



PRESS RELEASE

Finally, UN General Assembly adopts Peasant Rights declaration! Now focus is on its implementation

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Yesterday, 17 December 2018, the 73 Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 73) in New York adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. Now that the declaration is an international legal instrument, La Via Campesina (LVC) and its allies will mobilise to support regional and national implementation processes.

This final vote represents the culmination of a historic process for rural communities. With 121 votes in favour, 8 votes against and 54 abstentions, the forum of UNGA representing 193 Member States, ushered in a new promising chapter in the struggle for the rights of peasants and other rural communities throughout the world. The 17-year long process, initiated by the international peasant movement La Via Campesina, supported by numerous social movements and allied organizations, such as FIAN and CETIM, has been a great source of inspiration and has strengthened the peasant communities in all regions of the globe.

2018 was decisive for the process of the Declaration:

- **Geneva:** in April, after 6 years of negotiations, the 5th Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group of the Human Rights Council (HRC) concluded the debates on the content, finalizing the text. In September, the HRC (39th Session) adopted the Declaration by a majority vote.
- **Rome:** in October, during the 45th Forum of the Global Committee for Food Security, La Via Campesina together with the Civil Society Mechanism and with the support of several countries and UN institutions, organized a political event promoting the Declaration under the framework of the Decade for Family Farming.
- **New York:** in November the Declaration reached the process of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). On November 19th, the Declaration was voted and approved with a large majority by the Third Committee of UNGA, responsible for social, humanitarian and cultural matters. Lastly, yesterday's UNGA plenary vote concluded the adoption process. A new stage will follow, a stage of implementation,

transforming the aspirations of La Via Campesina into solutions for daily struggles of the rural society!

”This declaration is an important tool which should guarantee and realize the rights of the peasants and other working people in rural areas. We urge all states to implement the declaration in a *conscientiousness* and transparent manner, guaranteeing peasants and rural communities the access to and control over land, peasant’s seeds, water and other natural resources. As peasants we need the protection and the respect for our values and our role in society to achieve food sovereignty,” said Elizabeth Mpofo, a peasant farmer from Zimbabwe and La Via Campesina General Coordinator.

As peasants all over the world, we are going to mobilize and we will join hands in our respective countries to lobby for the establishment of policies and strategies that contribute towards recognition, enforcement and accountability. Violations of our rights through land grabbing, forced evictions, gender discrimination, lack of social protection, failing rural development policies and criminalization can now, with the formal international recognition of this Declaration, be addressed with increased legal and political weight.

Peasants Rights are Human Rights!

Globalize the struggle! Globalize hope!

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NOTES:

- 9 – 13 April, 2018, Palais des Nations – Geneva: Fifth session of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on a United Nations declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RuralAreas/Pages/5thSession.aspx>
- 28 September 2018, Palais des Nations – Geneva: 39th Regular Session Human Rights Council – Vote on Draft Resolution – A/HRC/39/L.16 – “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas” <http://webtv.un.org/search/ahrc39l.16-vote-item3-40th-meeting-39th-regular-session->

[human-rights-council-
/5841400348001/?term=&lan=english&cat=Regular%2039th%20session&sort=date&
page=2](http://www.human-rights-council.org/5841400348001/?term=&lan=english&cat=Regular%2039th%20session&sort=date&page=2)

- 17 October 2018, during the 45th Forum of the Committee on World Food Security, FAO Headquarter – Rome: Political event “Connecting the UN Decade with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants”
<http://www.fao.org/cfs/home/plenary/cfs45/side-events/063/en/>
- 19 November 2018, United Nations Headquarter – New York: result of vote of the Third Committee of UNGA (119 in favour, 7 against and 49 abstentions), recording starting at min. 15:35 <http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/general-assembly/main-committees/3rd-committee/watch/third-committee-53rd-meeting-general-assembly-73rd-session/596916682400>
- 17 December 2018, United Nations Headquarter – New York: final vote of the United Nations General Assembly, 73rd plenary session (to be recorded and archived). Final Resolution and text of the UN Declaration for the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas – to be registered.