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People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty

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Statement of the People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS) on the adoption of the VOLUNTARY Guidelines on Land Tenure, Fisheries and Forestry

On the 38th Special Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the [VOLUNTARY Guidelines on Land Tenure, Fisheries and Forestry](#) was finally adopted. The Guidelines seek to serve as “a reference and to provide guidance to improve the governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests with the overarching goal of achieving food security for all and to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.”

The document was approved at a time when wanton land-grabbing specifically in rural communities in Asia and Africa was intensifying. In the years that consultations and finalization of the document took place, reference to this phenomenon and how exactly these can be decisively addressed through accountability mechanisms remain absent.

Since the release of the Zero Draft, PCFS already pointed out in its [Concerns Regarding the Food and Agriculture Organization's Draft "Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance on the Tenure of Land, Forestry and Fisheries"](#), that the guidelines are bereft of enforceable implementation and complaints mechanisms, as well as international legally binding human rights convention.

With worsening hunger and malnutrition affecting over a billion people worldwide in the face of massive land-grabbing, spiraling food prices and the like, accountability mechanisms in the international policy architecture are imperative. It is against this backdrop that it becomes incumbent upon the CFS to engage in processes that would meaningfully address the current issues involving worsening hunger, poverty and malnutrition, and in so doing make a case for its *raison d'être*.

At the time of intense deliberations on the said guidelines in Rome and up to the heels of its approval, land grabbing in different parts of the globe has even intensified. Before the guidelines' Zero Draft was released, the Economist magazine revealed that about 37 to 49 million acres of farmland were put up for sale in deals involving foreign nationals from 2006 to mid- 2008. On the eve of the guidelines ' approval last week, [Landportal.info](#) has already documented **1,008 deals** since the year 2000 amounting to **76,329,194 has.** equivalent to half the size of Western Europe.

Indeed, there are serious doubts the guidelines will serve as a deterrent to land-grabbing. Reports from PCFS network members indicate harsher environment in rural areas of developing countries. In fact, while the draft guidelines were still awaiting CFS ratification, peasants, small- scale farmers and other marginalized groups face life and death situations in defense of their rights against land-grabbing, militarization, development aggression and other forms of atrocities.

Giant agro-industrial corporations such as Cargill, Dupont, Syngenta, Monsanto and the like will not be held accountable by the VOLUNTARY guidelines. Landlord and warlord state leaders being funded by World Bank and IMF will not refrain from doing business as usual. The challenge, therefore, lies in how the guidelines as an international document can contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for poor and vulnerable populations at the national level.

But just like the plow and sickle that we use in our farms, fundamental changes still lies upon our hands that cultivate the land and harvest the fruits of our labor. The peoples' control and ownership of their food and agricultural systems lie at the heart of food sovereignty as a framework and advocacy.

Efforts to seek justice and reparation to justice to victims of rights abuses, displacement, loss of life and livelihood of marginalized and oppressed peoples as a result of decades of unsustainable and corporate-led development paradigm rest in the collective efforts of the impoverished majority and their advocates.

We call on all the small-scale farmers and other marginalised groups to stand their ground and strengthen their ranks in defense of life and land.

Stop Landgrabbing!

Implement Genuine Agrarian Reform!

No to Corporate Globalization and Monopoly Capitalism!

Protect, Promote and Develop People's Food Sovereignty!