

Analytical Feedback for United Nation Draft Statement

Rights of Peasants (Smallholder farmers)

The Human Rights Council of the United Nations mandated an Advisory Committee to undertake a preliminary study on **ways and means to further advance the rights of people working in rural areas, in particular smallholders engaged in the production of food and/or other agricultural products by directly working the land.** *This is the same client group as LISO's.*

Below I have summaries this report and the draft “Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas”, *highlighting in red* the areas of similarity with LISO’s commitment to the **Rights of Livelihood Sovereignty**

The **Conclusion** of this study was that

“Smallholder farmers ... are among the most discriminated and vulnerable people in many parts of the world. Every year, thousands of peasant farmers are the victims of exploitation of land, forced evictions and displacements ... owing to the new phenomenon of the global “land grab”.”

To overcome this situation, the Advisory Committee has made the following recommendations:

- (a) More attention should be given to agrarian reforms that benefit small-scale land holders and *promote security of tenure and access to land*
- (f) **A new international human rights instrument** ... should be developed and adopted by the Human Rights Council. ... The new instrument should recognize the rights enshrined in existing international instruments ... It **should** also **recognize new rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, such as rights to land, seeds and means of production.** The elaboration of this instrument by the Human rights Council, *with the full participation of peasant farmers, small landholders* ... represents one of the ways to overcome centuries of discrimination against the most vulnerable groups working in rural areas.

A summary of the Advisory Council’s draft “Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas” selecting *issue relevant to LISO* is as follows

Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas (edited).

Article 1

Definition of peasants

1. A peasant is a man or woman of the land, who has a *direct and special relationship with the land and nature through the production of food or other agricultural products.* Peasants work the land themselves and rely above all on family labour and other small-scale forms of organizing labour. Peasants are *traditionally embedded in their local communities and they take care of local landscapes and of agro-ecological systems.*

2. The term peasant can apply to any person engaged in agriculture, cattle-raising, pastoralism, handicrafts-related to agriculture or a related occupation in a rural area. This *includes indigenous people working on the land.*

Article 2

Rights of peasants

4. Peasants have *the right to participate in the policy design, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring of any project, program or policy affecting their land and territories.*

5. Peasants have *the right to define their own food and agriculture systems.*

Article 3

Right to life and to an adequate standard of living

4. Peasants have *the right to maintain their traditional food cultures.*

10. Peasants have *the right to ... not be affected by the contamination of agrochemicals, such as chemical pesticides and fertilisers.*

Article 4

Right to land and territory

1. Peasants have *the right to own land, individually or collectively*, for their housing and farming.

4. Peasants have *the right to manage, conserve, and benefit from the forests and fishing grounds.*

5. Peasants have *the right to security of tenure and not to be forcibly evicted from their lands and territories.* No relocation should take place without free, prior and informed consent of the peasants concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return.

Article 5

Right to seeds and traditional agricultural knowledge and practice

1. Peasants have *the right to determine the varieties of the seeds they want to plant.*

2. Peasants have *the right to reject varieties of plants which they consider to be dangerous economically, ecologically, and culturally.*

3. Peasants have *the right to reject the industrial model of agriculture.*

4. Peasants have *the right to conserve and develop their local knowledge in agriculture, fishing, livestock rearing.*

6. Peasants have *the right to choose their own products and varieties, and the ways of farming, individually or collectively.*

7. Peasants have *the right to use their own technology or the technology they choose guided by the need to protect human health and environmental conservation.*

8. Peasants have *the right to grow and develop their own varieties and to exchange, to give or to sell their seeds.*

Article 8

Freedom to determine price and market for agricultural production

1. Peasants have *the right to prioritize their agricultural production for their families' needs.* They have the right to store their production to ensure the satisfaction of their basic needs and those of their families.

2. Peasants have *the right to sell their products on traditional local markets.*

3. Peasants have *the right to determine the price, individually or collectively.*
7. Peasants have *the right to develop community-based commercialization systems in order to guarantee food sovereignty.*

Article 9

Right to the protection of agriculture values

1. Peasants have *the right to the recognition and protection of their culture and local agriculture values.*
2. Peasants have *the right to develop and preserve local knowledge in agriculture.*
3. Peasants have *the right to reject interventions that can destroy local agricultural values.*
4. Peasants have *the right to be express their spirituality, individually and collectively.*

Article 10

Right to biological diversity

1. Peasants have *the right to protect, preserve and develop biological diversity, individually and collectively.*

Article 11

Right to preserve the environment

1. Peasants have *the right to a clean and healthy environment.*
2. Peasants have *the right to preserve the environment according to their knowledge.*
3. Peasants have *the right to reject all forms of exploitation which cause environmental damage.*