



World Social Forum, 2024

Crisis in Agriculture and Way Forward

Peasants' Assembly on Food Sovereignty, Agrarian Reform and Peasants' Rights

17th February, 2024 | Kathmandu, Nepal

Organizers

ANPFa

All Nepal Peasants' Federation

SAPC

South Asia Peasants' Coalition

NPC

Nepal Peasants' Coalition



Asia Europe Peoples' Forum

Square of Statement Kathmandu Declaration

17th February 2024

We, the representatives of All Nepal Peasants' Federation (ANPFa), South Asia Peasants' Coalition (SAPC), National Peasants' Coalition (NPC) and Asia Europe Peoples' Forum (AEPF), including different agricultural labor unions, plantation workers' unions, peasants, women, Dalit, indigenous people, consumers, policy makers, media, workers, and fisher-folks have gathered here in Kathmandu, for 16th edition of the World Social Forum, to activate, extend support, and strengthen and consolidate worldwide solidarity and commitments to the peasantry movements in Nepal, South Asia region along with global level.

We, farmers worldwide, are marginalized by anti-peasant policies of the government and by the policies of International Financial Institutions (IFIs), including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and multilateral trade institutions, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). Policies of neo-liberalization, deregulation and privatization have adversely impacted lives and livelihoods of peasants. Most of the subsidies in agricultural inputs and minimum support pricing legislations have been made ineffective or withdrawn.

Over the decades, there has been rampant supply of Hybrids and GMO seeds from multinational companies and the traders make compulsion to buy and grow in the agricultural communities by virtue of which the indigenous seeds are disappearing. Increasing use of such seeds have made compulsion to use modern fertilizers and pesticides in commercial as well as home consumption cereal crops too. There are multiple reports over detrimental health effects due to residual chemical effects on pregnant women, children and elderly people's health by over use of these chemicals.

Food sovereignty-based agriculture is only the key approach for agrarian development which incorporates diversified component of local resources contributing to equity and equality in

addressing the need and necessity of marginalized people in Agriculture sector. Now this is seriously threatened by government hegemony to peasants' right through several bottlenecks on accessing to natural resources like cultivating land, native and climate resilient seeds, adaptive livestock breeds, potential irrigation sources, forest resources and local indigenous species. In the name of agrarian reform, the land lords and money transfer control number (MTCN's) agents are monopolistically benefitting. Through liberalization, corporation, land grabbing, residential buildings and tourism, they have dispossessed farmers and fishermen, dismantling their social and cultural communities.

The national policies have failed to address the sufficient food and nutrition supply protocols to the poor peasants, women, factory workers and majority of the rural people. So, in all sectors there is grave violation of human right possessing to food insecurity, malnutrition, poverty and civic inertia.

There is an increasing control of imperialist forces, namely World Trade Organization (WTO), World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), and International Monetary Fund (IMF). The impacts of WTO-dictated policies of liberalization, deregulation and privatization, such as WTO's Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) with its provisions of market access and reduction of farm export subsidies have proven detrimental to peasants. We continue to fight to keep WTO and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) out of agriculture. We deeply condemn anti-peasant policies in the name of poverty reduction programmes by the IFIs and multilateral trade institutions, including micro-credits, which have devastated peasants' lives, many a time causing them to commit suicide. We delight agriculture and food system as a basis of life to peasants and marginalized peoples not a marketed commodity.

All Nepal Peasants' Federation (ANPFa), South Asia Peasants' Coalition (SAPC), National Peasants' Coalition (NPC) and Asia Europe Peoples' Forum (AEPF) have collectively been advocating for food sovereignty, agrarian reforms, and peasants' rights. The following demands are in response to the above-mentioned exploitation and marginalization experienced by peasants in the region:

1. Ensure small-scale farmers', fisherfolks', and indigenous people's control over the region's food system. Keep multinational corporations out of agriculture and cultivable land.
2. We demand that local food systems be strengthened through the protection of indigenous food varieties, indigenous livestock breed, seed banks, and indigenous technical knowledge.
3. Peasant organizations have been demanding agrarian reforms that focus on increasing productivity, food security, and sustainability and ensuring Food sovereignty and Right to Food for all. Regional governments to enact policies that provide land tenure security, productions inputs, and other service supports to small farmers in appropriate point of time.
4. The right to land is a key demand of ours. We CSOs fight for labor rights, protection from evictions and land grabbing, and access to markets on fair terms. We call for comprehensive land reforms that take gender, caste, and ethnicity into account, and

distribute land to the tillers. We aim to create a more equitable and food-secure future for peasants and their communities in a sustainable way.

5. The neo-liberalism designed by corporations and operated through markets that favor unjust profiteering over people's sustainable development and deny peoples' collective rights of commons to MTCN.
6. Ensure equal rights to and use of land for women for sustainable agriculture practices. Ensure justice and equality for women, which require the transformation of social and economic arrangements, including access to land, credit, education, social benefits and power through full decentralization to community governance.
7. Supply subsidized and cheap inputs to individual farmers and guarantee crop insurance. Ensure Minimum Support Prices for small farmers in the form of legislation such as Minimum Support Guarantee Act. Increase the State budget allocation in agriculture parallel to GDP generation through agriculture and forestry sector.
8. Effective implementation of land use policy in each country ensuring protection of fertile farming land. We also demand to stop Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in primary agricultural production sector and allied industries.
9. Many smallholder farmers in South Asia are burdened by debt due to high interest rates, lack of access to credit, and crop failures. The governments must provide relief and support to these farmers in participation with farmer's organization.
10. National, Regional and local governments should introduce a comprehensive loan waiver scheme, at the time of crisis, for small and marginal farmers, who are the worst affected due to the agrarian crisis. Which could help these farmers to come out of the indebtedness trap and revitalize their farming system.
11. We urged governments to recognize and value women's care work contribution to agriculture through policies and programs. Government must conduct social mobilization in the communities to uplift women farmers in benefit sharing through implementing a women friendly agricultural system.
12. Women are often exposed to high levels of pesticides during agricultural work, which can have adverse health effects, including infertility and cancer. The governments must take measures to protect women from these hazards
13. We call the regional government for better land classification and land use policies to protect the interests of smallholder farmers in the region. This is urgent to achieve an ecological based agricultural system.
14. We need to ensure the farming rights and address the problems faced by peasants in the national parks, conservation areas and buffer zones through an integrated policy and ecology-based protocol.
15. The state must ensure that work is available round-the-year for agricultural workers with a justified wage and working hours.
16. We also call upon other peasants' movements to join us to broaden and strengthen farmers' movements.

17. The state should ensure social protection of peasants – health, insurance, and pension but also of peasants, farm workers, tenants, and sharecroppers
18. The state should develop Minimum Support Price guarantee Act at national level; the laws, by-laws and directives for implementation at regional, district and local level.
19. The state should be aware about Water management, flood control measures and other natural disasters dismantling the agriculture land.

Organizers:

1. All Nepal Peasants' Federation (ANPFa)
<https://wsf2024nepal.org/organization/activity/44>
2. South Asia Peasants' Coalition (SAPC)
3. National Peasants' Coalition (NPC)
4. Asia Europe Peoples' Forum (AEPF)