



Human Rights Council
Open-ended intergovernmental working group on the rights of peasants
and other people working in rural areas
Fourth session
15–19 May 2017

Draft declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas presented by the Chair-Rapporteur of the working group

The Human Rights Council,

Wishing to promote the realization of the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of discrimination against Women, the Declaration on the Right to Development, the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant international instruments that have been adopted at the universal or regional level,

Reaffirming that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing and must be treated in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis, and recalling that the promotion and protection of one category of rights should never exempt States from the promotion and protection of the other rights,

Recognizing the special relationship and interaction between peasants and other people working in rural areas, and the land, water, nature and territory to which they are attached and on which they depend for their livelihood,

Recognizing also the past, present and future contributions of peasants and other people working in rural areas in all regions of the world to development and to conserving and improving biodiversity, which constitute the basis of food and agricultural production throughout the world, and their contribution in ensuring food sovereignty, which is fundamental to attaining the internationally agreed development goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Concerned that peasants and other people working in rural areas suffer disproportionately from poverty and malnutrition,



Concerned also that peasants and other people working in rural areas suffer from the burdens caused by environmental degradation and climate change,

Concerned further about peasants ageing around the world and youth increasingly turning their backs on agriculture owing to the lack of incentives and drudgery of rural life, and recognizing the need to improve the economic diversification of rural areas and the creation of non-farm opportunities, especially for rural youth,

Alarmed by the increasing number of peasants and other people working in rural areas forcibly evicted or displaced every year,

Stressing that peasant women and other rural women play a significant role in the economic survival of their families, including through their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, but are often denied tenure and ownership of land, equal access to land, productive resources, financial services, information, employment or social protection, and are often victims of violence in a variety of forms and manifestations,

Stressing also that several factors make it difficult for peasants and other people working in rural areas, including small-scale fishers and fish workers pastoralists, foresters and other local communities to make their voices heard, to defend their human rights and tenure rights, and to secure the sustainable use of the natural resources on which they depend,

Recognizing that access to land, water, seeds and other natural resources is an increasing challenge for rural people, and stressing the importance of improving access to productive resources and investment in appropriate rural development,

Convinced that peasants and other people working in rural areas should be supported in their efforts to promote and undertake sustainable practices of agricultural production that support and are in harmony with Mother Earth, including the biological and natural ability of ecosystems to adapt and regenerate through natural processes and cycles,

Considering the hazardous and exploitative conditions under which many labourers in agriculture, fisheries and other activities have to work, often lacking living wages and social protection,

Concerned that individuals, groups and institutions that promote and protect the human rights of those working on land and natural resources issues face a high risk of being subject to different forms of intimidation and of violations of their physical integrity,

Noting that peasants and other people working in rural areas often face difficulties in gaining access to courts, police officers, prosecutors and lawyers to the extent that they are unable to seek immediate redress or protection from violence, abuse and exploitation,

Concerned about speculation on food products, and the increasing concentration and unbalanced distribution of food systems, which impairs the enjoyment of human rights,

Recognizing that, in order to guarantee the right of peoples to food sovereignty, it is essential to respect, protect and promote the rights recognized in the present declaration,

Affirming that, according to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, indigenous peoples, which include indigenous peasants and other indigenous people working in rural areas, have the right to self-determination in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, while highlighting that nothing in the Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, people, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, or construed as authorizing or encouraging any action that would dismember or impair, either totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States,

Reaffirming that the right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized,

Recalling the right of peoples to exercise, subject to the relevant provisions of both International Covenants on Human Rights, full and complete sovereignty over all their natural wealth and resources,

Recalling also the extensive body of conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Organization on labour protection and decent work,

Recalling further the extensive work of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on the right to food, tenure rights, access to natural resources and other rights of peasants, in particular the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and the Organization's Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security,

Recalling the outcome of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development and the Peasants Charter adopted thereat, in which the need for the formulation of appropriate national strategies for agrarian reform and rural development, and their integration with overall national development strategies, was emphasized,

Convinced of the need for greater protection of the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, and for a coherent interpretation and application of existing international human rights norms and standards in this matter,

Solemnly adopts the following declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas:

Article 1. Definition of peasants and other people working in rural areas

1. For the purposes of the present declaration, a peasant is any person who engages or who seeks to engage alone, or in association with others or as a community, in small-scale agricultural production for subsistence and/or for the market, and who relies significantly, though not necessarily exclusively, on family or household labour and other non-monetized ways of organizing labour, and who has a special dependency on and attachment to the lands.
2. The present declaration applies to any person engaged in artisanal or small-scale agriculture, the raising of livestock, pastoralism, fishing, forestry, hunting or gathering, and handicrafts related to agriculture or a related occupation in a rural area.
3. The present declaration also applies to indigenous peoples working on the land, transhumant and nomadic communities and the landless.
4. The present declaration further applies to hired workers, and migrant and seasonal workers, regardless of their legal status on plantations and farms in aquaculture and in agro-industrial enterprises.

Article 2. General obligations of States

1. States shall respect, protect and fulfil the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas both in their territory and extra-territorially. They shall promptly take legislative, administrative and other appropriate steps to achieve progressively the full realization of the elements of the rights of the present declaration that cannot be immediately guaranteed.
2. Particular attention shall be paid in the implementation of the present declaration to the rights and special needs of peasants and other people working in rural areas, including older persons, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.
3. Without disregarding specific legislation on indigenous peoples, before adopting and implementing legislation and policies, international agreements and other decision-making processes that may affect the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with peasants and other people working in rural areas through their own representative institutions in order to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of peasants and other people working in rural areas.
4. States shall elaborate, interpret and apply international agreements and standards, including in the areas of trade, investment, finance, taxation, environmental protection, development cooperation and security, in a manner consistent with their human rights obligations.
5. States shall take all necessary measures to ensure that the non-State actors that they are in a position to regulate, such as private individuals and organizations, and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, do not nullify or impair the enjoyment of the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.
6. States, recognizing the importance of international cooperation in support of national efforts for the realization of the purposes and objectives of the present declaration, shall take appropriate and effective measures in this regard, between and among States and, as appropriate, in partnership with relevant international and regional organizations and civil society, in particular organizations of peasants and other people working in rural areas. Such measures could include:
 - (a) Ensuring that relevant international cooperation, including international development programmes, is inclusive, accessible and pertinent to peasants and other people working in rural areas;
 - (b) Facilitating and supporting capacity-building, including through the exchange and sharing of information, experiences, training programmes and best practices;
 - (c) Facilitating cooperation in research and in access to scientific and technical knowledge;
 - (d) Providing, as appropriate, technical and economic assistance, facilitating access to and sharing of accessible technologies, and through the transfer of technologies, particularly to developing countries;
 - (e) Improving the management of markets at the global level and facilitating timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help to limit extreme food price volatility and the attractiveness of speculation.

Article 3. Equality and non-discrimination

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to the full enjoyment, individually and collectively, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, free from any kind of discrimination in the exercise of their rights based on grounds such as race, colour, descent, sex, language, culture, marital status, property, disability, nationality, age, political or other opinion, religion, birth or economic, social or other status.
2. States shall take appropriate measures to eliminate conditions that cause or help to perpetuate discrimination against peasants and people working in rural areas.

Article 4. Rights of peasant women and other women working in rural areas

1. States shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against peasant women and other women working in rural areas in order to ensure, on the basis of equality between men and women, that they fully and equally enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms and that they freely pursue, participate in and benefit from rural economic, social and cultural development.
2. States shall ensure that peasant women and other women working in rural areas enjoy without discrimination all the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the present declaration and in other international human rights instruments, including the rights:
 - (a) To participate meaningfully in the formulation and implementation of development planning at all levels;
 - (b) To have access to adequate health-care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning;
 - (c) To benefit directly from social security programmes;
 - (d) To receive all types of training and education, whether formal or non-formal, including training and education relating to functional literacy, and to benefit from all community and extension services in order to increase their technical proficiency;
 - (e) To organize self-help groups and cooperatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment;
 - (f) To participate in all community activities;
 - (g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology, equal rights with regard to land and natural resources;
 - (h) To have equal access to, use of and control over land and natural resources, independently of their civil and marital status and of particular tenure systems, and equal or priority treatment in land and agrarian reform and in land resettlement schemes;
 - (i) To decent employment, equal remuneration and social benefits, and to have access to income-generating activities;
 - (j) To be free from violence;
 - (k) To be treated with equality and justice in marriage and in family relations, both in law and in private.

Article 5. Rights to natural resources and the right to development

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to have access to and to use the natural resources present in their communities that are required to enjoy adequate living conditions. They have the right to participate in the management of these resources and to enjoy the benefits of their development and conservation in their communities.
2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to determine and to develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development.
3. States shall take measures to ensure that any exploitation of the natural resources that peasants and other people working in rural areas traditionally hold or use is permitted based on:
 - (a) A social and environmental impact assessment duly conducted by technically capable and independent entities, with the individual and collective involvement of peasants and other people working in rural areas;
 - (b) Consultations in good faith to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of peasants and other people working in rural areas;
 - (c) Modalities for sharing the benefits of such exploitation that have been established on mutually agreed terms, between those exploiting the natural resources and the peasants and other people working in rural areas.

Article 6. Right to life, liberty and security of person

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person.
2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas shall not be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and shall not be held in slavery or servitude.

Article 7. Freedom of movement

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to recognition everywhere as persons before the law.
2. States shall take appropriate measures, including by means of international agreements, to facilitate the freedom of movement of peasants and other people working in rural areas, and in particular pastoralists, fisher-folk, and migrant and seasonal agricultural workers, including across borders.
3. States shall cooperate to address transboundary tenure issues affecting peasants and other people working in rural areas, such as indigenous peoples, and those relating to rangelands or seasonal migration routes of pastoralists, and fishing grounds of small-scale fishers, that cross international boundaries.

Article 8. Freedom of thought, opinion and expression

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion, expression and peaceful assembly. They have the right to express their opinion, including through claims, petitions and mobilizations, at the local, regional, national and international levels.

2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right, individually and collectively, to participate in peaceful activities against violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

3. States shall take all necessary measures to ensure protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threat, retaliation, de jure or de facto discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise and defence of the rights described in the present declaration.

Article 9. Freedom of association

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to form and join organizations, trade unions, cooperatives or any other organization or association of their own choosing for the protection of their interests. Such organizations shall be independent and voluntary in character, and remain free from all interference, coercion or repression.

2. States shall take appropriate measures to support cooperatives and other organizations of peasants and other people working in rural areas, particularly with a view to eliminating obstacles to their establishment, growth and pursuit of their lawful activities, including any legislative or administrative discrimination against such organizations and their members, and provide them with support to strengthen their position when negotiating contractual arrangements in order to ensure that conditions and prices are fair and stable and do not violate their rights to dignity, a decent life and a sustainable livelihood.

Article 10. Right to participation

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to active, free, effective, meaningful and informed participation, directly and/or through their representative organizations, in the formulation, implementation and assessment of policies, programmes and projects that may affect their lives, land and livelihoods.

2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to participate, directly and/or through their representative organizations, in the formulation of and in monitoring compliance with food safety, labour and environmental standards, whether by private or public actors.

3. States shall take adequate measures to ensure meaningful and effective participation, directly and/or through their representative organizations, of peasants and other people working in rural areas in decision-making processes that affect their lives, land and livelihoods, including by facilitating the establishment and growth of strong and independent organizations of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

Article 11. Right to information with regard to production, marketing and distribution

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to seek, receive, develop and impart information, including information about factors that may affect the production, processing, marketing and distribution of their products.

2. States shall adopt appropriate measures to ensure that peasants and other people working in rural areas have access to transparent, timely and adequate information in a language and form and through means adequate to their cultural methods that ensure the

effective participation in decision-making in matters that may affect their lives, lands and livelihoods.

3. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to a fair and impartial system of evaluation and certification of the quality of their products, at the local, nation and international levels, and have the right not to accept certification mechanisms established by transnational corporations.

Article 12. Access to justice

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to have access to and prompt decision through just and fair procedures for the resolution of disputes, and to effective remedies for all infringements of their individual and collective rights. Such a decision shall give due consideration to their customs, traditions, rules and legal systems in conformity with human rights standards.

2. States shall allow for non-discriminatory access, through impartial and competent judicial and administrative bodies, to timely, affordable and effective means of resolving disputes in the language of the persons concerned, and shall provide effective and prompt remedies, which may include a right of appeal, restitution, indemnity, compensation and reparation.

3. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to legal assistance. States shall consider additional measures for peasants and other people working in rural areas who would otherwise not have access to administrative and judicial services.

4. States shall strengthen the mandates and the functioning of national human rights institutions, in particular in rural areas.

5. States shall provide peasants and other people working in rural areas with effective mechanisms for the prevention of and redress for any action that has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their land and natural resources or of depriving them of their means of subsistence and integrity, and for any form of forced sedentarization or population displacement, forced assimilation or integration.

Article 13. Right to work

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to work, which includes the right to choose freely the way they earn their living.

2. States shall create an enabling environment with opportunities for work and that provides remuneration allowing for an adequate standard of living for peasants and other people working in rural areas and their families. In States facing high levels of rural poverty and in the absence of employment opportunities in other sectors, States shall take appropriate measures to establish and promote food systems that are sufficiently labour-intensive to contribute to the creation of employment.

3. States, taking into account the specific characteristics of peasant agriculture and small-scale fisheries, shall monitor compliance with labour legislation by allocating appropriate resources to ensuring the effective operation of labour inspectorates in rural areas.

4. No one shall be required to perform forced, bonded or compulsory labour. States shall, in consultation and cooperation with peasants and other people working in rural areas and their representative organizations, take appropriate measures to protect them from

economic exploitation, including debt bondage of women, men and children, and forced labour of fishers and fish workers, including seasonal and migrant workers.

Article 14. Right to safety and health at work

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas, irrespective of whether they are temporary, seasonal or migrant workers and of their legal status, have the right to work in safe and healthy conditions, to participate in the application and review of safety and health measures, to select safety and health representatives and representatives in safety and health committees, to have access to adequate and appropriate protective clothing and equipment and health and safety training, to work free from harassment and violence and to remove themselves from danger resulting from their work activity when they reasonably believe that there is an imminent and serious risk to their safety or health.

2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right not to use or to be exposed to agro-chemicals or agricultural or industrial pollutants.

3. States shall take appropriate measures to protect the above-mentioned rights, and shall in particular designate an authority responsible and establish mechanisms for intersectoral coordination, for the implementation of policies and enforcement of national laws and regulations on occupational safety and health in agriculture, the agro-industry and fisheries, provide for corrective measures and appropriate penalties, and establish and support adequate and appropriate systems of inspection for rural workplaces, in accordance with relevant instruments of the International Labour Organization.

4. States shall take all measures necessary to ensure:

(a) An appropriate national system or any other system approved by the competent authority establishing specific criteria for the importation, classification, packaging and labelling of chemicals used in agriculture, and for their banning or restriction;

(b) Those who produce, import, provide, sell, transfer, store or dispose of chemicals used in agriculture comply with national or other recognized safety and health standards, and provide adequate and appropriate information to users in the appropriate official language or languages of the country and, on request, to the competent authority;

(c) There is a suitable system for the safe collection, recycling and disposal of chemical waste, obsolete chemicals and empty containers of chemicals so as to avoid their use for other purposes and to eliminate or minimize the risks to safety and health and to the environment;

(d) The development and implementation of educational and public awareness programmes on the health and environmental effects of chemicals commonly used in rural areas, and on alternatives to them.

Article 15. Right to food and food sovereignty

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to adequate food and the fundamental right to be free from hunger. This includes the right to produce food and the right to adequate nutrition, which guarantee the possibility of enjoying the highest degree of physical, emotional and intellectual development.

2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to food sovereignty. Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced

by means of socially just and ecologically sensitive methods. It entails the right to participate in decision-making and to determine one's own food and agriculture systems.

3. States shall formulate, in partnership with peasants and other people working in rural areas, public policies to advance and protect food sovereignty at the local, national, regional and international levels, and mechanisms for ensuring coherence with other agricultural, economic, social, cultural and development policies.

4. States shall ensure that peasants and other people working in rural areas enjoy the right to physical and economic access at all times to sufficient, adequate and culturally acceptable food that is produced and consumed sustainably and equitably, preserving access to food for future generations, and that ensures a physically and mentally fulfilling and dignified life for them, individually and collectively.

5. States shall take appropriate measures to combat malnutrition in rural children, including within the framework of primary health care, through, inter alia, the application of readily available technology and the provision of adequate nutritious food and by ensuring that women have adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation. States shall also ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to nutritional education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge on child nutrition and the advantages of breastfeeding.

Article 16. Right to a decent income and livelihood and the means of production

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to a decent income and livelihood for themselves and their families, and to the means of production necessary to achieve them, including production tools, technical assistance, credit, insurance and other financial services. They have also the right to use individually and collectively traditional ways of farming, fishing and livestock rearing, and to develop community-based commercialization systems.

2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to the means of transportation, and processing, drying and storage facilities necessary for selling their products on local, national, and regional markets at prices that guarantee them a decent income and livelihood.

3. States shall take appropriate measures to strengthen and support local, national and regional markets in ways that facilitate, and ensure that peasants and other people working in rural areas have, full and equitable access and participation in these markets to sell their products at prices that allow them and their families to attain an adequate standard of living. Prices should be set through a fair and transparent process that involves peasants and other people working in rural areas and their organizations.

4. States shall take all measures to ensure that their rural development, agricultural, environmental, trade and investment policies and programmes contribute effectively to strengthening local livelihood options and to the transition to environmentally sustainable modes of agricultural production. States shall stimulate agroecological, organic and sustainable production whenever possible, and facilitate direct farmer-to-consumer sales.

5. States shall take appropriate measures to strengthen the resilience of peasants against natural disasters and other severe disruptions, such as market failures.

Article 17. Right to land and other natural resources

1. Peasants and other people living in rural areas have the right, individually and collectively, to the lands, water bodies, coastal seas, fisheries, pastures and forests that they need to achieve an adequate standard of living, to have a place to live in security, peace and dignity and to develop their cultures.

2. States shall remove and prohibit all forms of discrimination related to land tenure rights, including those resulting from change of marital status, lack of legal capacity or lack of access to economic resources. In particular, States shall ensure equal tenure rights for women and men, including the right to inherit and bequeath these rights.

3. States shall provide legal recognition for land tenure rights, including customary land tenure rights, not currently protected by law. All forms of tenure, including tenancy, must provide all persons with a degree of tenure security that guarantees legal protection against forced evictions. States shall recognize and protect the natural commons and their related systems of collective use and management.

4. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to be protected against arbitrary displacement from their land or place of habitual residence, or from other natural resources used in their activities and necessary for the enjoyment of adequate living conditions. States shall incorporate protections against displacement into domestic legislation that are consistent with international human rights and humanitarian law standards. States shall prohibit forced eviction, the demolition of houses, the destruction of agricultural areas and the arbitrary confiscation or expropriation of land and other natural resources, including as a punitive measure or as a means or method of war.

5. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right, individually or collectively, to return to the land and to have restored their access to the natural resources used in their activities and necessary for the enjoyment of adequate living conditions, of which they were arbitrarily or unlawfully deprived, or to receive just and fair compensation when their return is not possible. States shall take measures to restore access to land and other natural resources to those peasants and other people working in rural areas that have been displaced by natural disasters and/or armed conflict.

6. States shall carry out redistributive agrarian reforms in order to facilitate broad and equitable access to land and other natural resources used in their activities and necessary for the enjoyment of adequate living conditions, particularly to young people and landless persons, and to promote inclusive rural development. Redistributive reforms must guarantee equal access of men and women to land, fisheries and forests, and shall limit excessive concentration and control of land, taking into account its social function. Landless peasants, small-scale fishers and other rural workers should be given priority in the allocation of public lands, fisheries and forests.

7. States shall take measures aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of land and other natural resources used in their production and necessary for the enjoyment of adequate living conditions, including through agroecology, and ensure the conditions for the regeneration of biological and other natural capacities and cycles.

Article 18. Right to a safe, clean and healthy environment

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to a safe, clean and healthy environment.

2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories

and resources. States shall protect that right and take appropriate measures to ensure its full realization for peasants and other people working in rural areas, without discrimination.

3. States shall comply with their international obligations to combat climate change. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to contribute to the design and implementation of national and local climate change adaptation and mitigation policies, including through the use of practices and traditional knowledge.

4. States shall take effective measures to ensure that no hazardous materials or substances are stored or disposed of on the land or territories of peasants and other people working in rural areas without their free, prior and informed consent, and shall cooperate to address the threats to the enjoyment of their rights that result from transboundary environmental harm.

5. States shall protect peasants and other people working in rural areas against abuses by non-State actors, including by enforcing environmental laws that contribute, directly or indirectly, to the protection of the rights of peasants or other people working in rural areas.

Article 19. Right to seeds

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to seeds, including:

(a) The right to the protection of traditional knowledge relevant to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture;

(b) The right to equitably participate in sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture;

(c) The right to participate in the making of decisions on matters relating to the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture;

(d) The right to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed or propagating material.

2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their seeds and traditional knowledge.

3. States shall respect, protect and fulfil the right to seeds, and recognize it in their national legislation.

4. States shall ensure that seeds of sufficient quality and quantity are available to peasants at the most suitable time for planting, and at an affordable price.

5. States shall recognize the rights of peasants to rely either on their own seeds or on other locally available seeds of their choice, and to decide on the crops and species that they wish to grow.

6. States shall support peasant seed systems, and promote the use of peasant seeds and agrobiodiversity.

7. States shall ensure that agricultural research and development is oriented towards the needs of peasants and other people working in rural areas; they shall ensure their active participation in the definition of priorities and the undertaking of research and development, take into account their experience, and increase investment into research and development of orphan crops and seeds that respond to the needs of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

8. States shall ensure that seed policies, plant variety protection and other intellectual property laws, certification schemes and seed marketing laws respect the rights of peasants, in particular the right to seeds, and take into account their needs and realities.

Article 20. Right to biological diversity

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right, individually or collectively, to conserve, maintain and sustainably use and develop biological diversity and associated knowledge, including in agriculture, fishing and livestock. They also have the right to maintain their traditional agrarian, pastoral and agroecological systems upon which their subsistence and the renewal of agricultural biodiversity depend.

2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to protect their associated traditional knowledge, innovation and practices relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

3. States shall take appropriate measures, in compliance with their obligations under relevant international agreements, to prevent the depletion and ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and genetic resources, and for the protection and promotion of relevant traditional knowledge of peasants and other people working in rural areas, and their equitable participation in benefit-sharing arising from the use of these resources.

4. States shall regulate, prevent and reduce risks of violation of the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas arising from the development, handling, transport, use, transfer or release of any living modified organisms.

Article 21. Rights to water and to sanitation

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the human rights to safe and clean drinking water and to sanitation, which are essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights. They also have the right to water supply systems and sanitation facilities that are of good quality, affordable and physically accessible, and non-discriminatory and acceptable in cultural and gender terms.

2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to water for farming, fishing and livestock keeping and to securing other water-related livelihoods. They have the right to equitable access to water and water management systems, and to be free from arbitrary disconnections or the contamination of water supplies.

3. States shall respect, protect and ensure access to water, including in customary and community-based water management systems, on a non-discriminatory basis, and shall take measures to guarantee affordable water for personal, domestic and productive uses, and improved sanitation, in particular for disadvantaged or marginalized groups, such as nomadic pastoralists, workers on plantations, migrants, regardless of their legal status, and persons living in irregular or informal settlements.

4. States shall protect and ensure the regeneration of natural water resources, watersheds, aquifers and surface water sources, including wetlands, ponds, lakes, rivers and streams, from overuse and contamination by harmful substances, in particular by industrial effluent and concentrated minerals and chemicals that result in slow and fast poisoning,

5. States shall prevent third parties from impairing the enjoyment of the right to water of peasants and other people living in rural areas. States shall prioritize water use for human needs, small-scale food production, ecosystem needs and cultural use before other uses.

Article 22. Right to social security

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to social security, including social insurance. They also have the right to enjoy fully all social security rights established under applicable international and domestic labour law.
2. Migrant workers in rural areas shall, regardless of their legal status, enjoy equality of treatment with regard to social security.
3. States shall recognize the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas to social security, including social insurance, and, in accordance with national circumstances, should establish or maintain their social protection floors comprising basic social security guarantees. The guarantees should ensure at a minimum that, over the life cycle, all in need have access to essential health care and to basic income security, which together secure effective access to goods and services defined as necessary at the national level.
4. Basic social security guarantees should be established by law. Impartial, transparent, effective, accessible and affordable grievance and appeal procedures should also be specified. Systems should be in place to enhance compliance with national legal frameworks.

Article 23. Right to health

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. They also have the right to have access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services.
2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to use and protect their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including access to and conservation of their plants, animals and minerals for medicinal use.
3. States shall guarantee access to health facilities, goods and services in rural areas on a non-discriminatory basis, especially for groups in vulnerable situations, access to essential medicines, immunization against major infectious diseases, reproductive health, information concerning the main health problems affecting the community, including methods of preventing and controlling them, maternal and child health care, as well as training for health personnel, including education on health and human rights.

Article 24. Right to adequate housing

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to adequate housing. They have the right to sustain a secure home and community in which to live in peace and dignity.
2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to be protected against forced eviction from their home, harassment and other threats.
3. States shall not, either temporarily or permanently, remove peasants or other people working in rural areas against their will from the homes or land that they occupy without providing or affording access to appropriate forms of legal or other protection. When eviction is unavoidable, the State must provide or ensure fair and just compensation for any material or other losses.
4. In cases of eviction, States shall guarantee the right to resettlement of peasants and other people working in rural areas, which includes the right to alternative housing that

satisfies the criteria for adequacy, namely, accessibility, affordability, habitability, security of tenure, cultural adequacy, suitability of location, and access to such essential rights as those to health, education and water.

Article 25. Right to education and training

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to education and training. Education and training programmes for peasants and other people working in rural areas shall take into account their economic environment, social and cultural conditions and practical needs, and incorporate their histories, knowledge and value systems. They shall be developed and implemented in cooperation with peasants and other people working in rural areas.

2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to adequate training suited to the specific agroecological, sociocultural and economic environments in which they find themselves. Issues covered by training programmes should include, but not be limited to, improving productivity, marketing, and the ability to cope with pests, pathogens, system shocks, the effects of chemicals, climate change and weather-related events.

3. Children of peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to receive education in accordance with their culture, and with all the rights contained in human rights instruments.

4. States shall encourage equitable and participatory farmer-scientist partnerships, such as farmer field schools, participatory plant breeding, and plant and animal health clinics to respond more appropriately to the immediate and emerging challenges that peasants and other people working in rural areas face.

5. States shall invest in providing training, market information and advisory services at the farm level.

Article 26. Cultural rights and traditional knowledge

1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to enjoy their own culture and to pursue freely their cultural development, without interference or any form of discrimination. They also have the right to maintain, express, control, protect and develop their traditional knowledge, such as ways of life, methods of production or technology, or customs and tradition. No one may invoke cultural rights to infringe upon the human rights guaranteed by international law, nor to limit their scope.

2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas, individually or collectively, have the right to express their local customs, languages, culture, religions, literature and art, in conformity with international human rights standards.

3. States shall respect, and take measures to recognize and protect, the exercise of the above-mentioned rights, and eliminate discrimination against the traditional knowledge, practices and technologies of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

Article 27. Responsibility of the United Nations and of other international organizations

1. The specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and other intergovernmental organizations, including international and regional financial organizations, shall contribute to the full realization of the provisions of the present

declaration, including through the mobilization of, inter alia, development assistance and cooperation. Ways and means of ensuring the participation of peasants and other people working in rural areas on issues affecting them shall be established.

2. The United Nations and its specialized agencies, funds and programmes, and other intergovernmental organizations, including international and regional financial organizations, shall promote respect for and the full application of the provisions of the present declaration, and follow up on its effectiveness.
