



RICE AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

IN ASIA PACIFIC



LA VIA CAMPESINA,
INTERNATIONAL PEASANT MOVEMENT



FEDERASI SERIKAT
PETANI INDONESIA (FSPI)

RICE AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

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Foreword

In 1996, La Via Campesina launched the concept of “food sovereignty” as an alternative to “food security” at the World Food Summit in Rome. Food sovereignty doesn't only mean access to food, but it also means access to land, water, genetic resources, as well as the people's right to know and to decide about their food policies.

Since then, La Via Campesina has kept developing this issue during our international conferences and our mobilizations. I even believe that several important members of La Via Campesina joined our movement because of this “peasant concept”. The defense of this principle led us to mass protests against the neoliberal policy makers. From Seattle to Cancun, and from Hong Kong to Geneva, we have been protesting against the WTO and its free trade policies that are destroying people's food sovereignty.

La Via Campesina and FSPI organized the Asia and Pacific People's Conference on Rice and Food Sovereignty in Jakarta (14-18 May 2006) to forge a common vision of food sovereignty among the Asian members of our movement. Our goal is to strengthen the peasant's position against the liberalization of agriculture and to develop a comprehensive alternative concept of food production that does not marginalize peasants.

We hope that the results of this conference will be useful for the coming mobilizations this year (2006): the on-going WTO meetings in Geneva, the FAO Special Forum in September and FMI and World Bank meeting in Singapore in September. We also hope that our debates in Jakarta will feed the Nyeleni forum on Food Sovereignty in Mali in February 2007.

We think that with food sovereignty, peasants from all over the world will not have to compete with each other anymore but that we will be able to build solidarity and improve our lives.

Henry Saragih,
General Coordinator of La Via Campesina

Acknowledgements

A number of individuals and organizations have been active during this conference to develop the food sovereignty concept. Peasant movements, members of La Via Campesina from all across Asia and America and some NGOs have worked hand-in-hand to build up alternatives in rice production, consumption, distribution and trade system.

National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC) from United States of America, Korean Peasant League (KPL) and Korean Woman Peasant Association (KWPA) from Korea, Hasatil from Timor Leste, Karnataka Rajya Ryota Sangha (KRRS) from India, Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) also from India, Monlar from Sri Lanka, Vietnamese National Farmers Union (VNFU) from Vietnam, National Coordination of Local Autonomous Local Peoples' Organizations (UNORKA) from Philippines, Paragos also from Philippines, Assembly of the Poor (AOP) from Thailand, All Nepal Peasants Association (ANPA) and also the host peasant organization where the rice and food sovereignty concept is finalized, Federation of Indonesian Peasant Union (FSPI) in Indonesia. It must also be recognized and acknowledged that this process has been enriched by the comments and updates from NGOs all across Asia Pacific, especially International Planning Committee (IPC) in the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), GRAIN, Institute for Global Justice (IGJ), Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI), Koalisi Rakyat untuk Kedaulatan Pangan (KRKP), and Indonesian peasant movement participating in the conference, Petani Mandiri.

In FSPI, many peasants from west to east Indonesia have long worked in food sovereignty. Their practices and experiences is the most precious implementation of the concept itself. Suhaimi, Suparman, Wagimin, Melliana, Mas'ud, Supiah, Husin, Indra Sago, Somaeri, Syamsul, Wahidjan, Fabianus Toa are very brave in their struggle. FSPI staff: Achmad Ya'kub, Zaenal Fuad drafted the concept of this conference with input from Henry Saragih. Precious expert support was provided by Gunawan Wiradi and Prof. Sediono MP Tjondronegoro.

People in La Via Campesina contributed to this event: Indra Lubis, Tejo Pramono, and Irma Yanny. Isabelle Delforge and Muhammad Ikhwan compiled the text, however full responsibility for the content and the style remains with the authors/organizations, and people who struggle for food sovereignty—who made this possible.

quite similar to those on the Java Island.

The rice farmers can be divided into three groups: the farmers who own large farming lands, the farmers who own a small piece of land (small farmers) and the peasants with no land at all. The farmers who own large farming lands are the farmers who own 2 hectares of land or more, the farmers who own a small piece of land are the farmers who own less than 2 hectare and the peasants with no land are the farmers who are mostly landless, they usually only have a very small piece of land and a small house.

Up to now most of the farmers are still mainly involved in rice farming and this is the family main income source. The income from rice farming is earned directly and indirectly.

The peasants who have no land work on the other farmer's land with 'kedokan': a renting system through which they can only keep 20% of the rice production, while giving the bulk back to the land-owner after the harvest (usually in dry-unhusked form). This is an old crop-sharing system in the rice production system in Java.

One reason why the system still works is that so many farmers do not have their own farming field or land. By being in the system of 'kedokan', farmers can at least have some rights over the crops,

even if it's only 20% of the harvest.

Peasants with no access to land earn a daily wage for working in the fields for their skill and manpower. Yet nowadays field plowing rarely use buffaloes because the number of tractor rentals has increased.

Working as a laborer is not enough to make a living in Indonesia. Therefore, besides working in agriculture, most peasants also work as small traders or send their children to work as laborers or informal workers in town. The fluctuation of peasants' earning is shown in the table below. After inflation, it went down. And because the price of all products has increased they could not meet their needs.

Irrigation management is another possible income for the peasants. They manage the schedule of irrigation cycle for the various-aged rice fields in village, and then paid by the community.

In harvest periods, the peasants who do not own land can participate to the harvest work and get a share of the crop. They sometimes take the rest of the unhusked by paddy stalks, and the remaining from harvest left on the field.

In other case, farmers who do not own land, but have money rent their farmland. With this system, then they have the rights over the total harvest.

Scope	Agricultural Households (a)	Agricultural Households With Land (b)	Percentage (b) to (a)	Peasant Households (c)	Percentage (c) to (b)
1. ST 1993					
Java	11671	11564	99.1	8067	69.8
Outside Java	9116	8954	98.2	2737	30.6
Indonesia	20787	20518	98.7	10804	52.7
2. ST 2003					
Java	13964	13336	95.5	9989	74.9
Outside Java	11472	10841	94.5	3674	33.9
Indonesia	25437	24176	95	13663	56.5
3. Average growth per year (%)					
Java	2	1.5		2.4	
Outside Java	2.6	2.1		3.4	
Indonesia	2.2	1.8		2.6	

Table 2. Number of households, agricultural households, agricultural households with land, and peasant households, 1993 and 2003. Source: Berita Resmi Statistik No. 51/VIII/3 Oktober 2005 (www.bps.go.id)

Lands are generally rented for some reasons, e.g. urgent need of money or debt. Land owners earn only from the rent. Nowadays, most of the farming lands are not owned by farmers, but by the person who inherited it or bought it as an investment. Many people in Java invest their money into land. Those investors do not work on the land, as some of them just neglect it and some just rent it out.

Peasants, who have some money, for example after returning from working in the city, also usually rent some farming land upon agreement with a landlord. These farmland rental processes can be done during the planting season, but usually it is done for a whole year.

Instead of making an income through rice farming, they can also use the land for breeding and grazing livestock such as cows and ducks. They do it in the post-harvest until the field plowing period before harvest season.

In the processing of the unhusked paddy into hulled rice, the peasants dry the paddy under the sun, mostly in front of their houses, then they do the rice milling in the mill, and take the leftovers back to their houses. But in present time, peasants just sent the unhusked paddy to the mill or directly sell it because they urgently need the money. The urgency happens because some peasants do not have any savings: very often they find themselves strangled in big debt.

This situation automatically results in the decline of rice price in the harvest season. The peasants try to sell the paddy as fast as possible to pay their debts. The price declines even sharper when farmers have to sell their crops to middlemen. This also occurs in peasants-corporations relations, which is common in rural area in Java and many other areas in Indonesia.

Production Technology

Seen from the technological aspects, nearly the whole Indonesian rice

production use agricultural green revolution modernization pattern. Today, they mostly use variety 64 (IR-64). Only a small numbers of the farmers use dry-field rice variety

The farmers must buy certified seeds in accordance with the government recommendations. In critical economic situation, the farmers would prefer using the seeds from their crops to be replanted. But it means lower productivity in next harvest.

The dependence upon the certified seeds occurs because the government does not support the emergence of the seed breeding at the farmers' level and prefers urging the corporations to do it.

Moreover, most farmers use agrochemicals, e.g. urea, and the other fertilizers e.g. TSP, NPK, ZA, and KCL to raise the plants. These kinds of fertilizers have been used for more than 20 years, and the current trend is to overdose those fertilizers. In fact, this type of fertilizers has damaged soil structures. The soil has become more solid and poor on fertility substances.

On the other side, there are also distribution problems, such as the scarcity of fertilizers in the planting season, which has resulted in an increase in the fertilizer prices. When it builds fertilizer factories, the government increases the foreign debt. At last, the subsidies for fertilizers go to the corporations instead of going to the farmers.

Farmers are used to use pesticides such as chemical herbicide, insecticide and fungicide for plant protection. These chemicals have resulted in ecosystem and environmental damage, as well as in diseases for the farmers.

Land Owning Problems

Land owning has been unequal for centuries, and it remained so even when Indonesia came to independence in 1945. This is the consequence of the development of plantations during the

Dutch period and of the development of public facilities such as railways, government buildings, highways... In the Dutch colonialization period of ethical politics, many Dutch companies opened plantations in Indonesia, growing coffee, cocoa, tea, sugar and rubber.

Thus many farmers lost their land or became laborers in the land that they used to own. Unfortunately, after Indonesia's independence, this land has not been returned to the owner. Though the government promised them to return the land when the HGU (*Hak Guna Usaha* or Permit of Using Land) of this land would come to an end, it was never implemented.

There have been several efforts to distribute the land by the implementation of UUPA No.5 1960 (Basic Agrarian Law No. 5 1960), but the government was under pressure from some interested groups which were supported by the United States of America.

Consequently, after the collapse of Soekarno's regime, the New Order regime never implemented any land distribution. Instead of land distribution, this land is used to serve other interests, e.g. building of dams, highways, industrial and commercial buildings.

Several national rice production areas, mostly located in Java (for example Karawang, and along the West and East Java coasts) now have turned to be real estate and industrial areas. This land used to be fertile agricultural land which had access to irrigation.

Nonetheless, as farmers' debt is increasing and price of rice decreasing, the problems linked to land owning are becoming even tougher.

Threat: Rice Agro-Industry Corporations

Nowadays, rice farmers experience heavy pressure from many sources. Their income keeps declining as a result of the local, national, and international unfair trade system. On the other hand,

farmers' farming land is getting less and less available and they have to leave agriculture to make a living.

It is not impossible that in a near future the rice production system will be changed and that rice will not be controlled by farmers anymore, but by agribusiness companies. Today rice is more and more dominated by big rice producers—especially distribution and market system, whether it is from import or for national consumption. If this trend continues, Indonesian farmers will have serious problems. Poverty and famine will extend.

While Bulog (the National Logistical Body) has been criticized for forcing rice imports—especially the recent in November 16th 2005 and January 30th 2006, the Minister of State-Owned Corporation, and Bulog, stated that they would create a new state company to produce rice for the national food reserve after importation is closed. Rice production through the State-Owned Corporation would be a new threat for family-based farmers.

The possibility of having private companies managing all the paddy production and processing has been generating anxieties among farmers. If this happens in the future, farmers will have to compete with large producers in the free market while large corporations will keep controlling fertilizer and seed production and markets for 30 years—since 1970s: when green revolution came into action.

Conclusions

1. Green revolution is largely implemented in rice production in Indonesia
2. Green revolution caused dependency and hazardous impact to soil structure because of overuse of chemical fertilizers and agrochemicals. Meanwhile, the use of this kind of fertilizers has been perpetuating the dependency of rice farmers towards big agrochemical

corporations which control the supply and the retailing systems.

3. The high cost of these inputs results in higher production costs for the farmers and cut their income.
4. Land ownership is in a very unequal, with some landlords having a very big part of the land on one hand, and many landless people on the other hand. The situation also occurred because the state-owned land has not been distributed to the landless farmers. Moreover, peasants struggling to implement land reform have been criminalized by the government as they are neglecting the principle of genuine agrarian reform stated in the UUPA (Basic Agrarian Law No. 5 1960).
5. Land conversion from agriculture to other sectors is increasing: real estate, trade and industry have occupied fertile land like in Northern Java.
6. The number of small farmers and of farm workers has been decreasing, as the inequality of land ownership is still increasing.
7. There has been many cases of difficulties to access food—especially rice—as the price is not controlled by farmers. Farmers only can sell dry-unhusked paddy and do not have the resources to develop production until paddy is turned into rice. We can say that rice is controlled by corporations, middlemen, and governments.
8. Malnutrition cases tend to increase, as access to food is difficult in some regions. This is ironic in some case, that lack of access to food—especially rice—occurs in the centre of rice production; such as in NTB, West Sumatra, and South Sulawesi.
9. The price of rice in Indonesia has been varying a lot, especially since the beginning of rice imports in the late 1980s—and this has made rice farmers suffer because since the time Indonesia has been net importer of rice (since 1988). Since the time, government is so keen to import because the economic scale. This is also due to the free-market and neoliberal policies of the IMF,

the World Bank and especially the WTO. Those policies keep forcing developing countries to open their markets and therefore while they can not compete with subsidized products from richer countries.

10. In spite of the hardship, and after a long education and organization process, peasant movements have been struggling in favor of a genuine agrarian reform.
11. In some areas, land occupations have been carried out by peasant movements and some peasants have been successful in their struggle to reclaim land ownership.

Peasant struggle

Because food is basic need for human beings, we do not want any policy threatening our fundamental need to fulfill it. In case of agrarian country like Indonesia, rice policies should be based on two principles: (1) agrarian reform (2) national food systems based on the principle of food sovereignty. The peasant's right to struggle should also be recognized.

1. Any agrarian policy should urgently organize and implement agrarian reform. Land has to be distributed under the principle of genuine agrarian reform (not market-led agrarian reform): land to the tiller!
2. Fertile agricultural land and rice farming land can not be converted to other economic activity such as real estates, commercial and industrial buildings, infrastructure buildings such as airports, etc. Food is fundamental and should not be replaced by other activities. When an agrarian country like Indonesia can not fulfill anymore the need of food of its people, this country has lost its sovereignty and therefore become dependent from others in term of food.
3. Fertile-converted agriculture land should be converted back to agriculture activity. For fertile land which is not owned by the peasants, there should be a framework to

share the yield that will guarantee the worker's livelihood.

4. Land and forestry which are not managed and not actively producing should be distributed to peasant and landless people. The aim of this *absente*-land distributing is moving toward agrarian justice, so the peasant and landless people can guarantee their livelihood, producing food and basically increase their income. This is a simple action toward poverty eradication.
5. Rice as staple food should be produced by farmers, not by large agro-industry corporations. Governments should be obliged to fulfill the national food consumption and should cooperate with farmers to achieve this goal, not with corporations. This policy should overcome hunger and malnutrition and lead to an upgraded wellbeing of the people.
6. Concessions periods used by large planting corporations and forestry can not be extended. As soon as the concession period is over the land should be distributed to the peasants. This policy needs to be done in order to reduce inequalities in land owning and enslaving process in agriculture (especially in plantations, where farmers are only needed for their power force).
7. The government should give land rights to the farmers but not with certification program—which is done in order to make land transfer easier, such as the World Bank in Land Administration Programs.
8. The government, the police and the military apparatus are demanded to support farmers and not to conduct violence against them such as shooting, blocking, beating and arresting to farmers who struggle for agrarian reform.
9. In term of agrarian reform, the government should conduct it integrally and comprehensively—which is one is the importance of land reform/land distribution to agricultural activity followed by reformation of production system and restructuring other agricultural policy i.e. credit, production control, marketing, trade, protection, subsidies, importation, etc.
10. National policies should urgently adopt food sovereignty as food security can not protect people's sovereignty and farmers livelihoods (this has happened since 1988 when Indonesia started to import rice).

Rice farming in Indonesia and the urgency of agrarian reform

Presented by Wagimin, Chairman of Presidium, FEDERATION OF INDONESIAN PEASANT UNION (FSPI)

Indonesia is undoubtedly an agrarian country, because most of its citizens are farmers and because the regions consist of fertile agricultural lands. This situation, inherited from the previous centuries, is still unchanged.

According to historians, Ancient Java was discovered by Aji Saka who traveled around the Indonesian archipelago. He discovered an island which had fertile land and where millet (which in Bahasa Indonesia is called Jawawut) can grow rapidly. Jawa (Java) holds its name from this grain. Until today Java Island has been proved to be particularly appropriate for growing millet as well as rice. Now, Java is the main producer of rice in Indonesia, even though the land surface is very limited (only 7% of the total width of Indonesia).

The Javanese culture is strongly rooted in agriculture, and most specifically in rice agriculture. Even after various religions spread in Indonesia, the celebration of Dewi Sri, the Goddess of

rice, still exists and is practiced by most of the Javanese people, because she is still believed to be the Goddess of fertility and life.

Thus the ancient Indonesian agrarian nature is more related to rice than it is to other food plants. This trend has been accentuated by the green revolution which led the people, whose main food was not rice, to turn to rice as their staple food.

In spite of the high honor expressed by Indonesian people towards Dewi Sri, the government does not pay much attention to the farmers who produce food, especially rice. For a very long time, farmers and rice producers have suffered from hunger and have the lowest economic level in the country.

A Picture of the Indonesian Rice Farming

We will take the specific example of the Javanese farmers which are Indonesian biggest rice producers. Meanwhile, the situation for farmers outside Java is

Scope	Income Specification	2004		2005		Change (%)	
		July	December	June	August	July 2005 to July 2004	July 2005 to December 2004
National	Nominal	11051	11097	11942	12004	8.62	8.17
	Real	2624	2561	2654	2638	0.52	3
Java	Nominal	9452	10111	10706	10771	13.95	6.53
	Real	2315	2398	2453	2440	5.38	1.74
Outside Java	Nominal	13874	12840	14125	14181	2.21	10.44
	Real	3170	2849	3009	2987	-5.75	4.86

Table 1. Peasant income per day. Source: Berita Resmi Statistik No. 51/VIII/3 Oktober 2005 (www.bps.go.id)

Rice production and agricultural policies in Japan

Presented by Yoshitaka Mashima, Japan Family Farmers Movement, NOUMINREN

As same in most Asian countries, rice is the most significant staple food in Japan: “Rice is Life.” Japanese people call their three daily meals in three different ways: Morning Rice (*Asa Gohan*), Lunch Rice (*Hiru Gohan*) and Evening Rice (*Ban Gohan*). The Japanese word “Gohan” means cooked rice. Therefore, rice is equal to meal: It shows how important rice is for the Japanese people. In addition, one of Japan’s nicknames is “Country of Mizuho.” “Mizuho” is the fresh ears of rice. Traditionally, people have named their own country from this crop. Rice is like a symbol and a basis for culture, tradition and custom in Japan.

Japanese rice and agricultural policy before the WTO

However, it was only after the late 1960’s that Japan could produce enough rice to fulfilling its entire domestic consumption. During the World War II, Japan invaded and destroyed many Asian countries, murdering over 20 million people. After this war of invasion, Agrarian Land Reform has been implemented in order to abolish the landlord system that had worked as one of the fundamental pillars of Japanese militarism. In the post war period, agricultural policies were necessary to support the livelihoods of emerging small farmers, family farmers. Freed farmers enjoyed producing in high spirits under the support of the Staple Food Control Act. By this act, rice was

purchased by the government from farmers at a price that was high enough to cover the cost of production. Then, the government sold it to the consumers at a price that was set to make sure it was not a heavy burden on household’s economies. As the result, Japan could become self-sufficient in rice.

In the same period, the U.S. and the Japanese monopoly capital started to corrupt the agricultural policies. The U.S. targeted Japan as a large market to sell its agricultural product’s surpluses and tried to keep this country under its domination with the concept of “Food Umbrella.” On the other hand, the gigantic Japanese large capitalist companies tried to sell their own industrial products to other countries instead of accepting to import more agricultural products from the U.S. They demanded the government to reduce the cost of the agricultural policies. In order to sell the American surpluses, they tried to change the *rice food culture* into a *flower food culture*. Some nonsense campaigns were even promoted with slogans like “Eating rice makes you fool” or “You can live longer if you adopt the American food habits”. Before World War II, there was no school luncheon in Japan. In 1954, the system of school luncheon was implemented by a law that said that milk and bread had to be used. The school luncheon including rice has only started in 1976. Now, many schools have rice based school luncheon instead of bread based. Actually, the Japanese school luncheon

was institutionalized in order to use the flower and skimmed milk imported from the U.S. In 1976, a U.S. senator said, that the children who have had school luncheon sponsored by the U.S. and start to like eating bread and milk will become the best customers for American farm products in the future."

The Japanese government promoted a policy called "Euthanasia Policy" to follow the will of the U.S. and Japanese monopoly capital. The policy was implemented to stop the Japanese farmers to produce wheat, soybean and feed that the U.S. wanted to export. During the 1960's and 70's, the Japanese government promoted this policy to make the farmers change their production to the products that the U.S. was unconcerned. The policies of this period were not designed to support the Japanese farmers and consumers. They were designed to please the U.S. Therefore, Japan was a subject nation of the U.S. blindly following its will. There was no food sovereignty at the time. As a result, the current ratio of imported wheat has reached 86%, 97% for imported soybean and 72% for all crops. One Japanese journalist named the U.S. food strategy on Japan the "Wheat Strategy". But later, the U.S. changed the strategy to open all agricultural markets in Japan (and not only wheat). Its main target became rice.

The End of Food Sovereignty under WTO

Violations of Food Sovereignty by the WTO have been increasing. In the 1970's, Japan started to produce more rice that it could consume and the government promoted reductions of paddy acreage. Now, paddy fields have been reduced by 40%. Japan produces enough rice and does not need to import. Nevertheless, Japan has imported 6.78 million metric tons of rice as minimum access since WTO was established. The amount of undesired rice that consumers and companies have been forced to purchase by the government is less than half of the total amount of imported rice. A quarter of the minimum access rice is used as

foreign aid, and another quarter has become *defective stocks*. To emit the defective stocks, the government has started to sell it as feed for livestock.

Nevertheless, the Japanese government has proposed the enlargement of minimum access to 35% in the WTO agricultural negotiation, which represents 1.04 million metric tons of rice import every year (*1). If this is implemented, it would represent 12% of the total domestic production. Half of the additional 1.04 million metric tons of minimum access rice would be sold for feed at a low price. This is like throwing rice away. Some people in the world do not have enough rice to eat. Needless rice import means robbing food from starving people in other countries to feed animals. This is the worst policy. It is nonsense to discuss why a country that produces too much rice to feed its people needs to import increasing quantities of rice in the name of free trade.

The impact of the minimum access and the abolishment of the Staple Food Control Act hit hard on farmers. The price received by farmers has dropped by 35% since the peak in 1993. If you assume that 500 milliliters of water costs 100, the same amount of rice will become less than 70. One friend from abroad astonishingly said, "The Japanese water is so expensive but rice is so cheap." Farmers work half a year to grow rice shivering in the cold wind in spring and sweating under the strong sun in the summer. Is the price high enough to reward their work?

La Via Campesina and NGOs in the world consistently demand the abolishment of obligation on minimum access and other Market Access (MA). We also struggle against the minimum access that is one of the most absurd clauses in the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA). We call the Government to make the price of rice at least higher than the price of water. The *daily wage* of the Japanese rice farmer has become almost the same as the *hourly wage* of the Japanese

manufacture workers. This unfair gap must be filled, and the government is responsible.

Destructive agriculture policies

The government tries to withdraw more and more: rather than improving the price for the farmers, it is implementing a policy called “Structural Reforms in Agriculture”. “Japan cannot be a country isolated from the global agricultural markets,” said by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who gets nervous about the stagnant situation in WTO/FTA and steamrolls Structural Reforms in Agriculture. On April 4th 2006, the government adopted “New Agricultural Policies 2006 for the 21st Century.” This government’s scheme is the worst vision for the country.

The Structural Reforms in Agriculture aim at abolishing the price support system for all farmers, blamed for overprotecting farmers. That will take down family farming that has been at the basis of the Japanese agriculture for a long time. Along with this scheme, the government tries to get three quarters of the farmers out from production. The remaining quarter would receive “direct payment support,” filling the gap between the price of the domestic products and the goods imported at a dumping price, such as wheat and soybean. There is a Japanese proverb saying: “whether you chose to leave or stay, the direction is heading to the end.” The farmers who stay cannot manage their livelihood, and it is obvious that they cannot avoid stepping down toward the *end*. The aging of farmers and the lack of successors in agriculture have already been serious issues in Japan. Under this situation, the policy forcing three quarters of farmers to give up farming will directly lead to the end of Japanese agriculture.

Furthermore, the “New Agricultural Policies 2006 for the 21st Century” aim at opening all domestic markets instead of restricting Japanese imports only to the rich Asian countries. It also creates more opportunities for transnational

companies (TNCs) that are responsible for “hunting for foods” supported by the plan called “East Asia Agribusiness Consolidation Project.”

“We should protect sectors that should be protected, we should yield sectors that should be yielded, and we should attack the sectors that we need to attack.”. In this slogan of the “New Agricultural Policies 2006 for the 21st Century,” the “*protected*” sectors are the large companies that are pursuing more benefit throughout the world, the “*yielded*” sectors are the Japanese food and agriculture markets, and the sectors to “*attack*” are the farmers and consumers in Japan and Asia. Asia has become “the biggest importer of agricultural products in the world”. Asian markets are highly depending on crops and soybeans from other regions. Asian peasants are forced to produce cash crops for export instead of producing their own food.

Although the promise to halve the number of hungry people in the world has been made in the international arena, this number kept on increasing in 2003 and 2004. Asia, the largest agricultural area in the world, is partly responsible for this tendency.

In 2003, 45 NGOs and civil society organizations, including La Via Campesina, issued the following statement:

The real conflict over food, agriculture, fisheries, jobs, the environment and access to resources is not a North-South conflict, but a rich-poor divide. It is a conflict between different models of agricultural production and rural development, a conflict that exists in both the North and the South. It is a conflict between centralized corporate-driven, export-oriented, industrial agriculture versus decentralized, peasant- and family farm-based sustainable production

primarily oriented towards domestic markets (*2).

The “East Asia Agribusiness Consolidation Project,” promoted by the Japanese government promotes is inflaming this conflict.

The current Structural Reforms in Agriculture presupposes to reverse the achievements of the Agrarian Land Reform. The Agrarian Land Reform imposed in this country a family- farm based agriculture instead of a landlord system.

When the 21st century started, Hiroshi Okuda, the president of Toyota and the head of the Japanese Federation of Economic Organizations, *Keidanren*, said: “We cannot wait for the adoption of the Structural Reforms in Agriculture for many reasons. We have to completely reform the old-fashioned business model of ‘family farming,’ that has been practiced for thousands of years (*3).” That statement means the destruction of family farming while giving more business opportunity to big companies to be able to control agricultural production. The Council for Regulatory Reforms and Privatization of the Japanese Cabinet Office calls its Structural Reforms in Agriculture “the Second Agrarian Land Reform” and requests the abrogation of the land system that states that only farmers can possess and use farming land.

The Second Agrarian Land Reform aims at giving large companies the power that landlords had in the past. Historically, this scheme is completely backward. We struggle against this backward reform hand in hand with all people who are related to agriculture and the society as a whole.

People's Food Sovereignty First!

“We cannot afford to opened agricultural markets anymore.” This is a real voice of the Japanese farmers, stakeholders and consumers. “Food Sovereignty” is the alternative movement against the destructive path taken by the government, the WTO and the FTAs.

WTO focuses only on exported agricultural products that represent only 10% of the entire production in the world, under the control of the TNCs. But it must notice the great significance of domestic and local production. The earth is a planet where more than 800 million people are starving and countries have an unusual low food self-sufficiency ratio. In this planet, banning “productive” policy or policies supported by the WTO is fundamentally wrong. In addition, there are so many kinds of foods, customs and cultures in the world. It is unacceptable that these varieties of food cultures are being “McDonaldsised” by free trade.

“Free Trade” is not an eternal and ultimate principle. The U.S., EU and Japan used to protect trade, and even now these countries are protectionists. It is totally unfair in the international rule and history that the “Northern” countries impose Free Trade on developing countries that have not been able to develop their economy because the development has been delayed by a series of invasions and plundering from the same “Northern” countries.

WTO must get out from food and agriculture. In terms of agricultural policy and trade rules, the alternative to the WTO is Food Sovereignty. Let us strengthen our solidarity and movement to ensure Food Sovereignty locally, nationally and internationally.

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Thai rice exporting farmers, standing on the straw of illusion

Presented by Thonglor Kwamtong and Pongtip Samranjit, ASSEMBLY OF THE POOR, Thailand

The Illusion of Export

When people think about Thai farmers, they think about rice farmers. Thailand is the no. 1 rice exporting country of the world. People around the world know that Thai rice is one of the best quality rice in the world. Thailand is kept that reputation for more than 20 years. Related to this reputation, Thai rice farmers should have a good livelihood, no poverty, no debt, and no hunger. Unfortunately, it is not the case. The macroeconomic “trickle down” theory states that financial benefits accorded to big businesses will pass down to profit smaller businesses and consumers. But in reality, the opposite is happening.

In Thailand, we have 320 million rai total land area (1), 130 million rai are cultivation areas, in which 67 million rai (in 2004) are devoted to rice cultivation. That means that over half of the cultivated land is planted with rice. Each year, Thailand produces 27 Million tons of paddy, 60 percent of this is used to export. Most of the export rice is cultivated in Central Thailand. This rice is of medium and low quality. Jasmine rice which is one of Thailand’s best quality rice is grown in the Northeast

region.

In former times, Thai farmers were self-sufficient. Their livelihood depended very much on natural resources: land, river, forest, mountain, and seeds. Thai farmers were not rich, but not poor, and had enough food to survive. When the green revolution started, Thai farmers started to intensively grow rice for export. That was when all things changed.

People assume that Thai farmers must have more income and a better life. This is supposed to be so because Thailand is a food exporting country. Within the framework of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), Thailand is supposed to get more access to the world market. This is true as the statistic of the Office

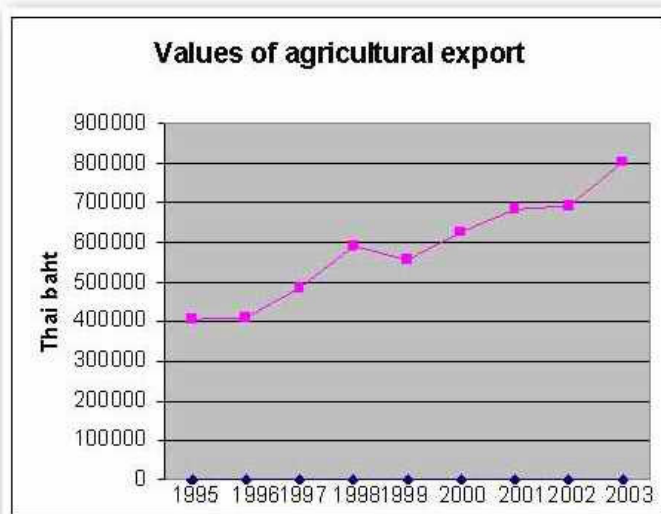


Table 1. Value of Agriculture Export. Source: Office of Agricultural Economics

of Agricultural Economics shows. The agricultural Export Value rose from 1955 to 2003, from 412,490 Million Thai baht (10,310 Million USD) to 804,188 Million Thai baht (20,105 Million USD). While the rice exports rose from 1995 to 2003 by 2,331,176 metric tons. Thus it is assumed that Thai farmers can profit from this increased income of agricultural export and rice exports.

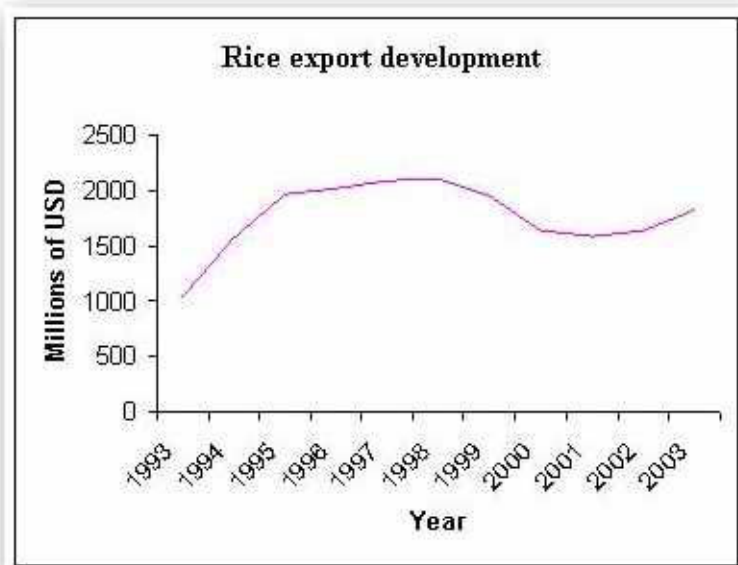


Table 2. Rice Export. Source: Customs Department, Ministry of Finance

How far Thai farmer could profit from the export value

It will be more interesting if we can find out that how much these figure of agricultural export and rice export value development affected to the livelihood of the Thai farmers. The question is in how far the farmers could profit from the export value increase during the last ten years.

We found out the interesting figures from the same institute on the agriculture income for Thai farmers, the debt of Thai farmers and the number Thai farmers indebted for the latest ten years. These figures show out different

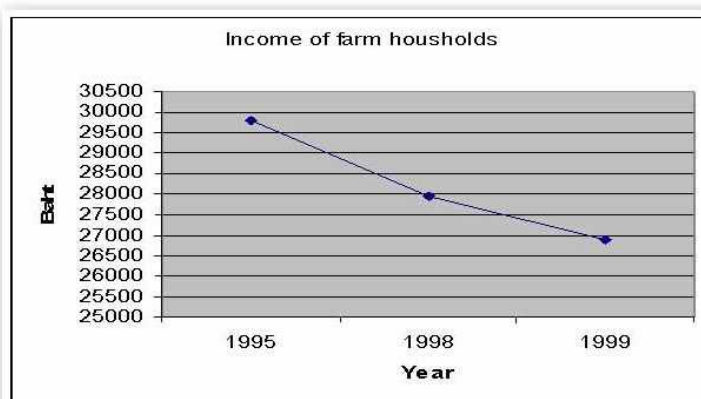
images from the figures above.

The statistics from the Office of Agricultural Economics during the period of time, 1995 to 1999 show that the average incomes from agriculture for Thai farmer had been decreased from time to time. It has decreased from 29,811 Thai bath per family in 1995 to 26,882 Thai bath per family in 1999.

Moreover it was found that during that period, the debt of farmers per family all across the country has been increased from 24,672 Thai bath in 1995 to 43,415 Thai bath in 2001. So, even if the agriculture export value was going up, the agricultural income of farmers was going down. The debt per family is going up.

Asides, the number of indebted households also increased from 2.8 million families in 1995 to 4.07 million families in 2001. These statistics told us that the livelihood and living standard of the Thai farmers are getting worse and were never in a good situation as assumed.

Table 3. Income of Farm Households. Source: Office of Agricultural Economics



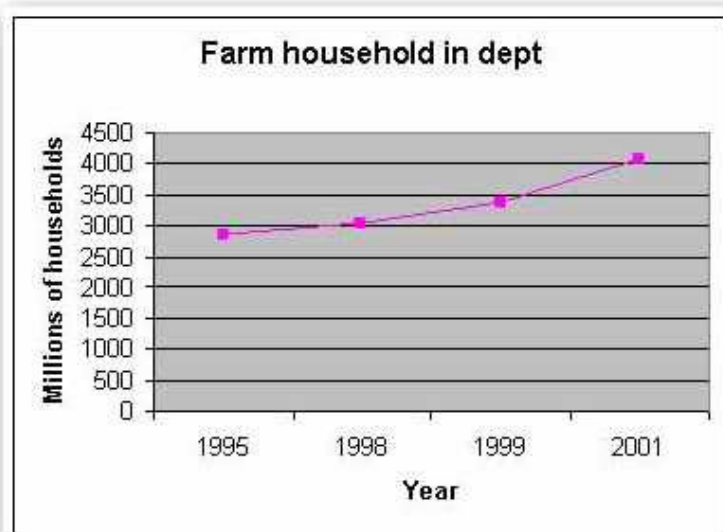


Table 4. Farm Households in Debt. Source: Office of Agricultural Economics

When we assume that the rice export value was going up for the last ten years, the income of rice farmers should be grown up too. However, there was a big gap between the rice export price and the farm gate price that farmers get from the middle man. Table 6 shows that farmers receive on average proportion from exports which is not in correlation with the increase of export earnings as shown in table 2. Thus the income generated by rice exports is not in favor of rice farmers. We can see from the table that in some years, the farmers even get less than half of the

export price. For instance, in 1998, the FOB price was 9,336 baht (233 US \$) per ton, while the farm gate price was 4058 baht (101 US \$) per ton. While the FOB price in 2001 is 6046 baht (151 US \$) per ton and the farm gate price the same year is 3120 baht (78 US \$) per ton only.

Life story of rice farmer

Let us have a look on this short case study. Once when we interviewed a rice farmer in Pichit province, central part of Thailand where rice farmers grow rice three times a year. A farmer told us the tragedy of rice farmers in the central region: The rice grown in the fields do no longer belong to the farmers. Before the planting season starts, farmers have to borrow money from local money lenders to finance their agricultural inputs. They also need cash for their children's education, for their food and other household's needs, for their clothes, and significantly for repaying back their debt from last season. The rice farmers can only borrow money from the local

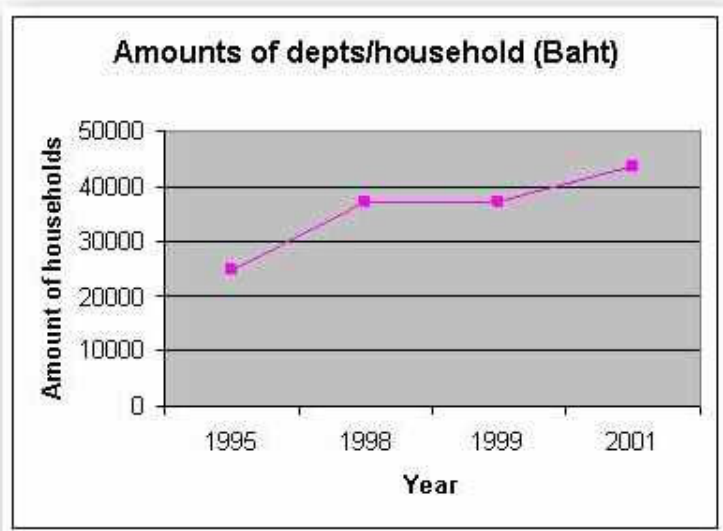


Table 5. Amount of Debt/Household (baht). Source: Office of Agricultural Economics

money lenders when they promise to sell their rice harvest to them. Some years, loans and interests are very high. The farmers know that their paddy will all go to the local money lenders and nothing will be left for their own family consumption. Thus the rice farmer stole the paddy from his own paddy field before the lenders came and hid this paddy at the back of

Year	Value of rice export in millions USD	Average export price in baht before milling	Farm gate price before milling	Difference between export price and farm gate price	Farmers proportion of export earnings (%)
1994	1563	5350.52	3449	1901.52	64.46
1995	1960	5259.71	4113	1146.71	78.19
1996	2012	6128.73	4663	1465.73	76.08
1997	2080	7735.3	5395	2340.3	69.74
1998	2098	9336.63	4058	5278.63	43.46
1999	1951	7117.42	3498	3619.42	49.14
2000	1642	7174.04	3189	3985.04	44.45
2001	1585	6046.13	3120	2926.13	51.60
2002	1631	6361.47	3372	2989.47	53.00
2003	1833	6803.88	3667	3136.88	53.89

Source: Calculation from Focus on the Global South

Table 6. Farmers shares of export earning

his house. This stolen paddy was the only thing he had for his family consumption.

Why can something like this happen? What are the main reasons behind the tragedy? The rice farmers are having no possibilities to define the farm gate price. The one who influent the farm gate price are the rice exporting company and the rice millers.

The Trick of Exporting Company and Millers

When there is a small quantity of rice in the world market and also in the Thai domestic market, export prices are supposed to rise. Thai exporting companies will skim the market by just selling rice from their stocks. Thus they profit from the price increase while the farmers who were forced to sell their rice just after harvesting are loosing.

When there is a big quantity of rice in the world market and also in the Thai domestic market, exporting companies furthermore will pass the low price on to

the rice millers and middlemen who than pass it further to the farmers by reducing the farm gate price. Rice farmers can not control the structure of marketing system, they had to take the burden of the world market price's fluctuations.

The Production Cost is growing up but the Rice Price is fluctuated

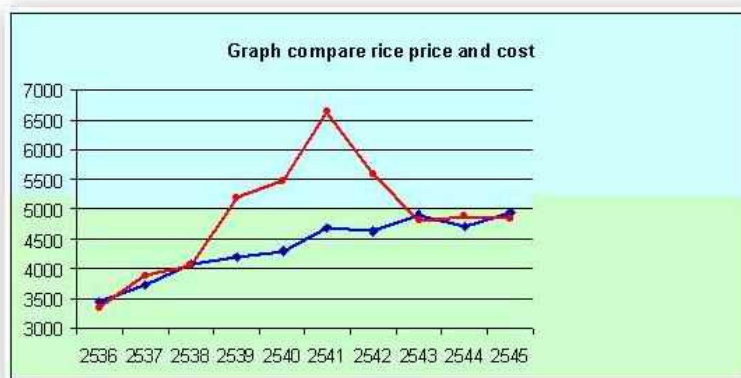


Table 7. Comparison of price and cost 1993, 1994, until 2002

This table shows, that, rice production costs have continuously increased over the last 10 years. In the past 5 years the price of rice has decreased following the world market price. In 2002, the Office of Agricultural Economic stated that rice production costs are higher than the price of rice. The costs of production are

4,942.43 Baht per 1,000 kilogram while farmers sell rice at the price of 4,840 Baht per kilogram. This means that farmers face a deficit of 102.43 Baht per 1000 kilogram. So farmers do not only lose but they also become indebted. This situation occurred not only in 2002 but also some other years when the price of rice was low but the costs of production were high.

How far do rice farmers enjoy any sovereignty over their food and life?

The situation of rice farmers in Thailand is getting worse. Each year, there are many rice farmers who could not pay back their debts and therefore, they need to sell their land. Nowadays the land of small farmers has been taken away by banks, local lenders, agribusiness, and national and local speculators. The main reason is that the economy of small farmers is collapsing. They can no longer make a living from their agricultural produce. The number of the landless and farmers who have not enough land for cultivation have been growing up to 1.5 million families out of the 5.6 farmer families across the country.

For small farmers, land is the most important productive resource they need for their food security. Unfortunately, land and other productive resources are taken away from small farmers. And used for the industrial sector and dam construction for electricity power plants. The control over seeds, forest and coastal resources seem to be exploited by big agribusiness and transnational

corporations. As mentioned above, the marketing system at national and international levels are completely controlled by exporting companies and big agribusinesses.

Lastly, the freedom to choose what farmers want to grow either for their own food or for trade is being forced by many national laws and international trade agreement. One example of a national regulation that will strongly influence the freedom of the farmers is the Act on Rice. Within this framework, rice for export is supposed to be produced in special rice exporting zones.

What is left for small rice farmers to survive in this world of competition for resources? Thai farmers want to define their own future and reclaim back their food sovereignty. They want to take back their lands through genuine land reform, not by a market-led land reform. They want to take back their rights on the use, control and conservation of rivers, forests, coastal resources and seeds that are ruled by their customary.

They want their self-reliant life and dignity back and they don't want to be controlled by export-led market, trade and big agribusiness. Lastly, they don't want a trade agreement on agriculture. The WTO agreement does not help Thai rice farmers, it rather destroys their livelihood and it trade away their land and their lives.

(1) 1 rai = 0.16 hectare/0.3954 acre.

Struggle for democracy and survival in the age of globalization in Sri Lanka

Presented by Sarath Fernando, MONLAR, Sri Lanka

Globalization enslaves the whole of humanity and threatens to destroy nature beyond recovery. Prevention of this destruction and creation of something new is the most important task in hand.

Resistance has picked up momentum throughout the world. The World Social Forum process has become the expression of this resistance, which brings hope. We from Sri Lanka would like to join this process in order to add our little bit of strength, but also to gain a lot more strength for our struggle in Sri Lanka.

What we would like to present today is the story of perhaps the most desperate crisis that our people are facing right now in Sri Lanka, which could be one of the strongest illustrations of the tragic consequences of globalization. It is also a story that tells us about the tremendous potential for us to build something new.

This is the story of the paddy farmers in Sri Lanka...

We have a long history of living in harmony with nature, with a philosophy of approaching life without greed or the desire for accumulation. People have never been very rich, but their whole effort has been to ensure survival. Economic policies planned in Sri Lanka gave emphasis to this need to ensure survival. Therefore production of food at low cost was seen as essential.

Availability of food at affordable cost was seen as necessary. And development of science and technology for the methods of production and distribution was planned accordingly.

This was later regarded as an approach that didn't lead to economic growth. People were defined as poor from the point of view of the market. Strategies aiming at faster growth through increasing exports were imposed upon the people and their governments with the promise that 'trickle down' would be the best way to reduce poverty. The process of thinking and planning was stopped and it was given over to the experts of the World Bank. They also became the lenders who could use the machinery of lending to take control. This was in 1977.

These changes led very soon to massive increases in rural poverty and malnutrition and to greater economic and social disparities, ending up in social and political unrest. Within ten years, we experienced two huge uprisings of rural youth. The uprising in the North has resulted in a protracted war that has caused 65,000 deaths and over 1.5 million displacements. The uprising in the South resulted in 60,000 disappearances within two years, between 1988 and 1990. Sri Lanka became one of the countries with highest rates of disappearances. We are also said to have one of the highest rates of suicide.

There are still one million paddy farming families in Sri Lanka, out of a population of less than 20 million. There are officially two million poor households, about 10 million people, or just over half of the population, all of whom depend on rice for most of their calorie intake.

Over ten years ago, the World Bank advised that Sri Lanka should no longer continue with a low value crop like paddy, but should go instead for high value export crops, and switch to imports of rice. The process of achieving this shift was very concrete. The Government was asked to withdraw all services and subsidies for paddy farmers. Providing free irrigation was seen as an encouragement to grow paddy, therefore it was recommended that water be declared a commodity to be marketed by the private sector. Maintaining restrictions on the sale of government-granted land was considered an unnecessary constraint on the market, therefore complete privatization was proposed. Intervention by government in supporting marketing was virtually ended and the state marketing board was closed and stores sold. Free agricultural extension services were stopped. Responsibility for the production of good quality seeds was handed over to the private sector. Low interest credit was stopped.

The results of these policies have been disastrous. The average cost of production on one acre is now between Rs. 19,000 and Rs. 23,000. So with a yield of about 80 bushels per acre, the farmer spends between Rs. 11 and Rs. 14 to produce a kilo of paddy.

Information gathered in the last few days from the major paddy producing districts shows that farmers are selling for as little as Rs. 10 and Rs. 8 in some areas.

This situation of farmers being compelled to sell at less than the cost of production has existed for ten years. In 1994, there was an outburst of farmer suicides, with 24 farmers committing suicide in one season in one district

alone, and this trend has continued unabated. Farmers have fallen into terrible debts to big traders who now control both the sale of inputs and the purchase of outputs. Many have lost their land through illegal transfers.

The Government consistently pretends to be intervening. Politicians announce that they are buying paddy at guaranteed prices of Rs. 16.50 and Rs. 17.50. But in reality only small sums are allocated for the purpose. On 3rd January this year, they announced a reserve of Rs. 700 million, enough to buy no more than 2% of the 2.1 million metric ton harvest. This was increased to Rs. 1,500 million on 14th February and then Rs. 3,000 million on 22nd March, but with almost all the harvest now complete, even this money remains in the Treasury. When the money does reach the Government Agents, it is often the bigger farmers who take advantage.

Meanwhile, much larger sums are being loaned at no or low interest to the big traders, who have absolutely no incentive to offer a reasonable price because they know that more than 90% of the harvest, is theirs.

The situation is set to get worse. The World Bank, now supported by the Asian Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund and Japan Bank for International Cooperation, who together provides about 90% of international finance to Sri Lanka, continues to insist on the full implementation of the remaining policies of globalization.

The land ownership bill is being brought for approval to Parliament. This is now a condition of the World Bank. The Government originally gave land to farmers in new irrigated settlement schemes on the condition that it could only be passed on within the family. The proposal is to abandon all restrictions on sale and allow a completely free land market. This is bound to result in a large number of small farmers losing their land and therefore their means of survival. The first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper or PRSP, called

Regaining Sri Lanka, produced in 2003, predicted a massive migration of people from rural to urban areas. It was expected that there would be a change from the current 70% in rural areas and 30% urban, to a balance of 50%-50%. What will happen to these 4 million people? This policy was drafted earlier, but was dropped because of opposition.

The water bill has also just been approved by the Cabinet. This is a condition of the Asian Development Bank. It proposes to allow private sector to come in and run water supply schemes and irrigation systems and to establish a system of water rights for different users that could be traded in a water market. This bill has been brought earlier but was not passed because of people's protest.

Meanwhile, the cost of rice is usually terribly high. The average price is generally between Rs. 30 and Rs. 40 per kilo. A family of five will need about 1 kg for a meal, so eating two rice meals per day at Rs. 35 per kilo would require Rs. 2,100 per month. However, the official figures of the Samurdhi movement say that more than 2 million families, or over half the population, receive less than Rs. 1,500 per month.

These struggles are for survival. But they are also struggles for democracy, for the people to be able to decide what to do with their lives, with their land, water and so on, as opposed to these decisions being taken by the international institutions in cohorts with the powerful rich elite that has benefited from the policies of globalization.

In the process of the struggle, farmers have been working out alternatives.

There are widespread attempts to cut the cost of production by reducing dependence on unnecessary chemical fertilizers and pesticides in favor of ecological methods. These have been proven to work and are increasingly implemented by farmers. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has shown in a study of 13

Asian countries that the use of Integrated Pest Management can eliminate the use of chemical pesticides completely, imports of which are said to cost Rs. 1,400 million each year. It can also increase the paddy yield by 23% and farmer incomes by 44%. There are other known methods such as System of Rice Intensification and Nava Kekulama, which have been shown to reduce the cost of production by half almost immediately.

There are groups promoting the use of indigenous seeds, which have been shown to be more resistant to pests while being able to give yields comparable with hybrids without application of chemical fertilizers.

These alternatives not only strengthen the farmers but also start the process of healing the earth, revitalizing the poisoned soil and water supplies, while improving the health of both farmers and rice eaters.

There are also groups of farmers converting paddy to rice in the villages and efforts to set up direct marketing between farmers and trade unions in the urban areas.

Half of the world's population is small farmers. Samir Amin says that if the agents of globalization get their way and agriculture and food production are treated as any other form of production to be submitted to the rules of competition in an open and deregulated market, then almost all of these 3 billion people would be eliminated within a very short period of just a few years. But 3 billion people will struggle for survival and democracy.

People in Sri Lanka and people all over the world are being compelled to fight the last battle, and that is the battle for survival. They have to fight for democracy and the fight for democracy is a fight for the right to be human. In the battle, something new is being born, and this something new will save the world.

Struggle against neoliberalism and alternative plan

Presented by Joen Ki Whan, KOREAN PEASANT LEAGUE (KPL), South Korea

I. Introduction

Korean farmers have fought against policies to open agricultural markets for several years. Under 36 years of Japanese rule and exploitation, we had to use Japanese food supply. Then we were forced to consume the agricultural surpluses of the US since 1945 when the American military government ruled Korea. As a result, Korean was ruined.

This short history shows that the development of Korean agriculture was blocked by foreign power.

The rate of food self-sufficiency has decreased due to American agricultural surpluses. This is threatening food sovereignty.

In addition, due to the emergence of the WTO, the liberalization in the agricultural sector has expanded. So the exodus of farmers from the country begins to accelerate. It decreases the population in rural areas; it decreases the rate of food self-sufficiency, and farmer's incomes. Therefore, farmers are suffering more than before.

Korean farmers have fought against neo-liberalism and globalization. KPL, the leading organization has struggled to derail the ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico in 2003 and in Hong Kong in 2005. We also struggled against the FTA (Free Trade Agreement) between Korea

and Chile for 3 years. Now we are fighting against the FTA between Korea and U.S and we keep struggling against the WTO.

II. Struggle of Korean farmers against neo-liberalism

Struggle's process

KPL, which initiated the struggle against the Uruguay Round (UR) negotiation in 1994, established a coalition of a nationwide movement comprising 300 social organizations and fought against the ratification to approve the Korean accession.

(1) On February 1st, 1994 over 40,000 farmers gathered in Seoul to hold a massive farmers' rally for UR renegotiation and agrarian reform and against ratification in the National Assembly. Farmers from all over the nation surrounded the National Assembly building and fought strenuously demanding not to join the WTO. At that time police violently repressed the farmers shooting tear gas. As a result hundreds of farmers were arrested.

(2) On November 29th, 1994, farmers from the whole country assembled and held nationwide farmers' rally against WTO accession and calling for securing the cost of rice production. But the government repressed the struggle violently and approved the WTO accession. So we started long-term anti-globalization struggle.

(3) On December 10th, 1999 over 20,000 farmers participated in a nationwide farmers' rally against the WTO, and marched toward the Blue House. During the march, about 200 farmers were injured, around 30 farmers were arrested and about 19 farmers were detained. Farmers got very angry.

(4) In 2000, the government announced that he was negotiating a FTA with Chile: it was like launching a battle against farmers. The struggle against the FTA between Korea and Chile started in 2000. About 2000 farmers' leaders gathered in the Integrated Government Building on March 5th and held a massive rally. Thanks to the persistent and devoted farmer's struggle, the negotiation was postponed. Following this event, several protests were organized: nationwide struggle of 200,000 farmers on October 20th, 2001; struggle of 300,000 farmers in Seoul on January 13th, 2003; and especially, the 114 days struggle of the rural people in Seoul showed the degree of farmers' resentment.

Eventually, 4 years anti-FTA struggle were brutally repressed by the government and couldn't achieve its goal. The FTA was finally ratified by the National Assembly in February 2004. Therefore, farmer's conditions got worse; they are suffering from economic hardship.

Struggle to stop WTO Ministerial meetings

(1) Struggle to derail the 5th WTO ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico in 2003

It is the increase of imported agricultural products that makes farmers' lives harder. After the emergence of the WTO, the real farmer's income has decreased and rural areas are devastated by the exodus of young farmers.

The number of farmers has decreased from 10 million to 4 million and the population in rural areas is ageing (the average of age reached 60). In addition there's no more baby crying in rural

areas. Because of the heavy burden of the debt, many farmers choose to commit suicide.

The more Korean farmers realize that Korean agriculture and farmers are collapsing due to neo-liberalism and globalization, the more they need to stop the WTO negotiation.

With KPL as a leading organization, other Korean farmers' groups prepared to block the 5th WTO Ministerial meeting. 1,000 farmers and 100 workers organized a team that went to Cancun, Mexico. They fought to derail the ministerial meeting. In the middle of the struggle, Lee Kyung Hae sacrificed his life. Nationwide, 80,000 farmers held a commemorative ceremony and held an anti-WTO rally on November 19th. During that time, farmers fought a strenuous anti-globalization struggle.

(2) Struggle to stop the ministerial meeting in Hong Kong in 2005.

The anti-WTO struggle in Korea has focused on stopping the opening up of agricultural markets. For one year, we focused more specifically on opposing the opening of the rice market for a year. We prepared the struggle against the opening up of the rice market and WTO ministerial meeting in Hong Kong for one year. Thousands of farmers held a powerful struggle against the government that promotes opening up rice market on 15th November.

When millions of farmers marched toward the National Assembly building, the police violently suppressed them. In the middle of the struggle, hundreds of farmers got injured and two farmers due to police brutality.

Social groups established nationwide committee to make counter plan demanding the punishment of the person responsible for the death of the two farmers and asking the president to apologize. Through strenuous struggle, we gained a victory as the president's apologized and the Chief of the police resigned. Nevertheless, the opening of

the rice market was approved by the National Assembly.

Over 1,000 Korean farmers in Hong Kong shook the WTO ministerial meeting through anti-WTO struggle. The reputation of Korean farmers was also enhanced within the international solidarity movement.

III. Crisis of the Korean agriculture and farmer's struggle

The U.S centered multinational capital moved into bilateral negotiations as the WTO negotiations were going through crisis. Based on the information issued by our government, we can expect that agriculture will go bankrupt if the FTA between Korea and the U.S. is conclude because farmers' income will be reduced by a half.

With KPL as a leading organization, 42 farmers groups established an agro-livestock committee in order to stop the FTA. On April 15th, 2006 thousands of farmers, workers, movie makers and stars gathered to hold the first national rally. They called to a mobilization of one million people in November, designating 2006 as the year of anti-FTA struggle.

National struggle of one million people

(1) Establishing regional committees to make counter plan in May and June.

- We are going to mobilize wide-range of organizations including farmers, workers, and social groups, hold meeting and educate them.

- We are going to organize commentative group of one thousands.

- We can take advantage of the regional elections and continue the struggle to judge the political forces that approves FTA with the U.S.

2) Sit-in Strike in Seoul in June

- Regional Committee and section committees (There are 14 section committees so far) organize the national rally and elevate unity and solidarity among each section through continuous sit-in strike.

- We denounce the first round of negotiations in the U.S in June. We hold a rally in front of the Blue House to make the negotiation ineffective.

- We organize the second rally against the negotiations in Seoul in June.

3) We form the second national rally against the negotiations in Seoul in July.

- We organize the second large scale national rally through the work and education done in May and June. Considering the characteristics of the negotiations, there's a possibility that the negotiation goes faster than we expect, even though we are not ready. The negotiation in Seoul might issue a proposal. Therefore, we need to launch an active struggle to stop the reckless intention of government. At the same time, we prepare a large scale protest in July to trigger the national rally in November.

4) We organize lecture for people in July.

- We are going to prepare lectures for the people to build up the atmosphere for national rally.

The ideological struggle against FTA will transcend our imagination. The major newspapers, Jo-Seon, Jung-Ang, and Dong-A which are the most conservative, blame the anti-FTA movement of collective selfishness by building up splitting up the public opinion between exclusivity and openness. It inflates the disruption in public opinion like history. Our strategy to fight this battle is to approach toward farmers on the ground. We are going to form regional committees and prepare lectures for rural people so that we can initiate the public debate on the ground. Therefore, we can lead people to struggle against the oppression.

5) One million people national rally in November

(a) We bring a million people together.

- The rally proceeds in each province.

It is too difficult for us to gather one million people in Seoul. So each province hold rallies and we have to gather our power and trigger people's movement by this simultaneous struggle

(b) We prepare a long-term struggle.

The massive rally in November should be the culmination of our struggle. But our struggle is continuous. Concentrating our protest just for one day is no use if the police and the press isolate us from the people. We need to guarantee the stronghold in each region. - We have to learn from our struggle in June 1987. So we prepare during day time and start the protest in the evening. After school or work, students and workers gather stronghold and hold a rallies. If they don't surrender, we have to do concentrated struggle and make them surrender.

IV. Closing

The anti-globalization and neo-liberalism struggle which has been waged for several years is heading gradually toward victory.

Farmers' organized protests are neutralizing WTO negotiation and blocking the FTA between Korea and U.S. This is made possible because of the persistent struggle of the Korean farmers and international solidarity.

National farmers' rally in November will grow like snowball and block the Roh's government policy which is against farmers and the intention that U.S wants to rule Korean economy. Finally we will restore hope and make a new society by the people. We will keep fighting until the victory.

Process and results of the struggle for food sovereignty in Korea

Presented by Joen Ki Whan, KOREAN PEASANTS LEAGUE (KPL), South Korea

Introduction

The rate of food self-sufficiency in Korea can't even reach 25%. We began our struggle to protect food sovereignty with a protest against the opening up of the rice market in 2004, because if we except rice, our level of food sufficiency does not reach 2.6%. Although there were a lot of problems in negotiation about delayed ratification on rice (such as double-contract), it was finally ratified by the National Assembly. Both the Korean government and the National Assembly are promoting agricultural policies that accelerate the opening up the agricultural market. They are also trying to promote a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Korea and the U.S.A. that leads us to be subordinated to the US while Korea is already highly dependent on the US if we compared with other countries. By retracing the process of our struggle to protect food sovereignty in Korea and its results, we think we can identify the perspectives and future of the struggle not only in Korea but also in the world.

What is food sovereignty?

First of all, we agree completely to Via Campesina's text on food sovereignty that was discussed at the Porto Alegre World Social Forum.

Food sovereignty means the right of peasants, the people and each country to formulate their own agriculture and food policies, against the invasion of

transnational capital and monopolization of agriculture by agricultural exporting countries.

Food sovereignty is the right of peasants, as subjects of production, to control production, land, seed and water, and it is at the same time the right of consumers to choose safe foods to consume. It signifies the right of each country to control production including the provision of land, seed and water, to ensure safe food to its people.

Progress of the struggle for food sovereignty in Korea

1. International forum on food sovereignty (2004.6.14)

It was one of the sections in the Asian People's Social Movement Meeting held against East Asian economic summit conference. Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Japan participated in the meeting.

2. The struggle against the opening up of the rice market and struggle for the protection of food sovereignty

- Implementing national poll to vote on rice liberalization (2004.March ~ September). 250,000 people participated in the poll in 44 regions, 94.8% of the voters were against opening up rice market.
- 2005.6.20 Going on a general strikes
- Massive struggle by piling grains
- Struggle in solidarity with Jeon Yong Chul and Hong Duk Pyo who died due to police brutality, while they were taking

part in a national peasants' rally against the opening rice market.

3. Establishment of the National Campaign for protection of food sovereignty and rice (2004.9.1)

- Nationwide campaign to protect food sovereignty

- Starting street campaign to raise the awareness of the people on rice and food sovereignty and asking signatures to petition
- Dissemination of information through the Internet such as sending news letters and using our website.
- Making video clip containing the meaning of rice and food sovereignty then distributing to each region

- Declaration of the commemoration week for Mr. Lee Kyung-Hae and for the protection of our own rice (2004.9.6~9.10)

- Declaration of food sovereignty from every field by declaring the commemoration week for Lee Kyung-Hae and for the protection of our rice, each organization (religious groups, workers, academic groups, groups of health experts, citizen, women, environmental groups, the press, youth, the legal profession, etc.) participating in the national campaign issued declarations about food sovereignty in a press conference.
- The press conference to announce the international day of action (La Via Campesina organized the International Day of Action against the WTO and in commemoration of Lee Kyung Hae on September 10th. It was celebrated in over 80 countries such as Switzerland, the Philippines, Japan, Mexico, Honduras, and so on.)
- Organize the first commemoration of late Lee Kyung Hae and the One Million Peasants National Rally Against the Liberalization of Rice and for the Protection of Food Sovereignty, and mobilize struggles on a daily basis. (2004.9.10~9.12

150,000 people participated from 9 provinces and 91 regions)

4. The campaign for a revision of the law fixing the target rate of food self-sufficiency

The rate of food self-sufficiency indicates the ability for the country to produce and supply food VS the national demand. It is the basis of food policy and its index shows the present food situation.

- The rate of food self-sufficiency in Korea has dropped drastically since the agricultural market opened up. So Korea has high dependency on foreign countries by being ranked as the 13th nation which imports agricultural goods after UR. The rate of food self-sufficiency in Korea is currently only 25%. This will make it difficult for the country to guarantee food supply in case of emergency. We need the government to be responsible for the food issue. It has to implement strong policies taking into account that the food issue is a question of sovereignty. In order to achieve this goal, we have to legalize the target rate of food self-sufficiency.
- We need to proceed harmoniously and gain national sympathy and participation from all sectors of society, making sure that there is enough budget, that the government is willing to defend this project and that we have a good planning to secure our incomes.

- Major Activity

- We proposed a "Fundamental Law on Agriculture" including the target rate of food self-sufficiency.

We set up a legislation team in the National Campaign for the protection of food sovereignty and rice. We discussed the plan to make the law with the support of the scholars who have academic knowledge on agriculture. As a result, we proposed the revised version of Fundamental Law on Agriculture containing the target rate of food self-sufficiency to the National Assembly in 2005

5. Hosting Forums

- Forum to establish a plan to pass the legislation fixing the target rate of food self-sufficiency and for food sovereignty (2004.5.7.)
- Forum and opening ceremony of National Campaign for the protection of food sovereignty and rice (2004.9.1)

6. Other activities

It seems to be possible for the two Koreas to reunify, because the exchanges between South and North Korea are increasing not only in the agricultural sector but also in other sectors. So the matter of food in two Koreas is not a isolated problem, we rather have to consider it as national problem. Therefore we are committed to keep struggling until we reach food sovereignty.

- We decide we would pursue the objective of achieving food self-sufficiency by cooperating with North Korea through the reunification movement. (2004.6.22)
- Declaration for food sovereignty of farmers in South and North Korea (2005.4.29)

climate changes, unstable food supplies, WTO, and multinational agricultural corporations. In this situation, people are aware of the fact that we need to protect our own food sovereignty against the WTO and derail the WTO.

(3) Korean farmers realized that stopping rice liberalization is deeply related to food sovereignty. Therefore, 900 farmers participated in a protest to block the 6th WTO ministerial meeting held in Hong Kong last December. They put all their energy to derail the ministerial meeting.

Result of struggle for food sovereignty

(1) We established the National Campaign through wide solidarity movement among over 120 workers', students', and social organizations and consumers. It was possible, because the concept was spread that the matter of food sovereignty is not only limited to farmers but it's national problem. This campaign was an opportunity for people to agree on the importance of food, secured food supplies, and safe food. In addition we informed people about the WTO's conspiracy. People became aware of how the WTO and the multinational agricultural corporations were seizing the food system.

(2) 0.8 billion people are suffering from hunger caused by exhaustion of natural resources, loss of farmland by urbanization and industrialization,

Struggle of Korean women peasants to protect food sovereignty

Presented by Lee Hyun Jung, Korean Woman Peasant Association (KWPA), South Korea

In Korea, the struggle of the Korean women peasants to protect food sovereignty and rice has a long history. First of all, it started from seeking for farmer's right a long time ago. After that, the government began to implement policies that opened the agriculture market. At that time, there were lots of struggle of women peasant; however, it was 17 years ago that the movement got really organized and consistent in its struggle: KWPA started in 1989.

KWPA fought actively against the governmental policies that tried to open up rice market. We studied about rice by ourselves. Also we did propaganda work in market places and the streets and we ran from door to door to give out printed materials. We expanded from region to region and collected signatures for petitions. In the evening we educated rural people walking through villages carrying our children. Women farmers held the first national rally in 1992 demanding the government to help mothers by providing school lunch and keep safe food for children rather than opening up the rice market. After that, there were several national rallies to protect rice and realize self-sufficiency of rice in accordance with the view and demands of the women. As the military government converted into a civilian one, it started to provide school lunches. Now we are requesting to formulate the law that makes government use Korean agricultural products, organic food for school lunch.

During 2002~2003, women farmers intensified their struggle using both the existing ways of struggle and other means, like shaving their hair and writing in blood, because this period was the starting point of promoting FTA in Korea. Also, some delegates fasted against the renegotiation of the rice agreement for 13 days and farmers protested in front of U. S embassy in 2004. As a result, 33 women farmers were arrested by the police. Last year, Oh Choo-Ok, a woman farmer, committed suicide to protest against the opening up of the rice market. Recently, not only women farmers, but also workers, citizens, students and youth are actively organizing movements to protect food sovereignty, anti-war, and reunification of two Korea along with women organizations.

Pyoung_Tak is an isolated island

There is a plan of the US to move its military base from Seoul to Pyoung-Tak. By doing this, the US shows its intention to wage an invasive war. The Korean peninsula is becoming one of the military bases of U.S. Due to the transfer of the military base; the farmers in Pyoung-Tak are deprived from their land forcefully. To protect food and land, farmers in Pyoung-Tak have been fighting for over 600 days. The place where U.S military base will be located is blocked with wires, it is impossible to walk through. People who live there can't cultivate anymore. The water system has been destroyed and if

people protest against this, they are arrested.

The atmosphere of reunification was inspired by a declaration on June 15th 2002. The reasons why the U.S military should stay in Korea was to protect South Korea from the North, but that reason is fading out. So the U.S. and the Korean government negotiations about the US presence in the Korean Peninsula is not for North Korea but it is because the US needs a place to stay in Asia if there is a conflict.

Therefore the source of dispute and conflict remains, and it hinders the Korean peninsula from reunification. Even though there no justified reason for the US to stay here, we have to pay the moving cost and give them land. It causes problems not only for people living in Pyoung-Tak and losing their land, but also to all citizens in Korea.

The Korean government is dealing with the struggle in the name of compulsory execution on May 4th. They mobilized the army, the police to suppress the protest mercilessly in Dae-choo lee and Do-Doo lee. As a result people who participated in struggle got injured and local citizen were kicked out. Can you understand that people who have spent their whole life farming on the land are kicked out for U.S. military base?

In addition, the U.S is blocking reunification through economic ruling by FTA and through military actions. As the atmosphere of reunification grows and the economy in China, Russia develops

as a new power, U.S tries to keep their hegemony over Northeast Asia. U.S changed the position of the military as Northeast intruder and tries to stay after the reunification of two Korea under the name of flexible strategy. Their intention is to conclude a FTA and keep their hegemony.

Of course, if the FTA is concluded, there's no meaning to talk about food sovereignty. KWPA is doing organizing actively its movement to fight against the FTA and their conspiracy such as flexible strategy.

Our delegates participated in the Forum on human right in North Korea in Brussels, Belgium and we denounced the U.S which has no right to talk about human right in North Korea. Moreover we organized 100 women farmers team to derail the WTO in Hong Kong. We are planning to go U.S to stop FTA in June 2006 joining a struggle team. In order to expand our struggle to all farmers and citizens, we are educating people running from door to door in villages. Lastly, 20 women candidates are running for election to influence political aspect on May 31st.

Korean women are fighting, standing in the front line and never compromising. KWPA put our value in making decisions and implementing them independently. Therefore, we can protect our food sovereignty, human right and dignity. We have to fight together against U.S that do whatever for their own interest to seize all over the world in its hands.

Rice, life and dignity: food sovereignty in Nepalese perspective

Presented by Dharma D. Debkota, ALL NEPAL PEASANT ASSOCIATION (ANPA), Nepal

Introduction

Everyone knows Nepal as the country of Sagarmatha (Mount Everest) highest peak of the world. For people who believe in Buddhism, Nepal is birth place of Lord Buddha and who believe in Hinduism, it is birth place of Goddess Sita. Nepal is a small country extending over southern slopes of the Himalayas bringing together China on the north and India on the south, the meeting place of world's two great civilizations - Tibeto-Burman cultures with Indo-Aryan traditions. It is also very rich in physical setting natural resources and biodiversity. It is the world's 2nd richest in water resource. Due to the low utilization of these resources, people's livelihood has not been improved.

Nepal is an agricultural country. 72% of the population is engaged in this sector. Production system is mainly traditional and backward. Total area of the kingdom is 147181 sq km. Total Agricultural holdings (2001/2002) are 3364139 Ha. Population has reached 25 million, and number of household is about 4.253.220. Per capita GDP amounts NRs 18799(US\$ 260). 80% of the population lives in the rural area. Out of that, 2 million people are landless and living in a situation of abject poverty. 4.7 million people are underemployed. Women are forced to live in a wretched life, and children are

subject to malnutrition. About 4 million people of the rural area are victims of social discrimination. Moreover, it is estimated independently that around 50 percent of people live below the poverty line.

Nepal and Nepali people have since long been exploited by the feudal productive system. Up until now, the state is dominated by semi-feudal and semi-colonialism structures. All the means of productions have been captured by those who hate work. The distribution of cultivable land is very unequal: of the peasants depending on agriculture, 70% percent have less than 1 hectares of land. In rural area, less than 5 percent people possess most fertile land. The average agricultural yield is still very low. The use of machine in agricultural production is nominal. Men, women and animals still constitute the largest component of the means of production.

The government is leaving the agricultural sector behind and stopped the facilities that were provided to peasants by the state before after the implementation of the liberalization policy in the country. In the past, the government had given subsidies for agricultural loan, small irrigation, fertilizers and seeds. However, right now subsidies given to peasants and agricultural producers have been completely removed, and the fact that it has further increased the cost of

production. Peasants' concern is to re-establish the subsidies as of previous rate.

The situation mentioned above shows very clearly that a genuine agrarian reform is to be accomplished as soon as possible, establishing the peasants' right to productive assets and widening access to productive resources including land. A package of agricultural development is to be implemented so that peasants' rights are protected, profitable price of their products can be ensured, local market can be protected and finally agricultural revolution achieved. Likewise protection of biodiversity and maximum utilization of it is also another task for the state. The peasants should be brought into the process in protecting all those elements so that they will have right over them and feel ownership over the resources. Peasants only can protect their resources and utilize them properly as per their needs. There is also urgent need of getting a peasants' act, court and commission. We have to have a series of campaign to achieve all of them.

Another important component of our movement is to achieve food sovereignty. Agricultural development is entering into commercialization and agro-industrialization. Therefore, the peasants' movement should also follow the productive system and pattern. Looking at this dimension, ANPA has also changed its organizational pattern accordingly and have formed various organizations based on production.

Conditions for rice production

Rice is one of the most important and number one cereal crop of the country. Not only is it a key staple food, but the rice-farming sector is also a major employer and source of income. It occupies more than 50% of the total food grains, and plays important role in food sovereignty of the country.

In the last decade, rice production has doubled. Production was merely

2.372.020 MMT in 1986/1987 to 4.455.722 MMT in 2005. According to the Ministry of Corporate and Agriculture, the area of cultivation has also increased during this period of time. The area of rice cultivation was 1.333.369 hectares in 1986 and now it is 1.559.436 hectares. Annual yield has also increased from 1.779 kg per hectare to 2.857 kg per hectare. However, growth of rice production is low (grain yield 2.07% per annum), compared to rate of population growth 92.2 per annum). Production system is mainly traditional and backward, although in the irrigated and low altitude area peasant can harvest twice in a year. One interesting thing to be underlined here is that we can find rice plantation being carried out in places elevating from 70 meters in Kechana of Jhapa to 2850 m. A kind of local, high land variety rice called "Marcy" can be grown even in one of the highest altitude area in the world, in the Himalayan region.

In the past, there were more than 1.836 varieties of germ plasma (indigenous varieties) which have already been registered in Nepal. 4 of them are wild rice. But various traditional varieties of rice seeds have already been lost.

Rice production in Nepal is historically important as it owns enough evidences to be claimed as the origin of rice. Meanwhile, the National Agriculture Research Council (NARC) has already recommended 39 types of improved varieties of rice in the last 37 years.

In Nepal, there are frequent eruptions of diseases on the rice. "There are regular epidemics in rice. Just a few years ago, there was an epidemic of brown plant hopper in Chitwan," said Dr. Dhurba Narayan Manandar, an entomologist NARC. And if such epidemic is not controlled there are going to be disasters for the farmers. Nowadays, researchers have tried to introduce new breed of rice and monitor the paddy.

Main problems

- No access to land

- No implementation of genuine agrarian reform
- No subsidy in rice production
- Production costs higher than rice market prices
- Traditional local varieties disappearing and being replaced by improved varieties
- Drought and flood problems
- Irrigation problem. Only 1 million hectare is irrigated
- Trade and market problem, as there is no regular market and sided-to-peasant trade system
- Import threatens local production
- Multinational companies are trying to enter in rice production and trade system

Struggle for food sovereignty in Nepal

Nepalese peasants have been struggling since 1951 for their right to access land, others natural resources and means of food production. They are continuously fighting for effective role on policy making, and to develop and conserve their food resources and food culture. ANPA, the mass based peasant organization, has fought against feudalism, bureaucratic capitalism and foreign interference over our natural resources. Due to the long history of struggle more than one million people are members of ANPA. It has been popular and largest coordinator of various peasants' movement of the country.

ANPA has successfully organized the peoples' caravan for Food Sovereignty in 2004 and its culmination with international conference on food sovereignty. International conference on peace, democracy, food sovereignty and road to Hong Kong on 2 December, 2005 was a grand success as ANPA organized a rally together with 100 thousand mass where Paul Nicholson has attended on

behalf of La Via Campesina. Participation in various seminars and meetings to build a strong movement of food sovereignty organized by La Via Campesina and other networks within Asia has become increasingly a regular feature.

Our current demands in national level

- Genuine Agrarian reforms program should be ensured by upcoming new constitution
- Program of Food Sovereignty should be incorporated into the new constitution
- Peasants' enactment should immediately be made public
- Peasants' court should immediately be established at district level
- Peasants' commission should immediately be constituted
- National government respect, protect and fulfill the people's aspiration

Our current demands in both national and international level

- No liberalization in rice trade
- Protect our internal rice market
- Ensure land to the tiller
- Ensure women's participation and rights in all aspects of life
- Prevent patents on life forms and stop bio-piracy
- Eliminate the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers
- Commit strongly to achieve profitable prices for rice.
- Build a strong rice producers network among La Via Campesina Food Sovereignty network
- Implement sustainable rice production and environmental protection
- Assert rice producers democratic and human rights
- Strongly resist the influence, monopoly and domination of Transnational Corporations (TNCs) in rice and agrochemical trade
- WTO Out of Agriculture

Rice is life, culture and dignity

We, peasants from Asia and the Pacific, civil society organizations and NGOs have gathered for the Asia Pacific People's Conference on Rice and Food Sovereignty organized by La Via Campesina and hosted by the Indonesian Federation of Peasant Unions (FSPI) in Jakarta 14-18 May 2006. We have shared our experiences on the issue of rice and how to implement food sovereignty in our countries.

We recognize that food and agriculture are fundamental for the people, especially when we consider the issue of rice in Asia Pacific. Many rice farmers in the region are now hungry or sinking into debt, and therefore their livelihood is threatened. This situation is also promoted by international institutions such as the WTO, IMF and the World Bank. On the other hand, these institutions are also promoting export-oriented rice production, and monopoly control by transnational corporations. This has been endangering rice farmer's life in Asia and the Pacific.

Rice is Life, Culture and Dignity

We, the peasants from Asia and the Pacific strongly voice our right to have a better life, to preserve our cultures, and to protect the dignity of the people. Rice has been our staple food for centuries, so it is a political issue. Therefore, we demand food sovereignty for the people. Farmers should have the right to produce food in a sustainable way and be protected from neo-liberal policies. Food sovereignty should prevail over free trade.

Women peasants have protected traditional rural agriculture and sustainable agriculture in their communities for centuries. Therefore, they should be respected and have the same rights as men. Their rights and access to production resources should be protected because women are the main force of production. Women peasants will implement a detailed action plan to protect sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty.

We gathered to formulate the principles of food sovereignty on rice. We urge our governments to adopt policies promoting and supporting sustainable rice production and family-based production rather than agro-industry, export-oriented, and high-input rice production. During our discussions, we realized that people's food sovereignty should be implemented at different level: (1) access and control over natural resources (land, water and seeds), (2) model of production and consumption, (3) processing and post harvest activities and (4) trade.

1. Land, Water and Seeds

- We demand a genuine agrarian reform that focuses on land distribution to the landless people and provides possibilities for farmers to retain land in their possession.

- Land to the tiller: the land should belong to the small and landless people, and not to landlords and big companies.
- Land and water have to be owned by the local communities with all respect to the community's legal and customary rights to their local and traditional resources.
- It is not enough to have some positive laws. In Asia and the Pacific, many countries have agrarian laws, but they are not implemented. Social movements have to be able to put pressure on the governments and to monitor the implementation of the laws.
- Women should have equal right regarding their access to land, water and other productive resources.
- We condemn the privatization of water; because water is now being controlled by MNCs. Governments have to protect their farmers in order to provide them with free irrigation access for production.
- We should be protected from the pollution of the water sources by the industry and chemical farming, especially in rice production systems.
- Seeds are at the heart of agriculture, they are the basis of food sovereignty. We should abolish all patents on seeds, as well as reject any means, system or technology that prevents farmers from saving, improving, and reproducing seeds. We categorically say no to terminator technology on seeds that curtails this freedom.
- We encourage the right to exchange and reproduce seeds by the people and for the people. Seeds can not to be distributed by the MNCs and the governments, as they will make farmers as only the end-user of the chain of seed production.
- Abolish GMOs and ban its production and trade in rice seed.

2. Rice production systems

- We condemn the green revolution because it destroys biodiversity, it fosters dependency on chemicals, it leads to environmental degradation and displaces many small farmers from their land (the basis of their livelihood).
- We promote sustainable rice production such as organic and natural farming: it uses less inputs and produce better quality outputs.
- We encourage the revival of traditional practices on sustainable rice production systems, for instance the natural farming in India (Karnataka).
- Recognize the importance of food sovereignty in terms of nature and ecology in order to eradicate poverty, to protect ecosystems, land preservation, biodiversity, to improve health conditions, to increase water quality and food at affordable cost.
- We support the establishment of rice quality criteria's depending on people's preferences and needs.
- We strongly push our governments to give support to organizations who promote sustainable agriculture, and to set up formal policies to promote sustainable rice production systems.

3. Post harvest activities and processing

- We support the development of local rice economies based on local production and processing by farmers.
- Processing activities and local trade should be managed by small family units, with cheap technologies adapted to the people needs and capacity.
- The governments should provide services program supporting production and land productivity. They should also facilitate post harvest activities.

4. Trade

- We should ensure adequate remunerative prices. The government should use subsidies and other tools to guarantee a price that covers the cost of production and an adequate profit related to the farmer's cost of live.

- We demand the abolition of all direct and indirect export subsidies, and ask the government to give subsidies to promote sustainable rice production, and make sure that the subsidies not to go to the MNCs and large producers.
- The governments must support farmers who produce rice for domestic needs.
- Domestic production should be regulated to prevent surpluses.
- Ban rice imports when countries can produce enough for their own consumption. Most of the time, rice imports are only surpluses dumped on our countries and they kill farmers.
- Promoting family-based rice farming to ensure the domestic rice need and self-sufficiency. We condemn the liberalization of rice trade pushed by the WTO and other the Free Trade Agreements. And we demand: WTO out from food and agriculture.

Rice is not only a commodity: it is life, culture and dignity!

Organizations (peasant organizations, civil society organizations and NGOs) endorsing this declaration:

- Assembly of the Poor (AOP) of Thailand
- PARAGOS of Philippine
- UNORKA of Philippine
- Viet Nam Farmers Union (VNFU) of Viet Nam
- Hasatil of Timor Leste
- ANPA of Nepal
- KRRS of India
- BKU of India
- MONLAR of Srilanka
- National Family Farmer Coalition (NFFC) of United States
- Korean Peasant League (KPL) of South Korea
- Korean Women Peasants Association (KWPA) of South Korea
- Indonesian Federation of Peasant Unions (FSPI) of Indonesia
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Movimiento campesino internacional
Mouvement paysan international
Gerakan petani internasional*

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Rice is Life, Culture, and Sovereignty

Jakarta, May 14, 2006

The Asia-Pacific People's Conference on Rice and Food Sovereignty organised by the Federation of Indonesian Peasant Union (FSPI) and La Via Campesina (International Peasants' Movement) has opened today in Jakarta at 4pm. The conference (14-18 May) is attended by 10 peasants' organizations coming from 9 countries in Asia-Pacific (members of La Via Campesina) as well as by Indonesian farmers coming from 12 different provinces, representing their peasant union (members of FSPI). There will also be representatives of 3 international NGOs and 3 national NGOs.

The Conference on the theme "Rice is Life, Culture, and Sovereignty" is organized parallel to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) regional conference held in Jakarta (15-19 May). This people conference intends to urge the FAO to adopt the concept of "food sovereignty". The FAO has been promoting "food security" from decades. During the World Food Summit in 1996, governments committed to cut the world's number of hungry people by half by 2015, from 840 million to 420 million people. However, the "food security" concept has not been effective in reducing hunger and poverty. In 2004, FAO noted that the number of hungry people has only decreased by 15 millions of people. It means hunger and poverty are still massively present in many parts of the world, especially in developing and poor countries. Ironically, most poor and hungry people are found in rural areas, among farmers' families, in the communities producing food.

As an international peasant movement, La Via Campesina promotes a concept more adapted to the realities of the peasant's families. Henry Saragih, the general coordinator of La Via Campesina, said at the opening of the conference that : "FAO "food security" concept only relates to food availability, access to food and food safety. It does not takes into considerations where the food comes from and how it is produced. But actually, there are many other aspects to take into account, including production aspects, in order to reduce hunger in the world. This is why we hare promoting food sovereignty that also encompasses issues such as land distribution, farmers control over water, seeds biodiversity and technology. "

In Asia-Pacific, rice is a central product in most people's lives. Furthermore, rice is the staple food of nearly half of the people all over the world. However, rice farmers which mostly came from poor and developing countries are facing a lot of hardship in their daily lives. Hence, it's very important to implement food sovereignty for rice production and trade to make sure that policies do not harm farmers. For example, farmers in Indonesia and in Korea have been recently hit their governments moves to liberalize their rice domestic markets.

It is important that governments from all over the world do not consider rice only as a market commodity, but that they also recognise it rice is part of the culture, the pride and the way of life maintained in the farming societies for several centuries long.

Along with the conference on rice, FSPI is also hosting and co-organising the People Assembly involving thousands of farmers, students, workers, youth, and other civil society representatives.

The head of FSPI Presidium, Wagimin, said at the press conference today : “This is time for the world to answer peasants’ and people’s aspirations. Governments have to make sure that peasants are not marginalized by political and business interests.” Hunger and poverty can not be solved on only guaranteeing food availability. The governments of the world should provide access to the means of production to the farmers. Wagimin said: “As part of food sovereignty, agrarian reform should be implemented now!”

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La Campesina is the international movement of peasants, small and medium sized producers, landless, rural women, indigenous people, rural youth and agricultural workers active in 56 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas.

La Vía Campesina

*International farmers movement
Movimiento campesino internacional
Mouvement paysan international
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La Via Campesina demands to the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and Pacific

Jakarta, 16 May, 2006

We are farmers from all parts of Asia and the Pacific, representing our organizations from Korea, Timor Leste, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and the United States.

We have gathered in Jakarta for the FAO regional conference for Asia and the Pacific (May 15-19, 2006). Over the years, we have experienced that the efforts made by the FAO to reduce hunger and poverty have not been successful. In our region, that represents two third of the world population, people are still suffering from hunger and poverty, especially those living in rural areas. The target set by the FAO World Food Summit, During the FAO World Food Summit in 1996, to cut the world's number of hungry people by half by 2015 will not be met. Instead of promoting small scale and family farming, FAO policies have been based on large scale and export oriented model.

Therefore, we call the States and FAO currently meeting in Jakarta to show their real political will to solve the crisis in the rural areas. We believe that by adopting the idea of Food Sovereignty, the FAO and the governments will really support farmers and reduce hunger in rural areas.

This includes the following elements:

1. Land, water, seeds and natural resources: the basis of our production

In order to produce food, farmers need to have access to the natural resources. The use of natural resources should primarily be for food production. A genuine agrarian reform must be a high priority on the public agenda. In the context of food sovereignty, agrarian reform benefits all society, providing healthy, accessible and culturally appropriate food, and social justice. Agrarian reform can put an end to the massive and forced rural exodus from the countryside. Agrarian reform should not only aim at the distribution of land. To be genuine and effective, it should also include the full environment: the air, the water, the seas, the genetic resources and the cultural dimensions pertaining to the land.

2. Towards production models sustainable for the people and the nature

People in our region should have the right to have access to food produced in the country where they live. In all our countries, it is possible to produce food with ecological methods and with less chemical external input. In our countries, we have a lot of local and indigenous knowledge about ecological agriculture. We don't need corporate controlled technologies, such as the biotechnologies, that are destroying the indigenous knowledge and practices of the farmers. We oppose corporate farming and we promote family based sustainable farming.

3. Developing post – production systems adapted to rural ways of live

The farmers also should be assisted to control the process after the harvest such as the milling, the processing, and the packaging of the products. These stages of production should be done my small units, under the control of the family farms.

4. Trade

Trade liberalization pushed by WTO and Free Trade Agreements, reduce the possibility to improve living condition and ending poverty. The current agriculture trade system affects farmers in developing countries as well as in rich countries. Farmers should have the right to be protected form cheap imports and dumping. Countries should be able to protect their food market and exports subsidies should be banned.

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Farmers' delegation meets FAO Director General Jacques Diouf

A delegation of farmers members of the international movement La Via Campesina and other civil society representatives met Jacques Diouf, Director General of the FAO, this morning during the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and Pacific at Shangri-La Hotel, Jakarta.

Farmers leaders from Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia were attending the meeting. Henry Saragih, General Coordinator of La Via Campesina said that in order to reduce poverty in rural areas, food and agriculture policies should protect peasants and small farmers. "FAO policies in the past have been based on large farms and on export oriented models", Henry said.

The farmers insisted that to increase farmers welfare and to reduce poverty in the rural areas, peasants should have access to agrarian resources –land and water. FAO should re-affirm its own commitments from the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural development (ICARRD) in Porto Alegre, Brasil, last march. " Agrarian Reform must be in the top priority to implement of public agenda," added Sarath Fernando, secretary general of MONLAR (Sri Lanka).

The representatives of La Via Campesina urged the FAO to adopt Food Sovereignty. This concept implies that people - producers and consumers - should have the right to chose their food policies and make decisions at all level of the chain: from the access to natural resources to the agricultural models, processing and trade.

In response to La Via Campesina delegation, Jacques Diouf stressed its commitment to push the agrarian reform and sustainable agriculture among FAO country members. But he added that not all countries have a commitment to implement Agrarian Reform. Only a few governments have a strong commitment on this matter, such as Venezuela. He said that the FAO will push agrarian reform and sustainable agriculture, but many countries do not want it. Diouf also invited the civil society to strengthen the role and the position of the FAO.

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Peasants Movements to FAO: “Act for people, not for MNCs!”

Jakarta, 18 May 2006

Farmers movements from all over Asia and the Pacific gathered in Jakarta are asking the FAO regional ministerial conference starting today to take concrete decisions to support small farmers in the region. Those movements coming from the Philippines, Thailand, South Korea, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, USA, Indonesia, Vietnam and Timor Leste are members of La Via Campesina, an international peasants organization that has members in 56 countries.

The farmers are asking the FAO to adopt the concept of Food Sovereignty: the rights of the people to choose their own agricultural policies, and to protect their food markets. As a result of trade liberalization, farmers from every country are fighting against each others in the name of competition. This system weakens the farmers and creates poverty.

Farmers are also urging the FAO to promote genuine agrarian reform. Access to land for small farmers is the basis of food production and poverty reduction in rural areas. FAO should make concrete steps to implement its commitments made at the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development held in Brazil last month.

If the FAO and the member governments are really committed to reduce hunger and poverty, they have to listen to the voices and the demands of people's organizations.

Farmers groups and civil society organizations concluded today the “Asia Pacific People Conference on Rice and Food Sovereignty” (May 14-18, Jakarta). They produced a declaration stressing the importance of rice for Asian people's livelihood and cultures. They reaffirm their will to implement food sovereignty at every level of the food chain: starting from the access to natural resources (mainly land, water and seeds) to the choice of the production model (ecological instead of chemical agriculture), and the kind of trade that we want. Free trade promoted by the WTO and the Free Trade Agreements has destroyed farmers' lives.

Farmers are urging the FAO to ACT for the well being for the majority of the citizens and not for the profit of the Multinational companies (MNCs).

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Peasants march for agrarian reform in Jakarta: “Don’t promise it, do it!”

On May 17, the streets of Jakarta filled with thousands of peasants. More than ten thousand men, women and children from the remote villages of Java flocked to the city centre with their banners, songs and the sound of the drums to one of the largest protests for agrarian reform since the end of the “New Regime” in 1998. They were joined by workers, students, youth groups, urban poor, and other civil society representatives.

The Indonesian Federation of Peasant Unions (FSPI) and La Via Campesina initiated this mass mobilization to protest against two major events in Jakarta critical to the direction of agrarian policy nationally and regionally.

Firstly, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was holding its 28th Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific in Jakarta. During the conference, farmers from all over Asia urged the FAO to comply with its goal to reduce hunger and poverty. On May 15, about 500 FSPI farmers protested in front of the conference venue to tell the FAO that food sovereignty, agrarian reform – and not free trade – were the key to reducing poverty in rural areas.

Yet streets were the only venue for farmers and peoples organizations to really express themselves. Civil society groups were denied the right to address the ministerial conference on May 18, after FAO Director General Jacques Diouf reneged on his commitment to allow them to do so. The FAO regional conference concluded without hearing them. In the conference’s final declaration, the ministers reaffirmed their faith in trade liberalization to alleviate poverty “in line with the spirit of the WTO Doha Development Agenda” – a position that La Via Campesina and other farmers’ movements have been opposing for years.

Land to the tiller!

Secondly, farmers in Indonesia are alarmed by the current move by the National Land Body (an institution directly under the presidency of the republic), to revise the Basic Agrarian Law (known as UUPA 1960). This law was developed in 1960 under the Soekarno government in order to transform the country’s unequal colonial social structure into a more egalitarian one. At that time, land ownership was heavily concentrated in a few hands and the majority of the farmers were landless or almost landless.

Adopted under the pressure of the farmers’ movement, the law provides an important framework for agrarian reform in the country. It states that the ultimate control over land, water, sky and resources under, beneath and over the soil rests with the state and can

only be utilized for people's prosperity. It also recognizes equality between women and men, the rights of indigenous people, as well as the principle that the land belongs to the tiller.

This law gave a valuable basis for land distribution and social justice, but its implementation was halted with the rise of the Soeharto dictatorship in 1967. Today, land distribution remains extremely unfair, creating massive malnutrition, poverty, unemployment and hunger in a very rich agricultural country. Currently, 70% of farmers control only 13% of the land, while 30% of farmers control fully 87% of farmland.

Even though the Basic Agrarian Law was never implemented, it has never been formally scraped and continues to be an important basis for land distribution. However, it is currently under threat with the Parliament due to debate a revised law in July or August 2006. The current revision is inspired by the World Bank's concept of "market led land reform"(1) : it focuses on the liberalization of the land market (through land titling) and not on land distribution.

National coalition against new imperialism

In the context of the FAO conference and the threat to the agrarian law, FSPI invited other social movements and NGOs in Indonesia to join forces for agrarian reform. They formed the People Coalition against Neo Imperialism to organize the mass mobilization on May 17(2). The forming of this coalition is a meaningful step in uniting people's movements because revisions of the UUPA 1960 had divided social movements in the recent past.

In 2001, the parliament adopted a decree on agrarian reform (3) opening the door to dismantling the Basic Agrarian Law. Some civil society organizations supported the decree, seeing it as a way to put agrarian reform back in the political agenda. But some other groups, such as FSPI, fiercely opposed it because they saw it as opening a "Pandora's Box" of neoliberal policies. The decree states that the UUPA 1960 has to be revised and restricted to the issue of land management, while the other natural resources were henceforth to be regulated by new laws. Since the adoption of the decree, a series of new laws, policies, concessions and regulations were adopted or amended to promote a neo-liberal approach (e.g. the Basic Forestry Law, the Law of Foreign Investment, the Law of Mining and the Law of Water Resources). They are designed to attract foreign investment and to boost trade and exports of natural resources, while dismantling people's rights

Hence, the May 17 mobilization was politically significant for Indonesian social movements and NGOs because it is the first time since the controversy about the parliamentary decree that they campaign together against the revision of UUPA 1960. There is a agreement now across the various groups that any revision of the law would be dangerous as it could alter its philosophy.

On the protest day, the coalition issued a joint political platform asking for:

1. The implementation of genuine agrarian reform
2. The implementation of UUPA 1960 and the rejection of the revision of the law
3. To stop all kinds of criminalization and violation to people's struggle
4. A solution to all agrarian conflicts based on the principle of social justice
5. To stop liberalization of agricultural trade and to reject all commitments under the WTO
6. To reject rice imports and to implement food sovereignty

These were the demands that the peaceful and colorful march carried in the streets of Jakarta during the whole day. Protestors left from the Istiqlal mosque early morning and walked to the Presidential Palace. There, the president sent an official delegation (the

minister of Agriculture, the chief of the National Land Body, the cabinet secretary and its spokesperson) to meet the farmers leaders. The official delegation told the protestors that they had “the same heart and mind” as the farmers, but that “even if power was in their hands, they could not use it alone”. The peasants replied that if no concrete step was taken towards genuine agrarian reform, they would organize more mass actions and land occupations in the future.

In front of the presidential palace, various people’s leaders addressed the crowd. Among them, a representative of the Korean Peasant League gave a brief message of solidarity to the Indonesian farmers. He was part of an international delegation of farmers organization members of La Via Campesina who had come from 10 Asian countries to attend the FAO conference and the Peoples’ Conference on Rice and Food Sovereignty (14-18 May, Jakarta)(4).

The protesters then marched to a central circle (Bundaran Hotel Indonesia) to spread out information about agrarian reform among the public passing by. During the whole protest day, the streets of Jakarta resounded with many songs of hope and protest. Franky Sahilantua, a famous Indonesian pop singer renowned for his songs about the lives of farmers, migrants and workers, sang with the protestors. He has been singing for the Indonesian farmers movements since he accompanied FSPI to the anti-WTO protest in Hong Kong in December 2005.

The march then went to the Parliament building where representatives from various parties (5) addressed the farmers. From the top of a truck, they promised them to implement land reform, but farmers had heard it before. They shouted at the parliamentarians: “Don’t promise it, do it!” They also shouted: “Come to our village, and see for yourself how we live!”

The largest group in the protest was definitely Serikat Petani Pasunda (SPP), a farmers union from West Java and member of FSPI. 7500 SPP peasants had come to Jakarta in 120 buses, (6). After an exhausting day of protest under the sun, they spent the night in the city and left at dawn to return to their villages. That same day, SPP protestors from Ciamis (West Java) occupied 300 hectares of land belonging to a teak plantation. A sign that agrarian reform in Indonesia can not wait anymore.

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Jakarta, 23 May 2006

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- (1) The World Bank has implemented the Land Administration Project I and II from 1995 to 2004. It is now implementing the Land Management Policy and Development project (2004-2009) with a budget of 65,5 million US dollars.
 - (2) The members of the coalitions are: Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia (FSPI), Aliansi Petani Indonesia, Kosorsium Pembaruan Agraria, Front Perjuangan Pemuda Indonesia, Komite Persiapan - Serikat Mahasiswa Indonesia, Front Aksi Mahasiswa - Universitas Indonesia, Sekretariat Bina Desa, Perhimpunan Bantuan Hukum dan HAM Indonesia, Aliansi Buruh Menggugat, Pergerakan, Persatuan Perjuangan Rakyat Tani Subang.
 - (3) Parliamentary decree on agrarian reform and management of natural resources (TAP MPR IX 2001)
 - (4) More information about the Asia Pacific People Conference on Rice and Food Sovereignty (Final Declaration and country papers) : www.viacampesina.org
 - (5) PDIP, PKB, PKS, DPD
 - (6) The second largest group was the trade union Aliansi Buruh Menggugat that mobilised more than one thousand people. Then comes PPRTS (farmers - about 500 people), API (farmers- about 500 people), AMPTB (students, about 400 people), AGRA - Lampung (farmers - about 300 people), other FSPI members (300 people including leaders from the 12 provincial unions members of FSPI), and various other national and international organizations.



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