

Terra Preta*: Forum on the Food Crisis, Climate Change, Agrofuels and Food Sovereignty

**SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!
WE ARE THE DIFFERENCE!**

1 - 4 June, 2008

Città dell'Altra Economia (*ex mattatoio*), Rome

Now is the Time for Food Sovereignty

**Platform for Collective Action
Forum Terra Preta, Rome June 4, 2008**

The serious and urgent food and climate crises are being used by political and economic elites as opportunities to entrench corporate control of world agriculture and the ecological commons. At a time when chronic hunger, dispossession of food providers and workers, commodity and land speculation, and global warming are on the rise, governments, multilateral agencies and financial institutions are offering proposals that will only deepen these crises through more dangerous versions of policies that originally triggered the current situation. Actions by some governments and top UN leadership at the High Level Conference on World Food Security, Climate Change and Bio-Energy (the FAO Summit) constitute an assault on small scale food providers¹ (among whom women are in the forefront) and the natural commons.

At a similar food and energy crisis in 1974, political and economic elites fragmented existing international institutions at the time, thereby disempowering peoples and governments to respond with knowledge and practices appropriate to local contexts. World Bank-IMF designed structural adjustment programs laid the conditions for recurring food crises through liberalization policies that undermined local and national capacity for food self-sufficiency and appropriate policies.

Since then, food crises have been exploited by agribusiness companies, local and global elites to concentrate control over farming, fisheries, land and territory, water, forests, seeds, breeds, transportation, distribution and energy sources. The rapidly emerging and cumulative climate crisis is being exploited by the same elites through market transactions such as carbon trading and emission offsets, and profitable techno-fixes such as agro-fuels and patented technologies, including synthetic biology. Some multilateral agencies are creating policy conditions to enable corporate conglomerations across energy, agribusiness, bio-technology and automotive industries.

* Terra Preta ("black soil" in Portuguese) is the incredibly fertile soil created by Indigenous Peoples in central Amazonia. Even today it continues to regenerate itself though no research has been able to uncover how this happens.

¹ These include women and men, peasant and family farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, forest-dwellers, Indigenous Peoples, agricultural workers and migrants, and other food providers on every continent.

International NGO/CSO Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty

Today, the corporate sector is far more powerful than 30 years go and controls a large part of global food and energy systems. As it stands now, the *UN High Level Task Force on the Food Crisis* will facilitate further convergence of the most powerful actors from private finance, technology and business sectors to extract profits in the name of crisis management. Wisdom of proven sustainable small-scale food provision, and the findings of the IAASTD² that call for a significant move away from research on chemically-dependent agriculture towards more agroecological, non-proprietary practices, are being deliberately ignored.

We, more than 100 organizations - coming from 5 continents - participating at Forum Terra Preta³, held in parallel with the FAO Summit, propose a different, sustainable way of addressing persisting ecological and food crises and climate change and forge solutions that strengthen our capacities, valorize women's centrality in food production, protect our ecologies, and reclaim our communities, societies and economies. We reject the corporate industrial and energy-intensive model of production and consumption that is the basis of continuing crises. We affirm that the paradigm of Peoples' Food Sovereignty forms the guiding framework for our future actions and the survival of humanity. Our analyses and positions are already articulated in numerous declarations and calls for action.⁴

We commit to the following actions:

1. Never compromise the Right to Food.
2. Establish small-holder agro-ecological farming, fishing and pastoralism as the foundation of food provision, soil carbon regeneration, restoration of natural and farm habitats for carbon sequestration and water security and management of the climate change emergency, in particular supporting certified and uncertified organic farming.
3. Resist corporate control of food and agriculture by:
 - Combating financial speculation and futures trading on food;
 - Ensuring that the UN Special Rapporteur and other relevant international mechanisms take action against all violations of the right to food;
 - Continue to build our capacities to fight Free Trade Agreements;
 - Developing solidarity campaigns amongst social movements and other allies;
4. Capture adaptation and mitigation funds for low-carbon, sustainable small holder food production, and ensure that these funds do not contribute to violation of the right to food. In particular insist on government and multilateral financing for small-scale food providers.
5. Include agriculture that supports food sovereignty in the framework of future climate change negotiations, particularly the post-2012 Kyoto commitments being negotiated in 2008 in Poland and 2009 in Denmark. At the same time we will build our alliances at the January 2009 World Social Forum.
6. Promote and push for comprehensive agrarian reform as a prerequisite to protecting our lands, territories, water, biodiversity and knowledge. Especially:
 - Affirm agricultural workers' rights under ILO Convention 118;

² International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development

³ Terra Preta is organized by and represents social movements, Indigenous Peoples' organizations and civil society organizations, supported by the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty.

⁴ See for example, *Declaration of Nyeleni 27 February 2007* and *No More Failures-as-Usual!*; www.foodsovereignty.org

International NGO/CSO Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty

- Oppose all institutions, policies, corporations and the underlying paradigm that threaten the rights of access to land and water among small scale food providers, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, youth and the rights of workers;
 - Resist the commodification, privatization and speculation of the natural commons;
 - Promote and protect the rights of women recognizing their critical contribution as food providers and strongly support the right to access land for youth.
7. Organize against the production and export of agro-fuels as promoted and controlled by the corporate sector and facilitated by some governments and multilateral agencies, including at proposed international conferences for example in Brazil (November 2008), as well as in future climate change conferences, in Poland and Denmark.
 8. Engage with national governments and multilateral agencies to support policies that strengthen the right to food sovereignty and the right to adequate food, including:
 - Educational work with local populations, schools and policy makers;
 - Engagement at the international level with supportive institutions and instruments (for example, the voluntary guidelines on the Right to Food and the office of the High Commission on Human Rights, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the IAASTD, etc.)
 9. We will chart a new model of international food and agriculture governance whose central purpose is to promote and advance food sovereignty. To this end, we will provide collective input to the FAO conference on the Independent External Evaluation at the end of this year, and monitor the outcomes and recommendations.

Our immediate tasks are to:

- **Demand that governments pursue justice for the victims of the food emergency**, by bringing to account, through criminal proceedings, corporations and institutions (including governments) whose actions, profiteering from agricultural inputs and products, have denied communities their right to food.
- **Set up a Commission on Food Sovereignty, under the auspices of the United Nations**, constituted by representatives of governments and organisations of fisherfolk, peasant and small-scale farmers, pastoralists and Indigenous Peoples, to identify, document and advance collective strategies for solving the food and climate crises.
- We will **expand our abilities to build collective** knowledge, analysis, and our capacity to make change and organize ourselves to monitor the outcomes of this FAO Summit.

Small-scale food producers are feeding the planet and **we demand respect and support to continue**. Only Food Sovereignty can offer long-term, sustainable, equitable and just solutions to the urgent food and climate crises.

THERE WILL BE NO SOLUTION TO THE CLIMATE AND FOOD CRISES WITHOUT US!