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News from the IYFF 2014 National Committees

30 October 2014

Although the countdown for the end of IYFF 2014 is coming ever closer, the National Committees are still in full swing, continuing their endeavours and reaping an abundant harvest of successes, some of which we describe below.

First of all, on **World Food Day** on 16 October, family farming was given pride of place in very many countries. Here are just a few examples: in **Pakistan** several marches and conferences were organised; in **Nepal** another march took place in the presence of the Minister for Agriculture; in **Indonesia** a fair was held at which signatures were collected and family farming produce was available for tasting. In **Bolivia**, the Minister for Rural Development and Land drafted the World Food Day document referring to the implementation of fundamental public policies to provide stronger support for farming families in the form of land management, credit, and the transfer of resources for productive initiatives, etc. In the north of **Côte d'Ivoire**, the political and administrative authorities, the Minister for Agriculture and civil society organisations celebrated IYFF in the presence of nearly 3000 people on World Food Day. In **Uganda**, the NC celebrated this special day by launching its awareness-raising campaign. In **Colombia**, a public hearing was held at the Congress of the Republic bringing together 20 delegates—men and women—from the 10 departmental and regional IYFF committees and over 130 participants from rural organisations and NGOs from all over the country. The NC presented its proposals for a differentiated public policy for family farming based on 7 strategy lines established at the meeting in Cartagena. The Minister will shortly define the future of the resolution and the FF programme.

In **Italy**, the NC is running a campaign to have a law introduced to recognise the different types of farmers. Two political parties are currently working on a bill, collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture to agree on the technical terms to be inserted.



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At the same time, several regional initiatives have been extended to the whole of Italy, thus proving that interest in family farming is on the increase! One example is the Italian government conference organised on World Food Day in conjunction with the NC, and another is the *Salone del Gusto and Terra Madre* (Taste and Mother Earth Fair) held in Turin, which was devoted entirely to family farming.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo** the three main rural organisations, COPACO (Congo Rural Confederation (*Confédération paysanne du Congo*)), CONAPAC (Congo National Confederation of Agricultural Producers (*Confédération nationale des producteurs agricoles du Congo*)) and UNAGRICO (Congo National Union of Fishermen, Arable Farmers and Stock Farmers) (*Union Nationale des Agriculteurs, Pêcheurs et Éleveurs du Congo*)), all of which are represented on the NC, organised and mobilised to challenge the government plan to set up agro-industrial parks in the country. The first park of nearly 80 000 ha has already been set up in Bukanga Lonzo, about 260 km from Kinshasa. The three organisations drafted a joint declaration which they submitted to the authorities in order to alert them to the dangers of a scheme of that kind if precautions are not taken both upstream and downstream. As it is, nearly 11 000 farming families have been expelled from their land with no compensation whatsoever. Moreover, the Congolese State has provided 83 million dollars for the project, at the same time as it is planning to reduce the next budget for agriculture. The three organisations lobbied members of parliament and the Minister for Agriculture intensively against that budget reduction in a country where the proportion of the population suffering food insecurity is among the highest in the world and where investment in the agricultural sector has barely reached 3% in recent years ...

These crucial issues will be raised again at the National Forum for Promoting Family Farming to be organised by the Congolese NC at the end of year; the Congolese authorities will be invited.

The **Slovakian NC's** political interaction with the Ministry of Agriculture has produced a whole range of very interesting results. The Slovakian Land Fund is to allocate 10% of the country's uncultivated land to family farmers, particularly the young. In addition, even



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though Slovakia still does not have a rural development programme approved by the European Commission, the NC managed to get the government to agree that if the funds scheduled for family farming proved insufficient, additional public funds would be allocated. The NC was able to rely on the goodwill of the Slovakian authorities who are open to dialogue and often attentive to the cause of family farmers.

Let's round off this newsletter on an international note: at the 24th session of the **FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG)**, held from 29 September to 2 October, it was decided that the FAO would continue its work on family farming and would integrate it into its strategic framework. The COAG recognised the importance of family farming and declared itself fully satisfied with the conduct of IYFF 2014.

All of that leads us to a vital conclusion: the conduct of IYFF and the outcome are the fruit of the lobbying engaged in by all the national committees. And their work testifies to the great capacity of civil society to organise in order to defend and advance the rights of the men and women who feed mankind with full respect for the land and the planet.

So three cheers for the rural organisations, the NGOs, the agricultural research centres and the universities, etc., who worked more or less closely with their governments to hack away at world socio-economic injustices, such as land-grabbing, as a stage on the road towards implementing the people's right to produce a substantial proportion of their own food!



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