

The Doha Round: A disaster for Farmers around the world

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PRESS RELEASEFarmer leaders representing the international peasant movement La Via Campesina are in Geneva to express their rejection of the WTO Doha Round. The agreement currently negotiated in “green rooms” by a restricted number of trade ministers will lead to the destruction of peasant agriculture in the developing world as well as in developed countries. Even though the current talks have been dubbed “the development round”, recent projections show that most developing countries will come out losers. Instead of promoting development, the Doha Round will increase hunger, poverty and inequalities around the world.

La Via Campesina is a peasant movement gathering hundreds millions of peasants from 56 countries in Asia, Africa, America and Europe. Small and medium-sized producers have been hit by trade liberalisation leading to mass suicides in India, disappearance of small exploitations in Europe and the US, migration to the urban centres in most developing countries, hunger in the rural areas, etc.

Therefore, La Via Campesina urges all governments to stand by their people and to reject further liberalization of agricultural markets. Developing countries should resist the pressure from the major powers, particularly the U.S. and the E.U. Farmers insist that Food and agriculture can not be sacrificed in the name of trade liberalization and that no deal is better than a bad deal.

La Via Campesina is calling governments around the world to promote food sovereignty instead of neoliberal policies. Food sovereignty is the right for people and countries to define their own agricultural and food policies according to the needs and the priorities of local communities. It encompasses mechanisms to protect domestic food production against low price imports, strict control of food imports to stabilize internal market prices, and supply management systems to avoid dumping on the world markets.

La Via Campesina leaders currently available for interview:
In Geneva

- Mr Sungho Cho: Vice-president of the Korean Peasant League (KPL) – Rice and melon farmer in South Korea. KPL was the strongest peasant group opposing the WTO during the last ministerial meeting in Hong Kong last December.
- Anne Osland: President of Norwegian Farmers and Smallholders Union (NBS)
- Valentina Hemmeler : Representative of Uniterre, Swiss peasant movement.

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