The 12th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development

Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda
Implementation of the Mandate and Programme of Work –
Focused Thematic Discussions and Interactive Dialogues
Palais des Nations, Room XVI, Geneva

The role of civil society organizations in realizing the right to development at the grassroots level

Wednesday 29 October 2025, 10:00 to 12:00

Transcript of statement by Ms. Morgan Ody,
La Via Campesina

Please check against delivery

Hello, my name is Morgan Ody. I am a small-scale farmer, and I am the general coordinator for La Via Campesina, the global peasant movement which gather small scale farmers organization, peasants organization, and agricultural workers organization, from over 80 countries all over the world.

So now talking of the link between peasants' rights and the right to development, as small scale food producers, I think that our priority is that we struggle for the right to have rights. And so, for all of us, learning about our rights, our human rights, is an empowering process that leads to mobilization and struggle in order to ensure that these rights are not only on the paper, but that they are implemented by the States and Government through appropriate public policies. And it's very important that public policies is how States comply with their obligations to implement the rights of the people. That's how we see this.

And I will give here some examples. For example, as a peasants, but also as indigenous people, as rural women, as agricultural workers, we have the right to lend an territory. So, States have the obligation to implement agrarian reform and other policies in order to redistribute the land to the people and in order to ensure the control by the people over the land and territories. Another example is that we have the right to a decent income, to a decent livelihood, and for these states have the obligation to implement public policies that ensure fair prices for farmers and fair wages for actual workers through minimum support prices, for example, but also through public stocks that ensure that as small scale farmers, we are given fair prices for our production.

We also have the right as people to decide about our food systems. This is the right to food sovereignty that we believe is the key right among the right to development. And as we know, the World Trade Organization, in particular, the agreement on agriculture, but also bilateral free trade agreements, they are attacking the right to food sovereignty. They are undermining this right. This is the reason why we are demanding, as La Via Campesina, a new trade framework based on food sovereignty and based on international cooperation and solidarity.

We also have the right to a safe and healthy environment. So for this, States should promote public policies in order to strengthen agroecology all over the world. But also States have an obligation to prohibit agri-toxics like dangerous pesticides that are affecting the health in particular of small-scale food producers and people living in rural areas. So that's how we see the right to development as being really a way to ensure that people in rural area, in particular peasants and in particular rural youth, rural women, can be empowered, so that really all rights are being implemented. And of course, in the current context, all these rights are being undermined by a lot of global policies. For example, World Trade Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, that are preventing the Governments, in particular the Governments of the Global South, from implementing these policies.

So that's the reason why we see the right to development as a powerful tool to stop this very dangerous policies by WTO, IMF, World Bank through which countries of the Global North, Governments of the Global North try to control the system to the benefit of transnational corporation against the people, against the people of the Global South, but also against the people of the Global North. So that's the reason why we see the right to development as a tool for the people from all over the world, to promote public policies by States in order to implement the rights of the people.

I thank you very much.

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