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FAO's Comments on the Advanced Draft Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, by Thursday 5 February 2015

PREAMBLE

In the preamble, paragraph 2, FAO would like to suggest a change in the language to better and more accurately reflect the positive links between peasants and biodiversity. Improving biodiversity is a broader statement which, in many cases, would not apply to peasants. Sustainable use is, on the contrary, a positive element of the relation of these communities with their environment that needs to be highlighted and better reflected in the declaration. (NB The "improvement" referred to in Article 22: Right to seeds, or Article 23 which refers to "agricultural biodiversity" are correct and should not be confused with this, which only refers to "biodiversity".)

Suggested new text in red:

- *Recognizing* the past, present and future contributions of peasants and other people working in rural areas in all regions of the world to conserving and ~~improving~~ sustainably using biodiversity and to ensuring food sovereignty, which are fundamental to attaining internationally agreed development goals,

In relation to the ability of peasants to "make their voices heard", it should be noted that this does not only apply to small scale fishers. FAO would suggest to adopt a more comprehensive language that involve all small-scale users of natural resources.

- *Stressing* that several factors make it difficult for small-scale farmers, pastoralists, foresters, fishers [and fish workers] to make their voices heard, defend their human rights and tenure rights, and secure the sustainable use of the fishery natural resources on which they depend,

Additions to the preamble: Rural Youth work

The declaration is fully aligned with FAO's efforts to promote decent work in rural areas, particularly in the agricultural sector. FAO actively promotes decent rural employment for peasants and other people working in rural areas: decent work has been identified as one of the main normative principles that should drive any FAO project formulation/design/implementation, within the human

rights based approach of the new FAO guide to project cycle, and also represents an organizational objective under FAO's strategic objective on Reduce rural poverty.

The advanced draft declaration is aligned with the core elements of definition of FAO applied definition of decent rural employment, which considers:

- (i) work that respects the core labour standards as defined in ILO Conventions, and therefore that is not child labour; not forced labour; and that guarantees freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining and promotes organization of rural workers; and Does not entail discrimination at work on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, social origin or other.
- (ii) Provides an adequate living income;
- (iii) Entails an adequate degree of employment security and stability;
- (iv) Adopts minimum occupational safety and health (OSH) measures, which are adapted to address sector-specific risks and hazards;
- (v) Avoids excessive working hours and allows sufficient time for rest;
- (vi) Promotes access to adapted technical and vocational training.

These elements are reflected in art. 11 ("Freedom of Association"), art. 15 ("Right to Work") , art. 16 ("Right to Safety and Health at Work"), art. 18 (" Right to Decent Income and Livelihood) and art. 28 ("Right to Education and Training). Child labour is clearly mentioned in art. 28 , para. 3 ("Right to Education").

However, the issue of youth in agriculture and rural areas is a growing concern. It is not properly covered in the draft text. To fill this gap, FAO would like to propose **two new paragraphs to be included in the preamble**, right after the one starting with "*Convinced of the need for increased...*"

- *Deeply concerned* about farmers ageing around the world and youth increasingly turning their backs on agriculture due to lack of incentives and drudgery of rural life,
- *Recognizing* the need to improve the economic diversification of rural areas and the creation of non-farm opportunities, especially for the rural youth

FAO would also strongly suggest the inclusion of a dedicated article on rural youth rights and the rejuvenation of the agricultural sector. See section below " Additional article".

ARTICLE 5

In article 5, paragraph 1, FAO would like to suggest:

- [...] They have the authority to manage and control their natural resources and to enjoy the benefits of their ~~development and~~ conservation and sustainable use.

PART II: ADDITIONAL ARTICLE

FAO suggests the inclusion of a dedicated article on rural youth work. This new article could read as follows:

Part II – Substantive Rights

ARTICLE 7 – RURAL YOUTH'S RIGHTS AND THE REJUVENATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

1. States shall take into account the particular problems faced by peasant youth and other youth working in rural areas and the significant roles which they play and will increasingly play in the future towards the sustainability of food systems and the economic survival of their families, communities, regions, and nation states, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Declaration to the youth.

2. In particular, States shall ensure to the youth the right:

a. to participate in the decision-making processes around, and the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;

b. to access decent and productive employment and income-generating activities, both farm and non-farm; particular attention should be given to the right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, especially for youth in the ages 15-17 to avoid them falling in hazardous child labour.

c. to obtain relevant types of training and education and mentorship programmes, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, in order to increase their life skills, technical proficiency and entrepreneurial capacities;

d. to organise self-help groups and co-operatives and join existing cooperatives and organizations in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through wage employment or self-employment;

e. to access innovation and new technologies, combined with traditional knowledge, to attract and enable youth to be drivers of improvement in agriculture and food systems.

f. to participate in all community activities;

g. to have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in access to and resettlement schemes regarding land and other natural and productive resources.