

The Struggle for Land

A Summary of Discussions and Strategies at the Asia Land Meeting

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at the Asia Land Meeting*

The Asia Land Meeting was an initiative born from interest expressed during two meetings: one, an international meeting in Washington DC in April 2002, of a group of academics and activists working with or representing people's organisations from throughout Asia, each involved in the struggle for land rights in their respective countries. This informal group felt that there was a wealth of experience in the region which was difficult to tap due to limited contacts. A meeting was therefore proposed to establish a closer network of organisations working in this field, build up solidarity and to explore the development of a common strategy and joint activities for the future. And two, the Asia Social Movements Meeting that was held in Bangkok, Thailand in August 2002. This meeting brought together numerous movements and local organisations from across Asia, many of them engaged in land and agrarian reform struggles. Here too, thoughts were expressed about the importance and timeliness of organising a regional meeting specifically on land and agrarian reform, in order to create an opportunity for establishing closer contacts among like-minded groups, to build solidarity across movements and struggles, and to strengthen the power of peoples' movements demanding progressive land and agrarian reform.

Substantive support and partial funding for the meeting was received from the Land Research Action Network, an international network of activist researchers committed to producing and disseminating research for

movements involved in land struggles. The Heinrich Boll Foundation in Chiang Mai, and Action Aid, Bangkok also provided financial support for the meeting.

Participants from 31 organisations and 10 countries (Bangladesh, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, India, The Lao PDR, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam) came together for the meeting. Valuable contributions were also provided by activists from elsewhere including Brazil, Colombia, South Africa and the United States (see **agenda** and **international participants list**). A major strength of the workshop was the interest and participation of about 100 people from all four regions of Thailand, including landless and indebted peasants, urban poor and activists.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to bring together the different movements and people's organisations, with a view to strengthening the links between them. The idea was not to create a new network, but to give the groups a chance both to share and discuss their own experiences and strategies as well as to learn from others.

This report presents a summary of the main points arising in the presentations. It tries to be as representative as possible of the breadth of issues raised and the various specific cases represented. Where possible, the sources of information are indicated in parentheses. As the meeting was held in Thailand, first names are used rather than surnames.

* Report prepared by Rebeca Leonard and Mary Ann Manahan

Deepening Agrarian Crises

Increasing Inequality

Land reform has been languishing on the political agenda of many governments for decades, without any demonstrable political will to challenge the existing feudal and power structures within their nations. Participants at the meeting spoke of the persistent and massive inequality of landholding between rich and poor throughout the countries of the South. In most of these countries trends towards land concentration in the hands of national and international elites are still increasing.

In Thailand, land has become increasingly concentrated in the hands of the wealthy minority, while 1.5 million farming families have little or no land. Around 3,200,000 hectares is lying in waste, creating an artificial scarcity of farming land. Yet there are 3,750 slum communities lacking secure access to housing and 200,000 people threatened with eviction. While the government says slum communities must be relocated, no action is taken against the large landowners who leave their land wasted (Sayamol). Politicians, such as Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, and other influential businessmen affiliated with politicians and businesses overseas, own the majority of the assets in Thailand. Conflicts are increasing between local people and large private companies as in the palm oil plantations in Southern Thailand.

A similar case was presented by the Filipino participants, where the political elites of the Philippines hold private control over much

of the nation's land, prolonging what was described as a 'semi-feudal economy' (Imelda). Land appropriation has intensified under the present government. There is strong popular demand for land reform in favour of the three-quarters of the national labour force that works in agriculture. However, the government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme (CARP) has never been implemented at more than a snail's pace. Particular regions have experienced severe problems (e.g., majority of the people of Mindanao no longer own their own land [Bapa Joe]) leading some organisations to see little option other than resorting to an armed struggle for agrarian reform.

High levels of landlessness were reported in almost every country in the region. Outside Asia, speakers from South Africa, Brazil, Colombia and the US all referred to the highly unequal land distribution in their respective countries. In fact, of all the countries with representatives at the meeting, Vietnam was the only country where inequality of landholding was not presented as an immediate problem. However, the Vietnam Farmers Union expected that in the current process of industrialisation, urbanisation and globalisation, less and less land would be used by small-scale farmers.

Increasing landlessness: causes unaddressed

Many speakers highlighted the impact of institutional inequality upon unequal land tenure relations. In India, more than 70% of

the population (around 750 million people) depend on agriculture and yet, land distribution is highly unequal, due in part to a caste system which “weaves inequality among people” (Sanjay).

Gender discrimination intensifies inequality at a national level, with women’s rights to land particularly insecure in the North of India, Bangladesh and Nepal. The predicament and struggle of women farmers in these countries stem from an institutional discrimination against the rights of women, despite their important roles in production and agriculture (Jaya). In Nepal, two thirds of the agricultural labour sector is comprised of women, often working 14-18 hours a day. However, women cannot inherit land. As landownership is only permissible within marriage, their rights are subordinated to the land rights of men to the extent that when a couple separates, women must give up their rights to land to their former husbands. Women’s work rarely creates any direct monetary value. The main reason why their work is not recognised is that they are not included or encouraged to participate in governance and decision-making processes (Jaya). In fact, few women are elected to Parliament and only 3,600 women participated in the last local elections, making it very difficult to forge any change in the status quo.

Increasing levels of rural debt is a major cause of land loss amongst the marginalised and poor sectors of society. In Cambodia, illness and hunger of rural populations is leading to distress sales of land, while wealthy landowners are buying up land at deflated prices. Indebtedness of the poor is creating a downward spiral of increasing hunger and diminishing means to repay initial loans. In 2003, while 20% of the population were landless (a rapid increase from only 3%, 20 years earlier), the richest 20% of the nation holds as much as 60% of the available land.

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Government policies exacerbate the debt problem. The majority of Thai farmers are indebted with the total amount of agricultural lending amounting to US\$10 billion. Even the most high-yield farms are in debt, locked into high input agriculture systems with only a few major companies controlling the agribusiness sector. Participants identified the role of influential agribusiness companies that profit from the availability of low wage labour, in holding land reform back from the political agenda.

Development-induced displacement and the threat of mega-infrastructure projects

A common direct cause of displacement of people from rural areas (and of landlessness) is the imposition of large-scale development projects, carried out in the name of national development with little serious consideration of the impacts on local communities. The development of mega infrastructure projects typically excludes local people. Decisions are taken to flood farmlands and “relocate” villages, sometimes without the prior knowledge of the affected people, and rarely with their consent.

A major culprit is dam construction whose estimated budgets have never reflected the full costs to the environment and local peoples’ livelihoods. In Southern India, 30 million people have been displaced mainly as a result of dam constructions (Trinadha). One Filipino participant referred to “Aggression” development projects, such as the San Roque dam and large commercial mining projects, which have uprooted hundreds of thousands of people of the Cordillera (Eduardo). Similar problems were raised in relation to Mindanao, India, Cambodia, and Colombia where heavy extractive industries have displaced millions of people. Expulsion of rural people from project sites, and increasing conflicts over land lead to outward migration and the growth of “temporary”

settlements in urban areas. Eviction from such “illegal settlements” is pursued in many countries either without providing viable alternatives to those who are displaced, or without addressing the causes of such settlements.

In Colombia, the impact of infrastructure projects is violently felt at the local level (Hector). For the construction of infrastructure projects such as highways, mines, canals and dams, private businesses involved have been known to hire paramilitaries, sometimes killing 100-200 people to convince a further 100,000 to move off the land.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB) promote development-induced displacement by investing in infrastructure to set up “economic corridors” such as that linking the Northeast of India to the Mekong region, providing opportunities for private investments to exploit the natural resources of the area. The new rural development strategy of the WB entitled “Reaching the Rural Poor” concludes that agricultural growth and productivity are a central focus of poverty reduction, through liberalisation of the market, structural adjustment, decentralisation and land policies. The Bank’s policy focuses on productivity and growth rather than sustainability. As such, land is understood as a key asset to mining, industrialisation and large scale agri-business (Sofia).

Overlooking common property resources, privatising common pool resources

At a local level, both physical infrastructure development projects and other rural policies may reduce access to common pool resources of those who remain in affected rural areas. In countries throughout the region, the promotion of tourism, for example, excludes local people, often ethnic minorities, from common resources, such as forests and rivers

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In countries such as Thailand and Bangladesh where land is bought for private development, more often than not, it is converted into resorts and factory complexes, thus diverting assets and people away from smallholder farming.

previously used for fishing. Even forest conservation, rather than involving local communities in promoting biodiversity and sustainable use, is becoming a euphemism for maintaining forest cover. With WB support, forestry efforts are being channelled towards the promotion of commercial rubber plantations for economic gains.

Traditional systems of communal land management are put in jeopardy, as concepts of private appropriation and management of resources are prioritised by government as well. The crisis is global, and from the North to the South, people are being driven off the land through privatisation of landholdings. In all countries, poor people are being excluded (Peter). Even in countries where community titles are recognised, such as Cambodia and the Philippines, wealthy investors are able to acquire private rights to common-hold land in a variety of ways. Much of the ancestral domains of indigenous peoples in the Cordillera region of the Philippines are under the control of transnational corporations (Eduardo).

Heavy pressure is also put on governments throughout the South to privatise common pool resources at a national level such as water and power, by international finance institutions such as the WB and ADB. Experience shows that such privatisation entrenches centralised decision making and excludes the interests of rural communities and increases their costs for those services. In South Africa, massive economic restructuring has entailed the privatisation of basic services such as water and power, affecting 1 million jobs, and leading to a situation where contrary to stated objectives, 1.5 million people have lost access to water since 1994 (Samantha).

Land speculation

In Bangladesh, land is increasingly being accumulated by influential businessmen for no productive use, but rather for speculation on future price rises (Omoli). Thailand

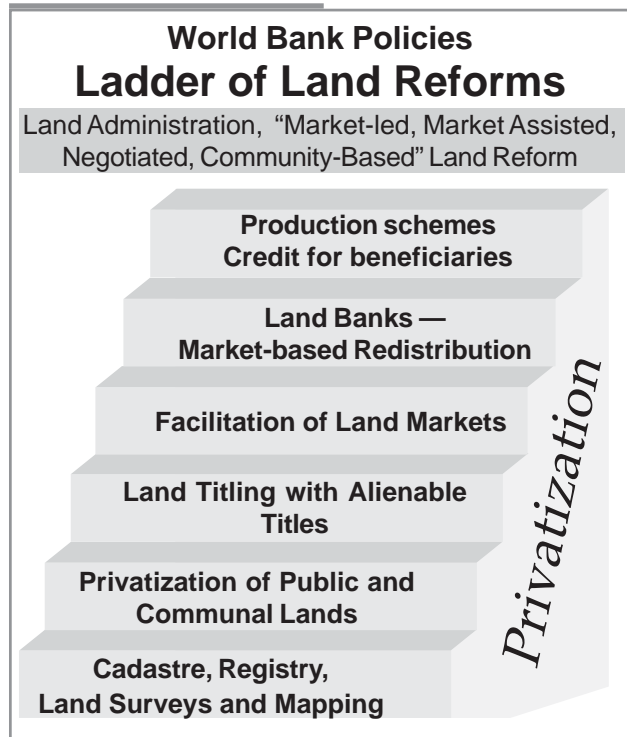
provides clear examples of the effects of land speculation on the national economy and local communities (Somchai). The law to expedite land titling led to an escalation of corruption in the process and land grabbing. The WB invested heavily in this programme but it failed miserably to address and solve the problems of national land mismanagement. In countries such as Thailand and Bangladesh where land is bought for private development, more often than not, it is converted into resorts and factory complexes, thus diverting assets and people away from smallholder farming. In Colombia, the larger the farm is, the smaller the proportion of land that is sown. Studies show that in holdings of less than 20 ha, an average of 42% is cultivated, while in holdings of over 500 ha only 1.3% is in cultivation. Land suitable for agriculture is extremely under-utilised. This under-utilisation becomes unreasonable given that small landholders produce 57% of the total national agricultural output (Hector).

Economic and political elites kill land reform

Modern democratic institutions have been unable (and in most cases unwilling) to address and resolve inequitable and diminishing access to land and common pool resources, and the historical roots of land concentration in the hands of urban and rural elites. Governments have failed the majority of their people by putting the interests of their elites, multilateral banks and economic global forces over and above the needs of the poor (Shalmali).

In Indonesia, despite findings that 20 million households have become landless under the new democratic regime, neither the present government nor any other political party have any proposal for land reform (Dethio). In those countries where people fought hard for progressive land reform legislation, governments have failed to implement these laws. The Philippines has had a variety of

Box 1



land reform programmes since the 1930s, yet the political and wealthy elites still dominate the land register. Thailand's redistributive Land Reform Act 1975, which was introduced in response to demands from a national peasant movement, has faced almost three decades of government stalling. Instead, the government is now seeking funding for a market assisted land reform programme as a nominal response to the growing land crisis (see Box 2, opposite page).

Following the 1992 land law, Cambodia saw a period of land grabbing by the elites and powerful groups such as the military and former landowners. Although a new land law was passed in 2001, there is a growing fear among the peasantry that politically and economically powerful people will now formally be able to register the land falsely acquired during that period. It will be difficult to prevent this because the judicial system is still extremely weak (Pheng).

“Market assisted land reforms”: generating more problems

In response to the wealth of evidence that broad-based economic development is more effective in addressing poverty than programmes that hope for benefits to trickle-down to the poor, the WB has now declared its support for land reform. In countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Cambodia, the Philippines, South Africa, and Thailand, the Bank has introduced policies to address, even diffuse, the popular demand for radical land reform, while seeking to maintain the confidence of existing landowners and potential investors in the existing framework of land ownership. This balance is sought through a programme of loans to support market-led (alternatively labelled ‘market-assisted’, ‘negotiated’ or even ‘community-based’) land reforms in different countries.

The WB’s land reforms pave the way for a full transformation towards a market economy through the privatisation of land resources. This process can be seen as a

“ladder” of reforms that leads to the privatisation of land (see Box 1). In some countries, governments have not only adopted programmes for the registration of private alienable landholding rights and the improved efficiency of the land transfer systems (as in Thailand), but are also introducing reforms favouring unrestricted trade of all forms of property rights.

The experiences shared by participants from various countries described the ways in which such “market-assisted” land reform is driving people off their land. In the Philippines, the WB has introduced a “Market assisted land reform” model to “complement” the existing government model, (CARP, see box below with summary comparison) which had never been effectively implemented. In effect, the new programme draws government efforts away from the existing state-led model, whose target land area was already cut by 20% in 1993 without official explanation (Enrico). CARP had originally been introduced by former President Corazon Aquino in response to pressure

Box 2

World Bank’s MALR model (Market assisted land reform)	State-led model, Philippines Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP)
1. Willing-seller, willing-buyer framework (loans to buy land). The 1998 WB report stated that because of landlord resistance, state-led land reform did not work. It proposed to remove landlord resistance through a willing seller-willing-buyer framework (loans).	1. The state recovers the land and compensates the land owners. The farmers, on the other hand, amortise the land. (land to the tiller program)
2. Post-land beneficiary development program. The implementing agencies will help the farmer beneficiaries to have a farm plan which is geared towards diversified commercial farming (cash crops). This is a necessity before a farmer beneficiary can be covered by MALR. The program, thus, does not promote small-scale farming.	2. The State redistributes the land. Support services are provided through the program beneficiary development of the main implementing agency (i.e., the Department of Agrarian Reform).
3. Demand-driven. Those who demand for land will be covered by the program.	3. Supply-driven. The state through its implementing agencies determines the number of hectares which could be covered by CARP and distribute them to potential and identified farmer beneficiaries working on the land and surrounding area.
4. Decentralised implementation (local government unit-governed program).	4. Centralised implementation.
5. Increased private sector participation for incentive investments.	

from a strong peasant movement for land redistribution that arose during the repressive Marcos regime (Ric). The limited gains achieved under that land reform law (considered by many as a progressive piece of legislation), were due to sustained pressure by organised peasants using various strategies. CARP has been made to work through the efforts and initiatives of peasant movements, peoples' organisations and NGOs, often working without the support of the state.

Given the power and influence of WB loans, governments are left with little choice but to adopt the Banks' version of land reform (Carmina). The MALR system is ostensibly based on the premise that land reform needs to be less confrontational. It aims to empower 'Farmer Beneficiaries' to seize opportunities, take advantage of the investments that are expected to pour in through a cost-effective programme requiring minimal bureaucracy, while correcting distortions in the market.

The WB initiated pilot studies of the MALR programme in the Philippines in 1998. However, after three years, both pilots had fallen short of their targets. Nonetheless, these unsupportive results were omitted in Bank reports, which instead recommended the expansion of the programme, including the further privatisation of support services and access to credit (Carmina).

Analysts from people's organisations identified the failures of the WB's MALR programme in the Philippines as stemming from: a) the scarce supply of land due to the fact that extensive landholders were still unwilling to sell; b) the unequal bargaining relationship between farmers and landlords, leading to distortions in the market, and; c) the dependence on private sector service provision (Carmina). Farmers' movements continue to oppose this programme.

In another example, the influence of the WB in directing a government towards market-

oriented prescriptions has seriously compromised the land reform agenda in South Africa (Samantha). There, the WB was integrally involved in the negotiations for post-apartheid during the democratic transition from 1991-1992. A "pact" was developed, and has been consolidated over the last 9 years, between the white elites, international capital (WB and IMF) and emerging black elites. The landless were not yet organised when the provisions on private property were being negotiated. While the Constitution allows the state to expropriate land, not one expropriation has taken place from 1992. Since 1996, there has been an increased focus on export-oriented production and consolidation of the neo-liberal programme.

Five features can be identified in the land reform programme of South Africa:

- 1) a willing-buyer and willing-seller framework along similar lines to the case of the Philippines. Small state grants are available for farmers who will continue commercial farming. Whereas previously, grants were targeted at poor farmers, the system now favours anyone who will promote commercial farming.
- 2) The role of the state is limited to that of grant-provider and negotiations-broker, and has no role in identifying land for redistribution.
- 3) There is no state support for the majority of South African farmers who are involved in small-scale agriculture and subsistence production. Because of the government's bias for commercial production, small-scale farmers organized into cooperatives are required to aggregate their landholdings, and therefore shift to commercial production, in order to avail of the government loans.
- 4) Race relations remain unbalanced under this scheme, as black landless people tend to work the land while white landowners oversee production.
- 5) Private sector involvement is considered paramount. Consultants facilitate and, in some cases, even draw up plans for the

...Only 2.7% of agriculturally productive land has been redistributed to landless farmers under the programme, far short of government targets (originally the goal was 20% by 1999). The rising poverty, inequality, dispossession, and worsening situation in South Africa are being met with rising anger and frustration among landless peasants and poor people.

In Brazil, members of the Rural Landless Workers Movement (MST) have decided not to participate in the WB market-assisted land reform and Land Bank (market-based distribution) schemes, which are based on providing credit as a means to buy land.

landless. Land reform is run as a joint venture with the private sector wherein landless people buy shares in the venture, and in the end are left with few rights to the land (Samantha).

As a result, only 2.7% of agriculturally productive land has been redistributed to landless farmers under the programme, far short of government targets (originally the goal was 20% by 1999). The rising poverty, inequality, dispossession, and worsening situation in South Africa are being met with anger and frustration among landless peasants and poor people.

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In Colombia, peasants and indigenous peoples' movements have been fighting for land reform since the 1930s. When the WB introduced its market-assisted land reform program in 1994, it was touted as the answer to the age-old problem of land in the country. A total of 1.5 million families have applied for land under the 'negotiated' land reform program of the WB. Under this scheme, the state provides 70% of the land price and the farmers must finance the remaining 30%. However, the government has only admitted 32,000 families to the scheme and in the end only 12,000 families have benefited. The WB is unstoppable in redefining their programmes. Last year, the WB admitted the failure of the market model in Colombia, and proposed a new programme called the "Productive Associations Project", which is billed as a joint venture between farmers and landowners.

Landholders sell to a corporation that then rents the land to the peasants for planting oil palms. However, there is no legal protection for workers' rights as the farmers are considered partners and not labourers. To make

matters worse, out of the 8 pilot areas, 5 are controlled by paramilitary groups (Hector).

The WB has established a Global Coalition for the Eradication of Poverty (known as the “International Land Coalition”) in an attempt to enhance its political legitimacy in this field by engaging with farmers and the organisations that support them. However, this coalition appears to employ delaying tactics against genuine agrarian reform. Similarly, the WB’s Rural Development Strategy Paper was produced following “consultations” with civil society but the WB’s views remained dominant. Even then there are no assurances that the responses from these ‘consultations’ will be applied in the WB’s revised land policies (Peter).

Nexus between land reform, trade and agriculture policy reforms

If small farmers have land and no fair prices, they will most likely lose their land. If there are fair prices but small farmers have no land, they will get no benefit (Peter).

In Thailand, for instance, the price of rice at farm gates has not increased in 20 years, due to General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments (Somchai). Thailand is known as one of the top food exporters in the world, particularly in rice. But as the country experiences the increase in its rice export, small farmers do not benefit from this success. Governments have tended to support agribusiness over the promotion of sustainable small-scale farming. The decline in profits of the agricultural sector has forced small-scale farmers to sell their land. In this context, land programmes that set up schemes to induce communities to take a loan or sell their land to businesses cannot work because the agriculture sector lacks the state support it needs (Sayamol).

Box 3

The 3 pillars of the WTO’s Agreement on Agriculture (AoA)

- 1. Market access:** WTO negotiations in agriculture aim for substantial improvements in market access (opening up of markets), which means further and substantial tariff reduction. A major concern of developing countries is that the benefits of ‘trade liberalisation’—market access—have not been reaped in real terms. In India, for instance, dairy farmers cannot compete with heavily subsidised Dutch dairy farmers. Mexican maize farmers face similar problems. Market access is biased for developed countries. Indonesian rice is not competitive in the face of Thai rice. The plight of small farmers is worse today than 20 years ago.
- 2. Elimination of domestic subsidies:** Domestic support or subsidies is deemed as trade distorting. AoA, thus, aims at substantial reduction or elimination of domestic subsidies. The main complaint against domestic support for agriculture was that it encouraged overproduction resulting in export subsidy and eventually low-priced dumping in world markets. But even within the AoA framework, developed countries maintain high levels of subsidies. For example, the US Farm Bill maintains high level of supports that mainly go to big corporate producers, exporters and TNCs such as Monsanto and not to its small-scale farmers.
- 3. Export competition:** Another trade distorting support comes in the form of export subsidies. AoA prohibits export subsidies on agriculture products unless subsidies are specified in a member’s list of commitments. Where they are listed, the Agreement requires members to cut both the amount of money they spend on export subsidy and the quantities of export that receive subsidies. However, for farmers, agriculture is a way of life and should not be simply reduced to a means of obtaining market shares and profits interests for a minority of any nation.

In the past, when FAO developed international food production policies, member countries were not coerced to abide by them. Now the WTO is the main institution in the international arena and has the power to enforce global agriculture policies.

The policies of export-orientation and market access, adopted under pressure from the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs) and other neo-liberal institutions, are reflected in the framework for the WTO’s Agreement on Agriculture (see box above), have led to the control of vast tracts of land by transnational corporations (Imelda). However, the transnational model of production is opposed to crop diversity, and takes no interest in local values or the sustainability of communities (Badrul). This is an issue high-

Free trade kills farmers and consumers

Mexico: after NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), maize production dropped by 50% as a direct consequence of dumping. The World Bank counters that cheap imports means cheap food for poor people, but the price of tortilla increased by 400% as the maize industry has been monopolised by private corporations.

South Korea: In 1990, before domestic markets were opened up to big export producers like Thailand, US and Vietnam, there were 6.5 million small-hold farmers; now the number has fallen to 3 million. There have been many suicides and bankruptcies, and losing land has become commonplace. The scale of decline, and the high cost for farmers, led farmer leader Lee Kyung Hae to take his life in protest during the recent Ministerial Conference of the WTO at Cancun - his own graphic message to the world that the WTO is killing farmers.

lighted by farmers' movements in Bangladesh (Bangladesh Krishok Federation). However, demonstrations by such groups are met with government crackdowns and anti-protest legislation.

Promoting high yielding varieties of crops does not protect farmers from international competition. Farmers end up producing for the interests of international business rather than for their own communities. Thus, they lose control over their livelihoods. There is, then, a need to protect national economies and develop alternatives along the way as well as to protect (and improve) indigenous farming systems.

The pilot areas of the Colombian Productive Associations Project referred to above based on oil palm plantations provide another example of government-promoted production that is neither beneficial for the local environment, nor even profitable (Hector). Over-production of palm oil in Indonesia, Malaysia and Bolivia among others, had already saturated the markets, which are controlled by major transnational corporations (TNCs) like Unilever. Small-scale farmers in this scheme do not benefit at all. TNCs have also dominated markets other than oil palm. The world's seed system, for example, is being taken over by a few TNCs (see

below) that are now promoting genetically modified seeds.

The reverse side of export orientation is import dependence. Under globalisation, countries are encouraged to import subsidised food produced in the US and EU. Those receiving government subsidies in Europe and America include the largest agribusiness operations.

However, it is important not to overlook the problems facing small-scale farmers in the North. Around 4,000 farmers are forced into bankruptcy each week in the US (Peter) and the US itself is witnessing an epidemic of suicides by its farmers. While there were 6 million farmers in the US in the 1950s, there are only 1.9 million left (there are currently more prisoners in the US than farmers). Contrary to claims by its proponents, the US model is not a sustainable system. For one, the agro-industrial model is very expensive and difficult to sustain, and if ever, only by a few big commercial farmers. Agriculture continues to be the second highest expenditure of the US government although only 8% of its remaining farmers are subsidised.

The Urgent Need for Genuine Land Reform

The experiences and struggles of the participants at the meeting revealed the deepening agrarian crises in both the North and South. Land has become concentrated in the hands of a few urban and rural elites. Increasing landlessness, bankruptcy, displacement and inequality are not confined to developing countries alone, but are common in the developed nations as well. Land reform and land-related issues are imperiled by commercialisation, export-oriented production and development, and ultimately, corporate-driven globalisation.

The issues raised have also highlighted the 'modern-traditional' divide, local/national-international relations and local and interna-

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tional pressures that continue to threaten land. The problems related to land and common pool resources discussed above were caused by various global economic pressures, which were compounded and bolstered by the complicity of local elites and states to resolve issues of wealth and assets redistribution. National land policies for instance, were often written by economic and political elites who have interests in land and private investments. Thus, wealth redistribution through land reform has been difficult, if not, impossible under a framework that pretends to be liberal and democratic. The bias of Asian states towards free enterprise, liberalization, privatization and debt-driven economic growth show that they have chosen to focus their nations' resources toward the international market. Instead of dealing with the centuries-old problem of land, governments have placed themselves in the service of powerful corporations such as Monsanto and international financial institutions such as the WB, ADB and the WTO. Land and agrarian reform have remained captive to the profit making interests of a powerful and influential minority.

Participants from the Philippines, Thailand, South Africa, Indonesia and India among others, emphasized that land reform was never the overarching framework used by their governments for its development efforts. To make matters worse, their land reform programs are, more often than not, out of sync with development-friendly agriculture, trade, and food security policies

(which are increasingly becoming more liberalised).

The implementation of a genuine land reform programme necessitates an alignment of forces in support of it. While the peasantry is vulnerable to the divide-and-rule machinations of the state, there is a trend of increasing resistance from organized peasant movements with support from different sectors such as slum networks, the urban poor, women, indigenous peoples, etc. There is a growing effort from peoples' movements to build broad alliances and real solidarity.

The participants from peoples' organisations, social movements and activist organisations also tried to provide answers on how genuine agrarian reform can work in a popular and prevailing neoliberal climate inhospitable to genuine land reform which has lost its legitimate place in the national and international arenas. The alternatives and strategies to promote them initiated by social movements, were highlighted in most of the discussions. They have been showing the way forward (e.g., the MST in Brazil, the Landless Peoples' Movement [LPM] in South Africa, the Thai Land Reform Network, etc.).

For the people present at the meeting, land is life to the peasants. Their hopes and strength lie in the land, which gives strength and assures the life of every nation. One thing is clear — all the peasants, landless and the poor from Asia and beyond are clamouring for genuine land reform. Now, more than ever, genuine and progressive land reform is needed. There is an urgency to put land reform back on the national and international agendas of development. Both the progressives and liberals argue that the road to development means an equitable distribution of resources, foremost of which is land. The interests of communities have to be given the highest priority. And unless the state ensures the rights of people to land, food and livelihood, people will continue to resist and build their own alternative systems.

Alternative Strategies and Approaches

Land occupations

Poor people have the right to have access to local common property resources (land, water, forests) and to food. If the state will not allow them access, then they will resort to extra-legal measures such as land occupation (Enrico). The lack of government commitment to land reform at the national level, has stirred groups of farmers in Brazil, South Africa, Thailand, Bangladesh and the Philippines to implement land reform by themselves, occupying land that is lying in waste and idle or was illegally acquired. Land occupation is the alternative to the state's inability to implement genuine land reform.

In Brazil, there is a legal framework that allows for the expropriation of under-utilised land. However, governments have not taken initiatives to expropriate land through legal means until faced with a *fait accompli* by the farmers supported by the peasant movements, such as the Rural Landless Workers Movement (MST), formed in 1984. Since September 2002, 3,000 rural settlements have been created by the movement. Over 4.1 million poor and landless peasants have settled over 8 million ha of land. Their collective strength gives groups of farmers increased bargaining power to negotiate down the government brokered price for land. Achieving access to land is seen as a victory for the members of the movement, a result of their struggle.

In Bangladesh, through the efforts of peasant movements, 28,300 ha of fallow land have been distributed following occupations. However, many lives have been lost in this

effort (see Box 5). In Thailand, 4,000 rural communities in the North have gained access to 2,300 ha of land through a community land reform movement. They see land as an inalienable resource and not a commodity. They are currently looking into establishing a local land bank that would enable farmers to sell land at a fair price. People in the slum areas of Thailand have also implemented their own limited land reform, by occupying both public and private urban land, but they still do not have security of tenure. However, this did not stop them from devising their own programme of secure housing where communities have the right to decide and fully participate. Slum dwellers are likewise willing to rent the land they occupy for a period of, for example, 10 years but the government has, so far, not responded.

The **working group on the issue of land occupations** shared experiences from Cambodia, South Africa, Thailand, Brazil and the Philippines. In particular, the question was posed whether there were any alternatives to land occupation because of the high risks of facing repression by states and the elites. Referring to the difficulties and sufferings of landless people outlined in the opening sections of this report, the participants felt that in the face of government inaction, there is little other option than occupying land. The main concluding points are:

- it is not enough to occupy land, efforts must be made to ensure productive and sustainable use of the land.
- public support for land occupation must be sought.

- land occupation represents the direct participation of people in development.
- land occupation empowers people. It liberates and promotes freedom among people who were previously oppressed. It is not only about getting new land but also building new lives and a new role in society.

Linking occupations to broader land reform campaigns

Farmers within the MST movement struggle not only for the land, but more importantly, for the self-esteem of the peasants (Manoel). To achieve these goals, they work on a broad range of sectors in: 1. Education: providing support for adult literacy and school education. 2. Mass Movement/Organisation: technical and political training. 3. Production: training and support for collective production and marketing, in some cases promoting organic production systems. 4. Gender: the movement aims at a gender balance in all activities and equal representation at all levels, both men and women discuss production in the settlement. 5. Communication: development of newspapers, and media training. 6. Human Rights: gathering of support for the defence of workers in jail from professors, priests, even entrepreneurs, lawyers and journalists. 7. Health: supporting the retention of traditional medicinal knowledge. 8. Cultural Sector: preserving traditional values and culture through organised events, songs, dances and other activities. 9. International Relations/Linkages: forging linkages with NGOs, other movements, other groups in similar situations, in recognition that the experiences gained in the movement can help others but the movement can, likewise, learn from the experiences of other countries.

Inspired by the strength and scope of the MST in Brazil, the South African Landless People's Movement (LPM) was initiated in

July 2001, in an attempt to break the political stalemate in the country. It represents the first national unified struggle around land since the national liberation movement. The LPM restores access to basic services such as education, restitution of land and occupations modelled after the MST experience. Like the MST, it also seeks to build local, regional and international linkages, actively recruits other movements, develops national popular education programmes and builds support from local level upwards. Diverse campaign actions by the LPM include marches, letter writing, submission of memoranda, participation in government policy meetings and legislation advocacy.

In India, the work is more focused on regaining land from private corporations in individual cases on land reform in a wider sense (Roy). There has also been a successful drive to ensure the joint entitlement of men and women in land titling programmes (Datta).

Box 5

Repression

In **South Africa**, hundreds of people are abused, murdered or violated daily. Anti-terrorism laws have paved the way for the criminalisation and imprisonment of people defending themselves against eviction or even fundraising for their defence (Samantha).

In **Bangladesh**, many peasants' lives were lost in the land occupations. State repression ranged from the eviction of 11 adivasi (indigenous) families to the burning of houses (Omoli). Peasant organisations have a constitutional right to organise but cannot make any public demonstrations without government permission. They are treated as if they were illegal organisations.

In **Colombia**, as many as 2,219 peasant and indigenous leaders fighting for the rights of local farmers have been assassinated in the last 15 years. 184 union leaders were assassinated last year and this happens every time a state enterprise is privatised. Uribe has been successful in institutionalising terror and violence. To make matters worse, the Minister of Agriculture has recently abolished the Agrarian Reform Institution saying 'we will never again have agrarian reform' (Hector).

Networks in Thailand recognised that land reform is not a panacea and that it is important to look at all the dimensions of the problem. Along with fairer distribution of land, they argue for land use planning (zoning), progressive land taxation, and the empowerment of communities to manage their own resources, with participation at all levels in decision making. Demonstrating the effectiveness of non-chemical agriculture, for example, can help reduce input costs and the risk of bankruptcy (Rangsan).

There have been land occupations in the Philippines, e.g., in the Bondoc peninsula (Enrico). However, the three main strategies adopted by the Filipino peasant movements were identified as: 1) radical armed struggle; 2) critical engagement with the government while harnessing public pressure and support from the ground, and; 3) reliance on governmental mechanisms to implement agrarian reform. The gains achieved by the peasantry have been limited due in part to the domestic strength of the land owning class reinforced by the dominance of US capital and to the vigorous development of land markets by the Philippine government under the influence of neoliberalism (Ric).

Legal battles

Several participants raised the question of using legal means to defend peoples land rights. The response was mixed, with legal approaches both through Parliament and the courts being seen as valid but insufficient. In Brazil, legal clauses in the Constitution have been essential for the eventual legalisation of the settlements. Nevertheless, in 20 years of struggle, many farmers, men women and children, lost their lives, and members of the movement are still under threat of violence (Manoel).

In the experience of the Landless People's Movement of South Africa, a judicial review approach is considered not only costly (US\$1,000 per day) but also unsustainable.

Box 6

Alliance building in Colombia

In the 1940s, an alliance was built between peasants and farmers, which called for the support of the self-determination of the indigenous peoples. In 1948, the movement "folded up". The country saw the re-emergence of farmer organisations in 1960, but they did not seek solidarity with the indigenous people. This was because a natural conflict exists between the peasants and the indigenous peoples over natural resources, foremost of which is land. But over the last few years, via the Agrarian mandate, a new coalition was formed between indigenous peoples and peasants. The coordination mechanism of National Coordinating Council of Indigenous Peoples (CNI) made this possible. The coalition is comprised of women's organisations, displaced people, indigenous peoples group and peasants (the last two are both members of La Via Campesina).

Many landless people have also joined the guerilla movement as a reaction to the repression of the state. A genuine land reform programme could, then, be an important step towards peace in the countryside.

In addition, the government actively flouts progressive court orders, even when they come from the high level courts (Samantha). In India, on the other hand, the legal framework is considered an effective strategic tool for social movements.

Two legal battles have been won in the Philippine Supreme Court in 2003, which will allow a renewed injection of funds from coconut levy/taxes and billions of pesos seized from the ill-gotten wealth of former President Marcos to reinvigorate the CARP programme. These were achieved as a direct result of campaigns by grassroots movements, e.g., the 'bibingka' strategy employed by some of the social democratic groups including PARRDS, UNORKA and PEACE. The strategy puts a strong emphasis on critical engagement with the government and implementing agencies while harnessing the pressure of social movements (Enrico).

NGOs in many countries have been supporting peoples' organisations in drafting amendments to legislation (e.g., in India) and in some cases, drafting new laws. The Thai

land network is working on several proposals for legislation. A new Land Bill has already been drafted. Similarly, a bill that will introduce a progressive land taxation scheme and disincentives for land hoarding is in the pipeline. The network is also looking into how to address land concessions to foreigners through legislative change. While the government, under strong pressure from the IMF currently only allows land title under private ownership, the Thai land network proposes a diversity of titling regimes, including management by communities and co-management by government, among others (Sayamol).

Hunger strikes

Two countries shared their experience with attempting hunger strikes as a strategy. In the case of Mapalad (the name of a farming cooperative in the Philippines), 137 farmers who had lost titles that they received under the land reform programme staged a hunger strike that was quite effective in gaining public support. A sympathetic media also helped the farmers. The Ramos government tried to apply a win-win solution by giving part of the land to the farmers (100 ha), and the remaining part (47 ha) to the agribusiness accused of land grabbing. However, once the issue had died down in the media, the Supreme Court, which has a natural bias for private property rights, reversed the presidential decision and ruled in favour of agribusiness.

In India, there were many hunger strikes in the struggle for land, and it is considered a very important strategy for those who believe in non-violent struggle. It is a weapon of last resort and can last a long time. During the period of hunger strike, supporters including the public, progressive parliamentarians, etc., are mobilised through media campaigns. During the latest hunger strike, the police arrested the strikers who were forced to eat, but the strike continued under-

ground and in the end the campaign was successful.

Building movements

The different country experiences reveal that land reform initiatives, such as that of the MST, are made to work primarily because of the tremendous sacrifices of the peasant movements along with the incremental efforts of NGOs, grassroots groups and civil society in general. The task of initiative and leadership is thrown on the peasantry, which must often only rely on itself. But without allies, movements will find the challenge of attaining successful reform extremely difficult. Thus, there is the need to bring together the various sections of rural and urban peoples' movements under one roof. An alternative paradigm and plan of action seem impossible without a broad alliance among different sectors and stakeholders.

Land struggle issues intersect with many different struggles such as those for alternative trade and economics, movements pushing for agro-ecology, free access to seeds and traditional seed conservation, alternative media, human rights, social forums, etc. Alliances and networking involving peasants, slum dwellers, NGOs, church representatives, lawyers, scientists and others can help to build a wider movement for change, harnessing collective strength. People are getting organised at all levels (local, sub-national, national, regional, continental, global). Land and trade reform are linked ultimately by fighting against the same driving forces: neoliberalism, U.S. imperialism, transnational corporation profit seeking, and local elite interests, etc. It is important to understand how these issues relate to local land struggles. Local initiatives can be complemented by other mechanisms at other levels to avoid a struggle only moving "one step forward and two steps back".

In-fighting amongst farmers was considered by participants to be an indirect result of the

neo-liberal global policies that national governments adopt. The peasant movements remain vulnerable to the divide-and-rule machinations of the state. Governments, for instance, focus on the needs of the market, while neglecting more important social issues and concerns. For example, in Indonesia, palm oil production is promoted while hunger in the countryside continues unaddressed. Now there is not enough arable land available to help produce for the survival of the farmers. Participants emphasised that small farmers in other countries are not the enemies. They are also victims of neo-liberal policies and major transnational corporations.

Landless peoples' movements in Thailand, though relatively new, have been able to garner support from different groups in the country, building on the existing linkages between, for example, forest communities, fisherfolks and slum dwellers. One example was raised from the south of the country where fishing communities already have good relationships with farmers. Both groups are negatively affected by international trade policies and mega projects such as the gas pipeline and industrial development projects that are destroying coastal resources. The strongest way to fight is to organise all different groups within the city and then within the country, bringing together a diversity of people in the struggles.

The need to link urban and rural interests was urged by several participants in order to mount an effective campaign for change at the national level. Many of the urban poor are in the cities because of displacement through mega-infrastructure projects, exclusionary natural resource management policies, and falling agricultural prices prompting their migration from the countryside (Parsaoran). The MST considers that it is simply imperative to build relationships between the cities and the countryside to avoid markets being diverted towards large-

scale production systems, leaving smallholders to starve (Manoel).

Linking indigenous minority groups with groups in the majority has proved an effective strategy in Colombia (see Box 6). Despite the risk of repression from the government, social movements were able to organise a general strike against Uribe in 2002, when he took power, and held a major conference in 2003 to discuss agrarian reform. The main outcome of this conference was the adoption of the Agrarian Mandate, by groups of peasants, African Colombians and Indigenous peoples concerning the defence of rights to land, access to land and food sovereignty. A National Coordinating Council of Indigenous Peoples (CNI) was also created last year to support rural people in resisting state oppression and pushing forward with reform.

Proposals from the **working group on land rights movements** on campaigning strategies encouraged positive messages. Instead of declaring what movements are fighting "against", languages should be used about what they are fighting "for" (land rights, land reform, etc.). Another point highlighted the importance of identifying different actors in society that need to be engaged, if necessary, using various strategies. The actors include proponents, supporters, 'fence sitters' (who are neither in favour nor against) and opponents. Alliances built with the first three will make fighting the last a much lighter task. It was also seen as equally important to involve political leaders in campaigns as a way to get strategic information about the government's policies and actions.

Strategies for recognition of indigenous peoples land rights

As mentioned earlier, extractive industries are one of the major causes of displacement

and sites are often located on land occupied by indigenous people. In the **working group on extractive industries** experiences such as those described in Colombia and from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand and Indonesia showed the need to push for the recognition of the indigenous people's identities, cultures and rights to use their ancestral domain and land.

Strategies proposed by the working group include the following:

- at the ground level, strengthen the communities through organisation, education and training
- use the legal process to push for the creation of a law on indigenous people's rights: some countries do not have a law recognising indigenous people rights.
- publicise the issue and gather broader societal support through public awareness.
- build alliances at national and international levels.
- advocate for policy alternatives: agricultural land should be kept for agricultural use. State intervention should be limited in indigenous territories allowing indigenous peoples some sovereignty over their lands. Indigenous lands should not be treated as commodities and many groups argue their land should be non-transferable.

Strategies to combat gender discrimination

The **working group on gender** began with a clarification about the situation of women in people's movements. Participants from Thailand, Philippines, Nepal, India, Germany and Brazil expressed that women often experience struggles within other struggles: against the patriarchal state (external forces) and against patriarchy within peoples' organisations and movements (internal discrimination). Women often carry double and multiple-burdens. Much of the struggle in India, for instance, is led by rural

women who are always in the frontline (Roy). Gender prejudice, however, persists and intensifies land inequality, for example, in Northern India, women do not have secure land rights (Sanjay).

The strategies discussed to overcome these barriers were:

- organise women from the grassroots level, empower women and realise their potential through capacity-building activities.
- raise the issue of empowering women among men (public education and information).
- develop mechanisms within peoples' organisations to denounce violation of women's human rights. Women's rights are recognised as fundamental human rights.
- go beyond the narrow struggle for natural resources by linking it with the struggle against patriarchy, class, caste, etc.
- build alliances: include other sectors in the struggle in order not to isolate women's issues. Women should take an active role and avoid falling into a victim's role.

Food sovereignty

The world is witnessing a move from a decentralised form of global food system to a highly centralised one. Three processes have been identified in the streamlining of the global food system (Sofia).

1. Vertical integration, or putting producers and the food processing sector together under single ownership or control (e.g., the poultry market). In this way, the farmer-producer also becomes the labourer ('grower'). Power becomes concentrated in a few hands, foremost among them being transnational companies.

2. Horizontal integration is a process whereby only a few companies control the global food market. For example in the seed

industry, Dupont, Monsanto, and Syngenta control almost 70% of the entire seed market. In the soya seed market, the figures are Monsanto (29%), Dupont (15%) and Syngenta (4%), together controlling 48%. Monsanto dominates again in the maize seed market, with a 38% share of the market. Similarly, the food and drink processing companies are dominated by just a few names, Nestle, Kraft, Unilever, Pepsi, etc. 51 of the biggest 100 global economies are corporations. Wal-Mart's business is ranked 19th, and even has greater economic power than many European nations. It is more powerful than any oil company. Both vertical integration and horizontal integration build cartels and monopolies. At the end of the chain are small-scale farmers.

3. Globalisation of the food system, such that consumers no longer know about the food they eat, leaving supermarkets to shop around the world to provide standardised foods, regardless of the season. When orders cease with farmers in one economy, when jobs are lost, or the environment is transformed, consumers are unlikely to know about it. Consumers in a globalised economy do not pay attention to who owns the land, and even more, where their food come from.

International financial institutions such as the WB support the linkage of small-scale farmers to the global food system arguing that biotechnology increase yields for small farmers, e.g., in India, Philippines, Brazil and Peru (Sofia), despite the problems associated with hi-tech and transgenic crops. Patents held by transnational companies mean that small-scale farmers find themselves in the control of TNCs such as Monsanto who, for example, control 30% of the maize seed market in Thailand. This is reminiscent of the 1980s, when the hi-tech packages of the Green Revolution failed to live up to its promise of abolishing rural hunger - 800,000,000 people around the planet are still suffering from hunger.

Box 7

MST : Sustainable production

As part of its efforts to make the lands they occupy sustainable, the MST develops the lands through its Production System Sector. Families survey the land potential (soil quality, water availability, crop choices), to make better use of it. Then, they apply for credit from the government (\$5,000 for each family at the beginning of a settlement) and discuss how to use it collectively or communally.

MST creates and uses an alternative production system that is ecologically sustainable. Traditional knowledge is applied as an alternative to external inputs provided by TNCs, which are expensive and harmful to the environment. A model of organic agriculture is, thus, seen as preferential. The movement has just started a national seed exchange program amongst the settlements. MST members are proud of their lands and continue to produce for the community's needs. They have made such progress in making their lands productive and sustainable. As a proof of this, their products and seeds are sold under their own trademark 'Bionature' (Manoel).

The framework proposed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to solve the hunger problem is "food security". However, as referred to above, this framework does not place importance on where food comes from, and is biased in favour of commercial farming and the distribution systems of TNCs. In the face of this kind of policy bolstering market dominance by TNCs, small-scale farmers find it hard to compete. Food security is not enough. Alternative paradigms become increasingly important in the face of dominant but ineffective development frameworks. La via Campesina, an international peasants' network, for example, advocates for food sovereignty and is giving farmers the opportunity to develop alternative models according to their own strategies (Indra).

The food sovereignty model is gaining support around the world as an integral part of the opposition to WTO interventions in national agricultural policy. The Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform, a joint campaign of FIAN and La Via Campesina also supports this. Food sovereignty is proposed as a human right - the right of the people to define their own food and agricul-

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY -

This model stresses not only the social welfare dimension of agricultural policy, but also a model for economic development which allows fair prices, land reform, state support, high level of organisation, alternative technology and local production for domestic consumption

ture model of production. Food sovereignty is also the right of peoples to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives; to determine the extent to which they want to be self-reliant; to restrict the dumping of products in their markets, and; to provide local fisheries-based communities the priority in managing the use of, and the rights to aquatic resources.

This model stresses not only the social welfare dimension of agricultural policy, but also a model for economic development which allows fair prices, land reform, state support, high level of organisation, alternative technology and local production for domestic consumption (Peter).

Producing food for people within the settlements is very important to the MST (see box) and a very important means of building alliances between peasants and urban workers. Surpluses produced in the settlements are sold to local and national markets. Chemical-free products are a good way of presenting a positive message about the settlements to Brazilian society and setting up stalls near the bigger supermarkets can also provide a useful contrast.

La Via Campesina has been involved in discussions on a Farmers Rights Charter (Indra) with proposals developed in April 2003. The right to conserve seed and the right to protect local biodiversity is also important in upholding rights to land (Thai Alternative Agriculture Network).

Calls for Support

Participants from all countries emphasised the common elements of their struggles and were conscious of the support derived from international solidarity. Many spoke in favour and support of developing a coordinated international campaign that will put agrarian reform back on national development agendas. Some participants also stressed the importance of information exchanges. They enable people to fight for better policies at every level. There are existing initiatives from groups such as the Land Research Action Network, which is monitoring WB policies and creating an information flow between movements/grassroots organisations and progressive researchers/academics.

However, there were also calls for closer collaboration of peasants' organisations active in the struggle and campaign for agrarian reform (Indonesia). Farmers want to have direct linkages with farmers of other countries, and not attend another NGO meeting. Though, this is a very costly activity, it is considered worthwhile by the farmers (Kingkorn).

Thailand working group to be set up

The Thai participants in particular were keen on working together more closely on unravelling the structural problems at the national level. One proposed a think-tank for the struggle to initiate actions – a working group that would work on these issues similar to that described by La Via Campesina representatives, but, specifically for Thailand. This working group would

coordinate and work on natural resources management and facilitate the sharing of information and experiences with other countries. Revolutionising the ways social movements think was emphasised to be able to challenge the government's intransigence on this issue.

Three participant's suggestions proposed that the focus of such a working group should be to ensure that its position on the above issues is clear with the public, recognising that current capacity of movements to develop and disseminate information. Also, information on the WTO and agriculture policies needs to be understood at the grassroots level. Some communities felt the need for simple data that would enable them to understand the issues better. It was also recommended that the working group look for creative ways to present and convey experiences (through small booklets, even comics, videos, etc.). It was pointed out that Thai NGOs had established a working group on globalisation, with its website (www.thaiactonglobe.org) updated weekly. Another website has also been set up on trade liberalisation (www.ftawatch.org). But it is not certain whether such information reaches community groups. A newsletter is much easier to understand, though difficult to put together.

Documenting experiences and distributing them to the world through a letter campaign was also proposed. This can sometimes be a very powerful strategy, even in difficult struggles. The support obtained from this mechanism is very important for the local people involved. A fact-finding mission was suggested as a means to organise and mobi-

lise the media and compile a lot of information around the issue (Sofia). This was described as a very effective tool for informing the public nationally and globally.

Upcoming events as of December 2003:

A. WSF, Mumbai, India, January 15-21 2004. The Indian Organising Committee have organised several seminars on land, women and globalization (Datta).

B. La Via Campesina's conference agenda for next year:

1. agrarian reform : Brazil
2. human rights issues : South East Asia
3. biodiversity and GMOs : South Asia
4. gender : Chile

Comments/suggestions to FSPI and La Via Campesina were encouraged (Indra).

C. FIAN upcoming activities over the next two years.

1. Presentation before the Human Rights Commission in Geneva in March. FIAN is preparing a dossier that will chronicle the different human rights violations against farmers and landless people. All were encouraged to share more information on this subject.
2. Celebration of a Global Day for Peasant Struggles, 17th April aimed at mobilising farmers. A background document will be prepared on this before February and can be sent to those interested in preparing for this day. (It was pointed out that April 17th is an inconvenient time in Thailand and the Lao PDR due to new-year celebrations. An alternative date was discussed for Thai farmers either linking into an annual national event, or suitable international day [see box below]. This prompted calls by other participants for a special day for land

issues, however no decision was taken on this.)

3. The possibility of having a Forum on Agrarian Reform in South Africa is being explored. The National Land Committee has offered to support the demands and strategies of peoples' movements represented at the Asia Land Meeting. Any organisation interested in participating at this meeting should contact FIAN.

Activists' Calendar

March 8	<i>International Day of Women</i>
April 17	<i>Global Day for Peasants Struggles</i>
June 10	<i>Agrarian Reform Law anniversary in the Philippines</i>
September 13	<i>Global Day of Action against Globalisation and Militarisation</i>
September 24	<i>Solidarity Day of Farmers in Indonesia</i>
October 15	<i>Rural Women</i>
October 16	<i>World Food Day</i>
November 19	<i>Solidarity Day of Farmers in Thailand</i>

Clamour for More Opportunities

The Asia Land Meeting was an opportunity for social movements, activists, NGOs and researchers to come together, learn from each other and develop a collective strategy to promote progressive, people-centred land and agrarian reform approaches in Asia and internationally. Participants forged a common plan of action that could help them in their own struggles. Victories could only be enhanced and preserved with real solidarity. Though no one wanted a definitive 'plan' of action or strategy, people were pleased to share and discuss their experiences and struggles. No one person or group wanted to show the way forward, or be the 'expert.'

What the meeting stressed most is the importance of collective understanding and analysis of land and natural resources issues, strengthening collaborative strategies among movements, and creating spaces for activists to meet, talk and forge unities and partnerships. The participants clamour for another land meeting in the future.

Box 8

Websites

Participants recommended the following websites to obtain more information about the different issues discussed in the workshop.

Farmers' rights

www.viacampesina.org
www.peoplesfoodsovereignty.org
www.acciontierra.org
www.acaoterra.org
www.landaction.org
www.fian.org
www.mstBrasil.org
www.grain.org
www.etcgroup.org

Trade and agriculture policy

www.viacampesina.org,
www.peoplesfoodsovereignty.org,
www.focusweb.org
www.foodfirst.org

Land Reform

www.viacampesina.org,
www.foodfirst.org
www.landaction.org
www.fian.org
www.mstbrazil.org
www.newint.org

Asia Land Meeting

A Meeting to Share Experiences and Strategies about Land Struggles

International Centre, Chiang Mai, Thailand

December 13-16, 2003

PROGRAMME

12 December 2003

Arrival of Participants

13 December 2003

8.30-9.00 Registration

9.00-10.00 Welcome by Thai Host

Matee Supan

Northern Farmers Alliance

Background/Objectives and Schedule

Kingkorn Narintakul

Northern Development Foundation (NDF)

Introduction of Participants

10.00-10.30

Opening presentation:
**The State of Land and Agrarian
Reform in Thailand**

Ajarn Somchai

Preechasilapakul

Chiang Mai University (Law Faculty)

10.30- 10.45

Break

10.45-12.00

**Session I. Land and Agrarian Reform
Under Pressure from Economic
Globalization and Trade Regimes**

Shalmali Guttal

Focus on the Global South

- Overview

Peter Rosset

CENSA

- The World Bank and Market-
based Land Reform

Carmina Flores

Philippine Peasant Institute

- Transnational Corporations:

Driving Forces in Production and
Consumption Patterns

Sofia Monsalve

FIAN

- FAO and Global Agriculture Policies

Indra Lubis

La Via Campesina/FSPI

12.30-13.30

Lunch

13.30-14.15

Continue Session I

Shalmali Guttal

Focus on the Global South

General Discussion

14.15-15.35

**Session II: The National Picture:
Struggle for Genuine Land and
Agrarian Reform in Southeast Asia**

Premrudee Do Reung

TERRA

- Vietnam

Pham Quong Ton

Vietnamese Farmers Union

- Cambodia

Pheng Reth

Resettlement Action Network

- Philippines

Imelda Lacandazo

Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas

Bapa Jose Akmad

Mindanao Peoples' Caucus

PROGRAMME (cont.)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philippines (cont.) 	<i>Eduard Mangile</i> Cordillera Peoples' Alliance <i>Eric Cabanit</i> UNORKA <i>Alok Agarwal</i> Jan Sangharsh Morcha <i>Roy Laifungbam</i> CORE Manipur <i>Datta Patil</i> YUVA <i>Sanjay K. Rai</i> FIAN
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India 	
15.35-15.50	Break	
15.50-17.20	General Discussion	
14 December 2003		
9.00-10.20	Continue on Session II	<i>Pongtip Samranjit</i> RRAFA <i>Dethio Ramoro</i> Institute for Agrarian Reform Studies <i>Premrudee Do Reung</i> TERRA <i>Northern Farmers Alliance</i> <i>Omoli Kisku</i> Bangladesh Kishani Sabha <i>Badrul Alam</i> Bangladesh Krishok Federation <i>Bala Ram Banskota</i> All Nepal Peasant Association <i>Jaya Ghimire</i> All Nepal Women's Association
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indonesia 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thailand 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bangladesh 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nepal 	
10.20-10.35	Break	
10.35-11.20	General Discussion	
11.20-12.00	Session III. Learning from Outside Asia	<i>Isabelle Delforge</i> Focus on the Global South <i>Samantha Hargreaves</i> National Land Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Africa 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Discussion 	
12.00-13.00	Lunch	
13.00-13.40	Continue on Session III	<i>Manoel Oliveira</i> MST <i>Hector Mondragon</i> Aruc-ur-Fensuagro
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brasil 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colombia 	
13.40-14.25	General Discussion	
14.25-14.40	Break	

PROGRAMME (cont.)

14.40-17.00	Session IV: Seminar	<i>Shalmali Guttal</i> Focus on the Global South
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Occupation • Women/Gender • Indigenous Peoples and Extractive Industries • Peoples' Movements Land Reform Strategies 	
15 December 2003		
9.00-9.40	Continue on Session IV	<i>Kingkorn Narintarakul</i> Northern Development Foundation
	10 Minute Presentation of Working Groups	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous People and Extractive Industries • Gender and Land Reform 	<i>Carmina Flores</i> Philippine Peasant Institute
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Occupation • Peoples' Movements Strategies 	<i>Mary Ann Manahan</i> Focus on the Global South
		<i>Northern Farmers' Alliance</i>
		<i>Imelda Lacandazo</i> Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipina
9.40-10.00	General Discussion	
10.00-10.30	Session V: Developing Strategies: Local and Global Movements	
	10 minute presentations by:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers' rights and food sovereignty • Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform • International Organizing related to land 	<i>Indra Lubis</i> FSPI
		<i>Sofia Monsalve</i> FIAN
		<i>Peter Rosset</i> CENSA
10.30-10.45	Break	
10.45-12.00	General Debate on Strategies	
12.00-13.00	Lunch	
13.00-16.00	Session VI: Planning for Collective Strategy	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenary Discussion • Wrap Up 	<i>Shalmali and Kingkorn</i>
19.00	Party and Cultural Exchange	At Northern Farmer Alliance Center
16 December 2003		
	Field Visit to Lamphun Province	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with Community Land Reform Network • Visit Ban Raidong, Ban PaeTai and Ban Sritia 	

Asia Land Meeting

A Meeting to Share Experiences and Strategies about Land Struggles

International Centre, Chiang Mai, Thailand

December 13-16, 2003

PARTICIPANTS

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Praween Julpakdee	Land Reform for the Poors network	Anuchit Tunjae	Northern Farmer Alliance
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Suriporn Bunrod	Land Reform for the Poors network		
Suton Aimin	4 Region Slum Network		
Patum Manlam	4 Region Slum Network		
Suparat Wisila	Land network, North-East		