



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/2005/NGO/21
11 February 2005

ENGLISH, FRENCH AND SPANISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sixty-first session
Item 7 of the provisional agenda

THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

Written statement* submitted by the International federation of rural adult catholic movements (Fimarc), a non-governmental organization in roster consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[10 January 2005]

*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Implementing the right to development

A Seminar in Poland

1. On 1st May 2004, when 10 new countries became members of the European Union, the rural movements of the FIMARC held a Seminar in Poland with delegates from Central and Eastern Europe.
2. Considered by all participants as a decisive challenge for the future of mankind, the objective of food sovereignty turned out to be a mobilizing project, able to ensure success for Europe with 25 members, and maybe with 30 of them tomorrow, in solidarity with the peoples of other continents.
3. The objective also stands out as the essential condition for a true development, respecting people's rights, per country or group of countries, to define and implement their own agricultural and food policies.

The harmful role of the WTO

4. The forced liberalization of the world economy, under the aegis of the WTO, and the will to integrate the agricultural trade cause considerable damage in all the countries of the world, mainly to small producers, in the North as well as in the South. Millions of small farmers can no longer sell their production, except at a price too low to be able to make a dignified living out of their work.
5. The reform of the EU Common Agricultural Policy, started in 1992, aims first at adapting to the rules of the WTO. The concentration of production means favours the exploitations running with an intensive model, which uses a lot of inputs and pesticides. The latter pollutes water stocks and damages the soil, while producing food of a controversial quality.
6. Nevertheless, the new members of the European Union expect much from the perspectives of a better future, despite the difficulties that will certainly be generated by the existence of a lot of very small agricultural exploitations and the small number of jobs offered by industries undergoing a total restructuring process.

The right to development in the practice of the WTO

7. The rules and commercial policies of the WTO currently have a very strong impact on the realization of the right to development. The movements of the FIMARC claim that these rules and policies should be reoriented, in order to aim explicitly at the objective to reduce poverty by the year 2015. Democracy and transparency would make sure that they are used in people's interest.
8. For instance, the fact that the liberalization of trade is considered as a goal per se and not as a way to ensure people's welfare, can only leave small or poor countries out of the negotiations on specific issues, preventing them from

having their voices heard in the elaboration of decisions. Let's just mention the way the cotton dossier is dealt with between the USA and Western Africa countries.

9. The right to development also implies that the WTO should take into account the rights and viewpoints of citizens and not only governments. It is true that the WTO easily avoids this obligation, saying that they do not have to be accountable for their activities as an institution, since the delegates of the member States are the ones who make the decisions.
10. The 1986 Declaration on the right to development confirmed that *"equality of opportunities for development is a prerogative both of nations and of individuals who make up nations"* and that *"States have a duty to take, individually and jointly, measures to develop international development policies"*. Thus, it becomes urgent, for a full realization of the right to development that, to integrate this right in the institutional practice of the WTO, member States open a consultation and negotiation process to the effective participation of citizens and of the different stakeholders of development, e.g. those of the civil society.

A global partnership for development

11. The initiative taken by the Working Group on the right to development to work on the integration of the right to development in the policies and activities of financial and commercial international institutions was welcomed with satisfaction by those who wish to see the Working Group progress in the concrete implementation of the right to development.
12. The setting up of a special team with high level representatives from commercial institutions like the WTO, financial institutions like the IMF or the World Bank, with other UN institutions, should allow federating the efforts for the realization of the right to development.
13. The team's mandate should help the Working Group in its work, to focus in priority on the necessary action and not on the theoretical debate that is already sufficient. It is actually essential to study how the right to development could be made operational, including through the possible development of a binding tool and to analyze, in order to overcome them, the obstacles to the implementation of the Development Objectives for the Millennium.
14. The broadly shared awareness of the unfair nature of the international economic order, States political will and the international community commitment, the new approach of financial and commercial international institutions that integrate the right to development in their activities and

programmes, should lead to the development of a global partnership aiming at the placing the human being at the heart of development.
