

Food Sovereignty: A Peoples' based Solution to Hunger and Poverty

By [Friends of the Earth](#)

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Friends of the Earth International conference on hunger and agribusiness in Africa

DURBAN [SOUTH-AFRICA], July 15, 2011 - Friends of the Earth International is hosting a two-day conference on the threats of agribusiness in Africa, starting today in Durban, South-Africa. During the conference *"Agribusiness and Hunger policies in Africa: who are the real beneficiaries?"* [1], organisations from over 15 countries will analyse the threats of agribusiness expansion in Africa. They will work on strategies to resist agribusiness and promote real, people-based solutions to hunger. On the first day of the conference, Friends of the Earth International launched two new reports [2] related to the subject, with case studies on small-scale farming, the struggle for access to land and the protection of biodiversity. One of the reports is focused entirely on the role of women in the rural South.

While the conference focuses on Africa, the discussion on the expansion of agribusiness is relevant beyond the borders of this continent. Large scale and export-based industrial agriculture is seen as a solution to hunger and poverty, but is in fact one of the causes of the current food crisis. It leads to land grabbing and the loss of biodiversity, along with other so called 'solutions' such as food price speculation and the commercialisation of food as a commodity. While the profits of the big agribusiness transnational companies continue to grow, more and more people are affected by hunger and poverty every day.

Mariann Bassegy, food campaigner at Friends of the Earth Nigeria/ Coordinator Food Campaign Friends of the Earth Africa and present at the conference, said: "The current food crisis and other international crises urge us to build and promote truly sustainable and people-based solutions to hunger and poverty. Small-scale farming by local communities, for example, is a much better solution to hunger than monoculture plantations and food-price speculation. Such market solutions, promoted by agribusiness, only increase hunger and poverty. At Friends of the Earth International we resist such policies to tackle hunger. They reinforce the country's dependence on imported food, harm the environment and only benefit the people responsible for the crisis in the first place."

Friends of the Earth today launched two new reports at the conference:

"Women and Food Sovereignty: The voices of rural women from the south" provides an overview of the situation of peasant women in the Global South. The document showcases the problems faced by these women, as well as their different forms of

resistance and struggle in demand for food sovereignty. It includes testimonies of rural women from Africa, Latin America and Asia. They explain why it is necessary to struggle for access to land, for the conservation of seeds and for small-scale farming.

“For the Land that Feeds us: Experiences of struggle and victories to continue building food sovereignty in different territories” is a case study report with examples of communities and small farmers that produce or obtain their food locally and sustainably, instead of depending on large scale agriculture. It highlights the strategic role played by peasant agriculture, urban agroecology and family farming in the defense of territories and the resistance to the advance of monoculture plantations. The report provides a political analysis of the current situation and shows how important peasants, indigenous peoples and young people are for the improvement, use and conservation of biodiversity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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NOTES:

[1] The program of the the conference “Agribusiness and Hunger policies in Africa: can be downloaded here: <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2011/hunger-conference-programme/>

[2] “Women and Food Sovereignty” is available in English and Spanish and can be downloaded here:
EN: <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2011/women-and-food-sovereignty/>

ES:
<http://www.foei.org/es/recursos/publicaciones/pdfs-por-ano/2011/mujeres-y-soberania-alimentaria/>

For the land that feeds us” is available in English, French and Spanish and can be downloaded here:

EN: <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2011/for-the-land-that-feeds-us/view>

ES:
<http://www.foei.org/es/recursos/publicaciones/pdfs-por-ano/2011/por-la-tierra-que-nos-alimenta/view>

FR: <http://www.foei.org/fr/publications/pdfs/pour-la-terre-qui-nous-nourrit/view>

Friends of the Earth International sees Food Sovereignty as a peoples’ based solution to

hunger and poverty. It is the peoples' right to ecological and culturally appropriate food that is sufficiently nutritious, the right to determine the way their food is produced and distributed and the right of [rural and peasant] communities to determine the way they produce and consume their food.

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