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“Agricultural development within the rural-urban continuum”

People at the Center: Food Sovereignty and Human Rights Compliant Rural Urban Continuum Development

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Abstract

The links between agricultural and food production, how and where food is produced, access and control over productive resources (land, water, seeds, etc.), land grabbing, impact of agriculture on the environment, control over the food system overall, access to adequate and healthy diets, and food consumption patterns and quality of life are undeniable. The persistence of unacceptable high prevalence of hunger, micronutrient deficiency associated with increasing rates of overweight and obesity, especially among women and lower income populations, in a world that is wealthier than ever before in history, and fully capable of producing enough food to adequately feed all human beings, have put in question the present model of agricultural development and, in special, the governance of the food system overall. This state of affairs goes hand in hand with the enormous concentration of economic and political power in the hands of the private corporate agrifoodbusiness sector, and national and international public policies that not only fail to regulate them, but in reality serve these interests. It is fundamental that people across the food chain (production, harvest, process, marketing, consumption. . .), and across the life span and diversity (gender, race, ethnicity, income/class, nation. . .), and across urban and rural spaces, and in and out of food production work need to be put at the centre of policy making at all levels, be food sovereign and have their human right to adequate food and nutrition realised. In this, it is also central to reaffirm that this will only be reached with the full promotion and protection of women’s human rights. Civil society organisations and social movements have organised themselves in a global network for the right to food and nutrition that seeks to bring together people from all walks of life, urban and rural, struggling for a human rights compliant food system. Academic and research institutions must strengthen their alliance with public interest civil society organisations, and guarantee its capacity to think outside the box and serve public interest. This will only be possible if it maintains its independence from and its critical view of private corporate sector interests.

Keywords: global network on the right to food and nutrition, women’s human rights, agribusiness, agricultural production, food sovereignty, food system, governance of the food system, human right to adequate food and nutrition, hunger, land grabbing, malnutrition