

Excellencies and Delegates,

all Honorable Guests of the UN Debate on Human Rights in the Light of the 50th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights.

I am extremely thankful for the chance to raise the question about the situation of the peasants and small scale farmers in the so called developed countries as well as for the pastoral tribes, peasants and indigenous subsistence farmers in the so called developing countries who are lost and forgotten about their daily struggle.

They do have no lobby. Although some work has been already done in the past concerning the rights of seeds and food. These activities are highly appreciated, but they are only within a particular approach and do not cover the situation and needs as a whole which is urgently needed for the struggle of the rural peasants, small scale farmers, subsistence farming family and pastoral tribes concerning its recognition by governmental bodies and international organizations.

Message

The Human Rights Convention is so far not covering the specific situation of small scale and indigenous farmers, pastoral tribes and their rural societies. They are the forgotten losers in decades of industrial development and global trade. They are robbed of their common assets as e.g. their autochthone plants and animal breeds which they have developed themselves as their treasures and values over centuries. We call that bio piracy.

Traditional and rare breeds and rare plants are often taken by multinationals as resources for their business cases and manufacturing of valuable and economic feasible products, but the small scale farmers and indigenous people remain robbed without any compensation.

But again: these breeds and plants are the common assets of the rural societies which were developed by them over centuries by domestication and natural preservation! These are their assets and the foundation of subsistence farming and serve substantially to the income of their rural societies.

As soon as third parties have taken and copied these breed and plants, the multinationals put their patent upon these breeds and plants generating their commercial profit out of the assets and values that belong to peasants and indigenous farming communities.

Even the indigenous knowledge of those rural and indigenous societies, passed on orally through generations and centuries, is not covered and not protected by WIPO, the “UN World Intellectual Property Organization” since it is still not considered as a valuable knowledge by the developed industrial societies.

Furthermore free access to land and to the natural resources by peasants and pastoral tribes is often banned and blocked due to political and economical influence and actions.

Peasants and small scale farmers and food producers are as well the losers in commercial markets since they do not get their fair share upon the commercialization of their products along the value chain. The prevailing local, national and global terms of trade and its framework are benefitting the multinational traders and local producers remain poor and in poverty.

These attempts against the rural farmer communities, peasants, pastoral tribes and people in rural areas in general, leads to starvation, social discrimination and legal injustice and effects their human situation more than even weapons and war.

Its a silent commercial war against those marginated people. They are in a process of losing their fundamental rights and assets and getting the modern slaves of worldwide monopolized capital and commercial imperialism.

Recommendations

As these peasants, small scale and indigenous farmers, pastoral tribes and people living in rural areas are highly underprivileged and are the victims of the commercial global trade, they have to be enabled with a legal framework to claim their basic rights in order to defend their common assets and their cultural life.

This is a highly relevant issue for combatting discrimination and inequalities, strengthening governance and access to justice in order to enable them an active share and participation on the wealth of modern human societies.

It is further proved, that rural farmers who are employing natural friendly and organic practices, are factor 4 more efficient in the production of food and agricultural products as the industrial/chemical farming systems.

This means, since in future efficiency in sustainable agrarian systems have to be measured and proved upon natural and energy balances as well as external costs and values, these small scale farmers will even play a substantial role in feeding the world and the fight against starvation.

So action has to be taken to realize the protection of the values and agrarian systems of the peasants, small scale farmers, pastoral tribes and indigenous subsistence farmers within rural societies leading to a “Convention for the Protection of Peasant’s Rights”. This will contribute also to the progress on peace, food security and sustainable development of global societies.

Conclusion:

As I am myself also a rural peasant on our family farm, I am now more than 35 years engaged and committed to rural development projects with small scale farmers and indigenous people in Africa, Asia, Arabic and European countries.

My long term experience as agricultural expert gave me a deep insight into rural cultural life and its issues. I experienced quite often the constraints of rural life and the under privileged situation of the rural farmers, pasture tribes, nomadic and landless people.

As these rural people and societies have developed over centuries the natural treasures of animal and plant breeds, nowadays their assets are subject to bio piracy and taken as business case by the large international agrochemical companies.

The poor farmers and rural people are just a lawless standby. Their treasures are taken and robbed just as they would be a free source to anybody. So they are remaining poor, not getting share out of their indigenous values.

Other issues are landgrabbing, environmental pollution and patents on so called wild medicinal plants and the indigenous knowledge upon it.

I am convinced that only a legal framework for the protection of the peasants rights can solve this worldwide problem. All project work in rural areas will be useless and blamed, if at the end the large international capital takes away the values of whom the farmers and rural people should be benefitted.

All stakeholders interested and engaged into those important issues are kindly invited to join and participate in our “Global Peasants Rights Congress” that will take place in Schwäbisch Hall and Kirchberg, Germany, held from 8th-10th of March 2017.

Thank you for your kind attention.