

## Press release

*The voice of the majority of farmers in WTO is not being heard*

### **NO agreement on agriculture but worldwide agreement between farmers**

*Hong-Kong, December, 17<sup>th</sup>, 2005 – Farmers organisations from 50 countries in all continents agreed today to denounce the way negotiations on agriculture are driven. They ask for an international regulation of agricultural trade: this regulation should be based on food sovereignty.*

Family farming, practised by the large majority of the 3 billion farmers, has much to fear from a new slump in tariffs and domestic support. On no continent can family farming endure yet a new fall in agricultural prices, nor can it sustain new surges of imports in domestic markets. To accept such a situation, is to condemn family farming and to pursue the exclusion, each year, of tens of millions of farmers' families who then join the billion people living in poverty.

**After having set up a symbolic action yesterday in the Conference Centre aimed at leading negotiators towards the forums of agricultural organisations, these organisations of farmers and producers invited the press to hear their unanimous position.**

While countries continue to express numerous divergences on agriculture, organisations representing family farmers share a common concern: the disappearance of farmers around the world must be stopped. **Farmers need remunerative prices not charity.**

These organisations warn that free trade will, first and foremost, benefit large-scale corporate farming and multi-national traders in developed and advanced developing countries.

Today, it is together that they come to address the press. They remind us that there is not ONE global agriculture but MANY types of agricultures, which are also reflected in these agricultural organizations. Even though the statement is identical, the facts speak for themselves: the lack of control over supply and the flow of agricultural products together with the loss of market power of the producers exclude family farming with a major economic risk in the countryside. They remind the principle of food sovereignty and request the right to protect their domestic markets.

“After our experience with low and unstable returns from export oriented markets, we chose to implement a supply management system, which is based on collective bargaining and production controls. This system provides agricultural producers with stable remuneration. We refuse to accept trade rules that, through the lowering of tariffs, and tariff quota expansion, condemn a system that works well for agricultural producers and consumers alike,” **said André Beaudoin, director general of UPA – DI, Canada.**

**NDiogou Fall, president of ROPPA<sup>1</sup> (a network that brings together 10 national farmers organizations from West Africa)** stressed that: “The real market access that we are looking for is access to our own national and regional markets. This is why it is imperative that our States be able to ensure protection of our domestic markets when faced with low priced imports by being given the right to raise tariffs and use fast and effective safeguard mechanisms. WTO rules, like the pressure from the World Bank and the IMF, prevent our governments from being able to make decisions that favor our development.”

**According to Georges Naylor, of the National Family Farms Coalition / NFFC (United States):** “While it is true that our family farms often cover areas greater than 100 ha, the low prices derived from

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<sup>1</sup>*ROPPA: Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*

the market do not provide sufficient income. Domestic support that insufficiently compensates for these low prices is often denounced in international debates. Like all producers, we would prefer to receive our income directly from the sale of our products. Remunerative prices make this possible, while rendering subsidies unnecessary.”

**Altemir Tortelli of FETRAF-CUT (Brazil)** <sup>2</sup> said : “The “latifundistas” associated with the agri-food conglomerates intervene at the international level with the same aggressiveness that they demonstrated in Brazil, where they are the ones who appointed the minister of agriculture and of commerce. For us, family farmers of Brazil, what is essential is not access to international markets but instead access to our domestic market and the move towards agrarian reform in order to eradicate hunger within the Brazilian population”.

« Japan is a big importer of food products. As in most Asian countries, our agriculture is based on small scale farms - I myself own a 2.5 ha farm – that we really need to protect. The position of Japan has been denounced as isolated and specific. My colleagues here show that on the contrary, we are in the majority”  
**M. Chochuemon, from the coalition of farmers, consumers and workers of Japan** said.

**Xavier Beulin, from COPA (farmers organisations from 25 countries in Europe)**, concluded: “The current Agreement on Agriculture doesn’t take our concerns into account. This so-called « development » round will in fact create more poverty. We ask for crucial steps to be taken towards the right to protect local markets and to regulate supply on domestic and international markets”.

#### **Organisations supporting this initiative :**

- Alberto Broch, **CONTAG (Brazil)** / T: +55 61 81 34 03 89
- Altemir Tortelli, **FETRAF-CUT (Brazil)** / T: 95 77 06 55 – Portuguese speaking)
- **Comission national de fomento rural de Uruguay**, tel 598 2 200 35 19 / 598 2 204 01 33.
- Ndiogou Fall, **ROPPA (organizations from 10 countries in West Africa)** / T: 62 74 74 63 – French speaking)
- Philip Kiriro; **Eastern Africa Farmers federation (organizations from 10 countries in East Africa)** (tel : Sheraton room1574).
- André Beaudoin, **UPA (Canada)** / T: +377 476 15 373 – French speaking Fernando Lopez,
- George Naylor, **National Family Farm Coalition, NFFC (USA)** / T: 90 17 92 69
- Xavier Beulin, **COPA (organizations from 25 countries in Europe)** / T: 61 49 92 85
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To get in contact with these organizations when they are back home from Hong Kong, please see [www.dakardeclaration.org](http://www.dakardeclaration.org)

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<sup>2</sup> *Member of FETRAF-Brésil (Family farmers federation)*