

## Post-tsunami meet

# The Medan Declaration

## Declaration on “Rebuilding Peasants’ and Fisherfolk’s Livelihoods After the Earthquake and Tsunami Catastrophes”

Organizations of peasants, fisher peoples and victims of the earthquake and tsunami of 26 December 2004, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work with, and support, peasants’ and fishers’ organizations, came together at the “Regional Conference on Rebuilding Peasants’ and Fisherfolk’s Livelihoods After the Earthquake and Tsunami Catastrophes” between the 17th and 19th of February 2005. Over 80 participants from 11 countries, representing around 20 organizations, were present.

On the 17th February some of the participants visited Serdang Bedagai, North Sumatra. And then the participants participated in a field trip to Aceh on the 20th -21st of February, visiting Banda Aceh, Sigli, Bireun, Lhokseumawe, Langsa and Medan, the six coordination centres of the KSKBA (Koalisi Solidaritas Kemanusiaan Bencana Alam di Aceh dan Sumatera Utara—Coalition of Humanitarian Solidarity for Natural Disaster in Aceh and North Sumatra).

The tragic effects on the lives, property, livelihoods and socioeconomic basis of hundreds of thousands of people in the tsunami-affected regions of Asia and Africa are immense, and an important part of the victims are peasants and small-scale, artisanal, traditional, beach-based, labour-intensive fishing communities, living in marginalized socioeconomic conditions.

Over 220,000 people died and many others are still missing. We are in solidarity with their families and communities, whose lives and livelihoods have been shattered by this unprecedented disaster. We recognize and acknowledge the immediate support

and commitment of all the people and groups that have shown great solidarity with the victims of the tsunami catastrophe.

The victims, their communities and social organizations must be enabled to rebuild their livelihoods themselves. Victims of the tsunami, their communities and organizations have to be the key actors in rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

Such rebuilding has to be done by the people, should be democratic and non-discriminatory, and lead to improved and sustainable livelihoods. Traditional ecological knowledge systems for protecting and managing natural ecosystems, biodiversity and human habitats, have to play a central role in this.

Especially in disaster situations such as this, it is crucial to strengthen peasants’ and fisherfolk organizations as key actors that defend the interests of these communities and support coalitions, networks and campaigns to further the cause of peasants and farming communities.

It is essential to guarantee that funds are utilized for building public infrastructure for fishing and peasant communities, like water and sanitation, free schooling, public housing and building of religious centres, and medical facilities that provide free healthcare and basic medicines.

### Women and children

In the tsunami relief and rehabilitation work, special attention has to be given to children by setting up educational, and health and trauma care infrastructure especially designed for them. Women and elderly people, particularly those who have lost all their relatives, also need specific attention.

**R**elief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts for the tsunami victims have to be transparent. People have the right to know where the funds go and for what they are used. International and national NGOs and institutions have to respond to the agenda and demands articulated by organizations and communities of fisherfolk and peasants for the rebuilding of their livelihoods in the long term.

There is a need for autonomous, independent disaster management and preparedness agencies, as well as early warning systems, both nationally, regionally and internationally, which should be done by the people themselves. These bodies should be co-ordinated by democratically elected committees, should respect human rights and be aided by experts and supporters of fishing and peasant communities.

We call on governments, international institutions and other policy-making bodies as well as NGOs and peoples' organizations to support and guarantee the following rights for small-scale farmers, peasants and fisherfolk in the tsunami-affected regions:

**In the case of peasant communities:**

- Houses have to be rebuilt in their original locations, based on traditional practices and local knowledge, in contrast to some

official attempts to relocate people under the pretext of safety. In case of potential safety problems, a dialogue with the affected communities should lead to an adequate solution, also for the communities concerned.

- Ensure that peasants are not displaced from their own traditional lands and homes, and that they can stay on their farms.
- Guarantee clear and unambiguous rights to their lands, including recognizing customary rights where applicable; ensure clearly defined demarcation of boundaries of the lands they have been living in before the tsunami devastation; and, in case of land being wiped out by the tsunami, guarantee equitable provision of land to the peasants.
- Systems for irrigation, traditional wells, sanitation and potable drinking water have to be rehabilitated. Peasants and their organizations must have a clear say in the planning and execution process, including initiatives for soil desalination.
- Rehabilitation efforts have to ensure that land appropriated by transnational corporations or

other vested interests will be returned to peasant owners.

- Rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts have to take into account people's food sovereignty, including a genuine agrarian reform programme.
- We demand that national authorities reject genetically modified (GM) food aid and any imported food aid that depresses local prices, purchasing food locally wherever possible, and matching local cultural and social tastes and preferences.
- Ensure a fair and equitable trading and market system that will guarantee remunerative prices for crops and reasonable costs for inputs at the national level.
- General training and education for building up human resources among peasants, and training centres for organic agriculture have to be established. Promote, in tsunami-hit areas, the practice of organic agriculture as an alternative to the pressure by multinational companies for transgenic seeds or genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and industrial agricultural production.

- Co-operatives managed by peasants and their organizations must be set up as well as transportation infrastructure for agricultural products.

**In the case of fishers and their coastal communities:**

- Design housing projects that are safe and appropriate for fisherfolk and coastal communities engaged in beach-based fishing activities.
- Prevent private corporate interests, including in the tourism and travel industry, from appropriating coastal areas for profit-making activities.
- Ensure that craft and gear for small-scale fishing communities are designed and manufactured by traditional artisanal fishworkers.
- Make certain that government aid for fisheries development goes to small-scale traditional fishing communities, and not to large-scale, mechanized, harbour-based fishing interests.
- Prevent the eviction of fishing communities from coastal areas and recognize their rights of access to, and management of, coastal resources.

- Enforce legislation to ensure fishing zones only for traditional, small-scale fishers, with distances to be determined as locally appropriate, in consultation with fishing communities and their organizations.
- Ensure that rehabilitation plans involve fishers, their communities and organizations, respecting customary law and traditional rights and practices.
- Emphasize that, while rejecting the neoliberal agenda for reconstruction and rehabilitation, fishers and their organizations stress that the above principles should be applicable for all disasters, big or small.
- Strengthen local, national, regional and international organizations of fisherfolk and fishing communities.

As NGOs and other organizations that work in support of peasant and fisherfolk organizations and communities, we commit ourselves to:

- Support the defence of labour-intensive, beach-based fisheries and the livelihood interests of peasants, as well as the monitoring of relief and reconstruction efforts.
- Raise awareness and campaign against dumping of discarded fishing vessels in tsunami-affected areas.
- Support initiatives by the victims and their communities for a social audit of relief and reconstruction efforts so that they can control how and for what purposes funds are used.
- Demand that governments of tsunami-hit countries desist from anti-people and anti-democratic activities and policies, and respect the rights of the people for justice, without any discrimination whatsoever, whether this relates to their nationality, ethnicity or

religious beliefs, and guarantee the safety of all those engaged in relief and rehabilitation work.

- Press international NGOs to respond to the capacity-building and other requirements of fisherfolk and peasant organizations in order to strengthen themselves, and to fisherfolk and peasants to rebuild their livelihoods according to their needs.

*Adopted on the 21st of February 2005 at Langsa, Aceh, Indonesia by the following participants of the Regional Conference on Rebuilding Peasants' and Fisherfolk's Livelihoods After the Earthquake and Tsunami Catastrophes.*

#### **Signatories:**

The affected fisherfolk and peasant organizations

National organizations:

- Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia (FSPI), Indonesia
- National Fisheries Solidarity (NAFSO) and Movement for National Land and Agricultural Reform (MONLAR), Sri Lanka
- National Fishworkers Forum (NFF), India
- Federation of Southern Fisherfolk (FSF), Thailand

International organizations:

- Via Campesina
- World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP)

NGOs and other organizations supporting peasant and fisherfolk organizations present at the Conference:

- Green Movement of Sri Lanka
- OXFAM Solidarity, Belgium
- International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)



- MORE AND BETTER, Italy
- Centro Internazionale Crocevia, Italy
- Focus on the Global South, Thailand
- INSIST, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- YSIK, Jakarta, Indonesia
- YBA, Aceh, Indonesia
- JALA, Medan, Indonesia
- LEUHAM, Aceh, Indonesia
- SBSU, Medan, Indonesia
- SINTESA, Medan, Indonesia
- LENTERA, Medan, Indonesia
- KAU, Jakarta, Indonesia
- Coordinadora de Residentes de Tlatelolco (CODE), Mexico
- CECAM, Mexico
- Japan National Confederation of Farmers' Movement (NOUMINREN), Tokyo, Japan
- Confederation Paysan, France
- Catalan Department for Cooperation and Development, Spain
- Hyogo Research and Quake Restoration Centre, Kobe, Japan

This declaration was adopted on the 21 February 2005 at Langsa, Aceh, Indonesia by the participants of the "Regional Conference on Rebuilding Peasants' and Fisherfolk's Livelihoods After the Earthquake and Tsunami Catastrophes"