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CETIM Rue J.-C. Amat 6
1202 Genève - Suisse
Tél: +41(0)22 731 59 63
www.cetim.ch
contact@cetim.ch



“ There is not one developed world
and one underdeveloped world
just one maldeveloped world ”

EDITORIAL

Last September, at the UN Summit of the Future, many heads of State undertook to work towards a secure, fair and sustainable world. However, the 56 measures put forward in the Pact for the Future that emerged from the meeting are nothing more than a wish list, with no real substance.

While the Pact takes up crucial issues such as poverty, peace, climate change and gender equality, its implementation is bound up with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Yet the SDGs do not call into question the current economic policies that are at the root of the maldevelopment and inequalities that continue to spread across the world. What's more, their implementation is mainly entrusted to transnational corporations which, far from being charitable institutions, are motivated solely by short-term profits for their shareholders.

While leaders recognise the urgent need for a change of course to forestall a crisis-ridden future, they seem to overlook the fact that the SDGs, in their current form, are not an adequate response to the challenges. Moreover, the Pact makes no mention of

the need to strengthen public services, which are crucial to combating inequality and guaranteeing economic, social and cultural rights.

The Pact also takes up the matter of the reform of the UN, and in particular of the Security Council. The Council is still dominated by five permanent members whose interests frequently diverge and each of whom has a right of veto, a structure that makes any reform difficult, particularly in a context of growing geopolitical polarisation. For example, the United States, the world's leading power, does not abide by the UN Charter, imposing sanctions on countries that oppose its interests and supporting States that commit serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

All in all, the Summit of the Future failed to relaunch meaningful international cooperation, a failure that could have serious repercussions in the future, by exacerbating global tensions and crises. Once again, the prospects of change seem to slip out of our grasp, while global challenges remain pressing and unresolved.

TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS

NEW POWER GRAB AGAINST THE TREATY ON TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS

The 10th session of the UN intergovernmental working group was initially scheduled for the end of October 2024. But just a month before the planned date, the working group presidency (currently held by the government of the Republic of Ecuador) announced that the session was being moved to the end of December 2024.

As a reminder, since 2014, the intergovernmental working group discusses and negotiates the development of a binding legal framework to regulate the activities of transnational corporations (TNCs) and ensure access to justice for victims in the event of violations of their human rights. As we have said many times before, this process has a considerable political and legal significance, given that it seeks to tackle the complex workings and mechanisms that grant the impunity that these entities benefit from on an international scale. Furthermore, this process has provided, and continues to provide, social and civil movements with a fundamental political advocacy space, which allows them to consolidate the articulation and coordination of this fight - be it on the ground or at an institutional level. This process involves key interests of the dominant international economic system, which explains why objections made against it have not stopped since they first began.

The decision to delay the 10th session of the intergovernmental working group until the end of December (specifically from the 16 until the 20 December) is a unilateral and arbitrary decision, one which undoubtedly seeks to put an end to negotiations. Holding the session on that date means that most of the diplomatic representatives from the Global South, social movements and members of civil society, will not be able to take part. This is due to a number of reasons (expensive flights, holiday period, etc.). The legitimacy and the inclusive and democratic nature of the process has been impacted by the decision of the Presidency.

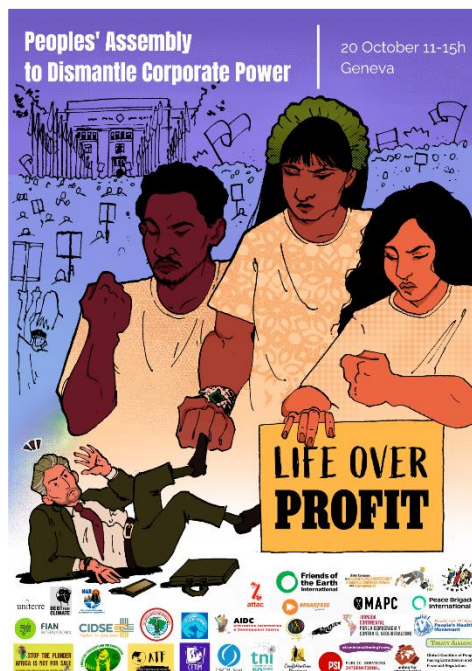
The Global Campaign (a coalition of nearly 205 social movements, organisations and representatives from communities impacted by TNCs, whose relations with the UN are coordinated by CETIM) has not stood

by and watched this recent power grab. To make the most of the numerous activists from organisations and social movements being in Geneva in October, an Assembly to dismantle corporate power has been organised. The goal of this event has been to serve as a forum for reflection and discussion to better consolidate the Global Campaign as a united front for the people's fight against multinationals, as well as a place to elaborate collective strategies and collective action. This assembly brought together analysis of the international context and the challenges posed by multinationals, from the perspectives of the different regions and sectors represented. It was decided that the global campaign should serve as a space for creating international solidarity and play a key role in providing viable alternatives to the dominant system based on the power of multinationals.

In this regard, if the UN is a space of relevant institutional struggles that are necessary for political advocacy that the people and movements must continue to invest in, we must also create alternatives to face up to transnational corporations, especially based

on ongoing struggles, together with other regional, national, and international issues. This is why organisations that are members of the Global Campaign are launching initiatives in the form of legal standards to regulate the activity of multinationals based in their country.

As representatives of the dominant neoliberal economic system, the fight against transnational corporations must be broadened on all possible levels. We need to come together, across all sectors on the ground, to stand up against these economic giants and build an opposition that can stand up to the multidimensional crisis that the system is forcing us into.





A NEW TRADING SYSTEM TO PROTECT BIODIVERSITY AND PEASANTS' RIGHTS.

Since 1995, the WTO Agreement on Agriculture has favored aggressive trade policies of the Western powers, which regulate markets and limit support for small-scale food producers in developing countries. In addition, bilateral and regional free-trade agreements reinforce the domination of transnational corporations (TNCs) over agricultural land, intensifying their monopoly over these resources and threatening biodiversity.

As part of the 10th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development of the UN, which took place from 28-30 October in Geneva, CETIM and La Via Campesina presented a joint statement on the fundamental issue of the impact of the dominant trading system on the protection of biodiversity.

The increasing commodification of nature, notably through biopiracy, is indeed a major challenge. This phenomenon consists in privatizing plant genetic resources by patenting the DNA of plants and seeds. These practices are often supported by coercive trade regimes such as intellectual property agreements or the WTO's TRIPS agreements, which favor TNCs' monopoly on food chains while contributing to the degradation of ecosystems.

The use of genetic engineering and synthetic biology technologies exacerbates this situation. The practice of manipulating genomes is likely to have unpredictable consequences for biodiversity and will compromise traditional food production. At the same time, at the COP16 biodiversity conference in Colombia, the biodiversity credit market was confirmed. This mechanism, similar to the carbon credit market, leads to increased commodification of nature and land grabbing, further threatening biodiversity and denying rural populations' sovereignty over natural resources, which in turn makes it impossible for them to define their own models of rural development.

Faced with these challenges, we urgently need to establish a new trading system based on protection of peasants' rights, biodiversity and food sovereignty.

This system must be based on fundamental texts such as Article 9 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT-PGRFA) and Article 19 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other Rural Workers (UNDROP). These articles are essential for safeguarding biodiversity and recognizing the value of traditional knowledge of peasant and indigenous communities (including peasant seed systems).

The fair distribution of land and the implementation of agrarian reforms are crucial. They must aim to increase the land devoted to agroecology in opposition to the concentration of land by large corporations that favor monocultures. Such a system must favor cooperation over competition, solidarity over sanctions, and rights over profit.

Faced with the above challenges, La Via Campesina proposes a new trade framework to support rural economies, promote diversified food systems, and ensure that the rights of peasants, indigenous peoples and agricultural workers are at the heart of international cooperation.

The UN Declarations on the Rights of Peasants and on the Right to Development should form the basis of this initiative, enabling trade to be reoriented towards the principles of food sovereignty and self-determination.

Read CETIM's Declaration: <https://urls.fr/ZZKupQ>

PEASANTS' RIGHTS



THE UN WORKING GROUP ON PEASANTS' RIGHTS HAS PRESENTED ITS FIRST REPORT

For a long time, peasants and rural communities have been marginalised and have been victims of discrimination. However, with the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP), a new chapter has opened for the promotion and protection of their fundamental rights. A new step has just been taken with the creation of the United Nations Working Group on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

During the 57th session of the Human Rights Council, the new Working Group presented its first annual report. In part one, the report focuses on the context of the mandate and history of the process which led to the adoption of the UNDROP, then it covers the way in which the group conceives its mandate and its future vision.

The report insists on the role that the rights holders of the UNDROP will have to play in the process of promoting and implementing the UNDROP.

It is also worth noting that the report focusses at length on the different types of structural and systemic discrimination that the peasants and other people working in rural areas are subjected to due to the current dominant economic system. A system that promotes the concentration of land in the hands of agribusiness and big property owners, creating dynamics of dispossession of the peasantry.

A side event for peasants' rights

On the occasion of the 57th session of the Human Rights Council, the CETIM and its partners organised a parallel event called "The Right of Peasant and Rural Populations to Determine their own Food Systems: Food Sovereignty to Tackle the Multi-Dimensional Crisis".

This side event was an opportunity to discuss the key structural issues that will determine to what extent current and future food systems and models are part of a perspective of protecting the rights of rural populations which are more vulnerable under the dominant agrifood system. It was also about presenting examples of good practice which show how peasants and rural communities can take ownership of the process at different institutional levels.

This includes participation in discussions and negotiations that affect their lives, thus enabling them to promote the tangible implementation of the provisions of the UNDROP. These efforts will progress towards achieving food sovereignty and the right to food for all, and more broadly to support realising the sovereignty of peoples and states and their right to self-determination.

THE RIGHT OF PEASANTS AND RURAL PEOPLE TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN FOOD SYSTEMS:
Food Sovereignty to Tackle the Multidimensional Crisis

MODERATION:
H.E.Ms. **Maira Macdonal** – Ambassador of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to the UN

SPEAKERS:

- Ms. **Geneviève Savigny** – Chair of the UN Working Group on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in the Rural Areas
- Mr. **Mihir Kanade** – Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development
- Mr. **Daniel Uribe** – Lead Programme Officer at the South Centre
- Mr. **Diego Monton** – La Via Campesina, MNCI Somos Tierra (Movimiento Nacional Campesino Indígena somos Tierra – Argentina)
- Ms. **Yasmeen El-Hasan** – La Via Campesina, Union of Agricultural Working Committees (Palestine)
- Video-message by World Forum of Fisher People

SIDE EVENT
57th session of the UN Human Rights Council
PALAIS DES NATIONS – ROOM XXV
THURSDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER 2024
10:30–11:30 AM

Read the Working Group's report:

<https://defendingpeasantsrights.org/en/first-report-of-the-un-working-group-on-undrop/>

Read our joint written declaration:

https://www.cetim.ch/wp-content/uploads/Written_Statement_UNDROP_offic-ENG.pdf

Watch the video of the side event (with English subtitles):

www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TA4MpLRy5Q

HUMAN RIGHTS

PERU: ALERT – CRIMINALISATION OF PROTESTERS

Peru has been in an unprecedented political and social crisis since December 2022, when President Pedro Castillo was removed from office and arbitrarily imprisoned.

A de facto government took power and street demonstrations were organised to protest against the institutional coup d'état. The subsequent bloody crackdown resulted in the summary, extrajudicial and arbitrary execution of more than 60 victims. Since then, the criminalisation of social protest has continued. The CETIM is monitoring the situation closely and has referred the matter to the UN human rights protection mechanisms.

The UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of association and peaceful assembly, Ms. Gina Romero, presented a mission report on Peru, drafted by her predecessor, Mr. Clément N. Voule, to the 56th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council. The report highlights the extent of the socio-political crisis in which Peru has been mired since December 2022.

The Special Rapporteur called on the Peruvian government to implement the recommendations made in her predecessor's report. The Peruvian authorities should encourage a national dialogue, involving the communities affected (specifically indigenous and rural communities) in order to restore social cohesion. Legal and political reforms should be launched to ensure full compliance with international standards on this subject and to allow everyone access to fair justice.

When the report on the visit to Peru was presented, CETIM took the floor to draw attention to the repression and criminalisation of social movements' efforts to obtain justice. We also recalled our advocacy work with human rights protection mechanisms in support of Peruvian peasant organisations. We urged the Peruvian government to implement the report's recommendations through concrete measures.

Highlighting the issues

On 1 July 2024, CETIM co-organised a side event at the 56th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, entitled "The quest for accountability for the violations of freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in Peru: Challenges and perspectives". The aim was to create a space for dialogue to identify challenges and possible solutions to the current situation in Peru.

The various speakers brought unique and constructive points of view to bear on this multi-dimensional crisis, reminding us that the freedoms of peaceful assembly and association are the pillars of a democratic society and must be exercised by all without discrimination, in particular by those populations historically dispossessed by a racist and predatory (neo)colonial system.



For more information :

www.cetim.ch/peru-2

Read CETIM's oral statement in Spanish: [www.cetim.ch/wp-content/uploads/Dec_o_Peru-Final ES.pdf](http://www.cetim.ch/wp-content/uploads/Dec_o_Peru-Final_ES.pdf)

See the video of the side event: https://urls.fr/x_Bo2m

Photo by Candy Sotomayor ©

HUMAN RIGHTS

ARGENTINA: ALARMING FOOD CRISIS AND HUMAN RIGHTS RESTRICTIONS

During the 57th session of the UN Human Rights Council, the CETIM and the Centre of Social and Legal Studies (CELS) sounded the alarm about the critical human rights situation in Argentina. The two organisations highlighted the deep food crisis that the country is experiencing as a result of the adjustment policies of Javier Milei's new ultraliberal government.

Since coming to power, Javier Milei has stopped providing resources and food to community kitchens in the country, plunging hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people, primarily children, into food insecurity. In May 2024, it was revealed that the Ministry of Human Capital had stored 5,000 tonnes of undistributed food since December. This situation caused the percentage of households experiencing signs of food insecurity to increase to 20.6%. According to UNICEF, 7.7 million children are consuming less meat and dairy products, and at least one million of those children go to bed without dinner or having skipped one daily meal.

Poverty has increased from 44% to 52% in one year in Argentina, while annual inflation recorded in July reached 285%. Minimal pension payments or minimum salary are not enough to cover basic necessities, which specifically impacts the economic, social and cultural rights of the working class, people and communities which are already vulnerable. In response to this critical situation and the mobilisation of popular movements, the government restricted the right to protest.

Repression of social movements

The declaration of CETIM and the CELS denounces the unprecedented food crisis that Argentina is facing.

It also denounces the protocol approved by the government stipulating that any public protest that involves occupying streets and roads constitutes a blatant crime. This same protocol authorises the police to reprimand, evacuate and arrest protesters without judicial order. Since this rule has been enacted, at least 93 people have been arbitrarily arrested across the country, including elderly people and children, and hundreds of people have been injured by non-lethal weapons. A mechanism has also been drafted to target movements that participate in protests, aiming to discourage mobilisation.

In light of this alarming situation, the two organisations call on the Human Rights Council to closely monitor the situation and to activate its relevant mechanisms and bodies to lobby the government to uphold its international human rights commitments.

A full report on the emergency food situation and the Argentinian government repressive policies will also be presented to the UN mechanisms.

Read the CETIM and the CELS' declaration
in Spanish : www.cetim.ch/wp-content/uploads/Dec_o_GD4-Argentina.pdf



FIND OUT ABOUT CETIM'S LATEST INTERVENTIONS AT THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL



PERU: CRIMINALIZATION OF SOCIAL PROTESTS

CETIM's statement at the 56th session of the Human Rights Council sounds the alarm on the explosive situation of social protests in Peru, which have intensified since December 2022. CETIM supports indigenous and peasant organizations on the front line, highlighting their crucial role in defending human rights and promoting social justice.

CETIM urges the Council and its mechanisms to closely monitor the situation in Peru and exhorts the de facto government to implement the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur. These recommendations, which address the root causes of the protests, including racism, colonialism and the dispossession of marginalized communities, must be implemented without delay.

Read the oral declaration in Spanish:

www.cetim.ch/wp-content/uploads/Dec_o_Peru-Financial_ES.pdf

PEASANTRY AT RISK: THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Peasants and rural communities, often considered the guardians of biodiversity, are bearing the full brunt of the climate crisis. While they are adopting sustainable agricultural practices, agribusiness is causing environmental degradation and dispossession and is monopolizing food systems for financial gain. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants (UNDROP) is an essential tool for tackling these challenges, but action is urgently needed to protect those who feed us and care for our planet.

Read the oral declaration :

www.cetim.ch/wp-content/uploads/Dec_o_Climate-change-1.pdf

FAILURE TO ACHIEVE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: A CALL TO ACTION

The UN Secretary-General's report, "Our Common Agenda", highlights the resounding failure of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report underlines the ineffectiveness of current strategies in the face of growing global crises, such as poverty, conflict and the environmental crisis. Indeed, to turn things around, it is imperative to adopt bold solutions such as tax justice and the promotion of economic and social rights.

Read the written declaration :

www.cetim.ch/wp-content/uploads/Written_Statement_SOFT_offic-ENG.pdf

ESC RIGHTS AND THE FIGHT AGAINST INEQUALITY

In a world of growing inequality, respect for economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) becomes crucial. States must abandon the dominant economic model which exacerbates inequalities. Instead of privileging special interests, it is imperative to strengthen public services, promote participatory democracy and foster genuine international cooperation.

The challenges are many: lack of respect for the self-determination of peoples and an unjust international economic order stand in the way of the realization of ESC rights. Powerful states use foreign debt and structural adjustment programs to impose the privatization of essential services such as health and education. It's time for states to recognize their obligations and take action to guarantee the fundamental rights for all, focusing on the public interest rather than military spending. This is the price of social justice.

Read the oral declaration in French :

www.cetim.ch/wp-content/uploads/Dec-o-CETIM-PanleDESC.pdf

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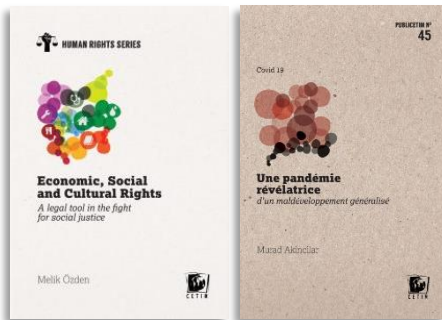
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by Murad Akincilar

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:

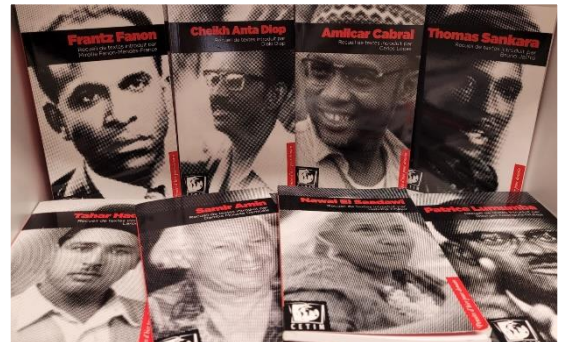
A legal tool in the fight for social justice by Melik Özden

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WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Without your generosity we would not be able to continue our fight for a fairer world.
In these difficult times, any donation, even the smallest amount helps us.

Many thanks in advance and we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Donations made from Switzerland are tax-deductible.

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