



Mister Chair,

First of all, we would like to express a warm thank you to the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development for inviting CETIM to deliver a statement at this panel.

We have prepared a joint statement together with La Via Campesina.

The dominant trade and investment regime, mainly promoted and enforced by the WTO and other international organizations and instruments, have posed continuous harm to the global peasantry and therefore to the protection of biodiversity.

Since 1995, the WTO Agreement on Agriculture not only authorizes the aggressive trade policies of Western potencies but also criminalises market regulation and hinders public support for small-scale food producers in many Southern countries. Moreover, the destruction of market regulation and the opening of markets to agro-industrial imports have been exacerbated by the proliferation of bilateral and regional free trade agreements. Such proliferation has also promoted tougher rules on intellectual property rights (TRIPS+) and reinforced corporate dominance over land by dissolving structures of collective ownership. These developments have intensified transnational corporations' control over food systems and have provoked continuous threats over biodiversity.

In other words, the ongoing trend towards the commodification of nature and the privatization of phytogenetic resources (what we call biopiracy) promoted by this framework must be counteracted if we want to protect biodiversity.

Biopiracy is constituted by the privatisation of phytogenetic resources, for which the DNA of these resources are decoded and subsequently patented. These patents become protected by the coercive regimes of international trade perpetrated by WTO (TRIPS agreements) or the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV). Hence, we have witnessed a continuing monopolisation of privatised biodiversity that boosts private profit and contributes to the very destruction of ecosystems and consequently of those who live and depend on it.

Furthermore, there is also the modification of living organisms through the development of genetic engineering and synthetic biology technologies, as well as the instrumentalization of digital information on genetic sequences (DSI) to patent nature and control agriculture and food sovereignty. These practices imply a privatization where corporations seek to obtain lucrative profits, leading to manipulations that can cause serious and unpredictable distortions in natural genomes, bringing unknown consequences that harm traditional and peasant food production and erode biodiversity.

In the same vein, during the current COP16 held in Colombia on the Convention on Biological Diversity, we expressed our opposition to the biodiversity credit markets which, as

the carbon markets, lead to an increasing commodification and monopolisation of the living, while promoting land-grabbing practices that ultimately result in biodiversity loss.

Mister Chair,

We need a new trade system, oriented towards the defence of peasants' rights, biodiversity and food sovereignty, against biopiracy practices. We need a new trade system that enshrines and protects article 9 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), as well as article 19 of the UNDROP, two pillar articles in the defence of biodiversity and peasant and Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge.

We need to promote the equitable and democratic distribution of land and land reforms, to increase peasant land that will be dedicated to agroecological agriculture and the protection of biodiversity. The current dominant regime, on the contrary, promotes the concentration of land in the hands of big landowners that foster monocultures that kills biodiversity.

In this sense, we need to forge a system that prioritises cooperation and collaboration over competition, that prioritises solidarity over sanctions, rights over profit, and community-led initiatives over corporate control. So that ultimately, this framework can *“support rural economies, enable diverse food systems to thrive, and ensure that the rights of peasants, Indigenous peoples, workers in both rural and urban areas and migrants are central to transnational trade.”*

LVC affirms that *“Social movements must aid the demise of the current coercive trade model by proposing a new framework for international trade that countries can adopt without fear of isolation. This alternative would offer a more equitable system benefiting global populations.”*

Indeed, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Others Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) and the UN Declaration on the Right to Development should serve as pillars for this work, so that trade can be reframed on the basis of food sovereignty, self-determination and peoples' right to a decolonised development.

Finally, we call on the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development to work with us on the conception of this new trade framework, by bringing inputs and insights on how the right to development framework can be a strong ally in this endeavour.

Thank you very much for your attention.