

International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD)

The International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (**ICARRD**) in Porto Alegre was organized jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Government of Brazil to explore new development opportunities to revitalize rural communities worldwide.

During the four days of the conference (7-10 March 2006), participants from more than 100 countries reviewed different experiences of agrarian reform around the world, analysing processes, impacts, mechanisms and participation schemes, and made proposals for future action. The ICARRD Conference closed on March 10th with the adoption of a Final Declaration. Altogether 1,400 participants, representing government delegations from 92 countries, NGOs and civil society observers from more than 150 farmer and civil society organizations worldwide, called for a new vision of rural development and agrarian reform that contributes to revitalise rural communities and thus reduce poverty and hunger in the planet.

The consensus-based principles emerged from ICARRD are as follows:

- Agrarian reform and land policies for rural development are essential for social cohesion, conflict reduction, food security, poverty eradication, economic growth and environmental rehabilitation.
- The wide diversity of agrarian reform, land policies and rural development situations calls for more exchange of experiences and locally-designed solutions and processes, rather than common guidelines and indicators of success.
- A number of fundamental rights should be better recognised in policies, institutional patterns and plans (e.g. land and natural resources, food sovereignty, women, indigenous peoples, pastoralists and vulnerable groups).
- Land and other natural resources are not only economic assets but also cultural, social and historical assets. Therefore, there is a need to address them in an integrated and territorial way through negotiation, dialogue and participatory approaches.
- Secure access to land and natural resources are essential but not sufficient to address poverty reduction.

It was also noted that there is a need for:

- productive aspects – emphasis on role of family farming and other small-scale production system.
- non-agricultural livelihood strategies - emphasis on employment & rural workers because they are often landless and the poorest of the poor.

- complement productive aspects with safety nets in marginalized areas.
- all support services, rural infrastructure and market access to rural people.
- good governance for all of the above and for ALL actors (government, private sector, civil society).

Note prepared by Food Sovereignty Network South Asia (FSNSA)