

## II INTERNATIONAL CONFÉRENCE OF THE VÍA CAMPESINA

TLAXCALA, MEXICO, APRIL 18-21, 1996



### MANAGUA DECLARATION

The farmers' organisations of Central America, the Caribbean, North America and Europe present at the Second National Congress of the Nicaraguan Farmers and Ranchers Organisations (UNAG) welcome this meeting of farm producers, recognising its fundamental

contributions to the defence of the demand of farmers from Nicaragua and of all Central America.

Within the framework of this Congress, we have met in order to call the attention of the world to the following:

- ♦ Neoliberal policies representing a dramatic constraint on farmers throughout the world, bringing us to the brink of irredeemable extinction and further aggravating the irreparable damage which has been caused to our rural environs.
- ♦ Farm communities represent the majority in most regions of the world and it is our work that ensures the food base and life of all societies.
- ♦ We demand real participation in the formulation of policies which affect the fundamental condition of our sector in order to overcome the injustices which we bear.
- ♦ We draw your attention to the lack of respect which has been shown to our productive culture. It is essential that we pay due attention and strengthen our lives as generators of agriculture as the fundamental and strategic base for the survival of all people.

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Governments and international organisations should offer their support in order that our organisations can fulfil our role as protagonists in securing fair prices for our products. Moreover policies must be established to promote and support the processing of our harvest under our own control, whether through co-operatives or direct marketing programme.

### **External debt:**

We reject the burden of the external debt and fiscal deficits as a pretext for the imposition of neoliberal policies by international financial institutions. These organisations do not wish to acknowledge the impact that such policies have had on our difficult situation and the precarious sustainability of our environs. We know that the external debt of the poor countries is unpayable. Furthermore, high rates of interest are undermining production. Furthermore, high rates of interest are undermining production. Farmers do not have the resources to continue to pay mortgages which we have already paid with our labour. To restructure the external debt and to reduce interest rates would represent evidence of the humanity which we require if we are to rediscover an ethnic development which is more humane and mutually supportive.

### **Protection of the environment:**

For us, the maintenance of our families and a vital rural life is a fundamental objective. To guarantee our livelihood in the country represents the most economically and ecologically viable alternative for the sustenance of all our societies. Current agricultural policies, imposed and exploitive

of the environment, do not benefit either producers nor the society as a whole. We farmers are the protagonists of the production and sustainability. For that reason, we demand direct participation in decision-making at the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development to take place in Brazil in July 1992.

### **GATT Negotiations:**

We note that the GATT affects farmers in poor countries and as well impoverishes farmers in rich countries to the benefit of monopolies and transnational corporations.

Trade and international exchange should have as their fundamental goal, justice and co-operation rather than competition and the survival of the fittest.

We, as producers, need to be guaranteed sufficient income to cover as a minimum our costs of production. This, to date, has not been a concern of the negotiators of the GATT. We reject policies which promote low prices, liberalised markets, the export of surpluses, dumping and export subsidies.

Sustainable agricultural production is fundamental and strategic to social life and cannot be reduced to a simple question of trade. Farmers demand direct participation in the GATT negotiations.

### **Follow-up:**

We agree on the need to continue to strengthen our ties as farmers' organisations assured that through our unity we will find the means to have our voice and our propositions heard by those who would usurp our right to cultivate the land and assure our

families' dignity.

### **Constructing an Alternative Model:**

As well, we agree on the urgent task of advancing the formulation of alternative proposals to neoliberalism which, born of our productive vocation, would guarantee economic development in accord with the participation of and respect for the majorities and the environment which feeds us.

### **A Call to Action:**

We take advantage of this opportunity to send greetings to our sister farm organisations from around the world to whom we extend our best wishes and an invitations to join with us.

*In the City of Managua, Nicaragua,  
26 April 1992.*

#### **ASOCODE**

Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua et Panama

#### **NATIONAL FARMERS UNION**

Windward Islands, Caribbean

#### **NATIONAL FARMERS UNION**

Canada

#### **NATIONAL FARMERS UNION**

United States

#### **CPE**

Europe

#### **COAG**

Spain

#### **NATIONAL FARMERS UNION**

Norway

#### **DUTCH FARM DELEGATION**

Netherlands