

South African Food Sovereignty Campaign

Statement from 1st National Coordinating Committee Meeting

The first national coordinating committee meeting of the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign convened in Johannesburg over the weekend, from the 21st to the 22nd of March 2015.

The Time Is Now!

Our deliberations took note of the context in which our campaign is emerging:

The Deepening Food Crisis

The food crisis is deepening due to the increase in electricity prices imposed through Eskom. This inflates food prices, in a context in which, household poverty is extreme and food inflation already high. Moreover, the importation of 1 million tons of maize, to fill the gap caused by the current drought, will certainly increase food prices as maize is a feedstock and a staple for many households.

The climate crisis globally is worsening with recent data showing that the rate of temperature change is faster now than ever over the past century. This study is based on recent UN International Panel on Climate Change science. The Paris UN-COP, later this year, is also not going to solve the crisis given its pro-business and market bias. A world of climate shocks is increasingly going to be our new reality with workers and the poor carrying the cost of the corporate induced climate crisis.

State Policy

The state is currently imposing a *Food and Nutrition Policy and Implementation Plan* without consultation. It does not address the structural roots of hunger and does not seek to regulate food corporations that profit from food. Moreover, it does not go far enough to affirm the right to food through alternatives like food sovereignty, agro-ecology and the solidarity economy. Hunger is clearly not going to be addressed in this unworkable policy and implementation plan.

Moreover, there is the *Plant Breeders Rights Bill and Plant Improvement Bill* in the pipeline, which seeks to commodify local knowledge around seeds and indigenous plant propagation. We reject this approach to our biogenetic resources, which belong to the people.

In addition, a law has been passed with stealth and out of public scrutiny to impose certification of organic foods with perverse consequences such as undermining small-scale producers at the expense of mercenary commercial enterprises that are increasingly capturing the organic market.

The state is failing to protect arable land in South Africa from the encroachment and expansion of mining as demonstrated by what's happening in Limpopo province with the expansion of coal mining.

All of this affirms the ANC state-capital alliance controlling our food system in the interests of the few.

The Need for a Food Sovereignty Alternative

In the light of the deepening crisis locally and globally we note the massive dignity marches in Madrid, Spain, under the banner: 'Bread, Work, Homes and Dignity'. We fully support the movement on the streets in Madrid.

In the same vein we are proud to affirm that the base of our alliance and networks are growing dynamically. We welcome the interest by the Masifundise Development Trust in wanting to work with the campaign and to link the 4000 struggling small scale fishers of Coastal Links SA. We are also proud to be associated with a dynamic group of students at Wits University willing to take forward the campaign and address the hunger crisis at the university that confronts students on a daily basis.

We affirm our commitment to build a bottom up and grassroots driven campaign.

Our Next Step: Peoples Tribunal on Hunger, Food Prices and Land

Due to the continued crimes of Hunger, Exploitation and Landlessness imposed on our people the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign has decided to call for a Peoples Tribunal on Hunger, Food Prices and Land. The Tribunal will indict the ANC State as well as Corporate South Africa for their roles in the ongoing suffering of our people. Apartheid was a crime against humanity and so is the crime of hunger experienced by 14 million of our people daily. We need to end the denial and the invisibility of hunger ravaging our society. This tribunal will hear testimony from the hungry, the landless and experts. It will also give a verdict on the state of hunger, high food prices and landlessness.

The time has come to restore the dignity to the historically excluded, voiceless and hungry in our society.

Contact:

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Amongst others these are the organisations supporting the campaign:

Midrand Solidarity Economy Education and Communication Cooperative
United Front
Ncedanani
South African Green Revolutionary Council
Mining Affected Communities United in Action

African Center for Biosafety
Ekurhuleni Environmental Organisation
Makukhanye Rural peoples Movement
Rural Women's Movement
MCC Ficksburg
Ethical Cooperative
Unemployed Peoples Movement
Surplus Peoples Project
Midvaal Farmers Cooperative
Khanyisa Development Project
Women in the Kraal
Mopani Farmers Union
Ilizwi Lamafana Farmers Association
Botshabelo Farmers
Land Access Movement of South Africa
Tswelalane Cooperative Bakery
Mawubuye Land Rights Forum
Masibambane Cooperative
Twanano Manufacturing Cooperative
UJ, Ezindabazokudla
Western Cape Informal Traders Coalition
The Ecumenical Service for Socio-Ecumenical Transformation
Home of Mother Earth Foundation
Ntinga Ntaba kaNdoda
Tukululelo Agriculture Cooperative (CAMOSA)
Cooperative and Policy Alternative Center
Justice and Peace Network
Consumer Action Network
Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community Social Action
Nkuzi Development Association
Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa
ABYG
Southern Cape Land Committee
Democracy From Below
South African Waste Pickers Association
The South African Self-Employed Women's Association
Sikhala Sonke Womens Organisation
Trust for Community Outreach and Education
Bethanie Solidarity Economy Education and Communication Cooperative
Tiekhulu
Ecolink Environmental Education Trust
Soweto Concerned Residents
Lechaba Letsatsi
Shimange CPA
Inyanda Cooperative
Biowatch
Randfontien Farmers
Rural Peoples Movement
Assumption Development Center

Asikhuiulisane
Abahlali Civic Organisation
Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance
Hlanganani Agricultural Cooperative
South African Informal Traders Association
Dzumeri Area Farmers Association
Earth Life Africa
Agrarian Reform for Food Sovereignty Campaign
Nama eSkills Center
Tyisa Nabanye
Sustaining the Wild Coast
Amahlokoliloko