

COVER STORY

- 3 **Small-scale fisherfolk: Feeding the world unnoticed**

NEWS

- 8 **World's Fisherfolk Unite in Global Coalition**
- 8 **Statement: Resist Corporate Capture of Fisheries, Build Sustainable Fisheries for the People**
- 10 **Groups from global South vow to campaign for people's goals**
- 10 **Statement: Campaign for People's Goals for Sustainable Development**
- 10 **Keynote: Rights for Sustainability Beyond Rio+20: Global Civil Society Workshop on the Rio+20 Outcomes and the Post-2015 Development Agenda**
Antonio Tujan
- 11 **TPP Agreement spells disaster for Mexican agriculture**
Emilio Godoy
- 11 **Philippines lags behind rest of Asia in agri growth**
- 12 **Asian peasant groups declare World Hunger Day**
- 13 **PCFS launches week of action on World Foodless Day**
- 15 **PCFS meets on aid to agri in Burundi**
- 15 **APRN marks World Food Day with book on food and climate**
- 17 **A Quilt of Collective Action for Food Sovereignty**
- 18 **PCFS bats for climate adaptation in Rome roundtable**
- 18 **ARWC honors 100 exceptional rural women**
- 19 **New report shows WB's conditionalities weaken democratic ownership**
- 19 **New IBON International paper tackles WB Agenda for 21st Century**

SPECIAL FEATURE

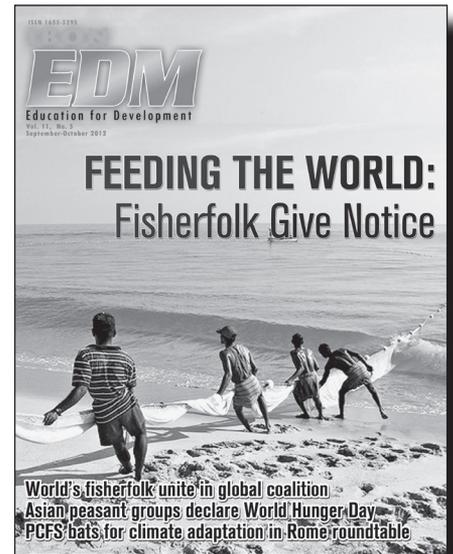
- 28 **Confronting the looming food crisis: New FAO methods likely to alter global hunger data**

BOOK REVIEW

- 30 **JK Rowling's clarion call for grassroots politics**
Susanna Rustin

FACTS & FIGURES

- 32 **Divided Waters: The state of Large and Small Scale Fisheries**

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Small-scale fisherfolk: Feeding the world unnoticed



A FISHERMAN from Timor-Leste carries his freshly caught fish. Small-scale fisherfolk have suffered from the push to increase profits in the fisheries sector concurrent to the exploitation of fish stocks. Photo credit: United Nations

The fisheries industry is expanding rapidly while fish stocks collapse. In the face of the imminent (and in some regions current) collapse of fish stocks, the demand in fisheries production has been sustained by an expansion in aquaculture without addressing the key issue – how can fisheries be environmentally and socially sustainable. The obsession with growth in aquaculture highlights the exploitative and unsustainable modes of production influencing policy. Instead of focusing on developing environmentally and socially sustainable production systems, fisheries management policies have commodified common fish stocks, which has fuelled overfishing and has increased artificial farming of fish to make up for the consequent shortfall in capture fish.

Concurrent to the exploitation of fish stocks, small-scale fisherfolk have suffered from the push to increase profits in the fisheries sector. Small-scale fisherfolk are the primary producers of fish for human consumption and support the livelihoods of up to 12% of the global population. They contribute significantly to food security through their produce and by supporting a significant proportion of the global population. Crucially, small-scale fisheries are more environmentally sustainable than large-scale fisheries, and yet small-scale fisherfolk are being marginalized in the drive for profits.

The state of fisheries

The significance of the fisheries sector cannot be understated in both economic and social terms. As a nutritional source, fish provides 4.3 billion people with more than 15% of their animal protein intake, which increases to 20% in low-income food deficit countries, while an estimated 660 to 820 million people are reliant on the fisheries industry for their livelihood—including those employed in both the primary sector of aquaculture and capture fisheries, as well as those involved in the secondary sectors of the industry such as packaging, marketing and distribution.

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization predicts a significant increase in global fish prices due to rising demand from a steadily increasing population coupled with limited growth in capture fisheries and rising costs of aquaculture. This indicates that the fisheries sector, if managed effectively, will be a profitable sector for investment.

Ninety percent of global fishers and fish workers are small-scale fisherfolk, who contribute more than two-thirds of fish produced for human consumption. Thus, they remain essential contributors to global food security, through their catch and the livelihoods they support. Despite this, small-scale fisherfolk remain part of the industry's 'invisible sector' who are predominantly poor, food insecure, and are methodically overlooked in fisheries policy development and management systems.

Apart from obvious socio-economic implications, the systemic marginalization of small-scale fisherfolk also has implications for the ecosystem and environmental sustainability, since small-scale fishers are heavily dependent upon the conservation of habitats that they live in and have more to lose from environmental degradation and exhaustion of global fish stocks.

The marginalization of small-scale fisherfolk is intensified by the continued promotion of unsustainable exploitation of resources in the form of neoliberal policy reforms crafted in favor of capitalist interests.

Regulatory and policy issues

In light of collapsing fish stocks and continuing environmental devastation, the need for effective and sustainable management of the fisheries sector becomes evident. However, most regulatory and policy responses to these problems have been shallow and have only exacerbated the problem by implementing market based reforms.

National legislation and global engagement

By and large, most national regulatory systems have been based on improving the economic efficiency of the fisheries sector as a means to achieve sustainable

fisheries. As such, they are largely focused on implementing management systems which attribute private property rights over the fish stocks, such as territorial use rights fisheries (TURFs) and individual catch quotas (ITQs). However, instead of ensuring sustainable fisheries, these systems have led to conflicts over resources, concentration of ownership by large-scale fishers, and misreporting and discarding of catch, not to mention the exclusion of small-scale fisherfolk from policy development and implementation.

The international transferable quota system (ITQ) is one such example. Based on the premise of limiting the amount of fish harvests according to estimated sustainable levels, ITQs grant individuals exclusive and transferable right to a portion of the total allowable catch, which can either be claimed or traded.

Ninety percent of global fishers and fish workers are small-scale fisherfolk, who contribute more than two-thirds of fish produced for human consumption.

Essentially, ITQ's attribute a partial property right to a common resource, making it hard to quantify and track. Apart from this, ITQs tend to favor industrial fishing fleets, thereby displacing multitudes of small-scale fisherfolk who are now penalized for practicing their trade. Rather than successfully addressing the issue of overfishing, ITQs have resulted in a windfall transfer of commonly owned fisheries resources to private interests.

Marine Protected Areas (MPA) are another example of how policies implemented without due regard for the interests of small-scale fishers often backfire. Research has shown that excluding small-scale fisherfolk in planning for MPA's result in conflict, as affected fishing communities often resist being blocked from traditional fishing grounds. Such communities also become more vulnerable as they struggle to access alternative fish stocks, and face harassment and arrest.

International policy and regulations

International agreements and transnational management systems on fisheries are essential in the context of highly migratory fish stocks. While there have been many international instruments and agreements seeking to control the unregulated plunder of the seas, almost all of the agreements are voluntary which has

made them less effective. Many international policies were also created and drafted through a top-down approach, without consideration for people's rights and the role of communities in sustainable management of fish stocks and food security, thus rendering most of the said policies useless.

FAO's 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries is a prime example. Meant to ensure sustainable fishing practices and management, the Code's voluntary nature has hindered its success. In fact, a WWF report reveals that 90% of member states failed to implement the code and have actually "institutionalized overfishing."

Discussion on the International Guidelines on SSF

Undoubtedly, there remains a need to recognize and protect small-scale fisherfolk's rights and interests on both national and international levels. Drafted for the purpose of informing governments and all stakeholders on policy that supports small-scale fisherfolk, the draft International Guidelines on Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries is a step in the right direction. Much like FAO's Code of Conduct, however, the International Guidelines suffers from several fundamental weaknesses, such as:

- Its voluntary character, making it impotent in developing and enforcing people-friendly, sustainable practices;
- Lack of acknowledgement regarding the private sector's accountability in the proliferation of unsustainable practices leading to the depletion of marine resources;
- Omission of the "right to food" in the development of sustainable fisheries

These omissions and lapses indicate that the interests of small-scale fisherfolk have not been considered, despite an existing regional consensus that the document should be based on human rights.

World Bank Global Ocean Partnership: Partnership for Whom?

Aiming to address issues of environmental exploitation and declining ocean resources, the World Bank Global Ocean Partnership was established as a broad

international coalition of governments, CSO's, scientists, and private sector representatives committed to the following objectives:

1. Rebuild global fish stocks by more than half
2. Increase annual net benefits of fisheries by US \$20 to US\$30 billion
3. Double the areas covered by MPAs
4. Increase sustainable aquaculture to provide two-thirds of fish

In order to achieve these objectives, the Global Partnership maintains that there is a need to concretely identify the value of fisheries and develop public-private partnerships to improve opportunities for investment. Towards this end, the World Bank developed Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystems Services (WAVES), a systematized approach to evaluating the economic value of natural resources.

Essentially, this new global coalition promotes the outright commodization of ecosystems as a means of initiating private interest to maintain common resources. CSO's and experts have been vocal in questioning the feasibility of such a project, citing the complexity of attempting to attribute specific values to an ecosystem. The new Global Partnership on Oceans is another glaring example of how small-scale fisherfolk are sidelined in policy development processes due to their being an impediment to profit.

Thematic crises marginalizing small scale fisherfolk

Apart from the continuing implementation of neoliberal policies, there are also other thematic crises which contribute to the marginalization of small-scale fisherfolk.

Climate Change

Small-scale fisherfolk are already coping with multiple threats to their livelihoods from opposing factors and the effects of climate change are exposing them further to these threats.



INDIAN FISHERMEN collectively drag a net from the sea. While small-scale fisherfolk are the primary source of fish, the majority of them live in abject poverty and hunger. Photo credit: Henric Silversnö

In fisheries and aquaculture, direct physical effects include rising sea levels, ocean acidification, increasing sea temperatures, flooding, and extreme weather events, as well as more subtle biological and ecological responses including productivity, species abundance, ecosystem stability and changes in fish migration patterns. Moreover, the ill-effects of climate change are exacerbated by anthropogenic causes, such as the destruction of mangroves for the sake of development projects, which in turn make coastal communities more vulnerable to tidal waves and other natural disasters.

In many cases, small-scale fisherfolk are taking it on themselves to adapt to climate change effects through building flood defenses, diversifying their targeted fish and fishing grounds, as well as changing their fishing seasons and methods.

But it is necessary to contextualize the issues regarding climate change – the driving cause of climate change is the increase in green house gas emissions which are predominantly generated and released by Northern countries while Southern states and their peoples are the most vulnerable to the consequences.

Fish Trade

Fish and fish products are the most internationally traded food commodity and is a valuable industry. The majority of fish is exported from developing countries where small-scale fisherfolk are the primary source of fish.

In spite of this, majority of small-scale fishermen continue to live in abject poverty and hunger, mainly due to the export-oriented focus of the fisheries sector that has brought concerns about local food security and

livelihood equity. Fueled by the demand of developed countries whose fish stocks have already been exhausted, developing countries are pressured to focus on exporting fish and fish products, thereby wreaking havoc on the food security of local communities who are increasingly being fished out of their own waters by industrial fishing fleets for the sake of meeting the demands of the international market.

Development Aggression

Enthusiasm for development projects across the Global South is taking precedence over the rights of local communities, such as tourism projects in which coastal land and land near water sources are expropriated for hotels, leisure resorts and entertainment facilities.

Development projects that refuse take into account the interests of the people they are supposed to benefit are reflected in the results. Rather than introducing widespread socio-economic improvements to local communities, most development projects along water sources have made a few people wealthy at the expense of the majority. In all cases, small-scale fisherfolk communities which have lived and fished in the area for generations are suddenly deprived of their main source of livelihood. At the same time, they can no longer provide local markets with a valuable source of protein and the wider community becomes dependent on imports from other regions and areas.

Aquaculture

Privatization of collective water resources for aquaculture farms became a form of enclosure of the commons. This has tremendous negative impacts on vulnerable socioeconomic groups (usually the poorest besides disproportionately impacting women) which

rely more heavily on these resources to sustain their livelihoods through subsistence harvesting.

Aquaculture also encouraged the intensification of production systems that eventually led to monoculture. The drive to secure returns on investment meant increasing control over resources (including fish habitat) by individuals or limited groups. It has also caused massive environmental damages, not to mention the widespread dislocation of affected coastal communities and gross human rights violations among organized fisherfolk resisting the intrusion of aquaculture farms.

Women the Invisible Fishers

Now that small-scale fisheries have become increasingly commercialized and cash-oriented, the role, duties and contributions of women have significantly expanded in many regions, yet they continue to face marginalization and discrimination in their work place. Worldwide, there are more women (33 million) than men employed (28 million) in the inland fisheries sector when post-harvest activities are included, but despite their contribution in the fisheries production, they are still frequently excluded from decision-making processes and from community and organizational bodies regulating fishing. This condition of the majority of small-scale fishers engaged in primary and secondary production only reflects the overall plight of the small-scale fishers in general.

Labor conditions in fisheries

Labor conditions in both aquaculture farms and aboard fishing vessels are appalling. Workers in capture fisheries often have to contend with hazardous working conditions, and many are subjected to physical and sexual abuse. There are even documented cases where seafarers are kept captive in ships and are forced to work for meager wages. Industrial fishing companies also typically use their workers as scapegoats in cases involving environmental damage. Crew members are often arrested and detained while owners go scot-free. Labor conditions in the aquaculture industry are similarly atrocious especially since labor relations are often determined according to demands for maximum results. In order to meet a steadily rising demand, aquaculture farms often employ child laborers and migrant workers who are willing to accept inhumane working conditions with minimum returns.

The working conditions in Thailand's shrimp fishing industry, heavily dependent upon Burmese illegal immigrants, is an illustration of how workers are coerced to work for 16 hours a day, often under hazardous conditions, for pitifully low wages. Because many fishing vessels are operating under flags of convenience, where the real owners are difficult to trace and identify, few are ever prosecuted and held accountable for labor rights violations.

Call for food sovereignty in fisheries

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, which they determine and control. Food sovereignty in the fisheries sector promotes a local harvest and production system that local fisherfolk determine and control. Thus the sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture can only be achieved by centering local communities and fisherfolk in management programs; ensuring they are consulted and their interests protected in the development of policy reforms for the fisheries sector.

Food sovereignty supports local fisherfolk communities' control over their natural resources. Local and national policies on management of these resources should ensure local fisherfolk communities in coastal and inland water resources are consulted in the development and implementation of national and international policies directly affecting the industry.

A truly sustainable approach foresees and understands the intersection of socio-economic and environmental concerns to achieve a real balance between competing interests. But this first requires a radical overhaul of vision – a movement away from fish production as merely an economic activity, an industry to earn foreign revenues, but more as an industry which feeds people and sustains communities. Similarly, environmental sustainability of fisheries cannot be merely to ensure continuous economic returns but rather a means to balance sustainable food production and environments. ■

This article is an abridged and simplified version of the **People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty** Special Release Issue No. 13, September 2012, entitled "Small-scale fisherfolk: Feeding the world unnoticed".

World's Fisherfolk Unite in Global Coalition

ILOILO, PHILIPPINES— The active participation of 35 representatives from various small-scale fisherfolk groups, civil society organizations (CSO's), academic research institutions and other advocates from over 15 countries proved crucial in ensuring the success of the recently-concluded International Conference on Fisheries and Globalization last September 17-21 in Iloilo, Philippines.

Hosted by the People's Coalition On Food Sovereignty (PCFS), in partnership with Pamalakaya, Fisheries and Marine Environment Research Institute, Inc. and IBON International, the conference provided a forum for small-scale fisherfolk from different parts of the world to share views, experiences and lessons, geared towards the formulation of sustainable alternatives for fisheries in the face of globalization. Policy

recommendations and campaign platforms based on grassroots research and experiences were likewise presented.

Defining sustainable fisheries

IBON International Director Antonio Tujan, Jr. delivered the opening remarks which served to set the tone for the conference. In his speech, Tujan reiterated the need to examine the detrimental effects of neoliberal policies and climate change on the fisheries sector. He urged small-scale fisherfolk and their advocates to clearly identify the root of their problems, as well as their 'targets and solutions'; and also challenged them to collectively develop viable alternatives that will echo the needs and concerns of the people—specifically small-scale fisherfolk, the environment and lastly, those of business.

“What do sustainable fisheries really mean? We must work strongly to

end poverty, to end oppression. We must promote small-scale fisheries to protect the environment. It is not just about the environment. The main stewards of the marine resources, the real stewards, are the people who live there, the real fisherfolks,” Tujan said.

A call for food sovereignty

The primary outcome of the ICFG was a declaration entitled “Resist Corporate Capture of Fisheries, Build Sustainable Fisheries for the People”. Issued and signed by 35 organizations of traditional small-scale fishermen and fisherwomen from marine and inland fisheries and their advocates hailing from 15 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, the ICFG declaration stressed the key role that small-scale fisherfolk play in achieving local and national food security, and denounced the ways by which neoliberal policies and the globalization of the fisheries sector has exacerbated the pillage of the seas and violated the people's right

**World Fisherfolk...
(continued on p. 14)**

International Conference on Fisheries and Globalization Declaration

Resist Corporate Capture of Fisheries, Build Sustainable Fisheries for the People

21 September 2012, Iloilo, Philippines

We, representatives of 35 organizations of traditional small-scale fishermen and fisherwomen from marine and inland fisheries and their advocates, from 15 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America met from 19 – 21 September 2012 in Iloilo, Philippines to discuss the destructive impact of globalization and to bring back traditional knowledge systems and practices for sustainable fisheries that uphold the rights and welfare of small-scale fisherfolk and all other oppressed and marginalized sectors of society, and strengthen international solidarity.

Small-scale fisherfolk feed the world. We are the backbone of the fisheries sector. We contribute to local and national food security using traditional fishing practices that take into account the sustainability of the environment for the present and future generations. Half of us are women who take on the burden of raising our families and providing food on the table.

But the globalization of the fisheries sector has further marginalized small-scale fisherfolk, pushing us into deeper levels of poverty and sub-human conditions. Our communities suffer from the onslaught of neoliberal interests seeking to maximize economic returns through profit and export and import oriented production.

Large-scale industrialized fishing fleets with their high technology to catch and process vast quantities of fish for profits have polluted and destroyed our seas and ecosystems. We suffer from poor working and safety conditions – on fishing vessels, in aquaculture farms and fish processing factories. We struggle to fight for our rights as we are displaced from our fishing grounds and our land in the name of the environment and development. These problems are compounded by the effects of climate change as mitigation and adaptation policies fail to take on ecosystem-based fisheries that principally support small-scale fisherfolk.

International institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), along with governments and multilateral institutions have promoted the corporatization and privatization of fisheries and community resources.

The World Bank-led Global Partnership for Oceans, by proposing measures such as rights-based fisheries that includes individual transferable quotas (ITQs) and similar systems, is another mechanism for more systematic and intensified wholesale plunder of our inland, freshwater sources and seas and resources in the name of blue and green

We stand for our inalienable human rights and community rights to access fisheries resources, manage our own resources through our traditional wisdom and to benefit from our resources.

economy and sustainable development. The globalization of fisheries sector has led to the disregard of our inalienable rights to life, land, seas and other resources.

We stand for our inalienable human rights and community rights to access fisheries resources, manage our own resources through our traditional wisdom and to benefit from our resources.

OUR CALLS:

1. We urge our national governments to strive towards achieving national food sovereignty by abandoning profit and export and import oriented laws and policies. We also call on our governments to put a halt on destructive development projects and to protect the interests of the poor and vulnerable people.
2. We strongly reject structures of globalization, including the World Bank and its Global Partnership for Oceans,

and the World Trade Organization (WTO), which have facilitated intensified plunder of our seas in the last decades. We want fisheries out of WTO which has promoted the privatization of our common resources through onerous trade agreements and policies. We oppose the extension of market-based mechanisms to climate change discussions and we push the international community to protect the fisherfolks.

3. International institutions must be stopped from developing programmes and policies that undermine small-scale fisherfolks. They must recognize the important contribution of small-scale fisherfolk to food security and more importantly food sovereignty and poverty alleviation. While we recognize that the draft International Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries is a step in the right direction, we maintain that the guidelines will not be sufficient to promote the interests of small-scale fisherfolk unless they address the structural challenges posed by neoliberalism and large-scale fisheries.

4. We call on our fellow small-scale fishermen and fisherwomen, fishworkers and vendors to organize ourselves as we collectively struggle for our inalienable rights and promotion of a genuinely sustainable, people-centred development framework at the community, national and international levels. We act in solidarity with indigenous peoples, artisans, peasants

**Resist corporate...
(continued on p. 20)**

Groups from global South vow to campaign for people's goals

Civil society organizations and social movements from the global South have banded together and pledged to Campaign for People's Goals for Sustainable Development.

Initiated by 16 international and regional networks as well as 8 national and local organizations representing a broad range of social movements and grassroots organizations, the CPGSD is the main outcome of the *Rights for Sustainability Beyond Rio+20: Global Civil Society Workshop on the Rio+20 Outcomes and the Post-2015 Development Agenda* held in Nairobi last October 2-3, 2012 organized by IBON International.

Hailed by IBON International Director Antonio Tujan Jr. as a "Southern-led campaign that is grounded in grassroots struggles while engaging with the official processes related to the post-2015 development agenda", members of the CPGSD adopted a common statement that called on governments to abandon the existing development model which prioritizes the needs of capital, and instead uphold a new development framework based on human rights, equality, self-determination, and social, gender and ecological justice. The said statement was released just ahead of the meeting of the High Level Panel on the Post-2015

development agenda in London, UK.

Among the key demands of the Campaign is the establishment of multi-stakeholder processes for setting the post-2015 development agenda at the national and international levels with full participation of civil society in deliberations and decision-making beyond mere consultations.

(See sidebars for the full text of the CPGSD statement, as well as IBON International Director Antonio Tujan Jr.'s keynote speech for the said event.) ■

Campaign for People's Goals for Sustainable Development

October 31, 2012

We are grassroots organizations, labour unions, social movements, non-governmental organizations and other institutions committed to forging new pathways to the future we want – a future where the common good of all takes precedence over the interests of a tiny elite; where the needs and rights of all people are realized; where the environment is not sacrificed to benefit only the few.

We are aware that the current development pathway, will not lead us to the future we want.

The capitalist development model, in particular under the dominant neoliberal policy regime, reduces development to growth in production and consumption of material goods, and grants rights and liberties to capital over the rights and freedoms

Campaign for... (continued on p. 21)

Rights for Sustainability Beyond Rio+20: Global Civil Society Workshop on the Rio+20 Outcomes and the Post-2015 Development Agenda

*KEYNOTE SPEECH: Antonio Tujan, Jr.,
Director, IBON International*

This meeting seeks to address an evaluation of our work at Rio. We were all active there, but in the end we also have to look forward; and therefore we are also going to look into how we take the results of Rio forward and link it to other processes especially post-2015. Indeed there are many ways to approach the results at Rio. Our efforts as civil society or specifically the Rights for Sustainability campaign contributed to defending human rights and pushing the voices of people especially of the South, as we try to recover and strengthen the original agenda for sustainable development in a world that is much more threatened with poverty,

**Rights for sustainability...
(continued on p. 25)**

TPP Agreement spells disaster for Mexican agriculture

by Emilio Godoy

MEXICO—Experts, farmer’s groups and other stakeholders warned that Mexico’s participation in the upcoming Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership (TPP) Agreement negotiations may well prove disastrous for the country’s agricultural sector.

Citing the pressure exerted by the US and other treaty partners for the flexibilization of Mexico’s current phytosanitary measures that have given ample protection from the influx of imported agricultural products, experts say that the treaty could exacerbate existing inequitable trade liberalization

practices that will eventually prove ‘unfavorable’ for the country.

“The purpose of this treaty is to defend Washington’s agenda,” says Timothy Wise, director of the Research and Policy Programme at the Global Development and Environment Institute at Tufts University, Massachusetts.

Originally implemented in 2006 with four member countries (Brunei, Chile, New Zealand and Singapore), the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement is a free trade agreement which seeks to bolster trade

liberalization among nations. After a year, it spawned the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, a substantially expanded version of the treaty that included more countries under its fold. Mexico is set to join the formal negotiations this coming December.

Despite its claims of “bring[ing] economic and social benefits, to create new opportunities for employment and to improve the living standards” of the member countries involved, the TPP has been widely criticized for advancing the interests of corporations at the expense of domestic labor, consumer and environmental rights.

TPP Agreement...
(continued on p. 14)

Philippines lags behind rest of Asia in agri growth

QUEZON CITY, PHILIPPINES—The Philippine government’s ambitious Food Staples Self-Sufficiency Roadmap 2011-2016 that promises to attain 100% rice self-sufficiency by 2013 remains unattainable, given the country’s dismal performance in terms of agricultural growth, research group IBON says.

Citing a study commissioned by the government which revealed that the country’s agriculture lags 20 years behind its Asian neighbors, IBON also pointed out several factors that aggravate the situation, such as the steadily declining traditional crop yield, a trade deficit amounting to US\$2.4 billion in 2009 and a

stagnant 0.2% per annum Total Factor Productivity rate—a far cry from Thailand’s 1% per annum increase, as well as the 1.5% per annum and 4.7% per annum attained by Indonesia and China respectively.

Furthermore, the Philippines has become the world’s largest importer of rice, which is ironic because the country is among the world’s major rice producers, IBON added.

According to IBON, the government’s recent roadmap, like previous agricultural modernization programs, spurs global competitiveness of local agriculture by prioritizing the

production of exports instead of domestic food. The program has also been criticized for its bias for private foreign agribusiness, from which funding for the program would come.

As the international community commemorates World Food Day, the Philippine government should recognize free land distribution to farmers as one of the fundamental requirements towards attaining food self-sufficiency and security. No amount of modernization or capital infusion in agriculture driven by foreign investment can help the country if it is done in the same context of landlessness, the research group stressed. ■

Asian peasant groups declare World Hunger Day

ASIA—In response to the UN's annual celebration of "World Food Day", Asian peasants from the Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka held simultaneous protest actions declaring "World Hunger Day". Led by the Asian Peasant Coalition (APC), the protesters condemned the steadily increasing hunger rates, as well as the continuing displacement of peasants across the region.

"The coordinated protests in seven countries in Asia aim to emphasize the fact rural people remain landless due to widespread land grabbing by domestic and foreign investors. Such a situation results in chronic hunger and destitution for peasants. As it is, the world's food producers are ironically the most food-insecure and hungry people," the APC said.

The APC also slammed joint statement issued by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) that urged governments to create an enabling policy environment that fosters private-sector investment.

"We condemn FAO and EBRDs statement as a continuation of what was engineered during the Rio+20 Summit last June 2012 in Brazil. Under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) scheme, both domestic and foreign investors, will be given legal authority to make it easy for them to further intensify land grabbing, to multiply plunder of available

resources and step-up corporate takeovers of other vital sections of the economy," the APC added.

Data from the Food Association Organization (FAO) shows Asia is home to 578 million hungry people, 22.5 million of them are Filipinos. The FAO was founded in October 16, 1945 aimed at addressing hunger and poverty.

Food, not bullets

In the Philippines, members and allied organizations of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Peasant Movement of the Philippines) held rallies and other events decrying the continuing exploitation of peasants in the country. The KMP organized a protest caravan from the Department of Agriculture to Mendiola, while chapters from Iloilo, Camarines Sur, Cagayan de Oro and Bulacan also held other activities on the same day.

Peasants and their advocates spoke out against government programs and policies which were causing their hunger and displacement, specifically the proliferation of genetically modified rice varieties, the mistreatment of the coconut levy funds and the failure of the government's land reform program to address their needs. They also denounced the intensifying militarization in the countryside which threatens their lives and livelihoods.

Asian peasant...
(continued on p. 13)

Dhaka farmers slam land grabbing for real estate development

DHAKA, BANGLADESH - Seventeen rights based civil society organizations led by Equity BD and SAAPE (South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication) organized a human chain / rally in front of National Press Club Dhaka last October 16 in observance of World Foodless Day.

The protesters criticized the government and private housing companies for the rising number of land grabbing incidents across Bangladesh, which aggravates poverty and hunger levels in rural areas.

"We want the government to hear the voices of the hungry. Right now, Bangladesh is losing approximately 89 thousand hectares per annum of its arable land to urbanization, industrialization and river erosion even as 26% of the population continue to experience chronic hunger. We demand that the government, in cahoots with private developers and housing companies, cease their so-called development projects which are mere cover-ups for incessant land-grabbing," said Rezaul Karim Chowdhury of Equity BD.

Dhaka farmers...
(continued on p. 13)

PCFS launches week of action on World Foodless Day

The People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS), a growing network of various grassroots groups of small food producers working towards a People's Convention on Food Sovereignty, launched several activities in commemoration of World Food(less) Day last October 16, 2012.

According to PCFS, "Rural communities in the Global South are facing increasing challenges to their food security. Their livelihoods are threatened by increasing land and

water resource grabs; extreme weather fluctuations, and rising food prices. In spite of this, rural communities organized and defiant. Peasant grassroots organizations, civil society organizations and multi-sectoral platforms for food sovereignty are mobilizing and demanding that their voices be heard and their rights respected."

"It is in this context that the PCFS prepared a quilt of collective actions that allied organizations and groups undertook in time for the annual

World Food Day celebrations. The prevalence of protest actions across nations testifies to the absence of an enabling environment for people to exercise their rights in defending their communities and livelihood," the PCFS added.

The group also reiterated their calls for food sovereignty, local ownership and control over natural resources and food production systems to achieve food security for all. ■

Asian peasant... (continued from p. 12)

"What we need is food on our tables and not bullets from the administration's forces," they declared.

Our land, our life

In Sri Lanka, the Movement for National Land and Agricultural Reform (MONLAR) organized a week of action in many parts of the country. In Nepal, different events in 45 districts were organized by All Nepal Peasants Federation (ANPFa). The Andhra Pradesh Vyavasaya Vruthidarula Union (APVVU) in India held simultaneous demonstrations opposing land grabbing in 10 districts of Andhra Pradesh while a People's Biodiversity Camp was held in Hyderabad. Similar actions will be held in Indonesia, and Pakistan.

Across Asia, the issue of landlessness was prevalent. The groups were united in calling for a genuine agrarian reform program that will sufficiently address chronic hunger and food insecurity.

"Research has proven that access to land rights has a direct link with food security. We demand genuine agrarian reform and food sovereignty to end chronic hunger," the APC concluded. ■

This article was drawn from the following articles originally published in the **People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty** website on 16 October 2012 (<http://www.foodsof.org/index.php/pcfs-news/6-latest-news/85-peasant-groups-lead-protests-declaring-world-hunger-day->) and the **Asian Peasant Coalition** website (<http://www.asianpeasant.org/content/peasant-groups-lead-protests-declaring-%E2%80%98world-hunger-day%E2%80%99>).

Dhaka farmers... (continued from p. 12)

Moinuddin Howlader of Krishok Federation added, "If the government wants farmers to increase food production, it should go after absentee land owners who own 15% of the country's agricultural land. Implementing a genuine agrarian reform program that will distribute lands to peasants is also an essential step towards achieving food sovereignty." ■

This is an abridged version of an article that originally appeared in the **People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty** website on 16 October 2012 (<http://www.foodsof.org/index.php/pcfs-news/6-latest-news/82-stop-agriculture-land-grabbing-in-the-name-of-development-of-real-estate->)

TPP Agreement... (continued on p. 11)

Bargaining Chip

Even though Mexico's agricultural trade has long been open to Canada and the US by virtue of the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the country has maintained several trade restrictions and non-tariff barriers that hindered the flood of imported agricultural produce. Most notable of these are phytosanitary measures that either regulated or banned the entry of coffee, poultry products and other goods that failed to comply with Mexico's sanitation standards.

Countries typically impose sanitary and phytosanitary restrictions to protect human, animal and plant life that may succumb to foreign pests or diseases brought by contaminated imported produce.

Potatoes are an especially protected crop; Mexico only allows entry of potato products from the U.S. and Canada to designated border areas. Mexico initially applied a tariff of 272 percent on potato imports from the United States until 2002, when the tax was replaced by phytosanitary barriers to control plant diseases, like nematodes.

But with Mexico's impending participation in the TPP, local potato producers stand to lose their last line of defense. Under U.S. pressure, Mexico might allow potato imports throughout the country in return for joining the negotiations in New Zealand.

Potato farmers are accusing the government of using them as a

bargaining chip for acceptance in the TPP. "No one consulted us, unlike in negotiations for other treaties," Cecilia Ríos, general manager of the National Confederation of Potato Producers (CONPAPA), says. "Ever since 2008, the United States has been pressing for total access. But as they did not comply with phytosanitary protocols, they were not allowed in."

According to CONPAPA, implementation of the TPP could put the livelihoods of 8,700 potato farmers at risk, not to mention a crop worth 900 million dollars. Potato diseases could also infect other domestic crops like tomatoes, eggplants, tobacco and peppers.

Mexico's Agriculture Ministry currently has records of over 1,000 shipments of US potatoes denied entry due to the presence of quarantine pests that have not been previously detected in Mexico.

Meanwhile, the U.S. National Potato Council continues to push for the removal of the said phytosanitary barriers, claiming that such were "not based on sound science and do not justify trade restrictions." Other agricultural sectors within the US are also pushing for unrestricted access to the Mexican market, such as the Northwest Horticultural Council (NHC), which has asked for permission to export fresh peaches and apricots under a protocol system unsupervised by Mexican authorities.

Amidst mounting pressure, local farmers are standing firm. "This is

a non-negotiable issue, it is about more than trade. We are going to lobby Congress to explain the problems and the situation," said Ríos. CONPAPA also sponsored a study on the impact of the potato trade in the border zone, and will publish results in the coming weeks. ■

A version of this article first appeared in the **Inter Press Service News Agency**, 22 October, 2012. (<http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/10/treaty-tolls-death-knell-for-mexican-countryside/>)

World fisherfolk... (continued from p. 8)

to life, the seas and other marine resources.

The declaration then outlined concrete recommendations towards achieving sustainable fisheries, including the promotion of traditional and indigenous fishing practices and management of resources, the development of techniques and research that will aid in the capacity development of small-scale fishermen, while expressly rejecting existing structures and strategies that trample upon the people's inalienable rights.

The five-day conference ended on a high note, with participants vowing to strengthen solidarity among social movements, civil society organizations, networks and advocates in the campaign for a sustainable, and people-centred development framework for fisheries. ■

PCFS meets on aid to agri in Burundi

BUJUMBARA, BURUNDI – The People’s Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS) organized a multi-stakeholder Country Level Post-Busan Meeting in Source du Nil in Bujumbura, Burundi last October 8-10, 2012. The meeting aimed to discuss the aid and development effectiveness agenda with reference to the outcomes of the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) especially in the context of agriculture and rural development.

Ms. Odette Nzeyimana of PCFS Burundi was one of the main organizers of the event, while Mr. Roy Anunciacion of BetterAid and global secretariat coordinator of PCFS, served as one of the resource persons who delivered a brief background on the history of CSO engagement in the

aid process and its current challenges. Honorable Citegetse Esperance of the Burundi parliament and Belgian Ambassador Emile Nimpaye who represented the National Aid Coordinating Committee also graced the said gathering.

Attended by representatives from 80 civil society organizations, parliaments and donor governments, the meeting also provided a venue to examine the country-level impact of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) and how these should feed into national level engagements. CSO participants reaffirmed the importance of the importance of the Istanbul principles and vowed to remain vigilantly engaged on issues of accountability and effectiveness.

Some of the key messages of the meeting include the urgent necessity to domesticate and enhance the Busan commitments within the Burundi context, and to enhance cooperation between governments, donors and CSO’s in order to avert negative consequences borne by aid ineffectiveness.

After the three-day conference, the body issued and adopted key recommendations addressed to the government of Burundi, the donor community and the Burundi civil society. ■

This article is an abridged and simplified version of an article that originally appeared on the **Better Aid** website on 23 October, 2012 (<http://betteraid.org/en/news/286-latest-news/570-pcfs-burundi-on-contextualizing-the-aid-effectiveness-agenda.html>).

APRN marks World Food Day with book on food and climate

In commemoration of the World Foodless Day last October 15, the Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN), in partnership with Andra Pradesh Vyavasaya Vruthidarula Union (APVVU) and Asian Peasant Coalition (APC), launched the book *Sowing Seeds of Change and Hope: Farmers Confronting the Food and Climate Crises* at the People’s Sovereignty: Land and Biodiversity Forum in Hyderabad, India.

Apart from exposing and analyzing the devastating effects of climate change on poor farming communities and other marginalized sectors, the book also lays down ways by which affected sectors are fighting back.

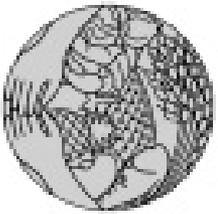
According to APRN General Secretary-in training Marjorie Pamintuan, “The book discusses how farmers use local agro-ecological food production systems and methods to cope with the food and climate crises and also how they use these to resist corporate agriculture from taking over their local food production.”

“This book is a compilation of stories and practices of sustainable farming systems from four countries of the region. Other food producers may draw strength and inspiration from these stories, to counter the corporate agenda and to support struggles for a people-centered economy,” Pamintuan added.

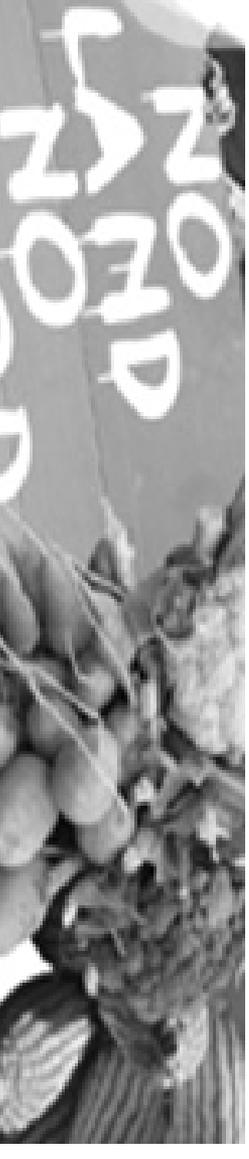
Research done by IBON International reveal that many small-scale food producers within the Asia Pacific are now turning to agroecological farming systems and methodologies that will help them deal with the ill-effects of the global food crisis. These local alternatives are rooted in local contexts and situations and are mindful of sustainable management of community resources. ■

This article is an abridged version of an article that originally appeared in the **Asia Pacific Research Network** website, 17 October, 2012. (<http://aprnnet.org/index.php/news/510-aprn-launches-book-on-food-and-climate-ahead-of-world-food-day>).

<p>the Department of Agriculture in Quezon City</p> <p>19 October</p> <p>Big march protest (Lakbayan) from the Department of Agriculture to Mendiola where the President's palace and office is located</p>			
<p>Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum Pakistan</p> <p>11 October Seminar on Peasant and Right to Food at Badin</p> <p>12 October Seminar on Peasant and Right to Food at Sanghar District</p> <p>13 October Rally on the Water bodies grabbing and livelihood insecurity of fisherfolk and peasants in all 10 districts</p> <p>16 October Conference on Land, Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Security in Karachi</p> <p>KWT) and Roots for Equity Pakistan</p> <p>Series of actions during the week of the World Food Day</p>	<p>All Nepal Peasant's Federation Nepal</p> <p>16 October Will organize different events in 45 districts</p>	<p>Eastern and Souther Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESSAF-Uganda) Uganda</p> <p>15-16 October Food Exhibition at Mbara District</p> <p>On air interviews with farmers on the World Food Day</p>	<p>ROSSAD Burkina Faso</p> <p>In collaboration with Oxiám La Semain Cultiwons (October 13-20)</p> <p>13 October Debate on "What synergy for a long term solution to the food crisis in the Sahel Region?" on two Radio Stations (Ouga FM and Savan FM)</p> <p>18 October Exposition of big pictures and a projection of a Film and a debate on "Let's break the cycle of Hunger" at the University of Ouagadougou</p> <p>19 October Forum on "Small scale farming: a solution to break the cycle of Hunger"</p> <p>20 October Competition called "Koudou du Faso." It is a gourmet competition based on local food in order to show the quality and diversity of local food and promote food sovereignty and food security.</p>
<p>Alternative Espaces Citoyens Niger</p> <p>Series of Activities for the World Food Day</p> <p>"Parliamentary Information on the Issue of Food Sovereignty in Niger" in partnership with the Nigerian Parliamentary Network for the Fight against Poverty</p> <p>Mobilization of youth against hunger at the headquarters of Frantz Fanon Alternative</p> <p>Debates and radio broadcast on the "Information and Mass Communication on the issue of the right to food and sovereignty"</p> <p>Launch the process of developing a draft framework law on the right to food and food sovereignty</p>	<p>People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty Burundi</p> <p>19 October Conference with UN Institutions and Ambassadors at Geneva</p> <p>Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESSAF - Burundi) Burundi</p> <p>9-10 October CSO Consultation on Development Effectiveness, Hotel Source de Nil in Bujumbura</p>	<p>BioWatch South Africa</p> <p>09 October Biowatch community project World Food Day event at Ingwavuma</p> <p>16 October Diakonia Council of Churches "World Food Day Celebration: in Durban</p> <p>19 October Biowatch community project World Food Day event at Pongola</p> <p>09 November Biowatch community project World Food Day event at Tshaneni</p>	<p>Andrah Pradesh Vyavasaya Vrutthidarula Union (APVVU) India</p> <p>Simultaneous demonstration opposing land grabbing in 10 districts of Andhra Pradesh</p>
<p>Tarifa Education and Research Centre for Rural Women (CCIMCAR) Bolivia</p> <p>Guarani Chaco Women Community (TBC)</p>	<p>Ogoni Solidarity Forum Nigeria</p> <p>16 October, 2012</p> <p>Conference on "Viable Option for Food Sovereignty in a Devastated Environment The Ogoni Case", at El-Queen Hotel, Bori-Ogoni</p>	<p>Arcade Senegal</p> <p>15 October</p> <p>The Commemoration of the 25th anniversary of Thomas Sankara's assassination at Al Affa Hotel, Dakar, Senegal</p>	



PCFS
PEOPLE'S COALITION
ON FOOD SOVEREIGNTY
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A Quilt of Collective Action for Food Sovereignty

Citizens Concern for Dams and Development (CCDD)

Committee on the Protection of Natural Resources in Manipur (CPNRM)

Centre for Research and Advocacy in Maniour (CRAM)

All Loktak Lake Fishermen's Union (ALFU)

JAC Against the Lamphel Yaipha Leikai Eviction (JADLYI)

JAC Against Lei Ingkhol Eviction (JACLEI)

16 October

Convention on "Development Challenges and Food Sovereignty in Manipur" at Centre for Research and Advocacy in Keisamphat, Imphal India

Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), Philippines

9-10 October
National Conference on Land, Mining and Militarization at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City
Mobilization in front of PHILLEX office in Pasig

15 October

Symbolic protest at the flag raising ceremony in the Philippine Supreme Court

16 October

World Hunger Day protest action in front of the Department of Agriculture

17 October

Big march protest (Lakbayan) and vigil from San Jose del Monte, Bulacan regarding the construction MRT-7

18 October

Big march protest (Lakbayan) and vigil from San Jose del Monte, Bulacan to NEDA, DILG and to

Pesticide Action Network - Asia Pacific

Land grabbing worsens hunger: Communities resisting land grabs to commemorate 'World Foodless Day'

For more information, contact:

Virgilio Tamayo Jr.

E-mail (Direct) jingo.tamayo@panap.net

Bangladesh Krishok Federation Bangladesh

A series of programs which includes meeting of condolence, protest rally and national-level discussion on the current trend of land-defender killings COAST Trust and Coastal Development Partnership (CPD) Bangladesh

14 October

Seminar on "Claim Your Rights for Participation in Climate Adaptation and Mitigation" at the National Press Club in Dhaka, Bangladesh

14-15 October

National Seminar on the International Rural Women Day

16 October

Human Chain and Rally in front of the National Press Club in Dhaka, Bangladesh

National Fisheries Solidarity Movement (NAFSO)

Sri Lanka

11 October

District-level seminars on Food, Water & Land

12 October

Signature campaign among people who are affected by land related issue in each districts

13 October

Conference on Plantation Sector

14 October

Prayers on Food, Water and Land

15 October

National Seminar on Food, Land, Water

Movement for National and Agricultural Reform (MONLAR) Sri Lanka

Asia-Pacific Research Network (APRN)

Andrah Pradesh Vyavasaya Vruthidarula Union (APVU) and the Asian Peasant Coalition (APC)

15 October

Conference on "People's Food Sovereignty: Land and Biodiversity" at 10:00 to 5:00pm in Hyderabad, India

Back to back with:

Book launching of "Sowing Seeds of Change and Hope: Farmers Confronting the Food and Climate Crises" at 3-4pm in People's Biodiversity, Public Gardens in Hyderabad, India

Pambansang Lakas ng Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA Philippines)

9-10 October

National Conference on Land, Mining and Militarization at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City
Mobilization in front of PHILLEX office in Pasig

17 October

Frontilla Protest for the Pasig River against Manila Bay Reclamation

24-25 October

co-sponsorship of the 1st People's Summit on the Impact of Reclamation (Quezon City)

27 October

Film showing of Nunal sa Tubig (Wole in the Water at Binangonan Plaza, Rizal

Alliance of Agrarian Reform Movement (AGRA) Indonesia

14 October

Protest action to address the World Bank and IMF Meeting in Japan, in front of State Palace and a press conference afterwards

16 October

National protest action in front of the Department of Agriculture and Department of Fisheries and a press conference afterwards

PCFS bats for climate adaptation in Rome roundtable

ROME, ITALY—Last October 15, 2012, the People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty (PCFS) reiterated their call for climate adaptation in the recently-concluded Policy Round Table on Food Security and Climate Change spearheaded by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). PCFS representative Ms. Amy Padilla made an intervention on climate change adaptation during the said event.

The PCFS stressed the need to immediately address the devastating effects of climate change on food production, livelihood, culture and human life, especially among poor people who are often the most vulnerable to these effects.

"In the Philippines, where I come from, farmers, fisherfolk and women are already suffering great losses from increased floods, linked to climate change," Padilla pointed out.

Citing the positive experiences of farmers from Burkina Faso, Mali and the Philippines, Padilla also urged the committee to focus on climate adaptation schemes based on the rights and welfare of small food producers, instead of prioritizing projects carried out by international bodies and governments that contradict the interests of farmers and other marginalized communities.

Finally, Padilla presented several recommendations to the body, including increased

public investment for climate adaptation, the strengthening of social protection measures, the establishment of drought contingency funds and additional community food reserves.

"Small-scale food producers are vital actors who feed the world and whose human rights must be fully realized within and beyond the context of climate change," Padilla concluded. ■

This article was drawn from the full text of Intervention on Climate Adaptation delivered by Ms. Amy Padilla at the 39th Session of the Committee on World Food Security last 15 October 2012. The original article is available in the **People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty** website (<http://www.foodsover.org/index.php/pcfs-news/6-latest-news/81-policy-round-table-on-food-security-and-climate-change>).

ARWC honors 100 exceptional rural women

MALAYSIA – In accordance with the celebration of the International Day of Rural Women last October 15, the Asian Rural Women's Coalition (ARWC) honored 100 exceptional rural women and advocates who have made significant contributions to the struggle for survival, justice and freedom.

According to ARWC, the occasion was an opportunity to highlight the vital role played by rural women in transforming the world into a just and sustainable society. The awardees were also given the chance to share their experiences and learn lessons from one another.

"My goal in life is to bring all my efforts into the development of our community to advance gender equality. My priorities are to involve women into full public and economic life, bring more women into the Rural Council, create more opportunities for young women and girls, improve rural environment and save natural resources and make my community and government understand that without consideration of women's human rights real development is impossible," says awardee Alya Kenebaeva, a leader, rural school teacher and activist from Kyrgyzstan.

Other awardees urged their fellow women to join organizations and make their voices heard. "All rural and disadvantaged women (should) have their voices heard in all levels of decision-making. Rural women should have freedom to move, be educated, learn skills and stand on their own feet," says Nirmala Devi Chaudhary Tharu, a Nepalese awardee who was instrumental in freeing 46 families enslaved by a local landlord.

"Our mission is to defend our ancestral land, our rights and resources. Let us defend our natural

ARWC honors...
(continued on p. 27)

New report shows WB's conditionalities weaken democratic ownership

The World Bank's practice of attaching policy conditions to aid negotiations and disbursements to recipient countries actually undermine the tenets of democratic ownership and contradict the right to development and self-determination of affected peoples and countries, a new report by the Reality of Aid (RoA) Network reveals.

RoA's *Reality Check* October 2012 issue closely examines how the World Bank regularly resorts to loan conditionalities in order to maintain power over borrower countries. Such conditionalities are often applied with blatant disregard of

the borrower countries' individual conditions and are usually based upon the Washington Consensus, particularly on its focus on the deregulation and privatization of nationalized industries.

In line with this, RoA's report cites the experiences of Indonesia and India—whose national governments immediately implemented structural changes on development planning that effectively sidelined legitimate CSOs and NGO's from participating in the development process in return for World Bank funding. For instance, Indonesia's National Development Planning Agency—a



The World Bank HQ. Photo Credit: World Bank

once-powerful government agency mandated to direct development planning—was reduced to planning and monitoring functions. In India, CSOs' rights were severely undermined when the WB granted the hosting of the \$84 million Bihar Panchayat Strengthening Project to a government managed institution, rather than to an NGO. In so doing, the WB has reduced India's CSOs to mere sub-concessionaires, instead of equal partners in development. ■

New IBON International paper tackles WB Agenda for 21st Century

As one of the world's largest multilateral development finance institutions with a total of 188 member countries, the World Bank is unarguably one of the most powerful institutions in the global arena today. Mandated to reduce poverty and fuel sustainable development, the WB has nonetheless been widely criticized for enacting policies that worsen poverty, hunger and indebtedness.

IBON International's October 2012 White Paper looks at the World Bank's agenda for the 21st century and discusses their implications, especially on developing countries. Entitled 'Earth, Inc.' the paper begins with an analysis of the World

Bank's lending focus, exposing the institution's tendency to prioritize corporate interests, specifically those of TNC's, to the detriment of domestic firms and small to medium scale enterprises.

According to IBON, the World Bank's corporate dominated agenda is even more apparent with the WB's new environment strategy for 2012-2022, which called for the systematic valuation of a country's natural resources. This process, known as Natural Capital Accounting (NCA), urges a country's government to assign monetary value and grant property rights to its natural ecosystems and open them up to trade.

Even though the NCA has garnered support among companies and even some CSOs, numerous CSOs slammed it as a means for the commodification and financialization of the ecosystem that will intensify environmental destruction for the sake of profit.

The report ends with a list of dangers that the developing world should be wary of when dealing with the WB, as well as recommendations on how to address them, including a policy review, an overhaul of the WB's governance and the removal of policy conditionalities, among others. ■

Resist corporate... (continued from p. 9)

and unorganized workers to advance our advocacies for food sovereignty.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. National and local governments should adopt a people-centred approach to fisheries management which recognizes and protects the rights of local communities to control natural resources and determine their own environmentally and ecologically sustainable fisheries harvesting and farming systems. The processes must be transparent and participative to ensure the representation of the people.

2. Frameworks to achieve sustainable fisheries must be in place which includes the promotion of traditional and indigenous fishing practices and management of resources, the dismantling of commercial fishing fleets and an overhaul of the unfair current systems of fisheries production and trade that favour profits over people.

3. National governments must take steps to fulfil their obligations in international instruments to recognize, protect and uphold our human rights, including our social, economic and cultural rights as well as our native customary rights. There must be mechanisms in place to ensure governments are held accountable.

4. Strategies for adaptation and mitigation for man-made and natural disasters contributing to climate change must be hinged on the promotion and protection of small-scale fisherfolk, and based on their proposals. These strategies should also protect and safeguard our ecological systems. National governments must ensure the safety and protection of small-scale fisherfolk from the man-made and natural disasters from climate change. Our national governments must also support small-scale fisherfolk in the event of the disasters.

5. Small-scale sustainable aquaculture of local and indigenous species must be promoted and large-scale unsustainable, industrial aquaculture rejected. There must be improved regulation and support for aquaculture farms to reduce their environmental impacts and reorient aquaculture from export and import based policies to local market needs. National governments must take adequate actions to provide financial

support for small-scale fisherfolk and promote small-scale fisherfolk organizations' through which they can maintain their livelihoods.

6. Society and national governments in particular should recognize, protect and realize women's rights in the fisheries sector. Women should receive equal wages and have equal rights to land and resources. They must have greater participation and representation in various levels of decision-making processes and their representative fisherfolk organizations should be supported in their advocacies.

7. Social movements, civil society and networks among fisherfolk and their advocates must be strengthened at the community, national and international levels. Effective strategies for communication to strengthen our collective advocacies for fisherfolk communities must be developed. And there must be support to build the capacity of social movements to operate freely and autonomously in a democratic system.

8. Local techniques and research which build the people's capacity and improve their participation and ownership in fisheries must be promoted. We reaffirm our commitment to protect and defend the rights to life and livelihood of fishing communities, promote sustainable and indigenous fishing practices and strengthen fisherfolk organizations and networks at various levels as we reject structures that trample on our inalienable rights.

Resist corporatization of fisheries!

Uphold fisherfolk's rights!

Long live international solidarity!

Promote national and people's food sovereignty!

Organizations:

- African Confederation of Professional Organisation of Artisanal Fishers, Africa Region
- Artisanal Fishermen's Confederation CONAPACH, Chile
- Asian Peasant Coalition, Asia Region
- AGRA Fisherfolk West Kalimantan, Indonesia
- Andhra Pradesh Fish Workers' Union, India

- Andhra Pradesh Vyavasaya Vruthidarula Union (APVVU), India
- BAYAN-Panay, Philippines
- Center for Marinelife Conservation and Community Development (MCD), Vietnam
- COAST, Bangladesh
- Coastal Development Partnership, Bangladesh
- IBON International, Global
- International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, Global
- International Food Security Network, Global
- FIDEC, Philippines
- Fisher Development Association, Myanmar
- Greenpeace-Philippines
- KIARA, Indonesia
- Loktak Lake Fisherman Union, India
- Malaysian Inshore Fishermen Action Network (JARING), Malaysia
- Mtwara People's Umbrella Organization (KIMWAM), Tanzania
- National Fishworkers Forum, India
- National Fishers' Association, Senegal
- National Solidarity Forum (NAFSO), Sri Lanka
- Network Activities Group, Myanmar
- Pamalakaya, Philippines
- Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum, Pakistan
- Pesticide Action Network – Asia-Pacific
- People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS), Global
- Platform for Exchange and Consultation of Organization of Civil Society on Sustainable Management of Marine in Mauritania Resources, Mauritania
- Fishery Local Trang Assembly, Thailand
- Fisheries and Marine Environment Research Institute (FMERI), Global
- Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM), Malaysia
- Save Andaman Network Foundation (SAN), Thailand
- Sustainable Development Foundation, Thailand
- World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), Global

Campaign for... (continued from p. 10)

of people and the protection of the environment. Under this framework, transnational corporations and especially the largest financial institutions based in the advanced countries have come to dominate the global economy and have intensified labor exploitation, resource extraction and speculative brigandage for the accumulation of profit.

This has led to greater hunger, inequality, landlessness, unemployment, precarious employment conditions, indebtedness, loss of incomes and social protections, deprivation of basic services, dispossession of communities, forced migration, resource depletion, environmental degradation, and the climate crisis. It

has bred more wars, oppression, violations of human and trade union rights, deaths and now threaten the very basis of life on this planet. All sectors among the people of the Global South bear the brunt of these injustices, including women, children, workers and peasant farmers.

Moreover, the majority of the people are either excluded or denied their right to participate in the making, monitoring and implementation of decisions that affect their lives and their future. Local and especially global elites and powerful actors, on the other hand, are often left unchecked and unaccountable for their actions that have severe negative impacts on society and the environment.

We believe that addressing these challenges takes much more than new strategies for rapidly achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Without addressing the structural roots of such trends, any gains will be easily undermined. Indeed the window of opportunity to reverse these trends before ecological and social catastrophe sets in is rapidly closing.

We need to embrace a new vision of development altogether, based on the philosophy of "living well" in community with others and in harmony with nature. This entails a profound social transformation which requires a radical redistribution of ownership, access and control over productive resources so that no one is denied

the basis for living in dignity and freedom. It involves the democratization of state and social institutions so that communities and citizens, rather than markets can democratically set social goals and priorities. It requires a reorientation of production and consumption to meet people's needs and human potentials within environmental limits rather than maximizing short-term profits. It necessitates a deeper respect and understanding of the symbiosis of people and the natural world instead of the valorization and commercialization of nature as mere resources and sinks.

As part of this transformative agenda, we challenge our governments and international institutions to break away from the current model of development and undertake meaningful reforms that truly address the needs of present and future generations. In this light we are committed to campaign for peoples' goals for genuine sustainable development founded on the principles of human rights, equality, self-determination, and social, gender and ecological justice. We are also committed to an autonomous civil society process of formulating and fighting for people's goals and demands, grounded in grassroots struggles, and challenging those in power.

We demand governments and the international community to adopt concrete commitments and targets, consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities, on the following peoples' priorities:

1. Human rights

- Adopt and enforce appropriate laws and policies backed up by maximum available resources to protect, promote and realize the full range of civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights
- Support realization of human rights universally through international cooperation including the provision of financial and technical resources
- Respect the sovereign right of nations to their own development and over their natural resources.

2. Poverty and Inequality

- Implement progressive and redistributive taxation, public spending and social policies (in education, health, wages and social protection) to minimize economic and social inequality
- Provide support to small-scale farmers, women producers, rural workers' secure access to water, land, soils, biodiversity, credit and infrastructure to end hunger and poverty.
- Ensure access to energy services for the poor and marginalized.

3. Food Sovereignty

- Adopt food sovereignty as policy framework towards adequate, safe, nutritious food for all, including policies and investments to support small-scale farmers, women producers, workers and secure access to (and protection of) the

water, land, soils, biodiversity, and other resources upon which food security depends.

- Carry out agrarian reform in order to secure worker's, farmer's and rural people's democratic access to land, water resources and seeds, as well as to finance and infrastructure in line with but not limited to the recommendations of the 2006 International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.

4. Full employment and decent work

- Ensure full and productive employment.
- Ensure enforcement of international labour standards for all workers, including women, migrants and workers in the informal economy, with reference to the Decent Work indicators as elaborated by the International Labor Organization (ILO).
- Promote green jobs and gender equality at the workplace.

5. Universal social protection

- Ensure universal access to basic guarantees of social protection with affirmative action in favour of disadvantaged groups in line with, but not limited to the recommendations set in the "Bachelet Report" and ILO Recommendation 202.
- Ensure income security for the unemployed and those whose livelihoods depend on precarious work, the sick, the

disabled, pregnant women, children and the elderly as well as on access to health care, education, housing and sanitation.

6. Gender Justice

- Full implementation of international commitments on gender equality, as enshrined in but not limited to, Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.
- Ensure equal access and opportunities in employment, land tenure, education, health, governance, and access to sexual, reproductive health services.
- Ensure systematic application of effective affirmative action to prevent marginalisation and discrimination of women, and to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

7. Climate Justice and environmental sustainability

- Limit global temperature rise to under 1.5 degrees, consistent with the latest climate science, through drastic emissions cuts and a fair sharing of the global carbon budget that takes into account historical emissions without resort to offsets.
- Provide adequate and appropriate finance contributed by countries on the basis

of historical responsibility for global warming to make reparations to all affected peoples (in line with the \$100 billion per year promised in the 2010 Cancun Agreements).

- Ensure sharing of safe, appropriate, ecologically and socially sound technologies unhindered by intellectual property rights.
- Shift to and expand renewable energy use.
- Adopt ecologically and socially sustainable production systems and technologies in manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, mining.
- Arrest deforestation, overfishing, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, pollution and protect livelihoods of forest-dwellers and fishers.

8. New trade, monetary and financial architecture

- Reform trade relations to promote equality among trade partners, uphold the special and differential treatment of developing countries, and help economic development in poor countries.
- Implement democratic and pro-developing country reforms in the international monetary and financial system, in line with those proposed in the 2009 UN Stiglitz Commission Report (Report of the Commission of Experts of the President of

the UNGA on Reforms of the International Monetary and Financial System), including: improved regulation of banks, financial flows and financial activities such as derivatives trading; greater developing country voice in the Bretton Woods Institutions; broadening the role of central banks beyond controlling inflation; and establishing a mechanism for sovereign debt renegotiation.

9. Democracy and good governance

- Institute measures for accountability and transparency in governance.
- Ensure people's participation in decision-making, access to information, and access to justice – three pillars of the Aarhus Convention.
- Ensure compliance of business and industry with international human rights norms and environmental standards, including mandatory reporting requirements.
- Ensure access to remedies for victims of human rights violations.

10. Peace and security based on justice

- Promote inclusive development processes--respecting the rights of all socio-cultural groups, minorities, indigenous peoples, religions, etc. over their cultural heritage and natural resources and respecting their right

to define and pursue their development aspirations.

- Adopt policy of eliminating nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction and arms trading.
- Rechannel military expenditure to social expenditure.

The ongoing process of establishing a new set of sustainable development goals and a post-2015 development framework should serve as an impetus for governments to address these challenges. This process should recognize and provide full mechanisms and opportunities not just for consultations but for full participation of civil society in deliberations and decision-making at all levels.

At the national level, multistakeholder bodies should be formed with representatives from the government (including parliament and local authorities), civil society and other stakeholders to decide on national development strategy and priority targets based on local consultations with experts' inputs. At the international level, multistakeholder processes led by Task Teams under the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals can be set up where member governments and representatives of civil society and other stakeholders can formally meet and work side-by-side to draft proposals for the General Assembly.

These modalities should include providing adequate support for the participation of those directly affected and most vulnerable

The ongoing process of establishing a new set of sustainable development goals and a post-2015 development framework should serve as an impetus for governments to address these challenges.

to poverty, inequality, injustice, ecological destruction and human rights violations, especially from the Global South.

We urge all movements, peoples' organizations, civil society groups and all concerned citizens to join this campaign.

Signed by:

International and Regional Organizations

- Asia-Pacific Indigenous Peoples Youth Network (AIPYN)
- Asian Students Association (ASA)
- Asian Peasant Coalition (APC)
- Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)
- Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF)
- African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)
- Habitat International Coalition
- Ibon International
- International Migrants Alliance (IMA)
- Indigenous People's Movement for Self-Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL)

- International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
- International Women's Alliance (IWA)
- Latin American Network for Debt and Development (LATINDADD)
- People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS)
- Peoples' Movement on Climate Change (PMCC)
- Reality of Aid (RoA) -Africa

National and Local Organizations

- Centre for Research and Advocacy, Manipur
- Community Environmental Rehabilitation and Rural Economic Empowerment Program (CERREEP), Kenya
- Economic Justice Network (EJN), South Africa
- Indonesian Environmental Forum (WALHI)/Friends of the Earth-Indonesia
- Ogoni Solidarity Forum, Nigeria
- Red Nicaragüense de Comercio Comunitario (RENICC), Nicaragua
- Social Development Network (SODNET), Kenya
- South Africa NGO Coalition (SANGOCO), South Africa

Those who wish to join this campaign and sign-on to this statement may email pquintos@iboninternational.org

The initiators of this campaign are participants in the, "Rights for Sustainability Beyond Rio+20: Global Civil Society Workshop on the Rio+20 Outcomes and the Post-2015 Development Agenda" held at the Masai Lodge, Nairobi, Kenya last October 2-3, 2012 organized by IBON International

Rights for sustainability... (continued from p. 10)

conflict, and environmental collapse than twenty years ago.

Now how we, and including our countries and the global community as a whole, have addressed poverty, threats of climate change, conflict and war have been mixed at best. That is the nicest thing to say, it's mixed. The truth is, it hasn't really been great, and the problems are greater, the challenges are greater for us. Actually the WTO, which was agreed upon at Uruguay Round right after Rio, is a portent of things to come. On one hand the world agrees to a great agreement, an Agenda 21 that is going to conserve the environment, that humanity is going to be responsible to Mother Earth. And then on the other hand you have an agreement for free trade. And this portent, this duality remains and exists. In that sense, Green Economy is a very stirring example of this duality, where you have corporations and powers-that-be that look at Green Economy as an opportunity for more neoliberalism to transform the environment into simply a question of services—something of value that can be paid for and can be used for speculative activities. But, at the same time, Green Economy for others is a serious agenda about how they can actually restructure their economies in a sustainable way. In the end, when in doubt, we take a more secure position, and in that sense civil society was satisfied at that level of speaking. But in terms of 'Was Rio+20 able to advance the ambitions of Rio?' No.

Similar to Rio, the MDGs also represents another initiative where we can say the results are mixed at best. There are some achievements but mostly we have challenges, we have problems. This is a combination of several circumstances, individual country circumstances. Things are not easy for our governments and societies. But you also have the recent global and economic crisis that have created conditions which made it even more difficult to achieve the MDGs, and also regressions that predate the crisis. For instance, the combined effect of the food and economic crisis has resulted in a significant increase in the number of hungry people from 873 million in the period 2004–2006 to more than 1 billion, the highest record ever in 2009, and still growing. The question of global



Antonio Tujan, International Director, IBON International

unemployment rates have jumped from more than 34 million people to reach 212 million in the end of 2009 and this has not improved because of the crisis.

But it's not just the crisis that's been a problem. There have been regressions that predate this crisis. For example, if we do not include China—because China is one big country that's one-fourth of humanity, more or less, and they have made great strides in reducing poverty—if we exclude it in the equation, actually poverty, extreme poverty in the world increased by about 36 million between 1990 and 2005, which means to say the situation in the world is not improving. It's actually growing worse. Worse, actually if we consider the increasing effects of climate change.

The MDGs, if you ask me, have been successful because they served the purpose of focusing attention to poverty. But others would question this success and say, "Well, it's limited to poverty alleviation and government responses to address the symptoms, and leave out many aspects of human suffering." Well, it's not easy to define goals. It does not address societal and global structural issues and in fact it has been implemented in the context of neoliberal reforms. Therefore can we say that the MDGs served to justify or window-dress neoliberalism? It can be said so, actually.

MDGs have not addressed the question of power. It has not addressed the question of democracy. And yet we do know that power structures are a fundamental basis for poverty as well, in many countries around the world—power structures both at national and international

level. Now all of these we are going to face, now that the MDGs are ending. And we want to do better. We want to work together to do better. But at the same time the crisis has also implications on the multilateral system that has sharpened the North-South divide, in a situation when there is a greater need for coordinated response. There is, in a sense, what people say a crisis of multilateralism that besets the United Nations. I don't necessarily call it a crisis of multilateralism but simply that the world is in a power transition and power relations have to be renegotiated.

Governments and multilateral agencies are generally aware of challenges due to the crisis and what they must deliver. And they do agree that there is a need for effective responses beyond the old G8 system. Now you have the strength of the G77 + China, a strength that we peoples from the South do welcome. The question is, "Is this strength working for us, the peoples from the South?" That's another issue altogether. And therefore because of this change in the power dynamics, the people from the South need to have stronger voices. If our governments have stronger voices, then we do need to have stronger voices to tell our governments what we want as a people.

The challenge post-2015 means that we need to define goals to again focus attention, no longer on the question simply of development, but on a broader agenda that includes sustainable development, climate change, the environment. And the goals therefore need to address key issues—many of them already presented to us—and many of them present challenges, how you translate them into goals. For example for us, for Rights for Sustainability, obviously the goals must now have a focus on human rights and democracy. Human rights and democracy become a fundamental framework with which the world is able to address the problems.

Second, we cannot simply stay with the symptoms of poverty. We should actually start going into structural issues of poverty. And how do we do that? What kind of goal would be easy to understand and yet respond to poverty structurally?

We have come to a situation that cannot be simply be relegated to the geopolitical conflicts between governments. We have come to a situation where the demands of the environment can no longer be addressed simply governments.

Third, we have to address inequality. Every one of us suffers from inequality. And that inequality is represented to us by the inequality of women and men. And therefore gender inequality is symptomatic of the totality of the inequalities in the world. And therefore the goals must have a very clear position, not simply about women's access and rights, not simply about equity, but even more so about equality.

And fourth, we must address the threat of irreversible climate change. We need to act now. And what kind of goal could bring total global attention to something that is doable? Indeed these four areas must address the question of an international order that is more responsive. We need trade and finance regimes that are responsive to the needs of countries. We need a system of peace based on justice rather than militarization and armaments. And finally of course, we must be able to lay down what are the structural roots of unsustainability in our societies. We now understand that the question of environment is linked to the question of social issues and that they can be addressed, or should be addressed together.

These, I think, I would call the people's goals. It's not simply about having Millennium Development Goals or their successor. It's not simply about having Sustainable Development Goals. It's about defining what are the people's goals. The goals must come from the people. They must be premised on the people's interests and articulated by peoples. They address our basic demands for human rights, social justice, and equality. They address our demands for system change, for genuine sustainability. And they are based on our popular action.

The problem is that our world is still not ready to really respond to people's goals. The intergovernmental system, even of the United Nations where there is an extreme effort already to bring in participation, to bring in human rights-based approaches of consultation, participation, and prior and informed consent, still fall short of the actual participation and the actual elucidation of people's voices. People's aspirations and

their future require the full participation of CSOs as people's special interest representatives.

We have come to a situation that cannot be simply relegated to the geopolitical conflicts between governments. We have come to a situation where the demands of the environment can no longer be addressed simply by governments. They must be addressed generally, and that is why the UN call for a new diplomacy, meaning, also addressing different actors, the multi-stakeholder character, the need for a multi-stakeholder action, is very ripe. But we talk of multi-stakeholder when in reality it's still not generally multi-stakeholder, because you just have multi-stakeholder consultations. So in the end the decisions are made the governments, many times in untransparent circumstances. So we believe that besides civil society being able to formulate what the people's goals are, a second responsibility is to create a truly democratic post-2015 agenda. An agenda that through the United Nations all stakeholders can together work for, all stakeholders are able to speak to, and that should make governments realize that there is a strength when other stakeholders are able to speak as equals.

This has been shown in Busan where CSOs had their own Sherpa. It has been proven to work very well on what a multi-stakeholder framework brings—the synergies and the strength of working together, of total partnership.

So the design currently of the post-2015 and the SDGs process seeks full consultation but (1) the processes are not fully transparent—there is an effort to be so but it is not so; (2) it is not fully participatory, including the role of oversight and interlocution by CSOs in addition to participation; and finally (3) essentially it's still a government framework and the approach is subject to the principal influence of the rich and powerful to whom our governments are mainly beholden to (landlords, corporations, transnational corporations). As it is now, it seems like a very well-thought-of process, but I think that it still suffers from these.

And therefore we have a responsibility to push, to define our goals, to push for our goals, to push for our participation until the end. That is our responsibility. That world demands nothing less.

ARWC honors... (continued from p. 18)

resources for future generations! Until such social inequities exist, we should not give up," Maria Galong, an anti-mining advocate from the Philippines added.

Despite all the victories gained by the women's movement, the ARWC says that the battle is far from over for multitudes of rural women who still face poverty, destitution and government neglect on a regular basis.

"Networks and advocates of rural women regard the Rio+20 framework for sustainable development as a failure. It did not address the systemic problems resulting to crises in financial energy, food and water, climate and environmental systems—crises that often hit rural women and children the hardest," the ARWC declared.

"Inspired by these rural and indigenous women's courage, we will persist in rallying governments for genuine economic development

goals as we reinforce our actions to defend the remaining resources of our land," Vernie Yocogan-Diano, from the Cordillera Women's Education Action Research Center, Inc. (CWEARC-Philippines) concluded. ■

This article is a simplified version of a news release that originally appeared in the **People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty** website, 15 October 2012 (<http://www.foodsov.org/index.php/pdfs-news/6-latest-news/87-honouring-100-women-to-mark-100-years-of-womens-resistance-rights-empowerment-and-liberation>).

Confronting the looming food crisis: New FAO methods likely to alter global hunger data



A WOMAN holding her young malnourished baby queues for food at the Baddado camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Somalia.. Photo Credit: United Nations

It is 6am in rural Mliba in central Swaziland, and Melody Thwala and her seven-year-old granddaughter Thandi are busy with their daily task of harvesting wild ‘umbhidvo’ weeds before Thandi goes to school. Thwala will use what they have gathered to make a spinach-like dish to supplement the family’s one daily meal.

“My grandchildren have a meal at school and this is a relief to me. At our home we have only one evening meal,” said Thwala, a widow who lives with her unmarried daughter and four grandchildren.

Meanwhile, in the Hatay Province of Turkey, people have started selling their houses, cars and other possessions in order to buy food, as food and fuel prices steadily escalate. Many are also migrating to nearby provinces in an effort to earn a living.

The situation is not any better in Pakistan. “We live only on what we find on rubbish heaps. My children and I scavenge daily, sell items that can bring in money such as bottles or iron scrap, and take home what rotten vegetables, discarded ‘roti’ [flat bread] or other edibles we can find to make up our dinner,” said Sharifan Bibi, 40, a widow who sifts through the giant garbage heaps strewn along the railway line. She says she has no other way to feed herself and her five children, and only wants to know what the government is doing to “help people like us”.

These are just a few cases that illustrate the depth of food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition in many developing countries across the world today. Coupled with the volatility of food prices, the question begs, are we headed for another food crisis?

Above crisis levels

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), approximately 12 percent of the global population is hungry, and most of them - 852 million - live in developing countries, where the prevalence of undernourishment is now estimated at 14.9 percent of the population. Notwithstanding this seemingly large number, the FAO insists that we are far from experiencing a food crisis comparable to the 2007-2008 crisis.

Even with the US drought that shriveled most of its maize crop, along with the various cases of political instability that tend to jack food prices up, food security experts say that we remain well-above crisis levels.

“Our stocks of cereals are relatively comfortable and the situation is not comparable to 2010/11 [when wheat stocks were smaller] or to 2007/08 [when stocks of the main staple grains, wheat and maize, fell to record lows],” says Abdolreza Abbassian, secretary of the Intergovernmental Group on Grains (IGG) at FAO.

However, experts do warn of sharp fluctuations or volatility in food prices that could disrupt the efforts of grain-importing poor countries to stay within their budgets. Such a situation could have a disastrous impact on poor families who already have little or no purchasing power.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon wrote, “The economic slowdown will diminish the incomes of the poor; the food crisis will raise the number of hungry people in the world and push millions more into poverty; climate change will have a disproportionate impact on the poor.”

New UN hunger indicators

In light of the possibility of a food crisis, the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has announced that it is exploring new ways to measure “hunger”, “undernourishment” and “food insecurity” - terms

used interchangeably - which will dramatically alter the number of people believed to be going hungry.

FAO experts say that the new figures reflect more and better data as well as major improvements in their methodology. The new data include fresh population estimates and household-level surveys of food consumption in 44 countries.

That has helped improve the agency’s statistical model, which is now sophisticated enough to cover ‘skewness’, or asymmetry, in the distribution of food in any population, making it more accurate. The new methodology also takes into account food lost during distribution, especially on relief operations.

Despite shortcomings—particularly its reliance on government data that tend to be of uncertain quality—analysts are hopeful that the FAO’s new set of methods and indicators will yield a more reliable result compared to previous estimates.

An initiative to collect a new form of data based on people’s experiences with food security is also in the works.

Purnima Menon, a nutrition expert with the International Food Policy Research Institute, says that using a more detailed set of questionnaires with experience-based indicators could be a very ambitious project. “In principle this is a good idea because it taps into some of the unseen effects of hunger.”

Definitions are key

At the heart of the matter is how “hunger” or “undernourishment” are defined – usually regarded as the inability to access enough food to be able to conduct a healthy and active life.

A key issue was to define what “enough” food is, said a technical note released along with the report.

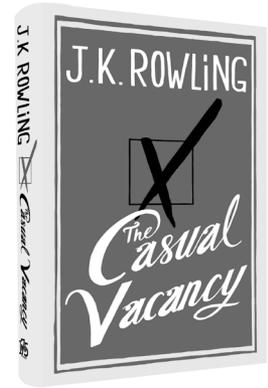
The FAO method is based on assessing energy requirements. People are considered undernourished “if the level of his or her habitual dietary energy intake

Confronting the looming...
(continued on p. 31)

JK Rowling's clarion call for grassroots politics

by Susanna Rustin

The Casual Vacancy features a parish that's lost its way – and someone getting involved in politics to do something about it



By now, anyone who is interested in the extraordinary career of Harry Potter author JK Rowling will have gathered that her first novel for adults *The Casual Vacancy*, published a fortnight ago, is fiercely political. The plot of this 500-page satire-cum-tragedy revolves around an election. The author is furious with the complacent middle Englanders who run the fictional West Country town of Pagford, and furious above all about their callous disregard for the poor.

By focusing on a parish council, Rowling almost entirely avoids explicit mention of party politics, but it is perfectly obvious that the faction seeking to decouple Pagford from the sink estate on its outskirts are Tories. Their ally in this, and a second project to shut down a drug clinic in the service of public sector cuts, is grandee Aubrey Fawley, possessor of a fine old house and a seat on the district council.

Reaction to the novel from the right has been predictably outraged, with *The Daily Mail's* Jan Moir denouncing it as a “socialist manifesto masquerading as literature”. Elsewhere though, opinions have been mixed. Melvyn Bragg called it “stunning” and suggested Rowling’s teenage underclass heroine Krystal Weedon would make the journey to posterity alongside Harry Potter himself.

Other contemporary novelists attempting a state-of-the-nation snapshot – Rose Tremain, Sebastian Faulks – have tended to use a wider angle, bringing in such disparate points of view as east European migrants and jihadist terrorists. In focusing tightly on a single community, Rowling shows that it is in local matters that questions of value are at their sharpest and most inescapable; that it is in our choices regarding what most immediately concerns us (our neighbourhoods,

our children’s schools) that we are most ruthless and most exposed.

The book ducks national politics. Parish councils are rarely as powerful as Rowling suggests, and it doesn’t really make sense that we hear nothing of the local MP or Conservative association. But to someone who has spent the past two years working towards the election of the first parish council in London, it is heartening to see grassroots politics treated with deadly seriousness.

Pagford parish has lost its way morally, with tragic consequences, but far from the nihilistic cynic some have labelled her, Rowling shows there is a way back. When Samantha Mollison, bored daughter-in-law of the novel’s chief villain and owner of a failing bra shop, finds herself afflicted with an unfamiliar “desire to be absorbed in something bigger than herself”, what does she do? She volunteers to become a councillor and hear the arguments for the drug clinic.

That Tory opinion-formers hate and fear this novel’s influence enough to bother denouncing it is heartening for anyone who thinks books can shape as well as reflect the world in which they are made. But if anyone is in doubt that a novel published in 2012, even one with millions of readers, can do much to bring about the social transformation that is required if real-life Krystal Weedons are to get the chance in life that Pagford denies them, Rowling reminds us very clearly that there is another way: join the decision-makers. Get involved in politics. ■

This is an edited version of an article that originally appeared in *The Guardian*, on 11 October, 2012: JK Rowling’s clarion call for grassroots politics (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/oct/11/jk-rowling-casual-vacancy>). Susanna Rustin is a writer and editor on the *Saturday Guardian*.

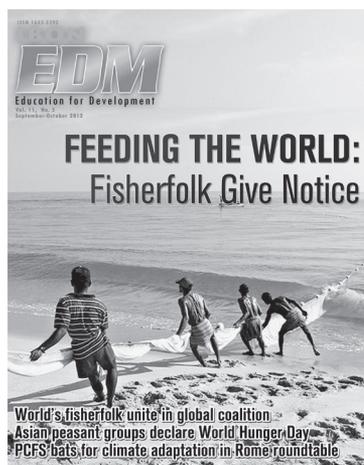
Confronting the looming... (continued from p. 29)

is below the minimum level nutritionists deem appropriate,” the technical report states, taking into consideration age, sex and lifestyle.

The other issue was how long a person must be undernourished before their condition is considered chronic; the FAO indicator has settled on a year.

Still, the new methodology does not capture the short-term effects of food price surges or other economic shocks. FAO says it is working to develop a wider set of indicators to capture a better sense of the quality of food people have access to as well as other dimensions of food security. ■

This article is an abridged and simplified version of IRIN's in-depth section entitled “**A Global Food Crisis**” (<http://www.irinnews.org/In-depth/77872/72/A-global-food-crisis>), including the following articles: **How good is the new hunger data?, 11 October 2012** (<http://www.irinnews.org/Report/96511/FOOD-How-good-is-the-new-hunger-data>), **Food: Another crisis coming?, 12 July 2012** (<http://www.irinnews.org/Report/95853/FOOD-Another-crisis-coming>) **Pakistan: Growing worries over food security, 4 October 2012** (<http://www.irinnews.org/report/96446/PAKISTAN-Growing-worries-over-food-security>), **Analysis: Syria and the regional food chain, 18 October 2012** (<http://www.irinnews.org/report/96583/Analysis-Syria-and-the-regional-food-chain>) and **Swaziland: Diets downsized by financial crisis, 16 March 2012** (<http://www.irinnews.org/report/95088/SWAZILAND-Diets-downsized-by-financial-crisis>). IRIN is a humanitarian news and analysis service of the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

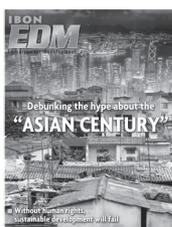


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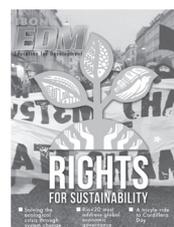
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