

16th FIMARC WORLD ASSEMBLY
September 25-October 4, 2023
Chunapa Resort, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Organized by FIMARC

Co-organized by Caritas Thailand, Caritas Chiang Mai, RTRC, Caritas Asia and AFC

Summary

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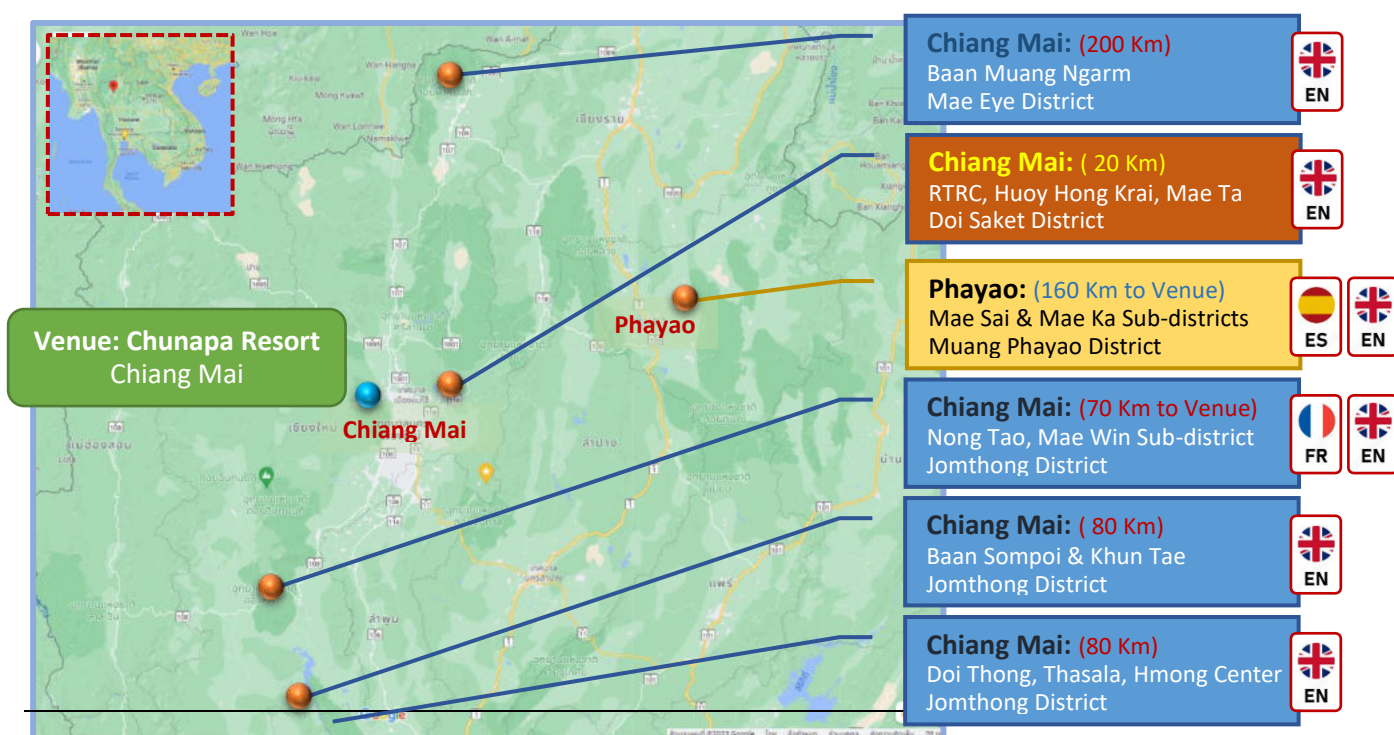
The FIMARC World Assembly was held from September 25 to October 4 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. It was hosted by Caritas Asia and RTRC, the Thai movement member of FIMARC. This assembly initially planned for 2022 was postponed following the COVID pandemic and was convened for spring 2023. The gathering was held in 3 sequences of 3 days: an exposure time within the regional rural population, a time of world conference and a statutory assembly time.

1: the participants

The Assembly brought together 75 participants from 30 national movements and organizations, including 44 representatives from 25 FIMARC movements (7 African, 6 South American, 9 European and 22 Asian) as well as 15 representatives from the Thai national movement and 15 Caritas Asia representatives from 5 of Thailand's neighboring countries. A German delegation from the Inter-Farm cooperation program took part in the conference. Ten (10) FIMARC national movements indicated that they were unable to attend.

2: Exposure time (September 26-28)

Location of the exposure programme for the 6 language groups



The 44 delegates, divided into 6 language groups and accompanied by Thai interpreters, were welcomed by regional groups of the Thai movement within a 100 km radius around Chiang Mai and were able to talk to their representatives about the way rural populations operate.

Two of these groups illustrate these exchanges. The French-speaking group presented here was received by the Karen community of Nong Tao, which lives mainly from agriculture and rice growing. This community has been heavily involved in the development of the Rice Bank and the Rice Merit Network, initiatives in which Father Niphot, director of the RTRC, the Research and Training Centre for Religious and Cultural Communities in the region, has been heavily involved.

The French-speaking group met with i) Mr Sommai, a local animator, who recounted the history of the village of Nong Tao and the local involvement in developing rice cultivation to replace poppy cultivation for opium production; ii) young Javoan, who mobilizes the village children to recycle various objects and waste, and to recycle and produce compost; iii) a farmer seeking to maintain a forest site as a cultivated natural area, in opposition to a government initiative; iv) a farming family living from organic cattle breeding, in the process of handing over their farm to their son; v) a women's association concerned with the transmission of their local culture and intergenerational solidarity; vi) a "Royal Project" site for agriculture, with the organization of vegetable production and marketing on a territorial community scale, intended to supply regional commercial sites.

The second example of these exchanges was with one of the English-speaking groups in the Doi Saket district, which provided an insight into the investment made by the Thai organisation RTRC in local development, with respect for nature and human communities. Through the presentation of projects to protect the quality of water in streams and food production (fish, rice, frogs, etc.), discussions focused mainly on the aims of these productions and the methods used. Naiyana Vitchiporn, who is deeply involved in the organisation, reminded us of the guidelines underpinning these projects and the link between the spirituality conveyed by the organisation and the guidelines it has set itself:

- i) Respect for nature by protecting water quality, preserving forests and maintaining soil quality.
- ii) Priority given to maintaining the autonomy and culture of village or regional communities by maintaining or seeking self-sufficiency in food.
- iii) The importance of opening up to the world by giving priority to training that combines technical knowledge, community culture and religious spirituality in a spirit of mutual respect.

The sharing of this time of exposure between our 6 groups highlighted the perception of a dynamic local development, strongly driven by local populations marked by their traditional culture. With the concern to pass on this culture to the next generation, and the questioning induced by modernity and changing lifestyles linked to the attraction of other forms of life and invasive technologies (media, computers and mopeds). All the groups emphasized the quality of the welcome they received in their host communities.

3: World Conference: (September 29-October 1) "Transformations of the food system and the economy, and ecological conversion in the light of Laudato Si".

The first day of the conference began with an opening mass attended by the Apostolic Nuncio for Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, the North American Archbishop Peter Bryan WELLS. Participants were invited to dress in traditional costumes.

The mass was followed by opening speeches by :

- Peter Bryan WELLS Apostolic Nuncio
- Andreas GRAMSO of the German Cooperation
- Benedict Alo D'Rozario, Head of Caritas Asia, Bangladesh
- George Fernandez, FIMARC General Secretary

Two speeches introduced the general theme of the conference: « The transformation of the food system and ecological conversion, in the light of Laudato Si » :

- - Wolfgang SCHARL president of FIMARC
- - Niphot THIENWIHARN, priest, director of the RTRC

In his presentation, Wolfgang Scharl clearly outlined the context of our commitment to FIMARC and our desire to work with our movements to implement ways of operating in our societies that are in line with the orientations expressed in the encyclical Laudato Si. With a vigorous appeal to our assembly and our movements: « Let us be the actors of ecological, economic and human transformation... Let us dare to build a dignified rural life and a just world! » Part of this introductory text is appended to this document.

Father Niphot, founder of the Thai movement, recalled the conditioning of human relations by the rice production method, and the spiritual and cosmic dimension of our engagement with nature; we are invited to live in harmony with it in order to find God in it. We are called to an ecological and spiritual conversion.

These concerns were developed in the afternoon's presentations. As an introduction, the presentation of a German-Thailand project supported by the German Ministry of Agriculture illustrated a form of cooperation between agricultures on different continents. The aim of the project is to support Thai farmers in forming local cooperatives to promote a sustainable development. A German civil servant, Karsten ZIEBELL, then two Thai farmers took the floor to explain the aims of this project, which is currently underway.

The conference continued with 5 themes

3.1: Impacts of COVID-19, particularly on farmers and rural populations. How can we create income-generating initiatives and build resilient and sustainable local economies?

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound and widespread impact on global economies, with farmers and rural populations among the hardest hit. Puangrat Kaewlom, a professor at Chiang Mai University, and her team examined the multiple consequences of the pandemic on these vulnerable groups, and explored possible solutions to foster the resilience and sustainability of food production systems in the Thai context. Based on a case study of a community farm in Chiang Mai, she highlighted the capacity of rural communities to build robust local economies and withstand external shocks. She emphasized that local initiatives can enable adaptation and improve resilience through community involvement, diversification of income sources and promotion of sustainable agricultural practices.

This presentation was complemented by a testimonial from the CLUMP movement: a foundation for living together in love and unity for mountain peoples.

Session 2 looked at agroecology as a response to climate change and the food and energy crisis. We heard the testimony of a peasant member of Kok Edoi, a Thai movement belonging to Via Campesina, followed by that of Sophie Elizabeth Kibuywa, from FIMARC Kenya.

3.2: Agroecology, a response to climate change and the food and energy crisis

Mr Phaithoon Soisod, General Secretary of the "Assembly of the Poor", illustrated the knowledge developed by his movement, Kok Edoi. He presented his local techniques for growing "Krajiao", particularly wild vegetables. He highlighted the concerns of local farmers to ensure the conservation of their indigenous seeds and to convey messages of respect for climate justice.

Elizabeth Kibuywa from FIMARC Kenya illustrated her organisation's DESECE commitment to agro-ecological approaches to vegetable production. She stressed the need for coherent funding for Third World countries that are unable to cope with the increasing negative effects of climate change.

At the end of the day, work in small groups focused on the following questions:

1. Name three major challenges created/increased by the COVID 19 pandemic for farmers and rural life.
2. Suggest ways or alternatives for dealing with these challenges.
3. What kind of sustainable and resilient local economy can be put in place to support the livelihoods of farmers and rural people?
4. What are the most common food production systems in your regions? What are the challenges posed by these systems?
5. Do you think that agroecology can be a tool and an approach for combating climate change and the food and energy crisis? How do you see this?

A summary of Day 1 and the reports from the various working groups was given as an introduction to Day 2 of the conference.

3.3: Digitisation in agriculture: a support for small farmers or another means of monopolisation by multinationals?

By way of introduction, George Fernandez pointed out that digital agriculture is a priority for the FAO and other international bodies, and that this approach raises many questions for CSOs concerning the widening gap between farming organisations that control and have access to technology and small farmers who do not have the means to access it.

The presentations by two researchers from the Lanna University of Technology in Thailand, Ms Parida Jewpany and Mr Pinit Nuangpirom, described and analysed two examples of very modern farms in Thailand, with the use of numerous automated digital systems, such as the continuous management of temperature and humidity in horticultural greenhouses. The presentation also raised the question of the impact of this modernisation on agricultural employment. The profiles of workers sought are inevitably evolving towards a higher level of education and technical skills, which may in fact exclude some of those looking for work in agriculture.

3.4: Impact of the corporatisation of the agricultural sector on peasants, migrant workers, the landless and other marginalised sectors.

Corporatisation, i.e. the increasing role of multinationals in the agricultural sector, raises questions about its effects on peasants, migrant workers and other marginalised people. This question was addressed by Mr Chomchuan Boonrahong, a retired researcher, organic farmer (2 ha) and pioneer in these fields in Thailand. He has been organising a farmers' market in Chiang Mai for several years. He retraced Thailand's recent agricultural history, with the green revolution of the 1970s, high-yield varieties, inputs, and the subsequent indebtedness of farmers. He then spoke of the problems facing the country: air pollution, the phenomenon of landless farmers, the decline in biodiversity, the rural exodus, against a backdrop of globalisation, free trade and the growing influence of the media.

He presented the system he developed in Thailand in 1986, for sustainable agriculture, both for local consumption and for export. He set up a training centre and a network to show that this was possible, and then to lobby for a different policy. In fact, following a visit by members of the government to his farm in 2007, sustainable agriculture became part of the government's national plan, and certain pesticides were banned.

At the end of the morning, Mrs Shin Keung Seon, from South Korea, presented the actions of the CCFM, a member movement of FIMARC, to support small producers in their fight for access to land, and to develop short circuits thanks to the network of urban Catholic parishes. This has helped to strengthen the links between urban and rural dwellers.

At the end of the day, small group discussions were organised around the following questions:

1. What challenges might the digitisation of agriculture pose for small-scale producers?
2. What types of digital technology can benefit small-scale producers?
3. Your suggestions on how to develop technologies that are affordable, accessible, usable and even participatory and controlled by small producers.
4. What are some of the impacts of the corporatisation of agriculture in your region/country?
5. What alternatives / initiatives / struggles / campaigns can be developed to resist the negative impacts of corporatisation in agriculture (and to promote sustainable food production systems)?

3.5: Farmers' rights (UNDROP) : the key to strengthening family farming

The end of the day was devoted to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Rural Workers, with a presentation by George Fernandez, General Secretary of FIMARC. He retraced FIMARC's involvement, between 2012 and 2018, in the fight to ensure that this declaration could be drawn up and then put to the UN vote. In particular, he raised the issue of seeds and access to land. At the end of the discussions, a minute's silence was observed in memory of Bak Nam GI, the farmer from the South Korean movement who died in 2017 during a demonstration for fairer rice prices. He encouraged us to use this declaration at local level, back in our respective countries and movements, even if unfortunately a number of states did not vote in favour of this declaration. (The European states abstained from this vote). What follow-up can we expect from this declaration? Participants from different countries spoke about their respective local contexts. Our task now is to continue to invest in ensuring that governments incorporate these rights into their legislation.

On the evening of the 2nd day of the conference, we enjoyed a festive exchange with the team from Caritas Asia, who told us about their recent work on Laudato Si. This Catholic NGO has decided to integrate a concern for ecology and social justice in relation to natural resources into its humanitarian and charitable programmes. "Together, let's protect our common home".

On the morning of the 3rd day of the conference, we summarised the various presentations and then worked in small groups on an action plan for our movements.

The following questions guided our reflections and discussions in small groups:

1. Are there any actions/programmes to promote awareness of the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas? If so, what are they?
 2. Are there any initiatives or policies formulated by your governments to implement the rights of peasants and other rural populations?
 3. Make proposals for our work on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.
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1. What concrete sustainable local economic initiatives has your movement created?
 2. What are your proposals for concrete activities/initiatives/campaigns to promote agro-ecological approaches?
 3. Suggest concrete actions for our work on digitisation in agriculture.
 4. Suggest concrete actions for our work on corporate control in farming and food systems?

In the evening, our action plans were presented so that adjustments could be made to suit local contexts at the continental meetings.

The conference ended with a mass and a relaxing evening in the centre of Chiang Mai.

4: General Assembly (2-4 October)

As a preamble to the General Assembly, the following affiliated members and associated organisations present and entitled to vote at the meeting were listed: Africa (Benin, Burkina-Faso, Kenya, Centrafrica, Senegal); Latin America (Argentina, El Salvador); Asia (Bangladesh, India, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand); Europe (Belgium, France, Germany, Spain).

4.1: Approval of the agenda

4.2: Approval of the report on the 2018 General Meeting in Senegal

George reported on the summary report that had been sent to the movements after the General Assembly in Senega.

The report was approved unanimously.

4.3: Presentation of the 2018-2023 Bureau report. George Fernandez reported on FIMARC's motivations and investments:

- i) The challenges facing the rural world (poverty, climate change, the place of farmers in society, conflict situations in many countries)
- ii) FIMARC's objectives (investing in rural communities, promoting the rights of peasants and rural populations, improving education, strengthening the place of women in society, the right of everyone to a dignified life)
- iii) FIMARC's desire to extend its network through the contacts it can establish on its own or through national movements.
- iv) Regional training sessions organised in conjunction with national movements or with international support (FAO, UNESCO, Christian development agencies, etc.)

He recalled the role and relations of FIMARC with its movements and within the Church, in particular with the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, through the forums of International Catholic Action Movements (MIACS) with the aim of having a common voice at the United Nations, with UNESCO's CCIC, and with the International Confederation of Catholic Development Agencies (CIDSE).

He mentioned FIMARC's advocacy role with the international institutions where it is present: at the United Nations Human Rights Council, where it maintains contact with the networks monitoring the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants; at the World Committee on Food Security (CFS-CFS) and with other international structures that revolve around the FAO. He mentioned his involvement in the preparation of the Nyéléni World Forum, to be held in India in 2025.

He recalled that since the 2018 World Assembly in Senegal, the Executive Committee has had to work essentially by videoconference, and has only been able to meet twice, in 2019 and early 2023, because of travel restrictions linked to the COVID pandemic.

This report was unanimously approved by the General Assembly.

4.4 : Admission of new members

- FIMARC has received an application from the Ecuador movement, presented by Mireya Andrade, to become an associated organisation of FIMARC. The application is supported by the Bishop of the Diocese of RioBamba. The application is based on a project by the local Christian association, which is heavily involved in a regional development project aimed at preserving a highly endangered local animal resource, the llama population.

Membership as an associated organisation was unanimously approved by the Assembly.

Consequently the number of voting organisations was increased from 16 to 17.

- In 2010, the Indian movement INAG, an organisation associated with FIMARC, applied for recognition as an affiliated movement. The FIMARC statutes state that an affiliated movement must be recognised by the country's episcopate as a national movement. Given the size and organisation of the Indian territory, the INAG movement was asked to obtain recognition from two regional episcopal commissions. The Thiès Assembly had decided that the decision could be taken by the Executive Committee as soon as this condition was met.

In view of the information presented by the Indian delegation, the decision to affiliate INAG was taken by a majority of 15 votes with 2 abstentions.

4.5 : Amendment to statutes of FIMARC

The FIMARC statutes adopted in 2006 need to be updated at the request of the Belgian authorities to take into account new obligations under Belgian law.

The articles of association examined and amended by the Executive Committee were submitted to the General Assembly. The amendments concern the following points:

- i. Recognition of "organisations in contact with FIMARC": these are organisations that wish to be part of the FIMARC network and request a period of observation before deciding to become affiliated members or associated organisations. These members can take part in FIMARC meetings without voting rights. Their contribution to the FIMARC budget is decided by the Executive Committee.
- ii. A General Assembly of the organisation must be held at least once a year before 30 June to approve the accounts for the previous year and to vote on the budget for the current year (this annual Assembly may be held by video conference);
- iii. Every 4 years, the General Assembly is organised as a World Congress.
- iv. The Executive Secretary, a salaried employee of FIMARC, is associated with the General Secretary. He may attend and speak at the Executive Committee and the Bureau, without the right to vote.
- v. The continental coordinations are made up of 3 or 4 members by the delegations of each continent at the World Congresses: the members of the Executive Committee are members of their continental coordination.

These changes were approved by a vote of 16 in favour and one abstention.

4.6 : Election of Executive Committee members

In response to the request sent to the movements, 6 candidatures were received by FIMARC

- Africa: Michel Doudou SENE (Senegal)
- Latin America: Glenda Mireya ANDRADE (Ecuador) and Irma PEREZ (Argentina)
- Asia: Malani PERERA KURUWITAGE (Sri Lanka) and Philip BISWAS (Bangladesh)
- Europe: Elisabeth SAINT-GUILY (France)

The 6 delegates were elected with the following results: Michel SENE (17), Mireya ANDRADE (14), Irma PEREZ (17), Malani PERERA (17), Philippe BISWAS (17), Elisabeth SAINT-GUILY (16)

4.7: Approval of the final resolution

The text of the final resolution, presented at the end of this report, was unanimously approved.

The Chairman thanked the drafters for the quality of their work.

4.8: Approval of the continental delegations' work plans for the period 2023-2027

The continental coordinations were asked to define their priorities for the next 4 years.

Action plan for Asia

1. Agroecological approaches, which aim to harmonise farming practices with natural ecosystems, emphasise respect for biodiversity, soil health and sustainability. This proposal aims to promote and facilitate the adoption of agroecological practices by farming communities.
2. An awareness-raising campaign highlighting the benefits of agro-ecological approaches and opposing corporatisation.
3. Training programmes: Work with agricultural universities, NGOs and extension services to develop and deliver training programmes on agro-ecological practices.
4. Research grants: Seek grants and funding opportunities for research institutes and agroecology experts to conduct studies on local agroecological solutions and their applicability.
5. Policy advocacy: Engage with government agencies and policy makers to advocate for policies that encourage agroecological practices.
6. Demonstration farms: Identify demonstration farms in key agricultural regions that showcase successful agroecological practices. These farms can serve as training centres for knowledge sharing.
7. Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the agroecology promotion programme through surveys and feedback from participating farmers.
8. Monitoring changes in farming practices and yields and carrying out environmental impact assessments, including soil health and biodiversity indicators.
9. Monitoring policy changes and their effects on the uptake of agroecology.

Action plan for Europe

The main areas in which the Group wishes to work in Europe are as follows:

1. Migration, human rights, fraternity and equality. Against a backdrop of rising populism in Europe.
2. Ecological transition, with a particular focus on water and biodiversity.

The group would also like to work on GMOs, as there is an ongoing debate in the EU on their possible acceptance.

3. The Declaration of the Rights of Peasants and Rural Workers: making it known and having it translated. The European states have not ratified it, but the FIMARC group wants to continue to propose it. The group hopes to achieve this by sharing it with like-minded partners in civil society.
4. Desertification of villages. Public services are disappearing. There is a lack of jobs. The group wants to make the regions attractive, especially for young adults. Even if it's difficult, we want to think about it and find actions to take.

The group is relying on the following means:

- We need a stronger voice of resistance, in the struggle.
- Think outside the box : be creative.

Action plan for Latin America

1. Virtual meeting inviting George Fernandez to talk about farmers' rights, the UN resolution, its implications and its importance.
2. Encourage contacts and exchanges of experience to support the young people of the organisation in Ecuador for the development of agroecology and Laudato Si.

3. To provide information on the risks of digitalisation by companies looking for a new business, without basing themselves on the real needs of farmers.
4. Replicate the El Salvador experience in the rest of the FIMARC Latin America member countries "How cool to be young and a farmer". Request support from Caritas USA.
5. Continue intercontinental meetings.
6. Organise the next FIMARC World Assembly.
7. Promote the transformation of the food and economic system and the ecological conversion of the rural world in Latin America in the light of "Laudato Si" by supporting family farming that respects the environment.

Action plan for Africa

Themes developed or to be developed by movements in African countries

- 1- The promotion by the movements in Kenya, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Benin, Uganda and Centrafric of agroecology to combat climate change.
- 2- Raising awareness and training young people on agroecology and water in Kenya and Burkina Faso.
- 3- Spiritual training for young people on the link between faith and their ecological commitment. In Kenya, before any activity with the children, we pray the prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi on Creation.
- 4- Continue to raise awareness among rural families of their role in preserving the environment and producing healthy food to ensure food sovereignty.
- 5- Strengthen the role of local churches in raising awareness of environmental protection. CARITAS could support associations and organisations in various countries.
- 6- Promote the digitisation of agriculture using the country's communications network.
- 7- Sophie's experience in Kenya could inspire African leaders. She is ready to welcome members to Kenya for training courses / she can support any trip.
- 8- Set up a continental financial contribution to support joint activities.
- 9- Initiate projects with our partners to finance the activities of the associations with the support of the various bishops for the continental meeting and to support the activities of the movements.
- 10- Organise a continental meeting every 3 years.

4.9: Finances

Jean Claude Germon, Treasurer, presented the financial situation at the end of the last 5 years. He underlined the difficulties of maintaining a balanced budget and the prospect of a deficit budget. He recalled that over the past 5 years, FIMARC's operating budget has relied mainly on the support of CCFD-Terre Solidaire (France), Entraide et Fraternité (Belgium) and the Austrian Catholic youth organisation DKA. The presentation of the specific budget for this assembly also highlighted the significant support of the Church of Germany and the German movement, and to a significant degree of other European movements and Korea.

The treasurer emphasised the declining support of Catholic agencies, which have their own international operating networks and their own difficulties, as well as the perception of a general tendency for national movements to withdraw into their territorial networks. He underlined the

uncertainties about the future of FIMARC and its current mode of operation if its sources of funding are not renewed.

He reiterated the need for FIMARC to seek sources of funding from our national movements and their networks, and to call on our movements to find ways to maintain a spirit of international openness on issues that are at the heart of our concerns and activities as Christian movements.

The FIMARC budget on the 2018-2023 period and the proposal for the next 4 years was approved unanimously by the Assembly.

5: The closing celebration

The World Assembly ended on 5 October, the feast of Francis of Assisi, with a Mass presided over by Bishop Francis Xavier Vira Arpondratana in Chiang Mai Cathedral, in the presence of priests involved in our movement and Father Pairat Sriprasert representing Caritas Asia.

6: Proclamation of the final resolution

At the end of the mass, the final resolution of our gathering, the roadmap for the next 4 years of FIMARC, was solemnly read out in the presence of Monsignor Francis Xavier Vira Arpondratana, who gave each participant a document reminding them of their participation in this work.



FIMARC Final Resolution

4 October 2023

Chiang Mai, Thailand

We, the participants in the 16th FIMARC World Meeting, coming from 30 countries around the world, have gathered in Chiang Mai (Thailand) from 26 September to 04 October 2023. The general theme chosen for this world conference, which will be the focus of our work for the next 4 years, is "the transformation of the agricultural food and economic system and ecological conversion in the light of Laudato Si", which calls for a genuine conversion of the global food system.

FIMARC's stated aim is to put an end to the unjust mechanisms of domination and exploitation of rural and disadvantaged people. The global crises in food, energy, climate and the Covid crisis mean that we must continue to mobilise for greater justice and solidarity.

While multinationals are monopolising farmland and making ever-greater profits in the agri-food sector, we would point out that most of our food is produced by small farmers and farm workers, men and women in rural areas. Unfortunately, these families are also the most numerous victims of hunger, malnutrition and poverty.

The encyclical Laudato Si reminds us that everything is interconnected: "we must hear the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth". Thus, we have to fight for the dignity of people and for the preservation of creation.

During our exposure programme, we were welcomed by Caritas Thailand and the RTRC movement and their many partners who work with rural populations, including various ethnic groups in the north of the country. The indigenous peoples have always lived this way: "God is everywhere, in nature, in relationships between people and in prayer and meditation". As a result, everything is sacred, and this invites us to show the greatest respect for creation and for humanity.

We therefore reaffirm the urgency and importance of caring for natural resources and promoting economic activities in rural areas that enable people to live in dignity. What we mean is the food sovereignty of peoples: their right to develop a local agricultural and food system that respects diversity, with sufficient economic resources and the opportunity to participate in the decisions that affect them.

The pandemic caused by Covid 19 has had a major impact not only on health, but also psychologically and socially in rural areas. This is why we need health measures and coherent responses to protect the most vulnerable, and to maintain sustainable farming and food systems. This crisis has shown us just how resilient local farming and food systems can be. Now we know that our societies are fragile when they rely only on a globalised economy to feed and sustain us. We need to prepare for similar global crises as a result of climate change and the collapse of biodiversity. We reaffirm that supporting and developing family farming, and agro ecology which are by nature local and resilient, and will be an effective solutions for the common good. Beyond the technical aspects, agro ecology allows to collectively mobilize to propose alternatives to a system that has clearly shown its limits. This is why FIMARC will follow its commitment to promote this model of agriculture both to its partners and to national and international institutions, at both civil and political levels.

We are witnessing the increasing digitalization of everyday life and economic activities, including agriculture. The Covid era has particularly changed our use of the Internet, which has enabled us to pursue virtual exchanges between people and communities.

We are aware that technological advances have improved people's lives. But not all technologies are necessary or useful. And they can never replace the knowledge and skills of farmers.

At FIMARC, we work with the most disadvantaged, those who live in no internet coverage areas, those who have not had a formal education and who are sometimes illiterate. We do fight against exclusion and for justice. This also means that we are fighting to make digital technologies accessible and useful to farmers and rural populations around the world.

We also see that the issue of biodiversity is more crucial than ever today. We will continue to fight for farmers to be able to produce and exchange seeds locally. We will continue to denounce the stranglehold of multinationals on living organisms, as represented by genetically modified organisms.

Because of our growing energy needs, more and more of the world's agricultural land is now being devoted to methane and electricity production. While these alternatives to fossil fuels may be interesting from a climate point of view, we are concerned about this competition with food production.

The issue of land and food concerns us all, producers and consumers alike. It's an issue of common good that requires the involvement of political power to ensure the necessary regulation of markets and finance.

Land is not a commodity. It has been over-exploited up to now and is coming to the end of its life if we are not careful. We, the members of FIMARC, strongly appeal to all our members and to the political and economic powers to become aware of this reality and to put a stop to this excessive exploitation. We call the Church to continue its work in line with Laudato Si, and to put it into practice.

Together, with our fellow activists, we want to take action to achieve the transformation we are aiming for. It's time to take care of the earth for ourselves and for future generations. Life is beautiful and good, the earth is generous... Let's get to work, with joy and hope for greater justice. Sobriety and solidarity are the keys to our future.



Appendix 1: Extract from the speech by Wolfgang Scharl, President of FIMARC

Dear friends of FIMARC,

“Transformation of the food system and economy and ecological conversion in the light of Laudato Si.” The theme of our global congress. An extremely important theme. The great injustice in the world, the hardship of many people, the destruction of the environment and nature, the loss of biodiversity, the horrible consequences of climate change, the external and internal missing of peace of people, the spiritual and mental hardship of many people, the often experienced meaninglessness, all this cries out to change and transform our world. It needs transformation, not just small changes and adjustments. We need fundamentally new ways of solving problems. This is now being recognized more and more in all parts of the earth. We, the movements of FIMARC, together with many others, say exactly this since long time: We need transformation.

It needs a transformation of the whole food system. That is to say: the way we organize the whole chain of food and nutrition in our world, from agricultural production, to the storage of products, to marketing, to consumption, to the handling of waste, this whole system needs to be redesigned.

And it needs a transformation of our economic system, which today often puts commodities and business profits above humanity and the dignity of people. So, unfortunately, what Pope Francis says is still true: this economy kills. People go hungry, people suffer poverty, people are deprived of their livelihood, people are exploited. And at the same time, nature is being exploited, countless species are dying, the heating of the earth is threatening people, animals, plants and entire ecosystems. We need a transformation of this economy towards a humane, common-good-oriented and ecologically responsible economy.

At this congress we want to explore what we -the movements of FIMARC -can contribute to this transformation. We with our faith, our commitment and with our existing concepts. Since many years, for example, we are advocating for food sovereignty, a form of food system that puts the power to decide what they eat and grow back into the hands of the people involved. And which also protects nature and the environment and respects the dignity of farmers. Or family-based agroecological agriculture, as the most appropriate way to feed humankind. Or the peasant rights, which after a long effort and struggle were adopted in a United Nations Declaration in New York almost five years ago, but are still almost not implemented into concrete national and international policies.

As a rural and peasant movement, we of course look especially at the peasants and the people in rural areas, who are often particularly affected by this existing anti-life and anti-human system, who often suffer and are marginalized. FIMARC wants to give them a voice and be a mouthpiece for them, in politics, society and church. They are also the ones, on the other hand, who play an essential role in the entire food system, feeding humanity and caring for nature. At this congress we want to ask what we as rural people and as rural movements can contribute to this transformation.

The slogan of our sixteenth FIMARC World Assembly is: Let's be actors of ecological, economical and human transformation ... Let's dare to build dignified rural life and a just world! This is a call to all of us. A call to us and to all our movements and communities to act and to commit ourselves to this necessary transformation. I am convinced, dear friends, that Laudato Si can be a helpful guide and a strong encouragement for that.

Wolfgang Scharl, President of FIMARC

Appendix 2

FIMARC Assemblée Mondiale, 2023, Chiang Mai, Thaïlande,			
Représentants des mouvements nationaux			
Asie			
	Bengladesh	Philip BISWAS	BSDF
		Rita BISWAS	
		Naby Navas SARDAR (Kanak)	
		Mokbul AHAMED	
		Narfis Anisa SULTHANA	
	Inde	Rony JOSEPH	INAG
		Nicholas CHINNAPPAN	
		John ABRAHAM	
		Victor ROCH	
		Deepika SINGH	
	Indonésie	Ronny Listya NOVIANTO	WFDFFM
		Handoko SAPTOTO ADI	
	Malaisie	Kai SYAN PAU	
	Pakistan	MariamSALMOON	SPSD (Soc. Peace & Sustainable Developt.)
	Corée du Sud	Hong MYUNGHEE	CCFM
		Shin HEUNG SEON	
		Kim BYUNGSU (interpreter)	
		Lee JINHONG (interpreter)	
	Sri Lanka	Malani PERERA KURUWITAGE	Community Education Center Sri Lanka
		Asha DASHANAYAKE	
	Thaïlande	Naiyana VICHITPORN	RTRC
<i>Organisations non représentées : Laos, Myanmar, KPMP Philippines</i>			
Afrique			
	Bénin	Jules DJIMBA	Mvt Agriculteurs Chrétiens Ruraux
	Burkina Faso	Anani DAKUYO	Action Cath. Rurale Adultes (ACRA)
	Kénia	Elisabeth KIBUYVA	DESECE
	R Centrafrique	Pacôme Emmanuel PAKALE	Mvt Familles Chrétiennes
	RD Congo	NR	ACCR
	Sénégal	Michel SENE	Mvt Adultes Ruraux Catholiques (MARC)
	Ouganda	Peter LUBWAMA	
<i>Organisations non représentées : MARC Cameroun , ACCR Congo, Madagascar, MFC Togo, CARAM Zambie</i>			
Amérique Centrale et du Sud			
	Argentine	Ulices Leonel QUARIN	MRR (Movimiento Rural Reconquista)
	Bolivie	German VARGAS	
	Colombie	Mario Alphonso CAICEDO	Fondacio La Cosmopolitana
	Equateur	Glenda Mireya ANDRADE	
	Mexique	Maria Mercedes PARAMO SANCHEZ	Paramo Centro Desarrollo Agropecuario
	Salvador	Manuel Jesus MORAN	Centro Araba de Romero
<i>Organisations non représentées : Asoc.Asoborda Guatemamla, Asoc. Rur. Crist. (ARC) Paraguay</i>			
Europe			
	FIMARC	George DIXON FERNANDEZ	Secrétaire Général FIMARC
		Colette DELHEZ	Volontaire FIMARC
	Belgique	Daisy HERMANN	ACRF
	France	Jean Claude GERMON	CMR
		Nicole GERMON	
		Elisabeth SAINT GUILLY	
	Allemagne	Wolfgang SCHARL	KLB
		Angelika HAAF	
	Espagne	Roberto CALVO IRUEGA.	MRC
		María Jesús BLAZQUEZ	
		Rodrigo CALVO BLASQUEZ	
<i>Organisations non représentées : MCPCC Catalogne, RURE Italie, PAKRO Pologne, ACR Portugal, AGRU Roumanie</i>			

Appendix 3

FIMARC World Assembly, Organisers and Thai participants			
International organisers and Thai participants			
Caritas Asia Foundation			
	Dr. Benedict D' Rozario	Regional President	Bangladesh
	Mrs. Shimray Mungreiphy	Regional Coordinator	India
	Mr. Ari Nugroho	Regional Program Officer	Indonesia
FIMARC Exco Member			
	Mr Wolfgang SCHARL	FIMARC President	KLB, Germany
	Mr George Dixon FERNANDEZ	General Secretary	India
	Mr Jean Claude GERMON	Treasurer	CMR, France
	Mrs Nayiana VITCHITPORN	Member	RTRC, Thailand
	Mr Rony JOSEPH	Member	INAG, INDIA
	Mrs Modesta AREVALOS	Absent Member	Asoc. Rural Cristiana, Paraguay
	Mr Manuel MORAN	Member	Centro Araba de Romero, Salvador
	Mrs Elizabeth KIBUYVA	Member	DESECE, Kenya
	Mr Médard MEYANGA	Absent Member	MARC, Cameroun
Thai participants (Caritas Thailand Network)			
	Ms. Wichapa Luangjok	Chairman of the Agric Committee	Disac Ratchaburi
	Mr. Wichain Suktam	Vice Chairman of the Agric Committee	Disac Nakhon Ratchasima
	Ms. Pannipa Ritmongkhon	Agriculture officer	Disac Suratthani
	Mr. Rungrote Tangsurakit	Farmer leader	Disac Suratthani
	Fr. Ongart Khaeser	Agricultural Network Committee	Disac Nakornsawan
	Mr. Chokchai Ritnethikul	Farmer leader	Disac Nakornsawan
	Mr. Tavanchai Sripithakdamro	Agriculture officer	Disac Ratchaburi
	Mr. Thawat Phoemchalat	Farmer leader	Disac Ratchaburi
	Mr. Niras Sirichai	Agriculture officer	Disac Udonthani
	Mr. Yutthapong Lalee	Farmer leader	Disac Udonthani
	Mr. Sayan Wapiso	Farmer leader	Disac Nakhon Ratchasima
	Mr. Yothin Yiangkaeo	Agriculture officer	Disac Chantaburi
	Mr. Audon Kaeopakop	Farmer leader	Disac Chantaburi
Caritas Asia representatives			
	Mr. Uch Samneang		Caritas Cambodia
	Mr. Thyro Ashiro Fabe		Caritas Philippines
	Mr Donatus AKUR		Caritas Indonesia
	Mrs. Dinh THI Hong Phuc		Caritas Vietnam
Thai Organizing Team			
	Fr. Pairat Sriprasert	Secretary General	Caritas Thailand
	Mr. Jirawat Chenpasuk (John)	Program Coordinator	Caritas Thailand
	Mr. Ratha Lay (Sam)	Admin and Events Officer	Caritas Asia Foundation
	Ms. Wanphen Khemanucheat	Head of Finance	Caritas Asia Foundation
	Ms. Marisha	Assistant	Caritas Asia Foundation
	Ms. Lakshmi Kasenvongraph	Assistant	Caritas Asia Foundation



Exposure program in rural populations of Northern Thailand



The French-speaking delegation in the Karen territory : the ecological forest management



One of the english-speaking delegations in Doi Sacket district : water management in forest area



A welcome from a Karen women's association and an alternative agricultural project to poppy growing



Rice cultivation remains the staple diet, and elephants are an efficient means of working in the forest

The opening mass of the World Assembly

Celebrants and FIMARC members



The souvenir photo of the opening of the World Assembly

The World Assembly



The opening conference by Wolfgang Scharl, President of FIMARC ; the desire to move forward with rural Christian movements, in line with Laudato Si.

Thematic presentations and group discussions



Plenary session: digitisation in agriculture, a means of land grabbing by multinationals ?



The exchange around a cooperative project in Thailand supported by Germany



Impact of corporatisation on rural development. Mr Chomchuan Boomrahong (Thailand) and Ms Shin Keung Seon (CCFM, South Korea).



A time of commemoration for our Korean friend who died during a protest against the price of rice paid to farmers

Statutory General Assembly and its votations



Statutory General Assembly and its votations



Transition meeting with the New Executive Committee of FIMARC



**Philip BISWAS from Bangladesh
The new FIMARC President**



Final sending !



Jirawat Chenpasuk (John) and Caritas Thailand, Naiyana Vitthiporn from RTRC and FIIMARC member, and George Fernandez, General Secretary of FIMARC, were the regional bearers of this World Assembly.



Francis Xavier Vira Arpondratana, Bishop of Chiang Mai surrounded by the new FIMARC Executive Committee



La délégation Sud coréenne et quelques autres participants



Discussion yime with thye regional Caritas delegates
