



FIMARC

Rue Jaumain 15

Assesse, Belgium

Tel: +32 83 65 62 36

Fax: +32 83 65 62 36

E-mail: fimarc@skynet.be

FIMARC ANNUAL REPORT 2017



FIMARC Exco members at the formation session on peasant rights to seeds, May 2017 (Belgium)

FIMARC has completed the year 2017 with enriching experiences that have empowered people and their struggles for food sovereignty and rights of peasants and rural people. This year we increased our

involvement and strong participation in the negotiation towards a UN Declaration on the rights of Peasants and other people working in rural areas, but there is still a long way to go.

The continuity of our global campaign on family farming is a great opportunity to nurture mobilization. It also follows our objective to build alliances that confront the industrialized agricultural system and model of development that put profit before people and destroys the sustenance of life. It allows to develop the basis of coexistence by presenting alternatives that tackle extreme inequality that exist especially among the farming and rural communities around the globe.

Throughout 2017, FIMARC continued to work hard and deliver for farmers on the many issues impacting them. As we move ahead of another milestone, it gives us great pleasure to share with you some of our recent engagements, experiences, challenges and achievements during the year 2017. FIMARC has continued to play the role of a catalyst in mobilizing and empowering the marginalized communities through increased range of programmes and activities to address the root causes of issues like poverty, deprivation, exploitation and abuse that hamper the realization of their civic and human rights. In this context of unequal distribution of opportunities and resources, we have been working with the support of our partners to empower communities to claim their rights and to protect their productive resources. Our grass root groups in various countries continue their mobilization in conservation and utilization of local resources to achieve ecological balance and build sustainable livelihoods.

Historically, smallholder farmers have proved to be key players in meeting food demand. Despite past successes, smallholder farmers will need to overcome considerable constraints if they aim to compete in modern markets. Generally, smallholder farmers in developing countries face major challenges such as poor access to land, lack of on-farm and off-farm infrastructure, lack of access to finance for production inputs, lack of access to transport logistics, extension and research support, and limited access to high-value markets. For smallholder farmers to be able to overcome these barriers, they need to organise themselves.

FIMARC movements and organisations in many countries devoted to promoting ecological farming alternatives among small and marginal farmers. The focus, thus, includes improvement and promotion of alternative farming practices to bolster food security, strengthen livelihoods, address environment issues and promote more sustainable agricultural practices. It adopts participatory approaches that recognise local knowledge systems and involves local farmers groups, community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

We believe that the work and commitments of FIMARC in different instances and levels have been found to be effective in assisting smallholder farmers to deal with some of these challenges they face.

In the rural economy, agriculture plays an important role but it is becoming less and attractive for many and especially for the rural youth. Therefore there is increase in rural youth migrating to cities for better livelihood opportunities. There is a strong need of transforming the agrarian economy into viable value chain. FIMARC thus promotes and strengthens family farming and agroecology to build viable alternatives. FIMARC think that investing in family farming and farmer organisations can counteract migration flows.

A very key and significant focus of the year was to start the reflection on intergenerational dialogue to see how best both adults and youth can enrich each other in terms of transfer of knowledge in order to

build the future of agriculture. South Asian Dialogue held in Sri Lanka was the starting point of this reflection and initiative.

Rural population has to find a solution to improve their quality of life by transforming village economy towards a self-sufficient and sustainable economy. This is where FIMARC comes in, and we want to empower rural communities to transform their lives for better future. As usual, this year we also focused a lot on Community Engagement especially in Asia and Latin America through our People Led Development Programmes (PLDP) and Dialogue on Social Change respectively. It helps us to understand the needs and aspirations of people. It supports us to segment the people into like-minded groups and builds a relationship of trust and it helps in creating ownership and stake of the community in whatever intervention is required. We were able to build also strong alliances and partnerships with other civil society organizations to implement our strategies.

The more informed farmers and ranchers are, the more empowered they are to use grassroots activism to make positive changes in their lives and communities. Our regular publications ie, Voice of the Rural World (VMR) and the last pedagogical document on agro ecology have this objective.

In terms of organisation and coordination, more focused activities and similar goals in the different regions are needed to have more impact in our work. But, we still have a way to go, we're not there yet.

FIMARC will continue to strengthen our engagements to protect and promote family farming systems in all continents and fight for the rights of peasants and rural people all over the world. Our involvement is always in collaboration with movements, coalitions and committed supporters.

Assesse, June 2018

FIMARC implemented the activities with the following major objectives during the year 2017 :

- * Create critical awareness on existing socio-economic and agricultural issues in different continents
- * Organise & mobilize small farmers to raise their voices for seeds
- * Increase the FIMARC capacity as an international network and help and strengthen FIMARC members as social movements in rural areas
- * Support and strengthen peasant family farming systems in different countries
- * Reflect the farmer's voice from southern countries in the drafting of articles on Peasant Rights and in the international debate on family farming through the support of FIMARC.
- * Raise awareness on World Food Day theme through a campaign material and common action Day
- * Reflect the farmer's voice from southern countries in the policy decisions of the World Committee on Food Security (CFS)

Achieved Results

- * FIMARC movements in India, Sri Lanka, El Salvador, Peru, Thailand, Bangladesh and Indonesia reported about the Community led development activities and lobby initiatives in the framework of PLDP and Social Dialogue

*FIMARC Members widely used the Exco Resolution on Peasant Rights to Seeds and the pedagogical material on Agro ecology for sensitisation/ information of the members of the movements and report back on their national activities on Agro ecology

* FIMARC played a key role together with Via Campesina to get the support of Portugal Government in favour of the peasant rights process and also had intensive lobby work with French and German Government through our national movements CMR and KLB to reducing their opposition on the peasant rights process

*FIMARC presented and showcased initiatives in relation traditional food systems, agro ecological and sustainable agriculture practices and methods at international policy spaces. (Ex: CFS, Agro Ecology Forums)

* The first phase of the PLDP process at Asian level in collaboration with MISEREOR ASIA has been successfully implemented and supported by the international secretariat of FIMARC.

*4 Editions of VMR (Voix de Monde Rural/Voice of the Rural World) has been released and used by few movements to share and showcase best practices of family farming and agro ecological initiatives

* FIMARC supported and initiated genuine and coordinated dialogue between different actors and organisations, which work on family farming at the FIMARC ASIAN continental workshop in February 2017 in Thailand.

* FIMARC initiated a transnational project between nine european movements entitled "Networking to strengthen Civil Society in Rural Areas in Europe". Strengthening Family farming is one of key questions dealt with during the workshops in Belgium (February 2017), Bulgaria (June 2017) and France (November 2017).

* FIMARC Bureau initiated discussion with its movement (MARC) in Senegal to prepare its World assembly in 2018 in this country.

*FIMARC initiated the dialogue with Vatican for the collaboration in the peasant right process

A.FIMARC and the rights of peasants at international organizations

1. UN Inter governmental Working group on Rights of Peasants and Other people working in rural areas -4th session- HRC in Geneva -May 15-19, 2017

FIMARC brought the Voice of southern Farmers to raise their concerns and aspirations in relation to the peasant rights declaration of the UN at Human Rights Council in Geneva. FIMARC already involved in the UN process on peasant rights in Geneva for the last years and participated in all the working group sessions so far. FIMARC is part of the collective lobby group along with Via Campesina, CETIM, and FIAN etc. FIMARC made 3 interventions on different articles of the draft declaration of the Peasant Rights and organised and participated in different lobby meetings to get the support of some governments as well as to change the opinion of couple of EU Governments in favour of the declaration. Wolfgang Scharl

(Germany), George Fernandez (India), Medard Meyanga (Cameroun), Gabriel Falchun, Elisabeth Pariat, Marcel Favre and Gerard Boinon (FIMARC GTDH members, from France) were part of the delegation of FIMARC in the 4th session of the UN Inter governmental Working group on Rights of Peasants and Other people working in rural areas.

FIMARC declaration at Human rights council –September 2017

FIMARC delegation participated in the regular session of the human rights council in September 2017 in Geneva to support and follow up the Peasant rights process. We strived with great effort to approve the resolution of Human Rights Council to continue the process on Peasant Rights. Even though many northern governments were either against or abstained, we were able to mobilise the support of southern countries.

Human Rights working group (GTDH)

The FIMARC Human Rights Working Group (HWWG) held two meetings this year to continue working on farmers' rights and to discuss about the pedagogical document on seeds.

2. FIMARC Parallel conference on Right to farm saved seeds and Food sovereignty - Human rights Council - Geneva 16 May 2017

FIMARC organised a parallel conference on Right to farm saved seeds and Food sovereignty in collaboration with CETIM on 16 May, Hall XXIV of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The main objective of the panel discussion was to raise the importance of peasant seed system and influence the article of the draft declaration on Peasant Rights to Seeds.

Speakers:

Medard Meyanga, Cameroon, FIMARC Pan African Coordinator

Gerard Boinon, France, Human rights group member of FIMARC

George Fernandez, India, Secretary General of FIMARC

Malik Özden Switzerland, Director of CETIM

Mdiakhate Fall, Senegal, Via Campesina-Africa

The adoption of a UN declaration on “the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas” are a historical demand of organizations representing the various populations. The need to protect these populations is increasingly stressed by various forums, including the bodies of United Nations. The right to farm seeds and genetic resources is a powerful means to reach towards the realization of the right to food, in all rural areas, South and North.

3. FIMARC participation in the International General meeting of Via Campesina-Basque region, Spain, July 2017

FIMARC took part in the VIIth International Conference organised by La Via Campesina, that held from 19th to 24th July 2017 at Basque Country, Spain. Manuel Moran Jesus Hidalgo, the Exco member and Latin American coordinator of FIMARC from El Salvador represented FIMARC in this important conference. During this International Conference, the delegates from around the globe re-affirmed their commitment to build a common path towards Food Sovereignty based on the rights and heritage of

peasants, rural peoples, indigenous peoples, and other small-scale food producers (fisherfolk, pastoralists, and others).

4. FIMARC Participation at FAO Regional Meeting on Agricultural Biotechnologies in Sustainable Food Systems and Nutrition in Asia-Pacific, Malaysia September 2017

Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) convened a “Regional Meeting on Agricultural Biotechnologies in Sustainable Food Systems and Nutrition in Asia-Pacific”, hosted and co-organized by the Government of Malaysia. The Regional Meeting was a follow-up to the 2016 International Symposium on The Role of Agricultural Biotechnologies in Sustainable Food Systems and Nutrition, held at the FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy.

The Regional Meeting aimed to create the space for greater clarity on the needs and concerns regarding biotechnologies at the regional level, underlining the needs for maintaining a multi sectoral approach, covering the crop, livestock, forestry and fishery sectors.

Rony Joseph, the Asian coordinator of FIMARC represented our organization to bring the voice and concerns of Family farmers and to highlight the importance of farmer led technologies and farmers rights and practices on seeds. The Regional Meeting includes representatives of governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-state actors, including civil society, private sector, research/academic institutions and cooperative/producer organizations.

Our main objective to participate in the consultation was to block the private sector that aimed to hijack the platform in favor of their profit motive. Even if the Civil Society Organisation (CSO) had a really small delegation, we achieved that US Aid was quite upset of the Symposium and has no more intention to fund the meeting in Latin America and Middle East, and the General Symposium on Agriculture Innovation. For this reason the FAO Biotech team is panicking and complained with FAO partnership office, saying that CSOs were blocking the discussion.

5. FIMARC Participation in UN committee on World Food Security (CFS 44) - Rome, October 2017

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) held its 44th Session from 9 to 13 October 2017 at FAO Headquarters in Rome. The Committee considered its engagement in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to support countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). followed by a presentation by FAO of the new report on the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2017. The Committee considered the report on Nutrition and Food Systems commissioned from the CFS High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) and provided space for FAO and WHO to update CFS membership on reporting related to commitments taken during the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) and in the implementation of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition Work Programme. A session on good practices and lesson sharing for improved nutrition provided the opportunity to share and discuss experiences on investments for healthy food systems.

The Committee acknowledged the HLPE report on Sustainable Forestry for Food Security and Nutrition and discussed about the work of the OEWG on Urbanization, Rural Transformation and Implications for Food Security and Nutrition.

“CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) for 2018-2019,"Monitoring the Implementation of CFS main Policy Products and other CFS Policy Recommendations", CFS Evaluation and taking note of Emerging Issues etc were other key topics of discussion.

Results

FIMARC contributed to the strong collective inputs and interventions relevant to concerned debates. Mr. Rony Joseph (India), P. Tomas Jose Spanghero (Argentina), Jean-Claude Germon (France), Wolfgang Scharl (Germany) and George Fernandez (Belgium) were part of the FIMARC delegation for CFS 2017.

The participation in FAO and CFS meetings were very good opportunities to defend our values and the interests of rural people particularly regarding food and agriculture. It is an important forum for lobbying towards world leaders on the governance of food and agricultural policies and systems. FIMARC involved in the CFS plenary and other relevant meetings and brought more southern voice at this policy space; FIMARC delegation took strong effort to influence the Policy decisions of CFS in favour of farmers and rural people.

6. CSM Forum-7-8 October 2017 –Rome

The Annual forum of the Civil Society Mechanism was held at FAO Head Quarters in Rome from 7-8 October 2017. Rony Joseph (India), Fr. Tomas Jose Spanghero (Argentina), Jean-Claude Germon (France), Wolfgang Scharl (Germany) and George Fernandez (Belgium) participated in the CSM Forum.

Each year the CSM holds its Annual Forum prior to the CFS Plenary Session and it is open to all interested civil society participants of the CSM. This two-days forum is a fundamental moment and space for the CSM. At the Forum, CSOs are able to debate, consolidate, articulate and finalise their positions that was shared and brought to the CFS Plenary Session. The Forum is as well a space for accountability, where Coordination Committee members report to all participating CSOs about their work, performance and activities. It is also the space to assess the past processes, to consolidate the common positions for the present and to identify the key challenges and steps forward for the future.

Results

The political analysis of the following topics were done in the CSM forum in which FIMARC made important contributions.

Criminalization of social movements and shrinking space for civil society: strategies to address the causes. The struggle for women's rights and gender equality; comprehensive policy responses to situations of famine, food crises and their root causes ; the struggle for agroecology ; the paths ahead. Strategies to fight violations of the right to food and nutrition and to promote human rights based monitoring and accountability.

FIMARC also participated in the Parallel Working Groups on the following topics and in the Public Panel Debate on:“ The struggles for human rights and the right to food and nutrition – What role for the CFS?”

Sustainable Forestry, SDG and global food security situation, famines and food crises, Monitoring, Urbanization and Rural Transformation, Nutrition, Critical and Emerging Issues/MYPoW, Women's empowerment, Plan of Action to CFS evaluation/ GSF.

7. UNESCO General Conference –November2017-Paris

39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 30 October to 14 November 2017. George Fernandez (Secretary General) and Jean-Claude Germon (Treasurer) represented FIMARC in the UNESCO General Conference.

B) FIMARC Thematic Campaigns

1. World Food Day Campaign 2017-October 16

FIMARC publishes every year a call to the movements in line with the World Food Day theme of the year to take up some concrete actions to eradicate hunger and poverty. A campaign material was published in English /French and Spanish and distributed to the national movements and local groups to support in coordinating their actions and raise their awareness. The main aim of the WFD campaign and call was to have a Common action day, common orientation and awareness raising campaigns, realisation of some practical projects.

The global message for World Food Day 2017 was “Change the future of migration. Invest in food security and rural development”. On the occasion of the World Food Day 2017, FIMARC called upon our movements and other stakeholders to address migration by investing for in sustainable food systems and rural development. FIMARC groups conveyed the following key messages to the public :

* Agriculture and rural development can make a strong contribution to meeting the global challenge of addressing large scale migration. Scaling-up the support to smallholder family farmers and creating alternative and sustainable livelihood options in rural areas, with a special focus on women and youth, is fundamental to addressing the root causes of rural distress migration.

* Three-quarters of the extreme poor base their livelihoods on agriculture or other rural activities. Creating conditions that allow rural people, especially youth, to stay at home when they feel it is safe to do so, and to have more resilient livelihoods, is a crucial component of any plan to tackle the migration challenge.

* Rural development can address factors that compel people to move by creating business opportunities and jobs for young people that are not only crop-based (such as small dairy or poultry production, food processing or horticulture enterprises). It can also lead to increased food security, more resilient livelihoods, better access to social protection, and reduced conflict over natural resources and solutions to environmental degradation and climate change.

Results

The following were some of the proposals of actions suggested and taken up by different movements

- Discussion forums on the impact of migration in own locality
- Debates on the negative effect of migration in rural areas
- Meetings with politicians and local self-governments to demand support for small scale business and rural projects with a view to resist the forced migrations.

- Migrations help desks at local level
- Forums to share the experience of internal and external migrants
- Territorial analysis to identify the potentials in rural areas with a view to implement sustainable livelihood projects

2. FIMARC Campaign on FAMILY FARMING

FIMARC campaign on Family Farming is progressing. Through this campaign FIMARC tries to influence decision makers, governments, international organizations, church, all other religious leaders, producers, consumers and society in general to support and promote family farming. FIMARC supported Continental /National initiatives in relation to Family Farming Campaign and facilitated the exchange of successful approaches among members.

2.1 FIMARC Europe initiated an exchange programme between rural movements from 9 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italie, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain) entitled "Networking to strengthen Civil Society in Rural Areas in Europe" and had learning and exchange workshops in Assesse, Belgium (February 2017), Burgas, Bulgaria (June 2017) and near Paris, France (November 2018), inviting movements to analyse the agriculture situations and define the perspective of Peasant Family Farming in their different countries.



Meeting of ProRure project initiated by FIMARC Europe in Bulgaria

2.2 Peasant Family Farming in Latin America

The two most important actions in the region has been "investments for Sustainability", which had two key initiatives as follows :

- a) Production of Green Sugar
- b) Improvement of agricultural production and forestry

a) Production of Green Sugar

This initiative is being developed in El Salvador, by a group of farmers who have planted a crop of sugar cane, using totally organic methods of cultivation and without the use of industrial processes, such as heavy machinery and burning. The idea arises because the little experiment is located in an area where the monoculture of sugarcane, gaining more and more ground to basic grains, and in its cultivation and destructive practices of the ecosystem are used for its harvest. Our local groups use animal traction, minimum tillage, organic fertilization, incorporation of green manures and crop without burning the plantation, as well as they want to influence the reduction of the burning of channels, in order to have exchange visits with producers of the area and with those responsible for the sugar. The reeds were sown in May, its development was excellent. Other crops developed under protected conditions is also developing the strategy of vegetable production in "casa maya" a model of production that avoids the use of pesticides. Farmers were grouped and established the structure with local materials such as bamboo, local wood and seeds. This is very similar to a greenhouse, but is different because the « casa maya » is a mobile structure and low cost, but very efficient to control insects that damage crops. In the first phase three crops were tested by the farmers to see its profitability: green chili, tomato and cucumber, green chili is the one that best responded.

b) Improvement of agricultural production and forestry

Location: Santa Rosa del Aguaray - II Department of San Pedro, Paraguay.

Nature of the initiative: It consists with the installation of an integral farm, which integrates harmoniously, conservation and sustainability criteria, the production of agricultural products, fruits, vegetables and, in addition to medicinal herbs, combined with the breeding of poultry, pigs and cattle, beekeeping and fish farming. For demonstration purposes, so that the families of the locality can learn from the experience developed and in conditions similar to that of their farms. This initiative will promote the partnership between neighbors, installing plots or acquiring animals for the production and utilization of the benefits obtained, on a shared basis.

Progress of the initiative

In the year 2016 FIMARC Paraguay initiated dialogs with youth leaders, some with recent graduation of the careers of agronomy and forestry, in order to form a group animator that nurtures the process with a participatory approach. A workshop was held on process of U theory in the city of Nueva Germania with the facilitation of Heike Teufel from MISEREOR. In parallel to the formation of the team of animation and coordination of the rural Christian association, advances in the development of the Integral Farm Demonstration, with the planting of fruit trees and native species that enrich the preexisting grove and the creation of new forest area in the farm located in the Km 264 of the Route 11 Juana María de Lara, in the district of Santa Rosa of The Aguary of Department of San Pedro. Also, progress is being made in the production of maize, and the installation of madioca apiary with very encouraging results .

2.3. FIMARC Asian Session on “To protect and strengthen family farming in Asia and raise awareness on Peasant Rights –26 Jan -1Feb 2017 -Chiangmai, Thailand

FIMARC Asian Formation session on “To protect and strengthen family farming in Asia and raise awareness on Peasant Rights “ was held in Chiangmai, Thailand from 26 January -1 February 2017. 35 rural leaders of FIMARC Asian movements from India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, Indonesia, South Korea and invited members from Myanmar and Cambodia participated in the programme. Our allied and networking organizations such as la Via Campesina, MIJARC, WFP etc were also part of this important continental formation session.

The study session allowed the participants to discuss the current situation of family Farming in Asian countries and the scope, policies and initiatives that can support it in the future. It also gave an opportunity to look at the real needs of farmers and rural people in order to strengthen and enhance family farming systems. More over the participants were able to get awareness on the Peasant rights process.

The FIMARC ASIA SEMINAR 2017 on Protecting and Strengthening Family Farming and Peasant Rights focussed on the Experience sharing of the family farmers of the Asian member movements to protect and strengthen their rights. Family farming contributes to many livelihood options for the poor rural world in terms of the social, economic and environmental advantages such as creating employment, maintaining good cultural practices, sustainable rural development and preserving ecosystems. The family farming concept has been widely chosen as an effective tool to sustainable development from the grass root level for a balanced ecosystem, fighting against the global climatic change. The main goal of the formation session was to have a strategic planning and concrete interventions of the movement at Asian level with a view to strengthen family farming and to create more awareness on Peasant Rights.



The objectives of the workshop were as follows:

- 1) To make an analysis on the current situation of family farming in Asian Countries.
- 2) To discuss about the real needs of the family farmers.
- 3) To gain insight on the potentials and limitations in terms of family farming.
- 4) To recognize the ways to strengthen family farming.
- 5) To be able to relate PLDP in strengthening of Family Farming in own country context.
- 6) To equip and prepare FIMARC members to use the momentum of the international debates on peasants rights and the key role of family farming, to engage in debates and mobilize at national level.

Achieved Results

*With this continental session, FIMARC initiated genuine and coordinated dialogue between different actors and organizations at various levels, such as Via Campesina, MIJARC, WFFP, Assembly of the poor, Thailand etc. which work on family farming.

* Provided space for sharing and showcasing the best practices of family farming, seed initiatives etc

*Created a strong network and coordination amongst the member organizations and partners in Asian Countries defending the interests of the small scale family farmers

* Formulated concrete proposals in favour of family farming and brought it in the policy debates at regional FAO conference in Malaysia on Biotechnology and other FAO policy forums in Rome as well as in the Peasant Rights inter-Governmental Working Group session in Geneva

*More young people are motivated to be the potential farmers in their countries. Provided the space for collaboration between RTRC, Thailand, Echo Thailand and other government initiatives that support young farmers

* Strong Network building and joint actions

3 FIMARC and Agroecology

3.1 FIMARC Latin American Consultation on Integral Ecology –Santo Domingo -15-19 October 2017

Objectives of the session:

- 1- Reflection on the current mission in the rural world in the light of Laudato.
- 2- Facilitation to encounter of ways, ideas and strategy for energizing the movements of FIMARC-Base on Seeds and Food Sovereignty
- 3- Raising the quality of the over all analysis that leads to local actions of greatest impact



Theme of the session- "Rural world, Human Promotion and Christian Culture- walking towards an integral ecology"

Acquired Results:

- 1- The delegates acquire greater strategic commitment and assume roles in the activities: local regional and continental.
- 2- In the light of Laudato Si, the mission, vision and objectives of FIMARC America were analysed and clarified.
- 3- FIMARC AMERICA built a map of strategic allies

Two key documents for the basis of reflection during the session were concluding document of Santo Domingo in 1992 and LAUDATO Si. Both these documents encouraged the spirits and commitment to take root in the essence of the gospel and the desire for a more dignified life. Participants from various Latin American Countries analysed the food and seed systems based on their national and continental context and arrived into key actions to further work on Integral Ecology.

3.2 FIMARC participation in the First Agroecology Europe Forum: 25-27 October 2017, Lyon, France

Agroecology Europe together with other NGOs, organised the first Agroecology Europe Forum, titled Fostering synergies between movement, science and practice from 25-27 October at ISARA, in Lyon (France). Jean Claude Germon (Treasurer of FIMARC) participated in the forum. The **Forum** was open to all kinds of actors and intends to foster interactions between various stakeholders such as scientists, practitioners, social movements, civil society and policy makers, by facilitating knowledge sharing and common action. It was a space to share their views and knowledge to design the agricultural and food systems of tomorrow.

It highlighted that, tackling challenges related to global change, environmental issues, consumer and citizen expectations require new knowledge and progress in agroecology. Therefore, innovation is required to develop integrative approaches which bridge existing gaps, to integrate different forms of knowledge from a broad variety of stakeholders, to create new initiatives, and to formulate policy recommendations for new pathways towards sustainable agricultural and food systems. The programme

included a World Café, plenary sessions, parallel workshops, and open discussions. Posters were exhibited during the Forum in an open space in order to facilitate networking among participants. The Forum also aimed at the creation of an inclusive European community of professionals, practitioners, and more generally societal stakeholders interested in agroecology.

4. FIMARC and the right of farmers to produce and exchange their seeds

FIMARC organised an International Formation Session on peasant rights to seeds. This study session was organised during the Exco meeting in May 2017. It was sharing and learning platform to initiate concrete work on seeds.

The aim of this programme was:

- *To support global leadership for the orientation of concrete national /continental level actions on achieving the rights of peasants on seeds.
- * To discuss and share sustainable seed preservation, management and exchange practices of the communities in various continents
- * To protect traditional agricultural knowledge and practice
- * To build up collaborative initiatives that strengthens seed rights of the peasants

Around 20 global leaders from 4 continents participated in this formation session on peasant rights to seeds. An Exposure to the different traditional seed initiatives and discussion with the local farmers, expert inputs, sharing stories of FIMARC own seed initiatives etc. were indeed an eye opener on the current situation of the peasant seed system, its potential and challenges.



Global Formation session on peasant rights to seeds 2017

Seed and plant variety selection is an important component of sustainable crop production. Indigenous seed varieties are getting depleted at an alarming rate. It is becoming increasingly clear that to maintain biodiversity in farmers' fields, an alternative system of seed supply has to be created. Farmers greatly feel the need to re-grow some of the traditional varieties they have lost, and thus systems have been put in practice among certain communities in different countries to make available good quality local seed varieties in order to full fill this need.

FIMARC Executive Committee made a final resolution declaring our position and engagement to preserve and protect the traditional seed system of the peasant communities. FIMARC will continue to promote sustainable seed preservation, management and exchange practices among the communities as an important component of its food security, nutrition security and food sovereignty campaign. FIMARC will continue the struggles to get the control and rights of Farmers over their seeds and help to devise mechanisms at local and national level that enable farmers, among others, to save, exchange, reuse and sell seeds, and to obtain ownership over their varieties. FIMARC decided to launch different national level consultations on Peasant Rights on Seeds in the upcoming months.

National consultation on seed rights

FIMARC National movement BSDF Bangladesh organised a farmer's consultation on Seed Rights at district level in Jessore District in December.

5. FIMARC and intergenerational transfer of Knowledge

FIMARC sub regional consultation on Intergenerational Transfer of Knowledge in alliance with MIJARC – Malabe- Sri Lanka – November 2017

FIMARC sub regional consultation on Intergenerational Transfer of Knowledge in alliance with MIJARC was held in Malabe, Sri Lanka from 16-19 November 2017. Around 45 National leaders from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Newzeland participated in this sub regional workshop. This was a first joint initiative in the sub region to have a dialogue among youth and adult on key issues pertinent to rural areas. It helped MIJARC and FIMARC to reflect this theme together and to develop some concrete initiatives to work on this topic at different level.

Achieved Results

- * Intergenerational dialogue on knowledge sharing
- * Exchange of information and share best practices from the movements
- * Better coordinated and collective actions at national and sub regional levels
- * MIJARC and FIMARC is more visible and regularly present to influence the policy debates at CFS, HRC, ILO and FAO.

C) FIMARC within the Church

1. Meeting of the International Catholic Social Action Movements-June 2017

FIMARC participated in the coordination meeting of the International Catholic Social Action Movements which was held from 2-3 June 2017 in Paris. The main objective of the meeting was to create stronger catholic social action network and collective actions.

2. FIMARC Meeting with the Vatican prefect for Laity, Family and Life-Rome -October 2017

FIMARC World Bureau members Fr. Tomas Jose Spanghero (Argentina), Jean-Claude Germon (France), Wolfgang Scharl (Germany), George Fernandez (Belgium) and Rony Joseph (FIMARC Asian Coordinator India) were part of the FIMARC Delegation who met with the Mgr. Buontempo, Secretary of the Vatican prefect for Laity, Family and Life. It was an occasion to share the work of FIMARC and to learn about the functioning of the newly created prefect. We also had discussion about how FIMARC can contribute to spread the message of Laudato Si among our members and others.

3. Vatican Catholic Inspired NGO forum-11-13 December, Rome

Third Forum of Catholic inspired organizations titled “Promoters of Humanity in a Transforming World.” was held at the Villa Aurelia, Rome from 11th-13th December. This meeting focused on the importance of some of the ongoing societal changes and on our commitments in the various fields of expertise. It also focused on how Catholic-inspired organizations can help safeguard core values such as family and religious freedom, and ensure that a proper integral human development is achieved in the context of a rapidly changing global society. The external experts gave their viewpoints on key topics and ample time has been scheduled to facilitate discussions and exchanges. The overall aim of the meeting was to identify some key leads for the Forum network to serve as starting blocks for longer term collaborations in thematic groups and contributing to the development of a social observatory from a Catholic inspired perspective.

Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Vatican Secretary for Relations with States, addressed the participants of the forum while celebrating opening mass on Dec. 11. In his speech for the conference, Mgr. Gallagher pointed to the issues of forced migration and displacement resulting in “unprecedented population shifts,” giving specific mention to the 2018 U.N. global compacts on migration and refugees. Other major areas of concern are climate change and the promotion of an integral human ecology; the freedom of thought, conscience and religion, which includes concern for religious discrimination and persecution; and freedom of expression, as well as the freedom to convert. While the global landscape in light of these issues might seem “immense and complex,” it is also promising, because the efforts that appear to be small are capable of “developing and achieving ends for the benefit of the common good of all.”

The final mass was presided by the Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Paroline and a Public Audience was held with Pope Francis on 13th December 2017. Wolfgang Scharl (President of FIMARC) and George Dixon Fernandez (Secretary General) participated in this meeting. FIMARC brought the topics on how Holy See mission in Geneva can contribute to our work on the UN Declaration for Peasant Rights.

D) FIMARC World Assembly preparation

1. Meeting in Thiès, Sénégal

Jean-Claude Germon, FIMARC treasurer, made a preliminary visit in Thiès in March 2017. He met Mgr André Gueye, Bishop of Thiès, and the board of MARC Senegal (Jacques Badji, President; Julien Badji,

General secretary; Fr Epiphane Mbengue, Chaplain ; Alphonse NDione, local animator). The choice of Thiès for this WA was made after this visit.



Preparatory meeting for the World Assembly with the Bishop of Thiès and the bureau of MARC Senegal

2. Meeting in Dijon, France

FIMARC World Assembly preparatory Meeting was held in Dijon, France on 22-23 August 2017. FIMARC Bureau Members and Fr Epiphane Mbengue, chaplain of the hosting movement MARC Senegal, participated in the meeting. The general programme of the Assembly was finalised during this meeting.

E) FIMARC Publications

1. **Voice of the Rural World (VMR)** is the review of the movement, published four times a year in four languages (English, French, Spanish and Portuguese). VMR is a tool to share ideas and experience between the continents/Movements. FIMARC support the movements to share and showcase best practices of family farming and agro ecological initiative through VMR. It contributes to the information and formation of national and local leaders on the different topics of FIMARC's work. VMR 123 on **Corporate Social Responsibility** was released during the project period .

2. **Pedagogical document on Agro ecology** : FIMARC always try to spread our ideas through the pedagogical documents. FIMARC published various documents on climate change, Food Sovereignty, Agro fuels, land grabbing in the previous years. The pedagogical document on Agro ecology has been published in 3 languages (French, Spanish and English) and this will be a major contribution to the analysis and reflection of the grass root groups on the ongoing debates about models of production systems all around the globe. This tool is useful for 60 movements and organizations for the animation of the basic groups.

3. **FIMARC Newsletters** : The continental coordinations are invited to develop their own communications. Three newsletters were published by the European coordination in 2017, respectively on the "Situation of rural population in Poland", on "The elaboration of the UN declaration on the peasant rights" and on "the questions of insecurity face to the rapid change in the rural world"

Conclusion

Civic space continued to shrink, with increased repression of people's movements and greater impediments to organizations working for social justice across the globe. Human rights violations, conflicts and disasters displaced or claimed the lives of intolerable numbers of people. In responding to this challenging context, the strength of FIMARC comes from the rootedness of its work with communities - empowering those most affected to know, claim and defend their rights. We believe, that we can overcome any hurdles, no matter how big they seem, if we fight them together. We would like to acknowledge the contribution, support and commitment of our colleagues on the Bureau and Executive Committee of FIMARC and all our activists and volunteers through their hard work, dedication and passion, are engaged in bringing about a better world. We are grateful to all our supporters, partners and donors for standing by us, for being at the core of the work of FIMARC last year. Each of you can and has made a difference. I am sure with all of your continued support, we will continue to move forward towards achieving our dream of living in a truly inclusive society that provides the farmers, rural people and all the marginalized communities with an equal opportunity to live a life of dignity. We believe that together we can realise that potential.

We fundamentally believe that food and agriculture can transcend politics. Issues like preventing food loss and food waste, finding ways to improve access and affordability to nutritious foods, improving food security and eliminating hunger, supporting family farmers, involving more young people in agriculture, and supporting urban rural linkages, are issues that we all have to address collectively.

We are thankful to all our partners to share our mammoth responsibility and we are committed to continuously strive to work for the betterment of rural communities and their future. We are looking forward to working together with you all to spearhead new endeavours and initiatives that ensure lasting change for farmers and rural people. The spirit of "Miles to go before I sleep" has been the inspiration of our work. Still, a lot more need to be done.
