

Oral statement of FIAN International and CELS during the fourth session of the inter-governmental working group for a UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas.

FIAN and CELS General Statement

15 May 2017

Distinguished Madam Chair- Rapporteur, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

FIAN International and CELS emphasize the importance of the Declaration in overcoming the systemic discrimination which peasant communities face and ensuring substantive equality. Our analysis has shown that the existing human rights framework has an urban bias that needs to be corrected to ensure a true universality of human rights.

The treaty bodies have collected abundant evidence of the widespread and systematic violations of the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas as have the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Two key areas of systematic discrimination have been identified: First, unequal access and control over land and other natural resources, and, second, egalitarian agricultural policies, which treat in an equal manner those who are not in reality equal, which *de facto* favor of a tiny elite of farmers and of industrial agriculture.

The norms and standards protecting the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas are dispersed and appear fragmented in a good number of treaties and soft-law instruments. Currently, there are normative gaps regarding the rights to land, seeds, water for agricultural and fishing activities and biodiversity.

The Declaration will provide proper guidance to States, international organizations and specialized UN agencies on how to increase the protection of the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

FIAN International continues its support to peasants, nomads, pastoralists, fisheries, indigenous peoples and other constituencies working in rural areas around the world, in their legitimate claim for their rights.

We thank the Bolivian mission and other supporting States for their efforts in this endeavor, aimed at furthering human dignity.