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News of IYFF-2014 National Committees

22th of August 2014

Not everyone has shut up shop for the summer holidays! Just look at what the National Committees in a very large number of countries have achieved over the summer!

First of all, two new National Committees have joined us: one in **Honduras** and one in **Kenya**. We welcome them on board and hope that for them 2014 will be a year of fruitful advocacy, strengthening the rights of family farmers—both women and men—in both countries.

Then there is the **Rennes Declaration** in which the Association of French Regions (*Association des Régions de France (ARF)*) committed itself to promoting Territorial Food Systems (TFS) through the activities of its members and through their agricultural policies and food policies. Those systems will enable the French regions to promote local economic development, the development of their areas, sustainable management of their natural resources, and agricultural and rural employment. That commitment therefore means making a major switch from a productivity-led polluting form of agriculture to local environmentally-friendly family farming. In the long term, it means reviving the link between culture and food.

To achieve that, the ARF is asking its members to adopt a whole series of measures designed to develop Territorial Food Systems. You can find out more about those measures on:

<http://www.familyfarmingcampaign.net/en/resources/documents>

In **Nicaragua**, the National Union of Farmers (*Unión Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos de Nicaragua (UNAG)*), an active member of the NC, organised a national consultation process over a period of 3 months in which over 400 family farmers—women and men—were directly involved. The purpose was to identify the criteria and viewpoints of the



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farming community, information which UNAG needs in order to prepare and draft its National Policy Proposal. That proposal will be set out in a strategy document defending the interests of small farmers, to be entitled “Policy proposal to strengthen the rural community in Nicaragua”, and will be presented to, and discussed with, the government after the recess.

As part of IYFF-2014, the Ministry of Rural Development in **Bolivia** has decided to increase credit and financial cover for 32 000 families of small farmers, small entrepreneurs and artisans for a period of 5 years, making 45 million dollars (33.843.000€) available through “Accesos”, its economic inclusion programme for rural families and communities. Family farmers who submit projects will thus be able to obtain the money to carry them out and will have the support of technical officers. Projects which meet the criteria for the sustainable management of natural resources and those to be carried out by women and young people in rural areas will be particularly welcome.

In **the Philippines**, the NC took an active part in the Sambilog campaign to recover the largest private landholding in the country, on two islands, Bugsuk and Pandanan, seized by one of the country’s most powerful political and economic players, Danding Cojuangco, at the height of martial law in the early 1970s. The protest against that land grab took the form of a sit-in opposite the central office of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), talks with the Department’s secretary, a press conference, and a presentation to a public forum at the University of the Philippines, attended by the under-secretary of the DAR. The DAR was thus finally pushed into issuing a notice for the recovery of 11 000 hectares of private property a few days before the final deadline for the land acquisition and distribution process, 30 June 2014. This is the largest landholding to have benefited from a notice of coverage over the last 40 years of agrarian reform.

In **Côte d’Ivoire**, the NC organised a national workshop on 15 July 2014 to collect and draft proposals and commitments by producer organisations and Ivorian civil society in general, in order to promote family farming in the country. The event provided an opportunity to collate all of civil society’s opinions and formalise its concerns in terms of challenges and topics for the development of family farming. Proposals for measures to



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be taken to promote family farming were validated and will be presented to the authorities in October.

We are both proud and excited to see that more and more NCs are managing to influence the preparation and application of legislative measures designed to give priority to local agricultural production, by having family farming taken into account on the political agenda.

As a result of the work of individual NCs, meaningful decisions are being made by some governments, decisions that will, in the medium and long term, bring about positive changes facilitating food sovereignty and food security in the countries concerned.



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