

Pastapur Declaration on Seed Rights

by Peasant Women from West Africa and India

Pastapur, Sangareddy district, Telengana, India,

January 22, 2020

After visiting the farms and families of the small-holder organic women farmers particularly millet cultivators of the Deccan Development Society [DDS], after Having participated in their biodiversity festival from the 10th to 22th of January in 2020, we, peasant women members of the Convergence of Rural Women for Food Sovereignty in Mali, of the Baragnini Women's Association in Senegal, accompanied by BEDE, members of the West African Committee of Peasants seeds, we have shared our common heritage and exchanged our experiences and knowledge about ecological farming through millet cultivation and biodiversity for the future of food and farming.

During the Mobile Biodiversity Festival and field visits, sessions on agro-ecological techniques, seed conservation, millet processing, use of medicinal plants, we have confirmed that our common to biodiversity is deep-rooted and profound.

However, we have also realized that we are facing similar and dissimilar threats to our agriculture and rural lives: industrialization and urbanization which are snatching away the control of peasant farmers over their agricultural lands, rampant deforestation in Africa, the effects of climate change, invasion of corporate-controlled and state-supported modern seeds, some of which are even genetically engineered, the latest danger to peasant agriculture both in Africa and India.

Yet we know that we, the women of India and Africa, have solutions to meet the challenge of achieving food sovereignty for our peoples. Our peasant agro-ecology based on our knowledge and practice of biodiversity allows for a healthy and nutritious agriculture. In particular based on the enormous diversity of millets and their nutritional potential, we practice a healthy, autonomous and sustainable agriculture that guarantees the food and health for our families and future generations.

We are engaged in the same struggle to cultivate, breed, maintain and co-evolve biodiversity for food and farming.

We are joining hands to defend this biodiversity as well as and our rights as peasant women as they are closely interlinked.

Earlier, the network of Millet Sisters only existed in India, but thanks to our exchange we have now sown the seeds to give birth to ***Millet Sisters International***, a network of women millet farmers across South Asia and West Africa.

We have observed that in the recent times our national governments have not been defending our rights as peasants over our food farming and seeds. We strongly demand that our national governments become sensitive for our rights and concerns and truly stand as defenders of our rights over food, farming and seeds.

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