

**ANNOUNCING THE “Pascual Carrión”<sup>1</sup> WORLD FORUM ON  
AGRARIAN REFORM (FMRA)**

***The new challenges in land management and access to  
natural resources in 21st century***

**February 10, 2004**

After occupying a central position within social struggles of peasant movements, in international institutional agendas and in developmental policies of many countries for the greater part of the 20th century, the Agrarian Reform issue seemed to have lost importance in the last decades. This occurred in spite of the profound social pressures linked to poverty, hunger and struggles for land and water which put humanity at risk of greater future conflicts. Today, in the context of neoliberal globalisation, the planet's greatest challenges demand new access and earth management policies and urge us to take up Agrarian Reform issues once again and to seek out new methods which allow us to reduce inequalities and guarantee the fundamental rights of people throughout the world.

• **FOOD SECURITY AND SOVEREIGNTY AND AGRARIAN REFORM**

In 1945, the UN, upon the creation of the FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) marked the objective of achieving food security for humanity through the development of food production, at the same time improving the living conditions of rural populations that would contribute to world economic development. Years later, in 1979, the FAO's World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development advocated the adoption of effective action by governments in those countries which required considerable reorganization in land possession and its redistribution to landless peasants and to small owners as part of its rural development strategy and as a way of redistributing power.

More recently, in 1996, the heads of state and governments gathered together by the FAO for the World Food Summit stated that this objective was far from being achieved. They committed to take all the measures within their means in order to reduce the number of people who suffer from hunger by half before the year 2015. Five years later, in 2002, a new World Food Summit held in Rome demonstrated that this objective could not be met. Recently, in its report on the lack of security in the world's food, published in 2003, the FAO indicates that instead of the world food situation improving, it has continued to deteriorate in past years.

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<sup>1</sup> *Pascual Carrión (1891-1984).- Born in Sax (Alicante-, Spain). Agricultural Engineer. His progressive ideas brought him to advocate agrarian reform in Andalusia. Author of La Reforma Agraria, problemas fundamentales – Agrarian Reform, fundamental problems- Madrid,1931 He was a member of the Technical Agricultural Commission which in the year 1931 drew up the Anteproyecto de Ley para la solución del problema de los latifundios, o Ley de la Reforma Agraria de 1932 – The law draft for the solving of the problem of latifundium , or the the Agrarian Reform Law of 1932, considered to be one of the most important projects of the newly formed Second Republic of Spain. After the civil war, his freedom was taken away from him for a time and he was barred from working, as were many other officials of the Republic. During those years when he was prohibited from working publicly, he continued with his writings in silence. Among which La Reforma Agraria de la II República y la situación actual de la agricultura española, - The Agrarian Reform of the II Republic and the current situation in Spanish Agriculture 1973 stands out, as well as the reprinting of Los latifundios en España, 1975. He was a proponent of Grape and Wine growing Cooperative Movement in Valencia.*

It is estimated that 2.8 billion people have less than two dollars daily on which to survive; more than 2 billion suffer from malnutrition due to serious nutrient deficiencies (iron, iodine, Vitamins A, C, etc); more than 840 million, 800 million of which live in developing countries, suffer from hunger nearly every day. We know that three quarters of the poor and hungry in the world can be considered rural, among which a great mass are peasants who are poorly equipped in means of production and/or in land, and that the majority of the remaining quarter were peasants forced into an exodus to urban areas escaping from poverty and hunger.

A great part of these poor peasants and ex – peasants are victims of the international level agro-food trading policies put into place by governments oriented by multilateral organizations and institutions. Policies which reduced real agricultural prices by half (in constant currency) during the last ten years. And the poorest are landless peasants, or peasants who own land which is of poor quality and size too small to support a family. All of them are victims of governments which have abandoned agrarian reform policies and no longer support family – farm operations. On the other hand, much land continues to be unproductive or has had to be abandoned or sold off at low prices by farmers who have not been able to meet contractual obligations.

In today's world, in order to deal with problems of poverty and hunger, environmental damage, and the disappearance of the peasant community in rural areas in all corners of the world, food sovereignty becomes an alternative paradigm based on three pillars: the consideration of food as a basic human right, reclaiming the right to define one's own agricultural policies for all peoples and states, and placing those who produce food at the centre of these policies: farmers and fishermen. Food sovereignty means that people have the right to produce their food on their land and for this, authentic, far reaching Agrarian Reform processes are required.

The human right to food, recognized in article 11 of the International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, means that peasant communities have the right to access to food production resources, namely land. Each one of the States and the Community of States which make up the International Pact are therefore obligated to respect, protect and guarantee access to production resources. Agrarian Reform is a principal measure which will ensure that poor peasants have access and control over their land, seeds, water and other production resources. In this way, the implementation of effective Agrarian Reform programs is not a question of the good will of governments, but a legal obligation ensuring human rights. Agrarian Reform must be recognized as an efficient public policy instrument for the fight against poverty.

- **LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

The Agrarian Reform issue in the 21st century includes many elements apart from land distribution. It is not only the landless peasants who have an interest in the establishment of more equitable processes with respect to land access. Urban social sectors, consumers, the business sector and family farmers in developed countries also have an interest. All these sectors see their survival or their growth threatened by the situation of millions of impoverished peasants, expelled from their farms and condemned to extreme poverty. The destruction of ecosystems, the rupture of the planetary ecological balance, and the newly created land use and management conflicts concern all of them.

The Earth is now being seen more as a complex, multifunctional space. It has an environmental dimension, with natural resources, biodiversity reserves and climatic sensitivity. Rural economies rely more on tourism activities, which very often cause conflicts of interest with respect to the rights of the peasant population. Interactions between the country and the city have taken on new forms and urban population opinion on land management and the way in which food is produced cannot be ignored. All of this obligates us to update Agrarian Reform.

- **THE “PASCUAL CARRIÓN” WORLD FORUM ON AGRARIAN REFORM (FMRA)**

The FMRA profile was drawn up by an International Promoting Committee which met in Valencia (Spain) on December 12 and 13, 2003, with the participation of experts and organizations from different regions of the world.

The FMRA defines itself as a space for dialogue, experiential interchange, reflection and the drawing up of processes and proposals, where agricultural and social organizations, experts, NGOs and governmental institutions from different continents can engage in Earth issues, and to consider the influence of Agrarian Reforms on the social and economic processes which are needed in order to achieve food sovereignty and which create the conditions necessary for the sustainable development of the world population.

Starting from these principles – food security and sovereignty, human rights, world economic development, the environment, peace and democracy – and their link to Agrarian Reform processes, **THE UNDERSIGNED PERSONS AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS CONVENE THE WORLD FORUM ON AGRARIAN REFORM (FMRA).**

- **OBJECTIVES**

The principal objectives of the FMRA are:

- To help make Earth issues a priority for world social movements.
- To contribute to the making of a new paradigm for 21st century Agrarian Reform, to show that these policies are justified not only for reasons of justice but for economic reasons and to debate new methods and land policies which are needed in the current context.
- To reinforce social processes and alliances between different sectors which wish to make new policies on land access and resource management possible.

- **CONTENT**

The FMRA will try to respond to the question: Which new forms of Agrarian Reform are necessary for current conditions? To achieve this, two great issues will be examined:

- The analysis of agrarian reform experiences of the 20th Century, of their social, political and economic context, successes, failures and counter reforms; all from the wide range of cases selected for their current interest.
- The necessity and the tools of agrarian reforms in the dawn of the 21st Century. Essential aspects of the future of humanity, the existing relationships between Earth issues and food sovereignty, sustainable development and ecological balances will

be examined.

### 1. - LESSONS FROM AGRARIAN REFORMS OF 20TH CENTURY

During the last century, agriculture occupied a central part in the economic development of nations, and land activities tended to favour the economic capacity of this production sector. Land was fundamental in the structure of social and political relationships of the rural world. Given the enormous importance of the latter on the political and social life of countries, land activities were relevant not only to the reinforcement of political and social power relationships but also in their change and their ability to diminish social inequalities.

Agrarian Reforms carried out throughout the 20th Century in specific countries will be examined: Mexico, USSR, Spain, Italy, Poland, Japan, China, Guatemala, Ecuador, Vietnam, Cuba, Algeria, Chile and Portugal among others, analysing aspects such as:

- the very diverse political, social and economic realities in which the reforms were born and carried out.
- the basic objectives that were to be achieved.
- the commercial, macroeconomic and sector policies which aimed at guaranteeing not only access to land but also access to other means of production such as loans, training and technical means as well as the strengthening of agricultural organizations.
- the success or failure of agrarian reforms, and the way in which they did or did not reach their objectives, or they way they could or could not be carried out, or the way in which their results have endured or not. The "market agrarian reform" model will be included in this revision which has been promoted by the World Bank, various governments and multilateral bodies in recent decades.

### 2. - AGRARIAN REFORMS IN THE DAWN OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Currently Agrarian Reform processes are being developed in different places: Brazil, Venezuela, Indonesia, The Philippines, South Africa, etc. There are very diverse critical situations in Africa or Western Europe where access to land is becoming ever more difficult for small family producers.

In which way can today and tomorrow's agrarian reforms influence the political, economic and social evolution of these countries, eradicating poverty, achieving food security and allowing food sovereignty?

Since the 1980s and years afterwards, – this process will doubtless become more pronounced in the future – control over land has lost much of its importance as an element of power. With current globalisation, new production technologies, commercialisation, consumption, the ever-growing role of the multinational companies, true agricultural power is found before and after the process of production itself. Those that control loans, materials supply, the dissemination of new technologies, such as transgenic products, on one hand and those that control national and international product warehousing systems, transportation, distribution and retail sales to the consumer, on the other, have real power. An Agrarian Reform which only distributes land, even at a large scale, cannot, on its own increase power of peasants if it is not

accompanied by the organization of producers in different ways (cooperatives, rural companies, banking institutions, distribution and commercialisation organizations) which aims to control both pre- and post-production sectors.

The debate of the 21st Century is now not only between idle latifundium and small farmstead, but also between apparently profitable companies (although the social, ecological and economic consequences of their success may be disastrous for society as a whole) and impoverished family-level agriculture lacking in public policy support which can help it attain its full potential. What new type of Agrarian Reform is needed to face this situation?

Most of the best agricultural lands of the world are being allocated for non-agricultural uses as a consequence of the laws of the free market (urban growth, land used for the spreading of the urban rich, rural tourism, real estate speculation, etc.). This is diminishing the quantity of agriculturally valuable land and in some cases dangerously decreasing the available agricultural area from the point of view of food security. How does this fact affect the processes of Agrarian Reform?

In recent years, significant indigenous populations of various countries have achieved recognition of their autonomous territories. In these territories, land ownership systems that differ from the traditional systems are fundamentally based on use and not ownership. How can this situation be compatible with agrarian reform policies?

The social relationships in the future must change to guarantee equality for women. Gender discrimination relationships which exist both in patriarchal systems and in the male dominated modern agro industry must be redefined. How will gender equality be guaranteed in Agrarian Reform policies?

The proliferation of free trade agreements and the associated opening of developing countries' borders is permitting the importation of agricultural and food products which are frequently subsidized. The result is the bankruptcy of millions of small farmers who, because of the advance of these processes, tend to become landless peasants. How does this situation influence new agrarian reforms and what can we do when faced with it?

Structural adjustment policies in the agricultural sector have impeded the carrying out of integral agrarian reforms; market liberalization has benefited large producers excluding or stripping the most marginalized groups of access to production resources. Recent history has shown us that considering and treating land as a product and letting the market solve problems does not work. Land management increasingly obligates us to think in terms of land-use rights, very often shared among different actors and not only in terms of property. How can today's agrarian reforms deal with this issue, and distribute land-use rights according to the interests of society as a whole?

• **DEVELOPMENT OF THE FMRA**

FMRA will take place in Valencia (Spain) during the month of November 2004<sup>2</sup>. The activities will be held over the period of four days.

The programme will be comprised of conferences, seminars and workshops. Spaces will be opened for self-managed activities related to the themes of the Forum.

Peasant, indigenous and fishing organizations, experts, researchers and non-government organizations will participate in the FMRA. Consumer and environmental groups, government bodies, international multilateral, banking and cooperative institutions will also be invited.

The Comité Internacional Promotor (CIP- International Promoting Committee) of the FMRA will be responsible for the program's organisation, and will make decisions concerning its development. An Operative Secretariat will be elected from among the members of the CIP.

The FMRA subscribes to the thematic forum dynamic generated by the spirit of Porto Alegre and adopts the World Social Forum's Charter of Principles.

**FMRA TECHNICAL SECRETARY CONTACTS (CERAI- España)**

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**INTERNATIONAL PROMOTING COMMITTEE OF THE FMRA**

- CARITAS. España.
- CENSA/LRAN (Center for the Study of the Americas and Land Research Action Network). EE.UU
- CERAI (Centro de Estudios Rurales y de Agricultura Internacional). España.
- CONTAG (Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura). Brasil.
- FIAN (Food First Information and Action Network). Alemania.
- FOCUS ON THE GLOBAL SOUTH. Tailandia.
- FORUM DU TIERS MONDE. Senegal.
- FPH (Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer pour le Progrès de l'Homme). Francia
- IBASE (Instituto Brasileiro de Análisis Social y Económico). Brasil.
- MST (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra). Brasil.
- PLATAFORMA RURAL. España.
- VETERINARIOS SIN FRONTERA. España.
- VIA CAMPESINA

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<sup>2</sup> *As the FMRA will be held in a South-Western European country and not in a country currently undergoing agrarian reform, emphasizing the idea that agrarian reform is a strategic problem for all. It is also a way of facilitating land access policy interchange, in different contexts including countries with a traditionally peasant agrarian structure, countries which today have serious land access problems for young farmers and enormous difficulties in family farming.*

- Samir Amín, Dakar. Senegal.
- Eladio Arnalte, Catedrático de Estructuras Agrarias de la UPV. España.
- Jacques Chonchol, ex –Ministro de Agricultura de Chile.
- Shalmali Guttal, Tailandia
- Marcel Mazoyer, Profesor del Institut National Agronomique. París. Francia.
- Michel Merlet, Ingeniero Agrónomo. Francia
- Fernando Oliveira Baptista, ex–Ministro de Agricultura de Portugal.
- Peter Rosset. EE.UU.
- Dao The Tuan, ex–Director del Institut National des Sciences Agronomiques. Vietnam

**FIRST LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS AND ENTITIES THAT SUPPORT THE CONVOCAION OF THE  
FMRA**

1. ALIMENTERRA – Europa
2. Amigos de la Tierra Internacional
3. ANAMURI (Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Rurales) – Chile
4. ANDAR – Costa Rica.
5. APM – Africa
6. ASOCODE (Asociacion de Organizaciones Agrarias Centroamericanas).
7. CAFOLIS (Centro Andino de Formación de Líderes Sociales). Ecuador
8. CER (Centre d'Etudes Rurales). Albania.
9. CIC (Centro Internazionale Crocevia). Italia.
10. CLOC (Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo).
11. CNC (Confederación Nacional Campesina). México.
12. CONAIE - ECUARUNARI (Confederacion de Nacionalidades Indigenas del Ecuador).
13. CONFEUNASSC (Confederacion Nacional Unica del Seguro Social Campesino). Ecuador
14. CPE (Coordination Paysanne Européenne).
15. FENOCIN (Federacion Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas, Indigenas y Negras). Ecuador
16. Fons Valencià de Solidaritat. España.
17. Foro Mundial de Pescadores y Trabajadores de la Pesca.
18. FSPI (Federation of Indonesian Peasant Unions). Indonesia
19. GAK (Grupos Autogestionados de Consumo). España.
20. Instituto de Sociología y Estudios Campesinos. Universidad de Córdoba. España.
21. INTERMON – OXFAM. España.
22. Land tenure Management and Rural Equipment Project. Côte d'Ivoire.
23. RONGEAD (Reseau d'Ong Europeennes sur l'Agro-alimentaire, le Commerce, l'Environnement et le Developpement). Francia
24. SLOW FOOD – Internacional
25. Sociedad Española de Agricultura Ecológica.
26. Sociedad Iberoamericana de Agroecologia.
27. TERRANUEVA. Ecuador
28. UNORCA (Union Nacional de Organizaciones Regionales Campesinas Autoctonas) – México.
29. Xarxa de Consum Solidari/Red de Consumo Solidario. España.