

Call for input - Working Group on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas

Global trends in challenges affecting peasants and other people working in rural areas, as well as their right to equal participation

(EXTENDED VERSION)

March 2025

The content of this document was elaborated based on inputs provided by the following **Brazilian movements and organizations**¹:

- Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT)
- Movimento dos Pequenos Agricultores (MPA)
- Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens (MAB)
- Terra de Direitos
- Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST)

¹The Centre Europe-Tiers Monde (CETIM) provided technical assistance throughout the process.

Methodology for preparing the report

This document, hereby presented to the Working Group on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural areas, was elaborated by a group of Brazilian social movements and entities gathered in a Virtual Training on the UNDROP, held between January and March 2025. Since 2021, various training sessions for peasant organizations and other rural movements have been conducted by La Vía Campesina (LVC) and CETIM. The edition of the training that resulted in this document was organized by La Vía Campesina Brazil², the human rights organization Terra de Direitos, and CETIM, with the primary objective of providing peasants with the necessary tools to understand the UNDROP, training future instructor-multipliers to enhance the capacity to monitor its promotion and contribute to its implementation at both national and international levels.

The following Brazilian movements and organizations provided inputs for the elaboration of this document: Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT), Movimento dos Pequenos Agricultores (MPA), Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens (MAB), Terra de Direitos, and Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST).

The reference to the methodology through which this contribution was developed is relevant as it reveals a collective process of training and learning, built upon the following premises: (i) the UNDROP represents a historic step towards the protection of peasants' human rights; (ii) after its adoption in 2018, the phase of implementing the Declaration at national and international levels requires the development of a process of capacity-building, learning, and rights advocacy; (iii) bringing the UNDROP closer to grassroots organizations worldwide is absolutely essential to keep the Declaration alive so that peasants, identifying with its content, use it in their daily advocacy and political engagement, thereby contributing to better living conditions (social, economic, environmental, political, etc.) for peasant communities and rural workers worldwide.

Answers:

Q1 - What are the main challenges facing peasants, small-scale fishers, pastoralists and rural workers in your country?

² It is important to highlight that La Vía Campesina Brazil is composed of the following movements and entities: Movimento dos Pequenos Agricultores (MPA); Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST); Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens (MAB); Movimento das Mulheres Camponesas (MMC); Coordenação Nacional de Articulação das Comunidades Negras Rurais Quilombolas (CONAQ); Movimento de Pescadores e Pescadoras Artesanais (MPP); Movimento pela Soberania Popular na Mineração (MAM). In addition to these, the following organizations are invited: Pastoral da Juventude Rural (PJR); Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT); Conselho Indigenista Missionário (CIMI); Federação dos Estudantes de Agronomia do Brasil (FEAB); Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil (APIB); Associação Brasileira de Empresas de Engenharia de Fundações e Geotecnia (ABEF); Executiva Nacional dos Estudantes de Biologia (EnBio).

1. Access to Land and Land Conflicts: Land concentration is a historical problem, and peasant, Quilombola, Indigenous, fisherpeople, and landless workers' communities face constant threats and violence due to land disputes, either against large landowners or agribusiness companies. The lack of effective land reform and the privatization of common areas exacerbate the situation. The demarcation of territories, both for family farming and collective use, is a priority.

2. Access to Public Policies and Resources: The difficulty in accessing public policies is a major obstacle. Many face excessive bureaucracy, lack of technical assistance, agricultural credit, and adequate resources for production. The struggle for territorial rights, land reform public policy, and access to credit for rural development are essential for the continuity of families in the countryside and the strengthening of family farming. Specifically, public policies aimed at Land Reform and the distribution of land to the poorest, while essential, face great challenges in being effectively implemented. The absence of public policies for health and education, especially in rural areas, and the difficulty in accessing agricultural credit for production and agricultural development are critical challenges. In this regard, we have observed a trend of school closures in the rural areas, as well as lack of access to water due to the absence of wells and infrastructure that could bring water to families' homes.

3. Violence, Insecurity in the Countryside, and Impunity: Violence in rural areas is one of the most serious challenges faced by peasants, rural workers, and traditional communities. The threats, assaults, and even murders of rural leaders, who fight for territorial rights and land reform, are recurrent, and impunity contributes to the worsening of this situation. Land grabbers, large landowners, illegal miners, and organized crime groups are often involved in land conflicts, and their violent actions against rural communities, such as the forced eviction of peasants and the destruction of their properties, are often not subject to investigation and/or accountability. This impunity is one of the main reasons for the increase in violence in rural areas and for the fear that persists in communities fighting for land ownership and the preservation of their ways of life. Furthermore, many rural workers and leaders face criminalization of their struggles, being accused of crimes for defending their rights and territories, especially when opposing the interests of agribusiness or large corporations. The lack of punishment for those responsible for violence strengthens the sense of insecurity and perpetuates the culture of impunity in the countryside, discouraging the pursuit of justice.

4. Climate Crisis and Environmental Impacts: Adapting to climate crises, such as prolonged droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events, has become a constant challenge for rural communities. These phenomena directly affect agricultural production and food security, as adverse weather conditions harm productivity and make subsistence more unstable. The resilience of these communities is tested, as family farming, artisanal fishing, and other traditional practices rely on predictable and favorable weather conditions. Moreover, environmental degradation directly impacts the living conditions of these populations, especially for artisanal fishers and extractivist communities, who face river pollution and the effects of dams. Pollution and the impacts of large projects, such as dam construction, further jeopardize the subsistence and culture of these communities. The effects of dams are devastating as they flood lands, alter ecosystems, and hinder access to essential

natural resources, such as fishing and drinking water. Furthermore, many peasants face the unviability of their productive areas due to industrial pollution and the intensive use of agrochemicals, which lead to the expulsion of these populations from their lands and the loss of their means of production. Access to justice in cases of violations of territorial and environmental rights is an additional challenge, as communities often face a bureaucratic system that is insufficient to guarantee protection and redress. The lack of proper support for these populations in the face of environmental degradation exacerbates the situation, as public policies are often bureaucratized and insufficient to effectively address these issues.

5. Threats to Local Identities and Cultures: The increasing pressure of large-scale production models, mainly driven by agribusiness, represents a direct threat to traditional cultures and ways of life. This production model, focused on profit maximization and intensive use of natural resources, often conflicts with the cultural practices and production methods of rural communities, such as peasants, artisanal fishers, and traditional peoples. The advancement of agribusiness undermines the sustainable use of land, as traditional farming practices, which are more diverse and sustainable, have been replaced by monocultures and large plantations aimed at the export market, such as soybeans and sugarcane, negatively impacting the environment and community health. Additionally, the intensive agribusiness model also contributes to the loss of territories and the destruction of ways of life, as many peasants and artisanal fishers are forced to abandon their lands or find themselves unable to continue their productive practices due to the privatization of common areas and environmental degradation caused by industrial practices, such as river pollution and the destruction of local ecosystems. The arrival of large agro-industrial projects and the uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources result in an irreversible transformation of rural spaces, threatening the preservation of local cultures and community ways of life. Accelerated urbanization and cultural homogenization also play a crucial role in this process of erosion of local identities. The displacement of families to urban centers, often caused by the lack of opportunities in the countryside, results in the loss of connections with the land and local culture. Rural life is increasingly threatened by the imposition of urban standards and the adoption of habits and beliefs from large urban centers. This not only impacts cultural and traditional practices but also creates a distance between younger generations and the cultivation and production practices that sustained communities for generations. Moreover, the agribusiness monopoly has a profound effect on the preservation of biodiversity and the practices of family farming, which are essential for the subsistence and culture of rural communities. The use of agrochemicals, for example, threatens people's health and soil quality, as well as undermining sustainable livelihoods and regional biodiversity. The loss of rural cultural identity is aggravated by the difficulty of access to land, the fragmentation of territories, and the lack of institutional support for the maintenance of local cultures.

6. Access to Justice and Human Rights: The search for justice in cases of human rights violations is a significant challenge. The struggle for the protection of territorial rights and the quest for dignity and quality of life in rural communities often clashes with the lack of resources and the inadequate structure of public policies. Furthermore, the judiciary system is often ineffective and slow. Access to justice is often hindered by distance and lack of infrastructure in rural areas, in addition to the shortage of public servants and lawyers

specialized in defending the rights of these workers. The fragility of public policies aimed at protecting rural leaders and the high cost of judicial processes contribute to the persistence of impunity (referred to in item 2 above).

Q2 - How does your government, organization or community address those challenges affecting the rights of peasants and rural workers? Please provide specific examples, where possible.

Several organizations and social movements work to defend the rights of peasants, rural workers, and traditional communities, promoting counseling, mobilization, and political advocacy. These initiatives aim to strengthen the autonomy of these populations, ensure access to fundamental rights, and address the impacts of agribusiness and exclusionary policies.

1. Monitoring and Support for Rural Communities: The monitoring work is carried out through mapping of conflicts, legal and technical assistance, encouragement of agroecological production, and pastoral and spiritual support. Legal assistance plays a key role in defending against violence in rural areas, while technical advice strengthens sustainable production practices and ensures the communities' permanence in their territories. For example, the CPT (Pastoral Land Commission) supports rural communities through legal and pastoral counseling, as well as promoting agroecological production and mapping land conflicts.

2. Organization and Strengthening of Peasantry: Social movements structure plans and strategies to ensure the continuity of the peasantry and its balanced relationship with nature. One example is the Movement of Small Farmers (MPA), which develops a "peasant plan" to consolidate and reproduce sustainable production practices and coexistence with nature. Additionally, the MPA organizes communities for political advocacy, providing information on rights and public policies, and creating emergency support networks, such as distributing food and water in disaster situations.

3. Public Policies and Structural Challenges: The political context directly influences living conditions in rural areas. After periods of dismantling policies aimed at family farming and land reform, some initiatives have been resumed to ensure food security, land regularization, and access to credit. Among these measures are school meal programs, the distribution of native seeds, and debt renegotiation for small producers. A recent example of revival is the National School Feeding Program (PNAE), which aims to include products from family farming in schools. However, challenges persist due to land concentration and the agribusiness model, which favors large producers, encourages the intensive use of pesticides, and negatively impacts the environment and rural community health.

4. Defense of Rights and Political Advocacy: Litigation and popular legal advice are essential tools for confronting rights violations and strengthening communities. Terra de Direitos, for example, conducts training and legal counseling activities, helping communities report rights violations and organize to fight for their demands. Additionally, it participates in the construction of public policies, such as the National Policy for Quilombola Territorial and Environmental Management (PNGTAQ) and the struggle to reduce pesticide use, through initiatives like the National Program for Pesticide Reduction (PRONARA).

5. Mobilization and Rights Claiming: Social movements use different forms of mobilization to pressure for effective public policies. The MST (Movement of Landless Rural Workers), for example, organizes protests and political mobilizations, pressures legislators to propose bills, and endeavors to restructure bodies responsible for land reform. This mobilization also includes a strong presence in budget discussions related to land reform and strengthening family farming.

6. Building Alternatives to Strengthen the Rural Areas: Training and local listening processes are essential for communities to actively participate in the creation of policies that meet their needs. The MPA, for example, works with technical and legal guidance, enabling small producers to access government programs and strengthen sustainable production models. These actions are critical to ensure that peasants remain in their territories and can live with dignity, overcoming structural and political challenges.

Q3 - What policies or measures have been found effective to promote the rights of peasants and rural workers in your country?

No policy has been 100% effective, as agrarian reform progresses slowly. The slowness of the public authorities in implementing it and establishing policies to encourage family farming has increased conflicts and poverty in rural areas.

The National School Feeding Program (PNAE) guarantees quality food for public school students, with 30% of the resources allocated for purchasing products from family farming. This measure strengthens the local economy and promotes social inclusion in rural areas. The Food Acquisition Program (PAA) buys food from family farmers, land reform settlers, and traditional communities, distributing it in schools, hospitals, and to populations in situations of food insecurity. The PAA Seeds, in turn, distributes traditional and agroecological seeds, which are essential for the food sovereignty of rural communities.

Programs like "Desenrola Rural" have been crucial in regularizing debts and providing credit to small farmers, allowing them to invest in their properties and increase productivity sustainably. Additionally, the creation of rural settlements and land regularization are essential measures to guarantee land access and reduce land concentration.

The National Policy for the Territorial and Environmental Management of Quilombola Lands (PNGTAQ) ensures the right of Quilombola communities to manage their territories,

promoting sustainability and respecting their cultural practices. Meanwhile, the National Policy for Agroecology and Organic Production (PNAPO) encourages the agroecological transition and sustainable agricultural practices, offering technical assistance, credit, and incentives for family farmers and peasants.

The National Program for Strengthening Family Farming (PRONAF) offers low-interest credit, enabling family farmers to invest in and improve their production. This program is essential for strengthening family farming. Furthermore, the National Program for Education in Agrarian Reform (PRONERA), established in 1998, has guaranteed the right to education for youth and adults in agrarian reform areas, promoting literacy and continuing education at different levels.

The execution of PAA, PNAE, CDA, and the construction of peasant housing through the Minha Casa, Minha Vida program has promoted dignity and opportunities for peasants. Access to university via PRONERA has also expanded the right to education in various fields of work.

Despite these achievements, the realization of rights is still ongoing. The measures constitutionally foreseen and the articulation with the justice system are fundamental, but many communities remain on the margins of the full promotion of peasants' rights, especially concerning land demarcation and territorial protection.

Q4 - What specific groups of peasants or rural workers may be at particular risk in your country; and what measures have been, or could be, taken to mitigate those risks?

In Brazil, all peasant groups are facing risks: Indigenous peoples, Quilombola communities, landless peasants, land squatters and small landowners, Caiçaras, riverside dwellers, extractivists, and all segments of traditional peoples and communities, immigrants, are facing risks such as violence in the rural areas, lack of access to land, lack of quality healthcare and education, life-threatening situations, and social exclusion.

- Indigenous peoples suffer from invasions of their territories and the slow pace of land demarcation.
- Quilombolas face institutional racism, lack of land titling, and pressure from large projects, requiring the National Policy for Territorial and Environmental Management of Quilombola Lands (PNGTAQ) and access to credit and technical assistance.
- Peasants and landless workers are frequently criminalized and victims of violence, demanding agrarian reform, land regularization through the creation of settlements, and the approval of agrarian reform policies.
- Caiçaras, threatened by real estate speculation and predatory tourism, need policies for regularizing traditional territories and promoting sustainable tourism.
- Riversiders, impacted by large infrastructure projects and river contamination, require their participation in decisions affecting their territories. Additionally, they suffer from criminalization of their practices, with unsustainable environmental fines being imposed, in a clear scenario of environmental racism.

Communities are affected by enterprises such as dams for energy generation (hydroelectric plants), water accumulation, waste containment, among other projects such as wind energy generation or communities near mines, pits, and piles of mining waste from metals like iron or lithium; some of these conflicts have been judicialized with collective actions. The PNAB (Federal Law 14.755/23) helps to establish a specific protocol for damages generally caused to affected populations, with rights outlined in the process of full reparation and ways for victims to participate in this.

Communities are also affected by climate change and disasters, such as floods, droughts, fires, landslides, and flash floods. Measures that could be taken, besides collective actions and other forms of popular pressure, would be to discuss compensations at the global level from companies that have historically contributed most to climate change, either through record carbon dioxide ("CO₂") emissions or the use of resources such as water and energy. In this way, climate justice measures could be implemented, such as reforestation of affected areas, collective resettlements, and incentives for socioeconomic recovery.

The expansion of agribusiness, with broad government policy support, has been violent, directly impacting communities with pesticide use and direct contamination; with the expulsion of peasants from their land for monoculture farming or mining; with threats and direct confrontations resulting in deaths; with the absence of investigations and accountability for the perpetrators, leading to increasing impunity.

Land titling policies for Indigenous and Quilombola lands, agrarian reform, and support for land occupiers and landless peasants are essential but face challenges. The sluggishness of public authorities and the delay in Indigenous land demarcation, aggravated by the threat of the "temporal framework" (Marco Temporal) thesis, hinder the advancement of these policies.

The current bureaucratic system was not designed to serve these groups, leaving them without access to land or the necessary regularization. The main groups at high risk are Indigenous peoples, Quilombolas, riverside dwellers, extractivists, landless peasants, and immigrants. It is necessary to establish a legal protection statute and implement effective land demarcation and territorial protection policies, as well as public policies that promote intergenerational permanence in these territories. The expansion of agribusiness, with strong government support, has caused negative impacts such as violence in the countryside, pesticide use, environmental contamination, the expulsion of peasants from their land for monoculture farming or mining, and the lack of investigations and accountability, leading to impunity.

To mitigate these risks, it is essential to strengthen public policies such as the Food Acquisition Program (PAA), the National School Feeding Program (PNAE), and the National Policy for Agroecology and Organic Production (PNAPO), as well as accelerate land regularization and combat violence in the countryside. Promoting agroecology and ensuring social participation in political decisions are also crucial measures to protect these groups and promote their rights.

Structurally, addressing and mitigating these risks and threats requires the establishment of a legal protection statute, the implementation of certain constitutional provisions, and the

execution of land demarcation and territorial protection policies, alongside public policies for intergenerational permanence in these territories.

Q5 - What are the challenges or violations facing peasants and other people working in rural areas in their exercise of the right to equal participation at the local, national, and international level?

The lack of access to information and popular legal advice, combined with the absence of transparency from public authorities and the lack of elected representatives, hinders the participation of rural communities in decision-making processes. The difficulties in marketing their products are exacerbated by the lack of state protectionism against agribusiness, which frequently violates the rights of peasants. Peasant communities that are also Indigenous, Quilombola, or from other traditional peoples face the risk of violations of the right to free, prior, and informed consultation, often being ignored in legislative processes or environmental licensing of enterprises.

In exercising the right to participation, rural communities face significant challenges. At the local level, exclusion from decision-making processes, lack of access to information, and political marginalization are recurring obstacles. Communities are often not consulted about projects that directly affect their territories, such as infrastructure works or administrative acts. Violence against peasant leaders, especially in areas of agrarian conflict, also hinders effective representation of these communities. At the national level, the lack of proportional political representation and the difficulty in influencing public policies that meet the needs of rural peoples are constant challenges. Despite the existence of participation spaces, such as councils and conferences, many are dominated by powerful sectors, such as agribusiness, to the detriment of small farmers and traditional communities. The criminalization of social movements and the repression of peaceful protests limit the organization and the demand for rights of these groups. At the international level, the lack of access to global forums, such as the UN or the WTO, hinders the participation of peasants in decisions that directly affect their communities, such as trade agreements and environmental policies. Economic inequality and lack of resources are also barriers to the participation of peasant organizations in international conferences. Furthermore, corporate interests and the interests of developed countries often marginalize the demands of rural communities, especially regarding food sovereignty, access to land, and protection of natural resources.

To overcome these challenges, it is necessary to strengthen participation mechanisms at all levels, promoting prior and informed consultation at the local level, creating public policies to expand political representation at the national level, and ensuring the effective participation of rural communities in international spaces. Financial and logistical support are also necessary to enhance this participation. The implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) is a fundamental step in guaranteeing the right to equal participation.

At the local level, the most evident violations include the denial of working conditions and land, the use of pesticides, threats of expulsion, and territorial violence. The temporal framework, which hinders land regularization, regulations that prevent inspections of properties in agrarian disputes, and policies that grant amnesty to large land grabbers are also noteworthy. Processes of regionalization of capital, such as AMACRO and MATOPIBA, with public and private resources, also exacerbate collective rights violations. Additionally, the lack of infrastructure and communication in rural communities, with difficulties in accessing the internet and transportation, exacerbates isolation and social exclusion.

Q6 - What laws, policies or other measures exist to recognize and/or promote the right to participation for peasants and other people working in rural areas?

Brazil has several policies aimed at the rights of rural workers, such as the PAA (Food Acquisition Program), PNAE (National School Feeding Program), PRONERA (National Program for Education in Agrarian Reform), and PNRA (National Agrarian Reform Program). Additionally, there are state laws for those affected by dams, such as those in Minas Gerais (Law No. 23.795/2021) and Maranhão (Law No. 11.687/2022), and the National Policy for Those Affected by Dams (Federal Law No. 14.755/2023).

Internationally, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants (UNDROP) and ILO Convention No. 169 recognize the right to consultation and participation of peasants and traditional peoples in decisions that affect their lives. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), ratified by Brazil, combats racial discrimination against these communities. The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) and the San Salvador Protocol (1988) also address issues related to environmental preservation and economic and social rights. The ITPGRFA (International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture), ratified by Brazil in 2006, regulates the sustainable use of plant genetic resources.

At the national level, the 1988 Constitution guarantees rights such as agrarian reform, established by Law No. 4.504/1964 (Land Statute) and the National Agrarian Reform Policy. Law No. 11.326/2006 (Family Farming Law) and PRONAF aim to promote the sustainable development of family farming. Additionally, Decree No. 9.064/2017 regulates family farming in the country. The Constitution also guarantees rights to political participation, but political will and infra-constitutional legislation still do not fully guarantee these rights.

However, there are conflicts in laws, such as the Agrarian Reform Law (Law No. 8.629/1993), which conflicts with policies favoring agribusiness, making it difficult to implement policies that address the needs of rural workers. The Temporal Framework (Marco Temporal), approved with Law No. 14.701/2023, and Law No. 14.757/2023, which grants amnesty to land grabbers in the Amazon, are examples of measures that worsen the legal situation in rural areas.

The Agrarian Reform Law establishes the social function of land, but the implementation of land access, credit policies, and protection for human rights defenders remains insufficient. Programs like the PAA, which acquires food from family farming, are essential, but their effectiveness needs to be expanded. Additionally, there are councils such as CONSEA, CONDRAF, and CNAPO, which formulate and monitor policies on food security, sustainable rural development, and agroecology, but challenges remain in ensuring political representation and implementing concrete measures for rural communities.

In summary, Brazil faces significant challenges in terms of implementing public policies and legislation that meet the rights of peasants and rural communities due to conflicts in laws, lack of political will, and the actions of agribusiness groups seeking to dominate rural territories to the detriment of workers. To overcome these challenges, it is crucial to strengthen legislation and mechanisms for community participation in the decision-making process.

Q7 - When the right to participation for peasants and other people working in rural areas is violated, what judicial and non-judicial procedures, remedies and processes are available to address the violations, and how effective are they?

It is possible to appeal to the judiciary to guarantee the participation of peasant communities, especially in cases of violations of ILO Convention No. 169, or to involve institutions like the Public Prosecutor's Office and Public Defenders to represent them in lawsuits. The effectiveness of these actions varies and depends on the local context. Frequently, all possible avenues are sought for conflict resolution: political representation through elected officials, rural social organizations, and the judiciary system, but in most cases, without effective solutions.

Class action lawsuits filed in the Brazilian justice system often take about 10 years or more to achieve a minimal level of reparation for the affected communities, as demonstrated by the Movement's experience. Often, it is necessary to rely on popular organization and political pressure for agreements and public policies to be implemented, as the judicial process, by itself, can be insufficient and ineffective in resolving collective conflicts.

Although there are several mechanisms to address violations of the right to participation of peasants and rural workers, their effectiveness depends on factors such as access to justice, the strength of social movements, and the commitment of institutions. A combination of judicial, non-judicial, and social mobilization strategies is essential to ensure that these rights are respected and protected. In the non-judicial realm, complaints can be made to public agencies such as the Public Prosecutor's Office, ombudsman offices, and public defenders. Additionally, peasants can report violations to UN mechanisms, such as special rapporteurs or the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). Organized social movements, such as La Vía Campesina, can pressure governments and companies through social mobilizations, campaigns, and international advocacy. Social pressure can be effective in generating change but depends on the organization and strength of the movements.

Judicial mechanisms can involve criminal actions against violators, civil actions for accountability and reparation, writs of mandamus to protect threatened rights, among others. The effectiveness depends on access to justice and the independence of the judiciary, but obstacles such as elitism, prejudice, and ideological bias can undermine the process, resulting in impunity. Mediation processes can also be used to resolve conflicts, such as the Land Conflict Commissions created by the Courts of Justice (Resolution 510 of the National Justice Council). In severe cases of human rights violations and impunity, peasants can take complaints to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The Court's decisions are binding for member countries, but the process can be long and complex.

In countries with legislation on prior consultation, such as ILO Convention No. 169, communities and peasants can demand consultations before the implementation of projects that affect them. However, the implementation of prior consultation is often flawed, with governments and companies ignoring or manipulating the process.

The Brazilian judiciary system is accessible as a constitutionally guaranteed right. However, the issue lies in how the judiciary handles the demands of rural workers and peasants. The judiciary's approach is often archaic and conservative, failing to keep up with the current realities of rural life.

The Public Prosecutor's Office, especially the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office (MPF), Public Defenders' Offices, and Popular Advocacy, work on issues related to peasant rights, mainly through Public Civil Actions (ACP), writs of mandamus (MS), acting as third-party intervenors, providing assistance, and Habeas Corpus.

There are two main fronts of action: seeking mediations through state structures, such as the human rights defenders protection program, the Agrarian Conciliation Department, the Ministry of Justice's Rural and Urban Conflict Mediation Department; or through actions in the judiciary system, such as complaints to the Public Prosecutor's Office, Public Civil Actions with obligations for the State, requests for action by the land solutions commission of the courts to advance through dialogue, or use of administrative structures, such as complaints to the human rights commissions of state legislatures or the Federal Chamber, and the National Human Rights Council.

Q8 - What policies and measures have been found effective in empowering peasants and other rural communities to participate in decision-making at the local, national, or international levels?

The participation of peasant communities in official spaces occurs through councils and forums in areas such as health, education, rural development, culture, sports, and the environment, both at the local and national levels. Activities such as training cycles, public hearings, marches, and meetings complement this participation. Policies like the National Program for the Strengthening of Family Agriculture (Pronaf) offer credit, technical assistance, and support for commercialization, and include participation mechanisms, such as

councils and forums, to influence decisions. Pronaf has strengthened the organization and economic capacity of family farmers, increasing their participation in local and national decision-making processes.

The National Policy for Agroecology and Organic Production (Pnapo) also promotes the active participation of peasants and rural communities in policy formulation, with a focus on agroecology councils and forums, strengthening community organization. Institutional participation mechanisms include councils like the National Council for Sustainable Rural Development (CONDRAF), the National Commission for Agroecology and Organic Production (CNAPO), and the National Council for Food Security (CONSEA), which ensure peasant representation in public policy formulation. However, their effectiveness depends on governmental commitment. Prior consultations with rural and indigenous communities, before the implementation of large-scale projects, also ensure greater participation but face challenges in implementation.

Initiatives such as rural schools, agroecology courses, and rural extension programs train peasants in agricultural techniques and management. Examples include the Agroecology Schools in Latin America and the National Program for Education in Agrarian Reform (PRONARA), as well as workshops and seminars promoted by social movements. These initiatives strengthen the technical and political capacity of communities, enabling greater participation in decision-making processes, while also raising awareness, community organization, and rights claims.

Programs like the Food Acquisition Program (PAA) and the Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Program (ATER) strengthen rural cooperatives and associations, improving collective organization, policy formulation, and production marketing. The Cistern Program, which installs cisterns in semi-arid areas, also improves access to water and climate resilience. Land reform policies ensure access to land and strengthen the autonomy of rural communities, while policies for community management of natural resources empower communities in sustainable forest and water management.

Pronaf EcoSol, the National Program for Cooperative Incubators (Proninc), and the Solidarity Economy Support Program (PAES) promote the solidarity economy, supporting the creation and strengthening of cooperatives and collective enterprises. The Popular Jurists Training Course trains peasant leaders on topics such as human rights, citizenship, public policies, and gender, empowering members of trade unions, associations, and social movements.

The development of Associativism and Cooperativism contributes to the implementation of public policies through processes of organization in social movements, unions, and social pastoral work. These groups act through courses, mobilizations, pilgrimages, advocacy, and complaints, as well as producing informative and formative materials, strengthening the organization and mobilization of the people to ensure awareness of rights and active participation in decisions.