



## **Statement of the Working Group on peasants on the occasion of the Seventh Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP)**

GENEVA (17 December 2025) On the seventh anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP), adopted by the General Assembly in 2018, the UN Working Group on UNDROP reaffirms the continued relevance and urgency of the Declaration in the context of escalating global crises, including hunger, social injustice, climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation.

Peasants, small-scale fishers, herders, Indigenous Peoples and other people working in rural areas are central to food security, nutrition, rural livelihoods and resilient ecosystems worldwide. Through diverse agricultural, pastoral, fishing and forest-based systems, they produce over 70 per cent of the world's food, contribute almost 50 per cent of the fish consumed in many regions, conserve seeds and biodiversity, and apply agroecological and traditional practices that strengthen climate resilience and support sustainable food systems. Their close and enduring relationships with land, water, forests and territories underpin not only their livelihoods, but also their cultural identities, social organization and knowledge systems.

Despite these essential contributions, UNDROP rights-holders continue to face widespread and systemic violations of their human rights. Persistent challenges include insecure land and resource tenure, environmental degradation, climate-related disasters, unequal access to services and markets, criminalisation and discriminatory legal and policy frameworks. Large-scale land acquisitions, extractive industry activities, infrastructure projects, and the capture of marine and riverine zones, when undertaken without meaningful consultation, consent and adequate safeguards, have led to dispossession and loss of livelihoods for many peasants, fisherfolk, pastoralists and Indigenous communities. Weak governance, corruption and inadequate legal recognition of customary tenure systems and gender discrimination further exacerbate these harms.

The Working Group expresses grave concern over the impacts of armed conflicts and military occupation on peasants and other people working in rural areas. Hostilities often result in the destruction or contamination of agricultural land, grazing areas, forests and fishing grounds, as well as damage to irrigation systems, water sources and rural infrastructure. Such impacts sever rural communities from their means of subsistence, undermine food systems and generate long-term social, economic and environmental consequences.

Rural women and girls are disproportionately affected by these intersecting challenges. They experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on gender, location, poverty, ethnicity and Indigenous identity. Structural inequalities limit their access to land, natural resources, credit, education, health services and decision-making processes, while increasing their unpaid care burdens, and exposure to gender-based violence and exploitation. Rural migrant women are particularly vulnerable to abuse and rights violations in informal and precarious labour contexts. Ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of rights by rural women and girls is central to the effective implementation of UNDROP.

The Working Group underscores that the lived experience, traditional knowledge and innovations of UNDROP rights-holders are indispensable for addressing planetary challenges. The Declaration provides a comprehensive normative framework that recognizes peasants and rural workers as rights-holders and as key agents of sustainable development, climate adaptation and environmental stewardship. Its effective implementation requires their meaningful and inclusive participation in decision-making at the local, national, regional and international levels.

On this anniversary, the Working Group calls on States to accelerate the implementation of UNDROP by adopting rights-based laws, policies and programmes; strengthening legal protection of land, water and natural resources; recognizing and protecting customary tenure systems; and ensuring access to justice and effective remedies. States should integrate UNDROP into national food, climate, environmental and development strategies, and allocate adequate resources for its realization. The Working Group further encourages international organizations, development actors and the private sector to align their actions with UNDROP and to engage in genuine partnerships with peasants and Indigenous communities. Advancing the full implementation of UNDROP is essential to ensuring dignity, equality and justice for peasants and other people working in rural areas, and to building sustainable and inclusive futures for all.

Looking ahead, the Working Group notes that key international processes provide important opportunities to advance UNDROP implementation. The seventeenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 17) offers a critical platform to recognize peasants and other rural people as central actors in biodiversity conservation and to integrate UNDROP provisions into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans through meaningful participation of peasant and Indigenous communities. The Second International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD+20) provides a timely opportunity to address persistent challenges regarding land, territories and natural resources, and to reaffirm commitments to agrarian reform, tenure security and inclusive rural development in line with UNDROP.

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*The [Working Group on Peasants and other people working in rural areas](#) is comprised of five independent experts from all regions of the world. The Chair-Rapporteur is **Carlos Duarte** (Colombia); other members include **Geneviève Savigny** (France), **Shalmali Guttal** (India), **Uche Ewelukwa Ofodile** (Nigeria) and **Davit Hakobyan** (Armenia).*

*The Working Group was established for three years in 2023 by the Human Rights Council in resolution A/HRC/RES/54/9 to promote global recognition and protection of the rights of peasants and rural workers, particularly in the context of poverty, food insecurity, and environmental degradation. The resolution underscores the importance of addressing systemic inequalities, securing access to land, seeds, water, and biodiversity, and ensuring that peasants participate in decision-making processes at all levels. It also*

*provides assistance in the implementation by States of the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas](#).*

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