

# Asian People's Declaration on ASEAN Summit

Sunday 14 January 2007, by [Movements \(Asian\)](#) (Date first published: 12 January 2007).

We, various organizations and social movements representing the landless peasants, small farmers, indigenous peoples, artisanal fishers, women, workers, small and medium business, consumers, and marginalized peoples in South and Southeast Asia, gathered together on the occasion of the International Conference on Alternatives to Corporate-led Globalization and Regional Integration this December 9-10, 2006 in Cebu City, express our grave concern, as follows:

- The recent proliferation of bilateral and regional free trade agreements pushed by developed countries such as the ASEAN- Japan Economic Partnership Agreements, US-ASEAN Trade and Investment Framework (TIFA), the Australia-Thailand FTA, Japan-Malaysia FTA, Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) and in particular the surge in negotiations for US FTAs in the region such as the US-Thailand FTA, the US-Malaysia FTA, and the US-Korea FTA and preparations for such in the Philippines and Indonesia pose grave threats to people's livelihoods, public health, biodiversity and environment. Bilateral and regional free trade agreements aim for a more rapid and comprehensive liberalization of economies of developing and least developing countries, which we have seen to have exacerbated poverty as well as class and gender inequalities for the last two decades.
- Furthermore, through the ASEAN, the negotiations for regional and bilateral free trade and investments agreements with rich industrialized countries are being fast-tracked on top of its existing economic initiatives like the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement(AFTA), ASEAN Industrial Cooperation Scheme (AICO) and ASEAN Investment Area (AIA). Envisioned to create a single market for more than 500 million Southeast Asian people, these free trade agreements and regional economic integration project is coated in rhetoric of "creating equitable access to opportunities." However past and present episodes of liberalization and economic integration have shown that they merely expand and facilitate market and investment opportunities for developed countries' transnational corporations. Thus, the creation of an ASEAN single market within the rubric of free trade will only result to worsening the economic, social, political and environmental crisis faced by many developing and LDCs in the region, in particular, the aggravation of landlessness and dislocation of small farmers, fishers and indigenous peoples; more virulent import surges destroying local livelihoods and enterprises; stagnation of national industries leading to more unemployment and lower wages and exploitative working conditions, rising out-migration and increased environmental destruction.
- There are no indications that the key issues related to the full operationalization of the Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) for developing countries through the Special Products (SP) and Special Safeguard Measure (SSM) in agriculture will be resolved even with the soft resumption of the negotiations. Instead, given the ambitious agenda for fuller liberalization in agriculture, NAMA and services under the Doha Round, its resumption and conclusion may push more peoples in the region into impoverishment and hunger.
- Food sovereignty is clearly undermined under WTO, the bilateral and regional free trade agreements and the ASEAN's neo-liberal concept of economic integration. All these agreements are aimed at "harmonizing" trade, investments, intellectual property, sanitary and

phyto-sanitary and environmental policies and standards of developing and least developed countries. This clearly violates the inherent rights of peoples, communities and governments to determine their own policies on food and agriculture that are appropriate to their specific circumstances.

- Meanwhile, states and national governments in both South and Southeast Asia, instead of protecting their national sovereignty in order to promote the interests of their small farmers, fishers, workers, indigenous peoples and local businesses have acceded and embraced neo-liberal policies of liberalization, deregulation and privatization. In consequence, their domestic policies have greatly facilitated or hastened the rapid entry of cheap imported products into the local markets unfairly competing with domestic commodities; food aid that destroy local livelihoods; product and toxic wastes dumping; exploitation of cheap labor; extraction of natural resources through mining, commercial fishing and expansion of plantations like palm oil, banana, etc.; commodification of land and the commons and the increased entry and commercialization of genetically-modified crops. Likewise, there's a gaping lack of political will on the part of governments to address lingering structural inequalities in many countries, in particular landlessness and land concentration.
- Moreover, most governments in the region have failed to represent the democratic interests of their people and have addressed the rising tide of resistance and struggles of peoples for survival with intensifying repression and human rights violations. In many cases, governments have initiated political reforms such as constitutional changes to further align their national policies and legislations with the neo-liberal corporate agenda of the WTO and the international financial institutions.

· Finally, the current surge towards intensifying neo-liberal globalization, regional integration and trade liberalization through free trade agreements and domestic policies and regulations are clearly driven by the trade and economic as well geo-political interests of developed countries and their transnational corporations and thus openly undermines human rights, food sovereignty, social rights, environment, and democracy in the region.

In this context we, participants of this conference and members of the Asia-Pacific Network on Food Sovereignty demand and call for the following:

1. **DEFEND NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY AND RECOGNIZE** the freedom and rights of peoples and their governments to set their own policies that will protect their political, social, economic and cultural rights towards attaining food sovereignty and sustainable development.
2. **STOP BILATERAL AND REGIONAL FREE TRADE** talks and reject existing free trade agreements like AFTA, SAFTA, US-Thai FTA, US-Korea FTA, Thai-China FTA, Philippines-China FTA and the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) that result to greater political, social, cultural, and economic deprivation of the common people; environmental degradation; displacement/migration and human rights abuses.
3. **NO RESUMPTION** of the DOHA Round unless and until existing implementation issues have been addressed (e.g. subsidy reduction), the negotiating agenda has been radically altered in favor of the interests and demands of developing and least developing countries' interests and demands and decision-making processes in the WTO have been reformed/ democratized, i.e. stopping green room negotiation practices and other manipulative /indirect threatening practices of developed countries.
4. New trade rules should/shall/must be able to regulate international trade in order to correct inherent asymmetries between the powerful rich countries and their TNCs and the economically weaker developing and least developed countries. Such rules should/shall effectively curb

agriculture dumping by developed countries, eliminate their direct and indirect export subsidies and curb overproduction through innovative instruments like supply management; allow developing countries to use import protection like quantitative restrictions to address import surges; allow countries to support their state trading enterprises and marketing and producer cooperatives or associations; and enforce legislations to regulate TNC operations or investments.

5. STRENGTHEN farmers', fishers' and indigenous peoples' OWNERSHIP, CONTROL and or ACCESS to their land, water, seeds, forests, and other productive resources through the speedy implementation of a genuine agrarian reform program, recognition of ancestral domain of indigenous peoples, and a land use legislation that prohibits or prevents effective ownership or appropriation of large tracts of lands by TNCs and agri-business firms. PRIORITIZE FOOD SECURITY in land use and stop entry of large- scale commercial plantations and extractive industries.

6. REJECT the neo-liberal market model of regional integration in Asia; PROMOTE a Southeast and South Asian social pact/ alliance based on the principles of fair relations, respect of sovereignty and mutual cooperation and that seeks to promote economic justice, the people's social and economic rights and in particular the recognition of ancestral domain of indigenous peoples, democracy, and the balanced development of agriculture and national industries based on sustainable technologies and practices.

7. NO to corporate-led agenda on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). In this regard, governments should RECOGNIZE, SUPPORT and PROTECT the traditional knowledge of farmers and farming communities in relation to plant genetic resources (PGR) for food and agriculture, as well as the basic right of farmers to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed and/or propagating materials, equitably participate in sharing benefits arising from the utilization of PGR for food and agriculture, and participate in making decisions on matters related to the conservation, development, access and sustainable use of PGR for food and agriculture.

8. STOP the commercialization of genetically modified crops, undo the patent on life forms and encourage public research instead of corporate-led research.

9. NO to IMF-WB-ADB and corporate-led agenda on harmonization programs/PRSP and other forms of structural adjustments programs that promote full economic liberalization, privatization and deregulation. No to loan conditionalities.

10. RECOGNIZE and PROMOTE women's role in ensuring food sovereignty, and create gender-responsive policy reforms that will empower women. Stop policies that push women to vulnerable positions.

11. STOP extra-judicial killings and other forms of human rights abuses being perpetrated by governments and their military institutions to suppress the struggles of social movements in the region.

12. UPHOLD genuine democracy and protect civil and political rights to ensure active people's participation in national and local decision and policy-making.

TASK FORCE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY -APNFS PHILIPPINES

PKMP

PKSK

AMA

KPMK

KASAMA-KA

WOMANHEALTH

PKKK

Liga Manggagawa (LM)

Integrated Rural Development Foundation (IRDF)

PHILNET-RDI

SEARICE

MODE, INC.

National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA), Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines

Appropriate Technology Resource Center (ATCRD)

RESOURCE CENTER FOR PEOPLE'S DEVELOPMENT (RCPD)

AKBAYAN

KAGAN PEOPLE'S FORUM

IDIS, Inc.

ALLIANCE OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR -DAVAO

Fair Trade Alliance (FTA)

KAISAMPALAD

Urban Missionaries (UM)

AKTIB

Institute for Popular Democracy (IPD)

CONZARRD

ASIAN FARMERS ALLIANCE (AFA)

KRKP - FOOD SOVEREIGNTY NETWORK INDONESIA

VECO Vietnam

BARCIK (Bangladesh)

Unnayan Dhara Bangladesh

Alternative Agriculture Network - Thailand

CARITAS - Sri Lanka

CARITAS - Bangladesh

Asia Partnership for Human Development (APHD, Thailand)

COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP/APNFS-BANGLADESH

LAJUSUAR, Indonesia

Sawit Watch, Indonesia

SPKS, Indonesia

INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE, Indonesia

International Gender and Trade Network-Asia (IGTN)

FTA-WATCH (Thailand)

FSPI-Via Campesina Asia

TNC-WATCH (Thailand)

CEDAC - Cambodia

Local Act Thailand

WALHI - FOE Indonesia

SANSAD- India

Center for Environmental Concerns (CEC) - India

LRC - FOE Philippines

HOMENET

ASIADHRRA

APWLD

WAC

KAFF -Korea

RRAFA - Thailand