

Food Policy for People:
Incorporating food sovereignty principles into
State governance

Case studies of Venezuela, Mali, Ecuador, and Bolivia

Sadie Beauregard
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Urban and Environmental Policy
Robert Gottlieb
Senior Comprehensive

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Executive Summary

Born out of the struggles of peasants across the globe, the food sovereignty framework proposes an alternative to neo-liberal trade policy. It calls for the removal of agriculture from the WTO, focuses on the rights of food providers, and emphasizes that food should be grown for people before profit. Since the 1996 declaration by the international peasants' movement La Via Campesina, food sovereignty has been emerging and evolving as an exciting alternative to free trade and industrial agriculture. Food sovereignty principles revolve around food for people, the rights and value of food producers, local food systems, equal access to resources, and growth with nature. These principles have evolved through the years, and efforts towards food sovereignty are driven by peoples' movements worldwide.

Food sovereignty efforts are seen at the local, regional, and national levels. From local food councils to fair prices for farmers to local markets to agroecological farming to more, food sovereignty is an emerging and developing movement. Beginning with Venezuela in 1999, food sovereignty goals have also been included in State level constitutions and legislation. Since then, six other countries have begun incorporating food sovereignty principles into their State governance as well. In 2004, farmers' organizations in Senegal influenced the adoption of food sovereignty principles as part of the *Loi d'Orientation Agro-Silvo Pastorale* (LOASP). In 2006, Mali developed their first agricultural policy (*Loi d'Orientation Agricole*), and food sovereignty was the key principle. In 2007, Nepal included food sovereignty in their 2007 interim constitution. Ecuador incorporated food sovereignty into their new 2008 constitution and has continued to develop legislation and discussion around food sovereignty. In January 2009, food sovereignty was included in Bolivia's new constitution. Each country differs slightly in its programs and legislation. This report delves deeper into Venezuela, Ecuador, Mali, and Bolivia.

The pursuance of legislation and programs in these countries offer interesting lessons for food advocates and producers. They demonstrate the necessity of involvement of producers in developing legislation that protects the rights of food producers and local food systems. The experiences of Mali, Ecuador, and Senegal suggest that farmers' organizations must be diligent in keeping politicians true to the spirit and goals of food sovereignty. These examples also suggest that public forums, debates, and discussions are part of the process of drafting progressive food and agriculture legislation. All seven countries illustrate how political and cultural climate greatly influence legislation for food and agriculture. In this sense, political will

is a large component of successful food sovereignty legislation. To influence political will, there must be strong efforts and collaboration among peoples' movements and actors at the State level.

For food advocates in the United States, the emergence of food sovereignty highlights solidarity with farmers' and peasants' organizations across the globe. Food sovereignty is slowly making its way onto U.S. soil. National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC), Grassroots International, Institute for Food and Development Policy/Food First, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) and others, support, research and organize towards food sovereignty goals in the U.S. and abroad.

Food sovereignty shares some goals but is also different from community food security and local food movements in several ways. It proposes an alternative to neo-liberal trade policy and calls for agriculture to be removed from the WTO. Yet it also shares many similarities in that it highlights food for people, emphasizes the value of food producers, and confirms the importance of environmental responsibility. As concerns and interest in food issues grow, food sovereignty is also expanding. The momentum for food sovereignty, along with recent developments at the State level, highlight the importance of food sovereignty as an emerging political, economic and social framework for food and agriculture.

Introduction

Food sovereignty is an exciting and emerging framework, born out of the work of international peasants' organizations and small scale food producers across the globe. The rallying cry from international peasants' movement, the Via Campesina, has propelled efforts for food sovereignty into the local, regional, and national levels. In several countries, peasants' organizations are pressuring their national governments to adopt policies that incorporate food sovereignty principles. Through the dual efforts of peoples' movements and actors at the State level, food sovereignty principles are being included in national constitutions, programs and legislation. Their successful implementation relies on the continued support, encouragement, and knowledge of local peasants' and farmers' movements.

This report includes several sections. Chapter One explores and explains the roots and principles of the food sovereignty framework. Chapter Two places food sovereignty in its historical and worldly context through the history of free trade agreements and the industrialization of agriculture. Chapter Three discusses the emerging efforts to include food sovereignty principles in State governance through inclusion in constitutions and State legislation and programs. Although seven countries – Venezuela, Mali, Senegal, Nepal, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Nicaragua – are touched upon in Chapter Three, the case studies in Chapter Four provide further detail to the efforts in Venezuela, Mali, Ecuador, and Bolivia. Finally, Chapter Five discusses the efforts of these four countries, emphasizing the importance of participation and collaboration between peoples' movements and State actors for effective inclusion and implementation of food sovereignty principles at the State level.

Chapter 1

La Via Campesina and the Food Sovereignty Framework

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture; to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives; to determine the extent to which they want to be self-reliant; to restrict the dumping of products in their markets; and to provide local fisheries-based communities the priority in managing the use of and the rights to aquatic resources. Food sovereignty does not negate trade, but rather, it promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production.

*Food Sovereignty: A Right For All, Political Statement of the NGO/CSO Forum for Food Sovereignty.
Rome, June 2002.*

Food sovereignty is an alternative economic and political framework proposed by peasants' organizations and civil society, and in recent years supported by an increasing body of research and reports. It goes beyond food security, noting the necessity of a framework to achieve the goal of food security—even declaring that “Food sovereignty is a precondition to genuine food security”¹ as well as a necessity to realizing the Right to Food. Food sovereignty has been developed by family farmers, peasants, indigenous peoples, forest dwellers, landless people and artisanal fisherfolk. It emphasizes the right of peoples to define their own food policy that is culturally appropriate and ecologically sound. It values indigenous knowledge and turns its focus to food for people rather than food as a commodity.

La Via Campesina

Founded in 1993, the international peasants' organization, La Via Campesina, first introduced the concept of ‘food sovereignty.’ In a response to neo-liberalization of trade and agricultural policy, farmers and peasants from the Global North and the Global South joined in solidarity to directly oppose trade liberalization and to actively promote an alternative framework. The Via Campesina currently consists of 148 organizations from 69 countries². Annette Aurelie Desmarais' book *La Via Campesina* outlines the development of the movement for food sovereignty, and underlines the shape and character of the movement:

The Via Campesina formed in the North and the South around common objectives: an explicit rejection of the neo-liberal model of rural development, an outright refusal to be excluded from agricultural policy development, and a firm determination to work together to empower a peasant voice. Through its strategy of “building unity with diversity” and its concept of food sovereignty,

peasant and farmers' organizations around the world are working together to ensure the well-being of rural communities – in particular by working to establish an alternative model of rural development, a model based on small scale-family farms and peasant agriculture³.

Via Campesina supports the peasant lifestyle and the rural communities that have been largely pushed out of recent trade and development paradigms. Contrary to the literature in the field and economic policies that situate peasants as obsolete, peasant organizations have proven to be resilient and united around food sovereignty⁴. They are calling out to reclaim their livelihoods and the control of their food systems, and are “at the forefront of struggles against neo-liberalism, not only as part of their efforts to gain greater access to and control over productive resources but also as key actors defending community and diversity”⁵. In the United States, the term ‘peasant’ sometimes generates a derogative image⁶. Indeed, throughout the world the translation of the term peasant has been viewed as “backwards”, almost an antithesis to progress⁷. As Michel Pimbert, Demarais and others note⁸, however, Via Campesina’s intentional use of the term ‘peasant’ – directly defined as “people of the land”⁹ – is a celebration of rural lifestyles and opposition to neo-liberalisms’ rejection of them.

In any study of the Via Campesina and food sovereignty, it is also important to note that this movement has been created and propelled by peasants’ and peoples’ organizations, not international NGOs (non-governmental organizations). Demarais clearly articulates important differences between the two:

NGOs were created, at least partially, to speak for those without a voice. Part of their mandate has always been to help these mute actors find an effective voice. Unfortunately, having done so, many NGOs have not been comfortable with what the “formerly voiceless” have to say. Many NGOs have not learned how to keep quiet when appropriate.

Peasant organizations, on the other hand, can best be categorized as people’s organizations or popular organizations, mass organizations, community-based organizations, or social movements that include, among others, trade unions, fisherfolk organizations, urban poor organizations, and women’s organizations. People’s organizations are community – or sector – based, grassroots organizations of volunteers that function to further the interests of their mass membership; many have

democratically elected leaderships, and are directly and immediately accountable to their membership or constituency¹⁰.

For the Via Campesina, and the food sovereignty movement as a whole, it is important to distinguish between institutional NGOs and peasants' organizations because of the political leaning of these two sectors. The latter is generally more fully committed to a full-scale alternative framework, while the former has often accepted the workings of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and has developed in relation to a neo-liberal framework.

Women and Agriculture

Food sovereignty recognizes women as agents and actors and not merely consumers in the food system. Food sovereignty also reaffirms the importance of social reproduction and social development as central components of rural development and rural employment¹¹.

-Alexandra Spieloch. 2006. *A Row to Hoe: The Gender Impact of Trade Liberalization on Our Food System, Agricultural Markets and Women's Human Right*, 12

The place of women as primary food producers is another essential component to understanding food sovereignty. Women are responsible for over half of the world's food production. In countries in the Global South, women produce 60 to 80 percent of food and are the primary producers of staple crops. Even though women are the primary food producers, food insecurity affects women more than men. Inequality between genders that affects women's employment, education, and participation in decision making in turn affects the food security of women and children¹². Due to these factors, in order to secure the right to food for women and children, policies related to food and agriculture must take into account gender, especially the access that women have to technology, credit, land, and markets¹³. In order to address this, the food sovereignty framework focuses specifically on gender¹⁴.

Development of Food Sovereignty Framework

Since Via Campesina introduced food sovereignty at the 1996 World Food Summit through the manifesto "Food Sovereignty: A Future Without Hunger", the framework has continued to develop and intensify, largely through the work, discussions, and debates of peasant organizations and their supporters in academia and civil society (see Box 1.1 for the original

food sovereignty principles from the Via Campesina). Via Campesina has been present at each meeting of the WTO – including Geneva, Paris, Seattle, Washington, Quebec City, Rome Bangalore, Porto Alegre, Cancun, and Hong Kong¹⁵ – declaring that agriculture be removed from its mission. As a framework, food sovereignty continues to develop and evolve. Via Campesina’s international meetings and conferences have been instrumental in developing food sovereignty principles and addressing challenges within the food sovereignty framework¹⁶.

Box 1.1: Food Sovereignty as an alternative

Food Sovereignty, A Future Without Hunger

La Vía Campesina, November 11-17, 1996, Rome, Italy

La Via Campesina introduced their original food sovereignty manifesto at the World Food Summit, Rome 1996. These principles laid the foundation for the food sovereignty framework.

1. Food – A Basic Human Right

Food is a basic human right. Everyone must have access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in sufficient quantity and quality to sustain a healthy life with full human dignity. Each nation should declare that access to food is a constitutional right and guarantee the development of the primary sector to ensure the concrete realization of this fundamental right.

2. Agrarian Reform

A genuine agrarian reform is necessary which gives landless and farming people—especially women—ownership and control of the land they work and which returns territories to indigenous peoples. The right to land must be free of discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, race, social class or ideology; the land belongs to those who work it. Peasant families, especially women, must have access to productive land, credit, technology, markets and extension services. Governments must establish and support decentralized rural credit systems that prioritize the production of food for domestic consumption to ensure food sovereignty. Production capacity rather than land should be used as security to guarantee credit. To encourage young people to remain in rural communities as productive citizens, the work of producing food and caring for the land has to be sufficiently valued both economically and socially. Governments must make long-term investments of public resources in the development of socially and ecologically appropriate rural infrastructure.

3. Protecting Natural Resources

Food Sovereignty entails the sustainable care and use of natural resources, especially land, water, seeds and livestock breeds. The people who work the land must have the right to practice sustainable management of natural resources and to preserve biological diversity. This can only be done from a sound economic basis with security of tenure, healthy soils and reduced use of agro-chemicals. Long-term sustainability demands a shift away from dependence on chemical inputs, on cash-crop monocultures and intensive, industrialized production models. Balanced and diversified natural systems are required. Genetic resources are the result of millennia of evolution and belong to all of humanity. They represent the careful work and knowledge of many generations of rural and indigenous peoples. The patenting and commercialization of genetic resources by private companies must be prohibited. The WTO’s Intellectual Property Rights Agreement is therefore unacceptable. Farming communities have the right to freely use

and protect the diverse genetic resources, including seeds and livestock breeds, which have been developed by them throughout history.

4. Reorganizing Food Trade

Food is first and foremost a source of nutrition and only secondarily an item of trade. National agricultural policies must prioritize production for domestic consumption and food self-sufficiency. Food imports must not displace local production nor depress prices. This means that export dumping or subsidized exports must cease. Smallholder farmers have the right to produce essential food staples for their countries and to control the marketing of their products. Food prices in domestic and international markets must be regulated and reflect the true costs of producing that food. This would ensure that smallholder farmer families have adequate incomes. It is unacceptable that the trade in food commodities continues to be based on the economic exploitation of the most vulnerable—the lowest earning producers—and the further degradation of the environment. It is equally unacceptable that trade and production decisions are increasingly dictated by the need for foreign currency to meet high debt loads. These debts place a disproportionate burden on rural people and should therefore be forgiven.

5. Ending the Globalization of Hunger

Food Sovereignty is undermined by multilateral institutions and by speculative capital. The growing control of multinational corporations over agricultural policies has been facilitated by the economic policies of multilateral organizations such as the WTO, World Bank and IMF. Regulation and taxation of speculative capital and a strictly enforced code of conduct for transnational corporations is therefore needed.

6. Social Peace

Everyone has the right to be free from violence. Food must not be used as a weapon. Increasing levels of poverty and marginalization in the countryside, along with the growing oppression of ethnic minorities and indigenous populations, aggravate situations of injustice and hopelessness. The ongoing displacement, forced urbanization, repression and increasing incidence of racism of smallholder farmers cannot be tolerated.

7. Democratic Control

Smallholder farmers must have direct input into formulating agricultural policies at all levels. The United Nations and related organizations will have to undergo a process of democratization to enable this to become a reality. Everyone has the right to honest, accurate information and open and democratic decision-making. These rights form the basis of good governance, accountability and equal participation in economic, political and social life, free from all forms of discrimination. Rural women, in particular, must be granted direct and active decision-making on food and rural issues.

Source: La Vía Campesina, November 11-17, 1996, Rome, Italy; www.viacampesina.org

The second international conference of food sovereignty was held in Sélingué, Mali in 2007. This conference, the Nyéléni Forum on Food Sovereignty, further developed the food sovereignty principles and provides the most recent international statement on food sovereignty. The Declaration of Nyéléni defines six principles essential to food sovereignty: Focuses on Food for People; Values Food Providers, Localizes Food Systems; Makes Decisions Locally; Builds Knowledge and Skills; and Works With Nature (see Box 1.2 for the description of food

sovereignty principles from the Declaration of Nyéléni). Similar to previous food sovereignty conferences, Nyéléni looked to address some of the challenges and obstacles facing food sovereignty groups.

The Declaration of Nyéléni is an important document for governments and groups to look towards when creating programs and policies for food sovereignty. If governments are to take on food sovereignty at a national level, they must take it on in all of its parts. Its true realization is not possible by taking bits from here and there. The development of food sovereignty includes the rights and value of food providers (here ‘food providers’ refers to small scale family farmers, peasants, indigenous peoples, landless people, forest dwellers, artisanal fisherfolk, and agricultural and fisheries workers) the localization of food systems, local decision making, development of knowledge and skills, and agroecological production. Each is part and parcel of the next. Michel Pimbert clearly notes the importance of a holistic and comprehensive approach to food sovereignty policy:

The need for a holistic approach was strongly emphasized by the Nyéléni participants because many actors today are increasingly co-opting the term “food sovereignty” to imply self-sufficiency and isolationist proposals that reject exchanges and complementarities between regions. Other actors cherry pick elements of food sovereignty and ignore others, thereby reproducing narrow approaches that ultimately hamper positive change.¹⁷

-From, *Towards Food Sovereignty: reclaiming autonomous food* by Michel Pimbert, 2008

It would be impossible for all countries to achieve food sovereignty by merely declaring themselves self-sufficient in food production. Clearly, some nations do not have the resources or capacity to produce all of their food. Nor should countries ignore possibilities for regional production and international solidarity. The Peoples’ Statement on Food Sovereignty underlines that, “*Food sovereignty does not negate trade, but rather, it promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production*”¹⁸. It emphasizes that food for people should not be reliant on the whims of a commodity driven international market. It recognizes that trade liberalization and recent bilateral trade agreements, such as NAFTA, have greatly impacted the livelihoods of local farmers, squeezing them “*out of their own national markets for food – markets they dominated in the past*

– *thus deepening the social and economic dimensions of the rural crisis*”¹⁹. Food sovereignty defines the rights of food producers and reclaims food policy for people through ecological sustainability and international solidarity.

Box 1.2: Furthering Food Sovereignty

Sélingué, Mali, 2007 Nyéléni Forum on Food Sovereignty **Declaration of Nyéléni**

- 1. Focuses on Food for People:** Food sovereignty stresses the right to sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food for all individuals, peoples and communities, including those who are hungry or living under occupation, in conflict zones and marginalized. Food sovereignty rejects the proposition that food is just another commodity for international agribusiness.
- 2. Values Food Providers:** Food sovereignty values and supports the contributions, and respects the rights, of women and men, peasants and small scale family farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fisherfolk, forest dwellers, indigenous peoples and agricultural and fisheries workers, including migrants, who cultivate, grow, harvest and process food; and rejects those policies, actions and programs that undervalue them, threaten their livelihoods and eliminate them.
- 3. Localizes Food Systems:** Food sovereignty brings food providers and consumers closer together; puts providers and consumers at the center of decision making on food issues; protects food providers from the dumping of food and food aid in local markets; protects consumers from poor quality and unhealthy food, inappropriate food aid and food tainted with genetically modified organisms; and resists governance structures, agreements and practices that depend on and promote unsustainable and inequitable international trade and give power to remote and unaccountable corporations.
- 4. Makes Decisions Locally:** Food sovereignty seeks control over and access to territory, land, grazing, water, seeds, livestock and fish populations for local food providers. These resources ought to be used and shared in socially and environmentally sustainable ways which conserve diversity. Food sovereignty recognizes that local territories often cross geopolitical borders and advances the right of local communities to inhabit and use their territories; it promotes positive interaction between food providers in different regions and territories and from different sectors to resolve internal conflicts or conflicts with local and national authorities; and rejects the privatization of natural resources through laws, commercial contracts and intellectual property rights regimes.
- 5. Builds Knowledge and Skills:** Food sovereignty builds on the skills and local knowledge of food providers and their local organizations that conserve, develop and manage localized food production and harvesting systems, developing appropriate research systems to support this and passing on this wisdom to future generations. Food sovereignty rejects technologies that undermine, threaten or contaminate these, e.g. genetic engineering.
- 6. Works with Nature:** Food sovereignty uses the contributions of nature in diverse, low external input agroecological production and harvesting methods that maximize the contribution of ecosystems and improve resilience and adaptation, especially in the face of climate change. Food sovereignty seeks to heal the planet so that the planet may heal us; and, rejects methods that harm beneficial ecosystem functions, that depend on energy intensive monocultures and livestock factories, destructive fishing practices and other industrialized production methods, which damage the environment and contribute to global warming.

Source: 2007 Nyéléni Forum for Food Sovereignty, February 23rd – 27th, 2007, Sélingué, Mali
(<http://www.nyeleni2007.org/spip.php?article334>)

Food Sovereignty, Food Security and the Right to Food

Food sovereignty also responds to food security and the Right to Food. While food security proposes that everyone should have a sufficient food supply, it says nothing about where the food comes from, how it is produced, and how this affects those people that most need food. The current definition of food security comes from the 1996 World Food Summit, and states that: “*Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.*” Food security is viewed at an individual level and fails to take into account the multiple factors that determine food accessibility, such as access to water, land, and resources. It also fails to take into account the larger neo-liberal system that creates an environment of food insecurity. Food security as a definition is more of a goal than an all encompassing path, framework, or program to genuine food security²⁰. In his article, “Food Sovereignty: Global Rallying Cry of Farmer Movements”, Peter Rosset clearly articulates the shortcomings of ‘food security’:

Food security means that every child, woman, and man must have the certainty of having enough to eat each day; but the concept says nothing about where that food comes from or how it is produced. Thus Washington is able to argue that importing cheap food from the US is a better way for poor countries to achieve food security than producing it themselves. But massive imports of cheap, subsidized food undercut local farmers, driving them off their land. They swell the ranks of the hungry, and their food security is placed in the hands of the cash economy just as they migrate to urban slums where they cannot find living wage jobs. To achieve *genuine* food security, people in rural areas must have access to productive land and receive prices for their crops that allow them to make a decent living²¹.

The Right to Food is included in the International Covenant on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966 and placed in a strong international context in 1976. Article 11 of the ICSECR “*recognizes the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living...including adequate food*” and “*the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger*”²². For countries that have ratified the ICSECR, the Right to Food is legally binding. Countries are obligated to progressively work towards implementing the Right to Food. People remain responsible “*for doing all they can to realize*

their own right to food,” yet concurrently, governments who have ratified the covenant must also ensure that residents of their country have the means to obtain their right to food²³.

While food sovereignty and the Right to Food promote parallel concepts, they also express distinctly different frameworks. The Right to Food holds the power of international law for the countries that have signed on to the ICSECR. Yet, unlike food sovereignty, the Right to Food is not an economic framework. It requires countries to progressively work towards implementation of the right to food and although it provides suggestions for implementation through the Voluntary Guidelines²⁴ there is not a specific framework to implement the right to food. It focuses predominately on achieving food security for a nation through the “*accountability and participation of the individual in the political process and redress mechanisms*”²⁵. The Right to Food looks towards the obligations of the state and to individuals taking opportunities to implement their rights. Food sovereignty, on the other hand, proposes an economic and political framework. It is based on both a right to food model and on the rights of small scale producers. It calls for food and agriculture to be culturally appropriate and to shift towards ecological practices. It emphasizes the rights of food producers, and the ways in which to ensure that these rights are realized. Food sovereignty proponents see food sovereignty as a pre-condition to achieving the Right to Food. The FAO Right to Food Unit is also examining food sovereignty and its relation to the Right to Food, stating that as a legally binding agreement, the right to food is a more strongly assertable right, yet that the mechanisms of the Right to Food could also be used to forward food sovereignty goals²⁶. Food sovereignty proponents say that it is impossible to realize the right to food without a major change in trade policy. Food security, the right to food, and food sovereignty all address food accessibility and the concept that everyone should have access to sufficient food. Fundamentally, however, food sovereignty proponents believe that food security and realization of the right to food necessitate the rights of producers, equitable access to resources, a shift from neo-liberal agriculture policies, localized food systems, and environmentally sustainable agriculture.

Chapter 2

Context for Food Sovereignty: Trade Liberalization and Industrialization of Agriculture

For the family farmers, peasants, indigenous peoples, forest dwellers, landless people and artisanal fisherfolk of the world, food has always been on their radar. Those who daily work and interact with the land are well aware of the dangers facing our present food system. Through reports, protests, conferences, collaboration with academic and governmental organizations, and through local and national policies they are tirelessly working to make the rest of us aware as well. In an interview with GRAIN, P.V. Satheesh, Director of the Deccan Development Society in Andhra Pradesh, Southern India, spoke about the motivation underlying food sovereignty:

Now for peasant communities, rural communities and indigenous communities, food sovereignty means the right to produce their own food, and not to obtain it from the big agro-giants in the supermarkets. It means asserting their right to their culture. To deny people their food is a political act. That is the way you suppress and subvert cultures, because food is an integral part of a people's culture. So, if you don't eat the food you are used to, and you are fed another kind of food just to fill your belly, it's an insult to your civilization. I come from south Asia. We have a millennial history of producing our own food. And, if the United States, which is only a few centuries old, comes and tells us that we are inefficient in producing food, that they should produce it for us and that we should just produce cash crops, like cotton, tobacco, sugar cane and so on, then they are insulting our whole civilization. And they are defending a false idea of efficiency, for transporting food over thousands of miles is a profoundly inefficient act, if you look at the real costs. If in the past century oil was the tool of neo-colonialism, then in this century food and seeds are its tools. So, considering all these aspects, food sovereignty has become the dominant issue for us today.

- P.V. Satheesh, Director of the Deccan Development Society,
Andhra Pradesh, Southern India²⁷

For decades, policies have encouraged the commoditization of food. This section will explore the various international bodies, trade policies, and agricultural frameworks that have created the heavily industrialized food system prevalent in much of the world today. Many factors surround the push for an alternative. These factors relate back to the way in which food is imported and exported from country to country and the support, or lack thereof, that exists for

small farmers and peasants. This chapter seeks to further explore the multiple factors that have led to food sovereignty as an alternative for food and agriculture policy.

Malnutrition and Hunger

Nine-hundred sixty-three million people in the world are undernourished, an increase of 40 million since last year's estimate²⁸. The majority of these people are food producers²⁹, and those in the Global South spend an average of 60 to 80 percent of their income to put food on the table. It is startling that those who grow the world's food often cannot feed themselves and their families. This "hungry farmer paradox"³⁰, however, is created by a food system that revolves around trade liberalization and corporate control of agriculture. There is little respect for the needs and unique circumstances of agricultural systems and producers.

Periodically the argument will arise that there is simply not enough food to feed the world. This is fundamentally inaccurate. In fact, there are enough grains produced to provide every person with 3,200 calories per day, and enough food to provide each person at least 4.3 pounds of food per day³¹. Over the last 20 years, food production has risen over 2 percent a year, yet the rate of global population growth has decreased to 1.14 percent a year³². What is lacking is the access to food, income, land, and resources³³. The UN General Comment on the Right to Food confirms this, stating, "*the roots of the problem of hunger and malnutrition are not lack of food but lack of access to food*". Although political conflict, war, and natural disasters do affect people's access to food and resources, they are not the underlying causes of malnutrition and hunger. People are poor because of their lack of control over resources and power³⁴. Therefore, it is not enough for a country to merely have enough food to feed its population. It must also address availability and accessibility of food and resources and how this food is produced.

The policies of international entities such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have compromised local food systems and national sovereignty across the globe. This liberalization of food and agricultural policies takes form in the shape of structural adjustment programs, free trade agreements, and privatization and monopolization of agricultural markets.

Trade Policy: Structural Adjustment Programs, Free Trade, and the WTO

Beginning in the 1970s and stretching through the 1980s, the United States and the European Union began to move away from the “economic nationalization” and protectionism that marked their post World War II trade policy. They felt a strain on their markets, and looked to expand to markets in the developing world³⁵. Coupled with this, countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia were facing a 1970s global recession and an assumption of large scale debt.

Due to their financial situation, many of these countries had to borrow additional money to pay off the high interest on their previous loans. They were persuaded to adopt Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs)—loans administered by global financial institutions and attached to a list of requirements that countries must meet. SAPs focused on broad economic change and a devaluing of currency that created a situation where “homemade goods were cheaper for foreigners to buy and foreign produced goods were more expensive to buy at home”³⁶. SAPs marked the shift to a free trade model with tariff reductions and cuts in domestic support programs for farmers. Countries were encouraged to produce based on the concept of competitive advantage. Those countries that were “best” at growing a certain crop were encouraged to do so³⁷ with other food items imported rather than domestically produced. These “‘trade-based food security’ policy packages” marked the beginning of the trend of opening up agricultural markets based on competitive advantage³⁸. In the 1980s, Latin America hosted the first SAPs. Here, rather than increasing competition and improving living conditions, living standards dropped to pre-1960 levels³⁹. Free trade continued to expand. Yet, through the years, it has failed to improve living conditions, and it has failed to facilitate the Right to Food.

Through the late 1980s and 1990s trade liberalization and negotiations progressed with vigor. From 1986 to 1995, a series of trade talks occurred known as the Uruguay Round. These talks resulted in the 1992 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). In 1995, the WTO, accompanied by the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) replaced GATT. The WTO sought to open up markets and expand free trade. The policies of the WTO have been particularly detrimental to peasants and small farmers. Meetings and trade negotiations often exclude those who are most affected by the results. They promote economic growth and tend to ignore vulnerable groups.

Today, free trade agreements generally require national governments to release control of their economies. Regulations are turned over to international bodies such as the WTO⁴⁰. This often leads to requirements that governments cut investment, do away with import quotas and

tariffs, privatize state banks, and abandon subsidies. In the case of agriculture, those who suffer most under these conditions are small-scale farmers. Without subsidies to support agriculture, and with an inflow of imported goods, domestic producers are pushed out of the market, unable to compete with the cheaper imports⁴¹. The classic example of this is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the destruction of small-scale Mexican corn farmers. Instead of focusing on supporting domestic production, countries absorb surplus production from the North, and their own food producers are unable to survive.

A Rallying Cry: Agriculture out of the WTO!

La Via Campesina and other advocates for food sovereignty, continuously demand that food and agriculture be removed from the WTO, NAFTA, and other trade agreements. Agriculture has been the most prominent obstacle in trade negotiations since its incorporation into the WTO through the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA)⁴². Interestingly, until the Uruguay Round, agriculture was outside of GATT in response to demands from the United States that they be allowed to keep protective mechanisms for sugar, dairy, and other agricultural commodities⁴³. Once again, the focus on agriculture stemmed from the demands and interests of the United States and the European Union:

This mutual realization of the needs for rules in the struggle for third country markets is what led the EU and US to press for inclusion of agriculture in the Uruguay Round. Rather than seriously promoting a mechanism to advance free trade, the two superpowers resorted to the rhetoric of free trade to regulate a condition on monopolistic competition, with each seeking advantages at the margins.

– Walden Bello, 2001, “The Iron Cage: The WTO, the Bretton Woods Institutions, and the South”, 23

The AoA requires reduction in domestic support systems and export subsidies. It also requires the gradual reduction of import quotas and implementation of tariffs. Mixed in with these provisions are exceptions and exemptions. For example, direct income supports for farmers were exempt from subsidy cuts. While the US and the EU were able to continue providing direct income subsidies, this compromised the livelihoods of farmers whose countries cannot provide them with the same⁴⁴.

This often also results in the ‘dumping’ of agricultural surplus from wealthier countries to poorer countries in the form of food aid or through free trade agreements and extensive

import/export markets. Dumping refers to the influx of food aid to developing countries as well as subsidized surplus crops sold below the cost of production. These practices do not support local food providers, local production, or local markets, and often include genetically modified organisms which can corrupt local seed varieties and crop diversity⁴⁵. In Mexico, extensive corn imports, including GM varieties, have threatened corn diversity and small farmers. In the case of natural disasters or extreme conflict, food aid may be necessary, but there are better ways to support domestic food supplies. Food sovereignty suggests that instead of imports of surplus food, local food systems would be better supported through the support of small and medium producers. Dumping puts these producers in competition with heavily subsidized markets and destroys their own ability to survive. Windfuhr and Jonsen note that contrary to theories of competitive advantage, *“The OECD reports that farmers in industrialized countries do not have natural comparative advantages, but often acquire them. Their ability to produce more competitively is grounded in their history of support through subsidies, while smallholder farmers in developing countries have often been taxed⁴⁶”*. Food sovereignty does not negate trade of agricultural goods. What it does do is call for a different approach where countries are able to determine the levels of support to provide; where small scale farmers have a say in these policies; where local markets are supported; and where exports and imports support a country’s domestic food supply and domestic producers rather than destroying them. Food sovereignty also calls for countries with surpluses to develop their own policies, supports, and reserves that support their domestic producers without harming producers and markets in other countries. It is also interesting to note that those lobbying for food aid programs are generally not the countries to which food aid is provided. Rather, they represent agribusiness interests. The table below, “Policies guiding the food aid program”, from an exercise by Grassroots International, outlines this directly.

Aid Recipient Categories	Policy Guiding the Program	Lobbyist
International Aid	U.S. Farm Bill: Trade Title: Public Law 480, Title II	Archer Daniels Midland, or other large U.S. commodity producer
Farmers affected by Free Trade	North American Free Trade Act	Cargill
U.S. Food Stamp Recipients and Food Pantry Participants	U.S. Farm Bill: Nutrition and Commodity Titles Tax Reform Law	Kraft or other large corporate food manufacturer
Native American Commodity Food Customers	Federal Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)	Kraft or other large corporate food manufacturer

Source: Grassroots International. 2008. *Food for Thought and Action: A Food Sovereignty Curriculum*

This is not to say either that all subsidies are fundamentally wrong or inappropriate. Food sovereignty states, however, that they should be shaped in a way that supports small and medium

producers. Currently, the majority of direct income subsidies, even in North America and Europe, benefit large industrial agriculture and corporations over small producers and family farmers. This is due to the free market framework – prices are controlled by the market and without price floors large corporations are able to force down the price of commodities. It is here that the Via Campesina and other groups call for the elimination of subsidies. There is space, however, for systems that support credit, market assistance, price regulation, resource access, and other systems of support⁴⁷. Food sovereignty proponents believe that these systems truly support the rights and livelihoods of food producers.

Industrialization of Agriculture

Since the implementation of free trade policies there has concurrently been a shift from smaller, regional food economies to international and transnational food economies greatly influenced by corporate agri-business. Contrary to locally oriented development, agri-business generally does not invest in local, regional, or even national economies⁴⁸. Above all, corporations are concerned about making a profit. Profit driven production leads to the commoditization of agriculture, decreases competition, and increases concentration of farming and agriculture. Peasants and farmers the world over are not able compete. Corporations that control much of agriculture include:

- Chemical seed companies like Monsanto, DuPont, and Syngenta. Together Monsanto and DuPont control approximately 65 percent of the global seed market for maize and 44 percent for soy⁴⁹;
- Grain traders like Cargill, Archer Daniel Midland, and Bunge. These companies control 90 percent of the world's grain trade⁵⁰; and
- Feedlot industries such as Tyson and Smithfield.

The agricultural influence of these corporations has been profound. In fact, Vice-President of Cargill, Dan Amstutz was instrumental in drafting the Uruguay Round's Agreement on Agriculture⁵¹.

Corporate control of agriculture is also enshrined in international frameworks through Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) and the WTO's Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs). IPRs let companies gain monopolies over seeds, knowledge, and technology among other things. This is especially worrisome for farmers, because, as

Windfuhr and Jonsen note, IPRs “*not only prevent the free exchange of these seeds and livestock breeds, but also allow corporations to expropriate farmers’ knowledge of food production*” without benefit to the farmer⁵². Small scale farmers who traditionally exchanged knowledge, seeds, and techniques are undermined when by changing a little component of a seed or a piece of knowledge, companies are able to patent the entire concept. TRIPs exasperates this by requiring countries to patent plant and seed varieties. While this is possible for richer nations, developing nations bear the brunt of patents that take away their sovereignty to resources that may have come from their countries to begin with⁵³.

Environmentally, industrial agriculture, factory farms, and agribusiness are also the greatest contributors to soil degradation, water pollution, and decreasing biodiversity in agriculture⁵⁴. This is another reason that food sovereignty proponents support small scale production and agroecological techniques.

Participation and Recognition

Lack of opportunity for participation in decision making and recognition of farmers and rural needs has also motivated the food sovereignty movement. Rural areas are frequently neglected in international policy making, and policy investment often focuses on industry and urban infrastructure. This greatly undermines the importance of rural communities and farming livelihoods. Small to medium sized producers are frequently excluded from international and national conferences, negotiations, and forums that craft the very policies affecting them so intimately. Their exclusion leads to policies that do not support their interests nor livelihoods. The food sovereignty framework supports these voices. The Via Campesina conferences and conferences of their member organizations, provide farmers with agenda setting and policy formation opportunities. This creates possibilities for policies that are not influenced predominately by the interests of agribusiness.

Similarly, there is substantial research and recognition that family farming and agroecological farming techniques are more productive than mono-cropping and industrial farming^{55 56}. Nevertheless, there remains much support and funding for research that benefits the interests of transnational corporations and industrial agriculture. Further recognition of the validity of these studies, as well as additional research around small scale production and the

interests of rural producers is needed in order to further change the culture of agricultural studies and to provide increased support for food sovereignty related policy.

Responding through Food Sovereignty

Organizations around the world are responding to the neo-liberal framework through calls for food sovereignty. Regardless of the claims of those who support free trade policies, small scale farmers are organizing because they know that these policies are not working for them. In addition to local community based efforts for food sovereignty, groups are organizing at a national level. There are calls for governmental support of food sovereignty in response to the realities of food systems. The following section explores the ways in which groups are bringing food sovereignty to a national level.

Chapter 3

National Efforts Towards Food Sovereignty

“Following numerous discussions within and among its eight regions, the Via Campesina began to focus its work on eight key themes that resonate at the local, national, and global levels: food sovereignty, agrarian reform, genetic resources and biodiversity, human rights, gender and rural development, developing a sustainable peasant agricultural model, migration (urban/rural and international), and farm workers’ rights. The movement recognizes that each of these issues might not be a pre-eminent concern in all locales or for all Via Campesina members. What is important is that all regions of the Via Campesina acknowledge the validity and importance of these issues for peasants around the world and dedicate themselves to supporting struggles around these themes”

– Annette Aurelie Desmarias. 2007. *La Via Campesina: Globalization and the Power of Peasants*

Food sovereignty is a political and economic framework proposed in opposition to neo-liberalism. It involves changes in programs, practices and policies at the local, regional, national, and international levels. None of these efforts occur in a vacuum and all are important for the full realization of the goals of food sovereignty. This section examines the efforts in countries to incorporate food sovereignty goals and principles into national constitutions, laws, and programs.

Objectives for Food Sovereignty Policy

A standardized food sovereignty policy agenda does not exist. Rather, policies revolve around the unique culture and atmosphere of the location in which they are implemented. Pimbert notes that just as food sovereignty recognizes the uniqueness of place, so must policies that support food sovereignty – “[t]hey have to take into account local history and culture as well as the unique social and ecological contexts in which food systems are embedded”⁵⁷. Even so, there remain similarities in the overall objectives of food sovereignty policies. Pimbert notes three overall objectives that food sovereignty policies aim for:

1. **Equity**: securing the rights of people and communities, including their fundamental human right to food; affirming and celebrating cultural diversity; enhancing social and economic benefits; and combating inequalities, such as the ones responsible for poverty, gender discrimination and exclusion.
2. **Sustainability**: seeking human activities and resource use patterns compatible with ecological sustainability.
3. **Direct democracy**: empowering civil society in decision-making, and democratizing government institutions, structures and markets.⁵⁸

These points establish the groundwork for food sovereignty policy. The ways in which these three objectives are realized vary. They do revolve, however, around food sovereignty as defined by La Via Campesina. The 2001 document developed by the People’s Food Sovereignty Coalition, “Our World is Not for Sale: Priority to Peoples’ Food Sovereignty, WTO out of Food and Agriculture”, concludes that governments should “*adopt and implement policies that promote sustainable, family-based production rather than industry-led, high-input and export oriented production*”⁵⁹. The statement also affirms that for comprehensive legislation for food sovereignty governments should adopt measures for⁶⁰:

- **Market policies** that ensure fair prices for farmers; prioritize domestic markets and local food systems; regulate production to prevent surplus; abolish export subsidies; and shift from subsidies that support unsustainable and inequitable agriculture to supporting agrarian reform and sustainable production.
- **Food Safety, Quality, and the Environment** that establish mechanisms and criteria that controls the safety and quality of food, respects the needs of the people, and considers environmental, social, and health standards.
- **Access to Productive Resources** that acknowledge and protect peoples’ rights to access productive resources: land, seeds, water, credit. This also applies to local, traditional resources. Reject privatization of these resources and allow common property rights for communities that depend on “aquatic reserves.” Prohibit patenting and intellectual property rights around knowledge, seeds, and plant genetic resources.
- **Production and Consumption** that support “local food economies” through local production, processing, and distribution
- **Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)** that ban GMOs in: seeds, crops, food, and animal feed; food aid; and agribusiness (specifically Monsanto, Syngenta, Aventis/Bayer and DuPont bringing GMOs into countries and local food systems). Promote alternative, organic, sustainable agriculture based in local knowledge.
- **Transparency of Information and Corporate Accountability** that label for origin and content; require companies to ensure transparency/accountability to human rights and environmental standards and establish anti-trust laws against industrial monopolies.
- **Specific Protection of Coastal Communities Dependent on Marine and Inland Fish**

When and Where Food Sovereignty Has Been Included

Box 3.1: Timeline for National Inclusion of Food Sovereignty

- 1999 – **Venezuela** approves by popular referendum the Bolivarian Constitution of Venezuela. Article 305, Article 306, and Article 307 address portions of the food sovereignty framework.
- 2001 – **Venezuela**'s Law of the Land addresses agrarian reform
- 2004 – **Senegal**'s National Assembly passes the LOASP, inclusion of food sovereignty principles are influenced by peasant organization, CNCR
- 2006 – The National Assembly of **Mali** approves the Law on Agricultural Orientation (LAO). This lays the groundwork for future implementation of food sovereignty framework in Mali.
- 2007 January 15 – **Nepal** approves the interim constitution which recognizes food sovereignty as a right of the Nepalese people to be implemented by the next administration.
- 2008 July – **Venezuela** enacts legislation to further support food sovereignty: the Law of Food Security and Food Sovereignty; the Law for Integrated Agricultural Health; the Law for the Development of the Popular Economy; the Law for the Promotion and Development of Small and Medium Industry and Units of Social Production.
- 2008 September 28 – **Ecuador** approves a new constitution recognizing food sovereignty.
- 2009 January 25 – **Bolivia**'s newly approved constitution recognizes the rights of indigenous peoples as well as rights to food sovereignty.
- 2009 February 17 – **Ecuador**'s Food Sovereignty Regime approves the Organic Law on Food Sovereignty.

In the past ten years, countries have begun incorporating food sovereignty into their constitutions and national legislation. In general, this inclusion results from dual efforts at the local and national levels. The inclusion of food sovereignty constitutionally is an important step forward. Countries that have shown the most success and actual implementation of food sovereignty, however, are those that have followed up with legislation that puts food sovereignty into action through concrete programs, support for small scale producers, and agroecological efforts. In all cases, food sovereignty does not mean food self-sufficiency. Rather, it takes into account the *way* in which food is grown, the consideration of *cultural* values, the *support* and *rights* of small scale producers, the protection of *indigenous knowledge and resources*, *equitable access* to land and productive resources, the creation and support of *localized* markets, and the *democratic participation* of the people.

Based on the 2008 declaration, *Declaration of Maputo: V International Conference of La Via Campesina* by the Via Campesina, food sovereignty language has been adopted in the

national legislation and/or constitutions of seven nations: Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Nepal, Mali, Nicaragua and Senegal⁶¹. While social movements in other countries are working to develop national level food sovereignty policy, this section primarily focuses on the efforts of those countries that have already taken that approach⁶². Also included in this report is an overview of organizations working on food sovereignty frameworks in the United States and Canada to identify how food sovereignty resonates with food advocate groups in those countries as well.

Of the seven countries some have been more successful in working towards the implementation of food sovereignty than others. Box 3.1 lays out a brief timeline of these efforts. Venezuela was the first country to develop policies for food sovereignty goals at a national level. In 2004 farmers' organizations in Senegal influenced the adoption of food sovereignty principles as part of the *Loi d'Orientation Agro-Silvo Pastorale* (LOASP). In 2006 Mali developed their first agricultural policy, and food sovereignty was the key principle. In 2007, Nepal included food sovereignty in their 2007 interim constitution. Ecuador incorporated food sovereignty into their new 2008 constitution and has continued to develop legislation and discussion around food sovereignty. Bolivia also included food sovereignty in the constitution in January 2009.

The following charts summarize national level food sovereignty efforts in Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Nepal, Mali, Nicaragua and Senegal. A more detailed discussion is provided for Venezuela, Mali, Ecuador, and Bolivia due to the more developed frameworks in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Mali and due to Bolivia's recent constitutional inclusion of food sovereignty. The efforts of these seven countries demonstrate a real desire for alternatives to the neo-liberal framework that has driven agriculture policy.

	Venezuela	Mali	Bolivia	Ecuador
Roots of food sovereignty movement	Bolivarian Revolution, Hugo Chavez's regime and farmers' organizations and peoples' movements	Work of farmers' organization, CNOP, in collaboration with supportive NGOs. Resulted from series of discussions, debates, and local, regional, and national forums.	Efforts of farmers' and indigenous organizations in Bolivia influenced the inclusion of food sovereignty. President Evo Morales is also sympathetic to food sovereignty and Via Campesina.	Peasant organizations: FENOCIN, FENACLE, CNC-Eloy Alfaro. Formation of the coalition Mesa Agraria for a stronger front in proposing food sovereignty language to the Ecuadorian government.
Incorporation into national laws/constitutions.	-1999 Bolivarian constitution: Articles 305, 306 and 307 -Law of the Land, 2001 -Law on Food Security and Food Sovereignty, 2008 -Law on Integrated Agricultural Health, 2008	Food sovereignty is the key principle of the Loi d'Orientation Agricole (LAO) which was passed in 2006.	Included in Article 16, Article 310, and Article 404 of the 2009 constitution.	Incorporated into the 2008 constitution through Title VI, Title VII, and Article 281.
Implementation	Has developed extensive programs for implementation including: cooperatives, subsidized food distribution (Mecal and PDVAL), communal councils, land reform, and agroecology institutes and research. Still faces some challenges in implementation, but seems committed to addressing these obstacles.	The High Commission of Agriculture leads the process of implementation and development of the LAO. The technical secretariat is in charge of implementation of the law and leads reports on its progress. Currently the LAO is in the process of being implemented through various laws.	Food sovereignty placed in the constitution in 2009 – yet to be seen where the country will go with implementation.	Ecuador is in the process of creating legislation to support food sovereignty and work towards its implementation. Through this process farmers' organizations have been actively involved with their input. Currently working on the Organic Law on the Food Sovereignty Regime and the individual laws that will follow.

	Nepal	Nicaragua	Senegal
Roots of food sovereignty movement	Efforts of All Nepal Peasants Association ⁶⁶ and nationwide campaign to incorporate food sovereignty as a fundamental right of the Nepalese people	In addition to Via Campesina, there are a variety of farmers' organizations and NGOs that support food sovereignty in Nicaragua. Under the umbrella of The Agrarian and Forestry Desk (MAF), two national networks support a food sovereignty agenda: Agrarian and Forestry Coordination (CAPFONIC) and the Agricultural Network ⁶³ .	Food sovereignty in Senegal is largely supported by the farmers' organization Conseil National de Concertation et de Coopération des Ruraux (CNCR) and West African coalitions for food and seed sovereignty.
Incorporation into national laws/constitutions	Incorporated into the 2007 interim constitution of Nepal, through Article 18 and Article 33. Article 18 states: "every citizen shall have the right to food sovereignty according to the provision made by the law" ⁶⁷ . The interim constitution also includes land reform, equality and increasing democratic participation of women/minority groups.	Nicaragua has several national food programs related to food sovereignty and the right to food. These include: Zero Hunger, Zero Usury, and Food Sovereignty and Security for Life ⁶⁴ .	Senegal's 2004 <i>Loi d'Orientation Agro-Silvo Pastorale</i> (LOASP) incorporated some food sovereignty principles.
Implementation	Nepal is in political transition and the new Constituent Assembly is in the process of drafting a new constitution. The government currently does not possess the capacity to implement food sovereignty principles. Though nationally the language is there, Nepal currently lacks the legislation and strategies to implement such principles ⁶⁸ .	The FAO has been funding and working with Nicaragua's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to examine the framework of a series of bills and policies for "la Política Sectorial de Seguridad y Soberanía Alimentaria Nutricional" (POLSSAN). In February 2009, the government led a series of workshops and consultations regarding the policy ⁶⁵ .	Senegal does not yet have a strategy to implement the LOASP.

Chapter 4

Case Studies

Venezuela, Mali, Ecuador, and Bolivia have unique approaches to food sovereignty at the national level. Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia have included food sovereignty in their constitutions while Mali has an agricultural orientation law. The three countries in South America have all gone through shifts in presidential power as well as constitutional reforms which have led to the establishment of a legal framework for food sovereignty. Mali's LAO is predominately due to the perseverance of producer organizations and continued organization against GMOs in Western Africa. Each case study presents an overview of national goals and efforts for food sovereignty. Each country has also been greatly influenced by the organization of their respective producer organizations.

The final section on the United States and Canada presents an overview of some of the food sovereignty work that U.S. and Canadian organizations are pursuing. The work of the National Family Farm Coalition, Canada's National Farmers Union, the Institute for Food and Development Policy/Food First, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), Grassroots International, and Food Secure Canada/Sécurité Alimentaire Canada demonstrate that food sovereignty can also resonate in the United States and Canada.

4.1 Venezuela

In Venezuela, food sovereignty is rooted in historical and political context. In the early 19th century, Venezuela was a predominately agricultural country, with 70 percent of the population living in rural areas⁶⁹. However, this changed with a series of inequitable land appropriations and a shift to the exploitation of oil. By 1935 Venezuela had become the largest exporter of oil in the world, while its agricultural sector had drastically decreased⁷⁰. Referred to as 'Dutch Disease'— cheap imports flooded the market pushing out domestic goods, and the increase of foreign currency caused inflation. By 1960, the number of people living in rural areas had decreased to 35 percent and by 1990 it was only 12 percent. Venezuela was a net importer of agricultural goods, with a mere 6 percent of GDP coming from agriculture⁷¹.

As such, land reform and agricultural policy were key components of the 1999 Bolivarian Revolution, following the election of Hugo Chavez in 1998. The urbanization, unequal land distribution, lack of jobs, and dwindling social support in Venezuela led to extreme poverty for

42.5 percent of the population. In addition, Venezuela now imported 70 percent of its food⁷². Agriculture, along with both the rural and urban populations, were in extremely vulnerable positions. The Bolivarian Revolution looked towards food sovereignty as a way to reform agriculture and food policy.

Food sovereignty in Venezuela is closely tied to the Bolivarian Revolution and the principles it embodies. Christina Schiavoni of World Hunger Year notes four principles of the Bolivarian Revolution that are crucial to food sovereignty in Venezuela: “Bolivarianism, Socialism of the 21st Century, Endogenous Development, and Participatory Democracy”⁷³. As a political and economic framework, food sovereignty is never a standalone policy goal. It is tied to other movements, policies and overall social change. Nevertheless, cases like Venezuela can provide model programs for other countries. They provide examples of ways that countries are embracing food sovereignty and making it work⁷⁴.

In 1999, Venezuela established a basis for food sovereignty. A key component of the Bolivarian revolution, the constitution contains several articles related to food sovereignty. Article 305 specifically focuses on sustainable agriculture, internal production, and technical and financial support as means of ensuring Venezuelan food security:

Article 305: The State shall promote sustainable agriculture as the strategic basis for overall rural development, and consequently shall guarantee the population a secure food supply, defined as the sufficient and stable availability of food within the national sphere and timely and uninterrupted access to the same for consumers. A secure food supply must be achieved by developing and prioritizing internal agricultural and livestock production, understood as production deriving from the activities of agriculture, livestock, fishing and aquiculture. Food production is in the national interest and is fundamental to the economic and social development of the Nation. To this end, the State shall promulgate such financial, commercial, technological transfer, land tenancy, infrastructure, manpower training and other measures as may be necessary to achieve strategic levels of self-sufficiency. In addition, it shall promote actions in the national and international economic context to compensate for the disadvantages inherent to agricultural activity.

The State shall protect the settlement and communities of non-industrialized fishermen, as well as their fishing banks in continental waters and those close to the coastline, as defined by law⁷⁵.

Article 306 continues laying a foundation for food sovereignty by focusing on rural development, and recognizing the importance of supporting rural producers for a sustainable food system:

Article 306: The State shall promote conditions for overall rural development, for the purpose of generating employment and ensuring the rural population an adequate level of well-being, as well as their inclusion in national development. It shall likewise promote agricultural activity and optimum land use by providing infrastructure projects, supplies, loans, training services and technical assistance⁷⁶.

Finally, Article 307 emphasizes the necessity of land reform. This article laid the groundwork for Venezuela's 2001, Law of the Land⁷⁷.

Article 307: The predominance of large land estates [*latifundos*] is contrary to the interests of society. Appropriate tax law provisions shall be enacted to tax fallow lands and establish the necessary measures to transform them into productive economic units, likewise recovering arable land. Farmers and other agricultural producers are entitled to own land, in the cases and forms specified under the pertinent law. The State shall protect and promote associative and private forms of property in such manner as to guarantee agricultural production. The State shall see to the sustainable ordering of arable land to guarantee its food-producing potential.

Although the term “food sovereignty” is not specifically stated, these three constitutional articles have led to further adoption of food sovereignty driven policies and programs. The Bolivarian Constitution is more than a just a legal framework. It is also a sets a guidelines for future policies and focuses. As Ronald Denis, 1980s Venezuelan grassroots organizer and former vice-minister of Planning and Development in the Chávez government, notes:

[The constitution] is simultaneously a political program and a framework for the future of the process. In this sense, the constitution is not a dead letter. In it many values and principles are reflected. And it is a deeply libertarian and egalitarian constitution.... It reflects the demands and the objectives of the popular movements⁷⁸.

With the respect to the constitution, food sovereignty has been driven by the efforts of communities and campesino [small-scale farmer] organizations along with governmental support and promotion.

Land Reform

Access to land is a major obstacle for small-scale farmers the world over, and Venezuela is no exception. Land is densely consolidated in the hands of the few large landowners. These large landholdings are referred to as *latifundos*, and according to 1997 census data, 5 percent of

the largest landowners control 75 percent of the land, while 75 percent of the smallest landowners control 6 percent of the land⁷⁹. The history of land appropriation and concentration has necessitated reform in order recognize the rights of small farmers and to increase their ability to produce food.

Venezuela's land reform law, the Law of the Land, was passed in November 2001 and came into affect in December 2002. The law states that land should be used for productive purposes. The government can expropriate and redistribute land if it is over a certain size and is unproductive, but must compensate landowners for the market value of their land⁸⁰. Venezuela also established three institutions to carry out land reform⁸¹: the National Land Institute to oversee redistribution; the National Rural Development Institute for technical assistance and infrastructure; and the Venezuelan Agricultural Corporation for distribution and marketing of agricultural products⁸². These institutions are important for ensuring the success of land reform. Land reform is a contentious issue, although the law stipulates that "only high-quality idle agricultural land of over 100 hectares or lower quality idle agricultural land of over 5,000 hectares can be expropriated"⁸³. Even so, land reform in Venezuela has been far from easy and much opposition and violence has erupted. Large landowners hire assassins to crack down on attempts at land reform, especially in areas where poorer campesinos are attempting to form cooperatives or claim idle land. The murder of small-farmer rights organizer, Nelson Lopez, in February 2009, marked the 213th campesino to be killed in retaliation to the re-distribution of *latifundos*⁸⁴. Two weeks later on March 9, 2009 another land reform activist, Mauricio Sanchez, was also murdered. Farmer rights organizations and the landed elite are greatly at odds in efforts for land reform – organizations such as the Ezequiel Zamora National Farmers Front call for land reform, while the private business association, Fedecamaras, strongly opposes it⁸⁵. There has been a mixture of governmental support for these efforts and ambivalence at the murders of land reform activists⁸⁶. In some cases governmental representatives have taken a stand against the violence, while in others police have stood by and watched it occur. This ambivalence demonstrates the still present tension between land reform efforts and some government officials. Coupled with these obstacles, there are also challenges around inaccurate land registry, corruption, and determination of whether land becomes productive⁸⁷. Land reform continues to be a struggle and necessity for food sovereignty.

Successfully re-distributed land – 3 million hectares by 2005 – often becomes the basis

for cooperatives⁸⁸. Cooperatives are a component of the “social economy” and are predominately overseen by Sunacoop (the National Superintendancy of Cooperatives). Brisas del Masparro⁸⁹, Pele el Ojo⁹⁰, and Mocaquetoes⁹¹ are only three of the approximately 30,000 agricultural cooperatives that have formed from reclaimed land in Venezuela. Cooperatives, or “socialist productive units,” allow people to work together, grow their own food, and work as a community to productively use the land for the benefit of many. Not all cooperatives are successful or productive which is a challenge for the cooperative model. Nevertheless, the cooperative framework allows for reclaimed land to become productive and for people to work together in small-scale farming to produce food for themselves and their communities. The cooperative model is also part of a process of fostering “a political culture of participatory democracy”⁹². They also allow for exchange of knowledge, growing techniques, increased employment, and popular education. Cooperatives have also allowed women to gain greater control over their livelihoods and land⁹³. Overall, successful cooperatives are an outlet for food sovereignty and provide both a voice and space for sustainable food and farming.

A Grassroots Voice for Food Sovereignty

The principles of Bolivarianism, socialism, endogenous development, and participatory democracy encourage grassroots involvement in the development of Venezuela’s food sovereignty framework. Food sovereignty relies on the expansion of localized food systems where the involvement of local communities is vital. Along with cooperatives, Venezuela’s communal councils engage the grassroots in food sovereignty.

In Venezuela, communal (or community) councils facilitate the participation, presence, and voice of the people. Communal councils are authorized under Article 184 of the constitution and fully established through the Communal Council Law of 2006. They consist of 200 to 400 families in urban areas, 20 families in rural areas, and 10 families indigenous areas. All final decisions are made by the ‘citizen’s assembly’ (total voting age residents in the community – over 15 years old) and 20 percent of voting population must be present for a decision to be valid. Each community elects a local community spokesperson, and all communal councils are able to receive funding from the government for projects and needs determined by the community⁹⁴. As of January 2009, there were around 25,000 community councils across the country⁹⁵. Communal councils have continued to expand and develop. Now when new laws, such as those related to

food policy, are drafted, they incorporate the power and rights of communal councils in their scope⁹⁶. In this way, Venezuela is striving towards participatory democracy.

How does this play into food sovereignty? With a strong community voice and presence, people do not need to rely solely on the initiative and programs of the government. Rather, they have the right to articulate their needs and determine their own solutions. They are able to develop their own initiatives, create their own budgets, and oversee local projects. In doing so communal councils are able to prioritize projects that are essential to them. Christina Schiavoni of World Hunger Year, relates an example of communal councils developing their own projects to assert food sovereignty:

There are plenty of policies coming from the national government, going through to the community councils, but there are also things that the national government might not have thought of where community councils are addressing their own needs. For instance we drove this one place and I saw that there was a community butcher shop. I stopped and asked, is that some national initiative? And they said no. This is a community where they identified that they didn't have a means to be process and sell their livestock, and so the community council instituted this on their own.⁹⁷

In addition to providing an outlet for community-driven programs and initiatives, soon community councils will also keep the government and private enterprises in check. Venezuela has faced issues of food hoarding and food shortages. Now, communal councils can also monitor the activities in their community, and effectively 'paralyze' any illegal activity until the national government intervenes⁹⁸. This dual system of national government and communal council provides for an outlet to keep the voice of the grassroots engaged and heard.

Providing Support

Venezuela has also been addressing access to resources and credit to support small-scale campesinos. FONDA (the Socialist Agrarian Development Fund) along with the agricultural bank are enabling farmers to make decisions and gain greater control over their production. Laws for public and private banks require that banks provide credit to farmers at a reasonable interest rate. There are also funds and an agricultural bank specifically to provide low-interest and no interest credit to farmers. From 1999 to 2008, agricultural credit distributed by private and public

institutions has increased from \$164 million to \$7.6 billion⁹⁹. Communal councils are able to determine when credit is needed and request it.

Support for small scale farmers is also addressed through inputs, equipment, training and technical assistance. The program, *Campo Adentro* (into the countryside) facilitates *campesino a campesino* (farmer to farmer) exchange through an extension program with 2000 Cuban agronomists, skilled in organic agriculture and agroecology. It also provides technical assistance and inputs¹⁰⁰. Additional missions for services – housing, sanitation, food access, education, medical care, child care, phone and internet access – also assist in providing safety nets for rural and indigenous populations¹⁰¹. These support systems are aimed at addressing the needs of small scale farmers.

Growing with Nature

Even at a national level Venezuela is promoting agriculture that works with nature. In 2004, Chavez declared a moratorium on genetically modified or transgenic crops. Chavez cancelled a contract with Monsanto, ending a 500,000 acre transgenic soybean project, calling the project a violation of food sovereignty along with the rights of farmers and farm workers¹⁰². Farmer initiatives for agroecology practices are supported by credit as well as laboratories that support and study ecological farming and alternatives to genetically modified crops. Through partnership and cooperation, Venezuela, Brazil's Landless Workers Movement (MST), and the Via Campesina created the International Agroecology Latin American Paulo Freire Institute, an agroecological institute in Barinas, Venezuela¹⁰³. This institute teaches agroecological techniques to an international selection of farmers. Institutions like this can validate and encourage small scale, agroecological farming as an important vocation; this is important for Venezuelan youth. Previously youth were encouraged to leave farming for jobs in the city. Now, however, young campesinos have the option of higher education and degrees in agriculture. They have opportunities to farm on their own or to find work in government ministries¹⁰⁴. Not only do agroecological institutions promote environmentally sound farming, they create a foundation for young farmers.

There remain contradictions and tensions around the direction and shape the agricultural sector should go; should it focus primarily on self-sufficiency or does it need to also address the way food is grown? The 2008 Law for Integrated Agricultural Health demonstrates a step in the

right direction as it states that agroecology is the basis for sustainable agriculture. Still, the tension around the agricultural production model and the promotion of agroecology demonstrates that social movements need to continue to be involved even in the context of a relatively receptive government¹⁰⁵.

Local Markets

Food sovereignty in Venezuela also means supporting markets for farmers and consumers – addressing market access for farmers and healthy food access for consumers. There are several outlets for domestically grown food and staple crops: mercados populares, Mercal, PDVAL, and casas de alimentación (food houses).

The Mercal network emerged from anti-Chavez oil strikes in 2002. These strikes and the food shortages and distribution meltdown that accompanied them inspired the State to gain greater control of the food system¹⁰⁶. Mercal consists of government subsidized supermarkets that provide basic food, such as beans, bread, milk, vegetables, and other products, at discounts up to 50 percent. Through support of local producers, Mercal is able to lower its prices and play a role in the eradication of poverty and malnutrition in Venezuela as well. PDVAL, established in 2008, works with Mercal to distribute subsidized food and ensure food security for Venezuelan communities. Mercal and PDVAL face obstacles with food hoarding and speculation, and it has proven important for community councils to regulate their actions and report back to the government. PDVAL was partially established as a response to these challenges and looks to regulate food distribution, production, and storage¹⁰⁷. Communal councils will also soon be set to regulate Mercal and PDVAL through ‘nutrition committees’ whose duties will be monitoring food distribution and local production. Therefore, although Venezuela faces challenges, there are also efforts to address them, demonstrating a true commitment to food sovereignty.

In urban areas, large open air markets, MegaMercals, sell staple foods and fresh foods to consumers in the city. Currently, due to irregular schedules, MegaMercals lack stability¹⁰⁸. Ideally, MegaMercals could provide an important connection between urban and rural populations. Through increased governmental support and community oversight, MegaMercals have the potential to benefit food access for urban populations and markets for rural populations¹⁰⁹.

In addition to the work of community councils, *casas de alimentación* work at the community level to support and strengthen local agriculture. *Casas de alimentación*, or food houses, are grassroots-government partnerships supporting local food and agriculture along with providing a place for community gathering and empowerment. They are similar to U.S. soup kitchens in that they provide a place for people to get a free meal, yet unlike most food banks *casas de alimentación* source food from local cooperatives. This supports and strengthens local food and agriculture. The houses are run out of the homes of community members with government support for equipment and food. There are currently 6,075 *casas de alimentación* in Venezuela, serving approximately 900,000 people¹¹⁰.

Although these programs continue to face challenges and obstacles, they have been effective in lowering malnutrition in Venezuela – in 1999 1 in 5 Venezuelan children died from malnutrition, while in 2009 the Venezuelan National Nutritional Institute estimates that 98 percent of the population eats three meals per day¹¹¹. In February 2009, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN declared Venezuela in a good position to address any future food crises.

Private and Public Production

Nationalization of production, banks, markets, and services has been a significant component of the Bolivarian Revolution and twenty-first century socialism of Venezuela. Nevertheless, cooperation and collaboration between the private and public sectors remains important as well. Reports from Venezuela cite a mixture of cooperation and tension between private and public sectors. For example, Venezuela is now self-sufficient in pork production, an important food for Venezuelans. This achievement relied on collaboration between the national government and the private sector. It would not have been possible if the public sector was the sole contributor to pork production¹¹². Even so, in 2007 meat production underwent increased regulation¹¹³ in relation to the idea that food must be accountable to the interests of the people. There are laws that protect the private sector, but overall the private sector is held accountable to the needs of the people of Venezuela. For instance, the equipment and the land may belong to the corporation, however the concept of production – that the plant or company should be producing food for the people – that is a socially owned concept. There are then a set of legal means the government can take to ensure that companies are producing food that is available to people¹¹⁴.

In February 2009, President Chavez ordered the takeover of two Empresas Polar¹¹⁵ rice-processing plants as well as a rice-processing plant owned by Cargill. The expropriation occurred because the corporations did not comply with the government production regulations. These regulations set price controls to protect against inflation and rising food prices – for companies that produce basic food products, 70 to 95 percent of their production must be regulated by price controls¹¹⁶. Although the government has been criticized by the private sector, according to the Agriculture and Land Ministry rice production in Venezuela has increased by 94 percent since 1999¹¹⁷. This is an example of the idea that food production must be accountable to the people. Even though the corporations themselves do not belong to the people of Venezuela, the production model does and therefore must be accountable to their interests. According to food sovereignty related policies, the private sector and the public sector can work together, but both sectors must be committed to producing food for people.

Moving Forward

Venezuela faces a variety challenges in food sovereignty policies and programs. Obstacles range from class conflicts and violence in land reform to food hoarding and speculation in its food distribution networks to lack of market access for all areas of the country. Even with these challenges, Venezuela is making a concerted effort to address challenges and move its goals for food sovereignty forward. The 2009 establishment of local production plants have served to address problems along the food chain by overseeing production, processing, and distribution of food¹¹⁸; the government, farmers, and researchers are collaborating to establish a National Agroecology Plan for Venezuela¹¹⁹; and policies are giving communal councils a greater voice for their own needs. Overall, in the past ten years actors in Venezuela have worked diligently towards their goals for food sovereignty.

4.2 Mali

In Mali, over 80 percent of the population lives in rural areas and over 97 percent are small-scale farmers. Understandably, farmers' organizations argue that food and agricultural policies should support the majority of the population. Mali's agricultural policy of 2006 was the result of a long process in which farmers' organizations lead the process and were instrumental in putting the law into place. *Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes* (CNOP), a leading Malian farmers' organization, was responsible for facilitating local, regional, and national forums and discussions. They were then responsible for drafting the *Loi d'Orientation Agricole* (LAO). This agricultural orientation law was Mali's first concrete agricultural policy in eight years¹²⁰. The LAO defines and includes commitments around food sovereignty, the family farming system, payments, calamity farming, and insurance for family farmers.

Roots of Food Sovereignty in Mali

In a *GRAIN* interview, Mamadou Goita, a social economist and the executive director of the Institute for Research and the Promotion of Alternatives in Development (IPAR) in Mali, notes that although agriculture policy has not always supported small scale famers, it is increasingly influenced by these organizations:

It's a process and we have a dialogue. Sometimes the government does what we want but at other times it refuses. If the government behaves wrongly, we denounce it. But if the government behaves well, we support it. Little by little the government is beginning to understand that it is important to listen to what we are saying. In this sense our democratic process is a success. It's not enough, for the process has to be strengthened, but at least we have made progress. Our strong card is to tell the government that it cannot conduct a successful agricultural policy without involving farmers.¹²¹

The LAO, especially the inclusion of food sovereignty, is the result of dialogue, public forums, discussion with the government, and diligence from farmers' organizations. CNOP – whose main objective is to ensure that Malian rural organizations are able to contribute to a clear definition of agriculture that is central to the concerns and needs of family farmers – was instrumental to the development of the LAO through dialogue and debate in 2005. Rural peasants, including women, organized and participated in dialogues and debates at the regional

and national levels. In these debates and discussions, CNOP raised specific points to include in the coming law. These included agriculture centered around family farming, food grown for the well-being of Malians, the ability to ensure food safety, and a role in the national economy. In September 2005, there were a series of workshops in order to finalize the draft of the law. Although the LAO is not yet fully implemented in Mali, it does in fact echo “*les aspirations profondes du monde rural*”—the profound aspirations of the rural world¹²². Mamadou Goita describes the process of drafting the proposal, and ensuring that it was passed in its entirety:

People debated everything at a grass roots level. All the ideas that came out of the debate were brought to regional level....And then the issues were taken to national level. There they were debated with other groups in civil society. Then we prepared the first draft of the new law¹²³ and a memorandum for farmers. We put in this memorandum the key things that we wanted to defend in law, and that is how the issue of food sovereignty was raised. It was decided that food sovereignty would be the key principle of our agricultural policy....We gave the document we had prepared to the government but we didn't end the process there. We had allies in the National Assembly, who monitored what was happening. And, in fact, that government did not present to the Assembly the document we had given them. They had taken out some things and put in others. Some deputies came to the CNOP and asked for original document and checked it against the Bill the government had presented, which we called the “genetically modified” copy of our document. In three days they found more than 300 alterations. They restored the original version and it was this document that was debated in the assembly. When the bill was put to the vote in mid-2006, over 100 farmers’ representatives from different regions went to the assembly, and the Bill was approved. Now we are working on the implementation of the new law¹²⁴.

The involvement of CNOP and small farmers in Mali was essential to the drafting of the LAO. CNOP was able to learn from the experience of farmers’ organizations in Senegal and their 2004 *Loi d’Orientation Agro-Silvo Pastorale* (LOASP). Both laws make reference to food sovereignty and food security. In Senegal, however, the farmers’ organization CNCR was given an existing draft law to analyze, while in Mali the CNOP was able to draft their own law from scratch. This resulted in a more favorable law for family farming¹²⁵. Overall, CNOP was able to learn from the experience of farmers’ organizations and legislation in Senegal. This emphasizes the importance of learning from the experiences and models of other countries.

Loi d'Orientation Agricole (LAO)

Among other things, Mali's Law on Agricultural Orientation¹²⁶ (LAO) includes the Right to Food, mention of social equity among men and women, accountability, food security and food sovereignty, and access to land and resources. Article 1 of the LAO defines a commitment to establishing food sovereignty:

The policy of agricultural development in Mali aims to promote sustainable agriculture, modern and competitive based, focus on family farming recognized, secure, through the enhancement of the maximum potential agro-ecological and agricultural know-how of the country and creating an environment conducive to the development of a structured agricultural sector. It aims to ensure food sovereignty and become the engine of the national economy in order to ensure the well-being.

The LAO also addresses access to land and natural resources, taking into account equality between men and women in rural and urban sectors. There are several articles that address *equitable* access to land:

- Article 8: agricultural development policy ensures promotion of women/men in the agriculture sector, with equity between rural and urban
- Article 24: Focuses on facilitating access to land for women and other marginalized populations.
- Article 46: Incorporates youth in agriculture

Title IV addresses access to land and secure tenure, and “*Article 75 establishes four key strands to land policy: (i) secure tenure of farm and farmers; (ii) promotion of public and private investment; (iii) equitable access to land resources; and (iv) their sustainable management*”¹²⁷.

Insecure land tenure is a prominent issue in Mali and especially affects poor and marginalized communities¹²⁸. Similarly, the LAO also addresses access to water and natural resources, focusing on the sustainability of ecosystems as well as securing water management for agricultural production through joint efforts of local government and farmers' organizations. These areas are targeted due to inequitable access to production and resources.

Implementation¹²⁹

Peoples' organizations and governmental sectors are currently working towards implementation of the LAO. The High Commissioner of Agriculture leads the process of

implementation and development of the LAO. The commission consists of the president of Mali, the Prime Minister, and a variety of other actors including farmer representatives and the minister of agriculture. Another important player in implementation of the LAO is the technical secretariat. The technical secretariat is in charge of the implementation of the law, especially leading reports on its implementation and progress.

There is a timeline for implementation and development of new written texts. These texts will include 35 policy documents, 5 legal texts, 60 decrees and other texts. They will also update the preexisting regulatory texts¹³⁰. A report by the FAO's Right to Food Unit emphasizes that due to conflicting interests in Mali strong political will is needed to actually implement the LAO and its ambitious proposals¹³¹. Farmers' organizations, in collaboration with international researchers, are organizing and making themselves heard in order to favorably influence political outcomes along these lines.

Currently the LAO is in the process of being implemented, through various laws and policies. In order to write specific policies, there have been series of consultations and national debates. Several of the written policies that are currently being drafted, debated, and discussed include: a land policy; a seed policy (including animal and plant seeds); and a policy on how people will benefit from calamity farming. Many different players are involved in writing these policies and the majority are still in the drafting process. The policies are supported by food and farming studies that have been conducted in Mali by farmers' organizations and their supporters.

Farmer organizations and their NGO supporters, such as the IRPAD, are working hard to make sure that communities understand the implications of the LAO and the subsequent policies that will affect them. This information process with communities strives for communities to understand the law, its implications, and how to implement it in their own settings. In addition to meetings and workshops for feedback, implementation, and further drafting additional laws, the LAO has been drafted into local languages and dialects. Even with the translation, policies can be confusing and dense. Groups are working to remedy this by going into communities and explaining the law. Through this approach, communities come to understand how they can implement portions of the LAO in their communities and how agricultural laws affect them. Thematic workshops and partnerships between the High Commission, the technical secretariat, and farmers allow people to understand the law and for government to gain feedback from farmer communities.

Implementation also faces obstacles and challenges. Obstacles range from small farmers' lack of political power to the increasingly persistent power of transnational corporations to decades of detrimental free trade agreements. Political relations with the United States and the European Union also affect agricultural policy for small farmers, since, as Corrina Steward of Grassroots International notes, “[s]upporting their livelihood needs would require forfeiting favorable political-economic relationships with the EU and US. To its credit, Mali is attempting to please both constituencies by working with CNOP and negotiating with internal organizations for more protective programs for family farmers.”¹³² Nevertheless, organizations such as CNOP, along with small-scale producers, and their supporters are organizing to fight against the forces that threaten their food sovereignty.

Additional Challenges to Food Sovereignty in West Africa

Recently, CNOP has been at the forefront of a movement opposing the privatization of seeds and knowledge. In December 2008, CNOP, IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development), and BEDE (Biodiversité Echange et Diffusion d'Expériences) released a publication, “Peasant seeds, the foundation of food sovereignty in Africa,” expressing the importance of protecting seeds from privatization and biotechnology. This is important in articulating the value of seed sovereignty and locally controlled food systems, as well as promoting a voice for farmers both regionally and nationally. In a press release announcing the release of this publication, Ibrahima Coulibaly, President of the CNOP, emphasized that, “*Seeds and land remain an inalienable part of family farming*”. The privatization of seeds by transnational corporations and the bio-tech industry directly undermine Mali's Law on Agricultural Orientation and commitment to food sovereignty¹³³. As one of the poorest countries in the world, and home to a majority of rural farmers, it is important that resources are protected and rights are granted, not undermined by actions such as dumping of food aid and the increased investment for fertilizers and the privatization of seeds. Although implementation of the LAO has yet to fully occur, the diligence among peasant organizations and their partners is ensuring that a quest for food sovereignty remains alive and that the government remains accountable to their policies.

Food sovereignty efforts in West Africa also make an important point regarding international aid and NGOs. Since the 2008 food crisis politicians, agribusiness, and

international foundations have been discussing the introduction of genetically engineered seeds and crops to Africa. Prominent players for GE crops in Africa include the Yara Foundation, Millennium Villages, and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) is a particularly influential proposal by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation¹³⁴. In particular, AGRA and other efforts to introduce genetically engineered seeds fail to take into account seed sovereignty and the skills of African farmers and producers. It looks to an industrial based, market driven model. While AGRA touts the dispersal of genetically engineered seeds to African producers, in *Voices from Africa*, Ibrahima Coulibaly, President of CNOP, notes that although farmers could use assistance or support in other areas, seeds are not one of them:

In response to the question of what his or her needs are, an African farmer will certainly emphasize access to water, agricultural equipment, credit, and above all, to remunerative prices. Access to seeds, however, is generally not mentioned because farmers have developed a very effective seed-saving system that has been in place since times immemorial. This traditional agricultural system allows farmers to access food quality seeds year after year through inter-farmer exchanges and in-crop selections of vigorous seeds. This also allows bio-diversity, a collective heritage of humanity, to flourish¹³⁵.

Just as with trade, food sovereignty does not negate support or technical assistance where needed. In fact it calls for support of small scale producers. However, it stresses that support must respect the rights, requests, and needs of farmers.

4.3 Ecuador

Like Venezuela, recognition of food sovereignty in Ecuador is largely tied to the industrialization of agriculture, unequal land distribution, and the work of peoples' movements to reform agricultural policy. It is also rooted in the election of Rafael Correa, a pro-Correa National Assembly, and the new constitution. The case of Ecuador offers lessons about the importance of grassroots organizing and participation in drafting food sovereignty language and legislation.

Rafael Correa was elected president of Ecuador in 2006. He touted his opposition to a free trade agreement with the United States, attempted to appeal to indigenous communities and various social movements, and spoke of the need for a new constitution for the citizens of Ecuador. Although the new government has made some environmental, social and political gains, there has been a shift from Correa's original anti neo-liberal rhetoric. With conflicts related to mining and oil exploitation¹³⁶, as well as negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement with the United States, rhetoric and reality have at times contradicted each other. In addition, the process of participation has not been as inclusionary as indigenous and social movements had hoped¹³⁷. Nevertheless, social movements played an important role to ensure that food sovereignty was included in Ecuador's new constitution.

The Roots of Food Sovereignty in Ecuador

Like efforts for food sovereignty across the world, Ecuador's pursuit of food sovereignty is directly tied to the industrialization of agriculture and agrofuels, the rising cost of fertilizer, free trade policies, and the privatization of resources¹³⁸. In response to these concerns, and in order to draft food sovereignty into the constitution, The National Federation of Campesino, Indigenous and Black Organizations (FENOCIN), La Federación Nacional de Trabajadores Agroindustriales, Campesinos e Indígenas Libres del Ecuador (FENACLE), and CNC-Eloy Alfaro formed an alliance focusing on food sovereignty. Their coalition, La Mesa Agraria (The Agrarian Roundtable), worked with Ecuador's Constitutional Assembly and drafted food sovereignty proposals which were largely included in the constitution.

FENOCIN and La Mesa Agraria held public forums in order to inform farmers of their rights to self determination and to celebrate traditional farming¹³⁹. As a coalition, La Mesa Agraria has greater capacity for outreach, communication, research, and organizing. By joining

together they are establishing a strong commitment to food sovereignty and are pursuing mechanisms to protect its longevity.

La Mesa Agraria has committed to promoting food sovereignty through a variety of goals. Their proposals take into account the many factors that create the food sovereignty framework. In a documentary (*Si A La Soberanía Alimentaria*) of their work for food sovereignty and with the Constituent Assembly, they emphasize these factors, in particular:

- Access to land, credit, and technical assistance¹⁴⁰
- Social economy and fair trade
- Diverse and sustainable production
- Local markets for small scale farmers
- The right to water and prohibition of its privatization
- The Rights of nature
- Protection of seeds
- Prohibition of transgenics
- Rights for agricultural workers
- Rights for female campesinas
- Intercultural cooperation.

Food Sovereignty in Ecuador's New Constitution

On September 28, 2008 Ecuador approved a new constitution which was drafted by the National Assembly. The constitution lays out important commitments to equality and justice, along with the right to water, balanced living, the rights of nature, and the right to communication through media. In Title VI, Title VII, and Article 281, the Ecuadorian Constitution also establishes a commitment to food sovereignty. Title VI establishes a Food Sovereignty Regime to incorporate technical assistance for sustainable and ecological agriculture, to boost resources for farmers, and to ban harmful biotechnology and genetically modified seeds¹⁴¹. Title VII further promotes biodiversity and natural resources through prevention of genetically modified seeds and crops. There are exceptions to this rule in the interest of 'national security':

Ecuador is declared a country free of transgenic seeds and crops.
Only as an exception, in the case of national security, with the

support of the President of the Republic and approved by the majority of the National Assembly will genetically modified seeds be allowed¹⁴².

Article 281 guarantees food sovereignty by stating:

Food Sovereignty constitutes an objective and strategic obligation from the State to guarantee its people, communities, *pueblos* and nationalities self sufficiency in healthy food, culturally appropriate in a permanent form¹⁴³.

Article 281 also goes on to establish fourteen State Responsibilities towards the implementation of food sovereignty in Ecuador. These include State commitments to¹⁴⁴: promote small and medium sized production and the social economies of the food and fishery industries; adopt fiscal policies, tributaries, and tariffs to protect the food and fishery sectors against dependency on foreign food imports; strengthen diversification and introduce ecological and organic technologies into agriculture; promote redistributive policies and access to productive resources such as land and water; establish financial support systems for small and medium producers; promote rehabilitation and preservation of agro-biodiversity, ancestral knowledge, and seed exchange; guarantee the health of animals for human consumption; ensure the development of scientific investigations and innovative technologies that are appropriate for food sovereignty; regulate the use and development of biotechnology through bio-security standards; strengthen the development of producer and consumer organizations and networks and the commercialization and distribution of food to promote equality in rural and urban areas; generate just systems of distribution and commercialization of food, decrease the monopolization and speculation of food; provide food to victims of natural disasters without monopolistic practices or speculation; prevent consumption of contaminated food; purchase food and materials for social programs primarily for networks of small producers.

Agriculture was a contentious point in the original drafting of the constitution. At first the National Assembly was looking towards agriculture that respected the rights of small farmers, allowed for seed sovereignty, and provided government credit for small farmers. During the drafting process, however, President Correa introduced an Agricultural Law quite contrary to these goals. His law would have predominately benefited those in the agrochemical business and large agribusiness, and included importing agrochemicals and subsidies for industrial

agribusiness. This highlights the importance of organizing by farmers' organizations¹⁴⁵. Daniel Denvir from the North American Congress on Latin America notes the work of such groups:

Intensive efforts by the National Federation of Campesino, Indigenous and Black Organizations (FENOCIN) and the CONAIE led to significant changes in the Agricultural Law. A shift towards supporting small farmers instead of agribusiness garnered [progressive and indigenous] support, leading to the proposal's overwhelmingly approval on the Assembly's second to last day.¹⁴⁶

Without the support and organizing of campesino organizations, indigenous organizations, and NGOs, food sovereignty may never have been included in the constitution. Their efforts involving community forums, coalition building, and articulation of the rights of small scale farmers were essential to the inclusion of food sovereignty in Ecuador's 2008 constitution.

Creating Laws to Support Food Sovereignty and the Constitution

Ecuador is now in the process of creating legislation to support the commitment to food sovereignty and work towards its implementation. The National Assembly headed, by the Commission on Health and the Environment, held national forums and video conferences to provide a space for input from cities, communities, and farmer organizations to express their proposals, concerns, and suggestions.

In the spirit of Ecuador's initiative to establish a more transparent government, the National Assembly's website¹⁴⁷ provides working table blogs on the progress of creating and implementing commitments that were established in the 2008 constitution. The working tables are updated daily. Appendix 1 provides an outline of the daily updates included in the National Assembly's working table¹⁴⁸ from January 28, 2009 to February 17, 2009. Box 4.3.1 provides a brief timeline of the drafting process.

Box 4.3.1, Timeline of Drafting Process.

- **February 17, 2009:** The Assembly adopts the Organic Law for Food Sovereignty. The President has a month to veto part or all of the law.
- **February 12, 2009:** Commission on Health and Environment begins discussing and revising the Food Sovereignty law.
- **February 9, 2009:** First debate of the Food Sovereignty Regime law. The Commission on Health and Environment collects comments from the National Assembly and drafts a new version of the bill.
- **February 7, 2009:** Second National Forum on the Food Sovereignty Regime
- **February 3, 2009:** Announcement of the Second National Forum on the Food Sovereignty Regime. Connects seven cities – Ambato, Cuenca, Guayaquil, Ibarra, Loja, Portoviejo, Quito – through videoconference. Set to discuss the proposed law.
- **January 28, 2009:** National Forum for the nationalization of the Food Sovereignty draft. This forum worked to explain the content of the draft of the food sovereignty law and to collect suggestions and input.

Source: *Soberanía Alimentaria: Proyecto de Ley de Régimen de la Soberanía Alimentaria*. 2009.

Asamblea Nacional: Republica del Ecuador Comisión Legislativa y de Fiscalización.

(http://asambleanacional.gov.ec/blogs/soberania_alimentaria/).

In addition to posting updates in regards to public debates, there are also updates around the two Assembly debates that finalized the Organic Law on the Food Sovereignty Regime ('la Ley Orgánica del Régimen de la Soberanía Alimentaria'). These entries primarily provide a government lens, although the website also includes PowerPoint and proposals from FENOCIN and other campesino organizations. FENOCIN's proposal¹⁴⁹ includes the following points:

- Contextual laws under the food sovereignty regime: water; land and territories; agrobiodiversity; rural development and agricultural credit; oversight of agribusiness and agricultural employment; and animal and plant health.
- Creation of a Council for Food Sovereignty; a Conference on Food Sovereignty; and an inter-ministerial cabinet on food sovereignty.

These points were largely included in the final draft. Diagram 1, from the National Assembly's website, lays out the process that the National Assembly took in drafting the food sovereignty law.

Diagram 1:



(Source: *Soberanía Alimentaria: Proyecto de Ley de Régimen de la Soberanía Alimentaria*. 2009. Asamblea Nacional: Republica del Ecuador Comisión Legislativa y de Fiscalización.)

The Organic Law on the Food Sovereignty Regime was passed by the National Assembly on February 17, 2009. The law passed with 49 votes in favor, 2 against, 3 blank, and 11 abstaining. The law provides for healthier food and farming through agroecology and organic production, and looks to avoid further monoculture. The new law's framework also connects the agricultural, forest, and fishing sectors and promotes access to credit and technology for small farmers. The law would also develop a Consultative Council for Food Sovereignty, integrating the Executive and Legislative branches and representatives from civil society. This consultation process provides for an implementation timeline which includes: access to land; agro biodiversity, and seeds; access to public credit for farmers and indigenous peoples; agrarian development; and regulation of farm insurance and subsidies¹⁵⁰. The Assembly also has one year to approve six related laws regarding: land, seeds, agricultural development, employment in agriculture and agribusiness, regulation of public banks, and animal and plant health. These laws are to be under the umbrella of the food sovereignty regime.

On March 20, 2009 President Rafael Correa sent back a partial veto of the law. The veto was largely related to GMOs, land ownership, and biofuels, and made observations regarding these issues. Transgenic inputs are one point of contention, with the veto allowing for import of raw materials containing transgenic inputs. Both the legislature and CONAIE question the influence of agribusiness in these vetoes¹⁵¹. The veto also extends the time period to 180 days for

the formation of the Consultative Council. Congress has 30 days to review and respond to this partial veto.

Ecuador's food sovereignty law offers an important case study regarding the factors that can influence the development of a constitutional commitment to food sovereignty and the drafting of laws that support it through a range of discussions, forums, and workshops. In February 2009, as part of the process of tracking the progress of the law, the government began to continuously update its blog with the newest information regarding its progress, including documents and presentations. It is important to recognize as well that electronic communication is not accessible to everyone—especially those in rural areas. FENOCIN took part in the debates, presenting their proposal for the food sovereignty law. Their continued participation is crucial in ensuring that campesinos and citizens are heard.

The persistence and organization of grassroots organizations like FENOCIN, FENACLE, and CNC-Eloy Alfaro assures that food sovereignty language does not get dismissed in the drafting process. Success of food sovereignty in Ecuador depends on implementation and the accompanying legislation. The key issue continues to be the need for democratic participation and continued support from producer organizations. An editorial by Francisco Hidalgo Flor of El Sistema de la Investigación de la Problemática Agraria del Ecuador (SIPAE), notes that there are limitations with the Food Sovereignty law proposed by the National Assembly: Although the law takes into account demands of peasant organizations, especially in areas of land, credit, and local markets it is limited by not fully confronting non-peasant agricultural interests. There have also been attempts to ignore the demands and democratic participation of peasants throughout the drafting process. For example, although the final draft of the law formed the Consultative Council, it failed to allow for extensive democratic participation. Instead it looks towards a council that consists of governmental delegates and selected representatives from civil society¹⁵². For food sovereignty advocates it remains crucial for producer organizations to continue to be diligent and organized even with a partially receptive administration.

Even with stated support for food sovereignty and producer organizations there have been recent events suggesting obstacles for peoples' organizations and NGOs in Ecuador. In March 2009, the Ecuadorian government cut support for Acción Ecológica (Environmental Action), a leading environmental organization in Ecuador¹⁵³. Their work with the indigenous population and on mining issues, food sovereignty, and protection of natural resources has made them an

important voice in Ecuador¹⁵⁴. In January, Acción Ecológica criticized a large scale mining project that was passed by the Legislative Commission as well as the introduction of GMOs to Ecuador. It is unclear whether attempts to silence organizations that disagree with governmental policy will become a trend.

With constitutional support for food sovereignty, and with the hopes of strong legislation to support and lead towards implementation of its goals, Ecuador has taken strides in the past year to incorporate food sovereignty. Civil organizations and the National Assembly still have much legislative and implementation work to do. They are continuing to work towards goals for food sovereignty.

Bolivia 4.4

Like most countries in the Global South, Bolivia was negatively impacted by free trade agreements, structural adjustment, cuts in social spending and debt to foreign interests. The level of debt in Bolivia has greatly impacted the country's political and economic sovereignty. Bolivia has consistently been in debt to foreign lenders and international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Like other Latin American countries in the 1980s, Bolivia dealt with its debt crisis by turning from state governance to market based policies. Social spending was decreased and subsidies for food and agriculture were cut; state companies were shut down. This deeply impacted many people in Bolivia and inequality between the rich and the poor grew. In fact in 2001, Bolivia was the most economically unequal country in Latin America¹⁵⁵. Rural agriculture communities and Bolivia's indigenous communities and other small producer communities suffered the consequences. The incomes of campesinos was systematically reduced¹⁵⁶. In Nick Buxton's contribution to *Dignity and Defiance: Stories from Bolivia's Challenge to Globalization* (2008), he relays the plight of a Bolivian campesino:

Rural agricultural communities were hit when price controls ended and tariffs were cut on foreign imports with the idea of improving efficiency and competition. Lower prices were better for low-income communities, but they devastated rural communities. Famer Martin Nina, his sun browned face shadowed by a Bolivar soccer team cap, explained that he now produces potatoes, chilies, and onions only to eat and not to sell. He can no longer compete with Peruvian imports¹⁵⁷.

New President, New Constitution

Evo Morales was elected president of Bolivia in December 2005 and his party, the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS), came to power in January 2006. He cited a commitment to nationalize Bolivia's gas and oil reserves, to increase the State's presence throughout the economy, and to reduce dependency on foreign interests. An indigenous Aymara, Morales has been a crucial player regarding the expansion of indigenous rights and autonomy within Bolivia¹⁵⁸. This presidency has done much for the indigenous population of Bolivia as well as for food sovereignty in the country. The approval on January 25, 2009 of the new constitution brought food sovereignty and a Right to Food further into the political realm¹⁵⁹. The new constitution has been strongly supported by *Coordinadora Nacional para el Cambio* (National

Coordinator for Change), an organization of indigenous peoples, workers, and peasants in Bolivia¹⁶⁰. The influence and organization of peoples' movements allowed for the election of the country's first indigenous president in 2005 and influenced the reforms of the 2009 constitution. Subsequently, their efforts have also influenced the inclusion of the Right to Food and food sovereignty in the 2009 constitution. In addition to food sovereignty, the 2009 Constitution¹⁶¹: establishes indigenous rights and allows for self determination for indigenous nations (Article 289)¹⁶²; grants rights and access to water, free education, universal health care, housing, retirement, electricity, and telecommunications; and provides for specific gender rights (Article 14, Article 15, Article 48) and demands equal gender participation in Bolivia's Congress¹⁶³. These reforms provide a legal framework, but Bolivia still faces the task legislation and implementation.

The history of Bolivia is fraught with tension between indigenous peoples, small-scale farmers, landed elite and large agribusiness. Agrarian reform and privatization of water are particularly contentious, and peoples' movements in Bolivia have long been speaking out against the privatization of natural resources. The Cochabamba Water Revolt against the privatization of the city of Cochabamba's water supply was one such movement¹⁶⁴. In response to peoples' movements' demands towards the nationalization of natural resources, Article 349 of the 2009 Constitution states: "Natural resources are the inalienable and indivisible property and direct domain of the Bolivian people and will be administered, in the collective interest, by the State," making it illegal for the state oil and gas industry (YPFB) and the state mining company to privatize¹⁶⁵. In recent years peoples' movements have continued to organize and work towards a legal framework supporting food sovereignty.

Food sovereignty and the Right to Food is seen in several articles of the 2009 constitution. Article 16 solidifies the Right to Food:

Article 16

- I. All people have the right to water and food.
- II. The State has the obligation to guarantee food security, through a healthy, adequate, and sufficient diet for the entire population.

According to the FAO, this inclusion is a result of efforts between the FAO and the Bolivian government. The April 2007 conference and training that resulted from this union, "Basis for Constitutionalizing the Right to Food," and the discussion between the FAO and the Constituent Assembly of Bolivia was paramount in the inclusion of food in the constitution. The FAO has

also been in touch with the Bolivian Ministry of Health's Councils for Food and Nutrition Security, which is focusing on "local action plans for the country's hunger mitigation program—desnutricion cero"¹⁶⁶.

The new constitution also recognizes food sovereignty in Article 310 and Article 404. Article 310 promotes economic democracy and the achievement of food sovereignty for the population by requiring state companies and state owned enterprises to provide Bolivians with rights to natural resources and strategic control of production. It also requires them to "promote economic democracy and the achievement of food sovereignty of the people". Article 404 touches on the importance of sustainable rural development through its emphasis on food sovereignty and security:

**PART III
INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Article 404

Integrated sustainable rural development is a fundamental part of the economic policies of the State, which gives priority to efforts to promote of common economic undertakings and the assembly of rural people, with emphasis on security and on food sovereignty, through:

1. The sustained increase in productivity and sustainable agricultural, livestock, manufacturing, agroindustry and tourism, as well as its ability to compete commercially.
2. The articulation of internal structures of agricultural production and agribusiness.
3. The achievement of better conditions of economic exchange of the rural productive sector in relation to the rest of the Bolivian economy.
4. The significance and respect for indigenous peasant communities in all dimensions of his life.
5. Strengthening the economy of small farmers

Future Challenges

The approval and development of Bolivia's constitution has been described as a step forward in "rolling back half a millennium of colonialism, discrimination, and humiliation"¹⁶⁷. So, it should come as little surprise that there is opposition. The majority of pressure and opposition towards the Morales government comes from Bolivians of European or mixed race descent. The Eastern lowlands are full of gas deposits and extensive farms. In these areas, opposition has erupted in violence between indigenous and European Bolivians. Wealthy ranchers fear that their farms will be broken up and handed to the poor as a result of new land

reforms which have been incorporated into the recently ratified Bolivian constitution. Precisely due to these concerns the charter was revised to include limits on land holdings to apply only to future sales¹⁶⁸. Multinational agribusiness is ever present in Bolivia and also resists agrarian reforms. Cargill and ADM control the soybean and sunflower seed production while John Deere sells machinery, and Monsanto and Calgene promote GM seeds¹⁶⁹. The influence of agribusiness and the mono-culture export model they promote is detrimental to both to Bolivia's food sovereignty and to the country's natural resources. Unfortunately these groups are often supported by the World Bank and the IMF¹⁷⁰. The tension between agribusiness, landed elite and small-scale producers and indigenous organizations may be an obstacle for implementing food sovereignty goals in Bolivia.

Trade agreements with nations like the United States are quickly becoming the way in which some nations are achieving market access for their own goods¹⁷¹. This creates a problem for food sovereignty if countries continue to see neo-liberal trade policies as the only way out. Bolivia has begun to engage in "People's Trade Agreements" with countries like Venezuela and Cuba. These agreements aim to protect the interests of smaller producers against imports, food dumping, patenting, and privatization of resources. Due to the power of the United States in international institutions and among export interests, Bolivia could suffer the consequences of not signing a free trade agreement with the United States¹⁷². If successful, People's Trade Agreements may prove to be a supportive route for campesinos in Bolivia.

Bolivia has taken an important step in including food sovereignty in their constitution and by supporting it through access to resources and indigenous rights. It is yet to be seen how this will result in concrete action and further legislation.

4.5 United States and Canada

The United States is considered the central place where policies associated with an export-oriented and heavily subsidized industrial agriculture lead to outcomes that are detrimental to other countries. The key to this U.S. agricultural policy involves large subsidies for commodity production, and a system dominated by agribusiness interests. Family farmers in the United States and Canada are affected by these policies like their counterparts across the globe. An analysis of food sovereignty in other countries may seem distinct from the issues experienced in the U.S., where there is a smaller population of small-scale farmers and a dominant culture of disconnection of consumers or “eaters” from food production. Nevertheless, there are farmers’ organizations and research institutes in the United States and Canada working for food sovereignty. These groups foster solidarity with small scale producers in other parts of the world, establish goals and potential programs to support the food sovereignty of family farmers in the U.S. and Canada, and provide research to support the food sovereignty framework and goals.

Organizing farmers in the United States in support of food sovereignty can be difficult. There are ranges of opinions, values, and ideologies, and, in such a large country, seeing eye to eye can be challenging¹⁷³. Family farmers’ organizations and their partners in the United States realize these barriers and recognize the importance of discovering the opinions and needs of family farmers in order to develop a set of policy goals that will work.

[In the United States] farmers are so propagandized by the farm media and citizens too are so propagandized by whatever they read. It’s very difficult. Farmers in this country are so vulnerable any way even if they are driving million dollar equipment and have million dollar production, they’re still very economically vulnerable.

- George Naylor, former President of National Family Farm Coalition, United States¹⁷⁴

As such, groups are making a concerted effort to unite farmers (at least indirectly) around a food sovereignty framework and to demonstrate how food sovereignty is relevant for groups in North America.

National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC)

We envision empowered communities everywhere working together democratically to advance a food and agriculture system that ensures health, justice, and dignity for all... Farmers, farm workers, ranchers, and fishers will have control over their lands, water, seeds, and livelihoods [and] all people will have access to healthy, local, delicious food.

-National Family Farm Coalition, Food Sovereignty Vision Statement

National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC) represents and connects family farmers and rural groups in the United States. NFFC aims to shift food and farm policy towards a socially just and responsible food and farm system and looks to empower family farmers¹⁷⁵. In the United States, NFFC focuses on restoring competition to the farm and food sector, to implementing the Food From Family Farms Act, to promoting food security and food safety, and to holding U.S. government agencies accountable to family farmers. NFFC also looks towards policy alternatives that provide family farmers with fair prices and access to credit¹⁷⁶.

The 2007 Food from Family Farms Act (FFFA)¹⁷⁷, proposed by NFFC, suggests an alternative that focuses on principles of food sovereignty and a farm bill that would support family farmers in the United States and abroad. Referred to as a “consumer-farmer economic bill of rights” it includes:

- A shift away from free trade policies as these policies negatively affect producers in the United States and abroad.
- Fair prices for the sale of farm commodities through price supports for small-scale farmers, food and energy security reserves, and conservation programs
- A Conservation Security Program (CSP) to transition to sustainable diversity family farming. Rewards for current practices and incentives to conserve crops, diversify farming, and practice sustainable bio-energy and local food production.
- Enforcement and further establishment of anti-trust laws to create fair markets for small scale farmers and to address vertical integration of agribusiness

International Focus

We’re not just a little group in Wisconsin or D.C., we’re part of a global movement that’s going to have a say in setting fair food policy at the international level.”

-Joel Greeno, President, American Raw Milk Producers Pricing Association, Executive Committee, NFFC. Qtd. in *Food Sovereignty* by NFFC and Grassroots International

NFFC also has an international focus, and through their Trade and Food Sovereignty Task Force, they are working with other groups to develop alternative trade policy that incorporates the needs of family farmers, addresses fair prices, and examines biotechnology and genetic engineering¹⁷⁸. They are a member of Via Campesina and are working to increase the North American presence in Via Campesina and in the food sovereignty movement. Farmer representatives from NFFC participate in international conferences with the Via Campesina, travel to WTO protests and clearly articulate their solidarity with the struggles of farmers worldwide. NFFC works collaboratively with other organizations – such as the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, Institute for Agriculture Trade Policy (IATP), Grassroots International, and Public Citizen – to strengthen the position of and policies for family farmers, to find solidarity with family farmers across the globe, and to strongly support alternatives for trade.

National Farmers Union of Canada

Canada's National Farmers Union (NFU) supports family farmers across Canada. Among other things, they strive to promote the social and economic success of farmers and to secure legislation that benefits farmers. They also strive to provide support for women and youth farmers in to break down barriers and ensure that these voices are heard.

The National Farmers Union of Canada is a founding member of the Via Campesina and like NFFC, NFU is a member of the North American Chapter of Via Campesina and is very involved internationally with food sovereignty and alternative trade¹⁷⁹. In April 2008, NFU hosted the International Women's Commission where women farmers from eight countries discussed land and seeds, gender equality, and leadership development and empowerment¹⁸⁰. NFU is truly dedicated and a part of work for food sovereignty internationally and in Canada.

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems.

-IATP's Mission Statement

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) emerged in 1986 as a “galvanizing effort to save the family farm” and develop research, documents, and policy that support rural

communities, family farmers, and sustainable food and farm agendas¹⁸¹. IATP's international focus, research, and policy proposals provide an important voice to food sovereignty and to trade alternatives. IATP's program areas include: Trade and Global Governance; Rural Communities; Food and Health; Environment and Agriculture; Forestry; and Local Foods. IATP concretely supports sustainable food systems, local communities, and alternative trade policy.

Grassroots International

Grassroots International is another U.S. based organization that focuses on supporting and joining in solidarity with peoples' movements work towards rights for land, water, and food. Grassroots International supports community driven projects and also advocates for more just U.S. foreign policy¹⁸². Grassroots International is a major voice for food sovereignty in the United States and globally.

In 2008, Grassroots International, in collaboration with NFFC, published *Food for Thought and Action: A Food Sovereignty Curriculum*. This document aims to bring a variety of groups into the food sovereignty movement, with modules and lessons targeted at consumers, faith and anti-hunger groups, environmentalists, and small farmers and farm-workers. Perhaps most importantly, it aims to demonstrate how issues of food sovereignty affects everyone¹⁸³.

In *Food for Thought and Action*, Grassroots International highlights that "food sovereignty is local control" and can be implemented through concerted efforts, even in a U.S. context. There are ways that food sovereignty can be implemented through a range of laws and programs and regulation including: fair prices for farmers with price floors for commodities; food reserves; enforcement of anti-trust laws; environmental programs that reward sustainable farming; community food programs; and public funding for organic agriculture, research, technical assistance, and credit. *Food for Thought and Action* looks to expand and build the food sovereignty movement in the United States and to demonstrate that many sectors can relate to the goals of food sovereignty.

Institute for Food and Development Policy/Food First¹⁸⁴

Based in Oakland, California, the Institute for Food and Development Policy/Food First supports food sovereignty through research, news briefs, and reports related to global food sovereignty efforts, international agreements, and local organizing. Food First is a great resource

for books and publications that clearly and articulately explain the dynamics of food sovereignty and the importance of family farmers the world over.

Food Secure Canada and the People's Food Policy Project

Organizations and individuals concerned with Canadian food policy formed Food Secure Canada/Sécurité Alimentaire Canada (FSC-SAC) to pool resources, strategies, and organizing for progressive food policy. Members of FSC-SAC come from many walks of life – First Nation communities, farmers' organizations, food banks, health and welfare groups – and are involved in grassroots activities to build food security in their communities and in working towards food policy that more appropriately addresses food security from an institutional and governmental level. Food Secure Canada focuses on policies that are favorable for consumers, producers, and the environment. In their search for an alternative food policy, FSC-SAC sites what they believe to be several essential elements for an alternative Canadian food policy. These elements include: International Markets; Local Production for Local Consumption; Urban Agriculture; Regulation; and Food Security¹⁸⁵.

Incorporated in FSC-SAC is the People's Food Policy Project (PFPP). This project was created to support the goals of food security and food sovereignty for a comprehensive food policy. PFPP¹⁸⁶ is based upon the work of the People's Food Commission (PFC) that worked to explore how everyday Canadians interact with the food system and how the food system in turn affects Canadians. The People's Food Policy Project¹⁸⁷ is based on the principles of food sovereignty and holds its ultimate goal to be the creation of a "suite of food policies" that are composed by people working on food policies locally and nationally across Canada. They are dedicated to staying true to the principles of food sovereignty as laid out by the Via Campesina, and to organizing with farmers for a sound food and farming policy. Currently they are guiding discussions with communities across Canada address the needs of Canadian famers and develop a thoughtful and participatory food sovereignty based policy. In order to ensure that all who are interested get a chance to share their voice – no matter urban or rural – PFPP uses teleconferences, community meetings, and digital storytelling. Cathleen Kneen of PFPP notes the necessity of diligence for progressive policy:

If we're not able to provide a coherent and deeply based position there's no reason for the forces in power to change their ways. It's only with a parliamentary system like ours that the polls will show

if people want something different. There are certainly people of integrity in power, but many people in power are just working to stay in power. If there is a force from below saying there needs to be a change, then the people in power will see that¹⁸⁸.

PFPP hopes to have food policies developed and finalized to present to the National Assembly in 2010 and later hopes to be instrumental in advocacy and implementation of these policies at both a local and federal level.

These are only a sample of the groups¹⁸⁹ envisioning a new food culture and alternative food and farm policies. With the momentum from the food crisis and the increasing interest of local food there is great potential for alternative models for food and trade policy.

Chapter 5: Moving Forward

The strategies, frameworks, programs, and policies of national level incorporation of food sovereignty in Venezuela, Mali, Ecuador, Bolivia, Senegal, Nepal, and Nicaragua present important examples and models to examine. The emerging movement supporting food sovereignty principles at a national level also represents a political shift, and a dynamic response to the consequences of neo-liberal trade policy. Common trends can be identified in relation to each of the four case studies of Venezuela, Mali, Ecuador, and Bolivia and present interesting considerations for future food sovereignty efforts.

Peoples' Movements are Leading the Way

One common trend that arises again and again in countries where food sovereignty principles have been implemented at the local, regional, and/or national level is the prominent guidance from people's movements: indigenous organizations, campesino coalitions, family farmer organizations, fisher-folk organizations, and women's organizations to name a few. This should come as no surprise considering the Via Campesina originally introduced the food sovereignty framework. Still, it is encouraging to note that even in countries where national governance has taken hold of food sovereignty language, peoples' movements continue to be involved. In Ecuador, groups like FENOCIN, FENACLE, and CNC-Eloy Alfaro came together in a coalition to call for food sovereignty in Ecuador's new constitution and have continued to persist in ensuring that the President and the National Assembly remain true to their rhetoric. Similarly, in Mali, CNOP initiated forums, discussions, and debates to draft an agricultural bill favorable to food sovereignty. They have continued to be active in communicating with farmers and addressing implementation. It is vital that peoples' movements continue to build on their strength, organizing, and diligence. Only through their participation, voices, opinions, and knowledge can food sovereignty regain its integrity and achieve key goals. One of the most important components to food sovereignty is ensuring that small scale producers' voices are heard and that their rights are upheld. In order to shape policy that supports the rights of food producers they must be a part of the conversation. All too often agribusiness takes the place that small producers need to occupy.

Responses to Food Sovereignty Principles

Peoples’ organizations are the best source to monitor whether or not state governance is actually in line with food sovereignty principles. It is important for campaigns and draft legislation to focus on and address the principles of food sovereignty. By being specific in seeking to establish certain goals and principles there is less chance that food sovereignty will be undermined or that the phrase will be redefined to mean something else (i.e. just self sufficiency). Food sovereignty is a developing framework, and so policy frameworks to address the food sovereignty principles are developing as well. The following chart lays out parallels between some of the legislation and programs previously discussed and the food sovereignty principles (based on the principles from the Declaration of Nyéléni):

Food Sovereignty Principle	Addressed at state level
1. Focuses on Food for People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social production in Venezuela – food is for people not commodity
2. Values Food Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in Mali to translate and explain agricultural laws for communities across the country • Venezuela – partnership in Latin American Paolo Freire Institute • Debates and forums for food sovereignty laws that included farmers (Ecuador, Mali) • LAO, Article 8: “agricultural development policy ensures the promotion of women/men in the agriculture sector...”
3. Localizes Food Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venezuela’s subsidized food distribution, Mercal and PDVAL. Potential to connect rural and urban communities through MegaMercal. • Venezuela casas de alimentación • Bans on GMOs in Ecuador and Venezuela • Article 281, Ecuador’s constitution
4. Makes Decisions Locally:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venezuela’s communal councils and cooperatives. • Land reform laws/commitments to land reform in Venezuela, Ecuador, Nepal
5. Builds Knowledge and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural banks and low interest credit (Venezuela) • Land reform laws/commitments to land reform in Venezuela, Ecuador, Nepal

<p>6. Works with Nature:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venezuela’s partnership in the International Agroecology Latin American Paolo Freire Institute • Venezuela’s Law on Integrated Agricultural Health • Ecuador’s 2008 Constitution: rights of nature; preservation of seed diversity and biodiversity
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There are other areas where food sovereignty principles are addressed in these countries, especially locally and in community contexts; and there are certainly areas where countries could strengthen how food sovereignty is addressed. For example, a place for improvement in West Africa would be the ability to challenge the potential introduction of genetically engineered seeds – an outcome that would greatly undermine food and seed sovereignty in West Africa. Further studies in these countries would be beneficial in establishing how effectively programs and legislation are developing in relation to food sovereignty goals. The work of these countries must still be analyzed, critiqued, studied, and improved. Positively though, they are examples of governments responding to powerful peoples’ movements and progressively drafting responses that address the consequences of neo-liberalism.

Political and Cultural Context

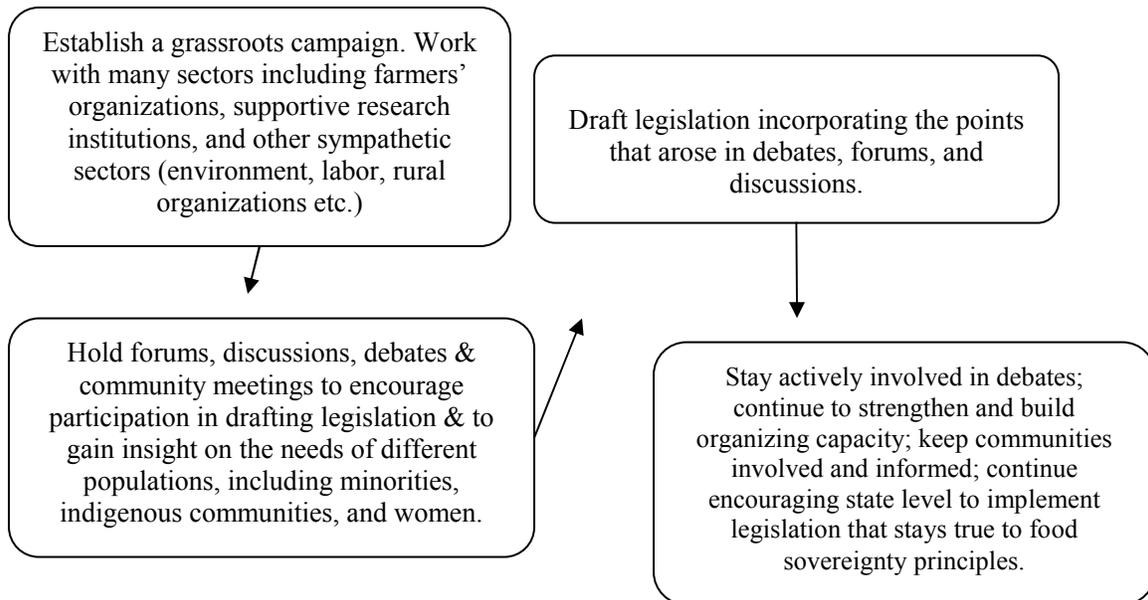
A country or region’s political and cultural context certainly plays a large role in where food sovereignty is supported. Three of the countries in this paper are in South America, one is in Central America, two are in West Africa, and one is in Asia. In the last ten years Nicaragua, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia have been part of the trend of shifting governments in Latin America. Food sovereignty has been incorporated as part of this shift. All seven countries have large rural farming populations. This certainly makes organizing towards food sovereignty accessible and understandable to a larger portion of the population. In countries like the United States this may be an obstacle to overcome. Nevertheless, with progressive organizations, family farmer collaborations, and solidarity there are still opportunities to overcome these obstacles.

Advocacy and Organizing Tactics

Each food sovereignty campaign is unique and strongly based in the culture, environment, and political context of the place in which it takes place. Organizers and food sovereignty advocates know the best ways to appeal to their areas and constituents. With this in mind, the

following flow chart provides a brief outline, compiling lessons from the organizing efforts of organizations in Mali and Ecuador:

Chart: General Trends in Organizing for state-level incorporation of food sovereignty



Finally, even with the magic of digital communication it is important to remember that many people in rural areas do not have extensive access to a quick internet connection. While the internet is an important and useful tool, it should be part of organizing and implementation, not the whole of it. The People's Food Policy Project in Canada addresses this through holding community meetings and one-on-ones in rural communities. Farmers' organizations in Mali, Ecuador, and Senegal connect with different communities and regions through debates, discussions, community events, and forums. Like any organizing campaign, organizing for state level food sovereignty requires a range of tactics, coalition building, and strategy.

Conclusion: More Than Just Political Will

Time and again articles, books, reports, and interviews repeat a common phrase when talking about how food sovereignty goals can begin to be addressed and implemented, and how they can receive state level support. This phrase is 'political will.' Without a doubt implementing and incorporating food sovereignty principles in state level governance is challenging. It requires strong, concerted efforts at the grassroots level and it requires political will. Political will arises

from struggle. It is motivated by the struggle of people crying out for something different. It is influenced by the strength of family farmers, peasants, indigenous peoples, forest dwellers, landless people, and fisherfolk joining hands, sweat, and minds in policy proposals, declarations, and community strategies. Venezuela, Mali, Ecuador, Bolivia, Senegal, Nepal, and Nicaragua are only seven of the countries where people are organizing towards a food sovereignty framework. This work and organization is gaining momentum all over the world. The momentum arises from people organizing together to influence the ‘political will’ of their national leaders, to draft an alternative framework, and to make the rest of us aware of their struggles and their triumphs.

Background to the Research

The food sovereignty framework emerged in 1996 and since then has gained momentum, power, and recognition. It continues to develop with conferences, convergences, declarations, and implementation at the local, regional and national level. The phrase ‘food sovereignty’ is still greeted with blank stares by many in the United States, but in recent years the phrase and the framework is taking root in an increasing number of journals, books, reports, studies, and newspaper articles.

In addition to providing background and context for the food sovereignty framework, this report is a compilation of information around inclusion of food sovereignty in state level legislation and in the language of national constitutions. It focuses on the work in Venezuela, Mali, Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua, and Nepal. Information has been gathered from newspaper articles from Ecuador; reports from the Via Campesina, the Right to Food Unit of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), FIAN International, IIED, IATP, and others; books by Peter Rosset, Raj Patel, and Eric Holt-Gimenez; blog entries and governmental website updates from Mali, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela; and articles and entries from peoples’ movements in different countries. Along with interviews and discussions with several food sovereignty leaders and food and agriculture experts, material was gathered and a chart was developed to identify where and how goals for food sovereignty are being incorporated and implemented at a national level.

There is much more to examine, learn, and study in this area. As efforts in these seven countries and others expand and deepen, they will continue to offer important examples for food sovereignty movements in other countries, regions, and localities. Additional interviews with

peasant leaders to determine how state level programs and laws resonate with their efforts would provide further information and conclusions; and additional analysis of newspapers and media would provide further context for how food sovereignty is experienced and articulated in a particular country. The food sovereignty framework is at an exciting stage and will continue to evolve through the dual efforts of peoples' movements and progressive governance.

End Notes

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- ¹ La Via Campesina. 1996. *Food Sovereignty: A Future Without Hunger*. (www.viacampesina.org).
- ² For a complete list, please see: La Via Campesina. 2009. (www.viacampesina.org)
- ³ Desmarias, Annette Aurelie. 2007. *La Via Campesina: Globalization and the Power of Peasants*. Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 39
- ⁴ See: Desmarias, Annette Aurelie, *La Via Campesina*, 19-21; and Pimbert, Michel. 2008. Food Sovereignty: a citizens' vision of a better world. *Towards Food Sovereignty: reclaiming autonomous food systems*. London: IIED, 41.
- ⁵ Desmarias, Annette Aurelie. 2007. *La Via Campesina*, 20
- ⁶ Goodman, Jim. Personal communication. December 2008.
- ⁷ Pimbert 2008, "Food Sovereignty: a citizens' vision of a better world.", 41.
- ⁸ Pimbert, Michel. 2008. Food Sovereignty: a citizens' vision of a better world. *Towards Food Sovereignty: reclaiming autonomous food systems*. London: IIED; Desmarias, Annette Aurelie. 2007. *La Via Campesina: Globalization and the Power of Peasants*. Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press (OTHERS)
- ⁹ Pimbert 2008, "Food Sovereignty: a citizens' vision of a better world.", 41; Desmarias, Annette Aurelie, *La Via Campesina*, 27
- ¹⁰ Desmarias, Annette Aurelie 2007. *La Via Campesina*, 23
- ¹¹ Spieldoch, Alexandra. 2006 December. *A Row to Hoe: The Gender Impact of Trade Liberalization on Our Food System, Agricultural Markets and Women's Human Rights*. Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy and Global Governance. Geneva: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 12
- ¹² Spieldoch 2006, *A Row to Hoe*, 8.
- ¹³ Spieldoch 2006, *A Row to Hoe*, 8
- ¹⁴ See La Via Campesina for a variety of reports on women's role in food sovereignty, several include: *Seed Heritage for the Good of Humanity (From the Women Seed Forum in South Korea)*; *Women's Declaration on Food Sovereignty*. IATP and the International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN) have reports on women and agriculture as well.
- ¹⁵ Desmarias, Annette Aurelie 2007, *La Via Campesina*, PAGE
- ¹⁶ Pimbert 2008, "Food Sovereignty: a citizens' vision of a better world", 42
- ¹⁷ Pimbert 2008, "Food Sovereignty: a citizens' vision of a better world", 48-49
- ¹⁸ Peoples' Food Sovereignty Statement. (<http://www.peoplesfoodsovereignty.org>).
- ¹⁹ Rosset, Peter. 2006. *Food Is Different: Why the WTO Should Get Out of Agriculture*. London, United Kingdom: Zed Books, PAGE
- ²⁰ On the other hand *community food security* is a concept that does take into account the concerns and wellbeing of both producers and consumers. It focuses on more than just the individual. The definition provided by Community Food Security Coalition (<http://www.foodsecurity.org/>) states: "Community food security is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice". Community food security also embodies 6 principles: Low income food needs; broad goals; community focus; self-reliance/empowerment; local agriculture; and systems oriented or inter-disciplinary projects (<http://www.foodsecurity.org/>).
- ²¹ Rosset, Peter. "Food Sovereignty: Global Rallying Cry of Farmer Movements." Oakland, CA: *Food First*. (<http://www.foodfirst.org/node/47>).
- ²² Right to Food Unit. 2007 October. "Achieving the right to food—the human rights challenge of the twenty-first century." *World Food Day: 16 October 2007*. Food and Agriculture Organization.
- ²³ Right to Food Unit. 2007 October. "Achieving the right to food—the human rights challenge of the twenty-first century." *World Food Day: 16 October 2007*. Food and Agriculture Organization.
- ²⁴ FAO. 2005. *Voluntary Guidelines: The Right to Food*. Available online (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/009/y9825e/y9825e00.htm>): The "Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security" were adopted by the 127th Session of the FAO Council in November, 2004. The Voluntary Guidelines offer specific recommendations regarding how to implement the Right to Food in the national context of the state. The Guidelines, and the FAO, encourage the participation of a range of stakeholders and focus on implementation through food principles, legislation, and policy. The stated objective of the Voluntary Guidelines is: "[T]o provide practical guidance to states in their implementation of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national

food security, in order to achieve the goals of the World Food Summit Plan of Action”. The Voluntary Guidelines contain 19 guidelines that countries can take to implement the right to food.

²⁵ FAO. 2008. Questions and Answers. *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*. Retrieved December 2008. (http://www.fao.org/righttofood/wfd/pdf2007/questions_and_answers_en.pdf)

²⁶ Knuth, Lidija. 2009. The right to adequate food and indigenous peoples: How can the right to food benefit indigenous peoples? Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, The Right to Food. (http://www.fao.org/righttofood/publi09/ind_people.pdf).

²⁷ “Nyeleni – for food sovereignty.” 2007, January. *Seedling*. Spain: GRAIN. (<http://www.grain.org/seedling/index.cfm?id=456>).

²⁸ Food and Agriculture Organization. 2008 December. “Number of hungry people rises to 963 million.” Rome: FAO News Room. (<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/8836/icode/>).

²⁹ Grassroots International. 2008b. “Module Two: Faith and Anti-Hunger Groups.” *Food for Thought and Action: A Food Sovereignty Curriculum*. Retrieved October 2008. (<http://www.grassrootsonline.org/>).

³⁰ Bacon, Chris. 2008. “Cultivating Sustainable Coffee: Persistent Paradoxes.” In Christopher M. Bacon, V. Ernesto Mendez, Stephen R. Gliessman, David Goodman, and Jonathan A. Fox (Eds.), *Confronting the Coffee Crisis*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 353.

³¹ Poole-Kavana, Holly. 2007, April 9. “12 Myths About Hunger.” Oakland, California: Food First.

³² Holt-Gimenez, Eric. 2008 October. “The World Food Crisis: What’s Behind It and What We Can Do About It.” Policy Brief No. 16. Oakland, CA: Food First

³³ Windfuhr, Michael and Jennie Jonsen. 2005. *Food Sovereignty: Towards democracy in localized food systems*. United Kingdom: ITDG Publishing, 3

³⁴ Windfuhr and Jonsen 2005. *Food Sovereignty: Towards democracy in localized food systems*, 4

³⁵ Rosset 2006, *Food Is Different*, 18

³⁶ Patel, Raj. *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System*. Brooklyn, NY: Melville House Publishing, 95

³⁷ Windfuhr and Jonsen 2005, *Food Sovereignty: Towards democracy in localized food systems*, 28

³⁸ Windfuhr and Jonsen 2005, *Food Sovereignty: Towards democracy in localized food systems*, 6

³⁹ Rosset 2006, *Food Is Different*, 2

⁴⁰ Rosset 2006, *Food Is Different*, 4

⁴¹ Rosset 2006, *Food Is Different*, 17

⁴² Rosset 2006, *Food Is Different*

⁴³ Walden Bello’s essays offer a more detailed overview of the policies of the WTO in relation to the South: Bello, Walden. 2001. *Future in the Balance: Essays on Globalization and Resistance*. Oakland, California: Food First. Focus on the Global South, 23

⁴⁴ Bello 2001, *Future in the Balance*, 23

⁴⁵ Steward, Corrina, Maria Aguiar, Nikhil Aziz, Jonathan Leaning, and Daniel Moss. 2007. *Towards a Green Food System: How Food Sovereignty Can Save the Environment and Feed the World*. Jamaica Plain, MA: Grassroots International.

⁴⁶ Windfuhr and Jonsen 2005, *Food Sovereignty: Towards democracy in localized food systems*, PAGE,.

⁴⁷ Rosset, Peter. 2006. *Food Is Different: Why the WTO Should Get Out of Agriculture*. London, United Kingdom: Zed Books.

⁴⁸ Rosset 2006, *Food Is Different*, 2

⁴⁹ O’Driscoll, Peter. 2005 March. “Part of the Problem: Trade, Transnational Corporations, and Hunger.” *Center Focus*. Issue 166. Center of Concern. Retrieved March 24, 2009.

(<http://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/tncs/2005/03problem.pdf>).

⁵⁰ O’Driscoll 2005, “Part of the Problem: Trade, Transnational Corporations, and Hunger”

⁵¹ O’Driscoll 2005, “Part of the Problem: Trade, Transnational Corporations, and Hunger”

⁵² Windfuhr and Jonsen 2005, *Food Sovereignty: Towards democracy in localized food systems*, 8.

⁵³ Windfuhr and Jonsen 2005, *Food Sovereignty: Towards democracy in localized food systems*, 9.

⁵⁴ This point is emphasized in many sources. Several that I looked at include: Windfuhr and Jonsen 2005, *Food Sovereignty: Towards democracy in localized food systems*; Varghese, Shiney. 2009 March. *Integrated Solutions to the Water, Agriculture and Climate Crises*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy; Steward, Corrina, Maria Aguiar, Nikhil Aziz, Jonathan Leaning, and Daniel Moss. 2007. *Towards a Green Food System: How Food Sovereignty Can Save the Environment and Feed the World*. Jamaica Plain, MA: Grassroots International.

⁵⁵ From Peter Rosset's (2006) book, *Food is Different*: "...research shows the potential that could be achieved by local production and land redistribution. Small farmers are more productive, more efficient, and contribute more to broad-based regional development than do the larger corporate farmers who hold the best land and who benefit from free trade. Small farmers with secure tenure can also be much better stewards of natural resources, protecting the long-term productivity of their soils and conserving functional biodiversity on and around their farms. What we require is the political will to make different policy decisions".

⁵⁶ Rosset, Peter. 1999. *The Multiple Functions and Benefits of Small Farm Agriculture, in the Context of Global Trade Negotiations*. Oakland, CA: Institute for food and Development Policy, Food First. Policy Brief No. 4. (<http://www.foodfirst.org/pubs/policybs/pb4.html>)

⁵⁷ Pimbert 2008, "Food Sovereignty: a citizens' vision of a better world", 53

⁵⁸ Pimbert 2008, "Food Sovereignty: a citizens' vision of a better world", 51

⁵⁹ Peoples' Food Sovereignty. 2001. "Priority to Peoples' Food Sovereignty – WTO out of Food and Agriculture." Retrieved March 2009. (full document is available here: <http://www.eph.org/a/620>)

⁶⁰ This list is a summary of the points laid out in the "Our World is Not for Sale" document. Please see the full document for a more detailed set of points. Peoples' Food Sovereignty. 2001. "Priority to Peoples' Food Sovereignty – WTO out of Food and Agriculture." Retrieved March 2009. (full document is available here: <http://www.eph.org/a/620>)

⁶¹ La Via Campesina. 2008, October 23. *Declaration of Maputo: V International Conference of La Via Campesina*. Maputo, Mozambique: La Via Campesina. (<http://www.viacampesina.org>).

⁶² Brazil also pursued national efforts for land reform and food sovereignty, largely driven by the work of the Landless Workers Movement (MST). Land reform is written into the constitution of Brazil, and MST uses this in order to call for improved land access and land redistribution. President Lula has proven to be more cooperative in this area and Brazil is an important example of national work towards land reform. Brazil is not directly included in this paper because it does not have a more comprehensive national food sovereignty policy.

⁶³ FIAN International and La Via Campesina. *The Right to Food and the Agrarian Situation in Nicaragua*. Germany: FIAN International. (<http://www.fian.org/resources/documents/others/right-to-food-and-agrarian-situation-in-nicaragua/pdf>), 8

⁶⁴ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. 2008 November. *Concluding Observations UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Nicaragua*. Geneva: United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (<http://www.fian.org/resources/documents/other-documents/concluding-observations-nicaragua-2008/pdf>).

⁶⁵ "MAGFOR presenta Política de Seguridad y Soberanía Alimentaria Nutricional". 2009 March 12. *Ministerio Agroecuario Forestal*. (<http://www.magfor.gob.ni/>).

⁶⁶ Now All Nepal Peasants Federation: (<http://www.anpfa.org.np/>).

⁶⁷ Samdup, Carole and Priscilla Claeys. 2007. *The Human Right to Food in Nepal: Reports of an International Fact-Finding Mission*. Montreal, Canada: International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, Rights and Democracy. (Available here: http://www.dd-rd.ca/site/_PDF/publications/globalization/food/report_nepal_sep07.pdf).

⁶⁸ Samdup and Claeys 2007, *The Human Right to Food in Nepal*

⁶⁹ Wilpert 2006, "Land for People Not for Profit in Venezuela", 249

⁷⁰ Wilpert 2006, "Land for People Not for Profit in Venezuela", 250

⁷¹ Wilpert 2006, "Land for People Not for Profit in Venezuela", 251-252

⁷² Wilpert 2006, "Land for People Not for Profit in Venezuela"

⁷³ Schiavoni, Christina. Personal Communication. March 5, 2009.

⁷⁴ Schiavoni, Christina. Personal Communication. March 5, 2009.

⁷⁵ Title VI: Socioeconomic System. 1999. *Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*. (Available here: http://www.embavenez-us.org/index.php?pagina=constitution/title_vi.htm&titulo=Government)

⁷⁶ Title VI: Socioeconomic System. 1999. *Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*. (Available here: http://www.embavenez-us.org/index.php?pagina=constitution/title_vi.htm&titulo=Government)

⁷⁷ The Law of the Land was also part of the 49 law-decrees approved by the National Assembly. These laws directly opposed the old ruling elite in Venezuela (Wilpert 2007, 23)

⁷⁸ Zelik, Raul. 2003, September 3. "To Destroy and Reconstruct: The New State in Venezuela and the Popular Movement." *Venezuelanalysis.com*. (<http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/78>).

⁷⁹ Wilpert 2006, "Land for People Not for Profit in Venezuela", 252

⁸⁰ Wilpert 2006, "Land for People Not for Profit in Venezuela", 255

- ⁸¹ This section discusses rural land reform, although Venezuela also has an urban land reform policy. Urban land reform largely provides land titles to people living in the urban slums.
- ⁸² Wilpert, Gregory. 2007. *Changing Venezuela By Taking Power*. New York: Verso, 2007, 111
- ⁸³ Wilpert 2007, *Changing Venezuela By Taking Power*, 111.
- ⁸⁴ Sugget, James. 2009, February 20. "Murder of Small Farmer Rights Organizer Sparks Protests in Yaracuy, Venezuela." *Venezuelanalysis.com*. (<http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/news/4235>).
- ⁸⁵ Sugget, James. 2009 March 13. "Venezuelan Farmer Rights Organizations Unite to Oppose Assassinations by Landed Elite." *Venezuelanalysis.com*. Retrieved March 2009 (<http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/news/4293>)
- ⁸⁶ Sugget, James. 2008 August 20. "Venezuela: Land Reform Conflict Arises Around Strategic Water Source." *Venezuela Analysis*.
- ⁸⁷ Wilpert 2007, *Changing Venezuela By Taking Power*
- ⁸⁸ Wilpert 2007, *Changing Venezuela By Taking Power*, 112; Schiavoni, Christina. 2007 December 16. "A Vision of Food Sovereignty in Venezuela." *In Motion Magazine*
- ⁸⁹ Marquez, Humberto. 2008, June 18. "Co-operatives Turn Idle Landed Venezuelan Estates Green." *Venezuelanalysis.com*. (<http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/3567>).
- ⁹⁰ Schiavoni, Christina. 2007 December 16. "A Vision of Food Sovereignty in Venezuela." *In Motion Magazine*
- ⁹¹ Sugget, James. 2008 August 20. "Venezuela: Land Reform Conflict Arises Around Strategic Water Source." *Venezuela Analysis*.
- ⁹² Wilpert 2007, *Changing Venezuela By Taking Power*, 64
- ⁹³ Nunez, Miguel Angel. 2007 February 19. "How Far is The Venezuelan revolution Advancing?" *In Motion Magazine*. Washington D.C. (http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/opin/man_59points.html)
- ⁹⁴ Fox, Michael. 2006, November 28. "Venezuela's Secret Grassroots Democracy." *Venezuelanalysis.com*. (<http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/2090>).
- ⁹⁵ Phillips, Peter. 2009, January 13. "Socialism Seems to be Working in Venezuela." *Venezuelanalysis.com*. (<http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/4104>).
- ⁹⁶ Schiavoni, Christina. Personal Communication. March 5, 2009.
- ⁹⁷ Schiavoni, Christina. Personal Communication. March 5, 2009.
- ⁹⁸ Schiavoni, Christina. Personal Communication. March 5, 2009.
- ⁹⁹ Schiavoni, Christina. Personal Communication. March 5, 2009.
- ¹⁰⁰ Schiavoni, Christina. 2007 December 16. "A Vision of Food Sovereignty in Venezuela." *In Motion Magazine*.
- ¹⁰¹ Wilpert 2007, *Changing Venezuela By Taking Power*
- ¹⁰² Tockman, Jason. 2004, April 21. "Venezuela to Prohibit Transgenic Crops." *Venezuelanalysis.com*.
- ¹⁰³ "Interview with Miguel Angel Nunez: The Science of Sustainable Agriculture is Agroecology." 2007 August 27. *In Motion Magazine*.
- ¹⁰⁴ Schiavoni, Christina. Personal Communication. March 5, 2009.
- ¹⁰⁵ Schiavoni, Christina. Personal Communication. March 5, 2009.
- ¹⁰⁶ Wagner, Sarah. 2005. "Mercal: Reducing Poverty and Creating National Food Sovereignty in Venezuela." *Venezuela Analysis*, June 24. Retrieved November 2008. (<http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/1211>).
- ¹⁰⁷ PDVSA. 2008 January 22. "Venezuelan Government Launches New State Food Company." *Venezuelanalysis.com*. Retrieved April 1, 2009. (<http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/newsbrief/3091>)
- ¹⁰⁸ Sugget, James. 2008. "Venezuela: government and communities organize to ensure food distribution." *Venezuela Analysis*, February 27. Retrieved December 2008. (<http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/news/3202>); Schiavoni, Christina. Personal Communication. March 5, 2009.
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- ¹¹⁰ Chavez Frias, Hugo Rafeal. 2008. Mensaje Presidencial 2008.
- ¹¹¹ Burgon, Colin. 2009 February 6. "10 Years of Progress in Venezuela." *Venezuelanalysis.com*. Retrieved April 4, 2009. (<http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/4181>)
- ¹¹² Schiavoni, Christina. Personal Communication. March 5, 2009.
- ¹¹³ Wilpert, Gregory. 2007 February 28. "Venezuela Expands Regulation of Food Production." *Upside Down World*. Retrieved April 1, 2009. (<http://upsidedownworld.org/main/content/view/647/35/>)
- ¹¹⁴ Schiavoni, Christina. Personal Communication. March 5, 2009.
- ¹¹⁵ Empresas Polar is a large Venezuelan food and drink corporation.
- ¹¹⁶ Fuentes, Federico. 2009 March 27. "Mass Organization, Unity Increase as Venezuela's Revolution Deepens." *Venezuelanalysis.com*. Retrieved April 4, 2009. (<http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/4330>).

- ¹¹⁷ Sugget, James. 2009 March 2. "Venezuelan Government Takes Control of Rice Plants that Evade Regulated Prices." *Venezuelanalysis.com*. Retrieved April 4, 2009. (<http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/news/4256>)
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- ¹¹⁹ Schiavoni, Christina. Personal Communication. March 5, 2009.
- ¹²⁰ Goita, Mamadou. Personal Communication. April 3, 2009. Phone interview, Los Angeles to Mali.
- ¹²¹ "Nyeleni – for food sovereignty." 2007 January. *Seedling*. Spain: Grain. (<http://www.grain.org/seedling/index.cfm?id=456>).
- ¹²² Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes. 2006. Mémoire Paysan Sur La Loi D'Orientation Agricole (LOA). *Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes*. Retrieved February 2009. (<http://www.cnop-mali.org/spip.php?article6>).
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- ¹²⁴ "Nyeleni – for food sovereignty." 2007 January. *Seedling*. Spain: Grain. (<http://www.grain.org/seedling/index.cfm?id=456>).
- ¹²⁵ Cotula, Lorenzo, Mousa Djire and Ringo W. Tenga. 2008. *The Right to Food and Access to Natural Resources: Using Human Rights Arguments and Mechanisms to Improve Resource Access for the Rural Poor*. Rome, Italy: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Right to Food Unit. (http://www.fao.org/righttofood/publi09/natural_resources_en.pdf)
- ¹²⁶ A copy of the LAO is available here: <http://www.maliagriculture.org/LOA/index.html>
- ¹²⁷ Cotula et al 2008. *The Right to Food and Access to Natural Resources*, 41
- ¹²⁸ Cotula et al 2008. *The Right to Food and Access to Natural Resources*, 41
- ¹²⁹ Unless otherwise noted, the information in this section is based on a phone interview with Mamadou Goita, director of the Institute for Research and the Promotion of Alternatives in Development (IPAR) in Mali. Goita, Mamadou. Personal Communication. April 3, 2009. Phone interview, Los Angeles to Mali.
- ¹³⁰ Cotula et al 2008. *The Right to Food and Access to Natural Resources*, 48
- ¹³¹ Cotula et al 2008. *The Right to Food and Access to Natural Resources*, 48
- ¹³² Steward, Corrina. 2007, January 19. "Grassroots Organizing, Regional Trade Agreements and Food Sovereignty in Africa." *Grassroots International*.
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- ¹³⁶ Denvir, Daniel. 2008, July 27. "Wayward Allies: President Rafael Correa and the Ecuadorian Left. North American Congress on Latin America. (<http://nacla.org/node/4826>).
- ¹³⁷ Denvir, Daniel. 2008, July 27. "Wayward Allies: President Rafael Correa and the Ecuadorian Left. North American Congress on Latin America. (<http://nacla.org/node/4826>).
- ¹³⁸ La Mesa Agraria. 2008. *Si A La Soberanía Alimentaria*. Daily Motion. (http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x7arkj_si-a-la-soberania-alimentaria_news).
- ¹³⁹ La Mesa Agraria. 2008. *Si A La Soberanía Alimentaria*. Daily Motion. (http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x7arkj_si-a-la-soberania-alimentaria_news).
- ¹⁴⁰ Similar to many countries in the Global South, access to land and land reform is an important goal for food sovereignty in Ecuador. There are high concentrations of singularly owned land and monoculture production. A study by El Sistema de la Investigación de la Problemática Agraria del Ecuador (SIPAE), notes that based on the 2000 agricultural census, 6,616 people control 29.1 percent of agricultural land, while 6.26 percent of land is occupied by 535,309 units each at less than 5 hectares¹⁴⁰. Additionally, land is most heavily concentrated in the provinces of Guayas and Los Ríos where rice and corn is grown for Ecuadorian markets and cocoa, coffee, bananas, and African palm are grown for export. Large land concentrations tend to grow food and products for export¹⁴⁰.

(Information from: “Soberanía alimentaria crea fricciones entre Gobierno y sociedad.” 2008 December 28. *El Universo*.)

¹⁴¹ Based on translation by Karla Peña: Peña, Karla. 2008. “Putting Food First in the Constitution of Ecuador.” *Food First*, October 31. Retrieved November 5, 2008. (<http://www.foodfirst.org/en/node/2301>).

¹⁴² Translation by GRAIN: “Ecuador Bars GMOs?”. 2009. *GRAIN*. (<http://www.grain.org/seedling/?id=571>).

¹⁴³ Full text of Ecuador’s constitution:

http://www.asambleaconstituyente.gov.ec/documentos/constitucion_de_bolsillo.pdf. English translation of food sovereignty components, by Karla Peña, available here: <http://www.foodfirst.org/en/node/2301>.

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¹⁴⁵ Denvir, Daniel. 2008, July 27. “Wayward Allies: President Rafael Correa and the Ecuadorian Left. North American Congress on Latin America. (<http://nacla.org/node/4826>).

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¹⁴⁷ *Asamblea Nacional: Republica del Ecuador Comisión Legislativa y de Fiscalización*. (<http://www.asamblenacional.gov.ec>)

¹⁴⁸ In addition to updates on the Food Sovereignty Law, the working tables also provide updates on other efforts from the National Assembly. These updates and more are available here: <http://asambleanacional.gov.ec>. Specific efforts around the Food Sovereignty Regime are available here:

http://asambleanacional.gov.ec/blogs/soberania_alimentaria/.

¹⁴⁹ “Ley Orgánica del Régimen de Soberanía Alimentaria: La propuesta campesina e indígena.” 2009. (http://asambleanacional.gov.ec/blogs/soberania_alimentaria/).

¹⁵⁰ “Aprobada Soberanía Alimentaria y deja leyes pendientes.” 2009, February 17. *El Universo*. Ecuador. Retrieved February 2009. (<http://www.eluniverso.com/2009/02/17/1/1355/058B139DFD544694B1AC9A43C34FF2FD.html>).

¹⁵¹ “Veto parcial a Ley de Soberanía Alimentaria.” 2009 March 21. *El Universo*. Retrieved March 30, 2009. (<http://www.eluniverso.com>).

¹⁵² Hidalgo Flor, Francisco. 2009. “Editorial, Ley de Soberanía Alimentaria: Logros y Limites.” *El Sistema de la Investigación de la Problemática Agraria del Ecuador*. Retrieved March 30, 2009. (<http://www.sipae.com/editorial.html>).

¹⁵³ “Correa dice que ONG se meten en asuntos de política.” 2009 March 11. *El Universo*. Retrieved March 30, 2009. (<http://www.eluniverso.com>).

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¹⁵⁵ Buxton, Nick. 2008. Economic Strings: The Politics of Foreign Debt. In Jim Shultz and Melissa Crane Draper (Eds.), *Dignity and Defiance: Stories from Bolivia’s Challenge to Globalization*. Los Angeles, CA: The Regents of the University of California

¹⁵⁶ Buxton 2008, Economic Strings: The Politics of Foreign Debt

¹⁵⁷ Buxton 2008, Economic Strings: The Politics of Foreign Debt, 156

¹⁵⁸ Taylor, Matthew. “Eva Morales hails ‘new Bolivia’ as constitution is approved.” *The Guardian*. Available online (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jan/26/bolivia>).

¹⁵⁹ BBC. “Bolivians ‘back new constitution.’” 2009, January 26. *BBC News*. Retrieved January 29, 2009. (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/americas/7849666.stm>).

¹⁶⁰ La Via Campesina. 2008, November 27. “Solidarity with Bolivia!” *La Via Campesina*. Retrieved January 29, 2009. (<http://www.viacampesina.org>).

¹⁶¹ The text of Bolivia’s 2009 constitution is available here: <http://www.repac.org.bo/destacados/CPE-Final-15-12-2007.pdf>

¹⁶² There are 36 indigenous nations in Bolivia.

¹⁶³ van Schaick, Alex. 2009, January 21. “Bolivia’s New Constitution.” *North American Congress on Latin America*. Retrieved February 2009. (<http://nacla.org/node/5437>).

¹⁶⁴ Shultz, Jim. 2008. The Cochabamba Water Revolt and Its Aftermath. In Jim Shultz and Melissa Crane Draper (Eds.), *Dignity and Defiance: Stories from Bolivia’s Challenge to Globalization*. Los Angeles, CA: The Regents of the University of California

¹⁶⁵ van Schaick, Alex. 2009, January 21. “Bolivia’s New Constitution.” *North American Congress on Latin America*. Retrieved February 2009. (<http://nacla.org/node/5437>).

¹⁶⁶ FAO. 2008. “Recently Adopted Bolivian Constitution Recognizes the Right to Food.” *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*. Retrieved January 29, 2009. (http://www.fao.org/righttofood/news6_en.htm).

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- ¹⁷¹ Buxton 2008, *Economic Strings: The Politics of Foreign Debt*, 173
- ¹⁷² Buxton 2008, *Economic Strings: The Politics of Foreign Debt*
- ¹⁷³ Goodman, Jim. 2009 January. Personal Communication.
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Appendix 1, Daily updates on the food sovereignty law from Ecuador’s National Assembly.

Date and Title	Summary of Update
January 28, 2009 “Foro Nacional para la Socialización del Proyecto de Ley del regimen de Soberanía Alimentaria.”	This national forum to draft the first version of the food sovereignty law, collected input and suggestions for the first draft. Focused on participatory democracy.
February 3, 2009 “Comisión de Salud entregó informe para primer debate de Soberanía Alimentaria.”	The Commission of Health and Environment bringing together the opinions and suggestions of different sectors—producers, governmental and non-governmental <i>campesino</i> organizations for the first debate of the Food Sovereignty law. Also notes the States’ responsibilities in regards to food sovereignty.
February 3, 2009 “Este Miércoles se desarrollara un foro alternativo de Soberanía Alimentaria”	Invitation to the Alternative Forum of Food Sovereignty. Themes to discuss include: land and water; administration and use of natural resources. Inviting many sectors including: campesino organizations, villages and citizens of Ecuador, unions, professional organizations, and governmental and non-governmental organizations.
February 4, 2009 “Se propone redistribución de la tierra en Foro de Soberanía Alimentaria.”	Sistema Investigación de la Problemática Agraria (SIPAE); Acción Ecológica; CONDEM. -Francisco Hidalgo, SIPAE: need legal norms for land reform and less focus on production for export -El Movimiento Popular Democrático (The Democratic Popular Movement) proposed an initiative: Socialization of production; Regulation of commerce and distribution; Credit and financial assistance for small and medium producers; Investigation of the alignment of agribusiness with the principles of food sovereignty; Sustainable livestock
February 4, 2009 “Abel Ávila llama a los ecuatorianos a participar en la construcción de las leyes de tierra y agua.”	Abel Ávila, member of The Commission of Health and Environment, proposed to avoid food imports and GM crops and to protect water sources. Said that the project has the tendency to regulate agriculture through contracts which may exploit the <i>campesino</i> ; need equal land access, perhaps the creation of an institution or a fund; end dependency on agrochemicals—toxic and expensive; aim for organic agriculture in Ecuador.
February 5, 2009 “Este sábado, segundo foro sobre Soberanía Alimentaria.”	Announces the second forum on food sovereignty. Is to include videoconference with: Ambato, Cuenca, Guayaquil, Ibarra, Loja, Portoviejo, and Quito.
February 6, 2009 “Mas de 500 personas participaron en foro virtual de Soberanía Alimentaria.”	National virtual forum on food sovereignty set for February 7, 2009. Provinces participating—Azuay, Guayas, Tungurahua, Imbabura, Loja, Manabí, and Quito. About 500 people interconnected by videoconference. Coordinated by FAO, ILDIS, CAFOLIS, and the Commission on Health and Nutrition. Each city 20 minutes to prepare presentation and 10 minutes to give presentation.
February 7, 2009 “Soberanía Alimentaria se enmarca en los principios del buen vivir: J. Abril”.	National Virtual Forum of Food Sovereignty Regime videoconference. President of the Commission on Health and Environment Jaime Abril: Food sovereignty is a right for all, want to encourage democracy, suggestions and proposals.
February 7, 2009 “Ley de Soberanía Alimentaria establece seguro agropecuario.”	Juan Gómez, advisor to parliament, explained the advances/present state of “Ley de Régimen de Soberanía Alimentaria”: complexity of law; importance of social participation, public deliberation in; discussed access to resources, water/land, protection of biodiversity, technical assistance, exchange of knowledge, access to capital and incentives.

<p>February 7, 2009 “Ley Alimentaria promoverá una verdadera nacionalización del sistema productivo.”</p>	<p>Virtual forum with seven provinces. Paid attention to land usage; access to water and other resources. Noted that there needs to be participation from the Bank or another financial system to help with production. Jaime Abril, president of the Commission on Health and Environment stated: “It is necessary to go to a true nationalization of the production system, to a political bias that guarantees production for internal consumption, from our own fields.”</p>
<p>February 9, 2009 “Pleno tramitará hoy en primer debate Ley de Soberanía Alimentaria.”</p>	<p>Formulate agrarian & agro-food policies for sufficient production, transformation, commercialization, and consumption of healthy food. Must respect, protect, & promote biodiversity and knowledge/traditional forms of production. General commission composed of over 400 people to share thoughts including representatives from FENOCIN.</p>
<p>February 9, 2009 “Ley de Soberanía Alimentaria tiene un carácter global, integral, y estratégico.”</p>	<p>-Jaime Abril (president of Commission on Health and Environment) meets with Consejo Nacional de Mujeres; Secretaria Nacional de Planificación y Desarrollo (SENPLADES); FENOCIN; la Confederación Nacional Campesina Eloy Alfaro y Protección Animal del Ecuador. -Need to take into account the multi-dimensional nature/complexity of food sovereignty law. Laws to regulate it: land; water; agricultural development; health; plant and animal.</p>
<p>February 9, 2009 “Pleno debatió marco normativo de Ley de Soberanía Alimentaria.”</p>	<p>La Comisión Legislativa y Fiscalización, session 24. First debate around Food Sovereignty regime. Looking to articulate points in the farming, forest, fishery, and fishing sectors. Discussed: -prioritizing national production: encouraging democratic participation, supporting farmers and consumers. Investigate fiscal policies, tariffs: incentives/credits for small and medium producers. Farm insurance, credit, subsidies. Technical Assistance. Access to water. Internal markets.</p>
<p>February 12, 2009 “Comisión de Salud y Ambiente analiza el proyecto de ley.”</p>	<p>The Commission on Health and Environment of the National Assembly began revising the Bill of Food Sovereignty. Incorporated comments made by the assembly's plenary session February 9, 2009. This analysis will be submitted to the National Assembly.</p>
<p>February 13, 2009 “Plantean que la calidad de alimentos sea prioridad en la Soberanía Alimentaria.”</p>	<p>Food quality is an important target. Need to investigate new technologies, look towards environmental conservation also.</p>
<p>February 13, 2009 “Informe de Soberanía Alimentaria listo para segundo debate.”</p>	<p>-Current proposal establishes mechanisms for the State to fill its obligations and to guarantee people, communities, and towns the self-sufficiency of healthy, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food. -Project has 5 titles: general principles; access to factors of food production; food and agricultural production/commercialization; consumption and nutrition; social participation. -Scope includes: agro-biodiversity/seeds; knowledge; social participation; conservation, storage, consumption; water; rural food/agricultural development; the agro-industry among other things.</p>
<p>February 13, 2009 “Esta tarde, ley de Soberanía Alimentaria entra a segundo debate en el pleno.”</p>	<p>Include multi-sector approach to the law. Incentives for productive use of land, disincentives for monopolization of land or land that is unproductive (will be redistributed). Fiscal policies, tributary, tariffs and other protections for food/agricultural sector to avoid dependence, to promote social participation and public deliberation.</p>
<p>February 16, 2009 “Ley de Soberanía Alimentaria desarrolla acceso a la tierra y amplía la función social y ambiental.”</p>	<p>Proposal should more accurately define and develop food sovereignty. Needs to specify scope and application. Discussion of access to factors for food and agricultural production: water, agro biodiversity, land, seeds, technology, knowledge, extension programs. Need social participation and public deliberation: National Council for Food Sovereignty, National Conference for Food Sovereignty.</p>

February 17, 2009 “Comisión Legislativa aprobó Ley de Soberanía Alimentaria.”	Approval of ‘la Ley Orgánica del Régimen de la Soberanía Alimentaria’. The law passed with 49 votes in favor, 2 against, 3 blank, and 11 abstaining. Contains 35 articles, 4 general dispositions, and 1 final disposition. The president now has a month to approve or veto all or part of the law.
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Each of these updates was posted on the National Assembly’s online forum: <http://asambleanacional.gov.ec>

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There are a wide range of organizations, peoples' movements and coalitions working to research, promote, and speak for food sovereignty. These include, but are not limited to:

La Via Campesina (www.viacampesina.org): See La Via Campesina for further connections to peasant organizations and peoples' movements worldwide.

The Alliance for Responsible Trade (www.art-us.org)

Food Secure Canada/Sécurité Alimentaire Canada (www.foodsecurecanada.org)

Friends of the Earth International (www.foei.org)

GRAIN (www.grain.org)

Grassroots International (www.grassrootsonline.org)

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) (www.iatp.org)

The Institute for Food and Development Policy/Food First (www.foodfirst.org)

IPC Food Sovereignty, the International NGO/CSO Planning Committee
(www.foodsovereignty.org)

National Family Farm Coalition (<http://www.nffc.net>)

National Farmers Union Canada (www.nfu.ca)