



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Farmers' representatives from developing countries at the gates of the EU

Brussels, 14.10.08 – At the occasion of the World Food Day and International Day of Poverty Eradication, SAAPE in collaboration with its European partners Eurostep, Hivos and the Europe External Policy Advisors jointly organised a hearing in the European Parliament urging the EU to adequately respond to the food crisis by making use of the €1 billion food facility in a way that focuses on the vulnerable and marginalized small-scale farmers in the developing world.

The €1 billion EU food facility is being designed to basically boost food production as a rapid response to the food crisis by providing external inputs of seeds and fertilizers to farmers in the developing countries.

“We are concerned that the food facility will be used in a way that supports multinational agribusinesses in making inroads in the region because the ongoing intensive external inputs driven industrialization of agriculture has significantly contributed to the current crisis and has devastating economic, environmental and health repercussions” said peasant representatives from Nepal, India and South Africa with one voice.

The peasant delegation strongly criticized the current aid and trade policies of the EU that detrimentally undermines sustainable models of eco-agriculture being successfully practised by a majority of small-scale farmers in the developing world. There is ample empirical evidence on the ground that sustainable eco-farming traditions put farmers in a sovereign position enabling them to produce a livelihood for themselves and their families as well as ensuring world's food



Rue Stévin 115 – 1000 Brussels – Belgium
Tel. +32 (0)2 230 07 32 – Fax. +32 (0)2 230 37
80

Email: office@eepea.be – Website:
<http://www.eepea.eu>



security by using local seeds, organic fertilizers and pesticides and traditional multi-cropping growing patterns.

Empowering farmers through genuine agrarian reform, access to land and land ownership, natural resources and guaranteeing their sovereign right to choose how and what to plant is the collective responsibility of nation states and the international community and therefore, only social justice, democracy and food sovereignty can end world hunger was the passionate call made by the peasant representatives.

The hearing concluded on an optimistic note urging the EU to provide the political leadership in international development cooperation by redefining and kick-starting a genuine pro-poor development paradigm that is based on justice and not on mere charity. The food facility indeed provides the opportunity of making an historic start to give due recognition to people's voice and people's agenda as opposed to the existing top-down prescribed solutions that have only failed in eradicating global poverty and promoting sustainable development.

The event brought together officials from the European Commission, EU parliamentarians, representatives from the EU member states, the European civil society and the World Bank on a common platform to critically debate solutions to the ongoing food crisis. The event was jointly hosted by the Members of the European Parliament, Thijs Berman and Gay Mitchell who are supporting the €1 billion EU food facility.



Rue Stévin 115 – 1000 Brussels – Belgium
Tel. +32 (0)2 230 07 32 – Fax. +32 (0)2 230 37
80

Email: office@eepa.be – Website:
<http://www.eepa.eu>