

***Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations Office***

***and other International Organizations in Geneva***

**Human Rights Council**

**Fourth session of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on a United Nations declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas**

At the outset, Brazil would like to congratulate you for your reelection as Chair-Rapporteur of this Working Group.

Agriculture is one of the main pillars of the Brazilian economy. We are one of the world's largest exporters in agricultural crops, such as sugar, coffee, soybeans and orange juice, to name a few.

During the last couple of decades, Brazil underwent enormous agricultural technological developments towards a sustainable food production. On average, national agricultural productivity almost doubled in relation to the early 1980s. By 2010, the country was already the third largest agricultural exporter in the world.

Approximately 15% of the Brazilian population dwells in the agricultural sector. Family farming has become one of the main tools in Brazil to ensure the sustainable growth of food production. It is responsible for the production of 70% of all food Brazilians consume and accounts for 33% of the value of agricultural production in the country.

Brazil has implemented a comprehensive social security protection mechanism for smallholders and family farmers, in order to help them maintain their livelihood. The Government has developed programs aimed to increase the participation of smallholders and family farmers in the market, including specific means of access to the Governmental Food Acquisition Program (PAA) and the National School Meals Program (PNAE), programs that have received praise internationally.

In recent years, approximately 25% of the amount of food acquired by the National School Meals Program originates from family farming, smallholder agriculture and its organizations.

Experiences in Brazil and in many other countries indicate that fostering family farming and smallholder agriculture creates positive externalities for the development of local economies, for food security and the fight against poverty.

Both commercial agriculture and family agriculture create jobs and produce wealth; both play an important role in development, promotion of food security and in the fight against poverty. Our experience shows that family farming and commercial agriculture can coexist in a harmonic manner. It is possible to promote and protect both activities in a complementary and sustainable fashion.

In this context, Brazil considers the negotiations of a UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas as one among many other efforts to draw the attention of the international community to the situation of peasants and other rural workers. We also see it as part of a permanent effort to achieve food security and to ensure the enjoyment of human rights by all, including the right to food, across the globe.

We recognize the contribution of peasants and other rural workers to the conservation and improvement of biodiversity, as well as to ensure nutrition and food security. Their work is central to the achievement of the sustainable development goals. We share the view expressed by many delegations today about the importance of respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

We understand that a UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas should not constitute, however, a focus of opposition or criticism against agribusiness, whose practices and regulations should also be consistent with human rights.

The Brazilian delegation will constructively participate in the negotiations of the fourth session of this open-ended intergovernmental working group and will contribute to the conclusion of a balanced draft declaration that recognizes human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas in a way that is consistent with international law.

I thank you.