

Working group on a United Nations declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas

Expert Bios:

MILLION BELAY

Million Belay is a founder of the MELCA-Ethiopia NGO and the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), is an expert and advocate for forestry conservation, indigenous livelihoods and food and seed sovereignty. He is the founder and director of MELCA-Ethiopia, and indigenous NGO working on agro-ecology, intergenerational learning, conservation of forests and improving the livelihood of local communities and indigenous peoples. He played a significant part in the establishment and activities of the Africa Biodiversity Network (ABN), and is a co-founder and coordinator of the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), a network of networks that advocates for seed and food sovereignty, as well as promoting agroecology and supporting the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples to their land. In addition to these topics, he is interested in knowledge dialogues and the use of participatory mapping for social learning, identity building and mobilization of memory. Million is also working to integrate resilience thinking into national, regional and global policies. This includes exploring resilience assessment methodologies that help communities in their adaptive strategies to social and ecological change. He won the National Green Hero Award for both Ethiopia and Addis Ababa, the capital city, in 2008. He was also a nominee to the International Forest Hero Award in 2011. He has a PhD in Education, an MSc. in Tourism and Conservation, and a BSc. in Biology.

JOSÉ ESQUINAS-ALCAZAR

Professor José Esquinas-Alcázar is PhD in Genetics and MSc in Vegetable Crops at the University of California, Davis, USA. He is also Doctor in Agronomy and Agricultural Engineer at the Polytechnical University of Madrid, Spain.

Starting in 1978 he has worked for 30 years at FAO (UN Organization for Food and Agriculture) as: Secretary of the Inter-governmental Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (1985-2007), Chair of the FAO Committee on Ethic for Food and Agriculture (1999-2007) and Secretary of the FAO Seed Treaty (ITPGRFA) since its entry into force in 2004 until his retirement from FAO in 2007.

Since 2007 till 2013 he has been the Director of the Chair on Studies on Hunger and Poverty of the University of Cordoba and full professor at the Polytechnic University of Madrid.

He is currently active in different fora and universities all over the world. He has authored numerous books and publications and has received many international awards.

He can be contacted at: jose.esquinas@upm.es and Tel: +34 696387697

DIEGO A MONTÓN

Argentinean, born May 13, 1976. Agronomist Graduated from the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences of the National University of Cuyo in 2001

Member of the Board of Directors of the Faculty in 1999

Teacher of middle level schools of peasant communities and indigenous peoples. 2001 - 2009

Member of the Union of Rural Landless Workers of the province of Mendoza - Argentina

Member of the National Coordination of the National Indigenous Campesino Movement of Argentina

Coordinator of the Continental Secretariat of the Latin American Coordination of Rural Organizations (CLOC Via Campesina) and Member of the Continental Political Commission

Delegate for CLOC Vía Campesina to follow the process of the Declaration of peasant rights in Latin America in 2012.

Member of the peasant rights collective of CLOC LVC / Participated in the preparation and presentation of regional reports on violations of peasant rights before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in 2013 and 2014.

Currently teaching at the Peasant Agroecology School and the Peasant Technical Superior Diploma of Social Economy and Local Development in Mendoza Argentina.

Partner of the Center for Legal and Social Studies of Argentina (CELS)

SMITA NARULA

Professor Smita Narula is Distinguished Lecturer and Interim Director of the Human Rights Program at the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College. Narula is former legal advisor to the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the right to food (2008 – 2014). From 2003 to 2014, she served as Director of the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice and Professor of the International Human Rights Clinic at New York University (NYU) School of Law. Prior to NYU, she was India Researcher and Senior Researcher for South Asia at Human Rights Watch (1997 to 2003).

Narula is author of dozens of academic publications and investigative reports on rights-related subjects, and has helped formulate policy, legal, and community-led responses to a range of social justice and ecological issues worldwide. She has led key research and advocacy initiatives to help ensure the right to food and food system sustainability, paying particular attention to the accountability of corporations and international financial institutions for human rights abuses, and to the impact of agricultural and land use policies on the human rights of peasants and other rural communities. Narula earned her Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School and her M.A. (Development Studies) and B.A. (International Relations) from Brown University.

YICHING SONG

Dr Yiching Song obtained her PhD in Rural Sociology and Rural Development from Wageningen University in the Netherlands in 1998. Since 2000, she has been a Research Fellow and then Senior Research Fellow in the Center for Chinese Agricultural Policy (CCAP), Chinese Academy of Science. She has been a member of the Scientific Committee of CIMMYT for the last 5 years. She is also a lecturer professor of the College of Humanity and Development of China Agricultural University and holds the same position in Jilin Agricultural University. She has been appointed as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the China Centre for Intellectual Property in Agriculture (CCIPA), Chinese Academy of Agricultural Science. Her research focuses on sustainable agricultural and rural development in China covering a range of related areas such as agricultural research and extension, biodiversity and related IPR and ABS issues, policies and institutions, rural indigenous community-based bio-culture resource management and development and farmer organization, gender and related social issues. Her main research methodology is participatory action research and she is leaders of the participatory action research programme and Farmer Seeds Network (in China) in CCAP under Chinese Academy of Science.

RAMONA IOANA DUMINICIOIU

Ms. Ramona Ioana Duminiçioiu is a peasant from Transylvania region, în Romania and one of the founders (2009) and a member of the of Eco Ruralis – a national peasant association, member of La Via Campesina Europe. She is involved în Eastern European peasant articulation, processes and actions, in the Nyeleni Europe movement for Food Sovereignty. Since 2016, she was elected as member in the Coordination Committee of the European Coordination Via Campesina. At international level, she is a member of the Civil Society Mechanism for the relations with the UN Committee on World Food Security (CSM-CFS) – representing food producers on behalf of La Via Campesina. Also, since 2016, Ms. Duminiçioiu is actively involved in the United Nations process towards the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other people working in rural areas.

CHRISTOPHE GOLAY

Dr. Christophe Golay is Senior Research Fellow and Strategic Adviser on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights. In the last 10 years, he has been providing legal advice to a number of stakeholders in relation to the development of a UN declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. From 2001 to 2008 he was Legal Adviser to the first UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food and undertook missions with the UN in Brazil, Guatemala, Bolivia, Cuba, Niger, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, India and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. He published several books and articles on the right to food, the rights of peasants, and economic, social and cultural rights.

ANA MARIA SUAREZ FRANCO

Ana Maria Suarez Franco is the Permanent Representative of FIAN International, the human rights organization for the Right to Food and Nutrition, in Geneva since 2011. She is currently responsible for the coordination on the Right to Food Accountability work. She holds degrees in law from the Universidad Javeriana (Bogotá), as well as in public policies from the Universidad de los Andes (Bogotá). Originally from Colombia, she moved to Germany in 1999, where she has received the titles LL.M. from the University of Heidelberg and Doctor Juris from the University of Mannheim. Being member of the “Coloquio Iberoamericano” of the Max Plank Institute for Comparative International Law and International Public Law, her main topics of research have been the Justiciability of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the monitoring of public policies related to the Human Right to Food. As practitioner, Suárez Franco has been responsible for justiciability, country and case work at FIAN International.