

Statement from the People's Movement Assembly on Food Sovereignty US Social Forum 2010

Over a half-century ago, Mahatma Gandhi led a multitude of Indians to the sea to make salt—in defiance of the British Empire's monopoly on this resource critical to people's diet. The action catalyzed the fragmented movement for Indian independence and was the beginning of the end for Britain's rule over India. The act of "making salt" has since been repeated many times in many forms by people's movements seeking liberation, justice and sovereignty: Cesar Chavez, Nelson Mandela, and the Zapatistas are just a few of the most prominent examples. Our food movement— one that spans the globe—seeks food sovereignty from the monopolies that dominate our food systems with the complicity of our governments. We are powerful, creative, committed and diverse. **It is our time to make salt.**

A movement for food sovereignty - the people's democratic control of the food system, the right of all people to healthy, culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems - is building from every corner of the globe.

We find that our work to build a better food system in the United States is inextricably linked to the struggle for workers' rights, immigrant's rights, women's rights, the fight to dismantle racism in our communities, and the struggle for sovereignty in indigenous communities. We find that in order to create a better food system, we must break up the corporate control of our seeds, land, water and natural resources.

Because at a time of record harvests and record profits we have over one billion hungry people on the planet; because poverty is the root cause of hunger; because the world's oceans are being polluted and plundered, because industrial agriculture contributes one third of all greenhouse gas emissions, because increasing inequality, poverty, hunger, a global land grab, and environmental destruction are threatening the livelihoods of family farmers, farmworkers, fisherfolk, and marginalized communities worldwide; and because community based food systems and agroecological farming can cool the planet, build resilience to climate change, and eliminate poverty;

We therefore commit to re-building local food economies in our own communities, to dismantling structural racism, to democratizing land access, to building opportunities for the leadership of our youth, and to working towards food sovereignty in partnership with social movements around the world;

We call on others in the US to demand an end to the global land grab, to end both corporate and military land occupations, to demand fairer trade, aid and investment policies, land reform, and support for sustainable peasant and community agriculture and sustainable community fisheries;

We endorse actions that include: the liberation of land and water resources for the production of food and sustainable livelihoods; the creation of new structures for cooperative ownership of land and food production, processing and distribution; the integration of labor rights, immigrant's rights and food justice; the valuing of women as primary food providers, and the denouncement of false solutions and false partnerships addressing climate change, hunger and economic development;

We demand a world in which everyone has control over their food and no one has to put food in their mouth that hurts people or the environment.

Organizations and individuals among us have therefore committed to the following actions:

- Launching a campaign for food sovereignty as a right of the people
- Growing and harvesting as much food as we possibly can everywhere
- Liberating land through reclaiming urban and rural spaces for the production of food for communities; demanding the use of public lands for food production
- Participating in a global campaign against land grabs, in which corporations and governments grab up the lands of communities
- Carrying forward the people's agenda coming out of the Cochabamba climate summit -- including popular education around food and climate justice and promoting sustainable agriculture as a solution to climate change
- Standing with the people of Haiti, Palestine, Honduras, and other countries whose food sovereignty is threatened by political, military, and/or corporate occupation
- Hosting collective meals in our communities as a way of connecting people across generations and cultural backgrounds and as a tool for dismantling racism in the food system
- Forging new models of collective control of land and waterways; assuring legal protection of the commons
- Building the leadership of the next generation; providing opportunities for urban and rural youth to have a future in food and farming
- Rejecting GMOs and other forms of the corporate takeover of our food systems
- Creatively and strategically working to dismantle the corporations who have hijacked the world's food systems
- Affirming the sovereignty of indigenous peoples in North America and throughout the globe
- Committing our food movements in the US to be active participants in the global movement for food sovereignty and to work to stop our government and corporations from practices that undermine food sovereignty globally.
- Challenging US food and agricultural aid and development policy (e.g., Monsanto and USAID's recent "donation" of seeds to Haiti)
- Working towards a people's food and farm bill based on principles of food sovereignty
- Hosting community seed exchanges
- Engaging communities in popular education on GMOs and the role of corporations in our food system
- Engaging communities in popular education on community nutrition and public health
- Creating more community farmers markets that are accessible and affordable to all; affirming everyone's right to food that is good, safe, healthy, and fair
- Helping everyone understand where their food comes from and who helped bring it to their table
- Highlighting the common struggles between farmers and farmworkers in the US and their counterparts throughout the world