

Curso Internacional de Agroecología y Desarrollo Rural Sostenible

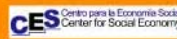
2 al 15 de Julio 2006



Declaration of the International Course of Agroecology and Sustainable Rural Development

The participants of the International Shortcourse of Agroecology and Sustainable Rural Development, who came to Matagalpa, Nicaragua from 12 countries, gathered in the facilities of the Autonomous National University of Nicaragua, and upon completion of the Course **DECLARE** the following:

1. We understand Sustainable Development as a legitimate aspiration of the whole population, including both urban and rural people who yearn for a full life that allows them to access a form of economic development that includes social justice, respect for diversity, balanced management of the environment, and the strengthening of democratic institutions.
2. We recognize that without appropriate policies you cannot achieve Sustainable Development. In the Mesoamerican region, there must be a responsible revision of the public policies that condition the access and control of the natural and productive resources.

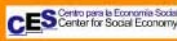


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3. We believe that it is necessary to permit more autonomous decision-making processes in our countries; we call for a democracy that listens to the voice of rural residents, and guarantees the right of self-determination.
4. To have real social participation, it is necessary to pass from discourse to practice; we can do this by socializing information and promoting justice through a more transformative educational process toward the creation of a common ecological conscience, as well as the respect and support for civil society and the construction of new participatory democratic models for sustainable development.
5. We recognize that that both the lived-local experiences and international organizations are calling for an Agroecological approach to our food systems.
6. We affirm that Agroecology is a valid and necessary proposal supporting Sustainable Development processes through the design and management of sustainable food systems.
7. To apply Agroecology it is necessary to: a) Increase the efficiency in the use of inputs, reducing both environmental and economic costs; b) Substitute inputs and conventional practices with sustainable alternatives; c) Re-design agroecosystem with ecological



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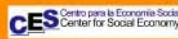
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processes; and d) Make the transition from the dominant ethics and values towards those that support more sustainable food production and consumption.

8. We recognize the importance of promoting participatory action research, this is an effective approach to recover and share community-based strategies for food sovereignty and to generate increased capacity for self-determination and empowerment.
9. We consider that the starting point to generate authentic development processes is the recovery of local knowledge and traditional technologies, and that local interests and needs should prevail in the research process.
10. We alert different organizations and the general public about the risks of bio-pirates; the bio-pirates are the organizations that through the illegal and fraudulent manipulation of tangible and intangible local and indigenous property, including seeds, germplasm, and ancestral knowledge, generate private profits.
11. We recognize the need to create educational programs at all levels that support the transformation of society's current behavior towards one that considers environmental protection. It is important to emphasize graduate degree programs in Agroecology and Sustainable Rural development. We recommend that educational programs have a strong



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link with local knowledge, a commitment with rural communities, an inter-institutional and international component, and an interdisciplinary focus

12. We recommend that Central American institutions lead Mesoamerican educational programs in Agroecology.
13. All these recommendations should be applied with intercultural awareness, attention to gender equity, an inter-institutional focus, and with a collaborative and entrepreneurial spirit.

Given in Matagalpa, Nicaragua, on the 15th day of July, 2006.

