

TOWARDS A GLOBAL MONITORING CENTRE ON PRODUCERS OF CROPS DECLARED TO BE ILLICIT

In March 2007, the International Promotion Committee (IPC) of the Global Forum of Producers of Crops Declared to be illicit was created in Valencia (Spain). This committee met several times until it reached its objective: the Barcelona Forum in January 2009.

From the first meetings to set up the IPC, it appeared that one of the outcomes of this Forum should be the creation of a monitoring centre¹ on producers of crops declared to be illicit in the countries where this problem is the most vivid.

The fact that the United Nations' organizations in charge of the issue (ECOSOC, UNODC, CND and INCB) and those from the countries fighting against drug trafficking currently put forward contradictory figures on the issue, added to the fact that millions of farmers, natives and small producers are the priority target of the war against drugs, reveal the errors of the crop areas verification systems, the informal monitoring of the concerned populations, the damages on the environment and the importance of questions such as food security, human rights, etc.

The proposition of a monitoring centre, set out to the representatives of the natives, farmers and small producers at the Barcelona Forum was seen as a priority extension of this Forum. The technical secretariat was asked to progress on this project in order to set it out to the concerned organizations and institutions.

In this post-forum stage, some advances have been noted concerning the creation of a Global Monitoring Centre on Producers of Crops Declared to be Illicit. First and foremost, the members of the initial IPC, the organizations' representatives and the people who, by their work, their guidance and their presence allowed the implementation of the Forum, have all been contacted.

At the same time, the dialogue was carried on with the officials of the Polytechnic University of Valencia, so that if the project succeeds, this academic institution can be a support to the organization that will be created.

That is why, in the upcoming months, a Consortium could be made up of institutions promoting the forum (CERAI, TNI, WOLA, WMPA), of the involved people (ICP and promoters), of the potential donors (GTZ, OSI, AECID, National Plan Against Drugs, Barcelona Solidaria and others) and of the interested universities² (in this case, the Polytechnic University of Valencia).

The consortium would be endowed with a managing body democratically elected by its members and that would decide the main directions of the Monitoring Centre's work. An executive secretariat depending from this managing body would centralize information, keep the contacts, enforce the decisions taken by the managing body, etc. It would be set up in premises granted by the university. A signed convention between the consortium and the university's education authority would grant the former a specific status.

Some elements of the long term strategy that the Monitoring Centre could adopt emerged from the Barcelona Forum's³ debates, among others:

1. To defend the right to the traditional uses (cultural, social and medical) for the populations that grow the three crops declared to be illicit by the Single Convention of 1961 (coca, cannabis and poppy).
2. To favour a real integrated development for native populations, farmers and small producers in the areas concerned by crops declared to be illicit, by tackling beyond economic issues the right to health, education, transport, access to land and to landed property, as well as the development of production and food sovereignty.
3. To monitor the forced eradications, whether they are manual or by aerial fumigation, that cause the militarization of production areas as well as the violation of the populations' human rights.
4. To promote the relationships between legitimate producers organizations and governmental organizations. To develop producers associations' visibility in order to strengthen their ability to protest regarding their own governments, cooperation organizations or international institutions.
5. To study the consequences of these crops on the environment (erosion, desertification, deforestation, water pollution) and their effects on the populations' living conditions and on the durability of their agricultural activity.
6. To study the effects of these crops and of the trafficking of their products on traditional farming societies.

¹ Monitoring centre or similar organization. A centre to monitor the evolution of crops and of the farmers' situation.

² Collaboration between universities from different continents that wish to study these subjects should be promoted.

³ Cf the final declaration of the Barcelona Forum.