

United Nations just proclaimed Universal Rights of Peasants

2 Oct 2018 | Blog, Research

The United Nations just adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, thus proclaiming new rights and binding States to take measures to respect and protect rural needs, singularities, traditions, and knowledge. An indispensable element to consider when undertaking reforms of Cannabis-related policies.

Today, a huge victory happens for all the farmers, small-scale growers, peasants and people working in rural areas around the world. The scope of Human Rights has been positively extended to all these populations, facing threats related to the global economy.



Peasants taking care of Cannabis plants in the traditional area of cultivation in northern Morocco. Source: The view from


Fez

The document was originally proposed by Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador and South Africa, and then received co-sponsorship from Algeria, El Salvador, Egypt, Haiti, Kenya, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Philippines, Togo, Venezuela and the State of Palestine. Switzerland notably supported the document in the negotiations.

This will help opening doors to incentivize rural policies that include *Cannabis* in their development strategies, and shift away part of the *Cannabis*-related discussions out of the counter-narcotics approach and mindset.

Indeed, the cultivation of *Cannabis* in rural areas around the world has been part of longstanding traditions, in all continents. The right to cultivate *Cannabis* plants in the areas where its cultivation is ancestral, are recognized and protected by the different international texts protecting indigenous people's traditions. Furthermore, besides the traditional areas of cultivation, even the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) recognizes that "many small-scale farmers in drug-producing countries grow illicit drug crops out of poverty and the absence of viable licit alternatives. Coca, opium poppy and *Cannabis* are non-perishable, high-value commodities that can be grown in marginal terrain, in poor soil, with limited or no irrigation, and can provide income for those who are land-, food- and cash-poor."

Notwithstanding, it is well-known that peasants and people living in rural areas, even though they are involved in the cultivation of so-called "narcotic plants", *Cannabis* included, are victims of a disproportionate impact of the war on drugs on their lives and the stability of their communities. UNDP acknowledges that "drug control efforts often have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups and marginalized communities: peasant farmers, low-level drug offenders, such as those transporting or selling small quantities of drugs, and racial and ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples" adding that "conditions of scarcity, displacement, state neglect, economic and geographic isolation and livelihoods insecurity, including in situations of conflict, increase the vulnerability of peasants and poor farmers to engaging in drug crop production."

 Results of the votes on the adoption of the Declaration | Universal Rights of Peasants and other people working in Rural Areas | Human Right Council of the United Nations

The adoption of the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas** is an added element in the work consisting in reading *Cannabis* and drug policies under a multidisciplinary approach that includes human rights, sustainable development, health approach as well as concerns for international peace and security. The declaration is indeed particularly precise and clear, stating that “States [...] shall promptly take legislative, administrative and other appropriate steps to achieve progressively the full realization of the rights of the present Declaration that cannot be immediately guaranteed.”

All these elements will be subject of debate and discussion during the **International Cannabis Policy Conference**, in relation with the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs' High-Level meeting that will draft International *Cannabis* law and policy guidelines for the next decades. When it comes to making Cannabis policy and legal Cannabis markets fit to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the rights of peasants will have to be at the core! Learn more: conference.faaat.net

Sources:

- Addressing the development dimensions of Drug Policy, UNDP, June 2015,
- Reflections on Drug Policy and its Impact on Human Development, UNDP, April 2016,
- Via Campesina “UN Human Rights Council passes a resolution adopting the peasant rights declaration in Geneva” September 2018

Read the Declaration in the 6 official languages of the United Nations: English, French, Spanish, Arab, Chinese or Russian!

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