

1. Introduction

It all starts with the land - land is why human life on planet Earth, as we know it today, is possible. The use of land is one of the main reasons human life developed the way it did. Nowadays, said land still makes it possible to produce more than enough food for an ever-growing human population while also being habitat for wild animals, plants, and other species. It is one of the most essential resources for sustaining life on this planet.

The people responsible for producing said food for human consumption are farmers - not only the industrialised monocultures producing big-scale farmers and/or companies - but peasants. They produce at least 50 and up to 70% of the world's available food (Graeub et al. 2016; ETC Group 2017; Ricciardi et al. 2018). According to former Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier de Schutter (2010, p. 9), the peasants themselves rely on "access to land and security of tenure [...] to achieve a decent standard of living". Article 1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas acknowledges that their most valuable resource for living is (their) land (United Nations General Assembly 2018). Within this declaration, the term peasant is defined as follows:

1. For the purposes of the present Declaration, a peasant is any person who engages or who seeks to engage, alone, or in association with others or as a community, in small-scale agricultural production for subsistence and/or for the market, and who relies significantly, though not necessarily exclusively, on family or household labour and other non-monetized ways of organizing labour, and who has a special dependency on and attachment to the land. (United Nations General Assembly 2018, pp. 4–5)

It is necessary to be aware that this does not mean the peasants have to own the land themselves. Especially in the Global South a substantial number of peasants does not produce food on land that is legally their own (UIA 2023). They depend on access to communal land, which is mainly owned by the responsible governments, and used by peasants to grow crops and feed their livestock. They belong to a group that is described as landless peasants. "Landlessness is the quality or state of being without land, without access to land, or without having private ownership of land" (UIA 2023). This group includes pastoralists who use extensive grazing on rangelands for livestock production (FAO 2001). They are classified by degree of movement since they move their livestock from one feeding ground to the other in varying frequencies. Some also move their entire households and/or communities accordingly (FAO 2001). Furthermore, many indigenous communities are also described as being landless, especially since they have a different sense of ownership. In many of their cultures, it is believed that one does not own nature so much that nature owns them (IWGIA 2022). 2

This entire peasant system has been **under attack** since the beginning of the modernisation of agriculture. In hopes of feeding the ever-growing human population, agricultural systems were changed to produce higher yields. This drastic change left peasants who could not or would not conform to the modern ways of agriculture by expanding their farms in a state of uncertainty. They were unable to compete with large landholders and/or investors for land and other resources. Consequently, many of

them were forced to sell land. Especially in the Global South this favoured an incredible amount of land redistribution, particularly since the privatisation of land offered governments a lucrative method to earn money for development purposes by selling it to foreign or local investors, companies, or large-scale farmers. Promised benefits from such development practices for the local communities are mostly non-existent.