



SOUTHEAST ASIA SUMMIT ON FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Ensuring climate resilience through food sovereignty
September 18-22, 2025 | Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, Philippines

Call to Action

We, the 80 participants of the SouthEast Asia Summit on Food Sovereignty and Community Resilience, coming from communities and organizations in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, believe that food is identity, culture, and a right. Geographic and cultural diversity is a foundation for sovereignty and resilience. A plural and collaborative approach –anchored in transdisciplinary thinking, revitalization of traditional knowledge systems and youth engagement will strengthen the food sovereignty, land rights and environmental resilience of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPs and LCs) in the face of the climate crisis.

Food systems across the globe are under increasing strain from multiple, interconnected crises - corporate monopolization of food and agriculture, land grabs, resource extraction and business as usual. For IPs and LCs, these challenges are deeply felt and threaten our daily lives, destroy ecosystems, remove people from their land, diminish health and wellness, and erode our cultures.

IPs and LCs stand at the frontline of the struggle for food sovereignty and climate resilience. Our stewardship of land, seeds, waters, and biodiversity are vital not only for our survival but also for the future of humanity and the planet. But without concerted efforts, our struggles are being overtaken by the aggressive corporate-driven greed and the overwhelming impact of climate change that already results to irreversible loss and damage.

The Summit aims to create a space for dialogue and collective reflection. By bringing together the many voices of community leaders, women, youth, marginalized groups, and organizations, we aim to reiterate the impacts of climate change and the food system crisis on communities, and unify on shared strategies that truly address our needs to secure food, assert rights, and adapt to a changing climate and environment.



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We base our call to action on these **fundamental principles**:

1. Local contexts and perspectives. All intervention must be rooted in the realities of local communities: respecting ecological diversity, local food systems, local seeds, and cultural traditions.
2. Social justice. Indigenous peoples, women, young men and women, persons with different abilities, people with diverse gender orientations, and other vulnerable groups must be recognized as key actors, not merely beneficiaries.
3. Self-determination and sovereignty. Territorial, resource, and knowledge sovereignty must guide the agenda.
4. Collaborative and adaptive. Encourage coordination across islands, communities, and actors. Integrate local wisdom with science and innovation to address complex challenges from the ground-up.

Our **calls to action** are:

For Policy Makers:

- Develop and implement policies that integrate agro-ecological solutions¹ into the national food policies and frameworks;
- Provide institutional mechanisms for funding and resources to support agroecology, soil health restoration, and natural farming methods;
- Promote organic farming and local food systems through incentives for smallholder farmers, growers and fishers, direct-from-farmer markets and peoples' cooperatives; and
- Recognize, respect and uphold Indigenous Peoples', ethnic groups' and peasants' land, seed and water rights, recognizing their role as stewards of biodiversity and climate resilience.

For Academe, Researchers, Agricultural Experts and Environmentalists:

- Invest in microbiome and microbial diversity research to enhance and innovate organic and sustainable agricultural practices;
- Create knowledge-sharing platforms that promote both scientific and traditional knowledge - highlighting ecological benefits of traditional farming methods, and resilience of Indigenous farming systems;

¹Traditional seed banks and ecological restoration programs; work with Indigenous communities



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- Collaborate with Indigenous communities to document and share their traditional agricultural knowledge, fostering mutual respect and exchange; and
- Educate the youth on the importance of agriculture, biodiversity, local food systems, and traditional knowledge.

For Consumers:

- Buy and consume local, organically grown and chemical-free produce from Indigenous farmers, community farms, and peoples cooperatives;
- Advocate for food sovereignty and the right to food that is nutritious, healthy, accessible and affordable for personal health and environmental well-being; and
- Learn about and raise awareness on the importance of the rights to seeds, the need to protect traditional agricultural knowledge, and cultural heritage to ensure a more sustainable, resilient food system.

For Civil Society and Support Organizations

- Work closely with farmers to build practical, evidence-based solutions for transitioning to agroecology;
- Provide financial support, and mutual capacity development for sustainable farming, and help to integrate traditional/ indigenous knowledge and practices into agricultural systems;
- Partner with local communities to create community-run seed banks and co-create stronger networks for sharing seeds, knowledge, and resources; and
- Strengthen farmer organizations to negotiate better prices and build community-centered markets.

For Indigenous and Local Communities:

- Develop and expand initiatives to protect traditional crops, establish more seed banks of heirloom varieties, and revitalize local food systems;
- Ensure food sufficiency in the community before external trade;
- Work together to document and share within their communities their knowledge on local food systems and sustainable farming practices; and
- Engage the youth in bayanihan/ ketsobong/ pahina/ pagsabuwa/ gotong royong/ ob-obbo work and other community agricultural activities, ensuring intergenerational knowledge exchange.



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Our vision is to attain food sovereignty - having autonomy to decide what to plant, when and where; full access and control of our lands, territories, and resources, so that we are able to revitalize our local food systems as a basis of resilience and cultural identity. We approach the interphasing with contemporary technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in keeping with the precautionary principles to ensure that it serves the needs of people. The revival of traditional seeds and agricultural systems is not just about saving crops - it is about saving cultures, communities, and the planet. We aim for resiliency - strengthening our sense of belonging to our land and culture, sharpening our ability to adapt and prevent, to learn and unlearn, navigating the social and environmental changes and realities while maintaining and embracing indigenous and local knowledge.

This summit helped us to affirm the urgency with which we need to move toward collective action and long-term transformation. Together, we affirm that self-determination, food sovereignty, climate justice, and Indigenous and local communities' rights are inseparable—and that defending them is a shared responsibility of all. ###

21st September 2025
Lake Sebu, South Cotabato
Philippines