

Save Our Rice! Resist Agrochemical TNCs!

**The Peoples' Conference Against
Corporate Onslaught on Rice and Food**

17 October 2023

*Conference Hall Open Space, UP Center for Integrative and
Development Studies*

Ang Bahay ng Alumni, UP Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines



UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
**CENTER FOR
INTEGRATIVE AND
DEVELOPMENT
STUDIES**



Magsasaka at
Gumagamit para
sa Pang-unlad ng
Agricultura



RESIST
AgroChem TNCs

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“Man harvesting rice in Leyte, Philippines.”

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ABOUT THE PROCEEDINGS

These are the proceedings of the Peoples' Conference Against Corporate Onslaught on Rice and Food. With the theme "Save Our Rice! Resist Agrochemical TNCs!," the conference was held on 17 October 2023, at the Conference Hall Open Space of the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (CIDS), Diliman, Quezon City. The conference aims to:

1. Gather advocates from different sectors to reaffirm solidarity in resisting different forms of corporate advances that trample on people's rights and welfare, particularly the rice industry and local food systems;
2. Acknowledge objective criticisms of the International Rice Congress 2023 and to different corporate-influenced and -led projects in the country. This include how their policies negatively affect Filipino food producers, among others;
3. Showcase people's initiatives and advocacy campaigns in resisting corporations; and
4. Collectively lay down directions for RESIST's actions amid the widespread corporate onslaught in our country.

The conference was organized by the following organizations:

1. Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP, "Peasant Movement of the Philippines")
2. Magsasaka at Siyentipiko para sa Pag-unlad ng Agrikultura (MASIPAG, or "Farmer-Scientist Partnership for Development")

These proceedings features the discussion of Chris Panerio of MASIPAG and Cathy Estavillo of Bantay Bigas, a citizen's initiative to monitor the price, quantity, and safety quality of rice. The resulting conversations were co-edited by Patrick Dela Cueva, Eliseo Ruzol Jr., and John Althani Famador of MASIPAG Inc, and by Ryan Martinez of UP CIDS Program on Alternative Development. This documentation is a result of a collaboration between the conference organizers and the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies Program on Alternative Development.

Opening Remarks¹

Rationale, Objectives, and Solidarity Message

About RESIST

Resistance and Solidarity Against Agrochemical TNCs (Transnational Corporations), or RESIST AgroChem TNCs Network, is a broad alliance of Philippine-based farmers' organizations, NGOs, scientists, environmentalists, health workers, members of the academe, and concerned individuals. It advocates against the corporatization of food systems and social services. It also promotes people-led alternatives centered on genuine agrarian reform and agroecology, which paves the way for genuine food security and social justice. The network opposes GMOs, pesticides, and other technologies brought about by TNCs and the evil menace of globalization. The alliance was founded in September 2001 in Laguna, Philippines.

RESIST believes that a thorough implementation of genuine land reform is the basic foundation of realizing agricultural mechanization and modernization. The Philippines has an economic basis for national industrialization because of its rich natural resources of metals, minerals, energy, and biodiversity. On top of this wealth are the skilled forces of production, including workers, peasants, and professionals. Agriculture shall be the base for industries as the source of raw materials and the main reservoir of labor power. It shall also be the major market for industrial products; machineries will be produced for agricultural modernization. Moreover, local markets and agricultural practices will be developed through rural industrialization, which will hopefully drive up manufacturing and employment in those areas.

¹ This section represents a near-verbatim account of the speech. Minor edits have been done for further readability.

About the Conference

Corporations have strengthened their hold over agriculture and the food system in recent years. Million dollar deals and mega-mergers of companies own and control seeds, agrochemicals, fertilizers, farm equipment and machineries, and the entire food chain. The Big Four, dominated by imperialist powers US and China, controls 62 percent of the pesticide market. In 2017, China's ChemChina & SinoChem acquired Syngenta for \$43 billion, and now "accounts for one-fourth of the global pesticide market. This is followed by Germany's Bayer (which merged with the US company Monsanto), BASF, and Corteva (a merger of two US companies, Dow and DuPont)" (PAN Asia-Pacific 2022). These same corporations dominate the seed industry, as pesticides are meant for hybrid and genetically modified seeds. ChemChina & SinoChem are set to establish their hold in Philippine markets in 2024.

These agrochemical corporations and their local counterparts suppress our indigenous and collective knowledge and practices on agriculture. Local ruling elites continue to design policies that serve the interests of profit and the monopoly of our foodways. Seeds that have long been passed down from generation to generation of land-tilling hands are now obstructed from our farms. Peasants and indigenous peoples in countries such as Indonesia are treated like criminals for sowing their own indigenous seeds. The European Union demands the compliance of the Indonesian government with the Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV 1991). UPOV 1991 offers an inflexible legal framework that severely restricts farmers' rights, especially their right to freely use, save, exchange, and sell farm-saved seeds. Such is how corporations have mustered their greed.

In the Philippines, only a few (TNCs) corporations control the seed industry. The three largest seed corporations own and control at least 57.6 percent of patented seeds. The largest of these are subsidiaries of US and European-based companies. In particular, these are US-based corporations such as Pioneer Hi-Bred Phil, SeedWorks Philippines, Inc., Del Monte Philippines, Inc., and Dole Food Company.

Earlier this year in 2024, the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) announced that the upcoming International Rice Congress (IRC) would be held in the Philippines. The IRC is a global event that gathers corporations, policymakers,

industry players, and researchers to discuss and exchange ideas related to rice production, research, and policy. With the theme, “Accelerating Transformation of Rice-Based Food Systems: From Gene to Globe,” it aims to highlight the critical necessity of genetic engineering and GMO to address challenges in food security. This year’s IRC will be co-organized by IRRI, the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers (CGIAR), and the Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA).

While it may seem like a noble initiative for improving global food security, the congress has now served as a platform for further corporate capture of the world’s food and rice system. This is evidenced by the list of individuals and other entities supporting and participating in the event.

The IRC has been conducted since 1926 and attended by various rice stakeholders. As shown in various platforms, the congress is heavily reliant on corporate sponsorship. This often includes some of the world’s largest agribusiness companies such as Bayer, Dabeng, Global Methane Hub, Regrow Ag, RiceTec, and ACIAR, among others. These corporations use their financial leverage to shape the agenda and discourse at the congress. Such sponsorship can influence research priorities, favoring projects that align with corporate interests while sidelining critical issues such as agroecology, sustainable farming practices, and social equity. Prestige sponsors like Bayer are guaranteed to have speakers during the entire conference, where it they can “freely market their products” (MASIPAG 2023).

Participants include scientists, researchers, donors, market analysts, input and equipment suppliers, processors, and entrepreneurs. There are no farmers in the list. The IRC “even imposes registration fees for [the] participants, further marginalizing farmers and robbing [them] of their right to participate in the affairs of rice production and rice science in general” (MASIPAG 2023). This exclusion solidifies the corporate agenda.

The IRC aims to discuss the following themes: (1) fast-tracking genetic solutions and varieties; (2) one-health and nutritious rice value chains; (3) digital solutions across the scale; (4) nature-based farming solutions; (5) transforming rice landscapes for climate resilience; (6) partnerships for scaling and impact; (7) sustainable global rice economy; and (8) social equity, equality, and prosperity (Villante 2023).

Excluded in the discussions are the conscious efforts to greenwash² sustainability initiatives and development work, trade, and market dominance of corporations. There is also no mention of the impacts of seed patents and intellectual property rights. This issue has historically been detrimental to the rights of farmers to seeds, most especially in the exchange, use, and development of their own rice and other crop varieties. “Corporations with patents on rice varieties use the IRC as a platform to promote their proprietary seeds” (MASIPAG 2023), which entrench their domination in the seed market.

With this, the RESIST Conference aims to:

1. Gather advocates from different sectors to reaffirm solidarity in resisting different forms of corporate advances that trample people’s rights and welfare, particularly in the rice industry and local food systems;
2. Acknowledge objective criticisms of the International Rice Congress 2023 and to different corporate-influenced and -led projects in the country. This include how their policies negatively affect Filipino food producers, among others;
3. Showcase people’s initiatives and advocacy campaigns in resisting corporations; and
4. Collectively lay down directions for RESIST’s actions amid the widespread corporate onslaught in our country.

2 “Greenwashing” is a form of marketing that deceptively leads consumers to believe that a company’s products are environmentally friendly when they are not.

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Testimony on the effects of the Green Revolution and Masagana 993

■ Danilo Ramos

Chairperson of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas

Farmers are victims of the Masagana 99⁴ program of former President Ferdinand Marcos Sr.

The Filipino masses, especially the farmers, will never forget the crimes committed by the IRRI. In gatherings such as these, I find myself reflecting on the bitter irony of Masagana 99. What was once hailed as a promise of prosperity for farmers like me has become a burden too heavy to bear.

I remember when the government first introduced Masagana 99. The idea of achieving bountiful harvests seemed like a dream come true for our struggling community. We were promised high-yielding rice varieties, modern irrigation systems, and access to credit to purchase fertilizers and pesticides. It all sounded too good to be true.

And, indeed, it was.

After IRRI's establishment in April 1960, the "miracle rice" and other technologies proliferated during their so-called Green Revolution.

The Green Revolution, hailed as a beacon of hope for agricultural development, swept across the globe in the mid-twentieth century. It promises increased agricultural productivity and food security. In the Philippines, one of the flagship programs of this movement was Masagana 99, a government initiative launched

3 This section represents a near-verbatim account of the Opening Remarks. Minor edits have been done for further readability. It also quotes material from previously published content from the MASIPAG website.

4 Masagana 1999 is a Philippine agricultural program created in 1973 to address rice shortage in the country. "Masagana" is a Tagalog word that literally means "bountiful."

in the early 1970s. While it initially seemed like a panacea for the country's agricultural woes, its long-term effects on Filipino farmers have been outright detrimental. During the 1970s, the Philippines secured loans from global financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The loans sought to finance initiatives that were aimed at bolstering rice production.

Eager to improve our livelihoods, many of us took out loans to invest in the recommended seeds and inputs. We hoped that, by embracing Masagana 99, we could escape the cycle of poverty that had plagued our families for generations. But as the seasons passed, the reality of our situation became painfully clear.

Instead of prosperity, we found ourselves drowning in debt. The high costs of imported fertilizers, pesticides, and seeds quickly ate away at any profits we might have made. We became slaves to the very system that promised to uplift us, forced to borrow more money each season just to keep our heads above water.

At first, Masagana 99 appeared successful. Rice production increased, and the Philippines became less dependent on rice imports. The program garnered praise from international organizations and policymakers for its apparent contribution to food security. However, a closer examination reveals a different story, particularly concerning its impact on Filipino farmers.

“Masagana” literally means “bountiful,” an allusion to a rich harvest. However, farmers were only left with “bountiful debt.” The program encouraged farmers to use high-yielding rice varieties, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and modern irrigation techniques. This eventually resulted in widespread indebtedness and perpetual servitude for peasants, primarily due to the exorbitant production costs associated with Masagana 99 seeds and inputs. Their incomes also declined. Additionally, agreements with multinational and transnational corporations (TNCs) prevented farmers from saving and exchanging seeds. Later, these agreements mandated that the cultivation of genetically modified organisms like the BT corn and Golden Rice must meet and stimulate market demand for the same corporations’ agro-chemical products. Masagana 99 contributed significantly to a myriad of problems, including worse levels of hunger and poverty in the country.

From 1970 to 1981, real farm income decreased from PhP 672 per hectare to only PhP 324. This left farmers deeper in poverty than ever. Extension agents of the Marcos government were reported to have burned stocks of traditional rice seeds of peasant communities, forcing farmers to use IRRI's IR-8 miracle rice. By 1981, 98 percent of rice crops in the country consisted solely of that "miracle rice." More than 4000 traditional rice varieties in the Philippines were systematically replaced during the Marcos administration.

As if the financial strains weren't enough, Masagana 99 exacerbated the problem of landlessness in our community. Wealthier farmers, who could afford to invest in the program, expanded their holdings at the expense of small-scale farmers like myself. Land that had been passed down through generations was lost to foreclosure as debts piled up and interest rates soared.

One of the most significant consequences of Masagana 99 was the widened divide between large landowners and small-scale farmers. This led to increased inequality within rural communities: wealthier farmers consolidated their landholdings, while smaller farmers were pushed further into poverty.

Furthermore, the intensive use of chemical inputs under Masagana 99 had severe environmental implications. Pesticide and fertilizer runoff polluted waterways, harming aquatic ecosystems and posing health risks to nearby communities. Soil degradation also became a pressing issue; the continuous use of chemical fertilizers depleted soil nutrients, making land less fertile over time.

By relying on these inputs, we witnessed the disappearance of various sources of food and income, including *dalag*, *hito*, *gurami*, *kuhol*, and *palaka*. Additionally, IRRI forcibly obtained local seed varieties such as *binato*, *wagwag*, *ramilad*, *intan*, and numerous others, which were traditionally cultivated without chemical inputs.

Moreover, Masagana 99 failed to address the underlying structural issues plaguing Philippine agriculture, such as land reform and access to credit. Landlessness remained a significant problem, with many farmers lacking secure tenure over the land they tilled. Without land ownership or access to credit, small-scale farmers struggled to invest in their farms or adopt new technologies, perpetuating a cycle of poverty.

In the long term, the Green Revolution and programs like Masagana 99 contributed to the loss of agricultural biodiversity and the erosion of traditional farming practices. By promoting monoculture and dependence on external inputs, these initiatives weakened the resilience of Philippine agriculture to pests, diseases, and climate change.

To this day, the majority of Filipino rice farmers remain dependent on the practices set by the Green Revolution and Masagana 99. The legacy of the program continues to haunt them, many of whom are trapped in a cycle of debt and dependence on agrochemical companies. The promise of bountiful harvests has given way to a reality of dwindling incomes, environmental degradation, and social inequality.

IRRI's power has become so pervasive and perverse that it can easily quash any suggestion for alternative and genuine pro-Filipino rice technologies since its establishment. IRRI even managed to sleep in the same bed with the Marcos dictatorship; Marcos gave IRRI immunity to Philippine law through Presidential Decree (PD) No. 1620.⁵ This decree barred farmers, and even IRRI employees and their families, from filing complaints against unfair labor practices and unsafe workplaces, where some workers contracted diseases and died.

Today, only four agrochemical corporations, namely Syngenta-Chemchina, Bayer-Monsanto, BASF, and Corteva, dominate the global agriculture market. They spearhead the dominant yet failing industrialized food and agriculture we know today. IRRI aided their corporate agenda. For sixty-three years, IRRI has been criminally legitimizing and masking these agrochemical corporations as the messiahs for food insecurity by being their research and development institution.

Ang pagiging masagana ng mga magsasaka ay makakamit kung may tunay na reporma sa lupa at suportang serbisyo sa mga magbubukid. [Farmers will only experience bountiful harvest if there are genuine land reforms and accessible social services.] There is a need to “revive the local agriculture and make domestic food production a priority by suspending conversion of agricultural lands, providing

5 Presidential Decree No. 1620 exempted the IRRI from paying taxes by making it an “autonomous, philanthropic, tax-free, non-profit, non-stock organization.” This was signed in December 1959.

a P15,000 subsidy for Filipino farmers and fisherfolk, allotting 10 percent of the national budget for agriculture, and ending reliance on importation of agricultural products starting with the repeal of the Rice Tariffication Law” (KMP 2023). However, he did the exact opposite and remained callous and indifferent to our demands.

Revive the local agriculture and make domestic food production a priority, which can be done through the following steps: suspend the conversion of agricultural lands; provide PhP15,000 subsidy for Filipino farmers and fisherfolk; allot 10 percent of the national budget for to agriculture; and finally, end reliance on importation of agricultural products starting with the repeal of the Rice Tariffication Law.

Moving forward, it is essential to learn from the failures of the Green Revolution and pursue more sustainable and equitable approaches to agriculture. This includes investing in agroecology, supporting small-scale farmers, and implementing genuine agrarian reform to ensure land rights for all. Only by addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality in Philippine agriculture can we build a more resilient and inclusive food system for the future.

Resist genetically modified organisms like the Golden Rice!

Farmers call IRRI out of agriculture!

Shutdown IRRI!

Fight for our right to land and seed. Strengthen local production!

Fight for genuine agrarian reform and national industrialization!

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Solidarity Message⁶

■ Sarojeni Rengam

Pesticide Action Network Asia Pacific (PANAP)

Hi, everyone. My name is Sarojeni Rengam from PAN Asia-Pacific. PAN Asia-Pacific, together with PAN Philippines, have been working with RESIST Agrochemical TNCs since its formation. I would like to congratulate RESIST for their conference today.

The global reach and impact of agrochemical TNCs and their pesticide products have grown exponentially over the past decades. The tools of imperialist countries, World Bank, international financial institutions (IFIs), World Trade Organization (WTO), and Asian Development Bank (ADB), all gather to benefit the TNCs. Input-intensive and chemical-based farming systems, which are promoted by governments and the food and agriculture industry, pervade communities globally. Highly hazardous pesticides have had immense impacts on the quality of human life, local ecosystems, and the global environment. These chemicals poison around 385 million farmers and workers every year. Within these numbers, there is a woman, a man, and a child whose life is being devastated. However, little has been done to hold companies responsible for bringing these hazards into the daily lives of over two billion people.

We believe systemic change is important, especially on regulating manufacturing companies to criminalize their violation of human rights. This should happen everywhere, including in developing countries. The UN special rapporteurs have documented the efforts of the pesticide industry to influence policymakers and regulators. They have obstructed reforms and paralyzed global restrictions. So far, they are not held accountable.

The integration of seed and agrochemical companies began nearly a century ago. At present, thousands of independent seed companies, along with hundreds of

⁶ This section represents a near-verbatim account of the speech. Minor edits have been employed for further readability. It also draws on material from <https://files.panap.net/resources/Of-Rights-and-Poisons-Accountability-of-the-Agrochemical-Industry.pdf>

pesticide companies and biotechnology start-ups, have consolidated into four corporations that continue to own most of the industry.

The integration of seed and agrochemical companies began nearly a century ago, and by 2009, thousands of once-independent seed companies, along with hundreds of pesticide companies and biotech start-ups, had become the six corporations that continue to own most of today's industry. (ETC and IPES Food 2017, 11)

The top four agrochemical TNCs control 70 percent of the pesticide market, 67 percent of the seed market, and more than 75 percent of all private-sector research on seeds and pesticides (cf. ETC and IPES Food 2017, 11). This is why RESIST Agrochemical TNCs as a network is important; it has the potential to inspire resistance against these companies.

We congratulate RESIST. We hope to collaborate closely with them, so that we can enhance and expand the campaign across the Philippines and abroad. We believe it's possible through collaboration with on-the-ground movements in Asia and the world. This is so we can hold corporations accountable for their environmental damage and their human rights violations.

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Discussion 1

The Peoples' Resistance against IRRI and the Corporatization of Food and Agriculture

■ Cris Panerio

Former National Coordinator, MASIPAG

The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) is an international organization that leads research work and training on rice and related agricultural knowledge. IRRI's headquarters are located in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines. They also have satellite offices in seventeen (17) other countries. IRRI's most prominent work was the IR-8, more commonly known as the Miracle Rice. Their work on rice development served as a catalyst for the Green Revolution. With the support of the Ford and Rockefeller Foundation, the organization established a research center that focused on developing rice varieties.

IRRI is part of the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers (CGIAR) composed of 15 other international agricultural research centers for important food crops such as maize, rice, root crops, banana, wheat, cereals, and fish. The CGIAR, formerly known as the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research, is a global collaborative effort to unify international organizations for the conduct of research on ensuring food security. CGIAR's research aims to eradicate rural poverty, secure food, improve human health and nutrition, and improve sustainable management of natural resources.

Each research center on food is usually based in agrobiodiversity centers of focus countries, most of which are within the Global South. IRRI is located in the Philippines and India, which are rice-diverse countries; the International Potato Center (CIP) is in Lima, Peru. These strategic establishments align with the main objective of the

Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centres (CGIAR),⁷ which is to collect and conserve food crops. These institutions study the crops to help create technologies against threats such as climate change and food insecurity. These centers coordinate with national and regional research institutions (e.g. IRRI and Philippine Rice Research Institute), civil society organizations (CSOs), the academe, development organizations, and the private sector (e.g. IRRI and Syngenta in the development of Golden Rice). The CGIAR has a yearly research budget of almost a billion dollars, with more than 9,000 staff working in eighty-nine (89) countries. The following research programs comprised the CGIAR Research Portfolio of 2017–2021:⁸

1. FISH - Fish Agri-Food Systems (WorldFish)
2. FTA - Forests, Trees, and Agroforestry (CIFOR)
3. Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals (ICRISAT)
4. WHEAT - Global Alliance for Improving Food Security and the Livelihoods of the Resource-poor in the Developing World (CIMMYT)
5. Livestock (ILRI)
6. Maize (CIMMYT)
7. Rice (IRRI) - International Rice Research Institute
8. RTB - Roots, Tubers and Bananas (CIP)⁹

7 The Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centres (CGIAR) is a global agricultural network that gathers international organizations and researchers to ensure food security and sustainably preserve natural resources.

8 This wording is from <https://www.wikizero.com/en/CGIAR>, but more information on the portfolio can be found in <https://www.cgiar.org/research/research-portfolio/>

9 FISH aims to improve fisheries and aquaculture, but it is sometimes criticized for emphasizing large-scale, commercial practices that may marginalize small-scale fishers and disrupt local aquatic ecosystems. CIFOR focuses on sustainable forest management and agroforestry but is criticized for its top-down approach that may overlook local knowledge and needs. ICRISAT works on enhancing dryland crop resilience but is criticized for focusing on high-yield varieties that may not always align with local farming practices and can increase dependence on external inputs. CIMMYT improves wheat and maize production through conventional breeding practices. ILRI aims to advance sustainable livestock management but is sometimes criticized for prioritizing large-scale commercial practices over the needs of smallholder farmers and for potentially exacerbating environmental and health challenges through intensive livestock systems. CIP aims to enhance root crop production but faces criticism for favoring high-yield, commercial varieties that may undermine local crop diversity and traditional farming practices.

The proliferation of IRRI's technologies, such as in-bred, hybrid, and genetically modified seeds, also facilitated the erosion of traditional rice varieties in the Philippines, which was home to more than 4,000 local rice varieties. Moreover, IRRI's technologies have also negatively impacted human and environmental health. There have been many documented illnesses from the exposure of farmers and farmworkers to hazardous pesticides. Meanwhile, nitrogen fertilizers contaminate groundwater and other bodies of water, which are drinking sources of communities in the countryside. Nitrogen fertilizers become carcinogenic when mixed in water.

IRRI started with a few traditional rice varieties (TRVs) during the 1960s. This eventually led to the development and introduction of so-called "high-yielding" varieties (HYVs) and in-bred seeds in 1966. In 2001, IRRI was able to develop "hybrid" rice varieties. It was only in 2021 when IRRI introduced genetically modified rice, such as Golden Rice.

HYVs do not include high-yielding traditional rice varieties. Their invasive technologies have undermined the performance of traditional rice varieties, which have been preserved and developed by farmers for thousands of years. TRVs can provide high yields without the use of inputs. Meanwhile, corporation-produced HYVs only generate yields when they are cultivated with chemical pesticides and fertilizers, as well as large amounts of irrigation. These varieties cannot withstand the effects of strong winds, heavy rains, and storms. Contrastingly, TRVs have inherently resilient characteristics, which are apt for the various agro-climatic conditions in the country.

These technologies also facilitated farmers' dependence on corporations. HYVs and in-bred varieties only last for two to three cropping seasons, while most hybrid seeds are designed to be planted for one cropping season only. The Philippine Hybrid Seed Market costs around USD 371 million in 2023 and will reach USD 478 million in 2028. With genetically modified (GM) crops gradually infiltrating the seed market, corporations will garner millions of dollars more. Hundreds of thousands of lands are readily allocated for GM crop production. Globally, the GM seeds market is expected to increase by 10.69 percent in 2027, as their sales totaled to USD 18 billion in 2022.

In contrast, TRVs can be shared, multiplied, and developed freely by farmers for a long time. This has been the practice of farmers for centuries across the globe. Seeds hold substantial power in directing international food systems. Hence, farmers tended to their seed systems and asserted their ownership over them.

Small farmers feed the world. This is the reality that corporations continue to deny. Various studies show that small farmers attain higher yields and have more biodiversity in their farms than corporate-led and -influenced farms. Small farms also have minimal carbon footprint and benefit largely to the environment. Meanwhile, industrial farms and plantations only produce agricultural commodities for international markets, and treat production merely as a business for profit. These production sites focus on marketable crops while watching the world run out of food. According to recent studies, industrial farms comprise almost a quarter of global emissions.

As such, it is important to place resource-poor yet empowered farmers at the frontlines of resolving the global food and agricultural crises. These farmers have asserted their sovereignty for centuries and continue to positively impact food systems, human health, and the environment. When farmers control agricultural resources and production, food security will follow, as practiced for decades by MASIPAG.¹⁰

MASIPAG, in its first decade, focused on reclaiming, developing, multiplying and sharing rice varieties. This was a resolution from the 1985 BIGAS Conference, which also gave birth to MASIPAG. MASIPAG's initiatives are direct alternatives to IRRI's programs. IRRI, alongside its partner corporations, focuses on profit. MASIPAG, together with farmers' organizations, scientists, and non-government organizations (NGOs), underscores the proliferation and pursuit of farmer-led agroecology. Its aim is to secure safe, sufficient, nutritious and accessible food for all and to assert food sovereignty in communities.

10 Magsasaka at Siyentipiko para sa Pag-unlad ng Agrikultura (MASIPAG) is a Philippine-based network of people's organizations and scientists whose aim is to preserve biodiversity through farmers' control of agricultural resources and production. MASIPAG is led by farmers.

Its farmer-leaders say that their dream is for MASIPAG to reach all barangays that pursue agricultural programs, through its farmer-trainers who can help resolve the lack or loss of food varieties. Their program, Collection, Identification, Maintenance, Multiplication, and Evaluation (CIMME) of seeds, inspired farmers around the country to collect seeds and include them in MASIPAG's rice seeds collection. The network was also able to identify locally adapted varieties and selections around the country.

Seeds and seed exchanges are the life of MASIPAG. All its activities ensure that seeds are shared freely among farmers in order to develop their own agroecosystems. Through farmer-led trial farms, verification farms, and production farms, MASIPAG farmers were able to identify more than a hundred climate change-resilient rice varieties. One of its renowned farmer-breeders, Pepito Babasa from Bato, Camarines Sur, developed a rice variety that is drought-resilient and flood-tolerant. This variety was named PBB 401. It also has good taste when cooked, and has high yield. This specific variety was cultivated widely and preserved in the region because of these characteristics.

MASIPAG also promotes the widespread practice of Diversified and Integrated Farming Systems (DIFS), which embraces diverse organic farming practices and farm components to utilize land. Farmers have been employing DIFS even before joining MASIPAG. The network only contributed to providing structure, analysis, and support to various forms of practicing DIFS. According to the experience of farmers, DIFS provided diverse food choices and livelihoods to their families and communities. It also serves as a living bank of apt seeds in their community, as well as a climate change mitigation and adaptation approach.

Farmers' organizations have reached a point of surplus production from their longstanding practice of sustainable agriculture, which leads them to pursue product processing and marketing. For a long time, farmers were seen only as producers of raw materials. In MASIPAG, farmers are empowered to lead market initiatives and develop their own economic resilience. Their products include cacao, muscovado sugar, raw vegetables, squash noodles, turmeric granules, turmeric tea, herbal teas, root crops, fruits, organic onions, spices, meat products, fruit wines, fruit and vegetable chips, jams, peanut butter, and honey, among many others.

The youth were also encouraged to take part in promoting agroecology. The purpose is to secure second-line farmers in communities, through participation in production, agroecology schools, and other initiatives.

MASIPAG also stands with many farmers in various advocacy campaigns such as assertions of right to land. It supports many *bungkalan* (cultivation)¹¹ areas around the country through technical support, in order to make reclaimed lands productive. Through the help of agroecology advocates, MASIPAG also participated in the conduct of a year-long campaign called “Salu-Salo: The National People’s Food System Summit,” a people-led alternative to the United Nations Food Systems Summit. The UN Summit has arguably been hijacked by many corporations in order to assert the corporate agenda in the directions of the world’s food systems.

Mr. Panerio asserted the calls to:

1. Immediately abolish IRRI and the CGIAR system
2. Promote agroecology for the people and the environment
3. Resist corporate capture of agriculture
4. Resist Green Revolution and Second Green Revolution
5. Stop Golden Rice
6. Fight for Farmers’ Rights to Seeds, Land, and Knowledge

On the International Rice Congress

The International Rice Congress (IRC) is a global event that gathers researchers, policymakers, farmers, and industry leaders to exchange ideas on rice production, research, and policy. While it may seem like a noble initiative aimed at improving global food security, the IRC has become a platform for corporate capture of the world's food and rice system. This year’s IRC is co-organized by IRRI, CGIAR, and the Department of Agriculture (DA).

11 “Bungkalan” is a collective farming practice where farmers, volunteers, and communities till idle lands for cultivation. The communal nature of bungkalan is usually seen as an act of peasant self-determination, which shows how they have reclaimed their lands.

History of the International Rice Congress

Note: While the official website of IRC states that the 2023 version is the sixth, it is in fact the tenth. For some reason, the website identified the 2002 IRC held in Beijing as the first. This table is from a primer published by MASIPAG.

1926	The First International Rice Congress (IRC) ■ The inaugural IRC was held in 1926 in Rome, Italy. It was organized by the International Institute of Agriculture (IIA), which later became part of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. ■ The congress aimed to address the challenges and opportunities in global rice production and trade.
1933	The Second IRC ■ Held in Bangkok, Thailand, the event was significant as it occurred in a major rice-producing region. This highlighted the importance of Asia in rice production.
1951	The Third IRC ■ The third IRC was conducted in Tokyo, Japan, further emphasizing Asia's central role in rice production and research.
1966	The Fourth IRC ■ The fourth took place in Manila, Philippines, focusing on the Green Revolution and the role of high-yielding rice varieties in addressing food security challenges.
1976	The Fifth IRC ■ The fifth IRC returned to Bangkok, Thailand. During the event, discussions revolved around rice production, including technological advancements and sustainable practices.
1985	The Sixth IRC ■ Indonesia conducted the sixth IRC. It continued to explore topics such as breeding, pest management, and the socioeconomic aspects of rice farming.

2002 The Seventh IRC

- After a long gap, the seventh Congress happened in Beijing, China. The event underscored the challenges of feeding a growing global population and the need for sustainable rice production.

2010 The Eighth IRC

- Conducted in Hanoi, Vietnam, the event emphasized the importance of rice research and development in addressing food security and poverty reduction.

2018 The Ninth IRC

- The ninth IRC was held in Singapore and covered a wide range of topics, including advancements in rice science and technology, policy discussions, and the role of rice in global food security.

2023 The Tenth (or Sixth) IRC

- The tenth (or sixth) IRC took place in Manila, Philippines, with the theme “Accelerating Transformation of Rice-Based Food Systems: From Gene to Globe.” It aims to highlight the critical necessity of genetic engineering and genetically modified organisms (GMO) to address food security.
-

Arguably, the huge gap between the 1985 IRC and the 2002 IRC is due to the failures of the Green Revolution. It can also be attributed to the overwhelming drawbacks during the period, such as super pest emergence, pesticide poisoning, and the stagnation of supposedly “modern” technologies.

Sponsorship and Funding

The IRC is heavily reliant on corporate sponsorship, which often includes some of the world's largest agribusiness companies. These corporations use their financial leverage to shape the agenda and discourse at the Congress. Such sponsorship can influence research priorities, favoring projects that align with corporate interests while sidelining critical issues such as agroecology, sustainable farming practices, and social equity.

Biggest scientific platform for rice research or biggest market place for agri-TNCs?

The IRC website lists down its sponsors for 2023:

- Bayer
- Dabeinong
- Global Methane Hub
- Regrow Ag
- RiceTec
- ACIAR
- Bioseed
- Eagle Genomics
- MyGen Informatics
- SCIO
- Temasek Lifesciences Laboratory
- Temperate Rice Research Consortium

Prestige sponsors like Bayer also have a guarantee of speakers during the conference, where it can freely market its products.

Who are its Audiences?

There are no farmers in the Congress. It also imposes exorbitant registration fees, which further marginalizes farmers and robs them of their right to participate in the affairs of rice production and rice science. This further proves the corporate agenda of IRC.

Point by Point: Themes in IRC 2023 and Our Corresponding Critique¹²

Theme 1: Fast-tracking genetic solutions and varieties

- Breeding program simulations
- Stress response and nutrient homeostasis: coordination by rice calcium-dependent protein kinases

Theme 2: One-health and nutritious rice value chains

- Bringing the missing nutrition into rice
- Basmati-breeding for premium quality
- Genomics and gene editing approaches to identify factors controlling grain quality

Theme 3: Digital solutions across the scale

- Opportunities to increase efficiency of International Rice Genebank (IRG) through the application of AI/ML-based approaches
- Digital tools for weed detection, mapping, and management in rice

Theme 4: Nature-based farming solutions

- Managing nutrients in future rice farming
- Nature-based farming solutions—reimagined?
- Harnessing microbiomes for improved rice production

Theme 5: Transforming rice landscapes for climate resilience

- Developing state-of-the-art rice system greenhouse gas accounting methodologies for the voluntary carbon market

12 Much of the wording of this list is from the actual IRC. See <https://irc2023.irri.org/keynote-speakers-together>

Theme 6: Partnerships for scaling and impact

- FLAR (Fondo Latinoamericano para Arroz de Riego): A long-standing public-private partnership for developing and scaling-up technologies for the rice value chain in Latin America and the Caribbean

Theme 7: Sustainable global rice economy

- Structural transformation and the future of global rice economy

Theme 8: Social equity, equality, and prosperity

- Rice is at the heart of global food systems: Analyzing submissions to food security

General Points of Critique

Seed patents and intellectual property rights

- Corporations with patents on rice varieties use the IRC as a platform to promote their proprietary seeds. This can lead to the monopolization of seed markets, making farmers dependent on a limited selection of expensive seeds.
- Farmers lose their traditional rights to save, exchange, and share seeds, ultimately undermining food sovereignty. Trade and market dominance

Trade and market dominance

- Multinational agribusinesses that sponsor the IRC often exert substantial influence over global rice markets. This control can lead to price manipulation and unequal power dynamics in the rice trade.
- Small-scale farmers and consumers can suffer the consequences of price volatility and market distortions.

Greenwashing and sustainability claims

- Corporations participating in the IRC may use the platform to promote their sustainability initiatives. However, these claims can often mask continued unsustainable practices or merely serve as greenwashing efforts.
- Such practices divert attention from initiatives to address the ecological and social challenges of rice production.

The corporate capture of the International Rice Congress also raises several concerns:

- **Conflict of Interest:** The heavy corporate presence at the IRC creates an inherent conflict of interest, as these companies prioritize profit over the public good.
- **Marginalization of Alternative Approaches:** The dominance of corporate interests can marginalize alternative approaches to rice production, such as agroecology and sustainable farming practices.
- **Economic Inequity:** Corporate control over rice markets can exacerbate economic inequities, benefiting a few major corporations at the expense of small-scale farmers and consumers.
- **Environmental Impact:** Focusing on profit-driven solutions may neglect environmental concerns, which leads to the further degradation of ecosystems and biodiversity.

Video testimony of Teodoro Labaydan, a 72-year-old farmer, on his experience during the implementation of MASAGANA 9913

Teodoro was in his twenties when he and other farmers in their place were invited by a technician from the Department of Agriculture to participate in a training under the MASAGANA 99 program. During the training, they were taught how to plant hybrid seeds and apply chemical inputs intensively.

Under MASAGANA 99, farmers were to produce 99 cavans of rice per hectare. Through *Samahang Nayon* (literally, “community association”), members availed of loans from rural banks to procure the required inputs for the target yield. Teodoro recalled that they felt abandoned after completing the training. They received no supplemental monitoring and assistance, whether in kind or in cash.

The program also disrupted indigenous farming practices. Teodoro grew up developing rice through traditional varieties and natural ways of farming. Those were times when seeds were free and accessible. They were also resilient to local ecological conditions. Infestations of pests, such as stink bugs and stem borers, were rare. Teodoro lamented that MASAGANA 99 spurred farmers' loss of control over resources of production. As a result, farmers struggled with debts. Teodoro was fortunate enough to have returned to organic farming. For him, the destructive effects of MASAGANA 99 on livelihoods and the environment continue to haunt the agriculture sector.

Past and present agriculture programs usually favored big landowners and businesses through political patronage. Teodoro is skeptical of another imminent “Masagana.” If the program remains focused on increasing yield while neglecting economic and environmental sustainability and farmers' rights in general, there would be no difference between versions of Masagana, and no real change in the lives of small farmers like him. Teodoro encourages fellow farmers to bring back traditional varieties of rice and other crops, as well as farming practices that protect biodiversity. He hopes that the government will prioritize small farmers and provide ample support for organic agriculture.

13 This was previously published almost verbatim in the MASIPAG website.

Discussion 2

The Onslaught of the Rice Tariffication Law and the Current Rice Crisis

■ **Cathy Estavillo**
Bantay Bigas

Cathy Estavillo, spokesperson of Bantay Bigas and AMIHAN National Federation of Peasant Women, discussed the current situation of rice and rice farmers in the country, in the context of a worsening rice crisis.

Introduction

At present, the rice crisis in the country has reached a new stage: retail prices have increased, while farm gate prices cannot keep up with rising agricultural costs. There is no decrease in supply compared to demand, so there is no basis for the rise of retail prices. Citizens suffer from the criminal exploitation and profiteering of large traders amid the economic crisis. The regime of Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the son and namesake of the former dictator, has shown support for the liberalization of the rice industry. However, assistance to farmers remains lacking. Instead of resolving urgent issues, the government stages crackdowns on hoarding through warehouse raids, neglects to criminalize cartels, and enacts the populist price ceiling.

The regime has feigned concern for the interests of the people ever since the campaign period of President Marcos Jr. However, the government has not fundamentally changed its policies and programs. The roots of the chronic crisis are evident now more than ever, through the implementation of Republic Act

11203, which is also known as the Rice Liberalization Law (RLL).¹⁴ However, the regime is the very instigator of the crisis, serving as the puppet of imperialists by railroading the liberalization of agriculture.

It favors exploitative traders, cartels, and landlords. Anti-farmer, anti-poor, and anti-people policies are enacted. Such mass deception must be shattered. The Marcos administration should be held accountable for its actions, which have worsened the crisis, poverty, and hunger for many Filipinos.

Before Marcos Jr. took office, he promised to lower the price of rice to PhP 20 per kilo and review the Rice Liberalization Law. Since July 2023, none of these promises have materialized. Monopoly control of agriculture has intensified, particularly the import liberalization of rice. The President granted allowed large traders, smugglers, hoarders, and cartels to set extremely low prices for rice and sell them for exorbitant amounts.

There has been no comprehensive plan to develop local production for food security and self-sufficiency. The country continues to import rice from other countries like India and Vietnam. Last October 2023, 500 metric tons of imported rice from India arrived in the country. Marcos Jr. also pleaded for rice from Vietnam, resulting in a five-year supply agreement. This means a continuous flood of imported crops into the country.

Marcos Jr. appointed himself as the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA). Since his appointment, neoliberal or imperialist liberalization policies have been implemented to supposedly lower the price of rice. In September 2022, farmers lamented its very low value, reaching PhP 13 per kilo. This was accompanied by high farming expenses such as Fertilizer which was PhP 994.95 in January 2021 and peaked at PhP 3002.17 in May 2022, a 201.741-percent increase (FPA 2024). There is little support from the government and a lack of

14 Enacted in 2019, this law removes restrictions on rice importation in the Philippines, replacing the quota system with tariffs. The goal is to lower rice prices by increasing supply through imports. It also allocates revenues from tariffs to support local farmers by funding modernization programs and providing assistance to make them more competitive. However, the law has sparked controversy due to its impact on small-scale farmers, who struggle to compete with cheaper imported rice.

post-harvest facilities. In the fourth year of its implementation, the RLL has caused severe damage to farmers, including the loss of their lands.

The Marcos administration is export-oriented and import-dependent. It has promoted market-driven and profit-oriented agricultural systems, like the Masagana 150 and 200 other programs. Marcos suppressed the calls of farmers to stay on their land and use it for food production. The farm-to-market road masterplan and agriculture value chain were also dismissed. Any kind of consolidation, modernization, mechanization, and improvement is favorable only to large landlords, comprador bourgeoisie, bureaucratic capitalists, and imperialists. Marcos released Executive Order (EO) No. 4,¹⁵ or a moratorium on payments on amortization of agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) from Presidential Decree 27 and Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). EO No. 4 essentially admits the bankruptcy of these laws; they provided no benefit to farmers who canceled certificate of land ownership award (CLOA), certificate of land transfer (CLT), and emancipation patent (EP). Farmers were evicted from the lands they tilled.

Marcos also railroaded the anti-farmer Support for Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT), a program under House Bill No. 8162 or the National Land Use Act (NaLUA). This promotes foreign investments in agricultural land and resources. Marcos signed the New Agrarian Emancipation Act (NAEA) in July 2023. For farmers, this is not the answer to the persistent call for land ownership, genuine rural development, food adequacy, and rice security in the country.

In 2023, Marcos Jr. implemented the tokenistic and anomalous KADIWA, also known as the People's Rice Fort Program and Food Stamp Program. KADIWA purchases products from private cooperatives and from GOCC Food Terminal Inc. These products are smuggled, and then sold at high prices. It only has around 200 stores nationwide, and their limited stocks inconvenience buyers. It did not effectively lower food prices in markets. In September 2023, he signed EO No. 39, which set the rice price ceiling at PhP 41 for Regular Milled Rice and PhP

15 EO No. 4 states that the loan payments of farmers shall be suspended. Its aim is to assist farmers develop their own lands. This moratorium recognizes that Filipino farmers have been suffering from debilitating financial strains, caused by unsuccessful agrarian programs in the past.

45 for Well-Milled Rice. However, this did not decrease market price and only maintained the interests of large traders in profiteering.

No smugglers and hoarders were punished after he warned them in his State of the Nation Address (SONA) last July 2023. Price manipulation and import liberalization continue unabated. The rice cartel has not been dismantled; government-backed syndicates still dominate the industry.

These policies largely benefit foreign monopolies, compradors, hacenderos, bureaucratic capitalists and traders, smugglers, and hoarders or cartels. Meanwhile, small-scale producers suffer from poverty and hunger, alongside farmers, fishermen, agricultural workers, urban poor, and consumers. Essentially, Marcos Jr. is the instigator of the rice crisis in the country; he must be held accountable for these problems and immediately provide concrete solutions.

Worsening Rice Crisis in the Country

This is clear in production (farming) and distribution (market, high rice prices, etc.). The forces in production, primarily productive farmlands, remain vulnerable to destructive government programs and policies. Farmers are displaced due to the lack of genuine agrarian reform. Their lands are eventually converted for other uses (especially residential, commercial, etc.). Agricultural liberalization policies persist, making farmers victims of unfair trade and prices. These are all dictated by landlords and large traders in rural areas. This is why farmers, the creators of food in the country, remain in poverty, debt, and hunger. Such is the semi-feudal order in rural areas and agriculture: imperialist interests supersede genuine agrarian reform.

The RLL has worsened the rice crisis in the country since 2019. This is because of the World Trade Organization–Agreement on Agriculture (WTO–AoA), which dictates importing rice from the world market, even when it is not needed. Since the country began imports in the 1990s, there has been a decline in rice prices, weakening self-sufficiency. This escalated with the full tariffication and

liberalization in the RLL, which removed the minimum access volume (MAV)¹⁶ and replaced it with a tariff, a limit on the imported volume. The National Food Authority (NFA) also mandated selling rice at cheap prices, but retail prices are still dictated by large traders.

Former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Senator Cynthia Villar, alongside technocrats from the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), promised to lower the price of rice to PhP 25 per kilo and increase the price of “palay” (grain). However, self-sufficiency dramatically dropped to 80 percent, from the previous 93–95 percent, thereby increasing import dependence.¹⁷ Government interventions have only increased the price of rice and reduced the price of *palay* (grain). The only beneficiaries here are importers or bourgeois compradors, large traders, smugglers, hoarders, cartels, large landlords, and bureaucratic capitalists. Meanwhile, the rest of the population, especially the farmers, workers, and poor consumers, remain in dismal conditions.

The Marcos administration assured the public that it would not only review the RLL, but also reduce the price of rice to PhP 20 per kilo. Up to now, the promise has not materialized. The PhP 25-per-kilo rice in the Kadiwa Store is very limited and inaccessible to buyers. Furthermore, it depletes the limited buffer stock from the NFA, which is theoretically not for sale, according to RLL stipulations.

Relying on imports instead of developing local production only exacerbates the crisis. Soaring prices in the global rice market due to limited global supply foretell a continued increase in import value, while grains are sold cheaply. This worsens the debt and poverty among farmers in the country.

16 According to the Philippine Rice Research Institute, MAV “refers to the volume or quantity of a specific agricultural commodity that may be imported with a lower tariff as committed by the Philippines to WTO.” See https://www.philrice.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/RCEF_FAQ02-RiceTariff.pdf

17 Self-sufficiency is a part of local rice in total consumption, and import dependence comes with imported rice.

- a. **Landlords and large traders control the price and supply of rice.** These monopolies buy a large volume of the total harvested rice from farmers to sell, allowing them to set high rice prices with or without government-imposed price controls due to liberalization policies.
- b. **The price of palay continues to drop from PhP 20 per kilo to PhP 13, and even lower in various parts of the country.** The immediate 17 percent (or PhP 3.48 per kilo) decline in farm gate prices from 2018 to 2019 is noticeable, upon the implementation of the RLL. It continued to decline in the following years and did not recover based on the records in 2018.

YEAR	AVE PRICE PER KILO (FARM GATE, DRY)
2018	PhP 20.19
2019	PhP 16.71
2020	PhP 16.52
2021	PhP 16.67
2022	PhP 17.45
January-March 2023	PhP 17.66

■ Table 1. Average Farm Gate Price per Kilogram of Rice from 2018-2023 in Pesos

The adverse impact of the RLL on the farm gate is also evident. The average farm gate price from 2016 to 2018 was PhP 18.55 per kilo, but this declined to PhP 16.84 under the law (2019–2022). The decline in farm gate prices it resulted in widespread losses or depreciation in the value of rice in the country. These losses should have been additional income for farmers.

VALUE OF PALAY PRODUCTION	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Value (PhP billion)	385.01	314.5	318.76	332.77	344.15
Volume (in million MTs*)	19.07	18.81	19.29	19.96	19.76
Ave. per kilo (P Farm gate, Dry)	20.06	16.95	16.76	16.63	17.42
What the value should have been based on 2018 farm gate prices (P bilyon)		377.33	386.96	400.40	396.39
Difference (P bilyon)		-62.88	-68.2	-67.73	

■ Table 2. Cost of Rice Production from 2018-2023 in Pesos. *MT stands for metric tons.

Because of the decrease in the farm gate price, farmers suffered losses amounting to PhP 251 billion from 2019 to 2022. This amount represents 73–80 percent of the total value of annual rice production and 14 percent of the total value of agricultural production (PhP 1.8 trillion in 2022). This is also a significant loss to the economy in terms of rice and agricultural production in the Philippines, comparable to a mass displacement of an economic sector.

- c. **The farm gate price has dropped, but the cost of rice in the country remains high.** The only ones who significantly benefited from the RLL are landlords and large traders.

	2019	2020
Volume of Local Production (in million MTs)	18.81	19.29
Ave. per kilo (P Farm gate)	16.71	16.52
Ave. price of RMR (P per kilo, PSA)	41.44	39.31
What farm gate price should have been based on Rule of Thumb (P/kilo)*	20.72	19.66
Difference from actual farm gate	4.01	3.13
Income loss of farmers (in PhP billions)	75.40	60.48
*Rule of Thumb: (Price of Palay) x (2) = Price of grain		

■ Table 3. 2018-2019 Volume, Price, Price of Regular-Milled Rice, Supposed Price, Actual Farm-Gate Price, and Loss of Rice Production

Rule of thumb dictates that the price of milled rice is twice the farm gate price of paddy and the prevailing average retail price of regular milled rice (the lowest). As such, the farm gate price should have been roughly PhP 20.72 in 2019 and PhP 19.65 in 2020. However, the actual amounts were lower by PhP 4.01 and PhP 3.13 per kilo, respectively. Filipino farmers lost a potential income amounting to PhP 135.8 billion.

Similarly, the price of milled rice should have been around PhP 33 per kilo in 2019 and 2020. Its prevailing average price was higher by PhP 8.01 and PhP 6.27 per kilo. This amounted to an additional PhP 98 billion in 2019 and PhP 78.6 billion in 2020, totaling PhP 176.65 billion. This massive amount is undoubtedly a manifestation of profiteering because it is an additional 19–24 percent of the supposed price.

	2019	2020
Volume of Rice Grain (65% of palay, in million MTs)	12.23	12.54
What rice grains should cost based on the Rule of Thumb	33.43	33.04
Mark-up (Ave. Price minus Rule of Thumb price, in P/kilo)	8.01	6.27
Overall mark-up (P bilyon)	98.02	78.63

■ Table 4. Volume, Supposed Price, Overhead, and Overall Overhead of Rice Production from 2019-2020

In 2019, imported rice amounted to 3.12 million MT, which is worth PhP 55.9 billion (PSA). In 2020, it was 2.23 million MT, or PhP 43.56 billion. This translates to an average of PhP 17.90 and PhP 19.57 per kilo, respectively. Meanwhile, the prevailing average price of regular milled rice was higher at PhP 23.54 and PhP 19.74 per kilo. These mark-ups provided importers and traders with an income of PhP 73.48 billion in 2019 and PhP 43.95 billion in 2020, with a net total of PhP 117.43 billion. The degree of profiteering here is even more severe, as the mark-up amounts to 101–131 percent of its value.

The flood of imported rice devastated the livelihoods of farmers, burying them in debt and evicting them from their farmlands.

“Cheap” imported rice is always used as a leverage to bring down the price of palay, especially during harvest season. The reduced price of palay, juxtaposed with the rising costs of farming, pushes farmers into losses and loans.

YEAR	TOTAL IMPORTS (IN '000 MT)	VALUE (IN MILLION USD)	ORIGIN	SELF-SUFFICIENCY RATE
2018	2,006.35	869.51	Vietnam, Thailand, Pakistan, India, China	86.17
2019	3,122.09	1,144.56		79.8
2020	2,226.12	921.01	Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, China, India	85
2021	2.98	1,140.44	Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, China, India	81.5
2022	3.8	1,273.46	Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Pakistan, India, China, Singapore, Japan, Spain	
As of August 3, 2023	1.995		Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Pakistan, India, Cambodia, China, Japan, Italy, Spain	

■ Table 5. Importation Values and Self-sufficiency rates from 2018-2023

Currently, the Philippines has become the world’s second-biggest buyer of rice. In June 2023, the US Department of Agriculture estimated that the country’s rice imports for 2023 would reach 3.9 million MT. According to data from the Bureau of Plant Industry as of August 3, 2023, the Philippines has already imported nearly two million MT.

Amidst the millions of metric tons of imported rice entering the local market, the retail price of rice has never dropped below PhP 25 per kilo, which was the price promised by the RLL. In 2022, regular-milled rice retailed for PhP 39.43 per kilo, while well-milled rice fetched for PhP 43.77 per kilo. Such costs remain a significant burden, especially considering the wide gap from the price of NFA rice, which ranges from PhP 27 to PhP 32.00 per kilo. This is compounded by the severe inflation in the country.

YEAR	RETAIL WMR	RETAIL RMR
2018	47.43	43.65
2019	45.43	41.44
2020	43.69	39.31
2021	43.46	39.61
2022	43.77	39.43
January-July 2023	44.73	40.60
September 2023	45.00	41.00

■ Table 6. Retail Price per kilogram of Well-milled Rice and Regular-milled Rice from 2018-2023

In July and August, the price of rice increased by PhP 4–5 per kilo. According to the monitoring by Bantay Bigas, prices have reached between PhP 48 to PhP 55 per kilo. This may further increase. Marcos was forced to issue Executive Order (EO) No. 39, also known as the Rice Price Ceiling, purportedly to address the issue of excessively high rice prices in the markets. Farmers and consumers do not oppose this, but the price ceiling should ideally be around PhP 41– PhP 45 per kilo to be affordable for the citizens.

Where is the assistance?

- a. In the 2024 proposed budget of the DA amounting to PhP 197.84 billion, farmers are demanding an even higher budget allocation and the inclusion of a PhP 15,000 production subsidy for 2.7 million farmers and fisherfolk. Government budget for farm-to-market roads has also increased to PhP 17.3 billion, which will be used to construct 1,144.58 kilometers of roads across the country.
- b. Under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) program, farmers are questioning where the government utilized the 2022 tariff excess of PhP 12.8 billion from the PhP 22.8 billion that entered the country. In 2021, there was also an excess of PhP 8.9 billion from the collected PhP 18.9 billion, as well as PhP 1 billion surplus from 2020. In total, tariff excesses under the RLL are estimated to have reached PhP 22.7 billion, which should have been immediately distributed as production subsidies to farmers.

- c. In connection with this, corruption plagued PhilMech-DA when it purchased overpriced 1,346 farm tractors under the RCEF in 2021. Each tractor had an additional cost of PhP 98,000, with a total of PhP 131 million. Instead of pocketing the money, it should have been distributed as cash aid to farmers, amounting to PhP 5,000 each as part of the Rice Farmers Financial Assistance (RFFA). In this way, 26,500 farmers could have benefited.

Hold Marcos accountable for his negligence in the rice crisis.

The crisis in rice aggravates the livelihoods of Filipinos. This is not a natural occurrence but a result of the actions of those in power, particularly their anti-people programs and policies. The masses should resist this situation and hold instigators accountable. These key players are currently led by Marcos Jr.

The populace should resist the president's widespread deception, in which he feigns interest in the crisis but offers no solution. In fact, he is among the primary instigators. He dismisses the calls of farmers for the program, "Genuine Agrarian Reform," and his neglect threatens the sustainable food production of farmers. He is also the proponent of imperialist agricultural policies, particularly liberalization and import liberalization. Traders, importers, smugglers, hoarders, and cartels are protected under the Marcos regime. Its policies and programs threaten national food security and self-sufficiency of the Filipino people.

Four years have passed since the implementation of the Rice Liberalization Law. It has slowly revealed its failure to improve the condition of rice farmers and make rice affordable to the impoverished population. However, it continues to be promoted by the government.

To summarize, the flooding of imported rice buried farmers in debt and displaced them from their lands. The low market price of rice and soaring farming costs are exacerbated by inflation and the TRAIN law.

We are facing a food crisis because of Marcos Jr. It is reasonable for farmers to call for Genuine Agrarian Reform. Marcos should be held accountable for his negligence to resolve the rice crisis. He also failed to alleviate severe poverty incidence in rural areas, which is the basis for promoting local development and food security. All farmers and citizens must unite in condemning Marcos Jr.'s leadership amid the food and agriculture crisis.

How We Resist Agrochemical TNCs

**Sharing of advocacy campaigns of
RESIST members and partners**

Good Food Community (GFC)

Good Food Community (GFC) is an alternative food system based on ethical and ecological farming that transforms consumers into co-producers. Since 2011, GFC has explored methods such as deliveries, Sunday Markets, and e-Commerce to support small-holder farmers. The work that GFC pursues is intimately linked to care and community—from fostering personal relationships to understanding the connections between the food we eat, the future we want to shape for our children, and how our biodiversity connects with our identity and sovereignty as a Filipino people.

Mabi David from GFC shared the perspective of consumers and community-based marketing groups. GFC joins the resistance because it believes that the corporate food system and agrochemical TNCs are destroying the important connection between farmers and consumers. The neoliberalization of agriculture and food has become rampant throughout global supply chains. Giant supermarkets also reveal such neoliberalization, as they replace traditional markets and sell appealing processed foods.

All of these erase the faces and stories of small farmers and consumer preferences, culture, and nature that truly shape our food system. With the breakdown of cooperation and solidarity, many consumers are losing sight of the issues faced by Filipino farmers.

Consumers are made passive for the corporate food system—the consumer is not part of food production and is only able to participate based on their purchasing power. Because profit-oriented corporations run our food system, farmers and consumers continue to suffer.

We bear the burden of illnesses while they profit. On the fields, deadly fertilizers and pesticides are widely spread. On our tables, food is laden with chemical additives and preservatives. Freedom of choice is confined to thousands of products in supermarkets made by a few corporations. Do we really have a choice if a select few tell us what to pick? The question of resistance is what we seek to contribute to the discourse.

How do we resist? We believe that what we eat defines the world we live in. For us in the Good Food Community, promoting the model called community-supported agriculture, or *pamayanihan*, is an important way to strengthen the relationship between farmers and consumers. This innate connection has been weakened by corporations who trample on nature and human rights.

In *pamayanihan*, consumers are developed to become co-producers. Consumers are important parts of producing safe, nutritious, and affordable food. This is an alternative marketing model where they participate in the three (3) Rs of food production: risks, rewards, and responsibilities. The present crisis heaps all risks on farmers, but they should not be alone.

Pamayanihan has a subscription model where consumers are guaranteed weekly harvests and a market. Partner farmers focus on strengthening their organization and organic production; there is less worry that there will have no buyers. This year, farmers started promoting community seed libraries alongside partners. There is a daily supply of food because of various crops. They are not buried in debt from pesticide use. Our model is one of the local alternative food networks. There is a direct relationship between the farmer and consumer. In local alternative food networks, trust and cooperation, rights, fair trade, participation, local culture, knowledge, and experience are ensured. Through community kitchens and seed banks, it recognizes the value of political, ethnic, and social dimensions in food, often erased by corporate food systems and agrochemical TNCs,

The urban poor are involved in creating alternative ways to meet their food needs. They entrust their vegetable seeds to small farmers who are partners of GFC. Solidarity shares from consumers are also used in food gardens. The community kitchen gathers the urban poor for affordable housing.

That's what the Good Food Community is doing now. On weekends, there is a community meal preparation where various subscribers discuss the current rice crisis.

Kilusang Magbubukid ng Bicol (KMB)

Bicol farmers, represented by Alyansang Magbubukid ng Bicol (literally, Bicol Farmers Alliance), shared their campaign against agrochemical transnational corporations (TNCs), specifically the commercialization of Golden Rice in the region. Bicol farmers were the first in the world to uproot the Golden Rice in its trial farm in 2013 in the province of Camarines Sur. Their resistance against GMOs was one among many expressions of their resistance against imperialism. The fight against agrochemical TNCs, and against Golden Rice and GMOs is part of the entire peasant campaign in the Bicol region.

The fight persists. It is important to make farmers understand how we resist and why we resist. First, we conduct continuous studies through forums and conferences related to issues and struggles against agrochemical TNCs. This should be done not only in central urban areas, but also in rural peasant communities, most especially at the barangay level. We also lobby local government units (LGUs) on the provincial level, municipal level, and the barangay level. This seeks to create concrete ordinances that favor farmers, such as the halt of the commercialization and cultivation of Golden Rice and other GMOs in farming areas. Such work is already starting and needs to be documented.

One thing we want to achieve in our lobby work is to engage with Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice). Currently, PhilRice is planting Golden Rice in Ligao City. We already held a dialogue with the mayor last August 8, 2023, but he was unaware of the project, so we will return to clarify matters. Golden Rice is still being planted there, as well as in Catanduanes. Annually, Bicol celebrates August 8 as the historical uprooting of Golden Rice in Camarines Sur.

Beyond local governments, we also lobby with district representatives in the Congress on the issues of GMOs, including rice, corn, and eggplant. In fact, there is a massive plantation cultivating GMO corn in Bicol.

Another campaign is the promotion of sustainable farming. In remote areas, especially in the mountains, sustainable farming serves as a year-round campaign because it is anchored in the fight for land. Fighting for land also necessitates rejecting chemical use. We are now directing the Department of Agriculture to provide organic seeds and inputs.

We popularize this through our “Bicol Farmers School.” Yearly, we have a school where the students are farmers from different parts of Bicol. Our goal is to develop farmer technicians who will serve in farmer communities advocating for sustainable farming.

At present, various groups, even on the barangay level, are launching trial farms and organic agriculture programs to raise awareness about these initiatives. However, militarization is prevalent in rural communities. Fascist attacks have intensified, and even trial farming and sustainable practices are viewed with suspicion.

Many land-related issues are heavily militarized. Communities are subjected to bombings, redtagging, and coercion to surrender. In Masbate, the latest incident involved bombings amid the planned expansion of the open-pit mining in Aroroy, which has now spread to Uson. From February to October, numerous homes and families have been affected. People were shot as land disputes grew. The government seized land from over 100 farmers, evicting them despite their efforts to farm sustainably without chemicals. In one severe instance, four farmers were killed.

Those involved in land struggles face intense persecution. Leaders are being sued and forced to submit. In the second and third district of Albay, many are coerced to surrender. Some of these capitulations are staged by the military. Raising awareness about these incidents persists. The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) is yet to acknowledge the reports and visit contentious areas. When we attempted to file a report on 10 June 2023, SWAT arrived before the CHR, which highlighted the severity of the situation.

Our peasant office in Libon, Albay has been padlocked and is no longer in use due to increased military presence. This was ordered by Congressman Cabredo. Despite these difficulties, we remain rooted in our cause. We prefer face-to-face actions over virtual ones, since they are more impactful.

We have faced challenges with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources due to registration issues. Their inspections cannot be conducted virtually. Although our numbers are small, we remain engaged to show the people of Bicol that we are still here. Discussions and organizing persist in the villages, amid threats of harassment. People may become accustomed to the situation and assume fewer numbers indicate fear, but even with a small presence, we continue to fight.

KABUHI-AN Association

In Negros, the KABUHI-AN Association has programs on sustainable agriculture, including education for farmers. We are also involved in lobbying for organic ordinances in cities under the LGUs. We have already achieved these ordinances in two places.

The Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) program is the main problem we face in Negros. Some farmers who started practicing organic farming have regressed because of RCEF, but we continue to organize against it. One of our demands is to implement the existing organic ordinance and prohibit chemical inputs and the dissemination of GMO terminator seeds. Chemical fertilizers like urea should not be distributed. These calls were communicated during the dialogue with their LGU. Another town in Central Negros will follow the same practice.

One problem seen in the implementation of sustainable agriculture is widespread land conversion. Negros is primarily a sugar-producing province with large sugar plantations. Chemical inputs are rampant in these areas. People's organizations (POs) have programs that plan to reduce chemical usage and produce organic sugarcane.

There is also an anti-reclassification campaign against land conversion. One town is set to convert over 100 hectares for commercial rice farming. This is a major campaign not only in Southern Negros, but also in urban centers like Bacolod, where significant displacement will occur due to reclamation projects. This will affect rice cultivation, especially in Southern Negros, where large tracts of land will be converted, considering that Negros has been approved as a single island-region.

Campaigns against land conversion have begun. Instead of addressing the community's demands, the government responds with militarization. The POs in the barangays are visited by CSP/CMO, coercing our leaders to surrender under threat of murder. One organizer said in a press conference yesterday that an intel from the 47th Infantry Battalion (IB) told him he is a target in a shoot-to-kill order. When he tried to file a blotter with the police, he was told to withdraw; otherwise, he would be pursued by all battalions.

Similar to other areas in the country, there are many large landowners in Negros whose haciendas have not been dismantled. Actions are taken by farmers and farmworkers to acquire land for cultivation so they can address hunger amid their low wages. However, the response they get is militarization. Instead of supporting areas that have Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA),¹⁸ the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) forcibly divides the/a collective CLOA. Farmers are coerced, but they try to resist, knowing that developing land under a collective CLOA will benefit them. The DAR and the military go house to house to intimidate people into agreement, using a forcible method that not only expedites the implementation of land conversion but also weakens the collective power of farmers. This makes it easier for large corporations to push for land conversion or reassert control, often for commercial use or agribusiness expansion, further undermining the goals of land reform.

18 CLOA is a government-issued document that proves ownership of land that has been awarded by the Department of Agrarian Reform. This also shows the redistribution of agricultural lands in the country.

KALIKASAN People's Network for the Environment (PNE)

Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment (PNE) is a nation-wide environmental campaign center based in the Philippines. It is composed of various non-government organizations (NGOs), grassroots organizations, and environmental advocates. Kalikasan PNE is also one of the convenors of Panatang Luntian Coalition (literally, Green Pledge Coalition), which, together with its legislative partners and other advocates, lobbies for the People's Green New Deal (PGND) in Congress.

The issues of rice and land are deeply connected to nature. Our predominant campaign addresses the contentious topic of reclamation, which is a consequence of ongoing militarization. The silencing of environmental advocates who fight for fishermen's rights is part of an administration that prioritizes profit. Like farmers, fishermen are essential. Everything we consume in Metro Manila comes from their labor.

To highlight these issues, a human chain activity was held on 19 October 2023 in Manila Bay,¹⁹ emphasizing that lip service is insufficient. Despite mentioning a moratorium, there is no executive order to halt reclamation. Human rights violations and dredging continue. This results in zero fish catch and the displacement of communities. Additionally, mining continues to affect land that should have been distributed to farmers. The Mining Act allows corporations to extract minerals, despite the Philippines' rich biodiversity.

Militarization is evident with the construction of EDCA sites, such as in Palawan, which is home to many endemic species and Indigenous Peoples. These sites are part of preparations against China, impacting farmlands and waterways with pollution from gunpowder and fossil fuels used for transport. Environmental groups recognize that such projects exacerbate climate change. Pollution often originates from foreign sources in the Global North. Farmers and fishermen, who directly interact with the environment and support our basic needs, are the first to be affected.

19 Environmental rights and various sectoral groups formed a human chain along Roxas Boulevard on October 18 to protest the continued Manila Bay reclamation. More information can be read here: <https://manilatoday.net/environmental-advocates-form-human-chain-in-a-bid-to-defend-manila-bay-against-reclamation-projects/>

This is the national campaign of Kalikasan and part of the Green Coalition oath, promoting House Resolution 8, also known as the People's Green New Deal (PGND) for economic stimulus. This resolution advocates building sustainable infrastructure rather than aligning with transnational corporations (TNCs). The PGND, supported by Kabataan Partylist, also calls for land conversion appeals and free land distribution. It opposes land grabbing by large corporations due to bribes. The Environment Defenders bill recognizes farmers as defenders of nature.

In Marcos Jr.'s first year, killings and harassment have increased compared to those of previous administrations. The Green Coalition comprises various organizations and advocates proposing alternatives to the current system, which fails to meet the majority's needs. For instance, the Save San Roque²⁰ network turned their demolished area into a community garden during the pandemic, showcasing self-sufficiency.

The Center for Environmental Concerns is collaborating on a primer on El Niño. Farmers are the first to be affected by climate change. Our efforts include studies, forums, and walks for environmental advocates in Metro Manila, with the aim of exposing the challenges faced by on-the-ground communities nationwide.

20 Save San Roque is an organization of volunteers, architects, engineers, educators, artists, writers, and students, among others, that collaborate with the urban poor in Sitio San Roque, Brgy. Bagong Pag-Asa, Quezon City, Philippines. The aim is to create pro-people programs and assert the community's right to the city.

Philippine Network of Food Security Programmes (PNFSP)

PNFSP envisions a self-determining and self-reliant society, where people have secured their right to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food. The Network also commits to advance the right-to-food of the most disadvantaged sector towards self-sufficiency.

At present, PNFSP focuses on mainstreaming agroecology and sustainable urban agriculture through capacity-building and education work in urban poor communities. Unfortunately, many of its partners face threats of militarization. Continuing their work becomes a challenging process. However, some partners still manage to persist amid threats. One of them engaged with their LGU in Mindanao to establish a learning farm.

IBON Foundation (IBON)

IBON Foundation is a non-stock non-profit development organization serving the Filipino people through research and education since 1978. IBON seeks to promote an understanding of socioeconomics that serves the interests and aspirations of the Filipino people. The Foundation also aims to study the most urgent social, economic and political issues confronting Philippine society and the world.

A significant part of our advocacy is supporting various sectors. The issues range widely from employment, wages, agriculture, food security, and environment. Many sectors build partnerships to advance pro-people policies. For IBON, organizing in the community is not the primary work, but providing research support for various issues. The current administration says a lot of good things about what they are doing. However, the group seeks to expose the corruption in the government. Its solution is not for the people, but for itself, the oligarchs, and corporations.

Research is done in resistance because the audience is not only the affected sector. Hopefully, it also reaches the middle class, the academia, government officials, and students—those who are not normally seen in rallies, but are open to learn and support the issues of the basic sector.

Pesticide Action Network Asia Pacific (PANAP)

PAN Asia Pacific's advocacy campaigns focus on land, food sovereignty, and agroecology. PANAP spearheads the Global People's Caravan for Food, Land, and Climate Justice, which is built upon the Global People's Summit's vision of radical food systems transformation. This campaign aims to mobilize rural communities and advocates from around the world by uniting their voices on critical issues related to food, land, and climate. It also seeks to demand accountability from governments and corporations for their violations and the destruction they caused.

Magsasaka at Siyentipiko para sa Pag-Unlad ng Agrikultura (MASIPAG)

MASIPAG is a farmer-led network of farmers' organizations, indigenous peoples, scientists, and NGOs working towards the sustainable use and management of agricultural resources through the assertion of control of farmers.

Its programs include the following: Collection, Identification, Multiplication, Management, and Evaluation of Seeds; Farmer-led Breeding; Development of Agroecosystems; Promotion of Farmer-Developed and Adapted Technologies; and Climate Change Resilience, among others. They are products of decades-worth of asserting food and seed sovereignty and farmer empowerment.

In the past year, MASIPAG's advocacy campaign work focused on stopping the commercialization of Golden Rice GR2E and Bt Talong. This was done through a filed petition in the Supreme Court. It also supported local and national legislations that promote the proliferation of organic agriculture and other agroecology-related programs. MASIPAG has been monitoring potential amendments on the country's seed laws and biosafety regulations.

Moreover, MASIPAG farmers around the country are spearheading resistance actions against development aggressions, political repression, and other forms of human rights violations on the local level.

Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP)

The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas or Peasant Movement of the Philippines (KMP) was founded at a time of great political upheaval and broad mass movement against the tyranny and abuses of the Marcos dictatorship. Hundreds of peasant leaders and land reform advocates from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao gathered during the historic founding of KMP on July 24, 1985. After thirty five years, KMP remains as the largest national democratic mass organization of peasants in the Philippines.

Until today, the majority of Filipino peasants remain landless as they face the fundamental problem of feudalism in the Philippines. Big landlords and foreign agri-business control vast tracts of lands in the country, further subjecting peasants to exploitative conditions such as land rent, slavery, usury, and high costs of production, among others. The Philippine government's previous and current bogus land reform programs are all anti-peasant and serve only the interests of landlords and foreign monopoly corporations.

The KMP is at the forefront of the Filipino peasants' struggle for genuine land reform. It upholds the national democratic interests of millions of rural poor in the countryside, fights against oppressive local landlords, big bourgeoisie, and the exploitative feudal and semi-feudal conditions that perpetuate the lingering social inequality among the Filipino people.

KMP is the democratic mass organization of Filipino peasants primarily struggling for genuine land reform, social justice, and genuine social change. It is composed of landless peasants, farmworkers, peasant women, youth, and millions of rural poor in the countryside.

For the past three decades, the KMP has been organizing and mobilizing the peasant masses so they can reveal their strength as the country's main force, collectively uplift their social and living conditions, and participate in the struggle for national freedom and democracy.

Depending on various strengths and capacities, KMP chapters and its local affiliates launch significant actions including collective farming, land cultivation activities, and other campaigns to recover agricultural lands which were grabbed by state-backed landlords and big foreign corporations.

The KMP tirelessly exposes the bogus land reform programs and schemes of the Philippine government that continue to deprive farmers of the right-to-land. The group also fights against graft and corruption in the bureaucracy, which squander billions of public funds intended for farmers and the local agricultural sector.

The KMP constantly collaborates with various sectors of society and people's organizations in the Philippines and abroad. This aims to broaden the national struggle for genuine land reform. It has successfully convened the Philippine Land Reform Movement that affirmed the Filipinos' united struggle for genuine land reform and social change.

Ways Forward:

Direction Setting and Resolution Building

■ Facilitated by Patrick Dela Cueva

MASIPAG

Participants shared their issues and corresponding advocacy campaigns. They can be categorized into the following themes:

1. Resistance against corporate agricultural technologies and “solutions” detrimental to farmers’ rights, such as genetically modified crops, pesticides, and other inputs, among others;
2. Resistance against corporate-led, environmentally destructive projects enabled by the government;
3. Resistance against militarization and political repression; and
4. Resistance against land-grabbing and land conversions.

Closing Remarks

■ Rafael “Ka Paeng” Mariano

*Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP)*¹

On behalf of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas and the RESIST Network, we would like to thank everyone who joined us in yet another effort to gather and consolidate our efforts against big transnational corporations who leech on our land, on our food, and on rural people's livelihood. While this system remains in the country, no amount of policy reforms or huge loans for “developing” agriculture will benefit the peasantry. It shall continue to exacerbate the systemic crisis brought about by landlessness and neoliberal policies. The peasant movement, together with its broad network that includes scientists, the academe, and other productive and oppressed sectors of the country, will continue to stand for rural development that is free from neoliberal dictates. We shall persist in rallying our chapters and opposing the threats of the multinationals that will lead to our country's demise. This is a challenge we accept. As stewards of the land, we will make sure it remains productive and poison-free, for as long as our ranks remain steadfast and united.

Fight for genuine land reform!

Resist corporate control in agriculture!

Down with imperialism!

1 This section represents a near-verbatim account of the speech. Minor edits have been made for readability.

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