

# The Landless Constituency



The number of people considered landless number in the hundreds of millions across all regions. In India, for example, as many as [307 million](#) rural people are considered landless. In Bangladesh, almost [4.5 million](#) are landless. Landless People's Movement of South Africa is composed of rural people and people living in shack settlements in cities, many of whom have been dispossessed under the infamous Natives Land Act of 1913. Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra, MST*) is one of the largest social movements in Latin America with an estimated membership of 1.5 million.

This significant force and phenomenon of poverty has been a growing concern of the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) for the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), which reports directly to the UN's highest-level development policy-making body, the Economic and Social Council. In 2015, the CSM Coordinating Committee identified the landless as its eleventh constituency of people affected by food insecurity. The constituency's gender-balanced coordination team is led by Jamal Talab of HIC Member in Palestine, Land Research Center and Sylvia Mallari of Asian Peasant Coalition (Philippines).

With support from the Italian government, the CSM held a workshop of

concerned members in Tunis on 21–22 March 2017 to develop the landless concept and work program within the civil efforts to support and guide global food policy. HLRN coordinator Joseph Schechla participated with a presentation of the landless as a subject of human rights and international humanitarian law. The workshop resulted in a four-part program of staged activities that seek first to develop further and unify the concept of landlessness based on a literature review, further consultations and a survey of the constituency. In parallel, the coordinators will lead an inventory of the concerned stakeholders. The CSM then will seek to develop the capacity of those stakeholders to make their voices heard at the global level and to conduct advocacy before the CFS.

The new and emerging landless constituency be involved in the various work streams of the CFS, building upon a body of policy norms and guidance already developed with the Rome-based UN agencies specialized in food and nutrition, including the [Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security](#) (2012), the [Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises](#) (2015) [Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition](#) (2016).





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