



## ARZE GLIPO

Born in 1963, is a development scientist and coordinator of the Asia Pacific Network on Food Sovereignty (APNFS), to which women's, consumer and farming organisations from nine countries are affiliated. The focus of their work is to analyse the social and economic impact of trade agreements and credit schemes run by international organisations. «Most of all they have undermined our countries' ability to act to protect our own farming,» Glipo explains. «After we joined the WTO in the mid-1990s many rice growers in my home region had to give up, because the market price for their rice no longer covered the cost of production and loan repayments». She thinks that the new agreement with the EU will make the situation for smallholders and poultry farmers even worse. The alternative is «food sovereignty», which means that the people of the Philippines should have the freedom to be able to decide about their own food. «We at APNFS will be exerting a lot of pressure on governments and international institutions to make the global commodities market more democratic. Only then can the people have food security».



**Import duties must be raised to protect agricultural production in our country.**

**There must be no speculation with agricultural products.**

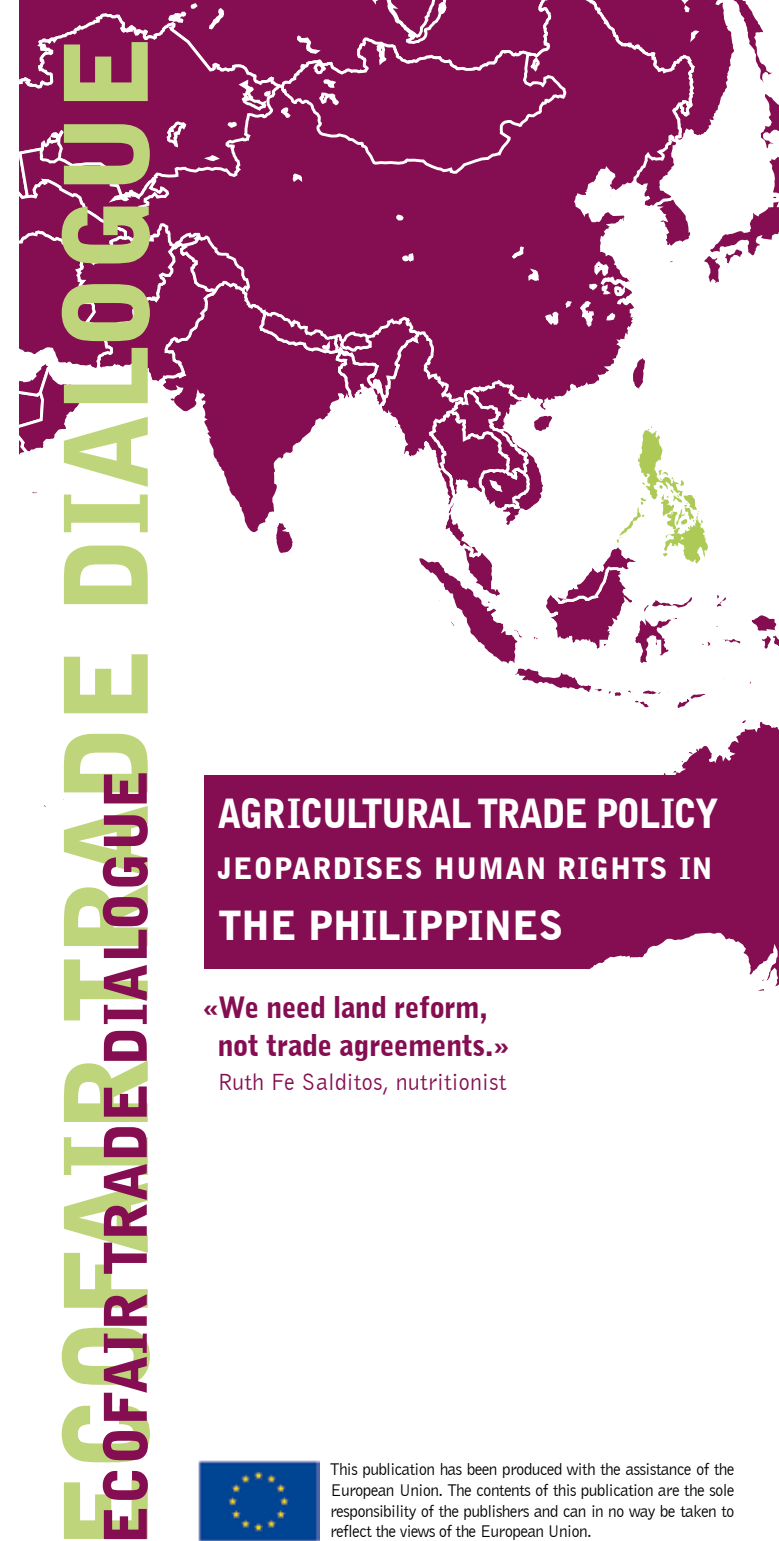
**The EU should not offer incentives for growing «biofuels».**

**Further information and contact:  
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## AGRICULTURAL TRADE POLICY JEOPARDISES HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

**«We need land reform,  
not trade agreements.»**

Ruth Fe Salditos, nutritionist



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The Philippines is already very dependent on food imports. In 2008, there was a global increase in food prices that heavily affected the country. The price of rice, the main staple food, rose by 53 percent within six months. The poor could not afford to buy it. The government had to buy four million tonnes of rice on the world market at high prices to be able to feed its people. This was not the first shopping trip abroad; the Philippines normally imports around two million tonnes of rice per year. Yet until the 1990s they were still in a position to export rice.

What had happened? The Philippine government had begun to promote export-oriented plantation farming, and had cut investment in rice production. When the country joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995 the government committed to opening up the agricultural market to foreign goods. Farmers with less than two hectares of land bear the brunt. They produce pork and poultry, and milk and rice, but they cannot compete with the oversupply of cheap agricultural products from abroad. That is why many of them have given up farming. In contrast, large landowners growing bananas, pineapples and palm oil for export on their vast plantations have been able to cash in on entry to the WTO.

The situation in Philippine agriculture could be made still worse by a bilateral trade agreement with the EU, which is being considered by both parties. In 2010 the EU and the Philippines signed a mutual agreement on «partnership and cooperation». It is regarded as paving the way for a future «free trade agreement», which our ambassadors are warning against. «Our large landowners and foreign agribusiness will be the only ones to benefit from that as well,» says Ruth F. Salditos.

## FACTS & FIGURES

Population	90 million
Number employed in agriculture	34 million
Agricultural exports	3.3 billion dollars (bananas, palm oil, pineapples)
Agricultural imports	4.7 billion dollars (wheat, soya, rice, milk powder)
Percentage of population undernourished	15%
Average life expectancy	72 years



## RUTH FE SALDITOS

Born in 1960, is a nutritionist and is in charge of a Fair Trade project on the island of Panay. It produces banana chips and raw cane sugar, some of which goes to be sold in European Fair Trade shops. «As a nutritionist I worked mainly with impoverished women in my community,» Salditos says. «That made me realise that the right to food is a highly political issue». This is because, since joining the WTO, the Philippines is no longer able to feed its people from its own farming industry. Moreover she fears that with the financial crisis in Europe the demand for fairly traded exports from the Philippines will fall as well. «The 500 families who work in our project are already not earning enough to cover their basic needs.» With her organisation Salditos is campaigning for comprehensive land reform, so that more people can farm their own land and thus secure their livelihoods through self-sufficiency.