



**Name of session: Agrarian reform in Latin America**

**2. Facilitator:**

**Liz Alden (specialist in land tenancy)**

**3. Presenter:**

**Fernando Eguren (Cepes, Perú)**

**3. Key points of the presentation:**

Between 1960 and 1970 several countries in Latin America (Bolivia, Cuba, Peru, among others) experimented with land reform. These land reform processes had important results: the landed class was eliminated, the peasants acquired the status of citizens, and they began to be part of the political community. At the same time, rural markets were extended, land was redistributed to peasants so that they could access this form of collectivity. On the other hand, among the negative consequences were the fact that the rural population did not manage to pull out of poverty, the distribution of land was not accompanied by adequate policies and the countryside lost technical and skilled labour.

Neo-liberal policies brought new concentrations of land, widened the agricultural boundaries, concessions were granted to extractive industries by the state, as well as the sale of land for biofuel production. The concentration on natural resources signified a step backwards to the advances won by the reforms; socio-economic inequality grew with the process of democratization.

Today, the scenario for implementing redistributive reforms is more complex and needs a strong political will, as well as the support of the population. To win a consensus for reform is more difficult as industry does not have the stigma of traditional landowners. Nevertheless, this consensus is being achieved in some Latin American countries. There are now indigenous peasant movements that are claiming the land, not only as an element of production but also as their territory, referring to their cultural identity and their social and economic development.

Globalization brings problems such as food (in)security, deterioration of the environment, commercial pressure on resources and the energy crisis have made this unsustainable. There must be an agreement that those who need access to the land, as well as those who lay claim to it, take on the responsibility that production will not be aggressive with nature. Thus, they need to find techniques and ways of organizing production in a way that will raise productivity of food and at the same time use sources of energy that are renewable and not contaminating. Compromise must be taken on by the different actors: workers of the land, the State and civil society – only in this way can we guarantee the quality of life for all.