



Roundtable: Sharing experiences and lessons on land reform

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**A perspective from Latin America
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Land reform in Peru took place in 1969 and was supported by the peasant movement. It succeeded in eliminating the holdings of large landowners. The lands of landowners were expropriated and cooperatives and associations were created. Nevertheless, this process was carried out vertically from above and the restrictions of reality were not contemplated. These same farmers grouped themselves into family parcels of land and the result was an increase in small land holdings.

The reform brought a significant redistribution of land, but this did not translate into successful systems of production and a more successful economy. One of the greatest successes was the elimination of semi-feudal relations and, in this sense, land reform was a social and political revolution which achieved the extension of citizenship to individuals who had previously been excluded from the political community.

One of the challenges of the process of reform is to achieve the stimulation of association of small farmers so that they can integrate into the economy on a level that will permit them, among other things, to improve their capabilities for negotiation. If farmers are not organized into associations, it is difficult to obtain the support of the State. In Peru, farmers' initiatives have been associated through export. Small farmers can certainly be viable in the market economy, but this requires the support of the State.

On the other hand, we must keep in mind that land ownership does not necessarily bring positive economic transformation. The limitations of ownership are also an important theme and these will vary according to their context.

Achieving the redistribution of land in Peru has taken a step backward and, at present, there is a re-concentration of land related to modernization of agriculture which excludes small farmers.