

May 2013

No. **5**

Notebook
La Via Campesina



Land is Life!

La Via Campesina and the Struggle for Land



 La Via Campesina
International Peasant Movement

Land is Life!

La Via Campesina and the Struggle for Land

“Land is everything for us.”
Ndiakhate Fall (CNCR)



Contacts of La Via Campesina

International Peasant Movement

Operative secretariat:

Jln. Mampang Prapatan XIV no 5 Jakarta Selatan, Jakarta 12790 Indonesia

Tel/fax: +62-21-7991890/+62-21-7993426

Email: viacampesina@viacampesina.org

Cover photo : Peasant woman, activist and founder of CONAMURI (Paraguay).

Photos : Argeo Kennet, Zad.nadir.org, LVC South America, Nick Paget, LVC South East and East Asia, LVC Africa 2

Jakarta, May 2013

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
1. Resistance around the world	2
Europe	
Land grabbing in Hungary	3
The scramble for land in Romania	3
Urban land squatting action in Vienna, Austria	4
Access to land in Andalusia, Spain	5
Resisting land concentration and urban sprawl in France	6
Green land grabbing: the case of Narbolia, Italy	7
Africa	
Stopping land grabs for agrofuels in Senegal	7
Mozambique: Breaking the silence of violence against women	9
Land grabbing and inter-ethnic conflict in Mauritania	10
Raising awareness of land grabs in Burkina Faso	10
Mali: 'The land is our inheritance'	11
Asia	
100,000 people mobilize against corporate-led agriculture in India	12
Indonesian coalition against land grabbing	13
Taiwan: Farmers rally outside the Presidential Office	14
The same struggles encountered elsewhere	14
Latin America	
Honduras: Killing with impunity	15
Gender equity in land tenure in the Dominican Republic	16
Solidarity with Paraguay	17
Agribusiness as usual: The death of peasant farming in Argentina	17
Landless farmers under threat in Pernambuco, Brazil	18
2. Global Context	19
A global overview of land grabbing and land concentration	19
20 years of local to global action on land reform	20
A permanent campaign for land reform	20
The rights for peasants	21
Opposition to the policies of the World Bank	21
Adoption of the voluntary guidelines on land tenure	22
3. Ways Forward	23
Agrarian Reform: Our vision for the 21st century	23
Conference Declaration: 'Stop Land-Grabbing Now!' November 2011, Mali	24
Conclusion	26
Boxes	
Occupy the Farm at Gill Tract, California	5
Brazilian megaproject in Mozambique set to displace millions of peasants	10
Testimony by a Malian family farmer, victim of a land grab	11
Demonstration and occupation in Bahía, Brazil	18
Recognition of the concept of 'territory'	20

Introduction

*“We are not birds that live in the air, we are not fish that live in the water. We are peasants who need to live on land.”
Unified Peasant Movement of Aguan, Honduras (MUCA).*

This report brings together stories and analyses of farmers’ struggles for land all over the world, as well as Via Campesina calls to actions against land grabbing and for agrarian reform. However, as a movement made up of several hundred million peasants, landless, women farmers, indigenous people, youth, migrants and agricultural workers, we can only reflect fragments of our vitality and strength. This publication seeks to present Via Campesina’s struggle for land and its strategy that has developed over the last two decades.

Many of these analyses and testimonies were gleaned from two major forums: the international conference against land grabbing in Mali in November 2011 and conference on agrarian reform and the defense of land and territory in Indonesia in July 2012. These two important international gatherings allowed us collectively to build solidarity and forge common policy positions.

Land grabbing re-emerged during the 2007-2008 global food crisis, which pushed an additional 115 million people into hunger, leading to a total of almost one billion suffering from hunger by the end of 2008.¹ Today, global food prices remain high and volatile, particularly in developing countries. National ‘offshoring’ for land and food production, increased speculation in food markets, the ‘meatification’ of diets and the push for agrofuels are major agro-industrial trends that are fuelling the global land grab.²

The world’s poor continue to be subjected to the systemic failures inherent within the capitalist neoliberal model. Export-led growth and corporate-controlled food systems expose farmers to unfair competition from powerful financial interests. Yet our steadfast and dignified call for food sovereignty over two decades has resonated with certain governments, institutions and progressive organizations despite the deepening of the global neoliberal paradigm. As climate change threatens the survival of humanity, there must be a more aggressive push to support peasant and family farmer-led agriculture worldwide. Integrated agro-ecological farming is widely recognized as being resilient and adaptive to climate change, restores soils – a rich storehouse of carbon – and is highly productive. In stark contrast, the corporate food system promotes unhealthy diets, GMOs, excessive irrigation, chemical pesticides and fertilizers, and the degradation of biodiversity. We are resisting this corporate-dominated model all across the planet.

¹ In 2009, 960 million were going hungry worldwide, according to FAO (2009)
http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ISFP/SR_Web.pdf

² See Transnational Institute, The Global Land Grab: A Primer, 2012 <http://www.tni.org/primer/global-land-grab>

1. Resistance around the world



Call for action against land grabbing made by la Via Campesina for April 17, International day of Peasants' struggles.

By illustrating our members' struggles, we expose the harsh realities that they face in combatting land grabs and the concentration of land ownership, which are caused and compounded by systemic injustices inherent in our capitalist societies.

These country-level case studies also offer hope as farmers and activists mobilize to take control of the land and demand policy change from decision-makers. Women are at the forefront of these land struggles and the deafening silence of their repression is being broken. Farmers and indigenous activists under threat from violent regimes and landowners are defiantly defending food sovereignty, including those subjected to the extreme violence in Honduras.

And we continue to work the land, to feed families in both the countryside and cities, to cool the planet and show what sustainable alternatives really look like on the ground. As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, still growing strong with new members and allies, our struggles are being localized and globalized, providing a powerful antidote to the food, climate, energy and financial crises.

Europe

Europe is highly industrial and the most urbanized continent in the world with around 80% of its population living in towns or cities. Yet agriculture serves as an important sector in the EU: there are around 12 million farms, which cover 170 million ha. But agricultural land is shrinking, the closures of small farms continue to rise and young prospective farmers face major barriers to access land.

European rural dwellers are facing land grabbing – a phenomenon largely associated with the global South – and the increasing concentration of land in the hands of private investors and wealthy farmers. The EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) subsidy scheme contributes directly to this growing land inequality as it explicitly favors large landholdings, thus marginalizing small farms and blocking the entry of prospective young farmers.³

Land grabbing in Hungary

In Hungary, the land is considered to be of great national value as reflected in its history and popular legends. Over the last two decades, investors from wealthy EU member states have been attracted by Hungary's low cost of land and the prospect of capturing lucrative agricultural subsidies following Hungary's accession to the EU.

Despite Hungary's moratorium on foreign land ownership, outside actors have been able to grab and control large areas of land, in particular through the use of so-called 'pocket contracts' that bypass legal restrictions on land deals.

Some spectacularly dubious deals have come to light. The sprawling farm property in Somogy county, owned by Carlo Benetton, a scion of the Italian textile dynasty family, exploits 7,000 ha of corn, wheat and poplar trees. As Le Monde has reported, the village of 1,200 residents, hemmed in by fences to protect the Benetton fields from game, refer to it as 'Alcatraz', after the former US prison.

Grupo Milton – a Hungarian company with Spanish ties – has been embroiled over scandals related to its much hyped 'investment' projects including a golf village project and motor racecourse.

The role of the Hungarian state in this process has been ambivalent: regulating the worst excesses of these land grabs, criminalizing various practices but also facilitating and profiting from these dubious land deals. These competing tendencies within Hungarian agrarian politics raise both challenges and opportunities for the country's farmers and civil society groups.

The scramble for land in Romania

Across Romania, natural resources, including peasants' land, are subjected to exploitation and massive investments. Land is snatched for many purposes

³ This introduction is based on analysis by Jennifer Franco from Transnational Institute and Saturnino Borras Jr. Associate Professor in Rural Development at the [Institute of Social Studies \(ISS\)](#)

including industrial agriculture, mining, energy, tourism, water sources and land speculation. The impacts of these massive land investments spreading through the countryside are the weakening of rural economies, inflated costs of land and an exodus to the cities.

In the 1990s, the main land grabbing agents were Romanian but since 2000 foreign corporations have joined the takeover. Romanian authorities are facilitating this acquisition of fertile lands and freshwater supplies for intensive agriculture and livestock, as well as mining activities.

Land grabbing is hidden behind the harmonious image of the EU accession, which took place in 2007. EU policies reinforce the export-oriented agro-industrial model, and the Treaty of Accession to the EU required the liberalization of the domestic land market to foreign buyers. In addition, the EU's Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) has exacerbated rural inequality: in 2008, 51% of CAP subsidies were allocated to less than 1% of all farms, which were those farms larger than 500 ha.⁴

As rural areas are emptying, the remaining aging and vulnerable local population is allowing agro-industrial corporations to secure relatively cheap land deals. There is some modest, positive resistance to these trends. The association, Eco Ruralis, a member organization of the European Coordination Via Campesina, is demanding national and EU policies that respect and support the four million citizens living from local, diversified and environmentally-friendly peasant agriculture.

Urban land squatting action in Vienna, Austria

"[A] step towards food sovereignty and to reintroduce forgotten practices concerning access to land in Austria." SoliLa! members

A collective named SoliLa!⁵ emerged during an urban land squatting action in Vienna, which started on 17 April 2012 to show solidarity with the global day of peasants' struggles. SoliLa! is a group of mainly young people including 'prospective peasants'⁶ who seek land in the city to grow vegetables. The collective discovered plans by the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU)⁷ to end its lease of 3.5 ha of land owned by the state-owned company, Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft (BIG), that manages public real estate.

During the last decades various groups used the land: the university for research (including GMO fruit trees), small-scale student gardens, a shepherd, beekeepers, and some gardeners. Since the end of 2011, most of the land was fallow so SoliLa! issued a call to action for land occupation which was answered by around 100 people who arrived with bikes and tools on 17 April 2012.

⁴ Lucian Luca, Two extremes don't make one right – Romania and the Reform of the Common Agriculture Policy, 2009, Romanian Center for European Policies.

⁵ Solidarisch Landwirtschaften! Solidary Agriculture!

⁶ This includes those active in Reclaim the Fields <http://www.reclaimthefields.org/who-we-are>

⁷ Universität für Bodenkultur

After a short assembly, people immediately started cultivating the land, planting seedlings, setting up the basic infrastructure and spreading information about the action. During the following ten days, the land was worked collectively, new participants were welcomed and the vision of urban agriculture, based on food sovereignty principles, was put into practice.

This squatting action received support from local people, diverse political groups, farmers' organizations and generated surprisingly positive media attention. Yet after ten days, on the official grounds of 'security', the University rectorate ordered an eviction, which was executed by a private security company. SoliLa! does not believe that this signals the end but creates a new beginning to raise the issues of access to land, the right to the city and the need for 'emancipatory education'.

Occupy the Farm at Gill Tract, California

At the same time that the SoliLa! action took place, 'Occupy the Farm' was unleashed to resist the planned commercial development of public land and to promote urban agro-ecology in Gill Tract, Albany in California. The action took place on 22 April 2012 (Earth Day) and was intended to show solidarity with Via Campesina.

This occupation brought together a coalition of local residents, farmers, University of California (UC) students, researchers and activists who planted over 15,000 seedlings as part of proposals to create a center of sustainable urban agriculture at UC. While these proposals have been rejected, community dialogues continue to discuss the future of urban agriculture at Gill Tract Farm and beyond.⁸

Access to land in Andalusia, Spain

In Andalusia in southern Spain, unlike many other European regions, the rural population has not drastically declined, allowing social networks and peasant agro-ecological demands to be transmitted across generations. The struggles for land have achieved some successes through the peasant farmers' movement, which has occupied and cultivated lands. According to the Spanish Ministry of Environment, Rural and Marine Affairs, between 1991 and 2011, the number of organic *operators*⁹ increased from 396 to 32,837 and the area of land under ecological cultivation nationwide expanded from 4,235 ha to 1,845,039 ha.¹⁰

In 2011, organic food consumption was worth €965 million, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment. In addition, organic farming

⁸ Take Back the Tract website: <http://www.takebackthetract.com/index.php/17-general-content/111-wed-3-6-community-forum-on-the-future-of-the-gill-tract>

⁹ The term 'operators' refers to agricultural, livestock and aquaculture producers, manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers, importers, exporters.

¹⁰ Over the last decade, the area of land being farmed organically has grown by 25% in Spain, compared to 12% average growth in the EU, according to the European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development. See: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/statistics/index_en.htm.

contributes significantly to agricultural employment, generating 50,000 jobs in 2010.

Anti-austerity movements have sparked the interest of Andalusia's urban youth who are developing new forms of collective production and responsible consumption projects. Eco-villages, village revival and consumer cooperatives are bridging rural and urban divides.

Since the 1980s, Sindicato de Obreros del Campo (SOC), a progressive farmworkers' union and member of the European Coordination Via Campesina, has created cooperatives alongside other successful agro-ecological initiatives. In 2007, the SOC's need to connect with urban movements gave rise to the Sindicato Andaluz de Trabajadores (SAT), the Andalusian Trade Union. SOC-SAT mobilises across Andalusia and deploys successful land occupations for sustainable production.

Resisting land concentration and urban sprawl in France

In France, tenant farming laws and the relatively cheap cost of land allows small farmers and their families to control 80% of agricultural land. Regulations allow new and less well-off farmers to resist marginalization from expansion of larger farms.

However, access to land is a major obstacle for young prospective farmers as land is being grabbed for non-agricultural projects and is concentrated within the farming sector. More than 60,000 ha of agricultural land are lost every year to make way for new urban development including roads, supermarkets and leisure parks.

The most fertile land, which tends to be located close to cities, is wrested from agricultural use as local decision-makers prioritise short-term economic gains over long-term rural employment. Certain large infrastructural projects that would destroy agricultural land are facing opposition. One such case that has generated a massive protest and occupation movement is the proposed airport near Nantes (Notre Dame des Landes), which would destroy at least 2,000 ha of farmland and lead to the eviction of local farmers.

Stencil created by the movement opposed to Notre Dame des Landes airport near Nantes in France.



Limits on land-use change for urbanization, the expansion of green spaces and sustainable infrastructure in cities can help to reverse the trend of land appropriation. In addition, policy changes could shift subsidies from large farms to smaller producers. Farm-related regulations should prioritize those that till the land to grow sustainable produce rather than large commercial interests and wealthy inheritors.

Italy: Green land grabbing: the case of Narbolia

In the Italian region of Sardinia, land grabbing has taken place to promote environmental protection and 'renewable energy'. Enervitabio Ltd operates a photovoltaic solar installation on greenhouses to produce an energy output target of 27MW in Oristano province. The plant represents a trend whereby hundreds of hectares of prime farmland are being captured for solar greenhouse projects that have multiple negative impacts.

Not only are these projects undermining local communities' rights to produce and access land but they also erode the capacity of the small peasant farm sector to help solve the economic crisis affecting the country. In fact, such plants have captured financial resources that should have been devoted to agricultural production.

Millions of hectares of land have shifted or are shifting towards non-agricultural uses such as residential, industrial, military, commercial and tourism activities; public infrastructure; and renewable energy production. This is a priority issue – solutions are within reach.

Africa

As the African continent is the most affected by land grabbing, an international peasant conference on this issue was organized in Nyeleni, Mali by La Via Campesina and its allies in November 2011. Its fertile land is cheap compared with other continents and most of the land is not covered by title deeds, which enables the takeover by multinationals.

The land is grabbed from peasants, pastoralists, indigenous peoples and small-scale farmers who feed about 80% of the sub-Saharan population. While land grabbing in Africa has occurred since colonial times, in its new form states and/or multinational corporations are seeking to capture land and water resources to cultivate agrofuels or food crops.

There are domestic factors that compound the problem of land grabbing including the patriarchal ownership of land, discrimination towards young peasants and small-scale farmers, and the domination by local elites. There is a general consensus that land grabbing negatively and directly affects peasants and family farmers, in particular women who constitute a majority of rural workers and who tend to be more active than men in agriculture.

Stopping land grabs for agrofuels in Senegal

"I am a farmer. I grow mainly peanuts, and other vegetables for consumption, as well as keeping sheep and cows. My country, Senegal, has already promised to give away 500,000 hectares of land for growing agrofuels or food for export."

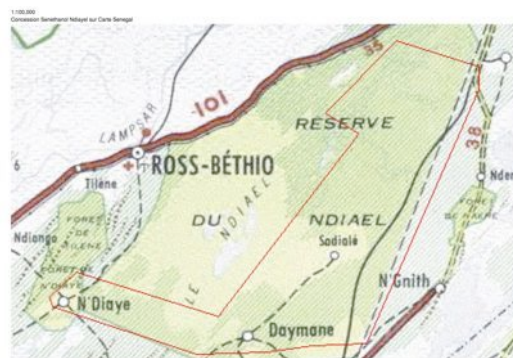
Ndiakhate Fall (CNCR)

In Senegal, the Via Campesina member, CNCR,¹¹ has mobilized against the land grabs that are on the increase throughout the country. The targets have included mining companies, agrofuel plantations and property projects that extend urbanization trends.

“In Fanaye, an Italian company (SENETHANOL), asked for land to produce agrofuels. When local communities discovered they were about to lose their land and villages, they decided to resist. Following the violent deaths of two peasants who were killed by local elites corrupted by the project, we organised a large protest in the capital, Dakar. Due to this pressure, the prime minister finally suspended the project. However, we know that the government has already received the money and we fear that the company may obtain land elsewhere.”

After the violent incidents in Fanaye, in October 2011, President Abdoulaye Wade suspended the 20,000 ha agrofuel project. But in mid-2012, after Macky Sall came to power, the government ‘moved’ the project. They gave Senethanol other land in the rural community of Ngith, encompassing localities like Ronkh, Gninth, Diama, N'Diaye and Ross-Béthio. In that process, 10,000 ha of forest were reclassified in order for the agro-industrialists to dig up the land for their sunflower and sweet potato agrofuel plantations. This has inevitably created more anger, conflict and resistance.

Map showing Senethanol concession in rural community of Ngith, Senegal.



Since July 2012, protest actions and mobilizations have been constant. Farmers have taken to the streets, to defend their own rights to the land. Young people have set fire to Senethanol’s tractors to try to stop the land clearing operations. Peaceful demonstrations by villagers have been attacked violently by anti-riot police, sometimes firing tear gas and bullets.

Demba Kâ, the brother of one of the victims of the gendarme brutality, said that the villagers of Ronkh do not want the project because it just brings grief and pain: “The machines have ploughed over our ancestors, they have destroyed our mosques!” The investors have responded by various measures, including bringing in German Shepherd dogs to guard the plantations.

Herders of 37 villages, who cannot graze their animals now because of the project, are preparing to march from Saint Louis to Dakar with 30,000 cattle where they plan to install themselves in front of the presidential palace to insist that the Senethanol deal be cancelled. According to Amadou Kanouté, Director of the Pan

¹¹ Conseil National de Concertation et de Cooperation des Ruraux

African Institute for consumers and development, CICODEV,¹² the Senegalese government has given a total of 650,000 ha of farmland to private investors between 2000 and 2010. Ten of the projects are being led by domestic businesses and seven of them are foreign-led. This represents almost 17% of the country's arable land.¹³

Mozambique: Breaking the silence of violence against women

The capitalist model of agricultural production based on industrial monoculture plantations, export-oriented agriculture and the high use of chemical inputs has destroyed rural livelihoods and led to an exodus of millions of farmers to cities whilst ruining the environment. This system has particularly affected women by deepening inequality between the sexes.

In November 2011, at the international conference against land grabbing in Mali, a Mozambican farmer provided testimony of how the loss of land adversely affects women in her country:

"When a young girl grows up and marries, she goes to live with her in-laws. Sometimes the young woman is not treated well by her family. If her husband happens to fall ill, she takes care of him, does her very best but if her husband dies that is when her problems begin. She is asked to marry her brother-in-law. If she refuses she is accused of having killed her husband, is subjected to slander and sent back to her parents. When she arrives there, her sisters-in-law have already occupied the land."

"She doesn't have the smallest patch of land. She must start from scratch. Women work in the fields with men, do more than men, are often alone to take care of the work, the harvest and the market. But when the money comes in, it is the man who controls the household money. If the woman needs something, she must ask the man for money. When he is willing, we go and do the shopping together and it is he who pays."

"In Mozambique, there is very strong discrimination against women. This is also why I decided to become a member of the national union of peasants and family farmers. I know I am becoming much stronger thanks to this conference. I will be able to help other women who suffer very much. Many are illiterate and need education. Once educated, they no longer tolerate their husband's aggression because they know where to turn. If you are ignorant of laws and rights, how do you know where to seek help? Each one of these exchanges makes me more capable of helping others."

¹² CICODEV (Afrique Institut pour la Citoyenneté des Consommateurs de Développement)

¹³ http://www.pressafrik.com/Senegal-En-10-ans-650-000-ha-de-terres-ont-ete-donnees-a-17-prises-nationaux-ou-etrangers_a70658.html

Brazilian megaproject in Mozambique set to displace millions of peasants

The Brazilian government and private sector are collaborating with Japan to lobby for a large-scale agribusiness project in northern Mozambique. The project, called ProSavana, will make 14 million ha of land available to Brazilian agribusiness companies for the production of soybeans, maize and other commodity crops that will be exported by Japanese multinationals. This area of Mozambique, known as the Nacala Corridor, is home to millions of farming families who are at risk of losing their lands in the process.

Land grabbing and inter-ethnic conflict in Mauritania

In Mauritania, the oppression of ethnic groups has led to the dispossession of their territories and modern day slavery, which remains a widespread practice in the country. There is a majority Moorish community and a black population largely living in southern Mauritania and the cities.

In 1989, the ethnic discord caused political tensions between Mauritania and Senegal. Mauritanian authorities seized the opportunity to deport the black community of Malians and Senegalese from the country. The Mauritanian government redistributed the land of the people who had been deported. When the deported populations returned, they discovered that their land has been sold. This worsened inter-ethnic conflicts and confrontations but farmer organisations have been encouraging dialogue in the region.

Raising awareness of land grabs in Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, field research on land grabs has focused on national investors who grab land for industrial agriculture as this type of investment is not monitored. The majority of the population works in this exploitative sector. Exact figures are unknown but the number and size of the acquisitions have increased since 2000 as new forms of investments and speculation take hold.

The state encourages such industrial agricultural investment and establishes contracts with the investors. But who are these investors? In certain cases, they are new actors specializing in seeds and food production and collaborating with large farms, rather than peasants and small-scale farmers.

Peasants and family farmers say that the investors set up infrastructure including the construction of airports. The land grabs are also linked to water as the most well-irrigated lands are taken.

A 2010 survey by the national farmers' organization shows that if things continue as they are, there will be no land left for peasants and small-scale farmers within 10 years. Peasants and other people working in rural areas will be forced to emigrate. In 2011, they organized awareness-raising campaigns in various affected areas in order to put a stop to land grabs, and to encourage peasants and family farmers to stand up to investors. A community representative provided the movement with testimony:

“Peasants and small-scale farmers are not giving up the land. It is being taken from them. We must carry out consultations with those sectors of society that control land. Local governments have started to intervene in these transactions, sometimes to slow down the process.”

Mali: ‘The land is our inheritance’

“We were ready to harvest, but they took the land to make way for the canal. We are human beings and we are going to tell the government that this is wrong. We are not going to live in the mud. No one will let their crops be stolen from them! We have an enemy and it is the government.”
Bakary Sidi Coulibaly, peasant farmer from Sanamadougou village

CNOP (Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes) has helped with mobilizations and legal cases to block large acquisitions and recover land lost to large private investors. Since 2008, the government has signed agreements to pave the way for expropriations of land for agribusiness projects including sugar cane plantations, rice production and livestock.

MALIBYA, a Libyan company, was allocated 100,000 ha of land in the main rice-growing region, Office du Niger region. The Chinese company CGC was commissioned by MALIBYA to carry out the work on the canal and the road alongside it. In the region of Koulikoro, another canal was also built that now completely isolates the local village of Sanamadougou. People have to make a detour of several kilometers to reach their homes. On 12 April 2013, a young father, Fousseyni Coulibaly, tried to cross the canal on his way back home as night was falling but he tragically drowned.



in Mali, due to canals built by investors, people have to detour several kilometers to reach their homes.

The Malibya project has stalled since the fall of Gaddafi in 2011 and the following massive decline in investment in the region but land has already been expropriated. In Sanamadougou village, peasants and family

farmers signed a petition that was sent to the government, declaring their opposition to current developments. This process of advocacy is ongoing. However, there are fears that speaking out will result in imprisonment.

Due to the seriousness of the situation with land grabs threatening many communities across country, CNOP and other civil society organisations have founded the ‘Malian Convergence against Land Grabbing’ to strengthen and give more visibility to farmers’ struggles.

Asia

Many Asian governments are privatizing essential sectors, including agricultural services, seeds, water and credit services. This means that the families of peasants and small-scale farmers have great difficulty accessing education, health services, electricity, agricultural inputs and water for domestic and agricultural use. These neoliberal policies have been imposed by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank but also enacted independently by governments which adopt their own neoliberal policies.

Peasants and family farmers are becoming indebted and losing their land. Given how increasingly difficult it is to live from agriculture, many peasants and family farmers are forced to leave their land and often become migrants. In certain countries, a flourishing sex industry recruits large numbers of young rural women and forces them into work.

Multinationals and governments are seizing vast tracts of land to create large plantations intended for industrial or food production, mining, large dams, infrastructural or tourist projects. When the land is seized, communities are displaced and the environment harmed. Moreover, local solidarity, rural culture and traditional knowledge are lost in the process.

100,000 people mobilise against corporate-led agriculture in India

On 20 March 2013, an historic mobilization of more than 100,000 farmers, farm workers and agrarian masses, belonging to a wide variety of social movements from across India, descended upon New Delhi. Protestors came all the way to the Indian capital to show their collective commitment to reversing the ongoing agrarian crisis.

The government is responsible for this crisis due to its aggressive promotion of liberalization reforms, which ultimately support foreign investors, corporations and elite consumers instead of the agrarian masses and common people of India.

Farmers from the Indian Coordination Committee of Farmers' Movements (ICCFM), which comprises of independent mass farmers groups such as the Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) and the Karnataka Farmers Movement (KRRS), both members of Via Campesina, have joined hands with the largest alliance of peoples' movements in India called the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM). Together, they seek to defend Indian people's access to land, water, forest and seeds – the most important resources of agrarian people, and the source of food and livelihoods for the Indian masses.

Addressing the masses at Jantar Mantar, National Chairperson of BKU said: "Millions of food producers are being forced to abandon agriculture and leave the villages in search of insecure, unavailable jobs. Or they are pushed to even commit suicide in lakhs [hundreds of thousands]. At this rate, there will be only a small number of farmers left in the country very soon. If the Indian government continues to promote unharnessed industrialization and elite consumerism then

where will the water and electricity come from for such large industrial projects and what will be the impact on nature and the poor?"

Farmer leaders collectively burned the Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Act (2011), which is currently high on the national political agenda. Although farmers support a new land bill, they reject the current form of the bill, which has ignored the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee and converted the bill into an instrument for taking away farmland for private corporations.

The government's agricultural ministry is accused of being under the influence of Monsanto and giving support to Bt cotton cultivation – despite all of its failures – instead of supporting the majority of the small farmers of the country, so many of whom have committed suicide because of debt.

Indonesian coalition against land grabbing

In January 2012, a new coalition emerged as rallies demanding agrarian reform and people's rights shook Jakarta and 27 other provinces all across Indonesia. Around 50 organizations joined the 'Joint Secretariat of the Indonesian Movement for Recovering People's Rights' involving farmers, fisherfolk, workers, indigenous people, women, youth, students, village governance groups and NGOs. They declared resistance and denounced land grabbing facilitated by the SBY-Boediono regime.

"January 2012, SPI and others Indonesian social movements organised a march in Jakarta against land grabbing in Indonesia.



This huge coalition denounced recent major land grabbing cases in Mesuji and Sape. Both cases involved human casualties perpetrated by corporations and the police. At the House of Representatives, the rally convinced 34 members of parliament to form a Special Committee on Agrarian Reform to investigate the land grab abuses and to implement agrarian reform. The cross-sectoral dimension of this new platform increases the ability to translate popular concerns into concrete proposals. This could trigger a far wider and larger people's movement on the agrarian reform issue.

Taiwan – Farmers rally outside the Presidential Office

In February 2013, Taiwanese farmers – along with farmers and activists from Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea, Japan and Malaysia – rallied against the globalization of agriculture on Ketagalan Boulevard in front of the Presidential Office, protesting against the government’s plans to lift more bans on agricultural imports.

Taiwan Rural Front (TRF) spokeswoman Tsai Pei-hui (蔡培慧) addressed the crowd: “We gather here today to express our anger, we want to tell the government that we’re fed up with their compromises on our food sovereignty. It’s a serious problem that our food self-sufficiency has now dropped to 33 percent.”

In addition to a series of heated protests against land expropriations that have been going on for years, farmers and farming activists are concerned that the government may soon lift the bans on imports of 830 categories of farm products from China, as well as pork products from the US, despite President Ma Ying-jeou’s (馬英九) repeated promises that he would not do so.

National Cheng Chi University land economics professor Hsu Shih-jung (徐世榮) said farmers across the country, “have little confidence in this incapable government” and therefore gathered to voice their opposition to free trade in the agricultural sector and to call on the government to insist on food sovereignty.



February 2013, Taipei, Taiwanese farmers protesting against globalization of agriculture and the consequences on access to land for small-scale farmers

The same struggles encountered elsewhere

Henry Saragih, the general coordinator of Via Campesina, said that the problems that Taiwanese farmers encounter are the same for farmers across the world. Thailand, for instance, which originally had a diverse agricultural sector, now specializes in producing rice for export and has to import other produce.

South Korea has become an exporter of electronic products, “and since most of its farmland has been taken by the industrial sector, some South Korean agricultural companies now grab land in Africa — especially Madagascar — to grow produce to be imported back to South Korea, leaving Madagascan farmers landless.”

Latin America

Latin America suffers from high levels of inequality and land concentration. This is the result of historical processes that followed the colonial invasion, the building of nation states and several decades of neoliberalism. During recent years, agriculture, food, water, and natural resources are increasingly targeted for large flows of financial capital.

Large agricultural investors are speeding up the concentration of the production, processing and commercialization of agricultural products and reinforcing the dependence on chemical inputs.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, peasants and family farmers, both women and men, are expelled from their land by agro-industrial projects and other mega projects such as hydroelectric dams and mining. The land grabs are increasingly frequent, which naturally leads to a regression of land reform. As a result, land is increasingly concentrated in the hands of capital owners.

Communities are witnessing a land counter-reform with many governments acting as accomplices to these land grabs. The criminalization and killings of peasant farmers is particularly grave in Honduras but continues to take place elsewhere in Latin America.

Honduras: Killing with impunity

*"We are not birds that live in the air, we are not fish that live in the water. We are peasants who need to live on land."
Unified Peasant Movement of Aguán (MUCA)*

In the past three years, 85 peasants have been murdered in Bajo Aguán where gunmen operate freely. On 16 February 2013, Santos Jacobo Cartagena was shot dead whilst waiting for the bus that would transfer him to Tocoa. Cartagena was a member of the San Esteban Company that united the Unified Peasant Movement of Aguán (MUCA).

Hours later, murderers – led by land grabbers – shot and killed Jose Trejo Cabrera in the district of San Isidro de Tocoa Colon. Cabrera was the brother of the lawyer Antonio Trejo Cabrera who was murdered on 22 September 2012 near the Toncontin airport in Tegucigalpa. They were both members of the Cooperative San Isidro belonging to the Movimiento Autentico Reivindicador Campesino del Aguán (MARCA).

In a recent press release issued by MUCA stated:

"We hold the State of Honduras responsible for the wave of killings against peasant farmers in the Bajo Aguán area, and for its inability in creating public policies to halt the agrarian and food crisis in our country... We condemn the security guards, police, military and armed groups commanded by landlords Miguel Facusse, René Morales y Reinaldo Canales who are killing peasants in Aguán."

MUCA also blamed the unconstitutional Modernization and Development Law for the Agricultural Sector (1992) as a root cause for the current agrarian and food crisis.

A 2012 report by the Center for Constitutional Rights (New York) and the International Federation for Human Rights (Paris) highlighted the death of over 100 killings in Honduras, most of which were selective and targeted, and took place between coup d'état of 28 June 2009 and October 2012. The overwhelming evidence shows that state-sanctioned death squads are operating with impunity.

The human rights report states:

"The killings are one horrific manifestation of the broader attack which is also characterized by death threats against activists, lawyers, journalists, trade unionists, and campesinos, as well as attempted killings, torture, sexual violence, arbitrary arrests and detentions. The True Commission described the regime's 'attack' as one of using terror as a means of social control."¹⁴

Gender equity in land tenure in the Dominican Republic

Access to land is one of the main barriers that women face in developing their role in agricultural production. For millennia women have been subjected to numerous social conditioning, cultural and economic factors that have impeded the exercise of their rights as a producer and as a citizen, to access, use and control resources. The right to land and security of tenure are fundamental rights of every human being.

Research carried out jointly by the FAO, the National Confederation of Peasant Women (CONAMUCA), member of Via Campesina, and Veterinarians Without Borders has publicised the conditions and status of women in the land tenure and land reform programs undertaken during the last 50 years in the country.

The FAO has recognized that it cannot fulfil its mandate without addressing systemic gender issues in all areas of its work. FAO also stated that as part of its policy on gender equality, food and nutrition security, and food sovereignty cannot be achieved without equal access for women to productive resources. Likewise, FAO argues that 150 million people could be extricated from hunger and malnutrition by simply eliminating discrimination against women in agriculture.

Knowledge of this information can serve as a tool to raise awareness about the position of women in the Dominican countryside and as a basis for designing appropriate strategies that seek to overcome historical differences that have characterized the discrimination against women with regard to agricultural property.

¹⁴ Center for Constitutional Rights & International Federation for Human Rights, Impunity in Honduras for Crimes Against Humanity: Between 28 June 2009 and 31 October 2012, Submission Pursuant to Article 15 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, November 2012 http://ccrjustice.org/files/Honduras_ICC_Submission.pdf

Although recent legal changes have improved the recognition of equal rights for women within Dominican society, cultural practices and institutional arrangements continue to limit women's access to land and agriculture, thus limiting the performance of their role in food and agricultural production.

It is necessary to adopt policy measures to improve substantially the exercise of women's land rights, either through tenure reform programs or improving the availability of financial resources that will enable women to access this vital resource for their economic well-being.

Solidarity with Paraguay

Peasant farmers resisting the expansion of soy plantations are being targeted in Paraguay. Since September 2012, three peasant leaders have been murdered apparently because of their defense of community rights.¹⁵ Other peasant activists continue to face death threats and intimidation.

Three months earlier, members of the Latin American Coordination of Rural Organizations (CLOC-Via Campesina) of Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Colombia travelled to Paraguay in a solidarity mission to support indigenous and peasant organizations following the installment of Federico Franco and removal of the legitimate president, Fernando Lugo. Some members of the mission expressed concern over the safety of peasant organizations under the *de facto* regime, as well as new approvals of GM varieties and intensified agribusiness in the country.

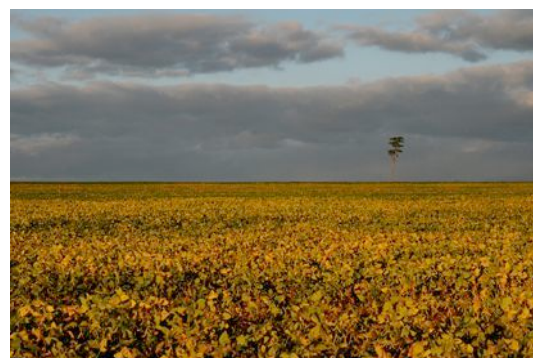
Agribusiness as Usual: The death of peasant farming in Argentina

"It could have been avoided, it will happen again."

The title of Mocase-VC's statement made in reaction to the murder of Miguel Galván.

On 10 October 2012, Miguel Galván was murdered, stabbed to death in the doorway of his own home. Almost one year earlier, Cristian Ferreyra had been shot and killed in his house. Both men were peasant farmers from the northern province of Santiago del Estero and members of the National Peasant Movement of Santiago del Estero – (Mocase-VC), an organization which fights for the land rights of peasants and indigenous people.

The reason behind the men's murders was that they refused to give up their land to multinational soybean plantation companies. Whilst Galván's attackers are yet to be identified, in Ferreyra's case it is widely claimed that a large landowner from the area hired hit-men to kill him.



"The expansion of soy production is responsible for the forced evictions of peasants and indigenous people"

¹⁵ Sixto Perez (September 2012)
Vidal Vega (December 2012)
Benjamin "Toto" Lezcano (February 2013)

“The expansion of soy production is responsible for the forced evictions of peasants and indigenous people”

In the six months after Ferreyra’s tragic death, incidents of conflict between large agribusiness and peasants decreased but since then the expansion of soy production has continued and so have the forced evictions of peasants and indigenous people from lands they have been occupied for centuries.

In 1996, Carlos Menem’s government approved a law that granted farmers permission to cultivate Monsanto’s genetically modified Roundup Ready soy (RR) in Argentina. Monsanto dominates the current soybean market in Argentina and is the driving force behind the corporate takeover that is destroying peasant farming.

Landless farmers under threat in Pernambuco, Brazil

In Pernambuco, Brazil, small-scale farmers and their families occupying underutilized land on the Serro Azul farm have been facing ongoing threats and acts of violence. Since mid-April 2012 when the occupation began, peasant farmers have been shot at and physically beaten by thugs hired by the landowners. This has included a shooting incident which injured two peasants, incursions by armed men pointing guns at workers and physical attacks. These cases have been widely reported to Brazilian authorities which have so far not taken the necessary steps to safeguard the lives of workers and punish those responsible for these crimes.

Demonstration and occupation in Bahía, Brazil

In April 2013, the landless farmers movement, MST, held a march starting in the municipality of Camacari as a tribute to MST leader, Fábio Santos Silva, who was shot 15 times by gunmen in South East Bahía. The protest was also part of the struggles remembering the 21 rural workers killed in the Massacre of Eldorado de Carajás, which took place in the state of Pará on 17 April 1996.

Márcio Matos, from the leadership of MST Bahía:

“We need to protest to denounce the lack of justice surrounding the murders of rural workers throughout the country. We also condemn the existence of several unproductive and empty areas in Bahía, and that nothing is being done to implement land reform. Meanwhile, we have 25,000 families under the tarpaulin on roadsides in the state [of Bahía]”.



In Brazil, Bahia, MST denounces several unproductive areas and organized a big march for land reform.

2. Global Context

An overview of land grabbing and land concentration

Global land grabbing has accelerated since the 2007-08 food crisis but, as shown in this report, this phenomenon is not only linked to food. Four mechanisms can be identified:

- food-related
- biofuels-related
- land grabs related to climate change mitigation strategies such as conservation and REDD+¹⁶ (leading to what observers call “green grabbing”, i.e. land grabbing in the name of the environment)
- demands from newer hubs of global capital, especially from the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).

The changes in the global agro-food system made some financially powerful countries – primarily China, South Korea and the Gulf states – feel insecure, as they could not produce sufficient food domestically. Thus, they started to seek control over vast tracts of lands overseas to secure their food supply – leading to land grabbing.

Land grabs are also emanating from the traditional centres of imperialist power on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as from the emerging centres of global capital, namely BRICS, and some emerging powerful MICs (middle income countries). Ultimately, opposing land grabbing is necessarily an anti-capitalist struggle.

The principal target is Africa where vast empty expanses of land are thought to be available cheaply. It is generally assumed that 70% of all grabbed land is on this continent. Land grabbing occurs to a significant extent in other regions too, namely Asia, Latin America, and the former Soviet Eurasia.

Land grabbing¹⁷ is widely assumed to be happening only in the global South. But a closer look at Europe invites a major rethink of this view. While the overall amount of agricultural land in Europe is shrinking, it is also becoming increasingly concentrated in a few large landholdings and in the hands of a relatively few big private business entities, which are benefitting from a truly massive injection of public funds.

This is taking place in an era when public funding for other purposes is being subjected to massive cuts. Among others, the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is contributing to an unprecedented process of land concentration and land grabbing inside ‘fortress Europe’ today.

¹⁶ Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD+)

¹⁷ The definition offered by Borras, Franco et al is used here: “... land grabbing is the capturing of control of relatively vast tracts of land and other natural resources through a variety of mechanisms and forms involving large-scale capital that often shifts resource use to that of extraction, whether for international or domestic purposes, as capital’s response to the convergence of food, energy and financial crises, climate change mitigation imperatives and demands for resources from newer hubs of global capital.”

20 years of local to global action on land reform

La Via Campesina is 20 years old. The beginnings were challenging but the organization is now very successful because we remain true to our operating methods with our policies and mechanisms based on the proposals of peasants and sustainable family farmers. The concept of food sovereignty has been taken to national governments and has gradually begun to be discussed inside international bodies such as the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in Rome.

A permanent campaign for land reform

Since the creation of the movement in 1993, the demand for comprehensive land reform, granting peasants and sustainable family farmers control over the land they cultivate has been at the heart of Via Campesina's struggles.

In 2006, FAO organized the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) in Brazil. A strong mobilization of peasants and small-scale farmers put land reform back on the global political agenda. The final declaration of the conference, signed by 192 governments, recognizes the elements of the struggle for food sovereignty by peasants and rural workers.

However, due to strong resistance on the part of 'developed' countries, the declaration was never implemented and today we are witnessing a new global wave of land grabbing and intensified land concentration.

Recognition of the concept of 'territory'¹⁸

No agrarian reform is acceptable that is based only on land distribution. We believe that the new agrarian reform must also include a cosmic vision of the territories of communities of peasants, the landless, indigenous peoples, rural workers, fisherfolk, nomadic pastoralists, tribes, afro-descendants, ethnic minorities, and displaced peoples who base their work on the production of food and who maintain a relationship of respect and harmony with the Earth and with the oceans.

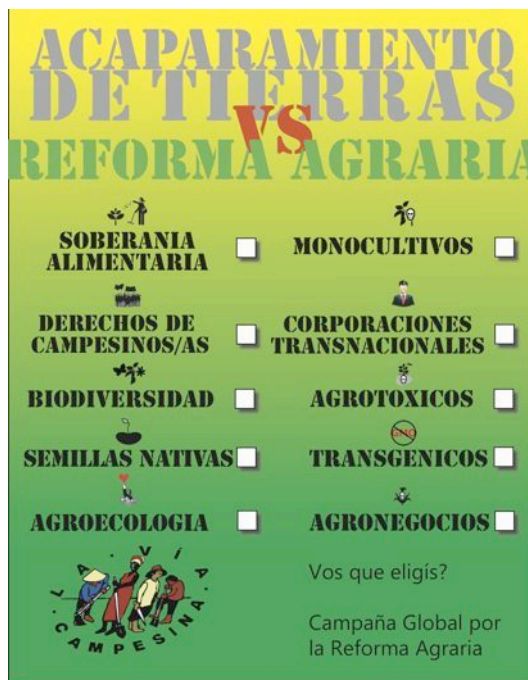
All of these groups have the right to maintain their own spiritual and material relationships; to possess, develop, control, use and reconstruct their social structures; to politically and socially administer their lands and territories including their full environment, the air, water, seas, rivers, lakes, ice flows, flora, fauna and other resources that they have traditionally possessed, occupied and/or utilized.

This requires the recognition of their laws, traditions, customs, tenure systems and institutions as well as the recognition of territorial borders, self-determination and local culture.

¹⁸ This concept was included in the final declaration of the Civil Society Forum "Land, water and territories" held in parallel to the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) in March 2006.

Landless peasants and family farmers are nonetheless active in demanding their rights. In spite of the criminalization they are subjected to, many movements of rural men and women are demanding land for cultivation, are occupying land to produce food for their families and communities, and are demanding just land legislation from their authorities. These resistance movements can be found in many countries across Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas.

In parallel to the demand for land, the movements of peasants and other people working in rural areas are developing sustainable family farming, often called 'agroecology', which respects community rights and the environment.



Poster of the Global Campaign of la Via Campesina for Agrarian Reform. "Land grabbing versus agrarian reform : food sovereignty or monoculture, Peasants' rights or Transnational corporations, Biodiversity or chemical products, Peasants' seeds or transgenics, agroecology or agribusiness : which do you choose?"

The rights of peasants

In the early 2000s, Via Campesina initiated an internal process on the need to protect the rights of peasants. This was supported by the entire movement. In September 2012, the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva adopted a landmark resolution to promote the human rights of peasants and other people living in rural areas.

This includes not only the right to access land ownership, collectively or individually, but also the right to control water resources, the right to have access to farming equipment, the right not to be forcefully expelled, equality between women and men, along with other fundamental rights.

Via Campesina welcomes the collaboration with certain countries from Latin America, Asia and Africa, which made the adoption of this text possible. However, European Union member states (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Spain, Italy) and the United States unacceptably opposed the establishment of the specific protection of farmers and peasants.

Opposition to the policies of the World Bank

Since its very beginnings, Via Campesina has opposed market-driven land reform policies as promoted by the World Bank since the 1980s. These policies aim to allocate title deeds to land in order to facilitate the purchase and sale of rural property. In the end, poor peasants and other rural people lose out to those who have the means and privileges to buy land.

In October 2010, Via Campesina, civil society organizations and certain governments, rejected a set of principles on investment published by the World Bank in collaboration with other institutions. These seven 'Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment' (PRAI) were presented as if they would regulate mass acquisitions of land but would have in fact legitimized large-scale land grabbing.

So far the effects of this large-scale 'investment' in land have generally been negative and destructive. Numerous peasant families have been driven from their land without any alternative means for survival. The transfer of land from local communities to large companies, with the goal of producing industrial monocultures earmarked for export, will never create a situation favorable for communities or for food sovereignty.

Instead of adopting the PRAI, in October 2012, the Committee for World Food Security (CFS) decided to launch its own consultation to give broad attention to public investment in food production and to investment in food production done by farmers themselves.

Adoption of the voluntary guidelines on land tenure

In May 2012, the CFS adopted voluntary guidelines on land tenure. These guidelines should lead to the implementation of national policies and regulations that protect the land rights of peasants, smallholders and communities. The guidelines are the result of discussions over many years between governments and civil society representatives, and reaffirm basic human rights principles such as human dignity, non-discrimination, equity and justice when applied to tenure.

The new instrument developed by the CFS rightly recognizes the key role of women, peasant farmers, fishing communities, pastoralists and indigenous peoples. However, the guidelines fall short on a number of crucial issues, thus failing to provide a comprehensive set of rules to counter effectively the widespread grabbing of natural resources. The text does not sufficiently prioritize essential support to small-scale producers who should be the absolute priority if governments are to achieve sustainable development.

It is also disappointing that the guidelines fail to protect further the rights of indigenous peoples already recognized by international instruments. While Via Campesina and other civil society organizations still disagree with several parts of the text, we will work to ensure that the guidelines are used at national level to strengthen the rights of small-scale food producers.

3. Ways Forward



Mozambican peasants working on their "machambas", Marracuene, Mozambique, 2008

Agrarian Reform: Our vision for the 21st century¹⁹

Agrarian reform in the 21st century is a struggle for social justice. Agrarian reform should not only respect territory, water and biodiversity but also sacred sites and traditional cultural knowledge. An agrarian reform begins with a process of land distribution and/or the defense of territories. The possession and

use of land should be based on the principal that land rights accrue only to those who work it, depend on it and reside on it with their family.

Agrarian reform should enable the return of peasants to their lands; this would also serve to regulate rural, urban and international migration. The principle of land as common property and not individual property needs to be defended. Land speculation must be prohibited and capitalist corporations should be prevented from acquiring large areas of land, especially through land grabbing.

Genuine and integral agrarian reform are democratized agrarian structures and challenge structures of economic and political power. An agrarian reform (re)-introduces controls against over-production, limiting exports and dumping, and guarantees food sovereignty through the implementation of agro-ecology.

Redistributive policy implies, above all, the expropriation of private lands that serve no social purpose. The goal should be to redistribute land and power, altering the relations of power in society in favor of farmers and the coalitions that support them. An agrarian reform cannot be carried out through market mechanisms.

Past agrarian reforms have favored one sector over others. Future reforms must balance the needs of peasants and family farmers with those of fisherfolk, indigenous people, the landless, pastoralists and other rural peoples. True agrarian reform guarantees these people and sectors total access to and control over the land and its resources. It must be reform that gives legal guarantees to peasants who have occupied lands in order to survive. Agrarian reform should guarantee communal land ownership that is designed to resist the threat of counter-reform.

¹⁹ This is an edited version of the narrative report from the conference of Agrarian Reform and the Defence of Land and Territory in the 21st Century: the Challenge and Future held in Bukit Tinggi, West Sumatera, Indonesia July 2012

Conference Declaration: 'Stop Land Grabbing Now!' November 2011, Mali²⁰

We reiterate our commitment to resist land grabbing by all means possible, to support all those who fight land grabs, and to put pressure on national governments and international institutions to fulfill their obligations to ensure and uphold the rights of peoples.

Specifically, we commit to:

- Organize rural and urban communities against land grabs in every form. Strengthen the capacities of our communities and movements to reclaim and defend our rights, lands and resources.
- Win and secure the rights of women in our communities to land and natural resources.
- Create public awareness about how land grabbing is creating crises for all society.
- Build alliances across different sectors, constituencies, regions, and mobilize our societies to stop land grabbing.
- Strengthen our movements to achieve and promote food sovereignty and genuine agrarian reform.

In order to meet the above commitments, we will develop the following actions:

On capacity building for local resistance

- Build our own databases about land grabbing by documenting cases, and gathering the needed information and evidence about processes, actors, impacts and so forth.
- Ensure that our communities have the information they need about laws, rights, companies, contracts, etc., so that they can resist more effectively than business investors and governments who try to take their lands and natural resources.
- Set up early warning systems to alert communities to risks and threats.
- Strengthen our communities through political and technical training, and restore our pride in being food producers and providers, particularly among the youth.
- Secure land and resource rights for women by raising awareness among our communities and movements about the importance of respecting and protecting women's land rights, particularly in relation to ancestral customs and traditions.
- Develop and use local media to organize members of our and other communities, and share with them information about land grabbing.
- Make our leaders abide by the rules set by our communities and compel them to be accountable to us, and our communities and organizations.

²⁰ This is a shortened version of the declaration which emphasizes the commitments to take action. The full declaration is available at: <http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/main-issues-mainmenu-27/agrarian-reform-mainmenu-36/1127-stop-land-grabbing-now>

On using legal aid for our defense

- Develop our own systems of legal aid and liaise with legal and human rights experts.
- Condemn all forms of violence and criminalization of our struggles.
- Work for the immediate release of all those jailed as a result of their struggles for their lands and territories.
- Urgently develop campaigns of solidarity with all those facing conflicts.

On advocacy and mobilization

- Institutionalize April 17 as the day of global mobilization against land grabbing; also identify additional appropriate dates that can be used for such mobilizations to defend land and the commons.
- Develop our political arguments to expose and discredit the economic model that spurs land grabbing, and the various actors and initiatives that promote and legitimize it.
- Establish a Peoples' Observatory on land grabbing to facilitate and centralize data gathering, communications, planning actions, advocacy, research and analysis.
- Promote women's land rights through targeted re-distribution of land for women; make laws and policies responsive to the particular needs of women.
- Take our messages and demands to parliaments, governments and international institutions. Continue engaging with the Committee on World Food Security and demanding that processes such as FAO's guidelines on the governance of land, fisheries and forests truly contribute to protect and promote small-scale food providers' rights to land and natural resources.
- Identify and target local, national and international spaces for actions, mobilizations and building broad-based societal resistance to land grabbing.
- Plan actions that target corporations, the World Bank and other multilateral development banks that benefit from, drive and promote land and natural resource grabs. Maintain opposition to schemes of corporate self-regulation such as PRAI.
- Promote the recognition of customary values while ensuring the rights of women.
- Ensure the rights to land and natural resources for youth.
- Support peoples' enclosures of their resources through land occupations, occupations of the offices of corporate investors, protests and other actions to reclaim their commons.
- Demand that our governments fulfill their human rights obligations, immediately stop land and natural resource transfers to business investors, cancel existing contracts, reconstitute the grabbed lands, and protect rural and urban communities from ongoing and future land-grabs.

On alliance building

- Build strong organizational networks and alliances at various levels – local, regional and international – building on the Dakar Appeal and with small-scale food producers/providers at the center of these alliances.
- Build alliances with members of pension schemes in order to prevent pension fund managers from investing in projects that result in land grabbing.
- Build strategic alliances with the press and media, so that they report accurately our messages and realities; counter the prejudices spread by the mainstream media about the land struggles and land reform in Zimbabwe.

Globalize the struggle! Globalize hope!

Conclusion

In more than 70 countries, our member organizations are struggling for land, the lifeblood of our movement and the source of livelihoods and sustenance. The contexts for each struggle vary. European young prospective farmers are seeking to access land, which is ever harder to achieve given the rising value of farmland and the detrimental impacts of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which favors large landholdings.



Delegation of La Via Campesina at World Social Forum in Dakar, February 2011.

African farmers are being severely affected by the land grab phenomenon, which has been rapidly engulfing the continent especially since the 2007-2008 global food crisis. Multinational corporations are taking over land and water in order to export food and agrofuels. This neo-

colonial development is worsened by domestic factors including the dominance of unaccountable elites and the patriarchal ownership of land.

In Asia, the drive for privatization is affecting the agricultural sector including rural communities' access to seeds, water and credit as well as education, health and electricity. The World Bank and Asian Development Bank have imposed these harmful policies but Asian governments are also enacting them independently. State-owned companies and foreign corporations are grabbing vast areas of land for food production, dams, mining, tourism and infrastructure, which is eroding ecosystems and traditional knowledge.

Land grabs are also increasing in Latin America as local communities are displaced to make way for agro-industrial and mega projects. Peasant farmers continue to suffer from high levels of inequality, intimidation and even murder from death

squads, which has been particularly apparent in Honduras since the 2009 coup d'état. In the wake of the ousting of President Lugo in Paraguay in June 2012, peasants have faced persecution.

As a global force, now entering our 20th year, the movement continues to oppose neo-liberal economic reforms that unfairly support privileged sectors, including large landowners, state companies and transnational corporations. Along with a growing number of allies, Via Campesina is spurring on a popular and global alliance against land grabbing and for agrarian reform.

Our intense struggles for systemic changes to the industrial food and farming systems and the promotion of agro-ecological farming methods can help to combat growing biodiversity loss, land degradation and catastrophic climate change. Sustainable small-scale farming can mitigate the effects of climate change as soil matter naturally stores carbon dioxide. Moreover, organic agriculture and nitrogen-fixing plants can remove nitrogen from the air. The shift away from industrialized agriculture would allow the increased use of sustainable and decentralized energy sources.



Paraguay, Farmer with his oxen.

Agrarian reform goes far beyond land distribution and territorial borders. Agrarian reform has spiritual and material dimensions; it seeks to encompass respect for culture, laws, sacred rites and traditions that go hand in hand with protecting the land, seeds, water, forests and biodiversity. Those who possess, occupy and utilize the land using traditional agro-ecological methods deserve the full recognition and enforcement of their rights. Land is life!

La Via Campesina is the international movement which brings together millions of peasants, small and medium-size farmers, landless people, women farmers, indigenous people, migrants and agricultural workers from around the world. It defends small-scale sustainable agriculture as a way to promote social justice and dignity. It strongly opposes corporate driven agriculture and transnational companies that are destroying people and nature.

La Via Campesina comprises about 150 local and national organizations in 70 countries from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Altogether, it represents about 200 million farmers. It is an autonomous, pluralist and multicultural movement, independent from any political, economic or other type of affiliation.

More on www.viacampesina.org



International Operational Secretariat:

Jln. Mampang Prapatan XIV no 5 Jakarta Selatan, Jakarta 12790 Indonesia

Tel/fax: +62-21-7991890/+62-21-7993426

Email: viacampesina@viacampesina.org

Web: www.viacampesina.org