



REPORT OF THE VI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF LA VIA CAMPESINA

JAKARTA, 9 TO 13 JUNE 2013



Report of The VI International Conference of La Via Campesina



“

“In the name of the legacy of Egidio and in the name of all those who helped build La Via Campesina over the last 20 years, in the name of all the peasants, indigenous peoples, workers of the field and workers of the world, we declare the 6th international conference officially open!”

Irma Brunetto, MST.

Jakarta, January 2014

Contacts of La Via Campesina
International Peasant Movement
Operational Secretariat :
ZIMSOF
197A Smuts Road
Prospect, Waterfalls,
Harare
Zimbabwe
Phone number: +263 4576221

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| HOW THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WORKS..... | 2 |
| Participants..... | 3 |
| Decision making at the International Conference | 4 |
| Organisation of the debates | 4 |
| WOMEN'S ASSEMBLY | 4 |
| YOUTH'S ASSEMBLY | 5 |
| THE CONFERENCE | 7 |
| Opening Ceremony at the Peasants' Victory Stadium | 7 |
| Analyses of the international political context..... | 11 |
| Multiple Economic crisis | 11 |
| Asia high growth and high inequality | 11 |
| Capital accumulation over social uses..... | 12 |
| Fundamental challenges for La Via Campesina | 12 |
| Our solution, struggles and alternatives | 13 |
| Food Sovereignty and the fight against patriarchy in East Asia..... | 13 |
| What the peasant and indigenous organizations in the Americas are doing | 14 |
| The Challenges, Alternatives and Solutions for African Peasants..... | 14 |
| European farmers are still there and are putting up a good fight..... | 15 |
| Political evaluation of La Via Campesina's work by the outgoing international coordination committee (2008-2013) | 16 |
| Some outcomes of the last four years (2008-2013): | 16 |
| Ongoing challenges | 16 |
| Issues and campaigns of La Via Campesina | 17 |
| Stop violence against women campaign | 17 |
| Peasant Seeds | 18 |
| Campaign against Agrochemicals | 19 |
| Transnational Corporations..... | 19 |
| Free trade Agreements | 20 |
| Climate Change..... | 20 |
| Agro-ecology | 21 |
| Migrations | 22 |
| Land and Agrarian Reform | 22 |
| Peasants' Rights | 23 |
| Committee on Food Security (CFS) in Rome | 23 |
| Summary of La Via Campesina's strategic lines of action 2013 – 2017 | 24 |
| Declarations and resolutions | 26 |
| IN CONCLUSION | 27 |

INTRODUCTION

Nine women and nine men, peasants and leaders of communities from the farthest corners of the world kneel down next to a folded green fabric with seeds in it. The green fabric is their flag, a symbol of their bond to each other and to the earth. Their struggle is for a world where there is justice for everyone. A world where the people of the land can freely plant their seeds with dignity. They raise their green flag entrusting it to a strong woman from Africa. Their joined hands reassure every one of their solidarity and united strength. She holds it against her heart and cries out, "The challenges we are facing are difficult, but together we can defeat them all, Viva La Via Campesina!"



Transferring Operative Secretariat to Africa. "They raise their green flag entrusting it to a strong woman from Africa".

This was a symbolic ceremony called the *mistica*, at La Via Campesina's sixth international conference. *Misticas* are spiritual and cultural acts that form part of La Via Campesina's being. Through these, members can express and connect viscerally with their struggle, using song, poetry, dance, or theatre. The above *mistica* marked the handing over of the reigns of the international peasants' movement from Asia to Africa. La Via Campesina's international secretariat, the operative headquarters that had been hosted by Serikat Petani Indonesia and the whole East and South East Asia region for the last eight years will now move to Zimbabwe Organic Smallholder Farmers Forum, a peasant movement in Zimbabwe and Africa¹. It also marked the new leadership of La Via Campesina, eighteen democratically elected leaders from each of the movements' nine regions, entrusted with the responsibility of coordinating the movement until the next international conference of La Via Campesina in 2017.

International conferences in La Via Campesina are defining events that happen every four years and mark the future direction and leadership of the movement. It is the highest decision making body of the movement. Resolutions about the movement's future course of action, main strategies, its character, structure, new members and its leaders are all made at the International Conference. It is a considerable feat to bring together such a large number of people -representatives of every member organization, staff, friends, allies, media and well wishers participate. It is a great financial burden to bear for a social movement, but it is a collaborative effort by its more than 160 member organizations, friends and allies. The international conference is a testament to La Via Campesina's commitment to remain a democratic and plural movement where the most important decisions about the movement are made face to face in a collective manner.

This report provides a glimpse into the sixth International Conference that took place in Jakarta from the 9th to the 13th of June 2013. It is the result of tireless work by a team of note-takers that worked in more than 10 different languages. It is not a detailed description of events, but rather an overview of the key outcomes of the sixth International Conference.

More articles, photos and press coverage of the sixth conference as well as all the declarations and resolutions can be found on www.viacampesina.org (section "our conference") and many short video clips can be watched at La Via Campesina's on-line TV site- <http://tv.viacampesina.org/>. The section called Declarations and Resolutions in this report lists some of the main documents that came out of the conference.

HOW THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WORKS

The International Conference is the space where La Via Campesina makes its fundamental decisions. Its political positions, strategies and action plans are formulated here. Decisions about its organizational set up, internal rulings and functioning are also agreed upon. The 18-member International Coordinating Committee (ICC) is ratified along with the location and the functioning of the International Operative Secretariat (IOS) which is a revolving office. Finally, the conference ratifies the new member organizations.

The conference is both democratic and participatory. It provides besides plenary sessions various spaces for participation such as the regional and continental consultations, thematic discussions, and other side meetings. There are spaces for allies and friends, donors and media. Everyone has a chance and a space to at least participate. The right to vote is reserved for member organizations only.

There are also separate assemblies for women and youth which provide unique spaces to discuss, reflect, analyze and decide La Via Campesina's future from their perspective. These spaces were created in response to their struggle for greater autonomy. The first women assembly was held in 2000 at the III International Conference in Bangalore, India. While the first youth assembly was held in 2004 at the IV International Conference in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

All along, the 18-member ICC of La Via Campesina, its main political decision making body, meets on a regular basis to provide political direction on the conference program. The technical staff team works behind the scenes to organize and make everything happen- from meetings, logistics and food, to media, drafting documents, health, emergencies and whatever may fall upon their plate. A team of volunteer interpreters operate in more than 10 languages to facilitate communication during the multiple meetings. The major local logistical efforts for organizing the entire event falls on the shoulders of the local hosts and their volunteers, this time it was Serikat Petani Indonesia-the Indonesian peasant's movement.



A special agroecology village was set up to showcase the diversity of farming methods : Of particular interest to visitors from outside Asia were the myriad varieties of tubers and rice that have been locally cultivated by farmers for generations.

This year, a special agroecology village was set up to showcase the diversity of farming methods and local techniques as the alternatives to chemical and industrial agriculture. It included displays from all over the world of different natural fertilizers, colourful seeds, local medicinal herbs, local foods and grains. Cows and goats were brought in to do live manure making demonstrations. It was truly a global peasant village experience!

Participants

La Via Campesina invites all its member organizations. Each of the nine regions autonomously decides the make up of its delegation. La Via Campesina requires that each delegation should comprise 50% women, 33% youth and the remainder being men. This year about five hundred participants from 70 countries attended the sixth International Conference, of which 45% were women and 22% were youth.

Besides members, other guests are invited as observers. In Jakarta, up to ninety allies attended and participated in the conference debates and discussions in various thematic work groups. The outcomes of the discussions were included in the final call and declarations.

Decision making at the International Conference

The official political positions and decisions on strategies and internal functioning of La Via Campesina are made by consensus. There is no right to veto. In the case where there is no consensus, it is sought through regional consultations and working groups. The issues of contention can be redefined for further debate in the regions. The outcomes of these consultations are used by the ICC to prepare new proposals to the conference. It is only after these processes that the Conference can give the mandate to a drafting committee to write a proposal for decision.

Organisation of the debates

Member delegates have the right to speak and vote at the Conference not in their personal capacity but rather on behalf of their regions. In most instances, regions usually elect spokespersons to represent their views.

Women and men alternate to moderate panels. Special attention is paid to ensure that women are equally represented in panels as speakers. When speakers are chosen from the public, a gender balance is maintained and respected through alternation of men and women. For the first time in this conference, participants who wanted to intervene queued near the microphone following the gender parity of one woman and one man.

WOMEN'S ASSEMBLY

The international conference opened with a rich debate on various issues by the Womens' Assembly. Women peasants from all over the world held debates over patriarchy, feminism and the construction of a peasant-based and popular feminism.



“Women's work and power within families and in movements must be recognized...We will fight for Food Sovereignty. We will summon all our knowledge, to recover our seeds, multiply them, care for them, exchange them and let them multiply on our fields without hindrance or aggression” - excerpt from the women's declaration

Women of La Via Campesina reaffirmed their commitment to continue to confront both patriarchy and neoliberal capitalism. Food sovereignty was considered an important feminist struggle. They stressed the need and importance of including gender justice in food sovereignty.

They also recognized the women's struggle for equality and its achievements within La Via Campesina. As a result of their struggles, the movement now recognizes full equality and value of both men and women. Moreover, structural changes were made and implemented in terms of the gender composition of the movement's leadership. Women constitute 50% of the leadership positions in the movement. As a result, most peasant organizations around the world have followed suit and addressed gender imbalances at their decision making level.

The Stop Violence against Women campaign was relaunched at the assembly. The campaign has been on-going and will soon celebrate its fourth birthday. It condemns violence against women along class, gender, ethnicity and sex (which is worse for women in rural areas). The campaign will also reinforce the agreement for the construction of new gender relations within Via Campesina.

The women drafted a manifesto, which highlighted their major areas of focus. These areas include : access to land as a key right of women ; the demand for comprehensive Agrarian Reform that recognises and includes women in its implementation, ensuring not only access to and control over land, but to all the instruments and mechanisms on an equal footing.

The video "Mujeres Campesinas: Sembradoras de Luchas y Esperanzas" (Peasant Women Plant Struggles and Hopes) was shown in the auditorium and can be watched here: <http://tv.viacampesina.org/Women-planting-struggles-and-hope?lang=en>

The links to the Women's manifesto and action plan can be found in the Declarations and Resolutions section of this report.

YOUTH'S ASSEMBLY

The youth made their mark at the conference, whether it was through their lively and creative *misticas*, or the all night food sovereignty rock concert that concluded the entire conference. The richness of their debates within their unique space which created in La Via Campesina were memorable and inspiring. The deep passion displayed by the youth from different cultures for the earth and farming was a testament that La Via Campesina has continuity and bright a future.



The deep passion displayed by the youth was a testament that La Via Campesina has continuity and bright a future.

Young farmers recognized that rural youth are facing a lot of political, economic and social discrimination. The neglect of peasant agriculture as a valid livelihood exacerbated by neo-liberalism, privatization and resource grab in the countryside push peasants out of agriculture and leaving them without many livelihood opportunities. They believe that to truly achieve a dignified life in the countryside, today's rural youth need the realization of Food Sovereignty based on agro-ecology and agrarian reform.

They created an action plan based on five main themes: Agro-ecology, energy and climate change; Food Sovereignty; Access to Land, Territory and Natural Resources; Migration and Health. They decided to work on these topics as an effective measure to develop their agrarian visions as the basis to a radically new society.

The youth have pushed for more autonomy within La Via Campesina and have proposed additions to the internal structure of the movement. One of them is the creation of a global "youth articulation"- a collective of youth leaders, one woman and one man from each region who will be re-elected every two years. They will be responsible to integrate the La Via Campesina youth into the whole structure and system of the movement and to follow up on the youth action plan and work as autonomously as possible.

Links to the youth declaration, action plan and photos can be found in the Declarations and Resolutions section of this report.

THE CONFERENCE

Opening Ceremony at the Peasants' Victory Stadium



"Our greatest strengths are our self-reliance, our identity as peasant families, our diversity and our unity. These are taking us forward in our efforts to transform the food system"

Henry Saragih, outgoing general coordinator of La Via Campesina, SPI, Indonesia



The time has come to start building!

"With a new blueprint for civilisation based on new values, new ways of living together, new political power structure and new forms of governance. The time has come to start building the new road to complete happiness for the working classes.

Men and women, comrades from the whole world

It is time to unite, and, hand in hand, to form a large rural and urban alliance to defend life and build a new world where we can live with justice and dignity."

Itelvina Massioli, ICC, MST Brazil



“Freedom! Even though most nations have gained independence, the people, especially peasants, have not enjoyed their independence or their basic rights. They and the earth are suffering because of the greed of neoliberalism. I hope that those who fight in their villages, who have joined the progressive peasant movements under La Via Campesina, will bring the real independence for all and people peasants in the world.”

H.S. Dillon, Special Envoy for Poverty Alleviation to the President of the Republic of Indonesia

“Farmer organizations have an important role in the socialization and internalization of the anticipation of the impacts of climate change for farmers and their rights.”



H. Suswono, Minister of Agriculture, Republic of Indonesia



“It is important to increase investment in agriculture. Large-scale agricultural investments by foreign corporations offer opportunities, but there are also risks. Governments can encourage farmers to invest in their farms by creating a favourable investment climate for them.”

Vili Fuavao, Deputy Regional Representative, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

“The International Fund for Agricultural Development shares La Via Campesina’s convictions about giving marginalized voices greater space to speak and influence policies. In 2005, we launched the Farmers’ Forum with IFAD, La Via Campesina and others to promote greater collaboration between small farmers, IFAD and governments.

IFAD believes that farmers’ organizations must play a vital role in implementing at the country level the Voluntary Guidelines for responsible governance of land tenure.”



Ron Hartman, Country Program Manager, IFAD



M. Iqbal, President of Indonesian Worker Assembly

“The peasants and migrants struggle are not very much apart. With land grabbing, a number of peasants end up as migrant workers. In Asia, through the Social Movements for an Alternative Asia, the migrants’ movement and peasants’ movement have worked together for several years in our common struggle to resist and stop neo-liberal globalization. The convergence is necessary because by ourselves and separated, we cannot change the current economic model that exploits us.”

Maria Lorena Macabuag, Migrant Forum in Asia



Analyses of the international political context

One of the introductory panels was to evaluate the international political and economic context in which La Via Campesina operates. A majority of the speakers focused on the Asian continent, but their points were relevant for the rest of the world too. The major themes were the multiple economic crisis, high growth and high inequality in Asia, capital accumulation over social uses, and the fundamental challenges for La Via Campesina.

Multiple Economic crisis

There are ongoing multiple and interrelated crises- ecological, climatic, hunger, and political, affecting the lives of all. The crises are geographically interconnected as we live in one world. The current neoliberal economic system that favors the concentration of capital is the fundamental reason behind these crises. The climate crisis is the result of unfettered industrialization that is geared towards consumerism for the elite. While the food crisis is partially a result of a food system that is concentrated in the hands of agribusiness engaged in speculation and hoarding. The financial crisis was led by unregulated private banks that engaged in risky financial choices and destabilized entire economies resulting in massive debts. It is important for people to struggle against this concentration of power and resources.



“We obviously have some huge struggles ahead of us. We should credit ourselves for our love of diversity. Every time we put a seed in the ground it is an act of hope.”

Nettie Wiebe, National Farmers Union (NFU)

Asia high growth and high inequality

Asia is seen as an engine of global development, with high growth rates (averaged 7.7%) despite the crises but this hides large internal inequalities, which benefit the elites. Forty four percent of the poor in Asia live in South Asia. Throughout Asia, the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) promote a model of development limited to investment, which does not include public provision of goods or basic services like water, no subsidies for poor or workers but promote and/or encourage state investment based on full-cost recovery. The IFIs also promote certain types of investments in land and are thus one of the biggest drivers of unequal land and water grabbing.

Capital accumulation over social uses

While a majority of the speakers focused on Asia, it is true for most of the world that most national development plans include high state support for private investment. These are presented as “win-win” scenarios where both private entities and the people would benefit. However, such privatization of public resources and services deprives the people of their uses and become a means to accumulate capital by a few elite. For example, massive agrarian investments are put into acquiring farm land for private projects for export cash crops, agrofuels and others. These drive farmers off their land, increasing food insecurity but are portrayed as beneficial by governments. This is driving a global land grabbing trend. Similarly, the Green economy's financialization of nature is touted by its proponents as supposedly a “win-win” scenario.

However, this is a new mechanism to transfer resources from nature to capital including from people. In developing countries such as SE Asia, more than 20% of inflows of foreign investment are for the extractive industry. The huge Special economic zones (SEZs) corridors of Asia are export free zones that are displacing millions of shepherds and farmers. Local communities that oppose these developments are criminalized. People are either moving away from the countryside or arrested and some killed. Land grabbing in Asia is thus serious and some United Nations (UN) bodies such as the FAO and UNCTAD support and/or encourage the transfer of land to private actors from social uses under the guise of promoting development.

Fundamental challenges for La Via Campesina

La Via Campesina has inherited a great political heritage, which requires and confers a great responsibility. The key challenges for the movement in the future are to:-

- 1) maintain its ideological cohesion which allows it to take action directly at the international level;
- 2) maintain the visibility of its local struggles globally and at the same time highlight the global aspects in local struggles. This is even more important in our efforts to build alternatives, as we are building ecological alternatives and food sovereignty that start from local action and are solutions to global problems;
- 3) ensure full and equal participation of women and men not only within its organizations, but also in the economic life of their communities. Include women and youth in all activities but also at all organizational level to make sure that they decide and dynamize our organizations. Affirm the campaign to end violence against women;
- 4) strengthen the capacity of solidarity to defend against the increased criminalization of social struggles and La Via Campesina leaders, and
- 5) strengthen the global movement for social justice in all its forms by strengthening our alliances.

The following speakers contributed to this panel:

Yoon Geum Soon, South Korea, Korean Womens' Peasants Association
Shalmali Guttal, Focus on the Global South
Dani Setiawan, Serikat Petani Indonesia
Nettie Wiebe, National Farmers Union (NFU) of Canada
Paul Nicholson, La Via Campesina, Basque Country

Our solution, struggles and alternatives

The following thematic panels highlighted a range of local alternatives that La Via Campesina members are building around the world:



A field visit to the Sinarjaya, an agro-ecological village that was established on a rubber plantation occupied by landless peasants of the Serikat Petani Indonesia. It is a successful example of an agrarian reform struggle that has promoted agro-ecology and a dignified livelihood for more than 1,000 peasant families.

Food Sovereignty and the fight against patriarchy in East Asia

The Korean Women Peasant's Association (KWPA) has come with initiatives to realise food sovereignty and to fight against patriarchy. These include carrying out several campaigns, some of which are political such as pressurizing the local government to enact laws on food sovereignty. Other practical campaigns on alternatives include promoting agroecology and the conservation of indigenous seeds. Through their own producers' organization, women produce weekly vegetable and supply them to city consumers through a program quite similar to community supported agriculture. By so doing, women have built relationships with consumers and involved them in other activities such as the educational activities on food and farming. All their campaigns are situated in their struggle against neo-liberalism and violence against women.

What the peasant and indigenous organizations in the Americas are doing

The social movements of the Americas have achieved great success in denouncing the neo-liberal capitalist model and its violence against resources, land, water, and people especially the women. But they are also engaged in constructive politics to build alternatives. In this context, the peasant and indigenous organizations in the Americas have proposed comprehensive laws of Food Sovereignty and Rural Development. Moreover, they are building alliances with progressive governments such as the ALBA countries and with social sectors for Food Sovereignty, Agrarian Reform and the defence of land and territory. Many movements have demanded a peasant oriented agrarian reform, while some have practiced their right to occupy land to grow food. They have also lobbied at the United Nations for the Declaration of Peasant Rights and to demand the end of the criminalization of social movements. They continue to promote the Global Campaign on Seeds and the sharing of their ancestral and traditional knowledge on peasant production, agroecology through the farmer to farmer method. They demand that the People's Agreement of Cochabamba on Climate Change becomes a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth and be adopted by the United Nations.

The Challenges, Alternatives and Solutions for African Peasants

African peasants face many challenges such as the lack of access to land, lack of recognition, threats to indigenous seeds and traditional knowledge; resource grabbing by Transnational Corporations; Climate Change; unfavourable public policies to their interests and needs; lack of protection of peasants rights; armed conflicts and wars; violation of women's rights; limited interest and involvement of rural youth ; migration and rural exodus, especially by the youth, health and diseases (HIV/AIDS, malaria and other pandemic diseases).

In response to the situation the following alternatives and solutions are being implemented:

The practice and promotion of agroecology: A network of agroecological schools is already being implemented in Niger, Mali, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Another initiative is to register and disseminate solutions to climate change developed by local farmers using traditional and local knowledge.

Campaigns and capacity building activities and mobilizations are being implemented across the continent to tackle the issue of the violence against women, women's access to land, land grabbing and the advance of Transnational Corporations in the continent.

Lobbying and public pressure. In countries such as Senegal and Gambia, public policies initially driven by local community-based organisations and NGOs are implementing renewable energy programmes in rural areas. Governments of various African countries are also being pressured by civil society to pass laws and policies that protect the rights of migrant peasants. Campaigns and training programs are also being implemented with the aim to encourage youth to stay in the rural areas.

Campaigns of sensitization of young peasants are being carried out in various countries in an attempt to counter the scourge of epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, as well as the abusive use of drugs by the youth.

European farmers are still there and are putting up a good fight



"As farmers' movement in Europe, we want to have a role and we will have a role because we are the future"
Andrea Ferrante, ECVC – AIAB

As other economies are growing fast, Europe is undergoing a full economic crisis characterized by the absence of work and the attack on social welfare, on our farms, on the seed legislation etc. The recent land grabbing and oil exploration through fracking are ways to steal land from farmers, like in Eastern Europe. There is a real land crisis; no policy on access to land for youth.

In Europe, 58 years is the average age of farmers, and small-scale farmers are a minority. There is therefore an urgent need for the movement to become stronger and to bring in more youth into farming. Many good cases in Europe exist where youth are building a new young culture in farming, especially through agroecology. But government policies need to support these efforts too. Right now, all public policies are against small and young farmers. There is a need to build alliances. The example of the fight against GMO crops in Europe shows that victories can come from strong alliances. Today in EU, as a result of collective action by alliances, only 100,000 acres out of 30 millions are planted with GMO crops.

The following speakers contributed to this panel:

Mrs Kang To Pok, Korean Womens' Peasants' Association, Korea
María José Matz, Comité de Unidad Campesina, Guatemala

Elizabeth Mpofu, Zimbabwe Organic Smallholder Farmers Forum, Zimbabwe
Andrea Ferrante, Associazione Italiana per l'Agricoltura Biologica, Italy

Political evaluation of La Via Campesina's work by the outgoing international coordination committee (2008-2013)

Some outcomes of the last four years (2008-2013):

- Major mobilizations against GMOs and to promote peasant seeds: Actions have been carried out in most continents (Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa) and some have led to bans on GMOs for example in Mexico and India. Successful outcome of the conference on biodiversity in Nagoya, Japan which lobbied and retained the ban on terminator seeds.
- Climate justice: Since UNFCCC Bali Summit in 2007, La Via Campesina was active in getting the concepts of climate justice and mother earth into the discourse on climate change. In Cochabamba, La Via Campesina contributed to the articulation of the rights of mother earth.
- Opposition to the green economy: In Rio + 20 La Via Campesina opposed the green economy and other such market based false solutions to the ecological crisis.
- Agrarian Reform: La Via Campesina successfully held a meeting in Mali against land grabbing. Later they also held a meeting in West Sumatra to discuss and map the way forward on the future of agrarian reform in the 21st century.
- Peasant rights: In 2012, a UN resolution was adopted in the General Assembly to make Peasant rights a Convention.
- During the food crisis La Via Campesina made presentations at UN General Assembly demanding real solutions to the food crisis.
- Violence against women campaign is progressing well and has been adopted as a key campaign of La Via Campesina.
- Alliance building: La Via Campesina is not only a farmers' movement, but a reference point for all people struggling for social and ecological justice. The movement places great emphasis on building alliances and solidarity with other social movements and this has resulted in many successes in its campaigns.
- Political campaigns on alternatives: As a result of La Via Campesina's campaigns for food sovereignty, many movements have include food sovereignty, agrarian reform and agro-ecology in policies at local, provincial/state, national and regional levels.

Ongoing challenges

Besides the above achievements by La Via Campesina, a number of challenges continue to be faced. The ongoing challenges are as follows: The Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) is growing fast and is a big threat to the continent's ecology and its people. Africa is therefore a very important battle ground for La Via Campesina. To strengthen the movement's member organisations and allies, La Via Campesina secretariat is now moving to Africa.

- There is a need to train more leaders to participate in international level politics without compromising struggles at the local level. Women and youth are still to be fully integrated in all activities.
- There is a need to further develop the work on peasant seeds: This is a central part of La Via Campesina's work on alternatives, especially agro-ecology. La Via Campesina needs to work on rescuing the indigenous seeds at a global level, not only by political campaigning but also through practical work of sharing and exchange among others.
- Peasants' rights: We need to work with our allies in the spaces of the UN to push governments to adopt and support the UN resolution on peasant rights.
- La Via Campesina, despite its past achievements still needs to strengthen itself to be able to respond with concrete solidarity actions to denounce the criminalization of movements in other places.

Issues and campaigns of La Via Campesina

La Via Campesina will focus on the following issues over the coming years. A general action plan is presented later under the Strategic lines of action 2013–2017.

Stop violence against women campaign

A powerful *mística* dedicated to Maria do Fetal paid tribute to this campaign during the conference. Maria, a devoted women's rights activist from the Movimento Sem Terra Brazil strangled to death by her partner in early 2013.



Representatives from all the regions of La Via Campesina affirmed the strong and active commitment of the movement to stop all forms of violence against women

Representatives from all the regions of La Via Campesina affirmed the strong and active commitment of the movement to stop all forms of violence against women as a key foundation to its construction of new gender and social relations toward a desired future.

Understanding that violence against women is structural, i.e. embedded in the neoliberal, patriarchal society, the commitments include strengthening women's struggle for emancipation, gender equality and participation in all arenas of power; lobbying governments to implement their international commitments to end discrimination against women; and demanding every country to have an action plan to stop violence against women. Via Campesina has committed to use all training spaces, joint actions (esp. March 8, the International Day of the struggles of women and 25 November, the International Day of non-violence struggle) and the media to raise awareness on violence against women.

Peasant Seeds

Seeds are central to La Via Campesina's objectives and their achievements. Thus, the seed campaign was launched 12 years ago with the declaration of Rome. La Via Campesina commits to protect peasant seeds from contamination by GMOs and to promote them and their associated knowledge about how to rescue, save and multiply among farmers and cross country borders. La Via Campesina demands peasants' rights over seeds and to promote a bottom up solution to the loss of global agro-biodiversity. Most organizations of La Via Campesina already have very good experiences with seeds conservation, reproduction and exchanges in their communities. For instance Zimbabwe Organic Smallholder Farmers Forum in Zimbabwe has a highly evolved training program targeting women in particular. They organise seed fairs and seed exchange visits. The movimiento dos pequenos agricultores in Brazil has engaged about 2000 families in a seed program, who work on seed saving and production. The government buys peasant seeds from them and distributes them. They have conducted international seed exchanges with countries like Mozambique, Venezuela, Paraguay, Argentina.

La Via Campesina opposes industrial seeds promoted by transnational corporations because these are not consistent with nature, they depend on chemical inputs, and generate health and ecological problems and high dependence from farmers. Most importantly they are not owned by farmers but by capitalists. Industrialized countries have already lost most of their native seeds and their traditional knowledge about their seeds and a similar trend around the world needs to be stopped. La Via Campesina is also opposed to Transnational Corporations controlled unnatural seed banks, such as the "Apocalypse Seed Bank" in Norway. Such banks are not natural spaces for seeds to evolve and adapt to the environmental changes, and they become banks for Transnational Corporations to extract and profit from. Peasants must recover all their seeds from such seed banks and keep them planted on their farms.

La Via Campesina's publication on seeds "Our Seeds, Our Future" can be downloaded here: <http://viacampesina.org/downloads/pdf/en/EN-notebook6.pdf>

Campaign against Agrochemicals

The Campaign against Agrochemicals (agro-toxics) was launched in Latin America in 2010, and was proposed to be adopted as a global campaign for La Via Campesina. The increased use of agro-toxics has gone hand in hand with massive promotion of GM seeds around the world, as they come as part of the GM technology package. In many parts of the world agro-toxics are sprayed liberally on monoculture plantations using airplanes. Not all the agro-toxics applied this way fall on the crop, but some are blow away by the wind, affecting nearby communities and animals, and poisoning the land, water and soil. A study in Argentina showed that 90% of the breastfeeding mother's milk had high levels of agro-toxics, beyond the safety limits set by international organizations. Condemning agro-toxics is also a condemnation of agribusiness, Transnational corporations and the World Trade Organization which foster hazardous practices. These chemicals are at the heart of the current model of capitalist agriculture being pushed by neo-liberalism across the world. Thus, the Latin American region proposed the adoption of the campaign against agro-toxics in other regions. A key element of the "Campaign against Agro-toxics and for Life" is also to propose agro-ecology as an alternative model.

Transnational Corporations

La Via Campesina is fundamentally opposed to the domination of Transnational Corporations in the food system and in all the spheres of life. It denounces Transnational Corporations in all its campaigns, highlighting how they violate human rights, and destroy the people and the environment. There is a need to strengthen the global resistance in coordinated campaigns on different issues such as the extractive industry, food sovereignty, seeds, public services or financial corporations. It is important for the movement and its allies to monitor the constant reinventions of the Transnational Corporations. They use the political apparatus of the state to promote their control and also dominate most international intergovernmental institutions. Thus, the interests and rights of the people are sidelined. Our campaigns and participation through occupying these spaces is critical. People who resist against the control of Transnational Corporations on the ground are criminalized by government security forces in many places. Transnational Corporations also employ their own paramilitary forces to attack people and stop any opposition to their plans. The state acts as a broker for Transnational Corporations in many cases, instead of fulfilling its responsibilities towards the people.

Transnational Corporations are being legitimized through narratives around their so-called beneficial solutions to various problems which are just further profit making initiatives. The entire rhetoric of the green economy, corporate responsibility and others are ideological and political tools for their further control over people's resources and services. It is very important for La Via Campesina to continue its work on alternatives and solidarity economies, building alliances with consumers around the world.

Free trade Agreements

Since its inception La Via Campesina has been struggling against the neoliberal agenda imposed by institutions or agreements such as the World Trade Organization, the Bilateral Trade Agreements, the Comprehensive Economic Partnerships or the Transpacific Partnerships. These agreements are just arrangements which make it easier for Transnational Corporations to operate freely at the expense of the livelihoods of small peasants and food producers. In most of cases, they are concluded between unequal trading partners. These fall under the broader regime of the corporate globalization and the neoliberal regime.

La Via Campesina recognizes that there is a new wave of free trade agreements signed and an attempt to bring back the World Trade Organization to the centre stage of negotiating trade policies in agriculture. The Doha Round has failed to move forward for years, to a large extent because of lack of consensus on the Agreement on Agriculture. The WTO will meet in December 2013 in Bali for its 9th ministerial meeting. La Via Campesina has been mobilizing its members and allies, as it has always done in Cancun, Geneva and Hong Kong, to fight for peasants' rights. It will be doing so through a week of actions against the WTO in Bali, including a people's tribunal and a youth caravan.

Climate Change

La Via Campesina has the challenge to highlight impacts of climate change on food systems, water crisis and migration, as well as the impacts of extreme weather events on rural populations and especially women. The movement denounces the role of consumerism fuelled by the current economic system governed by Transnational Corporations as the root cause of the climate crisis. It recognizes that industrial agriculture is one of the highest contributors to climate change, not just because of the high fossil fuel dependence but also high food miles promoted by free trade and several other unsustainable practices. Instead, La Via Campesina promotes food sovereignty as a local solution to this problem. Agro-ecological production, as one of the pillars of food sovereignty is the direct alternative by peasants to end the dependence on fossil fuels in agriculture.

The movement has the challenge of building a global action plan that will:

- Push for food sovereignty
- Promote climate justice as enshrined in the Cochabamba People's Agreement
- Promote land occupation by peasants as a morally legitimate, and sustainable response to climate change
- Support the efforts of peasants in climate change adaptation and mitigation through on-farm conservation and massive exchanges of diverse seed varieties among communities worldwide
- Support local production and consumption, including of energy where possible
- Recognize the "right to migrate and not to migrate"

Agro-ecology

Agro-ecology is a pillar of the peasant-based model of sustainable agriculture, the defense of which is a key issue for La Via Campesina. Agro-ecology is a production technology that is based on ecological principles. For La Via Campesina agro-ecology also includes social justice principles. It is a balance of new ecological innovations and traditional peasant farming knowledge. Agro-ecology is considered to be a science, but has also become a social movement today, with a growing number of peasants, scholars, citizens and activists that are promoting it. The transformation of production models to agro-ecological models is one of La Via Campesina's important strategies.

La Via Campesina's slogan - "agro-ecology can feed the world and cool the planet" has projected agro-ecology as a grassroots' solution to the climate crisis and global hunger. Agro-ecology delinks farming from costly and finite petroleum based toxic chemicals. Although most or all La Via Campesina member organizations have some experience of agro-ecology at different levels of sophistication, the movement officially adopted slogan as a global issue at the Vth conference in Maputo. It has embarked on campaigns and drafted a international workplan since then, and a publication " From Maputo to Jakarta: 5 years of Agroecology in La Via Campesina" capturing this journey has been published. La Via Campesina will intensify its work on agro-ecology and continue its ongoing work on farmer to farmer knowledge exchanges, documenting the most successful agro-ecological experiences, and consolidating its network of agro-ecology schools around the world. Agro-ecology will be closely linked with La Via Campesina's work on seeds and climate change.



Agro-ecology will be closely linked with La Via Campesina's work on seeds

Migrations

Today, about 300 million people, mainly poor are living outside of their countries of birth. Many migrants are subjected to repression, exploitation, and criminalization within the receiving countries. Meanwhile, there are also about 700 million people who are internally displaced, forced out of the countryside into the urban areas in search of employment. As peasant agriculture becomes unviable due to faulty policies, and more people lose land, peasants, especially men, are left with no choice but to seek insecure low wage jobs in the cities. They leave behind broken rural communities. In some cases, the migration of men is so high that women would constitute up to 70-90% of the farming communities. The ongoing push for the industrial farming model will exacerbate these migratory flows.

Migration, as viewed by La Via Campesina, includes the ongoing assault against peasants, small family farmers, rural and agricultural workers all over the world. In addition, climate change is worsening their conditions, increasing even further migration flows.

Migration is an important cross-cutting issue and a critical area of work for La Via Campesina. It is the site of struggle in which many separate issues intersect – labor and human rights, gender issues, climate, and many more. More importantly, it is the nexus between the peasant and the wage laborer, the rural and the urban. It is thus agreed that it is necessary to raise the level of priority and commitment to the issue of rural workers and migrants within La Via Campesina.

Land and Agrarian Reform



“In Bangladesh, the land occupation movement has obtained and distributed 67,000 acres of land to men and women. AR will bring peace in the rural areas.” A participant from South Asia region to the VI International conference of La Via Campesina.

La Via Campesina recognized the need to re-energize the Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform (GCAR) launched together with its ally FIAN in 1993. The campaign aimed to accompany local land struggles at the global level by influencing governments to change policies in favour of peasants and denounce violations against them. La Via Campesina sees agrarian reform as a holistic process that goes beyond access to land to include support to practice agro-ecological food production. Today there is a new wave of land grabs and land concentration globally, not just in the south. Mainly these are converting fertile farm land to non-agricultural uses such as export oriented commercial plantations that do not grow food but agro-fuels. Some of the grabbed lands are used for infrastructural and extractive projects such as mining, huge dams for hydro-power generation. The result is the dispossession of peasants of their key livelihoods and threats global food security.

There are also serious ecological costs involved because of the high use of agro-chemicals and mono-cropping. Moreover, they are also accompanied by growing militarization and violence against peasants. Such land grabs are however legitimized using the rhetoric of beneficial or responsible investments by governments and global institutions such as the World Bank.

Some of the recommendations at the sixth conference were that La Via Campesina should develop its global campaign reaffirming that Agrarian Reform is a necessity for humanity. It should also defend the social and environmental functions of land and stop land grabbing and land concentration. There have been some successes on this front such as the CFS' Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests. However, these should not be just voluntary and are not an end in itself but rather part of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICCARD) process initiated in 1996. There is a need to build alliances and outreach to all continents and make land conflicts more visible, and denounce strongly any violence against peasants. Increasing the visibility of successes is also important.

La Via Campesina's publication on land "Land is Life" can be downloaded here: <http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/publications-mainmenu-30/1446-land-is-life>

Peasants' Rights

La Via Campesina has been developing the concept of peasants' rights for several years. It has worked at the level of the United Nations to promote a Declaration of Peasant's Rights. The UN Human Rights (HR) Council adopted a resolution to create a working group to draft this declaration, so this is already a success. Many countries in the global south such as Ecuador, South Africa, Cuba, Bolivia, Venezuela, Cameroon have supported this process. The European countries and the US that are not in favour of this. There is a need to work with those countries that are open to Human Rights mechanisms within Europe.

Committee on Food Security (CFS) in Rome

The CFS is the key space on food and agriculture in the UN system and an institution that is growing in importance. Its decisions are implemented by the FAO as well as other UN food institutions such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development, World Food Program and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. The CFS was reformed following the global food price crisis of 2008, which led to a big debate about where agricultural policies should be decided. The increasing importance of the CFS is the result of strong pressure from civil society and progressive governments to bring policy decisions on food and agriculture away from undemocratic spaces such as the G8 and WTO, into the multilateral UN system. One of the major reforms was to give a voice to civil society, which now has a formally recognized role that allows it to participate with an equal status as governments in meetings and governmental negotiations. It is however not allowed to vote.

La Via Campesina has participated at the CFS, and will continue as it considers the CFS as an important space to occupy.

Summary of La Via Campesina's strategic lines of action 2013 – 2017

1) Stop Transnational Corporate Control Over Agriculture, Human Life and the Planet

We will continue to deepen our strategies to expose TNCs and their destructive impacts and exploitation of both people and the environment. We commit to work to roll back their influence through better regulation, public pressure and strengthening peasant based-agricultural production that does not need TNCs for inputs or the sales of products. We will redouble our efforts to struggle against GMOs, pesticides, land grabbing, mono-cultures and industrial agrofuel production. We will continue our struggles against trade liberalization and privatization through the WTO and other Free Trade Agreements. We will struggle against military aggression (war, military occupations, paramilitary actions and “security” companies) used against the people around the world who oppose the plunder of their natural resources for corporate profit.

We will oppose the green revolution particularly, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, that promote corporate control over agriculture and threaten to destroy peasant agriculture.

2) Building Our Food Sovereignty Alternative – Agrarian Reform, defense of peasant seeds and Agroecology

Food sovereignty is our *global* alternative in face of the destitution caused by the dominant system of development – the neo-liberal capitalist system that is at the root of the multi-dimensional crisis (the food crisis, climate crisis, energy crisis, financial crisis, and the crisis of biodiversity, etc...). Food sovereignty is not only an alternative for peasants, but for the society as a whole. Only through food sovereignty will peasants be able to continue to sustain the earth for the benefit of the whole humanity.

We will maintain a presence at the international level (FAO, CFS, IFAD, UN HR Council, etc.) in order to obtain policies and initiatives that protect and support peasant- based, agro-ecological agriculture. Our work around the UN Declaration on Peasant Rights will be a central activity. At the national and local levels we will support national organizations in their struggles for better public policies, supporting peoples' struggle for peoples' sovereignty as a means to ensure peasants rights and stop forced migration.

We will strengthen our campaigns on seeds and on land and we will continue to support training and initiatives to maintain and strengthen peasant based, agro-ecological agriculture. We will continue to develop our strategy to strengthen the struggle against the neoliberal institutions and agreements which impede peoples and governments to develop their own agricultural and food policies. Food sovereignty can exist only on the condition that the WTO, FTAs and the World Bank are removed from agriculture.

3) Struggle to Unmask the “Green Economy” as a tool of the TNCs and Detain the Climate Crisis

We will continue to articulate our resistance against the false solutions for the climate crisis such as carbon markets, REDD and REDD+, and the concept of the “Green economy” as pushed by the private sector in the Rio+20 summit. We will oppose International Financial capital which is aggressively expanding its efforts to privatize and exploit natural resources (water, minerals, oil, biodiversity, etc.). We will continue to promote and defend peasant based, agro-ecological production as a real answer to the climate crisis. The current development model that prioritizes benefits to corporations over the lives of people and respect for nature is leading us to the destruction of the planet. The future of humanity is threatened.

4) Further integrate youth and women in the movement

Women and youth are indispensable for a dynamic and strong peasant movement as they play a crucial role in food production. Therefore we will continue our campaign to stop violence against women as well as our efforts to obtain full participation of women and youth at all levels in the movement.



Women and youth are indispensable for a dynamic and strong peasant movement

5) Organizational Strengthening is key

La Vía Campesina is a dynamic and growing movement; therefore we have to keep working on strengthening our internal cohesion and our collective functioning. Effective communication, consultation and training as well as an adequate strategy to have access to the needed resources are key. For this we have specific spaces where we can evaluate, analyze and adopt new ways of working. We recognize that learning from experiences outside La Vía Campesina is vital.

6) Build Alliances and Solidarity

The process of alliance building is an important political activity; we cannot undertake social change alone. Involving others is fundamental. An alliance is a collaboration undertaken in the short, medium or long term, that generates support to achieve certain results, but that also implies responsibilities. In order to achieve the maximum impact for change, alliances are crucial. La Vía Campesina will continue to strengthen the various alliances and collaborations that currently exist. Solidarity among movements and NGOs is key in a context where repression may increase. Besides receiving solidarity for peasant struggles, La Vía campesina also has an important role to play in solidarity with other social struggles that address any form of repression, domination or exploitation.

Main campaigns

- The “End Violence against Women Campaign”
- The Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform to be organized in various countries in a massive, broad and strong way.
- The campaign on peasants seeds - “Seeds, Heritage of the People for the Good of Humanity Campaign”. This will be a central tool for La Vía Campesina to make visible and strengthen the ongoing work on local and traditional seeds in peasant organizations.
- Launch the Global Campaign against Toxic Agro-chemicals at the international level on December 3rd– both in urban and rural places.

International Action Days:

- April 17th- the International Day of Peasant's Struggles, as the international day of action to promote peasants sovereignty and oppose transnational companies.
- October 16th - International Day of Massive Struggles against TNCs, Agro-chemicals, GMOs and for Food Sovereignty.

Declarations and resolutions

Follow this link to find a list of declarations and resolutions:

link: <http://www.viacampesina.org/en/index.php/our-conferences-mainmenu-28/6-jakarta-2013/resolutions-and-declarations>

- Youth declaration: This is the declaration prepared by youth at the Youth Assembly
- Youth Action plan: The four year action plan prepared by youth at the Youth Assembly
- Women's Manifesto: The declaration prepared by women during the Women's Assembly
- Jakarta Call: An important document for the Via Campesina as a message to the other international movements. It is the way LVC expresses itself to the world, shows its priorities and strengths. The document was prepared with contribution of all regions and was read at the end of the 6th Conference and approved by the assembly with a vibrant round of applause.

- La Via Campesina's Action Plan for 2013-17. This document is not available online but is available with the international operative secretariat
- New member organizations :
<http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/organisation-mainmenu-44/our-members-mainmenu-71>
- New ICC members – this document is not available online but is available with the international operative secretariat

IN CONCLUSION

The 6th Conference provided palpable evidence that there is an international consensus among peasant organizations from many different nations to promote food sovereignty as their ecologically and socially just model of development. They are united in their struggle against agri-business which is destroying human communities and nature. It confirmed that the international peasants' movement is not merely a dream but indeed a reality.



While the sixth conference reaffirmed La Via Campesina's anti-capitalist character, there is new vigour in the movement to build alternatives.

This 20th year anniversary of the movement welcomed new members, which not only brings an increase number of member organizations but also a wider diversity in the

movement. Thirty five new member organizations were welcomed into the family most of which represented the people of the first nations - Adivasi, Dalit and Afro-descendent peoples, as well as a new member organization from Palestine. The total number of member organizations in La Via Campesina has now reached 163 in 73 countries.

For the very first time, the international coordination of La Via Campesina will be lead by a woman from Africa. Thus, the international secretariat will be hosted by an African organization, Zimbabwe Organic Smallholder Farmers Forum, bringing a new style, energy and leadership to the whole movement. It will also bring to the forefront the issues and struggles of the African continent, a great necessity, given the increased interest of global capital through their various projects like the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) or massive ongoing land grabs.

The movement is now projecting itself beyond a reference point for farmers-only issues. It is reaching out to larger sections of society-workers, migrants, indigenous peoples, women among others. Although this was always the case in principle, this time concrete steps have been taken in this direction. It has launched new campaigns and taken on board issues that reach out to both rural areas and urban

sections- the proposed campaign on agrochemicals concerns not just farmers but also consumers everywhere. Migration is another cross-cutting issue that builds links with workers in urban areas. The youth and women of La Via Campesina have carved out a space for themselves and are bringing the feminist struggle to the food sovereignty movement. The campaign to end violence against women has become top priority for the movement in the coming years. The youth have proposed to create their own global coordination and plans to increase their autonomy within the movement.

While the sixth conference reaffirmed La Via Campesina's anti-capitalist character, its struggle against neo-liberal institutions, agribusiness, and their new green washed avatars like the green economy, there is new vigour in the movement to build alternatives. A re-energized global peasants' seeds campaign, and a considerable agro-ecology workplan will build on local action that peasants around the world are taking to conserve local seeds and promote agro-ecological farming. These are peasants' local solutions to hunger and the colossal environmental problems that the world is facing.

The global conference ended on an emotional and celebratory note. It confirmed that La Via Campesina's global family is growing, and the movement is here to stay. It has gained political strength over the past two decades, and that its message is being heard loud and clear, that peasants are not a relic of the past, they are indeed the future.

“They might ask who are we?
We are La Via Campesina
We are farming to save nations
We are farming to save our rights”

Song by the African women of La Via Campesina

Globalize the Struggle! Globalize Hope!

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 160 local and national organizations in more than 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



Contacts of La Via Campesina
International Peasant Movement

Operational Secretariat :
ZIMSOFF
197A Smuts Road Prospect, Waterfalls,
Harare, Zimbabwe
Phone number: +263 4576221