



# La Via Campesina

2013 Annual Report

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Caption : On the cover : Indonesian women farmers at VI international Conference of La Via Campesina, Jakarta, June 2013,

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## A. INTRODUCTION



It is difficult to encompass in the annual report of an organization such as La Via Campesina with a membership of 164 organisations in over 79 countries all the activities happening in the regions. This report, however, acknowledges the key activities and the strides taken in 2013 towards achieving the goals of the various campaigns and struggles of the international movement.

The annual report is structured in four sections. Section one gives a background to the overall work of La Via Campesina as well describing the political context during 2013 that had implications for the movement's work. Section two presents and discusses the movement's main thematic areas of work. In this section the various activities undertaken, the victories won, and other important outcomes of 2013 are highlighted. Section three provides a summary of the VI conference held in Jakarta, Indonesia and highlights the important outcomes of the meeting. Section four presents the transition of the International Operational Secretariat (IOS) to Harare, Zimbabwe and other changes in the International Coordination Committee (ICC). Finally, the various media and communication tools are presented.

### **A1. Background: political and economic context**

The political and economic context in 2013 had a bearing on how La Via Campesina shaped its campaigns and struggles. Generally, the multiple global crises, high inequality and increased poverty, primitive accumulation with extreme exploitation, and the political instability in the Middle East and Africa (in Mali, DRC and Mozambique) continued unabated.

The multiple global crises in finance, ecology, climate, hunger, and politics are affecting us all. These have been caused by the current high tide of neoliberal policies which foster the free reign of private capital, limited state intervention and market liberalization to rescue the world economy from collapsing as capitalism decays. This has led to extreme exploitation of the earth's and humanity's resources in the quest for super profits by capital. The increased role of finance capital through speculation in real, abstract commodities, commodity futures markets and

the need for 'greener' fuels to cut greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels are some of the underlying causes of the crises. Transnational corporations and some governments, particularly from the developed nations, ushered in a new surge in land grabbing in most developing countries for export and agro-fuel production and prompted further commodification of nature and natural services to promote their ill-conceived 'friendlier green economy'. The use of GMOs and agrochemicals is increasing in the world as transnational agribusinesses seek to standardize commodities through monocultures and to control food value chains. Africa faces an onslaught against its seeds and a threatened future on two fronts. On one front, the SADC (Southern Africa Development Community), among other African economic development communities, is working on seed trade policy harmonization to facilitate a regional free flow of hybrid seeds. On the other front, the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) seeks to standardize seed certification and subordinate the member states to UPOV. GMOs are slowly being accepted by some African governments thus posing a threat to biodiversity.

Despite high economic growth rates, the result has been an ever worsening level of inequality the world over. The few rich people are getting super rich while billions of people are getting poorer each day. The roots of inequality are closely associated with adoption of neoliberal policies everywhere in the world. The International Financial Institutions (IFIs) promote a model of development girded by investment and blind to the need for public provision of goods or basic services like water, and for subsidies for the poor or for workers. Instead, the full costs of recovery are borne by workers and the environment. Their investment thrust is also the biggest driver of land and water grabbing. The Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) have been renegotiated and signed between the EU and the ACP countries and threatens blocking EU aid to the latter. In June 2013, the United States and the European Union started to negotiate the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TIPP). Such a partnership, if approved, is a big threat to their farmers and citizens as it will mainly benefit transnationals. Many developing countries are also part of free trade agreements which have increased dumping and stifled domestic market development, causing unprecedented high levels of poverty and unemployment as local livelihoods are destroyed.

The economic crisis in Europe is resulting in a disengagement of the state from its social, economic and cultural responsibilities. This abrogation of the state's responsibilities, despite being lauded as 'beneficial', will drive farmers off their land, increase food insecurity and worsen the plight of its citizens. In developing countries such as in SE Asia, more than 20 percent of foreign investments go to extractive industries, some cocooned in special zones. The special economic and export zones continue to displace millions of peasants. Land grabbing in Asia, Africa and elsewhere are thus serious, and some United Nations (UN) bodies and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) support and/or encourage the transfer of

land to private actors under the guise of promoting development through such investments.

In light of the above political and economic context, La Via Campesina faces key challenges in the future. The movement's political heritage confers a great responsibility and requires it to maintain its ideological cohesion in such a fluid political and economic context considering the protracted nature of the struggles and campaigns. Such cohesion is critical in undertaking action at the international level but at the same time maintaining visibility in local struggles. This is even more important in efforts to build alternatives starting at the local level, proliferating globally as solutions to the problems caused by transnational corporations. The movement has to ensure full and equal participation of women and men not only within its organizations, but also in the economic life of their communities thus affirming the campaign for gender parity and an end to violence against women. The ability of social movements to defend against the increased criminalization of their social struggles and their leaders, through solidarity and the struggle for social justice in all its forms, need to be strengthened.

## B. STRUGGLES, ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2013, the movement welcomed 35 new member organizations, most representing people of the first nations such as the Adivasi, Dalit and Afro-descendants, as well as a new member organization from Palestine. The increase in the membership allows La Via Campesina to have footprints in most corners of the world and thus helps to attain the movement's well known international slogan to "Globalize the Struggle! Globalize Hope!". Moreover, the new members add to an already rich and wider diversity making the peasant movement not only a reference point for farmers' issues but also for broader societal issues (on workers, migrants, indigenous people, youth, women, etc.) caused by the assault of transnational corporations (TNCs) and a neoliberal agenda motivated by profit greed.



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The movement has strengthened its days of mobilization (March 8, April 17, October 16 and November 25) as witnessed by increased participation globally. It is noteworthy to highlight some main activities that took place in the different continents. In the North America region, our Mexican members held a collective hunger strike, which attracted global attention and solidarity, to stop the Mexican

government from formally approving large-scale commercial planting of GMO maize. Mexico is the world's centre of maize diversity with a thousand of varieties used by peasant and indigenous communities.

La Via Campesina organized numerous successful seminars and conferences through its regional structures. To note a few, the European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC) conference on land issues in the European Parliament whose proceedings were published and disseminated; the Africa One seminar on peasants' seeds to consolidate positions among peasant organizations in Africa; and South East Asia region of La Via Campesina organized and hosted in Jakarta the movement's VIth international conference attended by over 500 delegates from 70 countries. These delegates reviewed, discussed La Via Campesina's activities and consolidated its strategic lines of action. Besides seminars and conferences, numerous training events were held. These targeted the youth to strengthen their structures and also to deepen their understanding of the movement's various struggles. The women held a training on the campaigns to stop violence against them and also on other food sovereignty related issues.

At the international level, La Via Campesina contributed important interventions at the UN CFS to protect the interests of the small holder farmers and peasants. The movement participated in the discussion of the zero draft on the "*Principles for responsible Investment*" taking a lead role in the facilitation of this process in the Civil Society mechanism and with the CFS Bureau. Also, together with other social movements we obtained an important decision of the governments of the CFS in October 2012 where they decided to call upon national governments to set up a vision on how to support small holder food production. In October La Via Campesina and FAO's Director General Jose Graziano da Silva formalized an agreement of cooperation which acknowledged the role of small holder food producers in the eradication of world hunger. The cooperation will focus on various key areas: strengthening peasant based agro-ecological food production, protecting small holders' rights to access land and water, as well as improving farmers' rights over seeds in accordance with international and national seed laws. This cooperative agreement gives special emphasis on the key role of the youth and women in food production as well as the need to improve their access to land and other productive resources.

## **B1. Policy Areas: Struggles and Campaigns**

There are eight policy areas which are organized by the International Operational Secretariat (IOS) programme team. The policy areas are organized into collectives led by the various members of the ICC and supported by staff from different parts of the world. Though the policy areas appear to stand alone, they are actually interlinked and their activities are complementary and contribute towards building and entrenching La Via Campesina's ideological struggle.

## **B1.1 Defeat the transnational corporations and their trade agenda.**

The struggle to defeat transnational corporations (TNCs) is pervasive in the sense that it's the lethal arrow tip where all the campaigns and struggles of La Via Campesina converge. All the activities reported in other policy areas are struggles to defeat the actions of TNCs, the vehicles of global capitalism and facilitators of neoliberalism. These include struggles against GMOs, climate change, agro toxics or pesticides, land grabbing, dumping, loss of biodiversity, migrant workers' exploitation, WTO's free trade pact and forms of violence against women that result from the TNC's agenda of profit maximization at the expense of the interests of the people and the planet. Thus, the defeat of TNCs will resolve the bulk of the ills currently faced by peasants in all the corners of the world.

A number of events and activities (World Social Forum; Bali WTO, SADC Summit, April 17 mobilisations all around the world etc) were organized in struggle against increased transnational corporate control through commodification of nature and its services. The activities entailed creating wider awareness within the broader network of the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), scholars, activists and grassroots of the ways TNCs' actions affect rural women, youth, small holder farmers and peasants. This was done by preparing and posting various press releases and demands in the form of declarations to policymakers with our advocacy and lobby actions for change in policies which marginalize and affect the majority poor peasants.

Activities such as conferences (Europe, Mozambique), seminars and people's tribunals together with street demonstrations and protests were able to detain land grabs (e.g. Prosavanna land grabs in Mozambique, land grabs in Mali, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, and elsewhere). The fight against policies which promote the use and trade of GMOs at the international and regional levels not only brought the issue to the doorstep of policymakers but also strengthened and energized regional solidarity among various movements.

The protests and demonstrations also informed the wider population of issues of contention alerting the world of Civil Society Organisations and activists to the opportunity for advocacy against TNCs. Moreover, the reasons for their participation (increased poverty, high unemployment, grabbing of basic means production such as land by the elites and foreign investors, etc) increased their determination to build a world informed by the real needs of the people and not in the interests of the Transnational Corporations. Progressive CSOs, scholars and activists were called upon to mobilize and suggest alternatives that put the interests of people first so as to regain their sovereignty over their food, livelihoods and democracy. An example, of a great victory of both peasant movement and citizens against TNCs was the [law adopted by the government of El Salvador](#) to control the use of pesticides and fertilizers in agriculture.



In December we mobilized in the streets of Bali, Indonesia against the World Trade Organisation (WTO) tentative to revive itself

In December we mobilized and protested in the streets of Bali, Indonesia against the World Trade Organisation (WTO), a failed and delegitimized institution desperately trying to revive itself with a “Bali Package” at the expense of food sovereignty, livelihoods, jobs, and the future of the people. However, our calls fell on deaf ears as the ministerial WTO meeting agreed to a legally binding agreement on *Trade Facilitation* and a *Peace Clause* that jeopardizes the right to food. This proved that the WTO only represents the developed countries and their TNCs by pushing for free trade rules which benefit the rich and widen wealth inequality. During the Bali WTO meeting, La Via Campesina and its ally, Social Movements for an Alternative Asia (SMAA), held a commemoration of the Korean farmer Lee Kyung Hae who stabbed himself to death in protest against the WTO during its 5th ministerial in Cancun in 2003. This reminded the world and the WTO delegates that the institution kills farmers and it must be stopped.

Our struggles to defeat TNCs included different interventions on responsible investment at the UN level. In the UN Committee on Food Security (CFS) the *consultation on investment* to prepare “Principles for responsible investment” started in 2013. This was a tough battle as big investors and land grabbers were pushing hard to get weak principles adopted that would allow further land grabbing. For us it was an important struggle to keep this process from being “taken over” by corporate sector interests, but rather for the consultation to focus on investment by and for peasants and small farmers. We participated in three meetings of the Open Ended Governmental Working Group held in Rome in

January, May and June. Our participation entailed engaging in intense negotiations on the contents of the consultation (the so called “outline”) and the first “Zero” draft of the “Principles for responsible investment”. In the second meeting, we were successful in pushing back private sector interests and being able to reintroduce part of our content back into the consultation and a new “[Zero draft](#)” was prepared. In September we participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> Open Ended Governmental Working Group that discussed the Zero draft.

Another important result was the publication of a [report](#) by researchers for the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) of the CFS. A good team of researchers with Mamadou Goita and Jan Douwe van der Ploeg, wrote a report that expressed our concerns that constituted an important support for our agenda on land issues. In the months before the CFS plenary in October we advocated forcefully and participated in the formulation of a proposal on investments, based on the abovementioned HLPE report, to be adopted by the governments. We were able successfully influence the process and the final proposal that was presented to the governments was strongly in favor of investment for and by small farmers. This proposal was adopted by the governments in October. This was an important success as the proposal will serve as a “political reference” for the consultation on investment as well as for the work of the Rome based UN-Agencies (FAO, IFAD, WFP, CGIAR).

In November, the European Coordination of the Via Campesina (ECVC) organized an event on Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) between the EU and Canada, the EU and Morocco, the USA and the Pacific, and the EU and the USA. The event was attended by about 20 farmers from different countries (India, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Argentina, the United States, Mali, Morocco, Italy, France, Croatia, Romania, Spain and Norway). They participated in the discussions to build a common vision and strategy on these trade agreements, and to deepen our understanding of their impacts on small-farmers across the globe.

Throughout the year, we participated in the TNC Campaign coordinated by TNI, together with our allies ,Friends of the Earth International (FOEI) and Corporate European Observatory (CEO), bringing in the investment issue. The Peoples Treaty is one of the central instruments of the campaign. Besides this the campaign has mobilized on investment issues, FTAs, UN corporate capture etc. An important meeting on investment took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April where government representatives from Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, St. Vincent and Grenadine, Venezuela, Argentina, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico met in Guayaquil (Ecuador). They came together for the 1<sup>st</sup> Ministerial Meeting of the Latin American States affected by transnational interests.

Some of our member organizations have close contacts with some of these governments and have been lobbying around this event. The key result was a

**declaration** where they laid out how to work on this issue. Through the campaign a **joint statement** was published.

## **B1.2 Sustainable peasant agriculture: our right to life**

The defense and strengthening of the peasant production model, which broadly covers access to land, seeds, water, local markets and the rights of peasants and rural workers is central to ensuring food sovereignty and reversing climate change. This production model based on agroecological principles can, if adopted by national governments and international institutions, feed and cool the world. Campaigns and struggles for peasant farming in La Via Campesina are core to addressing a number of challenges currently affecting the world. These challenges are interlinked and are tied to the transnational corporations' (TNCs) greed for profit at the expense of the interests of the people and Mother Earth. These include the food crisis, the ecological/climate crisis and threats posed by industrial agricultural production methods, which rely heavily on fossil fuels and derived chemicals. The struggles for food sovereignty and the need to reverse climate change through promotion of agroecological principles and practices are thus paramount.

Specific activities collectively undertaken by La Via Campesina and member organizations with the support of the international movement are summarized below. The activities include campaigns, participating in demonstrations, dissemination of declarations (at times jointly with allies), press releases and other varied media work such as the preparing video clips, etc.

### ***Agroecology***

Among the major activities of LVC on agroecology and peasants seeds during 2013, were the following:

- *Peasant Agroecology Schools*: LVC has some 40 peasant agroecology training schools in the Americas, Asia, Africa and Europe. 2013 saw steps taken toward launching new schools in Mali, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Niger, India, Colombia, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Chile. Some of these offer formal education (high school, technical college or university level) to the daughters and sons (the youth) of peasant families, while others offer specialized short training courses for members of peasant families who wish to farm ecologically.
- At the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference of LVC held in Jakarta in June 2013, we built and hosted an Agroecology Village and re-launched our campaign on "Seeds: Patrimony of Rural Peoples in the Service of Humanity". The Village showcased many successful processes of ecological food production mostly based on peasant seed systems of LVC organizations in all continents. The re-launching of the seeds campaign emphasized the strengthening of local peasant seed systems that conserve, recover, cross and select, multiply and

share traditional crop varieties, highlighting the role of women. For these events and for the entire VI conference, we produced several publications on agroecology and seeds. (see the lists of publication in media and communication section)



At the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference of LVC held in Jakarta in June, we built and hosted an Agroecology Village

- *Agroecology and Seeds Exchange to Cuba*: In November more than 40 delegates from LVC in the Americas, Africa and Europe attended the IV International Encounter of the "Campesino to Campesino" Agroecology Movement, hosted in Cuba by LVC and the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP). Of those, 33 stayed on for a special course on Campesino to Campesino methodology. The participants selected were women and men directly involved in creating new peasant agroecology schools and/or directly involved in on-the-ground processes on agroecology and peasant seeds. We believe this will prove to be some of the most successful and important training activities that LVC has ever carried out, because of the quality of the training combined with the opportunity to visit many farms, and because the participants are people who will have the ability to directly implement what they learned.

- In Guatemala, women of CONIC, met in May to share their experiences with sustainable peasant agriculture ([guatemala-mujeres-motoras-de-un-proyecto-de-vida-agricultura-sostenible](#)).
- The mobilizations organized all around the world for October 16, where we reaffirmed that it is only possible to end the global food crisis and hunger through food sovereignty and agro-ecological production

### ***Small-farmers cool down the Earth***

In March, together with other allies we issued a [strong call](#) to join the Climate space during the World Social Forum in Tunis. The resistance to REDD was one of the central issues and is part of the final declaration "[To Reclaim Our Future, We Must Change the Present: Our Proposal for Changing the System and not the Climate](#)". In November we published our position with ETC and GRAIN: [Climate Summit: don't turn farmers into 'climate smart' carbon traders!](#)

During the COP19 of the UNFCCC (UN Climate Conference) in Warsaw we protested against the EU policies on carbon markets with a [statement: Stop the Corporate take over and expansion of carbon markets now!](#) signed by La Via Campesina and 155 other organizations. We issued a press declaration with allies that was widely re-posted and picked up by the media. The press release, titled: "[Yet another UN report calls for support to peasant farming and agroecology: it's time for action](#)" highlighted the UNCTAD findings which call for governments to "scale-up" agroecological practices and small-holder farming.

### **B1.3 Biodiversity and genetic resources (including seed campaign)**

La Via Campesina envisions a world where small-scale and peasant farming will be a key solution to the global biodiversity crisis. Despite the various initiatives of international institutions that have the mandate to preserve the environment such as the CBD (biodiversity), the ITPGRFA (agricultural biodiversity) and UNFCCC (climate), transnational corporations have invested millions of dollars in media and direct lobby campaigns to move towards further privatization, thus destroying peasant communities. La Via Campesina continues to campaign and struggle for biodiversity by defending peasant and indigenous territories, and opposing privatizations and land deals for agro-fuels and monoculture production. Moreover, we fight to defend the rights of the farmers to their seeds and to struggle against GMOs.

#### **B1.3.1 Campaigns and struggles for traditional and indigenous seeds**

A key facet of the seeds campaign of La Via Campesina is to oppose the use of industrially produced seeds and to promote the recognition and use of indigenous seeds, including the right to seed exchanges among farmers. Under this campaign we have undertaken the following activities:



Seed exchange organized during African seed event in Harare, Zimbabwe in November, 12-14<sup>th</sup>

- *“Reform” the seed regulations pushed by the European Commission:* We have developed a counter proposal in the form of a [working document](#) that has been sent to all the interested parties of the Commission, as well as to half of the Members of the European Parliament. We had a meeting with Ladislav Miko (DG SANCO Directorate General for health and Consumers–European Commission) to further discuss this issue. The European Parliament published a report, completely controlled by the agribusiness and biotech seeds industry, which we denounced in an [open-letter](#) to the CEO and a coalition of organizations. In addition, we published [a release](#) on this issue.
- *The 39<sup>th</sup> session CFS-FAO:* We had a delegation composed of African, European, and American delegates to the CFS in Rome. Delegates participated in several cross-sectoral meetings of CSOs, strategizing on seeds and agroecology related to the political agenda in Rome for the Year of Family Farming, and beyond. The delegation held a press conference parallel to the State of the World Report released by the FAO. Our delegation highlighted the positive impacts of peasant seeds and agroecology, as opposed to the corporate proposed alternatives (including “climate smart” agriculture, GMOs, AGRA, etc).
- In September 2013, a delegation from La Vía Campesina participated in the fifth Session of the Governing Body of the UN Seed Treaty in Muscat, Oman where a [resolution was adopted](#) by the governments that is more favorable

to the demands of La Vía Campesina and its allies. The resolution supports a stronger and more direct participation of peasant organizations in its work and an impact study conducted by farmer organizations on farmers' rights was requested. The resolution was adopted as a result of effective lobbying by LVC delegates which led to concerted pressure by regional groups of countries from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, and several Asian countries despite opposition from a group of States typically representing the powerful seed lobby. We organized a [side event](#) with our allies in the IPC network to give high visibility to the issue of peasant seeds.

- Also in September 2013, CONAMURI in Paraguay hosted a seminar on seeds dedicated to women ([paraguay-mujeres-rurales-abordan-la-problematica-de-las-semillas-en-el-marco-de-un-seminario](#))
- We worked and published a booklet on seeds called "[Our seeds, our future](#)" which was launched during our 6<sup>th</sup> Conference. This publication was promoted in the media at the time of the [Seed Treaty meeting](#) in Oman in September as well as in Zimbabwe [by organizing a press conference](#). The booklet was reprinted and used during the African seed event ([African meeting](#)) in Harare, Zimbabwe in November, 12-14<sup>th</sup> on seed initiatives. In this meeting a work plan was developed and agreed upon, including a peasant seeds program at the LVC agroecology school located in Zimbabwe. This program will benefit from the documentation and dissemination of ongoing successful cases already being carried out in Africa, including in Mozambique where collective fields of peasant seed varieties cultivated by the organization have facilitated capacity building and provided a seed for crop for over 200 peasant farmers.
- We also contributed with a chapter called "[Seeds and peasants autonomy](#)" in the book "Alternatives and Resistance to Policies that Generate Hunger". Another article on seeds was also posted in a mainstream media outlet: [via-campesina-fights-for-seeds](#) with the help of and collaborative work with a professional journalist.
- In March, during the World Social Forum in Tunis, we organized a [workshop on peasant's seeds](#) that was very well attended, even by the French minister of cooperation, Pascal Canfin. In order to stimulate the creation of further farmers' seeds networks for the exchange of seeds, we [met for 4 days in the South of France](#) (Gaillac), with around 60 participants from all over Europe.
- In Brazil, the MPA, a movement of small farmers developed its "[National Plan for local seeds](#)" intended to inform and provide conditions, and technical elements for the implementation of its strategy on native seeds. It developed a [co-operation with UNAC](#) in Mozambique as a South-South solidarity initiative to share knowledge on food sovereignty related to propagating indigenous seeds.
- In [Chile](#) our organizations mobilized against the new seed law. On the 17-18<sup>th</sup> of October a similar gathering took place in Paraguay with farmer representatives of La Via Campesina and GRAIN, ETCgroup and Friends of

the Earth.

- In France after [lobby work](#) and [actions](#) by the “Peasant Seed Network” and the Confederation Paysanne-member of La Via Campesina, a law was passed that allows farmers to save their seeds without paying taxes.

### B1.3.2 Campaigns and struggles against GMOs

The importance of peasant seeds and agroecology as a form of resistance, within the context of new proposals for the “green economy” and a new “green revolution” in Africa, became ever more apparent in 2013. In partial testament to this, many governments and institutions are beginning to use the language of agroecology and even food sovereignty in their proposals to shift toward a more sustainable model. There was also an international wave of mobilizations to stop the spread of



GMOs in many countries. Public pressure, led by peasant organizations and other social movements, led to victories halting (if only temporarily) pro-GMO legislation in many countries (i.e. Brazil, Mexico, the U.S., Zimbabwe, Chile, Columbia).

“No to GMO corn. Monsanto out! Food sovereignty now!”  
Poster of the action organized in January 2013, against the entrance of GMO corn in Mexico

Many of these countries have already experienced the how GMOs can have a damaging impact on biodiversity and food sovereignty GMOs. These experiences lead peasant movements to demand support for the

amplification of peasant seed systems and agro-ecology, which they know can provide real solutions to the climate, environmental and hunger crises. Some of the struggles and campaigns against GMOs are as follows:

1. In France the Confederation Paysanne conducted a “peasant investigation” of Monsanto offices and fields for GMOs, organized an action against GMOs, and published their position.
2. [Uniterre](#), LVC member in Switzerland protested against a revision of the law that would favor TNCs and GMOs.
3. In Brazil our member organizations [won a battle against Monsanto](#) in court on a complaint put forward against them.
4. A very important action took place in Mexico where our farmers from LVC-member UNORCA protested against the entrance of GMO corn through a hunger strike and mobilization. See the video on the rally [here](#).

5. In Thailand our member organization [the Assembly of the Poor](#) organized a gathering to defend the freedom of seeds against Thai-EU FTA talks.
6. The seed issue was also a key in the mobilization of [Indian farmers' organizations](#) of La Via Campesina against the EU-India FTA.
7. We also have started a close collaboration with GRAIN and ETC group in order to generate more releases and reports on this issue to the media.

## **B1.4 The Rights of Peasants**

### **B1.4.1 UN declaration on the rights of peasants and rural working people**

This process is entering a crucial phase of negotiations leading up to a final submission of the draft of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants to the governments. From 15 to 19<sup>th</sup> of July 2013, we participated in the first "[Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group](#)" (IWG) on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas" in Geneva. Our European member organizations made a [contribution](#) to this Working Group. Henry Saragih, then General Coordinator of La Via Campesina, also gave a [statement](#) in the plenary of the Working Group. Bolivia is sponsoring the Open Ended Intergovernmental Working Group at the organizational and political level together with other governments in the core group such as South Africa, Ecuador and Cuba. La Via Campesina has good relations with some of these governments and this has helped the movement to keep the process on track. This Working Group has a mandate to negotiate, finalize and submit a draft for the United Nations declaration on the rights of peasants and rural peoples. Some of the [relevant documents](#) of this process are available on our website.

In relation to the first Intergovernmental Working Group in Geneva we lobbied national governments to support our proposal. In Europe, La Via Campesina has focused its advocacy on key countries that voted against the resolution such as Italy, Germany, France and Spain. These countries are important decision-makers in the region and we need to lobby at the national level in addition to the European/ regional level to make our lobbying more efficient and effective. Other countries such as Norway and Switzerland abstained, but we will continue to lobby them given their important role on Human Rights issues.

We also had an important [hearing](#) with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States in Washington on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October where we presented the issue of peasant rights. [Diego Monton](#), leader of Latin American Coordination of Peasant Organizations CLOC-La Via Campesina spoke in the plenary of this body. We also worked with Christoph Golay and other academics on [academic articles](#) on the rights of peasants to promote the notion that States must negotiate on human rights issues. These articles highlighted critical aspects and debates within the rights of peasants' initiative, such as the:

- 1) Importance of peasants, including their positive contribution to food security, the fight against climate change and the conservation of biodiversity;
- 2) Situation of human rights in rural areas, in particular in terms of discrimination, poverty and hunger;
- 3) Need for a UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other People Working in Rural Areas.

To support this work we published a [special issue of the Nyeleni newsletter](#). In addition to La Via Campesina, our close allies Foodfirst Information and Action Network (FIAN) and Centre Europe Tiers-Monde (CETIM) are involved in this process. Other organizations involved in this work in 2013 are Revista Soberanía Alimentaria, Biodiversidad y Culturas, African Network on the Right to Food, Habitat International Coalition Latin American Regional Office (HIC-AL), International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), World Forum of Fish Workers and Fish Harvesters (WFF), and HelpAge International.

#### **B1.4.2 Agrarian reform and struggles against land grabbing**



March 2013, World Social Forum, Tunis, we took part to the big march opening the WSF and denounced impacts of Land Grabbing on Farmers.

The Campaign for Agrarian Reform emerged in the early 1990s and in 1996 we issued a declaration acknowledging that land and agrarian reform contribute to the solution to poverty during the FAO-organized World Food Summit in Rome. Following this FIAN International organized a global campaign aiming at 3 goals : (1) to accompany the processes of struggle for agrarian reform at the global level;

(2) to permanently denounce violations against peasants and (3) lastly to politically influence governments and international organizations to change policies in favor of peasants. La Via Campesina then constituted an international commission on agrarian reform, which is a group of allies including LRAN, Focus on the Global South and FIAN to work on the issue.

As we continue our work on this issue and promote inclusive land reform processes, we see a new dimension of the conflict in the field, and have identified a need to strategically rethink this issue in relation to food sovereignty. This year, we worked on a dossier that was approved by IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) in December in order to develop trainings in different countries in 2014 on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests.

Moreover, in order to highlight land grabbing, this year's celebrations of the International Day of Peasant Struggles (on April 17), we mobilized actions all around the world against land grabbing and the commodification of nature. A [map](#) with all these activities is available on our website.

To achieve our campaign goals, we must transcend the narrow framing of agrarian reform and call for an all-encompassing reform and avoid cases like Bolivia and Venezuela where poverty continues, despite the implementation of official Agrarian Reforms. We need to change the whole system, delink from the market and institute a proper foundation for food sovereignty. We want the rights of access and usufruct for the landless, pastoralists, women, youth, Dalits, Afrodescendent and Indigenous peoples.

As observed in the case of Paraguay, where land reform led to the destitution of President Lugo, only the power of Agrarian Reform can undergird resistance to the neoliberal system and surpass it. So, fighting against land grabbing is important, but above all we need to push for Agrarian Reform, with peasants' interests at the center, emphasizing land and territory as community rights or commons. Finally, Agrarian Reform is also a struggle against militarization which seeks to protect and keep peasants off lands from land grabbed by profit seeking corporations by force.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Link</b>
Media release	Argentina: a family was expelled by a violent police operation in the province of Cordoba		<a href="#">Click here</a>
Media release	21 <sup>st</sup> of March another expulsion of families from their lands took place in the South of the country Honduras		<a href="#">Click here</a>
Media release	Honduras 17 of February around 1,500 families began a process to retake their land that was taken from them in March 2013 by a public institution: the National Agrarian Institute		<a href="#">Click here</a>
Press release to stop slavery and respect farmworkers and call to government for land reform	A press release on farmworkers' strike in South Africa. These strikes are also the result of the government's failure to implement land reform in South Africa as the 30 per cent of land distribution that was promised by 2015 is very far from being implemented	February	<a href="#">Click here</a>
Media release on street protest against land grabs	People's movements and large farmers' unions in India came together to defend land rights and protect farm livelihoods. Thousands of farmers slept in the open on Parliament Street in protest against the government's decision to ignore them.	March	<a href="#">Click here</a>

Bulletin	Summary of findings on women's poor access to land in Central America issued by CLOC-Via Campesina. The bulletin was used to mobilize and demand that governments' comply with national and international laws guaranteeing individual and collective rights, including the right to land and the cessation of all forms violence against women	March	<a href="#">Click here</a>
A solidarity call against families evicted from their lands	Guatemala, more than 100,000 signatories defended expelled families from Polochi Valley. This action of solidarity with the 769 q'eqchi families expelled from their land in a violent way in March 2011	April	<a href="#">Click here</a>
Call for action and actions	More than hundreds of activities all around the world to denounce land grabbing and commodification of nature	April	
Join statement	A joint statement was issued by FOEI, LVC, WMW, CEO calling an end to land grabs in Hungary	April	<a href="#">Click here</a>
Open letter to the Governor of Segou	Open letter from the Malian convergence against land grabbing. To denounce the expulsion of about 4,000 persons from their land and to ask the governor to take action to defend them	May	<a href="#">Click here</a>

Press release on agricultural workers struggle	In Spain agricultural workers struggle to defend land and dignity. Three new land occupations in Southern Spain (Andalucia) in Las Turquillas (Sevilla), La Rueda (Jaén) and Lebrija (Sevilla). Also highlighted was a new type of struggle: a greenhouse occupation by migrant workers after it was given up by its owner. The land occupation in Somontes (Córdoba) continues and SOC launched a campaign of protests and actions against privatization of public land in Andalusia and in favor of a law to defend the agrarian patrimony of Andalusia	May	<a href="#">Click here</a>
Publication	Report published by our allies TNI/ECVC and Hand Off the Land network in Europe on <i>Land concentration, land grabbing and people's struggles in Europe</i> in June 2013,	June	<a href="#">Click here</a>
Conference	Conference on Land issues in Europe organized by European Coordination Via Campesina	June	To view program <a href="#">click here</a> ; the report <a href="#">Click here</a>
Mass mobilization in France	Mass mobilization to defend rural areas against the building of a big airport near Nantes	July	
Press release on publication of a report on extent of land grabs	A report detailing the extent of the Tanzania land grabs and how these investments will disadvantage thousands of smallholder farmers	September	<a href="#">Click here</a>

Media release on Prosavanna project and solidarity visit to Mozambique	In Mozambique, a large scale land grab is underway, and is set to displace millions of peasants to pave way for export production. The Prosavanna project is an investment project of developed countries such as Japan, Brazil etc. A representative of the MST visited the country and issued a warning to peasants to stand guard or risk losing their land.	October	<a href="#">Click here</a> for more on Prosavanna project <a href="#">click here</a>
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To achieve our goals for Agrarian Reform, during our 6th International Conference in Jakarta, the Committee for Agrarian Reform made the following recommendations:

- Reaffirm Agrarian Reform as a necessity for humanity, as an ideological counter offensive, and as an initiative to defend territories.
- Defend the social and environmental functions of land, Agrarian Reform for all.
- Agrarian Reform should include cessation of land grabbing; reaffirming the Dakar Appeal. We are documenting several cases.
- We have to disseminate this work more, and also make clear that the Voluntary Guidelines are part of the ICCARD process, and not an end in itself.
- The slogan of the CGRA was land and freedom (Zapata and Villa), and we had the support of FIAN and LRAN. Now we need more outreach to other continents (Africa, Asia also), also with youth. And open the doors to the allies through several activities, such as the conflicts Observatory (pilot project in Latin America). We also have to raise the issue of Agrarian Reform in Europe and North America.
- April 17 must be made more visible, also with allies.
- We are mapping major land conflicts (Latin America, then Africa, Asia)
- Link with rural schools: 40 agro-ecology schools exists
- Agrarian Reform ensures the coexistence of rural populations, but also of urban populations, consumers, people who suffer from military occupation and mining. Only Agrarian Reform can get us out of poverty and make possible another way of life in the countryside. We must face land grabbing, but the backbone of La Via Campesina remains Agrarian Reform.
- Make more visible our successes on the campaign for Agrarian Reform.

Various activities undertaken to achieve the goals of struggle for Agrarian Reform are as follows:

### **B1.4.3 Campaign to End Violence Against Women**

Understanding that violence against women is structural, i.e. embedded in the neoliberal, patriarchal society, is crucial. This makes the commitments, such as strengthening women's struggle for emancipation, gender equality and participation in all seats of power, a worthy fight.

This entails advocating and pressuring governments to implement their international commitments to end discrimination against women; and demanding that every country have an action plan to stop violence against women. During our last international conference in Jakarta, a powerful *mística* dedicated to Maria do Fetal highlighted this issue. Maria, a devoted women's rights activist from the Movimento Sem Terra Brazil was strangled to death by her partner in early 2013.



Postcards were developed and posted on ViacampesinaTV for the International Day to End 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. This is regarded as a key foundation to the movement's efforts to build new gender and social relations toward a desired future. La Via Campesina is 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 to End Violence Against Women) and the media to raise awareness on violence against women. More issues and activities are presented under the Women's Articulation section.

However, we highlight a few specific activities of this campaign below:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Link</b>
Press release in memory and honour of Maria Do Fetal	Maria Do Fetal was fatally strangled by her husband in January 2013.	January	<a href="#">Click here</a>
Press release on women suffering through land dispossessions	Guatemala, press release against women suffering expulsion from their land, harassment etc).	March	<a href="#">Click here</a>
A call for mobilisation	A call issued to mobilize and campaign against violence against women	November	<a href="#">Click here</a>
Campaign post cards developed and distributed	A set of postcards developed for the campaigns and posted on ViacampesinaTv	November	<a href="#">Click here</a>
ANAMURI denounce violence against women, a media release	In Chile, ANAMURI denounce the violence against women provoked by Monsanto and its attacks against biodiversity	November	<a href="#">Click here</a>
A call by CLOC women fight against violence	Ecuador: call from the women of CLOC-Via Campesina against violence against women	November	<a href="#">Click here</a>
Press release on CONAMURI women celebrations against violence	Paraguay, 6th meeting of indigenous women of CONAMURI organized on November 25 to celebrate day against violence against women	November	<a href="#">Click here</a>

#### **B1.4.4 Criminalization of peasants' rights**

As the global crisis deepens, the State, particularly through its security apparatus and judiciary, is tirelessly working on ways to criminalize any action undertaken by peasants hinder or block “development and investment”. The powerful nations, working with national elites and corrupt state officials, have stepped up persecution of any organized resistance by social movements particularly targeting the leadership. The war on terrorism has given credence to military occupations such as in the Middle East, Palestine, some parts of Latin America and Asia, and Western Sahara. The realignment of global powers and the rise of new economic powers such as Brazil, China, India and South Africa (BRICS) underpin the current

rush for resources. As this happens millions of peasants are displaced to make way for large scale mining, infrastructure, industrial and agricultural mega-projects. For most peasants migrating to urban areas in search of employment represents the only viable option to survive, but once there, they are condemned to scavenging dumpsites and bins as unemployment bites. Their traditions and culture are lost, while their legitimate struggle to defend themselves and their traditional seeds is often criminalized by the State. Peasants are sometimes harassed, some killed (for example in Brazil, Paraguay, Colombia, Honduras and Ecuador leaders of peasant organizations have been the main target) or put into jail as the following links show:

- [Peasants' rights at Organization of American States](#)
- [CLOC Via Campesina Central America denounces the increase in murders and persecution for defending life](#)
- [Paraguay: support to the victims of the Marina Kue slaughter](#)
- [Asesinan a dos campesinos en Ecuador:](#) (Two farmers in Ecuador were killed)
- [Colombia: Asesinan a dirigente del CNA](#) (One leader from CNA was murdered)
- [Brasil: Asesinato de Líder Quilombola en Pará](#) (one leader from Quilombola, in Para was killed).
- [Brésil: Regina dos Santos Pinho, leader of MST found dead](#)
- [Brazil, landless leader violently murdered in Rio de Janeiro](#)

In solidarity with, and support for, our member organizations, the Honduran Peasant movement, in Honduras La Vía Campesina sent delegates ([La Vía Campesina as international observer of the electoral process](#)) to join other national and international election observers to monitor the elections held on November 24. The peasants and civil society in that country have suffered various forms of violence including assassinations since the Coup d'état in 2009 as they struggled for land.

## **B1.5 Migration**

Migration is a critical and important crosscutting issue and area of work for La Via Campesina. It is the site of struggle in which all of humanity's separate issues intersect – labor and human rights, gender issues, climate, and many more. It is more importantly the nexus between the peasant and the wage laborer, both rural and urban. Currently, over 300 million people are living outside of their countries of birth, and about 120 million people are repressed, exploited, and criminalized within host countries. To add to this group are about 700 million internally displaced people forced out of the countryside into urban areas in search of employment. As more people lose land, they, especially men, are left with no choice but to seek low wage jobs in the cities, leaving behind, farming communities composed of 70 to 90% women, children and elderly people.

Migration has thus fuelled confrontations between workers and xenophobic tendencies across the globe, particularly now when the crisis of capitalism is deepening and giving birth to multiple crises. The crises also have exacerbated migratory flows. In an attempt to bail out capitalism, the political discourse of sustainable development at international and national institutions, such as the United Nations, and the ongoing promotion of the “green revolution” via the FAO, have increased migratory flows. During the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Jakarta, La Via Campesina formulated the following lines of action to combat issues of migration:

- Unity of action: La Vía Campesina is a coordination space among rural workers, immigrants, peasants and indigenous peoples based on the framework of food sovereignty.
- Coordination among organizations of the originating and receiving countries of migrants.
- Convention on Peasants Rights: including rural workers (peasants from the south who are expelled, and peasants without land) in Vía Campesina’s proposal for the International Convention of Peasants’ Rights.
- Struggle for the full ratification of the international conventions (UN and ILO) that protect the rights of migrants and workers in general.
- Social and labor rights: Issue a joint letter concerning rural workers’ rights to the ILO and the International Organization of Migration.
- International coordination: In collaboration with other organizations and networks, establish a space to work on the themes of separation and border walls, and migratory displacement
- Support the international mobilization for the rights of migrants on the 18th of December.
- Strengthen the functioning mechanisms of the commission of migration

The movement undertook the following activities during 2013 to fight and struggle for migrant issues.

#### Activities in 2013 on migration

Activity	Venue/ where	Date/ when	hyperlink
1)Seminar on social consequences of the industrialization of agriculture with testimonies from SOC of Andalusia	Berne, Switzerland	February	<a href="#">Click here</a>

2) Participated in the World Social Forum (WSF) and presented on "Migrations from the peasants' eyes"	Tunis	March	<a href="#">Click here</a>
3) La via Campesina joined the planning committee of the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR) and the (in full) GCM to organize a major demonstration held during the United Nations' High-Level Dialogue on the Rights of Migrants	New York City	September	
4) Explorative mission of Confederation Paysanne to document and denounce bad working conditions of agricultural workers coming from Africa to work in fruits and vegetables farms	Italy and Germany	September	

## B2. Womens' Articulation

The women of La Via Campesina have actively been working to strengthen their struggles and campaigns within the movement. More importantly, they have managed to forge a strong vision of anti-capitalist and anti-patriarchal struggles which are reflected in the [Manifesto](#) of the 5<sup>th</sup> Women's Assembly designed to help build alliances. The women's articulation has scaled up its Campaign to end Violence Against Women within the movement. Unfortunately the campaign gained even more importance as a result of the death of Maria Do Fetal who was strangled by her husband in January 2013. The women's articulation has taken a more feminist stance in an effort to give visibility to its work and to the role of women and their desire for parity at all levels. Moreover, while celebrating the International Day to End Violence Against Women on November 25<sup>th</sup>, the LVC women firmly committed to make their role visible in building the movement, in struggles for food sovereignty, campaigns to end violence against women, and the construction of a new economic model of production and consumption. A [set of post cards](#) were developed and used in various campaigns during the International Day to end Violence Against Women.

Over 30 women attended a training ([malaysia-women-training-to-stop-violence-against-women](#)) at Serian, Srawak in Malaysia from February 23 to 26. The event

was organized to help participants to understand the situation of women in Malaysia and to explore ways on how to handle the cases of violence including implementing the campaign of La Via Campesina.



The women of La Via Campesina have actively been working to strengthen their struggles and campaigns within the movement.

La Via Campesina women joined other women's movements to celebrate the International Women's Day ([international-women-s-day-day-of-action-and-struggle](#)) on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March. Towards this day, they issued a call ([International Women's Day: Day of Action and Struggle!](#)) for women's organizations and allies to mobilize and engage in various activities in the struggle for women's rights, justice, and an end to gender discrimination. Various activities organized on this day were documented and posted on both the LVC website ([International Women's Day in pictures](#)) and ViaCampesinaTv. Most notably activities include the occupation of land near the Institute for Agrarian Reform (INCRA) by MST women ([brasil-mujeres-campesinas-ocupan-terreno](#)) in Brazil; In El Salvador, women organized and protested in front of the embassy of Honduras ([El Salvador, Mujeres protesta frente a la embajada del Honduras](#)) and in the Dominican Republic the women issued a press release ([republica-dominicana-por-la-equidad-e-igualdad-de-derechos-de-la-mujer-del-campo](#)) in solidarity with women's struggles around the world.

In March the women from Spain, Austria, Italy, Norway and Poland, and a La Via Campesina representative met in Lampai (Teo, Galicia) during the working group of European Coordination Via Campesina meeting. Besides reflecting on the issue of women ([europe-the-crisis-is-worsening-the-inequality-for-female-farmers](#)) and defining the lines of action for 2013 at a European level, they discussed and

prepared for the IV Women's Assembly. They also participated in demonstrations organized by feminist collectives.

Women from CLOC-Via Campesina Central America met ([encuentro-mujeres-cloc-via-campesina-centroamerica](#)) in April to prepare for their participation in the VIth conference. Women of all the regions of La Via Campesina organized and prepared themselves for the assembly.

Then, in June the LVC Women together with their Indonesian counterparts ([indonesia-women-farmers-of-the-world-head-to-their-iv-international-assembly](#)) joined hands in various deliberations of the IVth international assembly in Jakarta, Indonesia. During the conference, the women drafted their international manifesto ([women-of-via-campesina-international-manifesto](#)) which outlines three key areas of struggle and campaign to achieve gender parity: fighting for their rights and against neo-liberalism and patriarchy; fighting for access to land as a key right; and for food sovereignty with gender justice. An excerpt from a video on [Women-planting-struggles-and-hope](#) produced during the IV International Women Assembly held in Indonesia captures this urgency: *"We are women who share our stories and common struggles for life, land, our territories, food sovereignty, justice and dignity. We are women who share our own knowledge and experiences, because – much like seeds – we are certain that when shared, they are able to grow and multiply"*. Another [short video](#) on the women assembly was posted on ViaCampesina TV and Alba TV and was viewed many times.

Other activities of the womens' articulation include seminars on food sovereignty focusing on issues of poor nutritional quality of imported foods ([guatemala-women-commit-to-agro-ecology](#)). The event was held in October and hosted by CONAVIGUA (member of LVC) in Guatemala.

In Brazil, the MPA inaugurated its first national feminist school in April where more than 70 women from 15 states of Brazil met and discussed various women's struggles ([brasil-mpa-inicia-su-primera-escuela-nacional-feminista-en-luziania](#)).

### **B3. Youth Articulation**

The youth have been busy building their autonomy and changing their way of working to participate more effectively in the various struggles and campaigns of La Via Campesina. In June the youth held their 3rd International Assembly in Indonesia alongside the VIth conference. They discussed their struggle for autonomy within the movement and found ways to show their dynamism and commitment, and spoke of the need to strengthen their participation in LVC by being included in decision-making spaces.

The youth have been given space within the ICC after a long struggle for recognition and representation within the international coordination of the movement. Each continent will nominate a youth representative for a team of four youth who will be part of ICC.

They prepared and issued a declaration ([declaration-of-the-3rd-international-youth-assembly-of-the-via-campesina-2](#)) in support of food sovereignty based on agro-ecology and agrarian reform.



In Brazil, the Youth of LVC defend the rights of the farmers to their seeds and the struggle against GMOs.

Other activities undertaken are as follows:

- The youth participated in their respective regional meetings held in preparation for the III Youth assembly and the VIth conference in Jakarta, Indonesia. The Africa One meeting was held in February in Harare, Zimbabwe. During this event, the youth issued a solidarity message ([zimbabwe-solidarity-message-for-our-brothers-and-sisters-in-mali](#)) to their brothers and sisters in Mali affected by war. The Youth of Cloc-Via Campesina Central America had their preparatory meeting in April.
- In 2013, more than 100 youth ([argentina-mas-de-100-jovenes-formandose-en-agroecologia](#)) attended the agroecology school in Quimili, Argentina. Besides learning more on agroecology, they also shared knowledge, experiences and cultures.
- The LVC youth around the world celebrated World Food Day on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October in many ways. In Indonesia the SPI, together with Youth Food Movement, organized during the celebration of the World Food Day a protest against the Indonesian government's pro-corporate policies ([indonesia-spi-and-youth-food-movement-celebrate-world-food-day-in-failry-deep-concern](#)). The youth in Japan celebrated the day by organizing a radio talk show to discuss sustainable food systems for food security and

nutrition on the internet ([japan-youth-activists-organize-a-radio-program-on-world-food-day](#)). In Argentina, more than 300 youth from Latin American countries participated in the 12th camp for the Youth of CLOC Via Campesina from October 11 to 16 in Jujuy. Besides engaging in their routine debates, they celebrated World Food Day by investigating ways of recovering desired values to build the movement and to fight against increased forced evictions, hunger and poverty ([argentina-xii-campamento-de-la-juventud-de-la-cloc-via-campesina](#)).

- In November, a national meeting ([guatemala-juventud-por-el-derecho-al-buen-vivir](#)) of Youth of CLOC Vía Campesina was held in Guatemala to learn more about strengthening the structure of youth organizations so that they contribute towards development at family, national and regional levels. They learned to analyze, discuss and debate the development model from the perspective of youth, as well as how to redefine the demands and advocacy strategies in different spaces in the search for comprehensive rural development.



## C. VI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

La Via Campesina held its VIth Conference in Jarkata, Indonesia from June 9 to 13, 2013. The event coincided with two significant moments of the movement: the 20th anniversary of the international Peasant Movement and the transition of the International Operative Secretariat (IOS) office to Africa, that was approved during the conference. The conference reflected on past work and on key outcomes of the various struggles, campaigns, engagements and mobilizations of the last four years (2008-2013). It also evaluated the work of the outgoing international coordination committee and charted a path to overcome the challenges facing the peasant movement.

In order to respond to such challenges, the movement recognized and acknowledged the need to train more leaders to participate in international level politics without compromising struggles at the local level. Moreover, La Via Campesina felt the need to strengthen itself to be able to respond with concrete solidarity actions to denounce the criminalization of movements in other areas. This includes among others fully integrating the women and youth in all its activities. Other important outcome of the VIth conference was the formulation of the strategic lines to move forward the struggles and campaigns of La Via Campesina (see box C.1).

### **Box C.1: Strategic lines of action, main campaigns and international days of action**

#### **Summary of Strategic Lines of Action for Coming Years: 2014 - 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, monocultures 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, Peasant Seeds and Agro-ecology

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 protect peasants 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 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 to slow 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.

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.

The report of the VIth conference is [available online](#).

## **D. LA VIA CAMPESINA COORDINATION/STRUCTURE**



### **D.1. Moving to Africa: IOS**

Following the decision of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Maputo in 2008 to move the International Operational Secretariat (IOS) to Africa in 2013, a process was started to identify a suitable location. After consultations in the two African regions, the African members of La Via Campesina proposed that the IOS be hosted by ZIMSOFF in Harare, Zimbabwe. This proposal was approved during the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference. The decision to move the IOS to Zimbabwe signaled the collective commitment to the struggles of our brothers and sisters in Africa and offered a great opportunity to strengthen and widen our networks of solidarity and struggle. In Africa many peasant and small-farmers' organizations, and others are fighting for the rights of peasant producers and for food sovereignty.

The move to Africa also marked a new change in the leadership of La Via Campesina. For the very first time, its International Coordination Committee (ICC) will be led by a woman from Africa. This brings a new style of leadership and energy to the movement. Moreover, it will also bring to the fore the issues and struggles of the African continent, a great necessity, given the increased interest of global capital through their various projects such as the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the current wave of massive land grabs for export production of agro-fuels among others.

### **D.2. Structure and ICC**

In 2013, the International Coordination Committee (ICC) held several meetings: One in April in Paris to prepare for the VI conference and, in Jakarta, just before and after the VI Conference in November at Harare in Zimbabwe.



In June, a new International Coordination Committee (ICC) was elected for the coming 4 year period (2013-2017)

A new International Coordination Committee (ICC) was elected for the coming 4 year period (2013-2017) during the 6<sup>th</sup> Conference in Jakarta. Of the 18 members (two representatives per region, a male and female and in some cases two women) eight new members were elected to replace those members whose term had come to an end. The committee is led by a General Coordinator, a woman, who is supported by a facilitation group. Within the ICC, a facilitation group was constituted to help to improve the organization of the committee's work and to better coordinate the activities of the movement. The facilitation group consists of the general coordinator and 4 ICC members drawn from each continent (2 men and 2 women). This group, however, does not have a representative role but collectively facilitates the processes for the whole ICC. The ICC will be responsible for overseeing the functioning of the movement, including decision making, ensuring the implementation of the agreed strategic lines of action and representing their members. The ICC members are also part of the working collectives which deepen the various areas of struggle and ensure their implementation.

It is worth mentioning that in June 2013 the ICC welcomed the proposal by the VI Conference to include four youth in the ICC, one per continent (not region). Their role will be to ensure the youth's voice is represented and its struggles implemented in the work of the movement. This is indeed a major victory for the Youth and brings new dynamism into the coordination committee of the movement. La Via Campesina is currently restructuring to allow the movement to deliver its mandate effectively and efficiently.

A tentative organization chart for the movement has been proposed.

### **D.3. Media and Communications**

To support its ideological struggle and promote various campaigns, La Via Campesina has worked to improve its visibility and content delivery in line with fast changing technology. This critical role of the international peasant movement is handled by a communicators' team. Their role is to ensure that most, if not all, of the activities are captured and disseminated in real-time using various media tools such as the Via Campesina website, social networks and mailing lists. This year, the team introduced "ViacampesinaTV" to capture and air videos of its activities and those of allies.

This team had an opportunity to strengthen its work when it met during the World Social Forum (WSF) in Tunis, Tunisia from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2013. It was the second time that communicators could meet to evaluate and plan their work including how to make better use of the various media tools such as Twitter, Facebook and other social networks. An important outcome of this meeting was a document on the plan of action for the coming years. The document was presented to and approved by the ICC during their meeting in Paris in April.

The communication work of the movement is made possible by another group of important people, the translators who volunteer to translate at various gatherings and also translate the print media into different languages. Without this group of dedicated men and women, the language diversity could have posed a serious hurdle to the movement's ideological struggle, campaigns and solidarity building.

Below we briefly highlight the various media tools and how they have been used.

#### **D3.1 La Via Campesina Website**

The website has been a key communication tool as it allows real-time dissemination of actions and activities of the La Via Campesina members and allies to all the corners of the world. It has been foundational in mobilization and building solidarity at the national, regional and international levels. Moreover, the website provides an interface with many people who follow the work of the peasant movement. It is published in three languages (English, French and Spanish). After the communicators meeting in Tunis, the decision was taken to decentralize the updating of the Spanish page in order to improve the relevance of the articles uploaded and the responses. We are currently restructuring our website according to suggestions from our members and allies.

For instance, from the 1st to 12th of June, we had almost 8,000 visitors on our website and more than 2,200 on our Via Campesina TV. These statistics are below the reality as they don't take into account the visitors that read the news or

watched the videos by means of others website. For instance, some videos from Via Campesina were also posted on ALBA TV website and also got more than 4,000 visits there.

### D3.2 Publications

A number of publications were prepared and are available electronically on the website (<http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/publications-mainmenu-30>) and some in print. In most cases, these publications are translated to other languages as shown in the table below.



A publication on land issue was launched during our 6<sup>th</sup> Conference in Jakarta, June 2013.

Title of publication	Language	Link
1) Land is Life	E, F, S	<a href="#">Click here</a>
1) Our Seeds, our future	E, F, S	<a href="#">Click here</a>
1) From Maputo to Jakarta, 5 years of Agro-ecology in La Via Campesina	E, F, S	<a href="#">Click here</a>
1) Organic farming at the Center stage in South East Asia	E	<a href="#">click here</a>
1) Agro-ecological revolution: The Farmer-to-Farmer Movement of the ANAP in Cuba	E, F, S	<a href="#">Click here</a>
1) Seeds and peasant autonomy	E	<a href="#">Click here</a>
1) Report on land grabbing in Europe	E, F, S	<a href="#">Click here</a>

Note: E- English; F- French and S- Spanish

Open Book ([viacampesina.org/downloads/pdf/openbooks/](http://viacampesina.org/downloads/pdf/openbooks/)) To celebrate and reflect the 20 year anniversary of La Via Campesina, an open book entitled "La Via

Campesina's Open Book: Celebrating 20 Years of Struggle and Hope" comprised of 15 chapters written by farmers, academicians, leaders, allies and staff. The contributors were invited to share their ideas on, and memories of, Via Campesina, including the history of farmers' struggles, current analysis and testimonies and the main challenges.

*Nyeleni Newsletter:* La Via Campesina continues to support the Nyeleni Newsletter, a collective publication of the Food Sovereignty movements. This support entails linking the Newsletter staff with potential resources and helping with administrative, fundraising and other tasks. La Via Campesina also assists in the distribution of the newsletter within its network including through the website. The newsletter staff took part in the communicators meeting in Tunis in order to make this tool better known and used within LVC. In March 2013, a special edition was released on [Food Sovereignty](#) and in June on [Rights and Repression](#). The latest edition was ready to be printed and distributed in July in Geneva during the first session of the Open-ended intergovernmental working group on a United Nations declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas in which LVC participated. In October, an edition was released on [small-holder agri-investments](#) to support our work in Rome during the UN Committee on World Food Security's (CFS) 40th session. We also released an edition on [People's struggle against WTO](#) focusing on the World Trade Organization meeting in Bali and also to mobilize social movements towards campaigning against its agenda.

### **D.3.3 TV and Video Work**

In March, LVC launched ViaCampesinaTv (<http://tv.viacampesina.org/?lang=en>) and many materials such as videos, audio/radio and pictures have been posted, classified according to issues related to our key struggles. The ViaCampesinaTv received favourable hits. In the month of June, 4,850 visitors viewed its contents. It was very useful during the World Social Forum in Tunis, and the VI conference. For April 17, we used it to live-stream conferences and activities which were taking place around the world. Many videos available on the website are in different languages (Spanish, French, English, German, Turkish, Arabic, Portuguese and Italian). We hope to develop this further to a major outreach instrument of our movement. Below are a few selected videos:

- LVC at World social Forum in Tunis: <http://tv.viacampesina.org/La-Via-Campesina-au-Forum-Social?lang=en>
- Women planting struggles and hope: <http://tv.viacampesina.org/Women-planting-struggles-and-hope?lang=en>
- IV women international assembly: <http://tv.viacampesina.org/IV-Asamblea-Internacional-de?lang=en>
- [Brasil, documental sobre el MST y la gran marcha de 2005](#) (video)
- Toda esta sangre en el Monte: <http://tv.viacampesina.org/Toda-esta-sangre-en-el-monte?lang=en>
- FECORACEN (Federación de Cooperativas de la Reforma Agraria Región

Central), member of LVC in El Salvador produced a video on the issue of “women and food sovereignty”. [mujeres-mainmenu-39?start=32](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mujeres-mainmenu-39?start=32)

### D.3.4 Social networks and lists

In our effort to reach and interact with our members, allies and other members of the society, La Via Campesina has been active on various social networks such as tweeter, facebook among others. We use our twitter and facebook account to promote special events like April 17, the World Social Forum, or to bring journalists to our events such as during the WTO Bali mobilization last December. We are developing our twitter (see [https://twitter.com/via\\_campesina](https://twitter.com/via_campesina)) and we have nearly 8,741 followers. Facebook is now the main entrance point for our website. We still use our public mailing lists as they are an efficient tool to reach more than 8,800 readers. Of these readers more than 4,500 persons are recipients on our English mailing list, about 3,000 on the Spanish list and more than 1,300 are on the French list by December 2013.

Newspaper	Title of article	Link
The Guardian	Land 'grabs' expand to Europe as big business blocks entry to farming (17 April)	<a href="#">Click here</a>
	World Social Forum begins with march through streets of Tunis (27 March)	<a href="#">Click here</a>
La Jornada	Contra el hambre, soberanía alimentaria (Hunger, food sovereignty) -27 January	<a href="#">Click here</a>
	La guerra del maíz (War of Maize) -26 January	<a href="#">Click here</a>
La Voz de Tenerife	on ECVC general meeting El futuro de la PAC en la UE se debate en Fuerteventura: “es hora de que los europeos retomen el control sobre sus sistema agrícola y alimentario frente a los intereses de la Organización Mundial del Comercio” (The future of the CAP in the EU debate on Fuerteventura: "It is time for Europeans regain control over their agriculture and food system against the interests of the World Trade Organization)	<a href="#">Click here</a>
Adital	Women activities at World Social Forum in Tunis	<a href="#">Click here</a>

### D3.5 La Via Campesina in mainstream media

Apart from reports published on our various media channels, La Via Campesina also organizes media briefings to disseminate its work through mainstream media. In 2013 a number of our 2013 activities were reported in mainstream media such as the The Guardian, La Jornada among others. Below are selected published articles:

The activities of the VIth international conference were reported by several media. The number of articles as follows: three in Jakarta Post-Indonesia, Huffington Post – US, The Guardian- UK, La Jornada – Mexico, El Pais – Spain; one in the New York Times, Cambio Politico de Bolivia, La Marea – Spain, Politis – France, Alai and EFE. In Indonesia about 26 articles were reported in the local, Bahasa Indonesian.

Most of the mainstream media articles particularly for the press clippings on World social Forum and the VI conference are available on request from the IOS.

## CONCLUSION

World-wide, peasants, pastoralists, fisher-folk and other small-scale family farmers produce 70% percent of the food consumed by humanity, despite the fact that peasants probably only hold a quarter of all farm land. Peasants, and especially peasant women, still feed today's world!

For 20 years, La Via Campesina has struggled to defend the rights of small scale family farmers, peasants, the landless, fisher folk, indigenous and afro-descendant farmers and pastoralists against the assault of neoliberal policies and corporate control of our food system. Our broken food system , that is based on industrial agricultural production controlled by corporations and not people, is attacking our peasant-based agriculture. Our movement defends a vision of a food system grounded in a diversified peasant-based production that honours the principles of food sovereignty and sustainable agro-ecological production models. This vision implies a change to the current development model that steals peoples' resources for the benefit of a few elite people. The challenge we face is huge as the balance of power is so uneven.

We have learned from history that change will not occur unless we fight for it ourselves. The fate of the peasants will not change until the peasants themselves change it.



European delegation at 6th international Conference. All member organizations reaffirmed the commitment to tackle the upcoming challenges.

Our future challenges and our responsibility, as capitalism clings for survival, is heavier and more complex than before, but with the cooperation and solidarity of our members and allies, La Via Campesina is ready to face them. The 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference held in June 2013 reaffirmed the commitment of all member organizations and our allies to tackle the upcoming challenges.

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](http://www.viacampesina.org)



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