REPORT
IV WOMEN’S ASSEMBLY OF LA VÍA CAMPESINA
JAKARTA – INDONESIA

SOWERS OF STRUGGLES AND HOPE,
FOR FEMINISM AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY!

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1. Introduction

We are women, and we have stories and struggles in common, struggles for life, land, territory, food sovereignty, justice, dignity; we are women who share our knowledge and experiences, because we are convinced that ideas, like seeds, grow and multiply when they are exchanged.

The struggle to build new gender relations in the 20 years since the existence of la Vía Campesina has demanded of us women two types of revolution: firstly, one which accepts that the patriarchal system and sexism have existed throughout history and which denounces capitalism and neo-liberal models as the main causes behind increasing discrimination and violence against us women. And secondly, another revolution, which analyses the problems of social relations within our movement, promotes our political participation and recognises the role we have played and the impact we have had on the historical construction of the Via Campesina.

And it was with that same strength and determination that drive our revolutions day after day, that rural women, weavers of struggle and hope, came from all over the world to Jakarta to inaugurate La Vía’s Campesina’s VI International Conference, in which we installed our IV International Women’s Assembly, which opened up a space for women where we could transmit our message through songs, poetry, theatre and dance, using the symbols and crafts of our cultures, in just one language, that of love and struggle, combined with a strong dose of mística and of collective construction throughout the entire process.

During our 4th Women’s Assembly we exchanged experiences that aimed to strengthen our organisation and expression: we discussed the capitalism crisis and its consequences for women; patriarchy; the campaign to stop violence against women; feminism and the challenges in constructing a peasant and working class feminism.

And that is how, after celebrating our IV Assembly, and acknowledging that we still have a long way to go, we share with you our reflections and discussions, so that, in the same way as our seeds expand in the ground, our organisations will also bear fruit to keep fuelling our struggle, in our Via Campesina. Together we are going to continue weaving the unity of our peoples, creating a resistant work of embroidery, of many colours, that reflect our diversity and our strength.

Planters of Struggles and Hopes,
For feminism and Food Sovereignty!
International Representation of LVC Women
**2. IV International Women’s Assembly of La Vía Campesina**

**Participants:**
Women actively struggling in Asian, European, African and American organisations.

**Opening Mística**
In the past 20 years we can see how we have moved forward, and say this was only made possible by the collective work of the organisations of Via Campesina, through the struggles and resistance of our people. We women feel proud of this achievement, since we've invested the best of ourselves in this great international movement that is writing another page in the history of peasant struggles in the world today.

The IV International Women’s Assembly of La Via Campesina involved the participation of more than 250 women from more than 150 organisations, representing 76 different countries.

We welcome our sisters from Africa 1, Africa 2, Europe, South East and South Eastern Asia, (especially our sisters from Indonesia, who welcomed us in their country) Central America, South America, North America, the Caribbean and we heartily welcome organisations from Australia, Pakistan and Palestine.

**Greetings to the IV International Women’s Assembly of La Via Campesina**

- **Yoon Geum Soom - South Korea - La Via Campesina South East and East Asia**

This is our IV Women’s Assembly of Via Campesina, since the first Assembly in Bangalore, India. We have taken enormous strides forward since then. And during this meeting we will discuss the resistance of peasant women against capitalism.

Women are the central part of this movement and we must unite to make it succeed, to put our discussions into perspective.

We thank the Union of Indonesian Peasants (SPI) for hosting this conference, and we hope it will be a huge success.

We also thank all the delegates from all continents for being here and building this IV Women’s Assembly. During this conference we hope to intensify our exchange with Asian women, as well as with all the other women. Likewise, we hope that you will enjoy your stay in Jakarta until the end of the VI International Conference of La Via Campesina.
Ms. Mudjiati - Minister of Women and Children in Indonesia

We welcome all the delegates who are here, peasant women of all organisations on an international level. First of all, thank you for being here in this wonderful place, for the IV International Women’s Assembly, with representatives from all over the world. We also thank the SPI, for hosting this IV Women’s Assembly. I have no doubt of the commitment and enthusiasm that all the delegates will bring to this assembly.

Thanks for your support and commitment. In Indonesia and throughout the world we need to focus on the welfare of society, and particularly on the welfare of women and children. Focusing on welfare involves improving the quality of resources and knowing how to use them.

The Indonesian Constitution states that equality is a right for the development of men and women. In Europe conventions that condemn violence and discrimination against women have been made.

Violence against women has been recognised in Indonesia since 2000, and a series of strategies have been put into practice to combat it and to achieve equality. The aim is for all the people of Indonesia to respect these efforts, given that gender equality is a right which must be acknowledged throughout the world.

Gender equality is linked to the quality of resources. According to statistics the female population in Indonesia is 50%, meaning half of the population, and 25% of the population of children. According to these same statistics, 70% of the population is rural. Of that 70%, 58% are women. It is therefore clear that peasant families have a strong influence on women’s development.

The participation of women in cultural, ethnic and family matters is crucial, since women in all parts of the world have improved their quality of life through development. However, the culture of patriarchy is an obstacle to full development. Any advances women have achieved are all their own work.

Often, when women live in poverty it affects the lives of their children. There are no exact statistics, but we know that there are many women who are suffering from racism, discrimination and rape, which are all problems experienced by women throughout the world.

Women’s poverty has a lot to do with tradition, religion, and the way women are treated in their communities. The development of peasant women is related to the development of the rural environment in general. Improvement of the rural economy has improved the cultural treatment of women. It is important to employ measures that address the needs of peasant women and men. We know the important role that women play in the process of peasant production, carrying out multiple tasks, in their homes, in production and much more.
The poverty of women in all countries is alarming. Macroeconomic policies must deal with this problem. In order for that to be possible, women must participate in agricultural life as equals. It is therefore vital to educate them, so they are included in all aspects of rural life. For example, it is, for me, a pleasure to see how SPI has helped peasant women in Indonesia gain access to land ownership. The work of SPI helps women worldwide on an international level.

The institution of peasants has strategic value as the driving force of countries, of sovereignty and of society. The greater the injustice we face, the more support we should give the women of peasant organisations.

We need the commitment of all peasant families to women and children, only then will we have a solution to the problems that peasants face. This women's assembly has an essential role. We need to define values and strategies in order for women to move forward.

I am confident that this IV Assembly will reach positive resolutions in order to enable women to achieve equality as a positive change in society that will help reduce poverty and encourage the participation of us women in the public and political life of our countries. It is not an easy task that lies ahead of us, so we must focus on what is occurring here in Indonesia.

- Ms. Lubaidah - leader of the SPI - North Sumatra

Long live women!
Thank you very much for being here. We thank all those present on this beautiful morning, and we thank the initiative of the SPI here in Indonesia.

Many of our colleagues have joined La Via Campesina in Indonesia. We women have achieved a lot during this time and have dedicated a lot of effort so that the women and men of the SPI can be a part of La Via Campesina. We have come from Sumatra and from various parts of Indonesia. We all have answered the call from La Via Campesina.

Welcome to the IV International Women’s Assembly. We are the mothers of food sovereignty, and if we work together food sovereignty will become a reality.

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Long live the women of La Via Campesina and food sovereignty!
Long live Indonesia! Long live women! All these women here together give us hope!
3. Women of La Via Campesina: Creating and occupying the spaces which are our right

Nettie Wiebe - National Union of Farmers of Canada - La Via Campesina North America

The 20th anniversary of La Via Campesina is a proud moment for celebrating many important things. It is an opportunity to reflect on some of the many struggles, victories, campaigns, successes, losses, joys and sorrows we have experienced worldwide, in our regions, in our countries, our organisations, our neighborhoods and in our own lives.

Over the two decades of its history, La Via Campesina has become one of the most dynamic, comprehensive and important movements in the world, encompassing an unprecedented diversity record while we struggle in solidarity for food sovereignty, social and political justice, and the protection of the Earth and life.

We women have been participants and key leaders in La Via Campesina. In fact, the role of women in La Via Campesina is part of what makes this movement unique in the history of peasant movements and other social movements and international organisations.

In my opinion, the work, the perspectives, the analysis, the energy, the leadership and the presence of women in La Via Campesina have transformed and strengthened our movement.

I certainly have been transformed (and strengthened) by being part of our movement. Each one of us comes from our own family and community and a wide range of experiences and cultures. However, like the majority of rural women, I've incorporated my work in the public and political world into my life, along with my home and family responsibilities. Unlike many of our male comrades, most of us know very well what it is to organise the care of children with other family members or neighbours, to ensure the washing has been done and that food has been prepared before leaving home to attend meetings. Our activism and commitment as women in the movement often require us to add even more tasks to days that are already full with food production, the care of the family and the home, cooking, paid work and many other demands on us. But, from my experience, our activism and solidarity also give us more energy, enthusiasm, confidence and happiness.

As a woman who had the great honour and responsibility of working in a leading role in La Via Campesina (as a member of the ICC and as an alternate member) for more than a decade, I feel great pride and respect towards the millions of women who are fighting to make this movement strong and invigorating, despite all the challenges that we face.

I am going to share some of my memories and observations about our work as women of La Vía Campesina.
The first meeting that La Via Campesina organised took place in Mons, Belgium, in 1993. However, the previous year, the National Union of farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) of Nicaragua had invited some leaders of progressive peasant organisations and farmers to its annual congress to analyse the serious consequences of the trade negotiations that were taking place at that time. The leaders agreed that the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was a terrible threat to peasant and small-scale farming everywhere and that it was therefore necessary to resist it.

The president of my organisation, the National Farmers Union of Canada (NFU), was among those invited to the meeting, as the women of the NFU (I was the president of the NFU women) had established a good relationship with the women of UNAG. Therefore, UNAG was already familiar with the NFU of Canada.

The Declaration of Managua was the work of (all male) leaders who met in Nicaragua. This document makes no mention of women or gender.

A year later, when peasant leaders met in Belgium to lay the foundations for a genuine global peasant movement to resist the neoliberal agenda of GATT and build an alternative to this destructive madness, La Via Campesina was born. About 20% of its representatives were women, and their participation and leadership were effective, as is reflected in the final document.

The 2nd Conference of La Via Campesina in Tlaxcala, Mexico, in 1996, was the next large world meeting of delegates representing peasant organisations and small-scale farmers from around the world. Again, 20% of the people who participated were women, they were active, influential and made important contributions to discussions! However, when the delegates met in regional groups to select the leaders that would attend the International Coordination Committee of La Via Campesina, all of the elected leaders were men.

The women, as well as some of the men, felt that this was unacceptable. An authentic peasant movement should have a better reflection of peasants, which include both men and women. A tense debate took place and the regional groups (eight at that time) met again.

The region of North America, which included the Mexican host organisation, UNORCA, decided to appoint me as the representative of the International Coordination Committee. I was then the newly appointed President of the National Farmers Union (the first and only woman to lead a national agricultural organisation in Canada, where, as in the rest of the world, the agricultural sector is highly patriarchal).
When we all met together again in the plenary session, we were pleasantly relieved to see that the gender barrier had been broken with the election of a woman to the International Coordination Committee. I realised the enormous responsibility that had been entrusted to me. But I also knew from that moment that I was surrounded, welcomed and supported by wonderful, strong women, as well as by men who shared the idea of creating a movement of equality and justice for women.

A women’s International Working Group (IWG) was formed in order to focus on articulating our analysis, improving our capabilities and achieving political and social equality both within our organisations and the movement and in all areas of our lives. La Vía Campesina would be a place where we would learn, fight and strengthen our struggle for equality, dignity and respect for the rights of women.

Women from South and Central America already had women’s commissions in their organisational structures and were successfully creating spaces and developing their leadership skills. At the next session of the ICC, in San Salvador, the model of the women’s commission of La Via Campesina was adopted.

This was followed by a very intense agenda of organisation and political activity. Thanks to the energetic, dedicated, efficient, tireless and motivated work of many women and women leaders of many organisations of La Vía Campesina, which received the support of technical staff who shared our passion for women's equality, we organised informative and women’s skills development meetings, as well as gender workshops, in many regions. We also participated effectively in a number of initiatives, demonstrations and public events to gain ground and make our voices heard on issues such as access to land, seeds, food sovereignty, education, health, human rights and democratic participation.

Thanks to lessons learned from the experiences of the women of the Latin American Coordination of Rural Organisations (CLOC), La Vía Campesina women adopted the practice of organising women’s assemblies prior to major events or conferences in order to ensure that we were well prepared to articulate our perspectives and points of view in the general conferences and plenary sessions. Because public spaces have traditionally been dominated by men, women may find it difficult to make themselves heard. Organising preliminary women’s meetings helps us to understand one another better, as well as to build relationships of trust, validate our experiences and analysis, all of which gives us more confidence to effectively occupy the spaces to which we are entitled. These women’s meetings also tend to be full of joy and are usually a lot of fun!

Our goal has been to achieve genuine equality between women and men, including equal democratic participation. One clear goal towards that end is having the same number of women and men at all levels of the organisation and at conferences where decisions are made. We wanted to reach gender parity in the 3rd Conference of La Via Campesina in Bangalore, India, in 2000.
We organised our 1st International Women’s Assembly in the days immediately prior to the general conference. Despite some logistical difficulties, that women’s assembly was a wonderful event, full of strength, in which the women of La Via Campesina, from regions all over the world, worked together on many key issues.

While we did not quite achieve equal participation in the 3rd International Conference, we did manage to make impressive progress towards that goal. More importantly, we pressed for a fundamental structural change in La Via Campesina, ensuring gender parity among both regional and world leaders. A structural change was adopted whereby the International Coordinating Committee must have two members in each region, one male and the other female.

This structural change gave me great satisfaction. Feminist women farmers from Canada had fought (and won) to achieve gender parity in agricultural organisations much earlier, so I had experience of this type of affirmative action. It's one more step towards equality. I was extremely pleased, but not surprised, when my male colleagues from the ICC adopted this recommendation with enthusiasm in 2000. I felt a wave of gratitude, pride and hope when the motion was adopted by the Conference.

The transformation of Spaces

Rural and indigenous women have a long history of oppression and struggle. We have achieved major improvements in some contexts and regions. Feminist struggles have resulted in the recognition of human rights, the right to education and resources, and have improved women’s social status. However, these improvements are still far from being universal. Patriarchal power and injustice are still the everyday reality faced by the majority of women.

The growing concentration of land and resources in the hands of private companies makes the struggle of rural women for access to land even more difficult. The more displaced families there are, the less security and more vulnerability to violence and exploitation there is for women. Violence against women was an issue that was taken on publicly by La Via Campesina at the 3rd Women’s Assembly, and at the 5th Conference in Maputo, Mozambique, in 2008, the campaign for the end of the violence against women, for which we are still fighting today, was launched.

La Via Campesina women began and continue to be key to the seed Campaign. Given that multinationals are usurping the ownership of seeds and manipulating seed genetics with the technology of genetically modified organisms, the fight for seeds has become a struggle for food sovereignty as well as for the basic elements of life itself. Peasant and indigenous women have a long tradition of harvesting and protecting seeds, thus improving their diversity and adaptability.
Throughout the existence of La Via Campesina, women have been present and participated actively in all areas and in all the struggles: they have devoted themselves to organisation, marched bravely and peacefully, stood up to the most powerful people at national and international conferences, suffered arrest and imprisonment, and made themselves heard on important issues. Side by side and in solidarity with the men of La Via Campesina, we offer political analysis, experience and energy to achieve our shared goal of creating a future that is fairer, equal, peaceful, ecological and exhilarating.

I have many memories of meetings, marches, meals, speeches, negotiations, etc, but my most emotional and impacting experiences at La Via Campesina have been those moments in which, despite the difficulties, loss and pain, women have risen, united, to create spaces of beauty and hope. Through songs, poetry, theatre and dance, using symbols and crafts, each dressed in the clothes of our cultures, talking in our many languages, the love of life that we share is revealed and gains meaning. These "místicas" are powerful and rejuvenating.

I think that this rejuvenation and this hope and diversity and beauty are what make our movement’s advancement necessary (and possible).

*Globalise the Struggle! Globalise Hope!*
I represent the Zimbabwe Smallholder Organic Farmers Forum, which is a member of La Via Campesina Africa 1 region. I am going to present the analysis of the capitalism crisis.

Capitalism has influenced ideology via free trade agreements – creating regulations that are damaging our systems of alternative development. We are facing a crisis on all levels. It is affecting our society profoundly at the economic level - this crisis is manifested in economic policies that affect the poorest members of society. We do not have access to the market, especially to quality products and other important goods.

The financial policies in poor countries have negatively affected our efforts to achieve food sovereignty. Poverty and the gap between the rich and poor have increased. And, with the current financial system, the effects are becoming increasingly devastating.

The current model of development requires resources at global and local levels. It exploits our land, minerals, water and even the air, with devastating effects on our ecosystems that form the basis of life – destroying forests, drinking water sources, fish reserves, and, in some cases, complete ecosystems, with catastrophic effects on local communities.
At the political level, we see groups and individuals taking advantage of power achieved through the polls. And these policies affect us directly. Through the scarcity of resources, the loss of autonomy (leading to austerity), we find the privatisation of natural resources, which, in developing countries, leads to even more entrenched cycles of dependence, increasing poverty and hunger.

In addition, there are the impacts of genetically modified organisms under a model of agribusiness that damages the environment and directly harms women.

Finally, this model directly affects peasant seeds. We strongly believe that it is contributing to the acceleration of climate change, in turn increasing the suffering of vulnerable groups of people.

Pressure from governments to communities has grown more intense. This is damaging to the rights of communities – primarily of women, and especially of those who work the land.

There are various factors involved, such as the excessive use of chemicals, contaminated water, exploitation with no long term plan, the degradation of natural resources, largely caused by the plans of the REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) mechanism.

REDD depletes local resources such as soil and water, harming the local communities. In addition, climate change decreases the productivity of rural working families. Also, the introduction of transgenic seeds and associated chemical fertilisers causes greater disasters. Droughts inhibit crop production and the land where they are grown, and put an end to local biodiversity.

Feminist greetings from the World March of Women to this IV Women’s Assembly of La Via Campesina. The World March of Women includes grassroots movements and working class representatives of those fighting against women’s poverty. This march enjoys the presence of 5,000 peasant members from 160 countries, who strongly denounce militarism and violence against women.

We are devoted to the all important issue of the oppression that women face. At the WMW we want to give the issue of oppression against women the visibility it deserves.

This oppression goes hand in hand with the rise of neo-liberalism and structural adjustment policies such as privatisation, opening up markets and cuts to social services, which affect women directly.

Our struggle is based on resistance. The restructuring of capitalism and the fight against colonialism are our main tasks if we are going to transform this capitalism. This capitalist system is implementing colonialist systems of occupation – firstly by commodifying nature, then by appropriating land, and finally by fundamentalist practices.
We are faced with the need to restructure the capitalist and patriarchal systems. In order to remain in existence these systems are increasing acts of violence and the accumulation of wealth. This process is carried out in 4 phases – firstly, through the commodification of nature, secondly, through the appropriation of workers’ income, then through militarism, and finally through the appropriation of women’s lives and bodies.

These processes of accumulation are about obtaining more and more profit. Everything is transformed into a product, a commodity – water, seeds, education, forests, inequality, etc. Peasants are suffering the consequences of these processes and have become the poorest and most vulnerable members of our society. In 2009 – the worst phase of the crisis – unemployment increased by 10% and the rich increased their wealth by 80% through the commodification of nature.

In 2000 we saw the market expand, which affected the lives of all peasants and reduced all of their sources of income. This control over our lives is a means of safeguarding the power they have over us. Peasants cannot grow their own food, the productive capacity of their seeds is limited and, furthermore, they are forced to pay transnational corporations for the use of foreign seeds and fertilisers – despite the fact that they are a common good of humanity. This commodification of resources is the result of the speculative policies of the financial market. The aim of these policies is to perpetuate the system. The result has been a systematic crisis at the economic, social and environmental levels. Land manipulation through monoculture and export crops has spread in Africa and Latin America.

Furthermore, mining companies are grabbing more spaces in order to speculate over the construction of mega-projects, contaminating water, exploiting indigenous peoples, and causing social conflicts.

As regards the expropriation of workers’ wages, it is important to state that workers have struggled in order to achieve several rights. Yet some of these are insufficient – the exploitation of capital continues and the system needs urgent readjustment.

It is necessary to reduce public spending, which will increase investment in public services. It is also necessary to fight against unemployment and its social consequences. In many cases, women are those who care for a large number of people in hospitals, in schools, and in other settings. Women’s work is the means to making real adjustments. It is the answer to these market cycles. Despite the efforts of women, there is a major lack in hospitals and in society in general, of food, of security, of homes. We have seen more and more stigmatisation of women through fundamentalism and militarism. One example is troops being sent to Pakistan. Another is the wars for territory in the Philippines in Southeast Asia, which are spreading conservative nationalist violence. Wars affecting several Asian countries have broken out in the name of these values.
The commodification of the female body is closely linked to militarism. Because of this fundamentalism, patriarchy and fundamentalism are appropriating women’s wealth – seizing not only women’s wealth, but also their ability to work. Since the beginning of capitalism, sex has been used as an instrument, as a tool. The system has established heterosexual marriage as the norm – whilst simultaneously promoting prostitution, driving women to become prostitutes and to be exploited in general.

Resistance – women and farmers in the fight for nature – we know that capitalism is not the solution. It monopolises territory, the rights of farmers, and the rights of the female body. We must defend our territories and communities and fight against violence against women. In Europe and the U.S. the fight for workers’ rights has spread in different ways – for example through the occupation of land and by holding other summits. However, our resistance also faces direct repression, from patriarchal violence, seeking to control our lives and our bodies.

My feminist women’s organisation fights patriarchy and globalisation, both necessary systems in the dominant economic model, which favours inequality in decision making. We are constantly forced to work in the informal sector, for no payment whatsoever, and forced to migrate just so we can send some money home to our families.

The rise of neoliberalism has had perverse effects on us women. Our duty is to help people, to tell them it is they and not the government who have power, and persuade them to unite and fight.

In this policy of resistance, the role of women is always to provide food to the communities involved in the struggle. Women must persuade the people to fight to stamp out violence against women.

The resurgence of WTO policies has seen an attempt to incorporate FTAs – which affect food, water, and raw materials – treating everything as a commodity. In this fight for equality and against oppression, we, as peasant and indigenous peoples, must enforce the mechanisms of peasant and indigenous agriculture. We have to take this opportunity to put sexism in the past and ensure that the principle of equality prevails throughout the world. We are fighting for access to land, water, and our rights to participate in decisions that impact on our lives. The WMW wants to show its solidarity in this global struggle, as we also sew the seeds of struggle and hope.

Summary of Working Groups
Who are we?

We are farmers, peasant women, from all over the world. We are mothers, carers and family organisers. We are also the community, regional, national and international leaders for
women’s rights, for women’s empowerment and for food sovereignty throughout the world. We have taken on multiple responsibilities, because we are the main organisers of the family, as well as the main source of employment on the farm.

On the other hand, we are the most vulnerable members of society to the impacts of capitalism and patriarchy in all their different manifestations, including physical and sexual violence, climate change and environmental disasters, the appropriation of land and the imposition of industrial chemical agriculture.

We are also the first to denounce this system and its impacts on society and propose alternatives, such as food sovereignty.

The onslaught of capital in communities and its impacts on rural women

Capitalism is an instrument of propaganda for commodities, for the control and exploitation of women. It renders our role in the economy and food sovereignty invisible. Capitalism also affects our cultural, educational and family values.

In our communities, land and resources are rapidly becoming concentrated in the hands of transnational corporations that are a direct threat to food sovereignty. We are witnessing extreme forms of energy extraction, such as mining, palm oil, bituminous sand, hydroelectric dams that exploit and pollute natural resources such as water and land, as well as contributing to the displacement of indigenous and rural communities that produced food and other crops. This is causing the displacement of agricultural production.

This causes an accelerated process of impoverishment, debt and powerlessness in women and rural youth, as they lose access to their land, their livelihood, and therefore become more vulnerable to food insecurity and are forced to accept other forms of paid work, such as prostitution, or casual agricultural labour, or jobs in which wage exploitation is the norm. They are also forced to become migrant workers, both in their own countries and abroad. In addition, capitalism promotes drug trafficking and the trafficking of women and girls.

Current agricultural policies do not guarantee the livelihoods of family farmers. The policy in many countries is not to have a price floor for farmers’ products. Another obstacle is the international model of industrial agriculture which makes us dependent on consumables derived from petroleum chemicals which stand in the way of our independence of an exploitative system.

Conflicts related to agrarian reform programmes and land rights leave women with no option but to defend our lands. They are more vulnerable to state perpetrated violence. The police commit acts of violence, and even after they have been raped and criminalised, women in land conflicts are often singled out and threatened. Militarisation is part of the process of capitalist accumulation and exploitation that makes women the target of growing violence.
Patriarchal society perpetrates multiple forms of violence against women and children. The sexual, physical and psychological violence they suffer often go unseen by society. We are suffering domestic violence on a massive scale. Capitalism and patriarchy are a threat to our rights over our own bodies, our dignity and our future.

Environmental and nuclear disasters, plus the climate, also provoke violence against women and children. Women come up against many cultural barriers in their attempts to gain independence from men, and have no rights.

In Indonesia 50% of females, mostly girls, are subjected to domestic violence. There is also discrimination against girls in the educational system. Within the family boys are always given priority in terms of financial support.

Some communities are matriarchal, and decisions are made in the community by women. These communities are taking over the care of cultural and family values, and at the same time guaranteeing the food and nutritional needs of the community by using solutions such as collective seeds or seed banks. However, the lack of respect for women in the government policies of these societies has undermined women’s resilience.

We have limited access to all universal human rights, including land and public services such as health and education, and we are also excluded from the right to act in the political sphere. This is partly because women are not part of the political process.

Women’s access to health is very limited, and they are consequently affected by HIV and AIDS, problems that lead to sexual violence, while they are also denied their reproductive rights.

We will not tolerate any form or manifestation of violence in the home, in the political sphere, and in our daily work, either within or outside of the food sovereignty movement. We will find a way of denouncing these violations of our social rights and of organising ourselves as women in order to gain mutual support and demand change. We must strengthen women’s organisations and improve our methods of communication and technology so that we can send our message to the whole of society and support the environment, as women’s rights and justice demand. In our own movement we must teach ourselves to defend not just our land, but also our own bodies. We must build a network with other sectors of society such as urban and working women.

Women are leaders in creating solutions for the family and the community through agroecological peasant farming, peasant seeds, and the dialogue of knowledge.
"The struggle for land means that women must be on the front line in order to protect their land, and expose themselves to police brutality, or that of the security guards of companies that own palm oil plantations. Women also have to fight against imprisonment, torture and even murder".

"In western Sumatra the matriarchal system recognises all rights to assets, food, children and also women’s rights. Men respect and honour their mothers. But this matriarchal system is being pushed aside by the creation of local laws on regional autonomy which diminish women’s role in agriculture”.

"The use of chemical fertilisers leads to health and reproductive problems in women. Furthermore the use of chemicals in agriculture gives women skin cancer".

"There has been an increase in domestic violence within the family in Indonesia, almost 99% of the victims are girls and young women between 4-18 years old".

"Capitalism, patriarchy and neoliberalism make the role of women and our contributions to the economy, to nations and to food sovereignty invisible".

"Capitalism and patriarchy are ideological political structures that discriminate against us and limit our roles exclusively to the family and private companies, but we we have mobilised and learned how to defend our rights. If we unite and read up on our rights we can move forward and build our homeland".
"Women’s problems and their situation are global. In the case of Guatemala, the rape of girls has increased, affecting the family and society in general”.

"Capitalism is sustained by patriarchy, but we also need to have this discussion with our male comrades, we are divided by capitalism ".

"As peasants and women workers we need to discuss neo-liberal policies and how they affect women, with our comrades. We must opt for political and ideological education, search for a means of opening up a space for political discussion with our comrades, and move forward in our communities to confront neoliberal policies and patriarchy that are making us poorer every day".

"The issue of violence against women is very prominent in our countries. We must create proposals and share our laws that allow us to become stronger. In Venezuela we have laws and legislation that help and protect women”.

"In Colombia we women work and form organisations, but the State will not let us win, we live in a state of permanent violence, murders, prison and kidnappings".

"The moral statute of women’s exploration of capitalism is patriarchy, capitalism is against men and women. Capitalism does not offer opportunities for women and men, it offers only functions, and for that reason it has a hold on us. We are still a threat to capitalism. We must continue to fight for equality, for our rights, and we will only win through struggle and resistance."

"I want to pass on the Cuban experience that is very different, in Cuba there is no capitalism, it is a different system, we have rights that guarantee the well-being of women and the family, we participate in politics, in leadership and decision making, we care for the environment, we have no multinationals, there are no transgenic seeds. We don't live in luxury, but we do have social welfare, there are some expressions of violence in families, which we are trying to resolve together with men".

"Capitalism is not adjustable, we are fighting to eliminate it."

"Women are no longer what they used to be, we have succeeded in reclaiming the same methods and mechanisms of fighting that our grandmothers used, combined with other forms of struggle, which have allowed us to defend our bodies, our land, our sovereignty".
"Capitalism in Haiti does a great deal of harm to women, but even more so since the military occupation. We must fight to defend our rights and strengthen solidarity in our countries, in our regions, between continents, to resist and strengthen the fight and confront capitalism".

"I agree with what was said about mining. Corporations are turning our farmland into monocultures and want to extract our country’s resources. For example, agricultural land in the Philippines is more and more concentrated."

"The Government is taking our land for palm oil plantations. This affects our coconut industry. The Government is displacing farmers, more and more farmers are being affected by the loss of jobs, loss of sources of water and food, because of corporate agriculture and mining".

"In India, 4,469 cases of rape were recorded in one decade (2003-2012). Most terrible of all is that only 315 criminals have been punished. The rest of the cases are still being processed".

"I come from the central part of Burma. I am a farmer and in our region we have problems with Chinese investment. Due to agreements with the Chinese Government for mining copper, they are forcing people out of the villages where they have lived for many generations".

"In Burma there is a lot of investment in mining and monoculture. But none of the projects are carried out through consultation with the local people and there is no transparency".

"These projects do not only affect the community, but women in particular, in terms of their health, education and the social problems associated with these projects. Chemical explosives, which get into the groundwater, are used for copper mining. Women have to get water for domestic use from considerable distances, and it is often polluted."

"Women in Thailand not only have the traditional role of carer and family provider, they are the ones who feed the community, society and the world in general. We have suffered, for example, from the lack of access to our land. Women are the worst affected by the project of capitalism."

"I come from Yokohama where there are a lot of people suffering because of the tsunami and nuclear energy. There is a nuclear power plant just 60 km from the city, and 160,000 people have to be evacuated".

"In Bangladesh climate change is affecting a lot of people, especially women".

"Bangladesh is the second largest exporter of garments in the world. More than 5 million women work under a system of exploitation. They work in precarious conditions and die in different ways. Recently there was a collapse at a construction site and 1,000 women were killed."
Francisca Rodríguez "Pancha", leader of ANAMURI - CLOC - La Via Campesina

It is good to be here because we recognise ourselves as political players, for us it is important to be with so many women from Indonesia, so much diversity, it is precisely this that comprises the wealth of La Via Campesina. To celebrate our participation in this space which is so important and relevant to rural women around the world.

I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to share with you some of the core aspects of the structure of a strong women’s movement in Latin America, which is part of CLOC, and therefore of La Via Campesina.

The 20th anniversary of the Via Campesina acknowledges, on the one hand, how we have stood up to the attack of the Neoliberal model, the advance of transnationalisation in agriculture, to the looting of natural resources, which are the natural assets of our people.

Attacks, in general, against our biodiversity and indigenous peoples and farmers, rural workers who suffer the worst consequences of this capitalist and patriarchal system.

Expulsion and plunder of our land, the undermining of our science and knowledge, the subjugation of our culture and identity and the transformation of our activities in the orchard, which have changed from seeding to industry.

On the other hand, in these 20 years the peasant movement has grown and has become a very important player in the construction and articulation of social movements, with a leading political role in social and popular resistance; added to this struggle is the organised force of women in all areas. We can say with certainty that we have been and we are builders of a continental movement such as CLOC, and a worldwide movement, such as La Via Campesina, which has placed the struggle for sovereignty at the centre, as the guarantor of the Sovereignty of our peoples and therefore of our own individual sovereignty.

This is, without a doubt, one of the greatest strengths of the 20 years of La Vía Campesina and CLOC.

In the heat of the struggles of CLOC – La Vía Campesina, women in Latin America have devised a mística that reflects our struggle, which is no longer exclusively a peasant struggle, but a struggle to change the system, a struggle for a new society.

A society in which we occupy equal spaces in terms of action and the leadership of the movement, as well as in decision making and the construction of public policies for our sector, with a clear focus on gender.
We are referring to gender parity, which is a right won in La Via Campesina, and which was adopted at the movement’s I World Women’s Assembly in Bangalore-India and ratified by the III International Conference. The challenge is to transfer this conquest to all areas of our society.

Women walking in CLOC, in the challenge to rediscover ourselves and identify ourselves in history, we recognised the need to go from being a commission to drawing up a petition that would make us visible in all our political action, which would generate more and new alliances, and develop policy proposals, work on achieving autonomy, open up the path for women’s participation. It would recognise us, value us, respect our diversity and our aim to strengthen our movement. These were the key convictions for the decision of the II Continental Assembly that led to our transformation from a commission to a Continental Articulation of Latin American Rural Women.

Our Women’s Articulation combines and expresses two organisational areas; firstly, peasant organisations that are specific to women, which were created at the end of the 90’s, several of them in response to and as an alternative to obstacles that arose as a result of the sexist behaviour of leaders within the organisations.

And the other space, led by women from traditional mixed organisations of the Latin American peasant movement, who consider that the “fight” for equality of the sexes must take place in spaces where tension between men and women occurs.

This has been neither problematic nor contradictory, and the challenges taken on by the Women’s Articulation of CLOC-La Via Campesina have had far-reaching consequences and consist of five important points:

1. in the first place, to be able to empower ourselves and put into practice full gender parity and not fail in the attempt, which is not easy.

2. To recognise that our actions and our struggle are political, and that we are therefore women politicians, hence an important step for us has been to recognise the contribution of feminism to women’s struggles and women’s historical legacy in the development and construction of policy proposals concerning our rights and gender justice, which increase the content of our movement.

3. The third point is to achieve full recognition and evaluation of the crucial leading role we play in exercising food sovereignty.

4. To include the new problems rural women face which have crossed the private public borders. They have substituted the family vegetable plantation and hearth for socio-political participation, many of them accepting salaried agricultural work.

5. Being a highly diverse sector, both culturally and in terms of the economic activities we carry out and even of our different political and ideological visions, it is important to learn to respect us and to identify us from the perspective of our legitimate differences.

Today the economic role of women in rural areas is undeniable and it is mainly their income that supports the majority of rural households. It is in small-scale agriculture, the area where most of
our productive practices occur, where not only the most conclusive results of food production are obtained, but also balanced, nature and redistribution friendly ways of life are generated.

In general, the political stakes and claims of the Latin American peasant movement which are moving ahead in terms of their political definitions are also leading us to define ourselves more clearly.

In this context, within CLOC we proposed setting up a large debate in order to define the kind of society we want and the popular political project we require for this large scale objective for the future and we agreed that this process should pave the way for a socialist society in our continent.

This debate has a special significance for us and we made that clear in our IV Assembly. We held a parallel debate alongside it, arguing that "women must ensure they do not occupy a secondary position in the new world we want to build",

Bearing in mind that, despite the progress achieved by historic socialism, women have still not obtained the responses they require for their true emancipation and for bringing down the patriarchal foundations on which power is based.

For this reason, our immediate response was
"Without Feminism, There is No Socialism"

That is why the IV Continental Assembly of Rural Women focused its discussions on Socialism and Capitalism, patriarchy and violence and the view of feminism, on rural women.

We set out to build a proposal with a largely feminist content, that would give rise to a popular feminist movement, proposals that were endorsed in our V Congress in Quito - Ecuador in 2010 and became one of our resolutions throughout CLOC.

There is no doubt that the slogan of the IV Assembly, "Without feminism, there is no socialism", took the men, as well as most of the female comrades of the peasant movement and of the women's movement in general aback, because, given our sector’s mentality, and its prejudices against feminism, it is considered as daring by many and madness by others to "introduce a concept and an ideology which is perceived as foreign and is largely demonised, because it shocks male and patriarchal sensitivities ".

We are certain, this definition is, for many, a subversive proposal, also for organisations and communities and, why not admit it, for many of our female comrades, and especially for our indigenous sisters.

We have adopted it in our coordination, and although we are aware that it will be a long discussion, it is already in place, and is an issue on the current agenda and on the training programmes of CLOC.

From where will our discussions take off?

We start from the basic premise that worldwide feminism is a multidimensional construction, with
great diversity of movements and actions, and that it is rooted in the criticism of unequal relationships in society, as well as in the search for opportunities for participation and recognition of women at all levels of our society: be they economic, political, social, cultural, etc.

Therefore, we have determined that the traditional power structures in society should make it their objective to establish more comprehensive life systems and development, to break with traditional patriarchal and paternalistic thinking that lead to the victimisation of women and their social degradation, without acknowledging the valuable abilities we possess.

Without a doubt, relations of oppression experienced by women have as their base material the sexual division of labour that is organised around two principles:

- The separation between male and female work

Thus, as regards the importance of labour between the sexes, there is a huge amount of work done by women that is neither considered nor valued, either socially or economically. However, for many rural women, there are clear doubts and gaps in its interpretation, and that has to do with the definition of helping out or family farming.

Therefore, debates about feminism among rural women are not exempt from tensions. And there is no doubt that these tensions may even lead to strong resistance and conflicting views.

Already, mixed peasant organisations have taken positions that explicitly reject the idea of defining the peasant movement as feminist, "arguing that it weakens the organisations and their cultures and that it violates the concept of family."

That is how it was expressed even in our own congress, in a letter from one of the participating organisations, that pointed out in one of its paragraphs that "true socialist revolution will come about from a strengthened family perspective and not from outside concepts that are contrary to our realities and are introduced under pressure, weakening our organisations, families, and culture."

However, on the other hand, strong responses to these conservative positions were also expressed, taking off from the idea that the family, precisely, is not a democratic, but a hierarchical concept, which has been socially constructed to protect inequality, and hence the importance of a transgressive discourse on feminism and the category of gender.

No doubt this challenge will be a long process of discussion, reflection, and learning, as we talk about the construction of new identities (the new man and the new woman).

First of all, we have been explicit in our Assembly in affirming that we strive to build a socialist world, which we understand to be a just and egalitarian, but above all "sovereign," society.

And this is related to our concept of sovereignty in the broadest sense of the definition, from the concept to the principle of food sovereignty. This concept of sovereignty is supported and defended but is not negotiable.
Peasant and Popular Feminism, with a Revolutionary Identity

Currently women live in a highly complex era, because, on the one hand, we have won certain rights, for example, we now have access to paid work, to relative economic autonomy, it is now acknowledged that violence against us is a crime, and we have more sexual freedom.

However, those achievements have been commodified by capitalism, and at the cultural level, there has been a trivialisation of the distribution of responsibilities, as can be seen in the idea that men now "help" but women work.

In the final Declaration of our V Congress, we pointed out that: "Ending capitalism has become a social objective and a necessary step for the survival of humanity and the planet, it involves proposing a project for the future under the pillars of Comprehensive Agrarian Reform and Food Sovereignty, which guarantees peasant agriculture, collective ownership of peasant farming communities and indigenous peoples, dignity, and a good life for all".

- As the articulation of the women of CLOC, we propose that feminism be a tool that will recognise the differences between women and men, and contribute to their integration through the construction of a movement that defends the universality of rights.
- Peasant and working class feminism, which we favour, is a subversive and transgressive proposal for society, just as food sovereignty was in its time.
- "We want to participate in the struggle, share power, and exercise it for real. We have decided to put our all into the fight, and not "go back into the kitchen." Which, for example, translates into the slogan - with the woman in the house land reform will fail."
- Thus we need to understand that "when we talk about feminism, we are talking about a struggle that involves not only rural women, but all of the exploited people of society."

Our current plan for the autonomy of the peasant and indigenous organisations of CLOC appeals to the notion of sovereignty for the people, and manifests our aspiration to a continent free from the practices that criminalise indigenous peoples and peasants, and free from violence against women. We therefore point out that:

- The women's organisations of CLOC are, without doubt, those which have participated most actively in the campaign for food sovereignty.
- Through our involvement in the campaign we experienced personal growth, recognition of our important contribution to farming, especially in food production, raised our self-esteem.
- Discursively, Food Sovereignty is aligned with gender justice, as it revindicates the evaluation of the socio historic function of land and the role of women peasant farmers with regard to the creative process of food production and their knowledge and practices.
- We assume that this has contributed to our being recognised and valued as rural women, and we aspire to continue to be peasant farmers and build a completely free world of justice and equal rights.
- But at the same time we must build systems to alert us to the risks of once again becoming invisible, such as when the issues which we were the first to challenge become politically relevant. "For example, in the first phase of La Via Campesina’s campaign for seeds, women
were widely recognised when talking about the cycle of seed reproduction, but when it moved on to the stage of seed multiplication, men came onto the scene and took all the credit for themselves, thus reducing the important role played by women in the previous cycle."

- From my point of view, the expression of peasant and working class feminism that we have initiated with the already established proposal of food sovereignty demands that we go beyond seeking mere recognition (of women), in order to avoid constructing a fantasy of sovereignty.
- The proposal must also include women's political, economic and personal autonomy, as well as the exercise of the freedom to define our own life project, which challenges traditional sexual mandates and a history marked by subordination.
- It must consider food and nourishment as the responsibility of society as a whole. Food Sovereignty with gender justice must reaffirm the progress we have made as regards recognition, but must at the same time consider and be alert to any possible steps backwards in terms of sexual subordination.
- From a feminist perspective, we should ensure that the right to make sovereign decisions about what, how, and for whom we produce food, is exercised within a framework of gender democracy, characterised by a fair practice of power and with equal occupation of decision-making spaces, ensuring the full participation of women in their communities and villages.

In the private sphere, the campaign proposes to address sexual violence between couples, spreading the right of women to decide when and how to experience sexuality. Various formal opinions expressed in our IV Assembly show changes in an issue which was until recently secret: "the work is hard, she goes to check on the animals, then goes to the farm to work as a labourer. Then the men don't understand that she is tired and she has to comply with the obligation to have sex...but not anymore!"

I would like to conclude with an excerpt from the Declaration of the IV Assembly of Peasant Women of CLOC, that summarises the reinvention of the discourse of the Latin American women's peasant movement, establishing that: "feminism will contribute to defining the socialist changes that we yearn for, and for which we will fight until the combined forces of capitalism and patriarchy are part of the past. We want relations between human beings that are comprised of equality. To build a supportive coexistence between peoples and cultures, that is decolonised and without sexism or racism. A region and a world free from all manifestations of violence, whether that be sexist or patriarchal; and with a comprehensive agrarian reform which guarantees women's access to land."

*There is no socialism without feminism!*

_Rural Women Building Peasant and Working Class Feminism, For justice, life, and equality!_
7. We Have the Floor: Statements from Rural Women

**Ana Paula Tauacale – UNAC – Mozambique - Africa 1**

I want to give thanks for being here with all the women from Indonesia. I belong to the UNAC (National Farmers’ Union of Mozambique). In our community we have several problems, but there is one that affects us a lot. When our husbands die, we are blamed for the death, people say that we have killed them. Because of these accusations, we can lose all of our property which we have acquired with our husbands when they were alive, and we are left only with the children.

As I have said, we are accused of killing our husbands, but we also have other problems with our customs and traditions. We are not respected, not even socially, although we are the ones who produce food and decide what we want to grow. There is no balance between men and women. They receive more senior positions, and most of the time it is men who are in power. We are trying to raise awareness and educate African women on these issues so that they can participate in literacy processes, because we have realised that in our society only men are consulted, women get married very young. Their parents agree because they know we are going to live in our husbands’ houses, and this will help them receive money. We are currency, that’s why we have to marry very young, but men don’t have to necessarily. We also want to promote the politicisation of our women, because in Mozambique, women do not often dare to look for a lawyer to report crimes committed against them. We want them to have the courage to denounce the wrongs done to them. Politicisation is also important because recently a law was approved that gives support independently of the family, but there are very few women who know about it. Mothers who work in the field do not know the laws, so it is important to reach these women and teach them about the laws so they can help their families.

**Lidia Ruiz - OLT – (Struggle For Land) Paraguay - La Via Campesina South America**

Resistance and struggle of the women of America. The process of women’s articulation began with the 500 years of indigenous, black and popular resistance. From common struggles, we have advanced in the process of women’s articulation. We contributed to the creation and strengthening of the Coordination of Latin American Peasant Organisations, CLOC, in 1994. We also want to highlight the fact that our continent was marked by dictatorships throughout the 60’s, 70’s and 80’s, when women were persecuted by the State. However, it was women who managed resistance and struggle in our countries. Also, as peasant women, we have been ignored from 1990 until today, when we are challenging neoliberal policies, policies mainly driven by US imperialism and in coordination with its military bases in all countries for the
purpose of defending transnational corporations in their exploitation of natural resources. Women have been part of the struggle and resistance against the actions of the US and transnationals, even as their processes have led to coups in our countries, first in Honduras and then in Paraguay, and we know they intend to continue in countries where there are progressive governments, such as Bolivia, Venezuela, Uruguay and Ecuador. This imperialist offensive is also accompanied by various forms of violence and discrimination against women defending the land and their territory, such as in Honduras and Guatemala.

We highlight the struggle and resistance of the women who have advanced in CLOC’s articulation process, and also in political and ideological training in women’s schools where the slogan without feminism there is no socialism was invented. We are fighting, and and we reaffirm that capitalism must be eliminated in order to build a more just and egalitarian society. For us inside the CLOC, the defeat of capitalism and transnational corporations and the commitment to socialism are necessary for the construction of real rights for peasants, indigenous peoples and afro-descendants. We also believe that we have to construct feminism from the multiculturalism of our countries. We affirm that many of our women are out on the streets, in mobilisations to regain land, and in the strengthening of and participation in our organisations and political spaces. Against the looting of capital and the empire, America is Fighting.

_Fatma Shamali – UAWC – Palestine_

I have come a long way, from the Middle East. I have come to participate in this beautiful conference, and with great pleasure and with great pride I have heard the statements of our comrades from La Via Campesina. I have come here to present the situation of Arab women, specifically those in Palestine.

You know that Palestine is an interim country, where Jesus Christ and our Prophet Mohamed were born. It is a religious and ancient country, filled with religious and ancient things. It is also a country where we grow food.

The Palestinian people love the land. We have beautiful things in Palestine, but we also have things that are very sad because of the Israeli occupation, because they steal our land and also the freedom of the people. They cut down our olive trees, our sacred tree, and leave us powerless to defend our lands against the settlements whose many settlers want to defend their new land, and also against the land grabbing of Palestinian land to build new colonies. Palestinian women are very strong and clever and fight to live. Women tend to have a son, a husband, or a brother who is a prisoner and so they take care of their children, their land, and fight for survival. Even with all this suffering, there is a Palestinian woman who has become Governor, and there are also women doctors, engineers and others who occupy high positions.

I’m going to talk about Ramallah, where I live. There are groups of women who work in the field and who practice a subsistence economy. The group works to obtain food and tries to make a
living by selling it. We have canned foods, cheeses, leaves, healing and medicinal herbs. We started with just a few items, but we asked the Union of Palestinian Workers for help, and they gave it to us. They gave us a kitchen that has allowed us to feed our children. Because every day there are conflicts with the Israelis, who destroy our vegetable gardens, our plots. I’m not going to say much today because I will talk more tomorrow. I just wanted to mention some of the difficulties we live with, and to say that we need to work together to help each other collectively. If we have goods, we don’t have the means to send them to other countries, and secondly, the people plant crops but when they mature, then Israel will intervene in our markets, setting prices so low that we lose our harvests. And when we need to harvest the ripe olives, they cut down our ancient olive trees. For us, the olive is very important. It is a much loved product, because it gives us a natural oil, as well as soap, and has healing properties. And when we need to harvest the wheat, the settlers destroy our lands, wiping out entire plots. We endure a lot of hardship and suffering, but we will continue to fight for freedom and peace, because there is peace throughout the world, but not in Palestine. I hope you will help us. We want to invite you all to Palestine, which is beautiful and has some lovely places.

_Ilona Drivdal – NBS – Norway – European Coordination Via Campesina_

Europe is also very different, and I would like to refer to meetings that we have had in the European Community. For example, in Norway we are very few. Most people go to cities to study. Our organisation is made up of small farmers who want to help and to sell their products.

Talking about definition, we realised that we are talking about many kinds of violence: psychological; physical; and there is also social violence in our homes and organisations. Women don't have access to resources, etc, and often governments try to find solutions to these problems, but their solutions are outdated and do not help. Often, women's work is invisible, so we have to work to make it show. We also have many people who come to our countries and who are unaware of their rights, and so we have prepared a leaflet and questionnaire and made the decision to ask a number of existing groups for cooperation. The next meeting was also held in Cáceres, Spain, and there we looked to define the role of women within our organisations and society. In 2011, we participated in the Nyéléni Declaration in Europe to emphasise the importance of women in food sovereignty, and recently in March, we met again in Santiago de Compostela, to talk about the financial crisis. We discussed the critical situation in Europe due to the financial crisis that is affecting us all personally in Europe, which is why it is important to participate in global networks, and why we participate in the World March of Women – because it is important to build understanding among all women.

Our countries, for example, Norway, provide resources to undeveloped countries, they say they are for women, but those resources go to help agribusinesses. We must ensure that development in the countries of the Global South goes towards food sovereignty and not in the direction it is headed now. All European governments and western countries are guilty of
creating more poverty, of spurring the production of agro-fuels, and logging, but we are fighting against that model.

Nandini Kardahalli Singarigouwda – KRRS – India - La Via Campesina South Asia

Good afternoon all. I can't speak in my native language so I will try to read what I want to tell you. I'm from India, I represent a farmers’ organisation. My name is Nandini.

Since this morning we have been talking about different problems and difficulties that women face and we can talk about similarities between these problems in all the countries represented here. The truth is that there aren’t so many differences. I'm going to talk about the specific problems that women in India have today, rural women.

Violence against women begins at the moment of conception. In my country, India, for example, a boy is considered an asset while girls are considered a liability. For two reasons: one is the cost of the dowry for the wedding, and the second is that we have to protect the honour of girls and that is a great responsibility, in many cases it is considered a burden. As a result of all this, we have a social scourge which we call female foeticide, or abortions which are decided on the basis of sex.

In rural areas, a girl begins to work in the home or in the field at the age of 6 years and works until the age of 66, that is how things are. There is discrimination in education, now even in rural areas girls are educated, but only so they can get an employed or salaried husband who, as far as possible, does not do agricultural work. This morning we talked about domestic violence, and now I'd like to tell you about the reality of our country. Rural domestic violence is very common, to such an extent that women who tolerate the most violence within their own home earn the respect of everyone else. We're talking about extreme violence that puts a peasant woman on a complete par with a farm cow. Women who choose not to assume or who neglect their responsibilities bring shame on the house and end up being expelled from it. They are trapped because they feel the burden of that responsibility on their shoulders and fear bringing shame on the family, and they cannot return to their parents’ house. We have not even mentioned the children, who are a big question mark, because (if she leaves) it’s not just a question of where the woman will live, but also where her children will live. The work of a peasant woman begins very early, she has to work in the field and also cook the food. The woman is the first to get up but the last to eat. That kind of situation affects her health and leads to malnutrition, and for this reason it is estimated that in India 1/150 women die in childbirth.

Now I'd like to refer to another important aspect: rural women are responsible for planting and harvesting the fruits, as well as preparing the meals, but they CANNOT go to the markets, they must stay away from the financial aspects. In this way all members of the family depend on the man, and it is from this dependence that exploitation develops.
The last issue that I would like to talk about is suicide in rural areas. 150,000 peasant farmers who are not the owners of their lands and must fight every day to survive, have no other way out. Worldwide, only 1% of the land is owned by women, and the situation is the same for women in Asia. That’s why I have mentioned only some of the many problems that we have. One of the solutions is to educate not only women but also men, because the destruction of the family will lead to the destruction of society. By educating the men we will halve the problem.

LVC supports us and we should pursue this goal.

8. Political Balance of the Work of the Women’s Commission

- **Itelvina Masioli - Landless Movement of Brazil, MST - La Via Campesina South America**

Comrades, I am going to present the document that is the result of a collective construction of our women’s process in La Via Campesina over these past 20 years. We worked as the Women’s Commission to organise this document. It is not a finished document, I have no doubt that each of you can and should enrich it and supplement it in your regions. That is the value of collective construction.

We women have walked an important path these past twenty years. We have made progress, but there are many challenges to taking the next step forward.

We have also faced difficulties during this journey. And we cannot say that everything is perfect. We have strengths and weaknesses that we have to face, in order to give more strength and a greater role to women within our organisations and in La Via Campesina in general.

**Political Participation of Women in La Via Campesina**

Since the birth of La Via Campesina in 1993, during the first International Conference in Mons-Belgium, the issue of the political participation of women has existed.

Over these 20 years we have covered a lot of ground, inspired by struggles for land; for agrarian reform; for food, environmental, and energy sovereignty; against violence; and for dignity and freedom. We have also opened and built spaces, framing the gender debate from a perspective of class and class struggle. In that context, we built and launched the campaign: no more violence against women, amongst many other actions and struggles.

In this construction, from the political prominence of women in the historical process of LVC, the issues of organisational strengthening and women’s participation are regarded as permanent challenges.
To this effect, as we celebrate these 20 years, we have to talk more forcefully about women in that construction. We certainly have many achievements to celebrate during this historic route. However, we must perform a major balancing act that will allow us to make a qualitative leap to the political/organisational level. We can do this mainly by having a clear idea of the historical period in which we live, and above all, by being certain that all men and women must assume responsibility for addressing the major challenges we face.

We want to reflect and look inward on our political and organisational process as the International Women’s Commission (IWC), and project our challenges and our next steps.

**I. Political Balance**

- In these 20 years many things in the rural world have changed, some for better and some for much worse.

- The offensive of the neo-liberal model with the advance of transnationals, the transnationalisation of agricultural capital, the plundering of natural resources and our biodiversity, the expulsion of farmers from their land, the devaluation of our knowledge, among others.

- In short, these are the key elements for dealing with the so-called agricultural modernisation process that continues to impact peasants in the south particularly, and public institutions in rural areas. Firstly, state intervention in the distribution of land with land reform, and subsequently the investment of urban and foreign capital in agriculture, and, why not say it, of the many projects and programmes of many NGOs who still believe that capitalism can be humanised.

- On the other hand, in these 20 years, the peasant movement has grown and has become a very important player in the construction of social movements, gaining political prominence and playing an active role in social and popular resistance. In these 20 years we have built a worldwide movement which is what LVC is.

- We can also state unequivocally that it has been precisely the organisational process and the active role of women which have given it so much strength and energy, we have changed the face of the global peasant movement in LVC, that has been one of our strengths in the last twenty years.
We have succeeded in making our struggles for food sovereignty, for land, for agrarian reform, our struggles to defend Criollo seeds, to regain local markets, to regain our cultures, values and our spirituality by devising a women’s *mystica*, cease to be struggles that are exclusive to peasants and they have now become the struggles of a large proportion of society.

To this effect, we have held an important debate on the undeniable economic role of rural women, given that it is largely their income which supports their households. It is in small scale agriculture, which is what most women practice, that most agroecological food production takes place, but also where ways of life that are in harmony with nature and redistribution are generated.

II - International Women’s Commission - IWC

Over the course of the last 20 years, the political participation of women has been placed amongst the permanent challenges for LVC. To this effect, the organisation of the International Commission has provided important internal pressure in order to continue the progress of the movement as a whole, discussions on class and gender oppression, and at the same time, ensure that the political definitions are being implemented.

The Women’s Commission operates in two organisational areas: peasant and indigenous organisations exclusive to women, and those of women who are organised in mixed movements.

Since the first International Conference of LVC, held in Mons - Belgium in 1993, certain comrades, albeit a smaller number, have, as a consequence of their experiences, pinpointed the issue of gender and women's participation as a challenge and a necessity of the movement.

Within the construction of LVC we meet, we identify ourselves in terms of our gender and class and we are part of this construction, we have devoted the best of ourselves to strengthening the movement at the local, national, regional, continental and international level.

As women, from our political and organisational experiences, from our grassroots organisations, as in the case of the women of the Latin American Coordination of Rural Organisations, CLOC, and partnerships of the kind that we have been building with other popular women’s sectors, we have become stronger, creating spaces for meeting / debate/ reflection/ actions, organising seminars and training courses, strengthening our grassroots organisations, producing materials, defining political lines and actions to contribute to the construction of objective conditions for the equal participation of women, young people and men throughout LVC.
III - Our Assemblies

- We are certain that our Assemblies provide a very important political space, for analysis, study, evaluation, decision-making, the construction of action plans, fraternisation, and strengthening our struggles and organisation/articulation at the international level.

- The assemblies are an organic part of the Conferences, and therefore the political/organisational definitions must be approved and accepted at the conferences, i.e, they are not just women’s definitions, they must be accepted and put into practice by the movement as a whole.

- The I Assembly and the III International LVC Conference were the historical framework in which 50% women’s participation in all activities was guaranteed and gender parity was adopted in the International Coordination Commission (ICC) as well as other organisational structures of LVC.

- These political definitions, among others, have allowed us to install/reflect/pressurise, by ensuring our rights and capabilities are valued, in order to guarantee that there is gender parity in all areas of decision-making of LVC.

- We will have to overcome many challenges before we have equal participation, but we have gained space and definitions and lines, we have become stronger and set goals that the whole of the movement must reach, while giving a whole new meaning to the internal political participation debate.

- The II Assembly, with the slogan "Organise the fight, land, food, dignity and life! Globalise the struggle, globalise hope!" we named ourselves the II International Assembly of Rural Women, and met in São Paulo - Brazil in 2004.

- We discussed issues such as the diversity of our sectors, solidarity and commitment to the fight against imperialism and patriarchy; we reaffirmed that we remain in the field as our natural space of life and different cultures; we acknowledged that we are historical discoverers of agriculture, guardians of land and seeds, creators of medicinal knowledge and preservers of biodiversity, and we are opposed to the threats posed by free trade to our autonomy, knowledge and expertise. We reject the World Trade Organisation and its commercial vision of the countryside. We asserted that our fight is to build a society based on justice and equality, respectful of human rights; we denounced the militarisation of the countryside, the criminalisation of social protest, the imposition of military bases, the invasion and occupation of villages, which cause death, destruction, violence and threaten the rights of women and people’s sovereignty. As women, we call for respect for all of our rights, we reject the patriarchal system and all its discriminatory manifestations; and we reaffirm the exercise of full civic participation. We demand the right to a dignified life and respect for our sexual and
reproductive rights; and the immediate implementation of measures to eradicate all forms of physical, sexual, verbal and psychological violence; as well as the elimination of feminicide, that still exists.

- In the III Assembly, we named ourselves: the III Women’s Assembly of Via Campesina, which took place in Matola, Mozambique in October 2008.

- We reflected on women who have, throughout history, fought against violence, defending their rights, territories and cultures since colonial times. We talked about how they are trying to colonise our minds and our lives; we demanded respect for our rights; we reaffirmed our struggles against the capitalist/patriarchal system and all its manifestations; we denounced the fact that women’s migration is related to impoverishment, social, economic, and gender violence in the countryside. We reaffirmed that the patriarchal capitalist system and its neo-liberal sexist model increase conditions of discrimination and violence against women and girls in rural areas;

- It is important to remember that in this III Assembly and V Conference we launched the universal campaign "Stop Violence Against Women" and defined that it should not only be a women’s campaign, but be adopted by everyone, thus contributing to the organisation of an offensive against patriarchal culture.

- Our Assemblies have been a reflection of our political maturity and the political/organisational process that we have been constructing these past 20 years.

- 2013 - IV Assembly. Here we are, and that is the result of the collective process that we started in Berder - France at the intermediate Conference in 2011, reflecting on our limits and setting ourselves the challenge to go one step further.

IV - The Journey Completed So Far: statements

- During these years we have tried to participate in different events, mobilisations with other sectors, we have reflected in different spaces and we have built reflections/statements that convey our ideals, our proposals and the realities in which we live in the countryside.

- 2003 – we participated in the III World Social Forum, we analysed the political context of that time; we reaffirmed our commitment to organisation and struggles, emphasising our pledge to "strengthen the training of women inspired by solidarity, freedom and commitment to the struggle for the liberation of our peoples".

2007 - Nyeleni - in the World Forum for Food Sovereignty, we made a strong point of our participation and proposal to advance the struggle for sovereignty

- In 2008 at the V Conference the balance sheet of the last term speaks of women: "women
within La Via Campesina have organised a major Conference on women’s rights in Galicia (Spain) and took a leadership role in some major actions, such as action against Aracruz Celulose in 2006 against the eucalyptus plantations in Aracruz, Brazil. Within La Via Campesina women have consolidated their regional processes in various regions. These are important steps in the path towards the full participation of women within our organisations. "Women play a fundamental role in food production and decision-making: La Via Campesina wants the rights of women to be recognised and fully respected. Women should, therefore, have equal access to productive resources. We also want to achieve full and equal participation of women at all levels and in all areas of decision making".

- 2009 - WSF Belem do Para - Brazil - we participated in the Assembly of women from different parts of the world and from our statements we particularly highlighted the following, "... We stand in solidarity with the women in regions where there are armed conflicts. We add our voices to those of the women of Haiti and reject the violence of the occupation forces. We stand in solidarity with the Colombians, the Congolese, and so many others who resist on a daily basis the violence of military groups and armed militias involved in conflicts. We express our solidarity with the women of Iraq who are subjected to the violence of the American military occupation. We sympathise especially with the struggles and resistance of Palestinian women. (...) For everyone and for ourselves, we will remain committed to the construction of the feminist movement as a counter-hegemonic political force and an instrument of women to bring about the transformation of their lives and of our societies, supporting and strengthening women’s self-organisation, the dialogue and articulation of the struggles of social movements"...

- And in 2009, within the framework of the meeting of the Women’s Commission in Seoul - South Korea, we launched the Declaration for 8 March and reaffirmed that: "we will keep fighting to change the patriarchal and capitalist world, we claim our right to a life with dignity, without violence and with respect for our sexual and reproductive rights, we are fighting for Food Sovereignty and peasant agriculture as alternatives to the food and climate crises; we demand comprehensive agrarian reform and respect for biodiversity". At that meeting we analysed and define that we should "strengthen the organisation and the struggle of women for emancipation; gender equality and the participation of women in all areas of decision making; put gender parity within our organisations into action; put an end to all forms of violence against women, build a fair and equal global society". Our slogan was: "Sovereignty feed us now; with the people’s struggle and equality. Globalise the struggle, globalise hope."

- 2010 - IV Assembly of the Articulation of Rural Women, CLOC - VC Latin America. There follows a small extract from the statement that summarises the political debate of the Latin American women farmers: "The feminist proposal that we will build will help define the socialist changes we yearn for, for which we will fight until the combined forces of capitalism and patriarchy are a thing of the past. We want relations between human beings, built upon equality. To build a supportive coexistence between peoples and cultures, that is decolonised, without sexism or racism. A region and a world free of all manifestations of violence, whether that be sexist or
patriarchal, and with comprehensive agrarian reform that guarantees women’s access to land”.

- 2010 in Maputo, Mozambique, we held an important seminar in conjunction with the WMW to create strategies common to our movements in order to strengthen the struggle of rural women for food sovereignty and to oppose violence against women; to strengthen the capacity of women leaders from Africa and Asia. We went further into issues related to Food Sovereignty, violence against women and climate change.

- In 2012 our statement for 8 March told the world that, rather than celebrate our progress, we would honour the memory of women workers from the countryside and the city, and reaffirm our commitment to keep fighting against the capitalist and patriarchal system in order to achieve equal opportunities and rights. It was demonstrated at that time that, although "women produce 80% of the food, they own only 2% of the land." Our slogan was: La Via Campesina says: Stop Violence Against Women! Women fighting against agribusiness, agrochemicals, in defence of Food Sovereignty, the environment, health, and women’s sovereignty!"

- Also in 2012, once again for 25 November, we launched our worldwide declaration Stop Violence Against Women and we announced the **Day of International Struggle Against Violence Towards Women**.

- Throughout this period we have held many meetings, seminars and training courses/schools, in order to increase and improve follow-up of training and articulation. From 2011, we have promoted training activities for women and young people in every continent.

- And finally, we wish to highlight that the Women’s Commission within the framework of the public policies seminar in Mexico - September 2012 decided unanimously to stage a protest to the whole of LVC in order to show our indignation at the violation of the principle of parity in the way the seminar was conducted. We say: it’s unforgivable that this should occur on the eve of celebrating 20 years of our existence, with all that women have contributed to the construction of this great international movement, that’s why we cannot remain silent. Our highly political protest consisted of not moderating any table, nor performing any místicas or other tasks considered as "less important", we maintained silence for a whole day; then we organised a work group and made our valuable contributions to the debate and proposals on public policy. We are certain that our political action was very successful, that it led to collective reflection on oppression, sexism, patriarchy and, most of all, the need for progress in the La Via Campesina on issues of gender awareness, respecting and promoting the political prominence and participation of women.

**V – How to Advance in Terms of Women’s Organisation**

- From 2009 onwards we have been continually and increasingly evaluating women’s internal organisation.
- We have established that, despite advances, the IWC as an organisational tool for communication, etc, has been rather disjointed in the last term. That its coordination format was not working. We need to make an organisational leap ahead for the next term.

VI – Is Transformed From a Women's Commission to an LVC International Women’s Articulation

- We haven’t just changed the words, this shows our political intention as regards the process of articulation, of women’s organisation within the whole of LVC. It also means that women are not a small part or an issue in the movement, we are a whole. We understand that making that change is a necessary part of being empowered to face the many challenges of the next term. In the IV Assembly we have to deal with this issue in greater depth and make the decision.

- The organisational format of the Articulation should be: the women from the ICC, plus one woman appointed by each region, i.e, two women leaders from each region. We define within the collective which region will assume the task of coordinating the articulation, this would be the job of the 2 appointed leaders of the region, with additional technical/activist support.

- In addition, each region must organise a group of women leaders to report on the political and organisational tasks in the region and at an international level.

VII – Challenges

- To ensure full gender parity at the international level, but also at the level of the member organisations;

- To recognise that our action is political action, and that we are, therefore, women politicians, hence an important step for us has been to recognise the contribution of the legacy of feminism, to give substance to the construction of our movement;

- To achieve full recognition and appreciation of the fundamental role of which we women are protagonists in terms of exercising food sovereignty;

- To integrate the new problems facing rural women who are crossing the borders between private and public, leaving the family plot and hearth in favour of paid agricultural work;

- To move forward towards more fluid communication between the Articulation and the regions;

- To develop a mid and long term strategic plan of articulation, organisation, training, and struggle in all regions and at the international level;

- To continue to appropriate and construct the theoretical and practical debate on peasant and
popular feminism;

- To go deeper into the discussion of how to deal, in these times of crisis, with the challenge of reconciling family life, productive work for survival and political/organic activism;

- To reinforce / create internal spaces of discussion, of solidarity, of confidence.

- To advance in the construction of class alliances with other sectors.

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VIII - General Guidelines for the 2013 - 2017 Action Plan

- In each region/country to beware of capital adjustment policies, because we are suffering the harsh consequences of a loss of rights that we had already won. To develop struggles with other sectors against these policies;
- To create coordination groups in each region;
- To reinforce actions against the transnationals, land-grabbing, mining and all forms of violence.
- To announce and articulate 2 days of international struggle: 8 March and 25 November.
- To strengthen the training/education/communication processes in all regions.
- To devote more organisation and give greater visibility to the campaign: Stop Violence Against Women;
- To promote exchanges;
- To produce materials: Videos, posters, fact sheets and other communicative tools that promote political debate and training.
It is very important to know that we are talking about feminism with La Via Campesina, that is already a big step forward. This is a very difficult fight to take on individually. And neither is it easy within our families.

Yesterday we heard different life stories, from America, Africa, Europe. And above all from Nandini in India. And it is only through solidarity, through collective reflection on these issues, that we can move forward.

But to do so, we need to change our way of thinking. We must make sure that men begin thinking about our relationship in a different way. One of our sisters from Indonesia said yesterday that we need to tackle the way things are constructed in a different way. Or build on what we already have. We do not believe that tradition and religion are bad, but the evaluation has shown us that we must fight against the patriarchal mentality in order to bring about change.

The task that La Via Campesina has carried out is very important because it has ensured that we can take this debate to our organisations. It is not always easy to include it in our agendas, but
once it becomes a collective petition each organisation must try to ensure that the different issues are dealt with collectively. It is easier when regarded from this point of view, all the work we have done on equality has been something that we have put in place, although sometimes the result is not tangible.

For example, we must bear in mind that the same things that happen in our homes also occur at this level. One of the biggest problems is that we, as women tend not to demand our own space. But this is a job for us, we have to be more visible. We have to make an effort to be more visible to them. This will take a lot of effort, especially as we have been learning to act in this way since we were children. So one of our biggest responsibilities will be to teach our daughters to react against this.

Women must work in a transverse way, they must not just be limited to a group. So this is a new stage, a new era in our collective organisation, in our work process.

One of the criticisms against us, moreover, is that there are problems in the way in which we operate, problems of organisation. We do not respond to all the different requests, which is understandable if we take into account that the internet is not accessible to all; that’s why it’s important to meet and come together in order to build collectively.

Finally, I’d like to say that the struggle we are carrying out is a long term project. In fact we are not moving structures directly, we have highs and lows, but we must keep up this struggle, in order to create a better world for our sons and daughters.

9. International Campaign to Stop Violence Against Women

- Juana Ferrer – CONAMUCA – Dominican Republic-La Via Campesina the Caribbean
  Politicial responsible in Charge of the Stop Violence Against Women Campaign

The Global Campaign to End Violence Against Women that we are carrying out in La Via Campesina is one of the most daring and difficult campaigns we have conducted. But it is no less true that it is also one of the most necessary to help with this construction, as it concerns the defence of our rights.

Through the training which is part of this campaign we have raised awareness, mobilised and developed partnerships in almost every country in the world where La Via Campesina operates. To move forward with our strategy we are going to take up proposals and challenges that have occupied so much space in our debate and our struggle.
In each country we have decided that there is a national and international level. To this effect, we must develop and make an action plan to follow up on this campaign. And to enable each country to use the campaign as a means of denouncing the violence exercised by capitalism and patriarchy against us women.

**Why the Campaign Stop Violence Against Rural Women**

“Women play and have played a key role in the construction of La Via Campesina since its birth. If we do not defeat violence against women within our movement, we will not advance in our struggles, and if we do not build new gender relations, we cannot build a new society”. Declaration V Conference, Maputo, 2008.

**Campaign Objectives**

- report and tackle all forms of violence committed against women in rural areas in all countries and at the same time expose violence against working class women.
- Denaturalise rooted violence against women and show how violence is structural in a neoliberal, patriarchal society.
- Strengthen the organisation and women’s struggle for our emancipation and progress towards gender equality and women’s participation in positions of power.
- Strengthen alliances with all groups, movements, and people who are willing to take up this campaign as their cause.
- Put pressure on governments to comply with international agreements and treaties that combat all forms of discrimination and violence against women.

**Lines of Action to advance the development of the Campaign for an end to all forms of violence against women.**

1. We have set up and developed the campaign in some countries where LVC has a presence through its organisations, working inwards in organisations of men and women, with the aim of encouraging these organisations to assume a role that inhibits violence.
2. Each country must develop and execute an action plan for the implementation of the campaign.
3. Each country must use the means at its disposal to promote the campaign and denounce actions of violence against women.
4. We must develop prosecution courts for cases of violence.
5. We must reanalyse events within our organisations in order to identify what is happening as regards the issue of violence and to define how to deal with each situation.
6. We must set up a communication team for the campaign at the international level, with references by continent.
7. Take up the proposal that all areas of training should include the theme of non-violence.
8. Promote partnerships with other women’s sectors and social movements with the aim of articulating joint actions opposing violence against women.

9. To launch an offensive of educational materials and awareness raising for both internal and external use by organisations: media, school, the workplace.

10. To draw up a document that makes the progress of the campaign stop violence against rural women visible worldwide, with statistics showing different forms of violence.

11. We confirm that the dates 8 March "The International Day of Women’s Struggles" and 25 November the "International Day of the Fight Against Violence", should be simultaneously taken up as days of struggle in all countries.

12. To enter deeper into discussion about Peasant and Working Class Feminism from within our organisations in order to advance the defence of our rights.

"We, all women and men of La Via Campesina, commit ourselves in a responsible manner to build new and better human relations, as a necessary part of the construction of the new society to which we aspire. For this reason in the V Conference we have decided to break the silence and launch the campaign in La Via Campesina".

- Elizabeth Mpofu – ZIMSOFF – Zimbabwe - Africa 1
  Current coordinator of La Via Campesina

Good morning comrades. We all know what we’re talking about when we talk about ending violence against women. Yesterday we had a very good discussion about these issues. There are challenges that we face as women.

In Africa, as a continent, we also have the problem of land-grabbing, we have mobilisation strategies to raise awareness, for both men and for women. Because we have also noticed that we cannot just educate women, men must also participate, because these are structural problems.

In these training sessions women learn more about their rights, about how to protect our seeds, and how to protect our natural resources.

We are also making use of the participation of our youth. Especially on the issue of ICT — information communication technologies. As most of us are denied our right to go to school, we don't know much about communication tools, so our young people are there to help us with this.

And we also need to know more about our countries’ policies. As Juana said, there are 2 important dates: 8 March and 25 November, and in Africa we are also participating in those activities.

We also have our regional rural women, for when African women from La Via Campesina also take part. Locally, we use local leaders, when we have meetings, we invite them too, especially
when we talk about problems related to land.

We also know that we are denied the right to inherit land after the death of our husbands. At times, this traditional policy stops us from inheriting. As part of our strategies we invent slogans like, ”women can do it”, reaffirming that women can stand up, win and fight.

- Mazdalifah - Indonesia - La Via Campesina South East and East Asia

Violence against women has become an important issue because it affects so many women all around the world. Because of that, the campaign was carried out in an effort to eliminate violence against women around the world. We have as commemorative days of struggle the 25 November which is the international day for the elimination of violence against women, and 10 December is international human rights day.

Asian women have to deal with this unfortunate situation. Due to poverty, women are the ones who bear the economic burden. Most of them are the economic backbone of the family. Bronstein (1982) said that women from poor families suffer triplefold. Firstly, they must struggle as underprivileged citizens. Secondly: their life is in itself a struggle since women farmers live in poor areas. And thirdly: because they live as a minority in the midst of male domination. That makes women more vulnerable to violence. The violence is perpetrated by their own family or by the people around them.

Women are key elements in the family, in improving resources, and especially in providing education for their children. In the economic sector, women drive industrial growth and help increase the family income. Women are seen as a potential resource, and women’s participation in development is expected.

What is violence against women?

The word violence recalls an abusive situation which is painful and causes negative effects. However, the majority of people only understand violence as a form of harsh action, speaking at a high volume, and cruel behaviour. Non-repressive behaviour does not count as a form of violence. Violence is, basically, all forms of behaviour, both verbal and non-verbal, of a person or group of persons, against another person or group of people, which has negative physical, emotional and psychological effects, converting that person or group of people into a target.
More specific limits on violence against women are mentioned in the United Nations Declaration in 1993, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, section 1, which is: "violence against women is any act of violence based on gender, which has resulted in or will result in a sensation of pain or suffering to women, including threats, coercion, restriction of freedom, whether it occurs in common or domestic spaces". (Women and Human Rights the Core Document, 1996)

Based on the above we can classify violence against women in several ways, namely:

1. Physical violence
2. Sexual violence
3. Psychological violence
4. Economic violence
5. Political violence

The above forms of violence which women suffer can occur anywhere. Whether that be at home, at work, at school or in other public spaces.

**The situation of violence against women in Asia**

Violence against women is regarded as normal in many countries. According to the WHO, there are 1.6 billion cases of violence against women every year, which is a huge number. Domestic violence occurring at home or within a family is very common. It affects women regardless of age, education or economic situation. The victims were women in developing countries and other Western countries.

Dina and Sulaiman, in their article entitled "The woman as a pioneer of the revolution", say that the condition of women worldwide, both in Western countries and the countries of the East, is very worrying. In Asia and the Pacific 30-40% of women have suffered sexual violence in the workplace, including verbal and physical violence.

The results of the research carried out by the Thomson Reuters Foundation in India shows that the country has a poor rating, due to the high number of marriages at an early age, domestic violence, especially amongst those who come from a poor family. The Parliament of India has passed a new law to protect women from sexual violence.

This law came about following the rape of a student on a bus in New Delhi in December 2012. And the rape of some Swiss tourists in May 2013.
In other countries, such as Pakistan, the issue of violence against women does not receive attention. There are no laws against domestic violence. The ancient culture and the ineffective judiciary prevent the problem of violence against women from being solved.

The situation is not very different in Thailand. In this country there are many women working from an early age and who do not receive full state protection. They are often victims of economic violence due to low wages and they are sexually assaulted at work. In the South of Thailand, a large number of women became victims of the conflict. Women were generally subjected to violence during the conflict. And once the conflict was over, they received no support from the state.

According to a national survey in China, domestic violence occurs in one-third of the country. That is equivalent to 270 million homes. A survey conducted by the Chinese Institute of Law in Gansu, Hunan and Zhejiang found that one-third of families had witnessed family violence, and that 85% of victims are women. Conditions in Japan however are almost the same as in other countries. The number of cases reported has increased over time. In 2007, there were 20,992 reported cases of violence, most of the victims being women.

The Campaign as an effort to address violence against women

The descriptions above have given us an idea of the violence suffered by women in several Asian countries. This occurs under cultural, economic and political conditions which may result in women suffering even more violence. These conditions require serious attention and treatment from various institutions so that violence against women can be overcome.

One effort that can be made is to design an effective and efficient campaign. The campaign must take into account the content of the message and select appropriate media for the audience.

The media should be the main channel of the campaign. But we are aware of access limitations and of how the mainstream media is at the service of private interests.

No more violence against women in Asia

The launch of the campaign in Southeast Asia and East Asia that began in South Korea in 2008, the Korea Women’s Peasant Association organised the campaign in Korea.

Training for women and the indigenous peoples of Sarawak, Malaysia, organised along the lines of the awareness raising campaign. The Malaysian campaign involved women who are also fighting to defend their land from TNC – a palm oil company.

The campaign in Indonesia began with the mobilisation of women on 16 October World Food Day in 2010. Women from the SPI mobilised in the capital, Jakarta, to reject imported rice that causes women farmers to live in precarious conditions.
The campaign was recently organised in a new country, in East Timor, a country which has been experiencing violence since 1970, under the Indonesian regime. Women and children live in poverty, and this violence grows worse when they are employed by international companies which have converted East Timor into their new market, because there is oil beneath the soil.

Asian women met in Hanoi in December 2011, where we also discussed how women can strengthen the campaign, we left with the action plan focusing on the area of education and training of women.

**María Do Fetal Present!**

With a very moving *mística* denouncing all expressions of violence faced by women in the world, the IV Women’s Assembly remembered María Do Fetal, who was murdered by her boyfriend in the city of Sao Paulo last January 2013. Of Portuguese Nationality and resident in Brazil, she supported the Landless Peasants’ Movement (MST) and La Via Campesina Brazil and International. Among many other activities, María was part of the team of interpreters at the V International Conference of La Via Campesina in Mozambique (2008), took an active role in the campaign Stop Violence Against Women and volunteered as an interpreter for many Via Campesina activities. The men and women of La Via Campesina present at this event raised their voices, saying: I am María Do Fetal, I am Maria do Fetal, affirming their commitment to fight so that this story is not repeated, so that more lives are not extinguished, but instead continue to flourish and give strength to our movement.
We are rural women of the world who have worked tirelessly over these past 20 years since La Vía Campesina has existed, to build a universal, broad, democratic movement which is committed both politically and socially to the defence of peasant agriculture, food sovereignty and the struggle for land, territories, justice, equality and the dignity of rural women and men.

We are women from different continents and cultures, we each have our own individual stories and are all engaged in the common struggle for life, for our own emancipation and that of our peoples. We are united in the vital defence of our right to food, to peasant farming, to protect biodiversity and our natural resources, and to fight to end every shape and form of violence, which is perpetuated by this capitalist, patriarchal economic system.

"La Vía Campesina is a movement that recognises the total equality of men and women and their equal worth"

This is clearly set out in the conclusions of our III International Conference in Bangalore. Following a structural change, La Vía Campesina guarantees that rural women and men will share equal responsibility within the movement. We are striving to strengthen open democratic processes throughout our international structure.

We deliver this Manifesto and our political stance to the women of the world and to our VI International Conference of La Via Campesina, as a contribution to the reflections, the work, the action, and the struggles that we carry out throughout the world. To achieve unity and to take action to ensure the full inclusion of women in equal conditions in all political, economic, social and cultural spheres, to put an end to the discrimination that affects our daily lives, in rural areas and in indigenous communities, is a task for which each and every one of us should feel responsible.

In these past two decades of La Vía Campesina’s existence, during which it has struggled and sewn the seeds of hope, women have been a key factor in carrying out political/organisational strategies for the future, fighting every day to defend mother earth and our territories against the plundering, devastation, death and oppression caused by colonial and entrepreneurial capitalism.
In these past two decades profound changes have taken place in the living conditions of the world’s rural women, the invasion of the countryside by capitalism and the multinationals’ appropriation of the agri-food systems have led millions of peasants to become the employees of others, causing forced displacement, loss of land and large scale migration.

The migration of rural women is closely linked to poverty and the levels of violence suffered by women and girls. This situation is more serious in view of the discrimination they suffer in their host countries. At the same time however, women have become a key element in supporting their families, and are often the main breadwinners in peasant households.

Confronting this reality is one of the fundamental objectives for which women and La Vía Campesina as a whole are fighting. Our biggest decision, to end injustice in the world, has been made, and we are going to break the vicious circle of poverty and give peasants’ rights the priority they deserve, in order to ensure that everyone has a plentiful, balanced diet, whilst acknowledging women’s crucial role in food production.

However, it is a hard fact that, far from diminishing, poverty in the majority of countries has increased in recent years. Several United Nations and World Bank studies confirm that this situation has not been reversed, it has only grown worse, and the gap between the distribution of wealth has widened, with disheartening repercussions on the rural sector, with rising poverty and homelessness, and women, as always, being the most worst affected victims.

Ending this humiliating class, gender and ethnic inequality that affects millions of women worldwide, as well as the scourge of hunger and violence, is a permanent struggle which the governments and parliaments of the world must take into account when legislating and approving laws that seek to guarantee a decent life for rural women and their communities around the world.

Access to land, one of our crucial rights
"For us indigenous and rural women, land is not just a production space, but one of life, cultures, emotions, identity and spirituality. It is not, therefore, a commodity, but an essential component of life itself, ours by unquestionable right, through systems of ownership, access and use defined by each town or nation".
poverty and discrimination. To assume that access to land should be gained through the market and in the form of individual property is far from representing the views and aspirations of peasant and indigenous women. We women demand a Comprehensive Agrarian Reform which redistributes the land with our full participation and integration in the entire process, guaranteeing not only access to land, but to every instrument and mechanism, as equals, with a fair evaluation of our productive and reproductive work, and which ensures that the rural environment will be a place where we can live in dignity and justice.

- Which protects and projects our methods of carrying out and perfecting agriculture, our seeds, our markets, our food, as well as our knowledge, our science and our technology.
- Which inspires and generates programmes and public policies that are compatible with our cultures and ways of life, with resources that make peasant production feasible, guaranteeing food sovereignty, peasant rights and social justice.

In this way access to land will undergo a Comprehensive Agrarian Reform, bringing about the development of a management model that places the social function of land and peasant and indigenous use and production practices at the forefront, guaranteeing the human need for food as a fundamental right in order to live.
Food Sovereignty with Gender Justice

"In order to preserve our dignity and our land, to keep our own food production alive and strong, to regain our food self-sufficiency as far as possible, to defend water, to exercise Food Sovereignty, it’s time for us to evaluate the role of women in all its dimensions in the development of our agri-cultures."

Our struggle and action for food sovereignty has given us women the opportunity to make visible our historical involvement in the development of the world’s food system and the role we have played since the invention of agriculture, in the collection and propagation of seeds, in the protection and safeguarding of biodiversity and genetic resources. At the same time we are one of the main pillars of social, ethical, and emotional support.

At the forefront, "is the food processing industry and the large supermarket chains that standardise production and hold much of the wealth created by the sector. Resistance and the alternative to this standardisation of consumption lies in food diversification and other forms of relating and consuming, in which the producers’ work is assessed, and consumers have a decent wage, which will enable them to acquire the food of their choice. (Nyeleni Mirian Nobre)

Under the slogan "food is not a market, but a sovereignty issue", we have been defining our sovereign rights to decide and organise the distribution, exchange, and consumption of food in terms of both quantity and quality, according to our possibilities and needs, prioritising solidarity, cultural and social factors, as well as health and well-being, for the sake of our families and our peasant and indigenous communities.

We can state that we have shown strength in taking on the struggle and the exercise of food sovereignty. To this end, one of the goals, for which we have worked tirelessly, was to "take stock of all our knowledge, in order to repossess our seeds, multiply them, care for them, share them and allow them to walk again, to grow and multiply in our fields without hindrance or aggression". This has placed us in direct opposition to intellectual property, certification rules, genetically modified organisms, and agrotoxins.

Furthermore our guidelines have been aiming to reassess labour relations and power in families and in movements, by rating the economic-productive role of reproduction and food production by women. This requires personal and collective processes, from us and from our comrades, for an assessment of the economic contribution that our work represents for agriculture, the family income and the macro economic indicators of nations.

We are certain that La Via Campesina’s most significant and revolutionary proposal was to propose food sovereignty, in opposition to the proposals of the FAO and Governments, which
sought to resolve hunger by means of Food Security, assuming one had the possibility and economic means of purchasing food, and thereby leaving the solution to the world’s biggest scourge, suffered by more than 1 billion human beings in the world, in the hands of the market.

**We are fighting against Neoliberalism, patriarchy and for our rights**

"Women, the historical creators of knowledge of agriculture and of food, still produce 80% of food in the poorest countries, and are currently the main guardians of biodiversity and of seeds for planting. They are the group worst affected by sexist neoliberal policies ". Women’s declaration, Nyéléni

Neo-liberal adjustment policies have intensified oppression and discrimination and increased situations in which violence is perpetrated against women and girls in rural areas, as well as created more insecurity and instability in women's working conditions, and a lack of social protection, as women are exploited to the maximum, with increasingly long hours, in the midst of a climate of violence that undermines our dignity.

We reaffirm that the anti-capitalist and antipatriarcal fight must go hand in hand with the struggle for equality between the sexes, the struggle against the oppression of traditional societies and against modern, individualistic, consumerist, sexist societies, based on market dominance. Our political project is to move towards a new vision of the world, built on the principles of respect, equality, justice, solidarity, peace and freedom, fighting to win the struggle to:

- Put into motion actions and immediate measures to eradicate violent and sexist practices, physical, verbal and psychological attacks within our organisations, the family, and throughout society.
- Achieve gender equality and non-discrimination.
- Fight indefatigably against all forms of violence in rural areas, against the growing militarisation and criminalisation of social movements and struggles in most countries in the world, as well as the implementation of anti-terrorism laws, used against peasants and indigenous people, who are the principal victims of the worst attacks and abuses in the name of the law.
- We express our determination to fight and to mobilise for justice, equality and peace in our land and throughout the world.
- Build the necessary proposals and lines of action in our movement to move ahead in socio political and technical training, with teaching methods aimed at raising awareness in our communities of the political and cultural visions that impede our progress in gender equality.
- Strengthen the mechanisms for the participation of rural women in proposing both internal and external public policies and programmes, which guarantee the resources for their development, both locally and globally, as well as their management, and extend access to education and technology.
Challenging the Patriarchate involves acknowledging the privileges and myths of male superiority, re-educating and raising the awareness of leaders, for example, by studying the history of women, in order to evaluate it. So far women have taken the lead, but this requires commitment as equals, in order to successfully make the transition from declarations to specific practices. Organised rural women are convinced that the future is promising, as there is no going back on the progress we have made and the triumphs we have achieved, much less so in the views of women. Fight for "sovereignty of our land, our territory and our bodies", saying no to violence against women in every shape and form.

That’s why, inspired by the debates of Latin American women and their policy proposals for laying the foundations of "Peasant and Working Class Feminism", our Assembly has taken on the challenge of extending this debate to organisations of La Vía Campesina at the international level.

Sowers of Struggles and Hope,
For Feminism and Food Sovereignty!
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 TRANSONTATIONAL COMPANIES THAT ARE DESTROYING PEOPLE AND NATURE.

LA VIA CAMPESINA COMPRISRES 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.

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