

STRUGGLES OF LA VIA CAMPESINA FOR AGRARIAN REFORM AND THE DEFENSE OF LIFE, LAND AND TERRITORIES



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Introduction and executive summary

In the current atmosphere of food, climate, poverty, financial, economic and democratic crises, the need for a massive change in the existing agrifood system is more urgent than ever! With the aim of strengthening the convergence of struggles, we will demonstrate in this publication that this change must be based on an integral and popular agrarian reform within the framework of Food Sovereignty.

Our concepts, strategies and struggles have undergone many changes within La Via Campesina, partly as a result of the current context, but also as a result of collective processes at the grassroots level in territories that are rich in historical, cultural, political and economic diversity.

WHY DO WE REGARD AN INTEGRAL AND POPULAR AGRARIAN REFORM AS A MATTER OF URGENCY?

Today peasants, indigenous peoples, farm workers, landless peasants, fisherfolk, consumers, women and young people worldwide are faced with difficult challenges.

Increasingly, in the four corners of the planet, people are feeling the effect of the growing imposition of financial and market paradigms on every facet of their lives. Subjugation to the interests of capital has led to the acceleration of capitalist extractivism, including industrial farming, livestock and fishing; large scale mining; mega-projects such as hydroelectric dams, large scale solar panel farms, tourism and large scale infrastructure – and to massive land grabbing and a changes in the way land is used. To an increasing extent, the control of common goods, which are essential to the lives of people and nature, are concentrated in the hands of a few private actors who have easy access to capital, with disastrous effects on the people and their rights. Furthermore, the highly concentrated market conditions (of consumable goods and the commercialisation of products) increasingly exclude small scale producers. Women and young people are by far the worst hit by these actions. The food, climate, environmental, economic and democratic crises that all of humanity is facing show clearly that a transformation of the current agricultural and food model is vital.

In many places, the people who defend themselves against and resist this “development” model face being demonised and criminalised, which in turn leads to prosecutions, imprisonment, violence at the hands of state or private security forces, and even murders. These are not random “incidents”, they are occurrences reported by almost every organisation. In this respect, States are not only failing in their duty to protect the people from these outrages, but are in fact important actors in advancing this model.

These effects are not a “natural phenomenon” of globalisation, they are the consequences of a political framework that responds to the paradigm of continuous growth: in

our analysis we find, amongst others, increasing commercialisation of land and water that favours grabbing; policies that favour the privatisation of seas and continental waters; the privatisation of seeds through patents and plant breeders’ rights, and agricultural and fishing policies that favour large scale production. These policies are reinforced within the framework of Free Trade Policies and Bilateral Investment Treaties.



THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: WHAT IS AN INTEGRAL AND POPULAR AGRARIAN REFORM?

But struggles on a local and global level have also grown stronger and there is widespread resistance with many success stories. La Via Campesina’s actions as a transnational social movement, have made it possible, through exchanges of experiences between organisations and social movements, to strengthen struggles, to analyse these policies and their mechanisms more deeply and to develop collective visions and proposals.

On the one hand the new context, the fact that capital is becoming more deeply rooted in the countryside, with a new alliance of national and international actors, and, on the other hand, the continued exchange of experiences and dialogues among our knowledges (called *diálogo de saberes*), have led to a more profound analysis and to a broader vision of our proposals for agrarian reform. Both the “object” of agrarian reforms, and “who” needs to bring them about have changed.

Whereas historically the organisations’ proposal for agrarian reform referred particularly to land distribution and to access to productive resources, such as credit, financing, support for marketing of products, amongst others, the **integral** or **genuine** agrarian reform is based on the defence and the reconstruction of territory as a whole, within the framework of Food Sovereignty. The broadening of the object of agrarian reform, from land to territory also broadens the concept of the agrarian reform itself. Therefore the contemporary proposal for integral agrarian reform does not only guarantee the democratisation of land, but also takes into consideration diverse aspects that allow families to have a decent life: water, the seas, mangroves and continental waters, seeds, biodiversity as a whole, as well as market regulation and the end of land grabbing. Furthermore, it includes the strengthening of agroecological production as a form of production that is compatible with the cycles of nature and capable of halting climate change, maintaining biodiversity and reducing contamination.

In the areas where there is still an unequal distribution of land, people are fighting for redistribution based on the expropriation of large estates. Land tenure, depending on the territories, can be collective, individual, or co-operative. There is also the possibility of granting co-operatives and peasants *use* rights to the land. In areas where the people do have access to land, the question is one of defending their territories against land grabbing.

Furthermore, the vision of *who* needs to carry out the agrarian reform is changing. Until the year 2000 there was a wide consensus to the effect that democratically elected governments should be the prime actors carrying out the reforms. Nevertheless, the current processes, that have led to major power imbalances, increasingly demonstrate that only a powerful popular movement, that is both rural and urban, can assure that such a process is carried out.

The analysis is also based on past agrarian reforms: both socialist and classical reforms have had their limitations. In many countries classical reforms that were based on the common economic and political interests of peasants and sectors of urban industrial capital were carried out – the latter with the aim of restoring productivity to unproductive large estates and creating an internal market for their industrialised products. With the changing of the agroindustrial model towards a transnationalised economy, which intensifies the use of common goods on a large scale, and where there is a growing alliance between transnational financial capital and the national elite, an agrarian reform is no longer considered to be necessary in the eyes of capitalists.

On the basis of this analysis, **strategies** are increasingly focused on carrying out an agrarian reform that is driven by social movements. Depending on the political context in which organisations act, most do not rule out intervention in public policies, but they reinforce strategies for change from the grassroots level: **direct actions**, such as occupying land, marches and protests and other forms of civil disobedience; **the praxis for change**, such as building production systems that are compatible with the cycles of nature, solidarity trade relations and supportive social relations; **the democratisation of knowledge and social relations free of oppression**, which aim to revert hierarchical, racist and patriarchal logic. The strategies also include the promotion of a different kind of communication from that of the mass media, and of another research model, from a land-based perspective. With the fight for Food Sovereignty there is an increasing **convergence** of struggles seeking to achieve a correlation of forces that will allow them to move towards a political system that favours the common good.

In this respect, it is evident that integral and popular agrarian reform is understood to be a process for the building of Food Sovereignty and dignity for the people.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PUBLICATION

Working on the basis of this conceptual framework, in which agrarian reform is presented as a defence and a recovery of land for Food Sovereignty, and as a people’s process, this publication will be structured as follows:

Firstly, chapters 2 and 3 present La Via Campesina’s analysis of the global context we are currently facing and the form in which capital is appropriating territories. What developments have led to this unprecedented level of land grabbing, land concentration and evacuation of people from their territories? To which actors do we refer when we speak of “capital”? What is the political framework that favours these processes on a global level? What are the consequences for the food and agricultural system? And how is that reflected in our territories?

This is the context in which La Via Campesina’s has developed the concept of integral and popular agrarian reform, which will be presented in chapter 4. How has the concept been modified from a vision of land distribution to a territorial vision? What were the most important milestones? Beginning with the question “How, in today’s world, can we achieve a change in the paradigm towards Food Sovereignty and agrarian reform?” we will present, in chapter 5, the strategies of La Via Campesina, which include direct actions and bottom up praxis, alternative communications and research, and political intervention on a national and international level.

While the analysis focuses more on global processes, the interviews held with leaders of La Via Campesina’s member organisations from different continents and regions show the multidimensionality of the mechanisms which specifically affect territories. They also reflect the way in which the diversity of cosmovisions in territories which are so historically, culturally, politically and economically diverse (which can also be seen in their terminology) has enriched and extended La Via Campesina’s construction of visions.

Because the aim of the publication is to summarise these aspects as a whole from the perspective of La Via Campesina’s organisations, it is not possible to enter into each issue in depth. Therefore, at the end of each chapter we provide suggestions for further reading, which will be a useful starting point for acquiring more in depth knowledge of the issues discussed here.

A reading of the current context: capitalist appropriation of the agrifood system is on the rise

The continued exchange of experiences and dialogue of knowledges between social movements and organisations, researchers and allied NGOs have made it possible to **acquire a more in-depth knowledge of the problems and identify common mechanisms** in the implementation of the extractivist model in the different regions and continents which are analysed in this chapter. Although the historic and political contexts are very different and the way in which the presence of capital in the countryside is becoming more deeply rooted differs, organisations the world over find themselves faced with very similar challenges.

La Via Campesina’s debates analyse the phenomenon of capital becoming more deeply rooted in the countryside. This is demonstrated in a large number of processes which are increasingly threatening to our territories. There have recently been massive changes in land use and the practice of large scale land grabbing for extractivism, which includes industrial farming, including agro-fuels and animal fodder, over exploitation and privatisation of the use of seas; industrial confined livestock production; timber exploitation, large scale mining, new technologies such as “fracking”; tourism, and large scale infrastructure projects, such as highways and airports. Recently, there have even been incidents of land grabbing for “protecting nature” and for large scale alternative energy projects, such as solar panel and windmill farms and hydroelectric dams. In conjunction with regulations that free markets and add force to the right to declare seeds and biodiversity as intellectual property, the advancement of GMOs and dependence on agrochemicals, the process of the appropriation of the agrarian and food system by just a few multinational corporations, in a market that is becoming increasingly concentrated, is becoming more and more deeply rooted.

HISTORIC PRECEDENTS: THE LONG STRUGGLE FOR AGRARIAN REFORMS

For many organisations the attack on their territories is nothing new, rather it is simply a continuation of old processes of plundering, just with a new face. In colonised countries the unequal distribution of land dates back to the era of the colonies. The colonial system established a production and exploitation system of primary goods (mining and agricultural products) for exportation; in exchange they functioned as a market for products produced and industrialised in Europe. Large land-owners occupied the most fertile land, with irrigation possibilities, close to commercial centres or ports, while typically indigenous peoples were robbed of their land and forced into servitude, or were allowed to keep only tiny parcels that were less suited to farming. This system was built on profoundly racist, patriarchal and unequal social structures, patterns which, in many cases, still remain in place today. In this respect, the struggle for agrarian reform has always been a struggle for democratisation, decolonisation and economic and social emancipation.

In the case of Europe, historically feudalism established an unequal distribution of land. In some cases, for example in Andalusia, these legacies still dictate the structure of land tenure today.

There were several agrarian reforms in the 20th century; those that are categorised in the debate as classical/bourgeois reforms, and those that are categorised as socialist reforms (see table 1). Nevertheless, in many countries, a rapid reconcentration occurred, leaving peasants with land that was less productive, or had lack of access to markets, to name just two.

Classical Agrarian Reform



Popular Agrarian Reform

In the past, several countries succeeded in bringing about agrarian reform, because large estates were regarded as an impediment to development on account of being unproductive. Landowners practiced extensive production, with next to no investment and, in most cases, without using even half of their land. This was a clear injustice: a great deal of land, which was not even productive, in the hands of a few, as opposed to millions of families who did not have any land at all.

This allowed an alliance of classes in favour of the agrarian reform between peasants and national industrial capital, so that the peasants could make the unproductive land of the large estates productive, and thereby contribute to national economic development. These were partial reforms and favoured the interests of farming peasants above the rights of nomadic pastoralists, forest dwellers, and other rural inhabitants. They were incomplete, defective reforms, and perhaps more importantly, current conditions are such that the alliance between classes that made them possible is no longer viable. This is because financial capital is transforming large, unproductive estates into agribusinesses and mines, which is why there no longer exists a capitalist argument in favour of the need to carry out an agrarian reform in order to bring about development.

Given that the classical agrarian reform was defective and is no longer even possible, there is a need for a new call in favour of a “Popular Agrarian Reform”. The idea is that peasants, indigenous peoples, nomads, fishers, workers and other popular sectors from both the countryside and the city fight together in favour of popular or peoples’ territories where we produce healthy food in harmony with nature, using agroecology and our ancestral practices and people’s knowhow.

Bringing about this agrarian reform also requires an alliance of classes, but no longer with any sector of national capitalism. What we need is an alliance between rural people and the urban working class. To build this alliance we need to farm ecologically and demonstrate that popular (or people’s), ecological territories, used for production of healthy food, are more beneficial to Society and to Mother Earth than capitalist territories. Popular territories make it possible to live with dignity, to produce healthy food and to protect common goods, such as soil, water, forests and biodiversity, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Capitalist territories are full of large scale monocultures and strip mines, are loaded with pesticides, GMOs and toxic waste, and they generate poverty, migration and global warming.

Table 1: Classical agrarian reform vs popular agrarian reform

In recent history, the green revolution and structural adjustment programmes have had a huge impact on the social fabric of the countryside and on the family economies of peasants. Through international institutions – many of them transmitting the interests of hegemonic countries and multinational corporations – in the 80s and 90s there was a major restructuring of states, including social and economic policies, the imposition of free trade, deregulation and the privatisation of state owned companies. This occurred first in the Uruguay Round, finally leading to the transformation of the GATT into the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which not only increased its **global power**, but also introduced the negotiation of **new areas of the economy** on an international level, including public services, rules governing intellectual property and investments, the firmer establishment of free trade, the agricultural and textiles sectors, and the “conflict resolution” in the WTO.

In this way the decision making power once held by local and national states moved to an international level, a process which has not yet ended. This phenomenon in effect as a de-democratisation of public policies and a strengthening of economic systems based on the “international division of labor”. But the result has been an increased dependence on the production of primary goods (with extremely volatile prices) on the part of countries in the South who, in turn, import finished goods. Furthermore, deregulation of financial markets

has led to a concentration of capital and a profound alienation by financial capital of the real economy. In the countryside the consequences are disastrous: the plundering of peasant territories, of markets, the concentration of land in the hands of a few, the radical rise of production costs, the shredding of social fabrics; and to growing poverty, hunger and migration to cities in search of work. In this regard, these measures are seen by our organisations as “a second colonisation”.

At the same time, programmes for land redistribution by means of the expropriation of large, private estates have, with very few exceptions, come to an end. By means of “market assisted agrarian reform” programmes, the World Bank not only sought to implement the ideology that access to land must be subjected to market rules, but also to dilute the concept of agrarian reform, and to demobilise and co-opt the social struggles for agrarian reforms (see table 2).

Although market assisted agrarian reform programmes have mostly come to an end because of their inefficiency, the real extent of the ideology behing them is increasingly clear: it is not just about the privatisation of land but of **every aspect of life**: food, land, water, sea, seeds, common goods, education, health and even the right to pollute nature. Furthermore, **the strategies** of these international financial bodies for the implementation of these policies follow a similar pattern.

What is the World Bank’s objective?

At the top of the World Bank’s agenda is Free Trade, including the privatisation and commercialisation of public goods. Within this ideology, in their agricultural agenda they promote the commodification of land, water, the sea and seeds, to increase investments in the name of “guaranteeing food security”, “combatting poverty” or “fighting hunger”. States play an important role, given that they can guarantee these interests through their power of legislation and their monopoly on security. The programmes for “market assisted agrarian reform” show this, based on the following principles:

- Private allocation of land: A free land market needs to guarantee companies legal security. This includes regulating them via land registry, etc.
- The de-regulation of land and water markets which still fall mostly within national jurisdiction. Some policies are: the privatisation of communal land and the suppression of regulations that restrict the purchase of land by foreigners.

In what way does the World Bank exert its influence?

Its main action is to promote its ideology, while finance is one motor for its implementation.

- 1

Technical advice: By means of large scale technical support, in the form of economic and social analyses, it doesn't just make recommendations, but also draws up public policies, laws and regulations.
- 2

Organisation of the implementation of public policies: To gain support on a national level, it organises "networks" or "alliances" between the States and private, social and economic, national and international actors.
- 3

Financing: It gives loans carrying conditions of readjustment of public policies and of a commitment to pay debts.

What is market assisted agrarian reform?

It's a programme promoted by the World Bank for the allocation and registry of land, and subsequently the establishment of a market for *buying and selling* land. Landless peasants negotiate a price with the landowners and the State guarantees credit for its purchase. This mechanism was first developed in South Africa, where social contradictions after *apartheid* were huge. One of the aims of market assisted agrarian reform is also to discourage social struggles for agrarian reforms with the illusion of a better distribution of land, especially in countries that are "important" for the World Bank, like, for example, Brazil, where the MST and the *Eldorado dos Carajás Massacre* in 1996 made international news, or the uprising of the Zapatistas in Mexico, who formed autonomous communities in reaction to Mexican state oppression and to the signing of NAFTA in 1994.

What arguments did the World Bank use to promote this programme?	What were the results?
They argued that it was a participative mechanism: The two parties negotiate and the State simply accompanies the process and guarantees the credit.	It was not participative , because the negotiating terms were completely unequal. Landless peasants were not in a position to negotiate a fair price and, very often, they accepted a debt that was far greater than what they were able to pay. Many peasants ended up becoming heavily indebted.
That it was cheaper , because the two parties negotiate the best price rather than the State, which pays exorbitant prices for land.	It was not cheaper , because it turned out that land was often sold at prices way above the market price.
It increases productivity , because (partially indebted) landowners sell their land which is lying idle.	There was no better redistribution of land , because most of the large estate owners did not want to sell their land, given that it was a reflection of their social status and political power. Most sellers were medium scale farmers.
It avoids conflict , because it is based on voluntary sales and not expropriation.	The contradictions and inequality in the countryside were not reduced.
The ideas of agrarian reform with a better distribution of land are weakened.	It resulted in partial division and conflicts within peasant organisations who were fighting for agrarian reform. LVC launched its Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform in 1999 to promote genuine and integral agrarian reforms with a better distribution of land, and to denounce the World Bank.

Table 2: The World Bank and "Market assisted agrarian reform"

This is the historic background which led to the formation of La Vía Campesina in 1993: peasant organisations saw an urgent need to intensify the collective struggle to support local resistance. By exchanging experiences and analysing these processes in greater depth, they aim to strengthen collective processes of defence and recovery of land and territories which could stand up to the threat of the multinational corporations who are acquiring increasing economic and political power. Several of the Latin American organ-

isations that helped found LVC have past experience of fighting for agrarian reforms in their countries, where land distribution has been inherited from colonial times, making the struggle for agrarian reform one of LVC's principal focuses since it began. In 1999 the Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform was launched, specifically to support local struggles for agrarian reforms and put the need for agrarian reforms with a better distribution of land on the international agenda (*see chapter 4*).

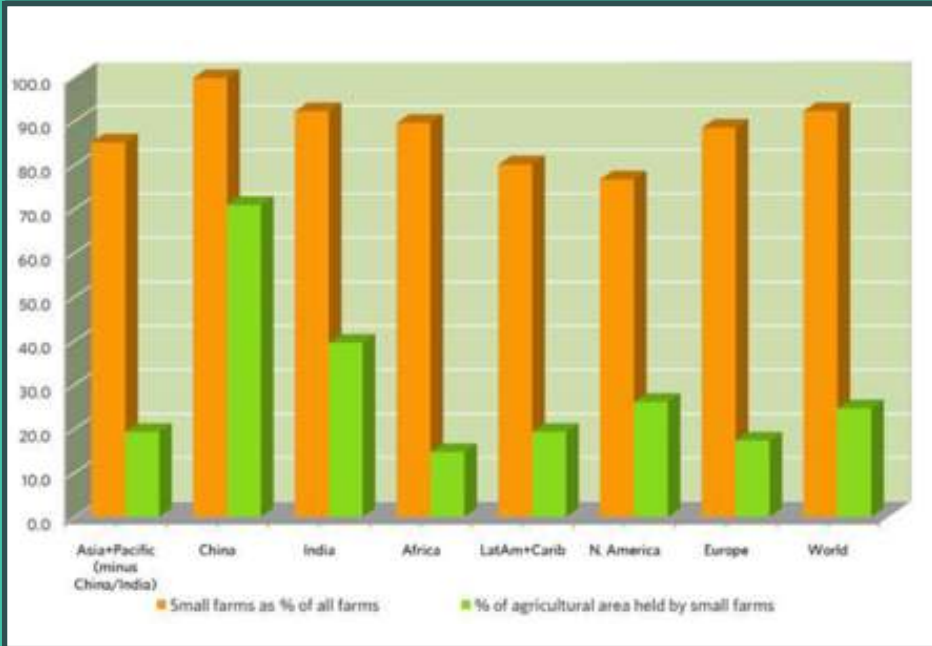
HOW CONCENTRATED IS LAND TENURE TODAY?

The high concentration of agricultural land in the hands of a few people for the purpose of commercial exploitation is a historical reality in many parts of the world. Nevertheless, in the last twenty years, the multiple processes of intensified capitalisation in the countryside has led to an acceleration of land concentration, owing to the expulsion of small scale producers. This can be seen in several studies which analyse land concentration on a national or local level, based on agricultural censuses, or case studies.

In their study, "Hungry for Land," GRAIN explains that today, on a global level, around 90% of farmers are small-scale peasant farmers, with an average of 2.2 hectares, but have access to less than a quarter of all land. **Table 3** shows the percentage of small farms out of the total number of farms, compared with their access to agricultural land per continent. At the same time, they are the ones who produce the vast majority of what we eat. How is that possible? The first reason is that small farmers tend to focus on the production of food, which is sold in local and national markets and reaches the people who need it most. Particularly

in the countries in the South, this kind of production and its sale is informal, so much so that it isn't even reflected in official statistics. Agribusiness, on the other hand, focuses on exporting commodities, such as sugar cane, canola, soy, palm oil, which is often used for the production of agrofuels, and for large scale confined livestock production. The second reason is that small farms tend to be more efficient than industrial farming, as they produce a large number of products in a small space, using human labour more than machines.

Table 3: Small farms as a percent of all farms versus the area they hold.



Source: GRAIN "Hungry for Land"

The study also affirms with numbers what peasant organisations have stated all along: that the number of small scale farms is falling. Furthermore, the remaining peasant farms are getting smaller all the time, while large agribusiness plantations are getting increasingly bigger.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, it is important to bear in mind the fact that in many cases peasants are displaced to areas less amenable to farming, while large plantations occupy the most fertile spaces with the best climate, with access to irrigation, better access to transport routes and proximity to cities.

THE ACCELERATION OF LAND GRABBING

The expulsion of peasants for the advancement of extractivist projects has been under discussion for a long time. Nevertheless, the real extent of land grabbing started to become apparent in the late 2000s when it increased significantly with the financial and food crises in 2008.

On the one hand the food crisis led States that depend on food imports and have a lot of access to capital – including the Gulf oil states – to invest in land abroad in order to produce food, with the aim of guaranteeing food security in their countries – at the expense of local peoples.

On the other hand, after the financial crisis, transnational capital started to look for new, more stable and secure forms of investment. According to this financial vision, land and water are regarded as limited resources, essential for human survival, for which reason their value will increase in the long term. It is also predicted that the price of food will rise – as a consequence of a growth in the population, increased meat consumption in countries like the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China) and the use of more and more land for producing

animal feed and the development of mega energy and infrastructure projects, etc.

Furthermore, the capitalist system, based on continuous growth, leads to a growing demand for primary products, such as copper, gold, coltan, and aluminium, but also fossil energy products, such as petroleum and gas. Despite price instability, a shortage of these products is predicted, which will lead to a rise in prices. Which is why today, mineral deposits which in the past were not considered to be lucrative owing to their low concentrations, are being exploited on a large scale, in turn leading to an increase in extractive activities in new biodiversity rich territories.

A new development in land grabbing methods is that promoted by certain “conservation” projects, which strip the people from the right to gain access and use their traditional habitats, for example for hunting, gathering, sustainable forest management or traditional fishing.

As can be seen, these processes have not only accelerated, but are affecting more and more territories, which

in the past were managed by people with traditional rights and in places where the peasants had land. What’s more, they are increasingly being extended to new spaces, such as, for example, the sea. Perhaps the most drastic form of land grabbing occurs in Africa, which is very rich in natural resources with low prices. Furthermore, in 2012 La Via Campesina declared that land grabbing and land concentration were no longer a phenomenon limited only to the global South. Particularly with the dissolution of the socialist system in Eastern Europe, new processes, leading to large scale land grabbing, began. Today, Eastern European countries have reached levels of extreme concentration, similar to those in Colombia or Brazil. At the same time, the State is intervening more and more actively in these processes of land grabbing and concentration, reinforcing them, instead of fulfilling its obligation to acknowledge and protect the ancestral territories of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant populations in the Americas and other ethnic and traditional peoples.



HOW EXTENSIVE IS LAND GRABBING?

While peasants survive on an average of 2.2 hectares worldwide, land grabbing is occurring to an extent that is difficult to imagine; quite often documented negotiations show the sale and concession of land measuring several tens of thousands of hectares, sometimes hundreds of thousands of hectares, or over a million hectares.

It’s difficult to know for certain the exact extent of land grabbing. That is partly due to the lack of official figures, and partly to the lack of transparency in these types of deals. On the other hand, definitions of what is understood as land grabbing differ greatly. Consequently, we can assume that the real extent far exceeds what is exposed here.

According to figures from GRAIN, 30 million hectares were grabbed through 2015. But this figure refers only to grabbing for food crops covering an area greater than 500 ha (although it includes food crops destined for the production of agrofuels such as soya, sugar cane, African palm or grain for animal feed). This figure therefore excludes other agricultural products (such as cotton), as well as land extensions that have been converted for the purposes of mining, tourism, wood and mega projects (such as hydroelectric dams and infrastructure projects). In comparison, the total agricultural surface of France is about 27 million hectares.

An analysis of the countries with the greatest prevalence of land grabbing shows that they are mostly regions where the population suffers from serious problems of malnutrition and hunger, such as, for example, Ethiopia and South Sudan.

Furthermore, it must be understood that land grabbing goes hand in hand with water grabbing. One example is large scale farming which requires irrigation in order to guarantee continuous cropping for the export market. Another example is that of mining, which depends on large quantities of water, as well as energy. One consequence of the latter is the construction of megaprojects for generating energy, such as hydroelectric dams, an activity which leads to large scale water grabbing and evictions of inhabitants. In addition, water is increasingly being grabbed to be bottled and sold. The extent of this kind of grabbing is unknown and unquantified, but there is a lot of documentation of specific cases and their disastrous effects.

What is land grabbing?	El control sobre la tierra se realiza:
Land grabbing has different definitions. Ecoruralis has come up with a broader definition for discussion: “Land grabbing is the control (whether through ownership, lease, concession, contracts, quotas, or general power) of larger than locally-typical amounts of land by any persons or entities (public or private, foreign or domestic) via any means (‘legal’ or ‘illegal’) for purposes of speculation, extraction, resource control or commodification at the expense of agroecology, land stewardship, food sovereignty and human rights.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● This can be direct or indirect, through ownership, lease, concession, contract, quotas or just plain power.● By any person or entity, including private and public sector investors, whether local or foreign.● By any means, whether or not it contradicts local legislation.● This includes industrial farming and livestock production, mining, large scale infrastructure, nature protection, energy producing projects, and tourism.

Table 4: The Definition of Land Grabbing

In the past, it was the community that managed the land, which could not be sold. Each person lived autonomously from his or her land, from their crops, and the river was for the fishers. Traditional law focused on harmonious existence between peasants, fishers and those who made their living from livestock farming and nature. Each individual was required to respect the communities' rules and, as they only had the right of use, each individual had the obligation to take care of their own portion.

Land grabbing began in the 2000s. People arrived in communities with heavy machinery. At first some believed that the government had sent support for them, whereas in fact the government had sold their land to a foreign investor. That was when the people started to rebel. They occupied the land, they protested, and the government sent the police. There were many casualties, some people were beaten to death, and others imprisoned.

The events in Mali are similar to what is happening throughout the region: the law is allowing land to be grabbed from the poorest sector of the population that depends on it for a living, favouring investors, that is, the richest sectors of society. The law is designed to convert the land into a machine of exploitation, to make profits, while of course disregarding the customs and uses of the people and communities who depend on that land for their livelihood.

In Mali, the *domanial et foncier* legal code (concerning state land tenure) was modified, resulting in the nationalisation of all land. Now the state owns all the land and does not need to consult the peasants in order to carry out business negotiations. Land grabbing is carried out in three ways: the first is via concessions for mining. The second is via concessions for land lasting between 30 and 80 years, signed between the government and foreign companies, or other countries, for the production of grain, palm, or sugar. The third way is via title deeds, which belong to the government, who can therefore speculate with them. In

all three cases the government is an accomplice in the land grabbing process.

As far as we are concerned, agrarian reform is the acknowledgment of land belonging to the community and the guarantee of our traditional rights. Our struggle takes two forms: political involvement and direct actions. Firstly we divide into different reserach groups to deal with different issues. I was in charge of studying law, and we discovered article 43 in the *domanial et foncier* law, which recognises the community's rights over land. To bring about a change in policies we wrote a memorandum encompassing all the factors, and proposing a rural policy containing 153 articles.

Parallel to these events was the process of the FAO guidelines (Note: for guidelines on responsible governance of land tenure, fisheries and forestry, **see chapter 5**) We organised ourselves to take part in the formulation process in order to put a stop to land grabbing. And that served as a reference for drafting the legislative proposal.

But we also "do politics". For us, doing politics means taking direct action: marches, strikes, blockades. We occupy the land that has been conceded and sold. For example, in one case concerning 20,000 hectares, we succeeded in expelling a multinational with South African-Chinese capital. In another case we succeeded in forcing the government to reverse the takeover of a property of 800 hectares, but the case went to court and the courts decided in favour of the company. The fight is still ongoing.

One very important action is the "West African Caravan for Land, Water and Seeds" for 15 countries in the sub-region, with the aim of raising awareness of land, water and seed grabbing, and mobilising the population for resistance.

We have been imprisoned and beaten, but we continue. If we engage in the fight it's because we're convinced we're going to win.

THE EXPULSION OF PEASANT PRODUCTION FROM MARKETS

Another worldwide consideration is the increasing liberalisation of the whole agrifood system. The concentration of the entire value chain has grown to unprecedented degrees, putting strong pressure on peasant economies. Through fusions and sales, the number of companies dominating the links and who are involved in the whole process, from production, exportation, importation and wholesale business, are becoming fewer and fewer. This can be seen in the production and sale of agricultural inputs (pesticides, fertilisers, seeds), as well as in the production and sale of food. This power of the global and local markets puts pressure on the prices of peasant production and, in turn, lowers labour and environmental standards, while increasing the price of consumable goods.

One example is the agrochemical and seed market: to date the vast majority of seeds used by small farms are still

local seeds. However, there are some worrying tendencies. The agrochemical market, for example, generates some 54,000 million dollars per annum (2013), and 75% of it is dominated by just six companies. These chemical companies have also appropriated the commercial seed market, of which they dominate some 60% today, and 100% of genetically modified seeds. Currently the fusion of 6 of the 7 biggest actors is under discussion: Monsanto and Bayer, ChemChina and Syngenta, Dow and DuPont. If there are no political interventions, the entire market will be controlled by just three companies. Within this context it is not surprising that commercial seeds, which are sold as a "package", require the use of a large number of agrochemicals. Worldwide, despite all the rhetoric concerning sustainability, the use of agrochemicals is increasing. The interests of companies which are implementing rules to criminalise peasant seeds are equally clear (*see chapter 3*).

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS FACED IN THE SEA, CONTINENTAL WATERS AND MANGROVES?

LVC's increasing exchange with fishers' and gatherers' organisations throws the issue of "blue grabbing" into debate. It is becoming increasingly obvious that this type of grabbing typically takes the same form as that of land grabbing. A growing loss of communities', fishers' and gatherers' control over natural resources is observed, in continental waters, as well as the sea and in mangroves.

Industrial fishing results in overfishing and destroys natural reproduction cycles, which, as a result, leaves many fishers without a livelihood. Increasing privatisation of beaches (for example for tourist projects) on the one hand, and the "protection" of ecosystems by certain conservation agencies on the other, deprives fishers of physical access to these territories.

The rapid expansion of industrial aquaculture, with products destined for exportation, such as shrimp, leads to the felling of mangroves, which are fundamental to the reproduction of sea life and to communities who make a living from gathering. Furthermore, the runoff from industrial shrimp farms is toxic and results in the extinction of natural systems. While mangroves are protected on an international level, on account of their being one of the ecosystems with the most biodiversity, and one of the most important for the capture of Co2, their felling continues.

Table 5: Experience in Mali: Land grabbing and agrarian reform understood as the defence of territory and traditional rights

WHO ARE THE ACTORS IN TERRITORIAL LAND GRABBING?

In the last 20 years the actors have changed drastically. Who provides the “big capital” behind them? The origins of these investments are difficult to ascertain, because they often comprise a complex network of actors who are different in every case. Quite often the geographic origin can no longer be determined, as the actors are transnationals who adjust their legal address according to their needs (tax evasion, legal protection through international trade and investment agreements, subsidies, etc.). Furthermore, it is often the case that behind an investment there lies hidden a whole invisible alliance of actors, including various investment funds, which, in turn, belong to other funds, and so on.

On the one hand we can define the **actors of production and marketing**: large agribusiness industries, of chemical and seed inputs, of industrial fishing, of mining, of timber exploitation, many of them multinationals, with a strong interest in entrenching the current system more firmly, as it will benefit them financially. Most of them are publicly traded companies, in other words, they operate on financial capital. But there are also direct investments in land and water by **investment funds and other financial actors**, such as banks, insurance companies and pension funds. **On the local level**, there are actors, for example, lawyers, or law firms who serve as intermediaries, for the purchase and

legalisation of land before its sale to a multinational, often supported by the local authorities, which make these deals “viable”. The growing concentration of market power of these multinational corporations favours their influence in politics and represents a threat to democracy.

Despite the growing internationalisation of politics, **States** play a key role. In many cases, the interests of State actors and of the national elites and multinational groups are closely linked. Their power to adjust regulations and laws are important conditions for increasing wealth. Furthermore, they support these processes through tax relief or other direct or indirect subsidies, in other words, with public money. They even use the legal system and their monopoly of security forces – the police, the army and, in some cases, paramilitaries – to prosecute protestors, evict people forcibly from their homes, threaten and even murder, with the aim of silencing protests and resistance.

The implementation of institutional law is strongly supported by **international financial institutions** and States’ **international co-operation for development**, while **national banks** provide support with finance, low interest credit, or intervene by exerting their influence in public policies. One common tactic is the forming of, often secret, alliances, between private and state actors in order to

gain influence in the highest spheres and to persuade the national elite of their benefits. Furthermore, they intervene as “intellectual” actors who, through analysis, research and the forming of public opinion and policies, promote a neoliberal ideology, with a false discourse regarding the eradication of hunger and poverty. In this respect, financing is an incentive which comes with these actors’ conditions (*see also table 1*).

The mass media, which greatly influences public opinion and is increasingly concentrated in very few hands, is also regarded as a part of these alliances. Related to this issue, in many countries there is an overlap between investors who control agribusinesses and other extractivist projects, and the control of newspapers and television channels. There are even cases in which they support *coups d’etat* against progressive governments, such as occurred in Honduras and Brazil recently, and take away the voices of, and criminalise, progressive movements.

Regarded in this light, this analysis has changed the landscape for peasant organisations, the same ones which were formed in processes based on the struggle against the owners of large, often non productive, estates, who exercised power over local politics and economy; these organisations are now confronted with an alliance of actors who are difficult to define and to track. As Rumanian peasants say:

“we don’t know who our neighbours are anymore”.

What are the policies

that favour the appropriation of the agrifood system?

These developments are not “natural phenomena” of globalisation with no other alternatives, but have developed within an international and national framework: through legislation and regulations (and/or their dissolution) and through the States’ monopoly over the legal system and security forces. Policies that favour the grabbing of land and public goods are multidimensional, interrelated and vary according to the legal-political environment. They lack transparency and are most often accompanied by the corruption of the national elites putting forward their own interests. Participation of the people affected occurs only as an exception. We will mention here some developments that have had global consequences but which, nevertheless, allow us to place national and local politics within a wider framework.

REGULATIONS THAT FAVOUR LAND COMMERCIALISATION

Generally, land and water was under national, and partially local, jurisdiction. Nevertheless, there is a growing tendency to **commercialise these public** goods in the free international market, to increasingly reduce their use by the community, and to reduce the possibility of intervening with public policies that ensure that land and water are used for local food production and remain in the hands of the people.

On the one hand a **growing deregulation of land markets**, such as, for example, the dissolution of **barriers for selling to foreigners** can be observed. In many cases, where there are still laws preventing the international sale of land, they resort to legal loopholes to get around them. One example is Rumania, where a foreign legal or private person can only buy land if s/he has a national counterpart. Nevertheless, when this national company leaves the deal, the international actor can keep the land. In this way it is common for sales to take place via a national company, which is sometimes nothing more than a phantom company, in order to be able to carry off the deal.

Another tendency is the **dissolution of regulations which protect use by the community**, which takes many forms. For example, through the dissolution of laws that protect communal and indigenous land and prevent its sale. In the case of Mexico, that was a condition for its entry into NAFTA. It is also occurring in other areas, such as Europe, where production is mostly individual, but communities and municipalities still have community land for livestock grazing, which is beginning to become increasingly privatised. In other cases, land is declared to be state (“public”) property, as a means of creating conditions for its sale or concession without consulting the communities (*see Experience in Mali*). In Turkey, a reordering of

territorial administration placed communal rural land administered by the municipalities under state administration, making it easier to privatise. People in India and other Asian countries still recall the colonial expropriation legislation (“**eminent domain**”), which allowed the colonialists to expropriate any land. This legislation is still used for the expropriation of land, for example to carry out mining projects.

In many countries there is no such thing as centralised **land registration**. This has been very ambiguous, and differs according to the area. On the one hand, **producing deeds for individual land** is very much in the interests of companies: private deeds, as opposed to community tenure, make the “**dynamisation**” of the land market easier. Furthermore, these land registries are an important instrument for guaranteeing legal security for multinational corporations (for example the protection of their guaranteed investments in FTAs). In this respect, this mechanism has been one of the World Bank’s main lines of action, for example through the so called “**market assisted agrarian reform**”. (*see table 1*).

In other cases, the lack of land registration has allowed local or national authorities to fake deeds of land tenure, declaring the land as “**non-productive**”. Thus, once the land is registered, land grabbing is carried out “**legally**”.

Increasing water and land grabbing has also been promoted on a large scale by means of the new generation of Free Trade Treaties and Zones, which prohibit States from taking measures to avoid the foreignisation of land, as they make it compulsory for rules governing investments to be the same for both national and international investors. On the other hand, they establish a whole series of sanctions to protect these investments on a large scale.

REGULATIONS THAT FAVOUR THE GRABBING OF CONTINENTAL AND MARINE WATERS

Legislation which increasingly excludes fisherfolk and gatherers takes different forms:

Fishing taxes are leading to the increasing exclusion of traditional fisherfolk. These taxes, in the rhetoric promoted as protecting the seas, actually lead to the transfer of legal rights from traditional fishers to industrial fishing. This goes hand in hand with the **reduction of the fishing limit** (distance in miles) in which large boats must not fish. Commercial agreements foster these developments because they negotiate the access of industrial fishing to national seas.

Lider Góngora (representative of the World Fishers’ Forum) explains this phenomenon with an example: “Before, in Ecuador, we had 200 miles, of which 12 were for national fishing. The other 188 miles could grant permits

to anyone. It has now been reduced to 8 miles, and in other places, like Chile, to just 3. Large fleets use modern technology, attracting the fish with ultrasound or light. Industrial fishing receive tax breaks. Before, if national fisherfolk could fish 80%, 20% was allocated to international industrial fishing. But then the amount of fish is reduced, so that the following year they only fish 60%, and then 40%, and thus they lose territory.”

Similarly, just as occurs in the case of land grabbing, the grabbing of mangroves takes place by means of concessions and the purchase of land. Very often, illegal industrial aquaculture installations, which are subsequently legalised, are built.

REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE PRIVATISATION OF SEEDS

With the onset of the green revolution came the promotion of the use of hybrid seeds. While peasants in most countries in the global South still use their own seeds, there is a strong tendency to criminalise their sale: this development has recently been strengthened by the reinforcement of laws protecting patents and “**plant breeders’ rights**” on the production and reproduction of seeds, their sale, importation and exportation and the possession of seeds. The conditions for these seeds are that they must be “**stable**”, “**homogeneous**” and “**new**”. This principally means that each plant from these seeds must be exactly the same, a condition that is not fulfilled by peasant seeds, that have been developed and exchanged over the millennia, and which have been proven to be better adapted to local territories. More and more countries are introducing registration and certification, without which seeds cannot be sold. In the European Union, despite a few agroecological experiences, the use of commercial seeds is common. Sometimes the receipt of certain subsidies depends on proving the use of these certified seeds.

Another aspect is the promotion and diffusion of transgenic seeds, to which La Via Campesina is strongly opposed. The use of these seeds has led to a dramatic rise in the use of agrochemicals, a reduction in (agro) biodiversity and the contamination of common goods.

The real consequences are as yet unknown, owing to a lack of independent research. Nevertheless, the little independent laboratory research that has been carried out on animals has proven high rates of damage to internal organs, and cancer.

This development therefore leads to growing privatisation of seeds, protected by legislation that favours economic interests. An international agreement which regulates patents and plant breeders’ rights is promoted through “**alliances for food security**” (for example from the initiative of the G8 countries, the “**New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition**”), and through FTAs, the approval of the UPOV 91 (Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants).

Defence of territory is therefore also the fight for the free use and sale of local seeds by peasants. Otherwise peasants require different conditions for registering their ecological seeds.

Peasants defend their free use and sale of seeds, not only as a productive resource, but also as the basis of their nourishment and their lives. In many places they are also closely linked to rituals and culture and ancestral know-how, and it is mostly women who select them. In this respect, seeds are a public good, and their control and care should remain in the hands of societies.

FREE TRADE AND INVESTMENT PROTECTION AGREEMENTS.

Free Trade Agreements, regional agreements and investment protection agreements, which are a powerful motor for ensuring the processes of the commercialisation and privatisation of land, water, seeds and fishing, are become increasingly more deeply rooted. While in many cases the public debate concentrates on the effects of the free market of goods, it is in fact much more than that.

On the one hand they do include **markets for products**, which abolish duties and price regulations, and thus successfully establish free trade zones. These place peasants in open competition with multinational corporations with access to large amounts of capital. European Union and United States subsidies reinforce the problem, because they have provoked overproduction and flood the markets of other countries with unfairly priced products, one of the factors that leads to the extinction of small farms, which supply food to local markets.

On the other hand, these FTAs eliminate the capacity of national States to regulate **investments** (land, water, agribusiness), **services** (the provision of basic services such as, for example, drinking water and energy), and they reinforce the rules of **intellectual property** (biodiversity, seeds, medicine).

Legally, national constitutions, legislations and regulations must **adapt to the regulations of the FTAs**. In this way, public decisions are de-democratised. Courts for the “solution of commercial conflicts” between States, and the possibility for companies to prosecute states when they believe they have been deprived of their earnings, have been set up to sanction them. This mechanism has the power to enforce severe sanctions. It has led to a wave of lawsuits against States, for the simple fact of having introduced public policies for environmental protection, or health. But on the other hand, these contracts **do not allow means of sanctioning companies** in the event of violations of human, labour, or health rights, or protection against environmental contamination.

For these reasons, La Via Campesina is strongly opposed to these treaties, because they do not only lead to unfair product competition, but they also favour the grabbing of public goods and services and the degradation of consumer, health and environmental protections. They produce a back door de-democratisation of national States, promoted by and in favour of multinational corporations and international, non-democratic institutions.

One way of promoting agricultural policies is by creating alliances and networks. Within the framework of “Private-public-partnerships” influence is sought in public policies at the highest level. One example is the G8 countries’ **New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition** for Africa, in which agribusiness is represented on the one hand, and state representatives on the other. The agribusiness participants include all the large corporations from the agrifood sector, from the actors in the provision of inputs (seeds, fertilisers, pesticides), to the investors in national and transnational land, as well as large industrial producers and large scale food sellers. To date agreements have been signed with six African states. The programme is very clear, with their slogan “combat poverty and hunger in Sub-Saharan

Africa” it promotes: regulations of patents and plant breeders’ rights over seeds, such as UPOV 91; regulations of the use of fertilisers and pesticides; opening up and dynamising the land and water markets; facilitating services, for example the provision of geographical data in order to promote “investment” in land. Similarly, “contract farming”, which persuades and finances peasants to produce commodities for the world market and to sell them to these same multinational corporations at low prices, also forms part of their project. Similarly, on a national level, “development co-operation” agencies also form these kinds of alliances between the private sector and state actors. In this way, it is not only development co-operation that is privatised, but the promotion of corporate interests is also co-financed with public funds.

Table 6: Alliances for the promotion of land grabbing policies

THE GREEN ECONOMY, REDD AND REDD+

The green economy is being promoted in international spaces supposedly to protect nature and to halt climate change. It does not, however, question the paradigm of continuous growth, on the contrary, it promotes the increasing commercialisation of nature, amongst other things. One example are the REDD and REDD+ mechanisms. The concept is based on the idea that it is necessary to place a monetary value on nature in order to protect it, and in that way the market regulates its destruction or values its preservation through costs and profits.

Given that deforestation is one of the main causes of climate change, REDD and REDD+ claim to protect ecosystems on the basis of market mechanisms. The mechanism is based on the principle of compensation payments for preservation in “developing” countries, on the part of the actors who pollute the environment with emissions. It is financed by governmental funds and funds generated by the business of “emission rights”.

La Via Campesina regards this as a “false solution”, for several reasons. The mechanism is a form of commercialisation and/or financialisation of nature, which increases

investment opportunities and avoids questioning the current system, which is the true culprit of environmental destruction and climate change. This mechanism allows companies to “buy the right to destroy the environment” when in fact they do not reduce emissions because the increased emissions are compensated for by the **preservation** of forests (which already exist).

This mechanism allows the creation of a market which has been clearly identified as a pretext for grabbing forests and other ecosystems in order to obtain compensation, thus excluding the very people whose centuries old practices have protected the ecosystems, as is the case in Indonesia, for example (see table 16), from access and use.

Furthermore, this vision does not take into account the complexity of the ecosystem as a whole, based on nature’s cycles and those who harvest, hunt and sow, but rather considers the ecosystems as mere “carbon deposits”. In addition to other problems, this has led to monoculture plantations also being considered as “forests”, which not only emit gases, but are also “green deserts”, with no biodiversity.

AGRICULTURAL POLICIES THAT FAVOUR LARGE PLANTATIONS AND AGROINDUSTRY

There are a great many negative national agricultural and livestock policies, which vary from country to country. In many countries public funds are used to feed an adverse situation, which continues to displace peasants because they can’t make a living from the proceeds of their work. Although there do exist small projects for peasants, if we analyse the distribution of ministerial attention, the content of the programmes and projects and the distribution of the budget, we will see that they continue to strengthen industrial food production, the export of primary goods and the use of agrochemicals.

Furthermore, in many countries where there is land grabbing, the perpetrators are supported by **direct or indirect subsidies**. To increase investments, national States participate directly by financing the massive purchase of land (for example, through national development banks). Another form is the exemption from tax or duties on production destined for export. Interna-

tional financial institutions also support the aggressive expansion of land grabbing, of large scale agroindustry and the multiplication of supermarkets.

Here we mention just a few examples occurring on an international scale.

The European Union’s policy on agrofuels: Introduced with the supposed aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, taxes were established to encourage the addition of agrofuels to fuel. Increased demand has led to a rise in prices and, consequently, to land grabbing in other countries with a large scale change in land use, whereby forests previously used for food production for the local population are converted into fields for the production of African palm, soya and maize.

The European Union’s **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** amounts to 40% of the European Union’s total budget and includes direct and indirect subsidies. As a result of various mechanisms, amongst others, direct

subsidies per hectare, it favours large scale production and impedes access to land for small scale farmers. “This means that a small scale farmer in Spain, for example, receives around 500 Euro per year, while 200 or 300 large scale farmers receive an average of 900,000 Euros. In this way, on a European level, 70% of direct payments favour the 20% who are the largest producers. This reinforces land concentration,” explains Federico Pacheco, from the *Sindicato Andaluz de Trabajadores* (SAT, Andalusian Workers’ Union). In addition to making direct and indirect payments for production, the EU has also subsidised the “modernisation” of the food processing sector (amongst others, large multinational corporations, such as Nestlé), and large industrial fishing fleets. These policies have contributed to a massive concentration, not just on a production level, but also

when it comes to commercialisation. Consequently, in just 10 years (2003 – 2013) 4 million small farms disappeared within the European Union. That is the equivalent of an average of some **1,100 farms per day**. The average size of holdings grew by 38%. Increased industrialisation also affects the contamination of water, biodiversity, greenhouse gas emissions, public health and animal welfare. In addition, it impacts massively on third countries. Overproduction, the contribution to the concentration of processing and commercialisation companies (for example, of dairy products, meat, sugar and grain), and industrial fishing, combined with free trade agreements, have led to unfair competition, and, consequently, to the destruction of local markets in third countries, and to the massive expulsion of small scale peasants and traditional fisherfolk.

The whole of Europe, but particularly Eastern Europe, is currently facing a situation of large scale grabbing of common goods. Grabbing, together with agricultural and commercial policies, is the main reason why today there are levels of land concentration similar to those in Colombia or Brazil (two of the the countries with the most unequal land distribution in the world). 0.3% of farmers control half of all agricultural land in Rumania, while 71% of peasants have land measuring less than 2 hectares, with access to just 17% of agricultural land (Eurostat 2010). The Rumanian experience demonstrates how different public policies merge.

Attila Szocs, Ecoruralis:

In Rumania small scale farmers face big problems, because small scale farming is no longer lucrative and large scale land grabbing has provoked an exodus from the countryside. Young people in particular migrated to the cities, or to Italy, Spain or Germany, to earn their living as workers, because it pays more to work on a supermarket checkout or as a labourer on a plantation in Spain than to be a peasant in Rumania.

In order to understand land grabbing mechanisms in Rumania it is important to understand history: At the end of the socialist era in 1990 there were two main types of agricultural production: state farms on the one hand, which produced food for large scale exportation, and so called “co-operatives” on the other, in which the socialist government of the 60s, and progressively until the 80s, pushed small scale peasants to join forces, and which were later managed centrally by the state. Peasants practically became

workers on their own land. In 1992 the first democratic government carried out a so-called “agrarian reform”: to begin with, large state owned farms were rented out on long term leases of between 30 and 70 years. Often concessions were granted to the first bidder, at a very low price, and there was a great deal of corruption. Big foreign and national investors took advantage of the low prices to rent land on a huge scale. In this way, half a million hectares were leased out. On the other hand, they wanted to return the lands of the “co-operatives” to their previous owners, who were both small scale peasants and the previous owners of large estates. But there was a great deal of fraud and corruption, because the tenure was mostly informal and it was difficult to prove each case. There were cases in which the local elite used their contacts to procure the “return” of land that had never belonged to them in the first place. For example, my grandfather, who had 10 hectares a hundred metres from the house, was “given back” land that was 200 km away. How could he work land that was 200 km away? In the south of Rumania they granted investors concessions on the land of the co-operatives. They did not return the land to the peasants, just the deeds, and in return the companies offered them a sum of rent. They didn’t really have any other choice but to accept, because how can you work your 2 hectares of land when you are surrounded by a farm of 10,000 hectares? There was no infrastructure, no access, there was nothing. So they accepted.

By 2004 all the land was sold, or had been leased out, or “returned”, yet investors wanting to buy land still kept coming. This usually occurs as follows: a bank or an investment fund hires a legal firm to negotiate the deal. The latter send “intermediaries” who try to persuade the small scale peasants to sell their land. The government’s aim was to “consolidate” the land, and, to encourage the peasants to sell, they paid them a monthly fee for a set amount of time. Given that peasants in Rumania don’t have a pension when they reach retirement age, and given that many young people had migrated, they accepted. When they didn’t succeed in obtaining the land in this way, the buyers bribed

the mayor to change the title deeds. We have documented several cases. One example is the case of Rabobank, a Dutch bank, one of the biggest land investors, who grabbed land in this way, through intermediaries. Another policy is the privatisation of communal land, where peasants used to take their livestock to graze, and which was subsequently offered up for sale.

The European Union’s Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reinforced the phenomenon of land concentration: firstly, direct subsidies are paid per hectare, therefore in Rumania 1% of the biggest farms receive 50% of the direct subsidies. Furthermore, there are subsidies for “rural development”. However, this is how the mechanism works in Rumania: if you want to invest in your farm you have to obtain credit from a private bank. That credit is then paid by funds from the European Union. But small scale peasants did not receive credit because they didn’t have enough guarantees. Therefore, funds for modernisation were also channelled into agribusiness.

Traditionally our local markets, which were peasants’ main means of selling their products, were very lively. From the 90s onwards, these markets became revitalised and dynamised. In the 2000s however, large chains of European supermarkets started to expand aggressively in the country, such as, for example, the Schwarz group, supported by public money (Note: One of the biggest chains in Europe, the “Schwarz Group”, controlled by one of the richest families in the world, with its supermarkets “Lidl” and “Kaufland,” received a total of almost 900 million dollars of public funds for its expansion in Eastern Europe. Lidl opened some 185 supermarkets in Rumania between 2011 and 2015 - an average of almost 1 per week.) They arrived with their suppliers’ contracts and imported a large part of their products from Poland, Turkey and other countries. Increasingly Rumanians shop in discounters because they are very cheap, leaving local markets with no customers.

These are all examples of how public policies contributed to the tremendous inequality that we are facing today.

Table 7: The Rumanian experience: Land grabbing and the European Union’s Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

CRIMINALISATION AND FORCED EVICTIONS

Almost every organisation in Asia, Latin America and Africa that is fighting against the hegemonic model reports political prisoners (imprisonment without trial, prosecutions), threats and physical and sexual violence, disappearances and murders. There are many mechanisms in place and their objective is to spread fear and terror and discourage the communities and societies that defend their rights. The actors are State security forces, the police, the army and, in some cases, paramilitaries or private security forces. Their impunity is the main factor that makes these crimes possible. Shalmali Guttal from the Land Research Action Network (LRAN) explains: “All the organisations in Asia that we work with suffer violence. The perpetrators of that violence are never imprisoned or punished. When there are trials, they’re a farce. The states themselves are violent, and use the law to criminalise. Criminalisation and impunity go hand in hand. And impunity can’t exist without the State. It’s only the State that can pursue violence.”

Criminalisation by States of social struggles is extremely alarming. The fact that it also occurs in supposedly progressive and democratic States considerably weakens confidence in them, meaning they are no longer perceived as defenders of human rights but are increasingly regarded as actors that impose the economic interests of the national and international elite. In addition to all the above is the use of the so-called anti-terrorist laws, that allow them to prosecute people who are exercising their right to protest.

While these forms of criminalisation used to be regarded as a problem particular to the countries in the South, it now occurs in Europe too, as in the case of Andalusia for example, with the imprisonment of Andrés Bódalo.

Conflicts on a world level are often related to the grabbing of natural, productive and mineral resources, which cause forced evictions of communities. The examples of Palestine and Colombia show how these violent evictions occur.

Furthermore, the vast majority of these cases receive no mention in the media, with few exceptions, and that is only thanks to diffusion by alternative media and by the organisations themselves. One of the few cases that have been brought to public attention on an international level was the murder of Berta Cáceres from COPINH (*Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras*, the Civic Counsel of Popular and Indigenous Organisations in Honduras), or the 43 disappeared students in Guerrero, Mexico. The majority of these cases are not, however, reported by the mainstream media. Protest actions, on the other hand, land occupations, struggles against megaprojects, are either ignored, or portrayed as illegal acts of violence. That is why La Via Campesina and its allies have worked hard in an alternative information network which gives these crimes visibility and calls out the international public in support, whilst simultaneously developing a campaign against criminalisation.

Colombia is one of the countries with the greatest land concentration in the world. Currently 77% of the land is in the hands of 13% of landowners, while 68% of farmers are small scale peasants who own just 3.6% of productive land. It has been calculated that 6.6 million hectares were stolen during the violence in recent decades. That amounts to 15% of the total agricultural land in the country.

Nury Martinez, Federación Nacional Sindical Unitaria Agropecuaria (National Federation of Agricultural Unions) FENSUAGRO

Land has always been one of the key issues in our struggle. The conflict in Colombia originated with peasants and was also about land.

There was large scale dispossession in the 80s and 90s. We call it the dirty war era. 6 million people were dispossessed, 80% of them peasants. How did that happen? The military and the paramilitary came and said “You have to leave. Otherwise, you’ll be sorry.” And they weren’t just empty threats, if you didn’t leave, you got murdered. There were massacres. Sometimes we lost 40 people in one day. Sometimes they arrived in the villages with a list, lined them up and killed them one by one. That was usually the paramilitary. Once they had dispossessed everything, then the military came. But they never arrived in time to defend the people or their human rights. They also killed the leaders of rural organisations. That way, many organisations were disintegrated. During the 90s they killed the general secretary of FENSUAGRO in our office.

And when the peasants returned, they found their land occupied with plantations. When the peace negotiations began, the USA approved the FTA with Colombia and the purchase of land by investors intensified. That was when we realised that their aim from the start had

been to dispossess the peasants of their land so they could resell it. Meanwhile, the companies claimed to know nothing about violations of human rights. And if the peasants wanted their land back, they were told they had to repay the investments the companies had made. Obviously, no peasant was able to do that. And the law backed the companies.

The criminalisation continues today. Every time there is a mobilisation or a protest, the only response we get from the government is violence and aggression. It is extreme, because they have the ESMAD (Mobile Antiriot Squad), which is a brutal military force. When we held the strike in 2013 they killed 19 people in 52 days, and injured 600. Some people lost an arm or an eye.

Now we don’t know what is being disputed in the peace negotiations, but are very concerned. In no time the land had once again become militarised. We are afraid that they are going to sell the areas currently held by the guerillas, for monocultures, mining and megaprojects.

Table 8: Experience in Colombia: Forced evacuations of peasants for monocultures and mining

Omar Tabakhna, Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)

The whole of the Middle East suffers from a series of problems, including high production costs, difficulties in selling the products, open markets, and, therefore, very low sale prices, a lack of policies that support small scale peasants and, one of the biggest problems is the lack of water and land. Palestine has all the same problems, but they are exacerbated by the Israeli occupation.

Land grabbing is a very serious issue. Israel’s policy is to increase its territory. Under the pretext of security, Israel is building a wall separating Israel and the West Bank (the Western region of Palestine). (Note: A UN analysis showed that only 15% was actually built on the “green line”, the borders negotiated in the Oslo accords; the rest of the building expands the barrier to encroach into Palestinian territory.) Furthermore, this barrier has a “security zone”; thus reducing West Bank territory even more. Another, very well known form, are the settlements on Palestinian territory, which are increasing year by year. Included among these settlements are the building of the so called “safe roads,” which guarantee safe access between these settlements. So, when they want to build, they arrive and warn the peasants that they have to evacuate the area within 24 hours. Or sometimes they don’t even warn them. You go to your field and find bulldozers that are destroying your trees. They pay no compensation. In Palestine no-one would sell their land voluntarily, the land represents families’ livelihoods!

The situation is even worse for peasants who have animals. Before, the land was communal, and the peasants’ goats and sheep would go there to graze. Nowadays the Israelis stop people from entering on the slightest pretext, whether that be because they are training camps for soldiers, or security zones. And so the peasants were forced to put their animals into barns and buy fodder, which is much more expensive. Many had to reduce their herds and sell animals.

The sale of Palestinian products is also affected. As the Israelis control the entry points, they allow goods to enter that will flood Palestinian markets on account of their low prices. They have agricultural products that have been produced on a large scale, with cheap access to water, high technology and subsidies. Our government does not give subsidies.

The main issue in this region is water. 90% of Palestine produces without irrigation water, for which reason production is low. Israel maintains control over hydrological resources. If, for example, we want to build a well in our territory, we need to complete all the bureaucratic procedures with the Israeli government. Consequently, it’s almost impossible to obtain water for irrigation.

Table 9: Palestine: The consequences for peasants of the occupation of Palestine

EDUCATION



THE CONSEQUENCES FOR FOOD AND TERRITORIES

Very often we hear the argument that large scale industrial agricultural production is necessary because it's efficient and without it we wouldn't be able to feed the world. The truth is in fact the opposite: while peasants, fishers and gatherers own only a minority of the land and have increasingly reduced access to forests, mangroves and seas, they are the ones who produce the vast majority of the food that we eat.

The effects of the expulsion of peasants and the dispossession of their land are very serious, not just for local economies, but also for the food eaten by the whole of society. In this respect, the struggle for an integral and popular agrarian reform and food sovereignty is a struggle that's crucial to survival, to the fulfilment of the right to food, the conservation of cultures and social structures, and women's rights.

Despite the calculations showing that current food production on a global level could easily feed the world's population, the figures for world hunger are alarming. In 2015 the FAO estimated that almost 800 million people on the planet suffer from chronic hunger. Nevertheless, these figures are questionable, firstly because it is a very complex issue, but also because it only includes the people who suffer from permanent hunger, 12 months a year. Furthermore, the calorific needs established by the methodology are for someone who is inactive, which is not the case of, for example, a peasant. The real figures for hunger are doubtless much higher. Apart from hunger, it is estimated that around 30% of the world's population has some kind of nutritional deficiency. This is no longer a problem limited to the countries of the global South, the effects are also felt in industrialised countries.

The real consequences to people's health of eating food produced with a large number of agrochemicals, antibiotics, hormones and chemical additives are difficult to determine, but it is known that the unprecedented rates of obesity, diabetes, allergies, cardiac conditions and cancer, amongst others, are the direct effects of consuming this type of production and changes in dietary patterns, and they have become a public health

issue. Scandals such as mad cow disease and the existence of the active ingredient glyphosate in urine and mothers' milk are increasingly raising doubts about this production model, even in cities. Particularly in areas where there are large plantations of commodities such as soya, canola (often genetically modified), sugar cane, bananas, etc, there are serious consequences for health from direct or indirect exposure to agrotoxics. Amongst these are high rates of cancer, birth defects, skin diseases, kidney and liver conditions.

Communities suffer from severe effects on their finances and their ability to feed their families. There are drastic effects on employment, as large scale industrial food production (with few exceptions) reduces the need for a workforce, compared with family farming, traditional fishing, or gathering. While vegetable family farming, for example, needs between 2 and 3 people per hectare per year, a palm monoculture or a shrimp reservoir use between 0.1 and 0.7 people a year – very often with no labour rights whatsoever. Local economies also suffer, because production destined for export has minimal multiplier effects on local economies.

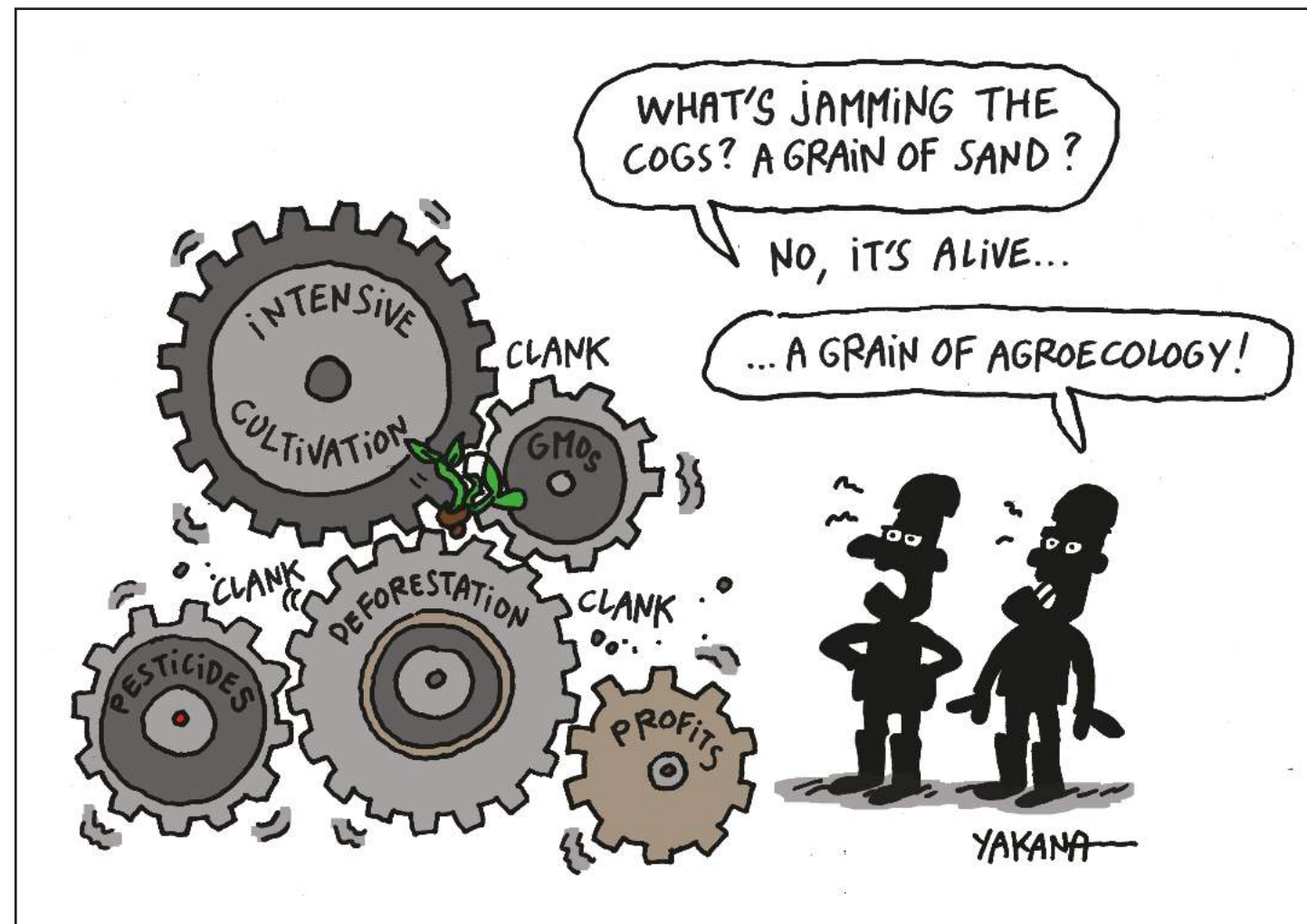
In most countries women are disproportionately affected by these negative consequences. While in many countries it is they who are responsible for most food production and who are the guardians of agricultural and cultural knowhow, they are also the ones worst affected by hunger and are excluded from systems of land tenure and social and political participation. The migration of men has led to a feminisation of the countryside, which has added to women's overwork. In addition to their roles as carers they are now undertaking more productive work.

Migration to cities and to other countries in search of work is closely linked to the degradation of rural areas, especially in the case of younger generations. In almost every country, the farming population is aging, on account of patriarchal systems which exclude young people from participation in and tenure of land. In other parts of the world, land tenure structures, the high price of land owing to speculation and the scar-

city of arable land prevent young people from engaging in agricultural activity. Faced with poverty, and the degradation of the countryside where they see no future for themselves, many young people have sought better opportunities in cities or even abroad. Which is why an agrarian reform is especially important for the younger generation.

Land grabbing on a massive scale does not therefore only affect economic life. Farming, pastoralism, traditional fishing, gathering, are not simply forms of work, but are closely linked with culture, world views, supportive social relations, the way in which humans relate to Mother Earth. In this way, evictions, the destruction of people's livelihoods, of their local economies, also dissolves their cultures, their languages, their forms of local social organization, and even leads to the extinction of entire peoples, as occurred in Amazonia.

Industrial farming, provoking an increase in agrotoxics, deforestation, overfishing, transgenics, packaging, refuse and transport, is one of the motors that is taking the planet to the brink of collapse: to the contamination of land and fresh water, the degradation of soil, the extinction of species and the rapid reduction of biodiversity, the acidification of oceans and climate change. It is estimated that the emissions produced by all of the links in the current food and agricultural chain is responsible for the production of 53% of greenhouse gases on a world level. Therefore, the agricultural model based on intense agrochemical usage, on industrial livestock destined for export, is completely unsustainable. Communities are affected very directly by the consequences of climate change: in the changing of seasons, in the rainy and dry seasons, and in the increase of catastrophic natural phenomena.



A collective process:

historical milestones and the programmatic development of La Via Campesina on integral and popular agrarian reform

The exchange of experiences, the dialogue of knowledges, collective analyses and related studies, have made the true extent of these developments increasingly clear. This is also the context in which the visions and programmatic concepts of the agrarian reform within La Via Campesina were developed; it's not just the visions of "what do we want?" that have changed, but also of the strategies (how will we achieve it?). This chapter will firstly discuss the most important milestones in La Via Campesina's struggle, that led to the development of the current proposals and strategies, just as they were presented in the conceptual framework of the first chapter.

The change and evolution of the concepts are obviously the result of *processes*, the same ones that will be shown in this context in relation to important milestones within the processes of La Via Campesina.

1993. THE FORMATION OF LA VIA CAMPESINA

In the context of an era of structural adjustments and neoliberal policies that reinforced poverty and migration in the countryside, the founding organisations of La Via Campesina analysed the situation in Managua, Nicaragua, in 1992. They identified how the main actors in this situation were the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. A year later, in Mons (Belgium), La Via Campesina was officially founded, with the aim of giving peasants a voice on a world level and building a counterpower to these international institutions. It analysed the following issues: the exacerbation of the situation in the countryside, which

was manifested by poverty, hunger and migration. In the face of this situation, it demanded the right to land access and decision making in agricultural issues on a national level, based on the Right to Food.

After several years, La Via Campesina gained strength. It strongly opposed the impositions of large institutions, of both the WTO in commercial matters, and of the World Bank, which set out to weaken the struggle for redistributive agrarian reforms. It showed its opposition during the Seattle protests in 1999 against the WTO, when La Via Campesina formed part of a large alliance against free trade and a “globalisation” with rules that favoured only a minority.

1999. THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR AGRARIAN REFORM

Several of La Via Campesina’s founding organisations are fighting for agrarian reforms in their countries, making agrarian reform one of our main demands since the beginning. In a setting in which neoliberal ideas were gaining momentum, in which redistributive agrarian reform was perceived by international organizations and even by NGOs as a thing of the past, La Via Campesina decided to reinforce its struggle for agrarian reform. In 1999 it launched the **Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform (GCAR)** – together with the partners of the Food First International Action Network (FIAN) and, later on, the Land Research Action Network (LRAN). The GCAR is a platform within La Via Campesina, and, together with its objectives of supporting struggles for land and agrarian reform on a local level, it carries out research and an exchange of experiences, impacting on international politics in issues related to land and influencing public opinion. Furthermore, it was formed as an international solidarity network that would be able to respond to land related violations of human rights.

The first action carried out by the GCAR was the First International Meeting of Landless Peasants in San Pedro

Sula (Honduras) in 2000, where we discussed the World Bank’s “market based agrarian reforms”, the role of women and the right to land, derived from the Right to Food.

In the same year, in Bangalore, La Via Campesina continued discussions on Food Sovereignty (which had been presented as a concept for the first time in 1996 at the FAO Summit in Rome) and, as a part of that, we debated agrarian reform. It was at that time that an acceleration of the privatisation of water and incidents of land grabbing for producing monocultures and megaprojects started to emerge. The Bangalore declaration placed a lot of emphasis on free trade, leading to forced migration and the destruction of peasant economies. Previous agrarian reforms were studied within this context and the limitations of simply distributing land were identified. Both socialist reforms and the so-called classic reforms were analysed, and conclusions were reached which would later be called “**integral or genuine agrarian reform**” within the **framework of Food Sovereignty**. The democratisation of land, water and the protection of markets with this aim in mind should be prioritised for food production in the face of the exportation of primary goods.

2003. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AGRARIAN REFORM AND PEASANT AND POPULAR FEMINISM

Women play a vital role in the countryside and in our struggles. They are the ones who produce most of the food we eat and who impart their knowledge of seeds, agriculture and the home, just as they are the ones who are proportionally worst affected by negative consequences. Past agrarian reforms have not taken women sufficiently into account.

Bearing in mind the crucial role played by women, they have occupied an important place in the debates ever since the beginning of La Via Campesina, and there has always been equal representation by women in positions of responsibility. On an international level, La Via Campesina possibly represents the most important forum in terms of the role of women in agrarian reform, and in agriculture.

For a long time the feminist debate was in general restricted to a Eurocentric perspective, without taking the reality of women in other countries and regions into account. Within this context, over time, “peasant and popular feminism” developed inside La Via Campesina. It comes out of the analysis that patriarchy, sexism, racism and class discrimination are an integral part of the structural violence of capitalism. Consequently, the struggle for an alternative society should go hand in hand with new gender relations. At the same time, the struggle for fair gender relations is inherently linked to the people’s right to territory, to their customs and way of life and to agrarian reform. Thus, amongst other points, La Via Campesina confirms in its declaration in the Women’s Assembly in the VI CLOC congress: “We want relationships between humans that are built amongst equals. We want the construction of a supportive relationship between different people and cultures that is decolonised, without sexism, or racism. A region and a world free from all forms of violence, be that sexist or patriarchal, and with integral agrarian reform that guarantees women’s access to land.”

One important milestone was the International Seminar on the Agrarian Reform and Gender in Cochabamba (Bolivia), with the aim of developing a methodology specific to the GCAR, with an integral emphasis on the issue of gender, and on focusing education on gender and land issues.

In the seminar, one of the important issues was “how to achieve women’s equality in an agrarian reform.” The demand of women for the title deeds to land in their own

names was questioned, particularly by indigenous women, whose cosmovision of nature and humans, societies, and families, men and women, complementing one another, prevails. The argument was that women might inadvertently be supporting the World Bank strategy for individual rather than collective title to land. During the seminar, women confirmed their defence of community tenure. It was nevertheless clear that we would still need to struggle against patriarchy in community and traditional rights and customs, and that the role of women in families and organisations, and their true level of participation, must still be questioned and renewed.

The role of the State also merges with this debate. The State, on the one hand, must guarantee human rights and intervene and pass laws that guarantee women’s equality, for example, in matters of equal participation, land tenure and inheritance, social rights and a guaranteed violence-free existence. In this respect the law has made significant progress, in many countries inheritance laws granting men and women equal rights, as well as anti-violence laws, amongst others, have been passed. On the other hand, States are replicators of an unequal, patriarchal system. While organisations fight for the right to self-management, for their organisations and for their customs, it is also necessary to seriously question the role of women within them. The battle for women’s equality is not, therefore, only directed at the law, or at society, but it also encompasses the patriarchal system within families, communities and organisations. Almost all of La Via Campesina’s organisations, its regional organisations and La Via Campesina International have worked for change from the “inside”. The equality of leaders in their leadership, the focus on gender and the transition within those same organisations and families are an important part of the transformation we are seeking. The women of La Via Campesina International for example, have launched, amongst others, the campaign to “Stop violence against women” because they have identified domestic violence as one of the main forms of violation of women’s human rights. It should not be just a women’s campaign, but one which is embraced by men and women alike.

Below are two experiences of people who have fought against patriarchy from within their own spaces and customs.

Massa Koné, Convergence of land and water struggles in West Africa.

When we think about women's roles, we first of all have to consider that each tribe is different. In my tribe some women own land, but in most tribes they do not. There are some tribes that think women are the ones who feed the planet, while others believe it is the men. In my tribe women can grow crops as well as prepare meals. In others, women are only responsible for the home, the cooking and the washing, while men sew, reap and bring food home.

In our traditional rights land is communal, we have the right to use it, but we do not own it. Therefore, when a woman marries, she moves to where her husband lives. If her husband dies, or they get divorced, she may remarry. It's possible for her to marry a man from a different tribe, but in that case she must move to wherever he lives. If the woman owned the land and she went with her husband to live with another tribe, that would cause conflicts within the tribe. That's why the land stays within the tribe and there are no conflicts. If it is a woman with children she may leave her land to her sons, but not to her daughters. Because the same thing would happen with her daughters: they would get married and problems would start. That is why today women do not own anything.

Current legislation has introduced a change: in order for men and women to sell land they must sign an agreement. Furthermore, the struggle is within the communities, to change our traditional rights, so that women can participate in decision making. For examples, in committees where conflicts are resolved. It's a matter of making women visible and making communities understand that women have a role in our society, that things have changed and that we no longer live in the times where tribes were warring over land.

Today women are at the vanguard of the struggle against land, water and seed grabbing, and they are gaining space within organisations. To succeed, we must include women. But we cannot succeed if the change does not come from within the community.

Table 10: Experience in West Africa: Women in traditional systems

Turkey: Abdullah Aysu, president of ÇİFTÇİ-SEN (ÇİFTÇİ-Sendikaları Konfederasyonu: Confederation of small scale peasants' unions

Women carry out most of the work in the fields: they do all the domestic work, they care for the animals, they work the land, they collect wood and take it home. The men only do the work that women are physically unable to do, such as plough the land, yet it is the men who sell the products and manage the money. Women, are, therefore, seriously overworked.

Women are the heartbeat of farming. Because they are the ones with the knowledge. The knowledge concerning the selection of seeds, animals, the preparation of cheese, butter and bread. If women were to abandon farming it would be like deleting the hard drive of a computer.

As for the inheritance of land, the law guarantees equality between men and women. If the father dies, or the woman marries, men and women have exactly the same rights to inherit land. The law therefore is not the problem.

But traditionally, in most regions, women leave the land to their brothers. When they marry, they go to live with their husbands and their husbands' families. But when they get divorced, or in the event of problems, they can always return to their father's home. Their father's home is their sanctuary. Therefore, if their father dies, they leave their land to their brothers, that way they can always return to their brother's home.

Consequently, as they do not have title deeds to land, women are also denied credit, because credit is granted when land can be shown as a guarantee. They are also excluded from education. If, for example, the Ministry of Agriculture wants to give a course on agriculture, it gives it in the tea houses. [Note: In Turkey, tea houses are cultural spaces that have existed for many centuries, and where not only is tea drunk but men discuss issues pertaining to the community and society]. But women do not have access to tea houses, they are just for men. As a result, women cannot participate in agricultural education. The government offers them courses in weaving.

For this same reason, ÇİFTÇİ-SEN does not have access to women either, because we also organise ourselves and hold our discussions in the tea houses. This is where our strategy for starting to work with women comes in, we go to the homes of peasant women and talk to them, with the aim of getting them to organise themselves and build a Women's Committee within ÇİFTÇİ-SEN, which can represent their interests. As we are only just starting this process, we have not yet seen its fruits.

Table 11: Experience in Turkey: Women in agriculture

2006. PORTO ALEGRE: TERRITORY AS AN OBJECT OF STRUGGLE

Porto Alegre marks another change for programmatic development and the struggle for integral agrarian reform. There, in 2006 the FAO convened the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) with participation from its member states.

The conference was preceded by the "Land, Territory and Dignity" Forum convened by the "International Planning Committee of NGOs/CSOs for Food Sovereignty (IPC)", a group of organisations that previously organised the NGO/SCO Forum on Food Sovereignty in Rome in 2002. The context of capital penetrating the countryside led to the emergence and participation of new organisations, which sprang out of the struggles in defence of their territories. They included organisations from Africa which were suffering under the new wave of land grabbing (which was not yet called that), indigenous peoples, fishers, pastoralists, people who defended their territories against new megaprojects and mining, against privatisation and overfishing in the seas and the privatisation of public and communal land. The inclusion of these new visions broadens the vision of the integral agrarian reform, towards territory, regarded as land as a whole, water, biodiversity, air and the social relations they entail, including cosmovisions, ways of life and cultures. The link with Mother Earth, inextricably linked to the life of the indigenous peoples, also gained momentum. Within this context, the discussion also arose on agroecology as a form of avoiding dependence on increasingly expensive inputs, and production in harmony with Mother Earth. In this respect, the conception of an agrarian reform within the framework of Food Sovereignty became broader and deeper in an integral vision of a territory shared between indigenous peoples, traditional fishers, gatherers and nomadic pastoralists, in the countries of the North as well as in the global South. Later on, this vision would form the basis of the negotiations of the Guidelines on land tenure. The vision of the agrarian reform as a solution for all of society, which focuses on the Right to Food, social justice, migration and unemployment was also reinforced. In this respect, the integral agrarian reform does not just insist on the control and the distribution of land and productive resources, but also on agroecology, health, culture, the

WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY (IPC)?

The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) is an autonomous and self-organised global platform comprised of more than 800 organisations of small scale food producers and rural workers, of indigenous peoples, pastoralists, fishers, gatherers, women, who seek to advance the issue of Food Sovereignty on a global and regional level (see the complete list in the Popular Manual of the guidelines).

These social organisations are supported by NGOs such as **FIAN, Friends of the Earth International, Centro Internazionale Crocevia, PANAP, Terra Nuova, Norway Development Fund, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, Cenesta, ETC.**

democratisation of the management of knowhow, social security, etc, as is demonstrated in the declaration.

The FAO's call to the International Conference with its member states was an important milestone because it succeeded in repositioning the agrarian reform on the international agenda: "No one spoke about the agrarian reform anymore in this day and age. We were regarded by civil servants, but also by certain NGOs, as dinosaurs, because they considered agrarian reform to be a thing of the past," explained Sofia Monsalve of FIAN. At the FAO's International Conference in Porto Alegre, land grabbing was not yet visible, but the foundations were laid there to start to formulate other types of policies on land and natural resources with food sovereignty at their heart.

“The new agrarian reform must acknowledge **the socio-environmental function of the land, the sea and natural resources within the context of food sovereignty**, which will require a very serious commitment from the States. We understand that food sovereignty implies **redistribution policies, fair and equitable access and control of natural and productive resources (credit, appropriate technology, etc), (...),** rural development policies based on agroecological strategies centred on peasant and family farming and traditional fishing; anti-dumping trade policies that favour peasant and indigenous production for local, national and international markets; and complementary public policies, such as **health, education and infrastructure for the countryside**.

Natural resources must first and foremost be used in the service of food production. Within the context of food sovereignty, agrarian reform benefits **the whole of society, giving it healthy, accessible and culturally appropriate food, and social justice.** The agrarian reform would put an **end to the massive, forced exodus from the countryside to the city**, which has made cities grow in dehumanising, unsustainable conditions. It would give every member of our societies a decent life; it would open up the possibility of **local, regional and national economic development** which would be **inclusive and would benefit the majority of the population**; and it would put an end to intense monoculture agriculture which grabs water, and which poisons the land and rivers. We need a new fishing policy which recognises the

rights of fishing communities and puts a stop to the industrial fishing which is killing off marine life. The new agrarian reform is valid both for the so called “developing countries” **in the global South** and for the so called “developed” countries **in the North**.

Food sovereignty is based on the human right to food, free determination, indigenous rights to territory and the rights of people to produce food for their subsistence and for local and national markets. Food sovereignty defends **peasant farming, fishing with traditional fishing families, forests with communities of forest dwellers, steppes with nomadic pastoral families...** Furthermore, the agrarian reform must guarantee the right to **education, to health, to a home, to work, to social security and to recreation.** The agrarian reform must assure the creation of life spaces **to keep our cultures alive**, to provide a home for our **children and young people**, so that our communities can develop in all their diversity and build their citizenship on the basis of the relationship with the earth, the sea and the forests.

The sophisticated knowhow that the **indigenous peoples, peasants and fishers** have acquired over centuries of interaction with nature **provide solutions to the current ecological and social crisis.** That is why we are convinced that indigenous food systems must be given top priority in agrarian reform and that indigenous principles and know-how must be applied for the benefit of communities.”

Table 12: Declaration of the “Land, Territory and Dignity” Forum

PUBLIC, COMMUNAL, CO-OPERATIVE OR INDIVIDUAL TENURE?

From a territorial perspective, the socio-environmental function of land, the sea and common goods within the context of food sovereignty, also broadens visions on the types of tenure. The democratisation of these goods must take into account all of the actors who share a territory, considering equal rights from a gender perspective and on an intergenerational level. Consequently, geographic, historic and cultural diversity lead to different proposals. Furthermore, it involves discussions about past agrarian reforms, in which private tenure in

an adverse environment led to rapid re-concentration through sale and subdivision.

In the areas where indigenous customs, or traditional rights, prevail, the proposed agrarian reforms typically call for communal land tenure. But in other regions, where crops are grown on private land, villages have community and collective spaces where pastoralists can take their animals to graze. Nomadic pastoralists also depend on this connected land for transhumance. Similarly, mangroves and the sea are

for collective use. In this respect, from the perspective of coexisting on the land, an agrarian reform must not just focus on the distribution of private land, but also take into account customs and uses, both in the countries of the North and those of the South.

Other organisations demand an agrarian reform that benefits co-operatives, associations or groups, to avoid private ownership. In other regions there is an ongoing struggle for use rights on land in the hands of the State or the municipality, which gives co-operatives the right to use it for food production, as, for example, occurred with the proposal of the *Sindicato Andaluz de Trabajadores* (SAT The Andalusian Workers’ Union) in Spain. “In past struggles in Andalusia we have succeeded in expropriating land in order to give it to co-operatives to use. Right now there is a strong pressure to privatise that land, there is pressure on our co-operative, or even its members, to buy it independently. In that way the land would once again be on the market. But we are fighting against that, we want it to remain public, and to be granted the right to use it,” says Federico Pacheco.

On the other hand, in many African countries, “nationalisation” of land, expropriating it from communities, has

been the precursor to land grabbing. Consequently, the organisations of these countries demand their traditional rights, over and above the State’s rights.

Elsewhere, the preference may be for agriculture that is carried out in private plots. For example in Rumania, the experience with the State created co-operatives, which in fact amounted to expropriation, resulted in a private distribution proposal, especially in order to guarantee access to land to young people, who have little land. Nevertheless, they can sell their products through the co-operatives.

In this respect, the forms of tenure, whether they be collective, held in private property, community, co-operative, or whether the State holds the tenure and the communities have the right to use the land, are all different, depending on each culture, history and territory. As part of everyone’s right to decide their own path of development, La Via Campesina does not have one viewpoint on this issue, but reinforces discussion and exchange of experiences regarding agrarian reform. Furthermore, no agrarian reform can be static, but instead needs to be a process of continual development, change and adaptation according to the experiences and collective decision making processes in the territories.

2007. NYÉLÉNI: EXTENSION OF THE MOVEMENT FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND URBAN-RURAL RELATIONS

The extension of the exchange that had begun with other organisations and popular sectors was formalised still further with the Nyéléni Forum. Convened by the IPC organisations, networks that do not belong to La Via Campesina, regional organisations from East Africa, environmental organisations, fishers’ organisations and new movements from cities also took part in this forum. From the exchange of urban-rural visions, new supportive ties were created around the question “how can we obtain healthy food which is economically accessible to all?” in relation to our respective territories.

At Nyéléni not only did the extent of the movement for Food Sovereignty become more visible, but La Via Campesina’s vision of urban-rural relations in a process of agrarian reform also changed. In the face of the economic crisis and unemployment, and with the aim of supplying themselves with healthy, accessible food, movements emerged which recovered and occupied empty unused spaces in the cities and peri-urban areas for food production. As they were spaces for exchange and reflection, bonds and supportive links were created within the cities and neighbourhoods around the issue of food production.

<p>On the other hand, there were more and more initiatives for direct solidarity buying. One of these was Community Supported Agriculture, CSA. This scheme was based on an alliance in which the consumer invests in supporting a farmer or a co-operative which, in return, provides them with agroecological food all year round. The calculations for this investment are based on the real costs of agroecological production, and take into account a decent wage for both the peasant and his/her workers and allow for any necessary productive investments. Other</p>	<p>forms of direct relations are agroecological baskets, whereby co-operatives deliver a weekly basket of local, seasonal products to consumers.</p> <p>In this respect, new movements and relations are created around the question “What food do we want to have?” But at the same time we can see that capitalist processes also do affect peri-urban farming. The vision that came out of this meeting extended the philosophy that the fight for agrarian reform and food sovereignty is not an exclusively rural issue, but one that concerns the whole of society.</p>
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AGROECOLOGY AS AN OBJECTIVE AND A STRATEGY

The environmental function of land and territories is a central factor in the demands for change. In the face of the contamination of common goods and food, the dependence on multinational corporations and the rising prices of inputs, the organisations began to argue that these production methods were the equivalent of “bringing the hegemonic production model into our own homes”.

For us, agroecology is not only a means of production, but also as a *praxis* of change: the building of autonomy from the production systems of the hegemonic model. In this respect, it is a form of resistance and of deconstruction of dependence on commercial seeds, pesticides and fertilisers which are becoming increasingly expensive, and of the possibility of building and salvaging knowledge which is part of a sustainable relationship between humans and nature, based on ancestral knowledge, culture and territorial diversity. Currently, almost every organisation has programmes for strengthening agroecology, for practising “traditional farming” or “low cost farming”. This includes, for example, producing seeds and seed houses and distributing them, producing natural inputs on farms, growing diversified crops, and intercropping and rotating them, amongst others. Another important aspect is the democratisation of the generation of knowledge through the exchange of experiences “from peasant to peasant”, seeking independence from conservative agricultural sciences that focus on the use of agrochemicals in production.

2011 AND 2012. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST LANDGRABBING AND THE CHANGE IN THE PERCEPTION OF THE STATE’S ROLE

<p>In 2011, the true extent of land grabbing which the organisations had been denouncing for a long time, without calling it “land grabbing”, came to light with the report by GRAIN and the International Conference “Stop land grabbing now!” in Nyéléni (Mali). This had large repercussions in the media, social organisations and NGOs. The wave of</p>	<p>land grabbing also led to more communities organising themselves on a national level, particularly on the African continent, in order to stand up to the threats. There were already organisations fighting for agrarian reform in the Western part, but the fight in defence of territory, where peasants had historically held the land and lived on the basis of tradi-</p>	<p>tional systems emerged in the Eastern part. The defence of territory became a crucial aspect of the fight for territory.</p> <p>The GCAR conference in 2011 in Bukit Tinggi, Indonesia, on “Agrarian Reform and Land Defence in the 21st Century: the challenge and the future,” analysed the processes in the context of the current crises being</p>
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faced by the planet. Furthermore, it was demonstrated how severely climate change affects farming, and food sovereignty, based on agrarian reform and defence of territory was presented as the solution to the climatic crisis. A broad analysis of land grabbing mechanisms was carried out, and a variety of factors were detected, including “green and blue economies”, payments for environmental services and the REDD/REDD+ mechanisms which were promoted by governments in the Río + 20 Summit in 2012, and which utilise the rhetoric of the crisis in order to establish the current agricultural model even more firmly.

In connection with these new mechanisms (*see chapter 2*), a **change in the perception of the State’s role was expressed**. While in Porto Alegre in 2006, the demands were clearly directed at the State and a call was made for “state revitalisation”. These demands were the repercussions from experiences of the structural adjustment, in which

the States and their role in the economy were dismantled. The situation in Bukit Tinggi was different. The states were highlighted as the key actors that reinforced the entrenchment of global capital through laws and regulations, even progressive states, for example in Latin America, which improved the fulfilment of basic needs and put forward social policies, but left agrarian reform processes very much on the sidelines. By contrast, mining projects, large monocultures and criminalisation gained considerable ground in those years. Consequently, discussions are underway as to how organisations can become autonomous, without disregarding the need to influence national and transnational policies. The perception that only a strong social movement can put sufficient pressure on the states to win them back is gaining strength. In this respect, alliances and the joining of forces are needed, and, at the same time, it is important to strengthen practices and the fight at grass roots level.

Seynel Arinfuat of the SPI (Indonesian Peasants Union)

In Indonesia, as in many places, the main problem is the issue of land. For us, land grabbing began when we were colonised by Portugal for Spain, Holland and Britain; they occupied our land in order to produce goods for export. After independence and when the “first government” came to power, it nationalised land and in 1965 approved the “Basic law of agrarian reform”. But under the “second government” (Note: Suharto’s dictatorship, which continued until 1998) the law was never implemented. This occurred in the world context of the cold war, when the United States fought against communism in Asia, and during the war in Vietnam.

Under the second government, structural adjustment programmes, which were as good as a second colonisation, were implemented. It must be taken into account that Free Trade Agreements are not just about trade, they are mainly about investments. Therefore, land grabbing became, on the one hand, increasingly fast because there were regulations that opened up the country for investments. On the other hand, it became

more extensive: whereas in the beginning investments were only allowed in five sectors, now all the sectors were open for direct investments.

Currently, land grabbing in Indonesia occurs in various different ways: one is that the state grants land concessions through direct investment agreements. The peasants who live in these areas are then evicted. The other is contract farming. Peasants are given inputs, they produce and the company buys their products from them (mostly for export). But that means that the peasant runs all the risks, if there is a storm that destroys the harvest, the peasant will have undertaken the expenses but not received any income. Moreover, there is no fixed price stated on the memorandum they sign, therefore they pay well in the first year, perhaps in the second year too, but in the third year, when the peasant has become dependent, they pay whatever they like. In this way, monocultures, particularly of oil palm, which have a large market in Europe, have proliferated. Lately there has also been large scale pro-

duction of rice and maize. At the same time there is land grabbing as a result of the application of the REDD and REDD+ mechanisms. For example, in Sumatra, Jambi, where they are currently trying to evict our members.

Conversely, Indonesia imports a lot of food. The food market is dominated by large corporations and food is just a commodity. Therefore, when we speak of the food crisis, we speak of a crisis of distribution, and on a market level, but not of a production crisis. Food prices therefore rose, and that is still occurring now. For the food crisis the government gives humanitarian aid, in the form of food. But this food comes from large corporations, from imports.

When the government discovered that we were so much importing food, its reaction was that we had to produce more maize, more rice, in large scale monocultures, and that is carried out by large corporations. That is how the government perceives Food Security. Meanwhile, peasants' wellbeing continues to decrease, according to Farmer Failure Index data. Therefore, transnational corporations first of all created the food crisis, and then benefitted from it.

We suffer a great deal of criminalisation for our land struggle: we are attacked, imprisoned and murdered.

The actors are the police and the companies' private security forces. There have been 255 conflicts, and many peasants went to jail. Just last year 2 or 3 people were killed, but they attacked some 100 peasants and 1,000 peasant families were displaced.

Our organization has 800,000 members. Our aim is to establish a peasant economy by means of an agrarian reform and Food Sovereignty.

First and foremost, we need control over our land and our food production. We believe the right way to do this is through community land tenure, which cannot be sold.

To achieve this, we put pressure on the government to implement the 1965 agrarian reform law. The government promised to redistribute 9 million hectares of land. In addition, we occupy land, between 2007 and 2013 we occupied 200,000 hectares; between 2014 and 2019 we want to occupy a million hectares. If we see that the land has been abandoned for several years or that the leases have expired, we arrive and grow agroecological crops. To achieve a peasant economy, we need strong foundations. Our aim is to strengthen collective coexistence by empowering peasant organisations.

Table 13: Experience in Indonesia: The consequences of FTAs, REDDs and the criminalisation of organisations

2016. MARABÁ: THE POPULAR AGRARIAN REFORM

The International Conference on Agrarian Reform in Marabá (Brazil) in 2016 was held in commemoration of the Eldorado dos Carajás Massacre 20 years ago.

The debate on strategies for bringing about an agrarian reform continued in Marabá. This came at an historical context in which several Latin American countries had suffered *coups d'état*. Included amongst these are Paraguay, Honduras, and during the conference itself, Brazil, when members of the national elite with close links to capital interests seized power in a parliamentary coup. For the first time, the concept of not just an integral, but also a **popular** agrarian reform was presented by the MST. This consists of an agrarian reform that begins at grass roots level: on the one hand it refers to the building of a broad popular alliance between the countryside and the city to generate pressure for bringing about change. But it also refers to

bringing about a change in the agricultural model with a change in productive and social practices. This is the basis for achieving a correlation of forces which will allow us to get the State back on our side, so that it accepts its role of organizing the provision of societies with healthy food.

Given that La Via Campesina is a heterogeneous space, the visions on the role of the State vary enormously in each different historical, political and cultural context. Thus, while influence in the political process is very important for some, others want to strengthen the autonomy of their organisations and movements. Nevertheless, in practice, all the organisations are based on a collection of strategies including praxis for change, the strengthening of alliances, of communication and dissemination, and they also work on exerting political influence on a national, regional and international level.

Delweck Matheus, Landless Workers' Movement (MST), Brazil

We are living in a time where economies and, consequently, the countryside, are dominated by financial capital. The fusion of financial capital with agroindustry and big landowners is creating a new agricultural model. This is occurring worldwide, in some regions very quickly, and in others more slowly. With this reflection in mind we need to rethink the concept of agrarian reform. This emerges from the reflection that for capitalism there is no longer any need for an agrarian reform in order to develop: at other historical moments urban capital sectors defended an agrarian reform for the development of capitalism. Previously, in classic reforms, there was an alliance between parts of urban capital and the peasantry, in order to create domestic markets for industrial production. But this need no longer exists. Which is why an alliance of classes is no longer possible.

Therefore an agrarian reform can only take place by building an alliance between the working classes in the countryside and in the city, in order to challenge the current model. We then find ourselves in a context of class struggle. Perhaps, a part of the middle classes can join the struggle, but without replicating the current model. This fight for an agrarian reform can only be won through an alliance between the countryside and the city.

In order to make that happen, the people must organise another production model based on another concept of communal natural goods, that is just to the earth and to the environment. Land must be made to fulfil its social function, it must serve the whole of society, produce healthy food based on the people's sovereignty, and the sovereignty of inputs and seeds. To this end peasants must ensure they do not reproduce the current model.

Therefore, the struggle is to change the technology of production, based on agroecology, and food processing in small and medium sized co-operatives, with the aim of feeding the whole population. This means different technological matrices suitable for each region. With the aim of feeding the whole population in mind, we also need to think about export, because some regions have more, while others do not have enough food. But the logistics of food distribution must not be controlled by the multinational corporations; we think that the State should take responsibility for these logistics, with the aim of supplying the population with healthy food. The whole process should be carried out with popular participation.

The state has the task of promoting public policies, but we can't expect it to fulfil that task, because it's not in the interests of the elite. That's why the agrarian struggle is a class struggle. We have to carry out an agrarian reform in order to achieve a correlation of forces that will allow us to change the nature of the State so that it accepts its role in the agrarian reform, which is to organise technical assistance and the logistics of storage and distribution, amongst other things.

Table 14: Experience in Brazil: Why must the integral agrarian reform be a popular reform?

YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR AGRARIAN REFORM

Young people are the future of farming, but the lack of access to the means of production, poverty in the countryside and patriarchal systems are factors that drive young people to migrate to the cities and abroad.

Almost every organisation has spaces for involving young people in the struggle. In many cases youth have been pioneers in the renovation of strategies, such as alternative communication and the inclusion of popular arts as a form of struggle.

Seeing agrarian reform not merely as an economic redistribution measure, but also as a change in social relations towards an oppression free society in which the majority does not dominate the minorities, young people are also contributing new issues to the debate, such as the questioning of patriarchal systems. This also includes decision making within the communities and families, and access to land and productive resources.

In Brazil, some young people have promoted a new issue within the MST. A debate was opened up in the organisation, within the discussion of the agrarian reform, on the rights of the LGBTQ community. Through culture, music, art and theatre, young people introduced and reinforced the need to debate the issue. Delweck Matheus, a national leader, explained it thusly: "They are issues that are still under construction, processes of public discussion. They are not issues on which we have a fixed stance. Our beginning to create a culture within the organisation to discuss this is all very new. Part of the discussion of the popular agrarian reform is that things should be built from the grassroots level, in collective processes." Possibly, in the future, this debate will be opened up in La Via Campesina, as part of the construction of social relations that are free from oppression.

Líder Góngora, National coordinator of the Defence of the Mangrove Ecosystem (C-Condem)

“Territory is the mangrove, the sea, the land, the forest, it’s everything put together, it’s a universe. First of all, it’s a beautiful landscape, where our history, our legends, our stories lie. As we respect the mangrove, it’s our way of working: when there is water we go to collect it, when the water level goes down, we leave, when the moon is waning we go to harvest, when there is a full moon we leave it to shine in all its magnificence, respecting cycles, coexisting, asking for permission to work, treating the land well, looking after plants, animals, looking after ourselves, learning together. Collective thought is very important, all listening to each other and all making proposals together. It’s this thought that we have to rebuild within our societies. We’re losing all the love that we have, we’ve stopped thinking about what’s going on between us, around us. This is territory, it’s not just land for land’s sake. It’s love and solidarity.

When we think about territory we also say we have reached the limit. The oligarchies and the politicians want to privatise land, put title deeds on it. While they share out large areas of land, the sea and the shrimp reservoirs amongst themselves, they try to squeeze us onto a tiny plot of land. There do exist some land laws, some agrarian reforms that just gloss over the issue. We need to go further. Before we were on the governments’ side, they sold us that model. They led us to believe that that was the way forward. But that model has had its day.”

Table 15: Experience in Ecuador: The defence of territories from the vision of collective thought

Abdullah Aysu, president of ÇİFTÇİ-SEN (ÇİFTÇİ Sendikaları Konfederasyonu: Confederation of small-scale peasants’ unions)

Agrarian reform is not only about land distribution, because we don’t only farm with land. What is farming? It’s the **culture** of working the land, it’s a way of life. And so, if we carry out a reform, that reform must **give that culture life**. A culture based on local food and supportive relationships and sharing. Therefore, agrarian reform should promote communal life. The history of farming is not a history of individual life. A reform based on co-operatives would be very easy to incorporate in Turkey. Because in Turkey life is based on the community, on solidarity. If I need something, you help me. The reform must lead to a political context in which the peasant can choose what to produce, how to produce and for whom to produce.

Table 16: Experience in Turkey: Agrarian reform as the revitalisation of rural culture

In Zimbabwe the only massive land redistribution in the world in recent years has occurred. In 1980, 5,700 commercial large scale farmers controlled 47% of agricultural land, while 99% of small scale peasants controlled 49%. In 2010 this situation had been reversed: the number of small scale peasants had doubled and had access to 79% of the land, while the large scale farmers’ control was reduced to 9% of the land.

In the first years studies were published that claimed to show a dramatic fall in production and which were based on official statistics. To date exports have not recovered their previous value. But a few years later, case studies based on interviews carried out in peasants’ homes started to be carried out. They revealed what statistics do not show: despite a lack of technical or financial support, access to land has actually led to a significant growth in production and a dynamisation of local informal economies.

Ngoni Chikowe, Zimbabwe Organic Smallholder Farmers Forum (ZIMSOFF)

In Zimbabwe our struggle for independence was all about land. We gained our independence in 1980. But 5,000 commercial farmers continued to control the land. There were a few negotiations with the previous colonisers, but they refused to sell the land. There was also an attempt to implement a voluntary land purchase and sale programme, but to no avail.

Veterans had fought for land in the war of Independence. And they won! But 20 years later they still had no land. In the year 2000, veterans and peasants went out to fight, we invaded farms to get our land back. We consider that the land is ours, as they never paid for it, we only went to take back what is ours by right. So, it was not an action, it was a revolutionary process, the aim was to win. The people invaded the land and we evicted the landowners. Then A1 farms were created, which are farms for small scale peasants, and A2 farms, which are larger stretches of land for commercial ends and exports. The communal land was maintained, and is being used for farming or rearing livestock.

And so, in Zimbabwe, land is no longer an issue, now we almost all have land. All the land belongs to the

State and therefore cannot be sold. But we have never had access to credit or technical support, that’s something that we need. Private banks do not give credit because peasants do not have guarantees, as the land belongs to the State.

Nationwide, we as an organisation have 19,000 members. In my region our organisation works on women’s issues, young people’s issues, value added and agroecology programmes. In fact, agroecology is not new, it’s traditional farming. Industrial farming on the other hand is very expensive; seeds, pesticides and fertilisers are very expensive and have serious repercussions on the soil and the climate. Traditional farming is a more sustainable way of farming; our crops are more resistant to droughts and are more nourishing.

In addition, we work on recovering our ancestral seeds, but under current legislation we can’t sell them commercially. Therefore, we also campaign politically on the seed law, we want to sell our ancestral seeds, for example, through seed houses. Seeds are closely related to tradition, there are rituals with seeds for our ancestors, seeds are linked to relationships between the living and the dead.

Table 17: Experience in Zimbabwe: Land redistribution as a result of pressure by mass land occupations

WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
AGAINST PATRIARCHY AND
CLASS DOMINATION



Strategies:

**Resistance, action and praxis
in territories, political impact
and communication**

Which strategies can we use to create a force that is capable of controlling today's globalised capital? How can we achieve an agrarian reform that goes towards a system that maintains biodiversity and the cycles of nature and stops climate change, feeds the world with healthy, suitable food, democratises politics, the economy, society and the management of knowledge in our societies? What strategies can we use in a context in which some state institutions seem to be dominated by the interests of oligarchies and multinational corporations? How can we achieve a correlation of forces on political decisions?

Agrarian reform is not perceived as a one-off policy, but is rather understood to be an ongoing process of change. In this respect, the strategies are multidimensional and are applied on the basis of collective construction and praxis in organisations, through changes in production methods, direct action, land occupations and resistance, advancing towards the democratisation of access to resources and the popular defence of territories. In addition, communication and exchange of experiences is vital in order to generate analysis from the territories and in the building of alternatives. At the same time, both on a national and international level, we are seeking opportunities to make a political impact.

POPULAR ACTION AND THE BUILDING OF DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVES

Democratisation based on collective and participative processes is crucial to the construction of an integral and popular agrarian reform and to Food Sovereignty. The democratisation of knowledge is fundamental and is understood as being the generation of knowledge from experiences, knowhow and the cosmovisions of the people. For that, political and organisational education is strengthened through an exchange of both local and international experiences. On an international level, La Via Campesina is an important platform for the collective construction of proposals and strategies. Part of the building of change is also agroecological education. Thus, almost all the organisations have educational programmes and the exchange of experiences “from peasant to peasant”. To this end, collective political and agrarian practices that aim to break with the age old exclusion of peasant men, women and young people, are the fundamental strategy for changing the current model. In many parts of the world, land occupations are one, and often, the most important, way of demanding

agrarian reforms and the democratisation of land and giving them a social and environmental function. The most widespread must be the MST in Brazil, but they also occur in Paraguay, Honduras, Andalusia (Spain), Indonesia and in many other countries. Often they are the only way in which peasants can gain access to land in order to be able to build real alternatives for feeding the people through collective processes. But also in regions where there is land grabbing for mining, monocultures and sowing of genetically modified seeds, communities and organisations have opted for resistance to the multinationals and to the States, which strip them of their rights and refuse to protect them. This resistance to land grabbing and the contamination of their sources of water and their land, and their seeds, takes many forms, including land occupation, the destruction of property and of genetically modified plantations and monocultures. Furthermore, protests, marches and occupations of institutions are key tactics to make the voices of peasants heard.

COMMUNICATION AND RESEARCH

Communication is a basic instrument which makes struggles visible, disseminates information about them and permits exchange, both at the grassroots level and on an international level, as well as making a political impact. Communication instruments are as diverse as the organizations themselves. Of these, some new forms of communication and collective building are recreational art, dance, art and *místicas*. Particularly in an environment in which international institutions and much of the mass media are increasingly monopolised, and closely linked to economic and political interests, alternative communications media are a crucial tool for making an impact on public opinion, for making problems and the victories of the

struggle visible, and for denouncing criminalisation. Calls for solidarity to support the struggle have also been disseminated by this kind of media. Carrying out research is important in order to give the demands of organisations a scientific basis, which is important in order to put them in the public eye, to get coverage in other types of media too, and to make a political impact. Thus, for example, evaluations of market assisted agrarian reform, numerical evidence of grabbing of land, water and natural resources, studies of the growing concentration of market power and, connected to that, the rise in prices, are aspects which support our struggles and place them in a context of global developments.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL IMPACT

Impact, pressure and lobbying on a national level are part of the struggle of almost every organisation, although they differ significantly according to the legal and historical context and political situation in each country. In this way, important changes have been achieved. La Via Campesina, as a multinational movement, has succeeded in finding opportunities to make a political impact on an international level. The organisations consider it important to generate

tools on an international level with the objective of accompanying the grassroots struggles in order to generate a debate on an international level which will serve for legislative proposals nationally and in the struggle against criminalisation and land grabbing. For this reason, La Via Campesina, its allies and other civil society organisations (NGOs and SOs) also work in United Nations organisations, including FAO and the Human Rights Council. On the other hand, the strategy also

includes an outright rejection of the legitimacy of international institutions that exist solely to back the ever deeper penetration of capital in the countryside and the cities, amongst them the WTO, the World Bank and the IMF. In this context we are going to cite two examples of important achievements on an international level, within the framework of the FAO and other spaces of the United Nations (UN), which have developed with the participation and pressure of La Via Campesina, amongst others.

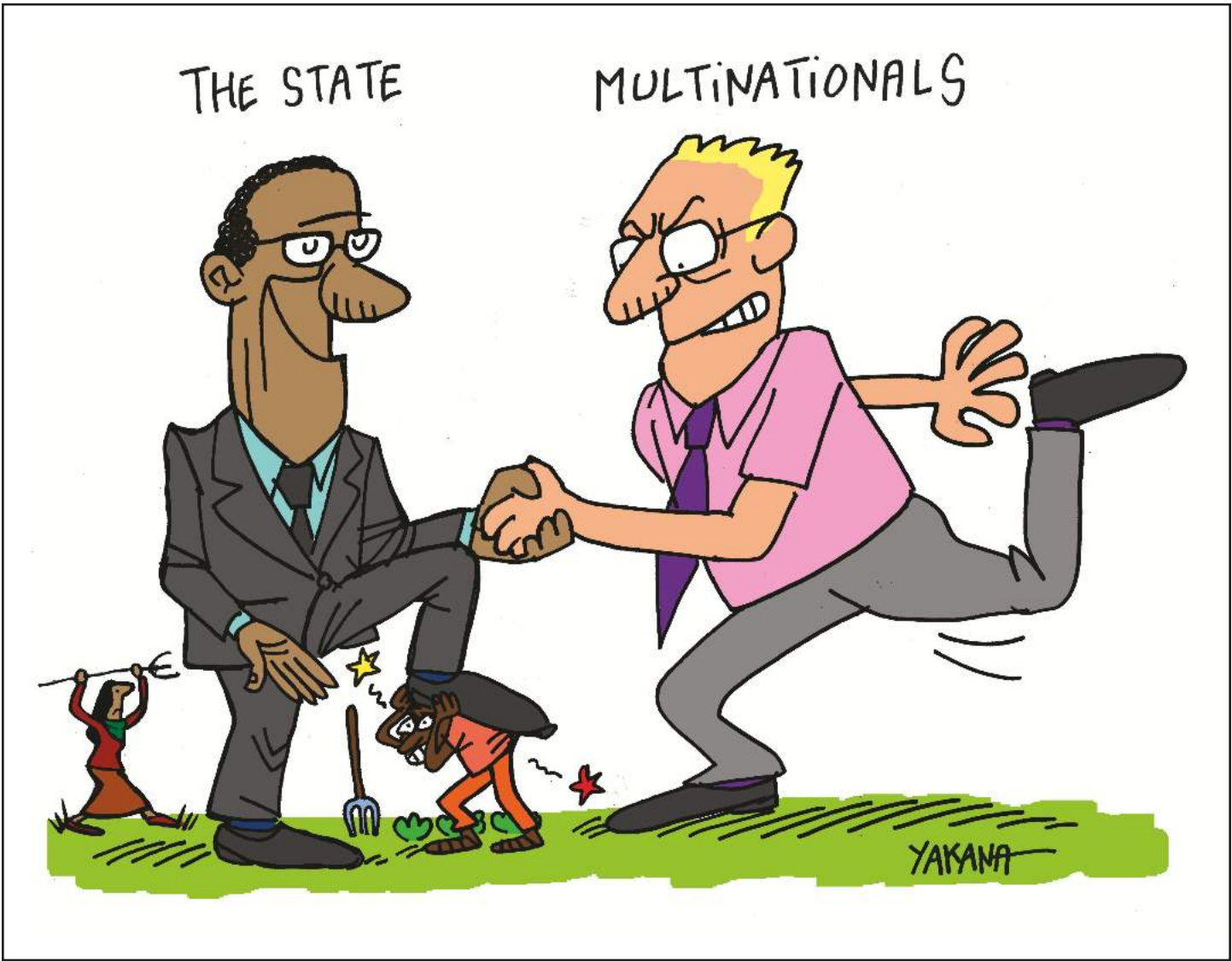
GUIDELINES ON LAND TENURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTS

With the “Voluntary Guidelines on responsible governance of the tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national Food Security”, an extensive, global instrument was obtained to aid in the fight for territories for peasant, fishing and pastoral communities, and for forest dwellers. It was approved in 2012 at the FAO. On the IPC side, the results, debates and new concepts on territories from the conferences in Porto Alegre in 2006 and in Nyéléni in 2007, as well as from various conferences of indigenous peoples, all fed into this process. An important precondition for these was the reform of the Committee on Food Security (CFS) of the FAO, in which the *institutionalised* participation of the organisations of the International Planning Committee of Food Sovereignty of the FAO was successfully achieved. Although they do not have a vote in the approval at international level, it meant that the IPC organisations could participate on an equal footing in the negotiation of the text of the guidelines. According to Sofia Monsalve, who took part in the negotiations: “This completely changes the dynamics of these institutions. The guidelines were the first action of this reformed committee, which made the biggest impact on an international level to date”. The document contains recommendations on several issues which are of paramount importance, such as agrar-

ian reform, women’s rights, access to justice, the protection of the defenders of rights to land, fisheries and forests, the participation of communities in decision making processes, the integral vision on territories, fisheries and forests, ancestral or informal rights and the communities’ self-government systems, evictions, speculation and land concentration, armed conflicts and situations of occupation, climate change and natural disasters. The aim is to expressly acknowledge that natural resources are basic to the fulfilment of the right to food. In this way it includes not just the land but also the integral vision of territory, in addition expressly acknowledging traditional, community and informal rights. The focus on women and young people is broad and transversal and is not limited to individual tenure, but includes both the right to political participation and the promotion of their participation in traditional systems. The organisations have decided to use these guidelines in this spirit; “as if they weren’t voluntary”, comprising an important instrument for the struggle for public policies, against land grabbing and discrimination. Nevertheless, international spaces are a reflection of current international power. Thus, governments and bilateral and international agencies interested in promoting an agenda focused on economic growth, fomenting land markets and profits for commercial and financial interests, also

succeeded in including useful references for these purposes in the text. An example is the “voluntary” nature of the guidelines, the IPC did not succeed in establishing secure monitoring by social organisations; the reference to food security and not to Food Sovereignty; not just agrarian reform based on expropriation, but also based on voluntary land purchase and sale; the right to water or seeds was not included and it does not prohibit large scale investment, despite the fact that important safeguards are proposed (for example the approval of negotiations in parliaments).

Thus, in no time certain actors had used the guidelines to promote “responsible investment”, those who rejected the intended spirit and in fact tried to justify land grabbing. Amongst them were the US Development Agency, US-AID, the G7’s New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa, and the so called Interlaken Group (a group of companies, banks, the World Bank International Finance Corporation, the IFC, the Department For International Development (DFID) and some international NGOs).



DECLARATION OF PEASANTS' RIGHTS

Another important milestone is the on-going process of negotiation for a **Declaration of Peasants' Rights**. Following a La Via Campesina initiative in 2012, the United Nations' Human Rights Council approved the forming of a working group to draft the Declaration. The working group included social organisations and NGOs from the IPC on the one hand, and government representatives on the other. Bolivia, as the president of the Human Rights Council's work group, is preparing the text of the Declaration, mostly on the basis of the recommendations from the social organizations. It will first be voted on in the Human Rights Council before going to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The Declaration would be an international framework to protect the collective rights of peasants, their rights to land, to water, to seeds and other productive resources, to peasant culture and to biodiversity. The defence of the role and specific rights of women and young people within the peasantry is also important.

The debate between the organisations and governments revolves around two main questions:

The opponents of the Declaration (particularly the European Union and the United States) argue that human rights are universal, and that they cannot be fragmented or characterised for a single group, because that would revert the logic of human rights.

Otherwise “tomorrow it will be the cobblers and the day after that the shoemakers, all clamouring for their own rights.” The basis of this discussion is mainly whether rights should be only be individual or if there should be collective rights within the human rights system. However, some African, Latin American and Asian countries support the Declaration and consider the vision of human rights as solely individual to be a Western imposition.

The second argument is that there are supposedly no gaps in international protections and that the Declaration is therefore unnecessary. But the gaps are evident: there is no protection of humanity's common goods for food nor of those who produce that food and defend it against commercialisation. And no protection of native seeds, the right to water, and productive resources. Sofia Monsalve of FIAN – who is participating in the negotiations along with LVC – believes that: “There are important gaps in the protection. The international norms need to evolve, as they did in the past in the case of social rights for example. More profound questions lie behind this debate: the relationship of human dignity with nature is an underdeveloped vision within human rights. It's a matter of finding other ways of relating to Mother Earth, which we in Latin America debate under the principle of “Living Well,” or *Buen Vivir*.

THE UNHRC’S HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: INTERVENTION AGAINST THE IMPUNITY OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS.

Behind the criminalisation, the extrajudicial murders and the violence perpetrated against the defenders of human rights, and the environmental destruction, one of the biggest questions is the impunity of multinational corporations (MNCs) and that of the people holding high profile positions within them. While International Free Trade Agreements that establish supranational tribunals so that companies can prosecute states are being strengthened, there are no international mechanisms that allow the people to prosecute the MNCs for environmental crimes, the murders of the defenders of human rights and nature, for forced evictions or for violations of labour and human rights.

Therefore, the Campaign “Dismantle corporate power and stop impunity”, which is supported by La Via Campesina, focuses on these aspects and is striving to gain traction in the United Nations’ Human Rights Council. Within this framework the campaign has established an intergovernmental working group, the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group, OEIGWG, to develop a legally binding tool against the impunity of the MNCs.

Finally, behind La Via Campesina’s international work is a debate that is yet to be resolved: are international instruments a mechanism for bringing about real change in the hegemonic model, given the asymmetry of power that we face today? To what extent does, not just the approval, but also the implementation, of these declarations and guidelines depend on political will? What purpose do international declarations serve in a context in which international human rights are moving backwards, in which even mandatory conventions are being openly flouted?

We understand that these struggles are tools, in a process for a change in visions, towards a different model. In addition, they are an international reference which gives the people another tool for their local struggles in territories against land grabbing, against criminalisation, and for an agrarian reform and the acknowledgment of collective rights. To this end, they are perceived, not as a point of arrival, but rather as a point of departure.

Conclusions:

Towards the convergence of struggles for an integral and popular agrarian reform for Food Sovereignty!

<p>The exchange of experiences, the dialogue of knowledges, collective analysis and the conclusions of research have left the real extent of the ever deeper entrenchment of capital in the countryside and in the city increasingly clear, as part of a paradigm of continuous growth. The consequences of the growing empowerment of an frightening alliance of actors in the agrarian and food system show that there is a serious contradiction between the interests of capital and the possibility of healthy, nourishing food, human welfare, human rights and care of Mother Earth. They are not isolated experiences, they are a direct consequence of the global political and structural frameworks which have been outlined in this publication.</p> <p>How can we achieve the change that we want in a world with such strong power asymmetries? We envisage, defend and build a strong alliance between people, organisations, movements from the countryside and the city, which is capable of building the necessary correlation of forces! We are building popular territories in which healthy food is being produced in harmony with nature, using agroecology and the ancestral knowhow and practices with which we feed the world!</p>	<p>Practices whereby land, water, seeds and knowledge are goods that belong to all of humanity, the basis of the food that feeds societies and of the protection of nature, with a solidarity economy that places a life with dignity for all above the interests of a privileged few. Practices in which there are social relations without patriarchal, racist or class oppression, where the people fight to overcome poverty, destitution and forced migration, and where political decisions are democratised.</p> <p>Healthy, nutritious food is everyone's struggle, in the countryside and throughout society as a whole, against the hegemonic system which places control of the people's food in the hands of multinational corporations!</p> <p>The fight for an agrarian and food system in the hands of the people, doesn't that boil down to a fight against the same paradigm that is generating increasingly extreme inequality, both in societies and between countries? The paradigm that generates precarious work, that undermines labour rights in the name of "global competition"? A paradigm that is pushing up the cost of housing in the cities, that expels people with fewer resources to the urban periphery? That increasingly promotes transport systems that</p>	<p>deprive us of clean air to breathe and destroy the climate? That reinforces tireless consumerism and has created wasteful societies in the countries in the North, which are, in turn, a strong motor for advancing the extraction of primary resources in the countries in the South? Which reinforces the privatisation of social systems and their placing into the hands of banks and insurance companies, which have generated this exorbitant concentration of capital, which itself is a motor for the grabbing of virtually everything? Which aspires to the increasing privatisation of public spaces and services that supply basic needs, such as drinking water, waste management, education and health?</p> <p>We understand that although the mechanisms are different in each territory, whether that be in cities or in the countryside, they are still part of the same paradigm, that has penetrated every corner of the planet, and which aspires to subject every aspect of life to the rules of the market, rules which serve the interests of a privileged few. That's why the banner of the integral and popular agrarian reform within the framework of Food Sovereignty is not just a struggle of peasant organisations, but a struggle of all people!</p>
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We envisage a convergence of our struggles in the countryside and in the cities, in which we build societies of Living Well for all people, in harmony with nature!

GLOBALISE STRUGGLE!

GLOBALISE HOPE!

Further reading

Declarations of La Via Campesina

- Declarations of La Via Campesina

The evolution of the concept of the integral and popular agrarian reform:

- Landless workers’ movement: the nature of the struggle for agrarian reform: historical context and current challenges.
- Peter M. Rosset: Re-thinking agrarian reform, land and territory in La Via Campesina
- Fausto Torres: Owners of the land, towards a new agrarian reform

Land concentration:

- GRAIN: Hungry for land: small farmers feed the world - with less than a quarter of all farmland
- Definition of landgrabbing: Ecoruralis: A proposal for a definition of landgrabbing, unpublished

Landgrabbing

- GRAIN: The Global Farmland Grab in 2016: How Big? How Bad? (this also contains studies of various issues, for example, seeds or water grabbing).
- Hands off the land: Land concentration, land grabbing and people’s struggle in Europe (only in English, about landgrabbing in Europe)
- La Via Campesina Europa: Red “Access to land”
- Landgrabbing and human rights. The involvement of European entities in land grabbing outside the European union. (About the landgrabbing actors, although it only refers to European actors, it gives a good overview of the structures of landgrabbing capital)

Further reading

Grabbing in the oceans:

- Global grabbing in the oceans – basic guide

Privatisation of seeds, and GMOs :

- ETCgroup: Who Owns Nature?; Breaking Bad and various other documents
- La Via Campesina: The GMO threat to Food Sovereignty and peasant economy in villages
- La Via Campesina: The seed campaign

Women and peasant and popular feminism

- La Via Campesina: Popular Peasant Feminism
- La Via Campesina: Stop violence against women! Campaign
- Sofia Monsalve: Land and women

Guidelines on the governance of land, fisheries and forests:

- IPC: People’s Manual on the Guidelines on Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests
- FAO: “Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of national food security.”
- La Via Campesina “The CFS: A new space for the food policies of the world, Opportunities and limitations”
- La Via Campesina: The Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure at a Crossroads.

Campaign against the impunity of multinational corporations

- Stop Transnational Corporations’ Impunity! campaign.



La Vía Campesina is an international grassroots movement that defends small-scale sustainable agriculture as a way to promote social justice and dignity. It brings together millions of peasants, small and medium-size farmers, women farmers, landless people, indigenous people, migrants and agricultural workers and youth from around the world.

It strongly opposes corporate driven agriculture and transnational companies that are marginalizing people and destroying nature. It counts 164 member organisations in 73 countries around the world.



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