

# ANNUAL REPORT

2023







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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## ***“Solidarity and resistance facing global crisis, towards the 8th Conference.”***

The year 2023 was a very important milestone for La Via Campesina, as we were able to celebrate the 8th International Conference of our movement. After the ordeal that the COVID-19 pandemic represented for peasant organisations, it was essential for us to come together to strengthen the unity of the peasant movement and to define our common strategy for the coming years.

Thus, along the year 2023, all the International Action Days served as occasions to prepare the International Conference collectively. After a six-year break due to the COVID-19 pandemic, from 1 to 8 December last year, over 500 delegates from member organisations and allies converged in Bogota, Colombia. The success of the International Conference fills us with hope and strength to face the many difficult challenges ahead.

Besides preparing for the 8th International Conference, the peasant movement focused its action on solidarity with our member organisations facing situations of repression, natural disasters, wars or coups d'état. Among the actions, we mobilised in support of peasant communities facing earthquakes in Turkey, Nepal and Morocco. We also stood with peasant organisations in Peru, France and Sri Lanka against criminalisation and repression of their mobilisations, and we supported the peasants in Haiti and Niger on account of destabilisation attempts linked to imperialism. The movement also mobilised every day alongside our Palestinian comrades to denounce the genocide of the people of Gaza and to call on governments to act for the liberation of the Palestinian people. This solidarity is an essential axis of La Via Campesina's action. Together, we are stronger to resist.

The two years of COVID-19 allowed a few rich countries and transnational corporations to attempt to capture the critical space of global food governance to serve their interests. This was the case of the UN Food System Summit (UN FSS) organised in late 2021. The lifting up of COVID-19 restrictions in 2022 enabled us, the peasants, and our allies to push against this

agenda. We continue to engage in the Rome processes to demand participation in the elaboration and implementation of public policies that ensure new relationships between those who produce food and those who consume it, those who live in rural and urban areas. We call for policies that also guarantee fair prices, thus generating a decent income for all those who produce in the countryside as well as fair access to healthy food for consumers.

That is why, together with our allies, we are convening the Global Nyéléni Forum in 2025 to continue building popular alliances around food sovereignty and to move towards people-based food governance, not transnational corporations (TNCs).

In 2023, La Via Campesina, working together with its allies (CETIM and FIAN International), focused on concluding one last important and crucial step towards the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP), demanding the setting up of the UN monitoring mechanism. Again, with COVID-19 restrictions behind us, peasant delegates frequented Geneva, home to the UN Human Rights Council, to lobby support of member states and advocate for the mechanism. Our efforts were rewarded in October, almost five years after the adoption of UNDROP by the UN General Assembly in 2018, when the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution to create a working group.

In 2023, the movement organised numerous virtual and face-to-face training sessions: virtual training for trainers on UNDROP at the global level in August, an in-person UNDROP training session for Africa delegates in May held in Harare, Zimbabwe, communication training processes for the regional secretariats in Turkey, as well as the 1st International Women's School held in March in Maputo, Mozambique. After 30 years of existence and the growing recognition of peasants as political subjects, we continue to build a stronger and bigger movement.

At the 8th International Conference, we celebrated the incorporation of the tenth La Via Campesina region, the Arab and North Africa (ArNA) region, the creation of an International Articulation of Diversities and the increasing involvement and representation of young people in political decision-making spaces. In addition, as the peasant movement working together with our allies, we started to work to radically change the international trade order.

We are convinced that it is time for the World Trade Organisation to be replaced by a new global framework for trade and agriculture, based on food sovereignty, cooperation and solidarity.

*United in diversity, we continue to organise, mobilise and march forward to ensure a future for humanity!*

## 2

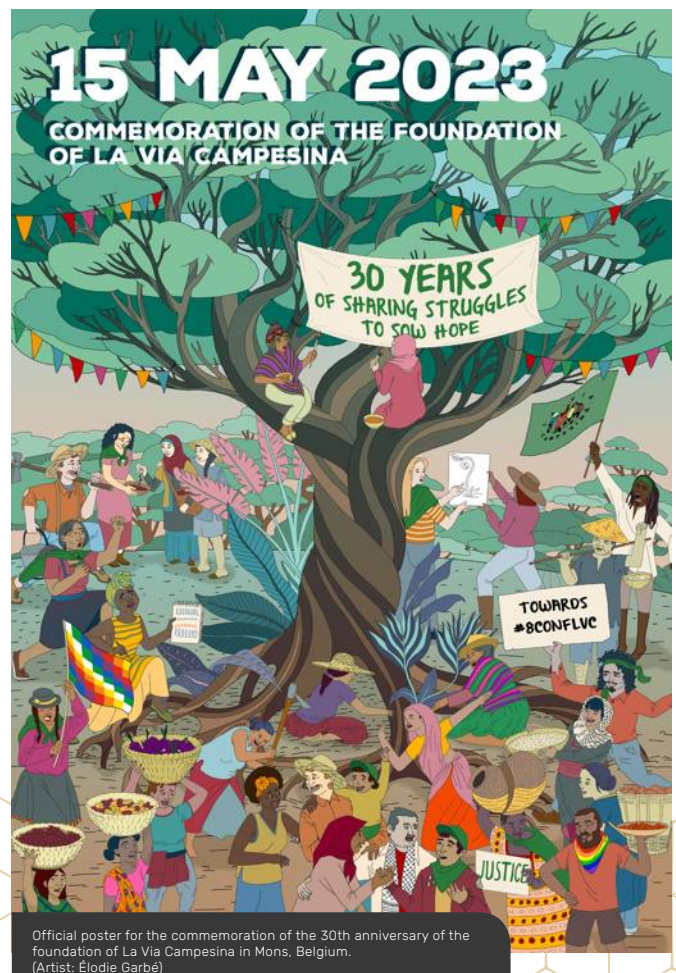
ORGANICITY – INTERNAL  
FUNCTIONING2.1 “30 Years of Sharing Struggles to Sow Hope”:  
Celebrating a Legacy of Struggle and Hope

***“Our role is crucial; the future of humanity is linked to the future of agriculture.”***

Three decades ago in 1993, in Mons, Belgium, La Via Campesina was born to be the voice of the small-scale farmers around the world. On 15 May 2023, some of the pioneers and current leaders gathered in Mons, in the same town hall, to celebrate the 30th anniversary and to reflect on the journey and the future of the movement. More than an event, the celebration was a testament to the resistance and solidarity that defines La Via Campesina.

**Box 1: Highlights of the Celebrations**

After 30 years, Paul Nicholson from Spain stressed the unity of the movement against neoliberalism. Pancha Rodriguez from Chile celebrated the pioneering role of women in agriculture and struggle. Henry Saragih from Indonesia recalled the peasant alternative in the face of crisis. Elizabeth Mpofu from Zimbabwe highlighted the impact of the movement in Africa. Leaders such as Hortense Kikodila from Congo, Anuka Desilva from Sri Lanka and Morgan Ody from France spoke about the role of the movement, its achievements and the challenges it faces.



Official poster for the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the foundation of La Via Campesina in Mons, Belgium. (Artist: Élodie Garbé)

## 2.2 8th International Conference

*In the face of global crises, we build Food Sovereignty to secure a future for humanity!*

The 8th International Conference, like the previous ones, was an important space of reunion, articulation and celebration, of analysing the challenges, building alternatives and renewing the movement's commitment to the struggle for a different world, with land, territory and food sovereignty, peace, justice and dignity for the peoples (see Box 2).

The conference began with a powerful opening *mística*, welcoming speeches by the host organisations and region, and the introduction and welcome of new organisations joining La Via Campesina from around the world. Leaders from each continent then presented to the plenary an analysis of the international context from the perspective of each of their regions. The debate continued the next day with two round tables: "In the Face of Global Crises, We Build Food Sovereignty to Secure a Future for Humanity" and "Building Alliances for Food Sovereignty and Nyéléni." During the conference, special attention was given to our allies (social movements, NGOs, academics and funders): they identified different axes to support the peasant's movement and to reaffirm their commitment towards a common cause.

### Box 2. Selected Highlights of the 8th Conference

#### 30th Anniversary Celebration

The conference was the ideal setting to celebrate the 30 years of La Via Campesina, a spirit that permeated the entire event. The conference had a special opening with a panel discussion where historical leaders reflected on the challenges, historical struggles and transformations that La Via Campesina has promoted in the world. The review of the movement's history and achievements filled the room with emotion, pride and a sense of belonging.

#### 1st Meeting of Diversities and Creation of the International Articulation of Diversities

The first La Via Campesina "Gender Diversity Meeting" was a historic moment for the movement. The meeting began with a powerful *mística* under the motto "Diversities are at the heart of food sovereignty in all territories!" The meeting concluded with the official launch of an International Articulation of Diversities.

#### 1st Men Against Patriarchy Space

Men from La Via Campesina renewed their commitment to the struggle against patriarchy in the movement. The men's space against patriarchy was punctuated by reflections denouncing the domination of bodies and lives in the hands of the complex and intertwined systems of patriarchy, capitalism, racism and class hegemony.

#### ArNA Region Formally Recognised. Solidarity with Palestine Echoed!

The ArNA region was formally accepted and recognised as the 10th region of La Via Campesina. In all the days of the conference, the solidarity with Palestine echoed!

#### Children Space

For the first time at a La Via Campesina conference, a permanent space was set aside exclusively for peasant children. A group of 15 children between the ages of 2 and 12 participated in playful, creative and plastic activities related to the struggles for food sovereignty. The children were co-protagonists of the closing day, where they presented a show to the plenary with songs, paintings and a play with puppets among other artistic creations.

#### Collective Care Brigade

Another innovation was the creation of a collective care brigade, responsible for ensuring strict compliance with the zero-tolerance policy on harassment, violence against women and discrimination in the movement's spaces. Thanks to good political work with the regions and the permanent presence of the brigade, inappropriate situations were stopped or successfully prevented.

#### Increase of Youth Representation in Political Leadership

The conference approved the youth proposal to move from a continental representation (4 members) to a regional representation (10 members) of young people in the ICC.

On the last day of the conference, the action plan 2024+ was adopted in plenary. A final declaration and a summary of the declarations of solidarity with the various struggles and peoples of the world were read out. The closing *mística* included the announcement of the venue of the 9th International Conference in Africa and the presentation of the new International Coordination Committee members. The conference ended with a call for peace in Colombia and a celebration of the enormous logistical, organisational and political achievement of unity in diversity achieved during this conference.



The new generation of La Via Campesina presenting the slogan of the 8th International Conference



## 2.3 Regional Functioning

In Turkey, an important training session for all the Regional Secretariats took place in February 2023. This training, both technical and political, made it possible to update the discussions on the situation of financial autonomy of the regions, to agree on the procedures and methodologies of joint work between the regional levels and the International Operational Secretariat, in particular for the processes of fundraising and implementation of the funds.

As a sign of the increasingly effective coordination between the different levels of La Via Campesina, 27 regional activities have been carried out during 2023, with the support and accompaniment of the International Operational Secretariat in the search for resources to develop the political agendas of the regions. These activities were organised in addition to the large number of actions and processes carried out by each of the regions, with the funds they manage directly and the contributions of member organisations.

**LVC members are organized under 10 regions**

- SOUTH EAST AND EAST ASIA (SEEA)
- SOUTH ASIA (SA)
- SOUTHERN AND EASTERN AFRICA (SEAF)
- WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA (WECAF)
- ARAB AND NORTH AFRICA (ARNA)
- CARRIBEAN
- SOUTH AMERICA
- CENTRAL AMERICA
- EUROPE (ECVC)
- NORTH AMERICA

**CLOC VIA CAMPESINA**

**THIS COLLECTIVE CONSTRUCTION OF REGIONS STARTED IN SAO PAULO 2004, AND WE CONTINUE TO GROW.**  
(3rd International Conference)

La Via Campesina's regions and regional secretariats

## 2.4 Transversal Working Collectives:

### a) Working Together towards Financial Autonomy for the Movement

*“Building financial autonomy is a priority for La Via Campesina and a collective task.”*

La Via Campesina has made progress in the implementation of its financial strategy, with the commitment and participation of the regional and global levels.

The year 2023 was a year of implementation of the strategy that the Financial Autonomy Collective has been building in a participatory way over the last few years. The concrete practice of guaranteeing the funds to cover the budget of the 8th Conference confirmed the success of the working methodology designed by the collective and based on 4 principles (see Box 3).

#### Box 3: 4 Principles of LVC Financial Strategy

- Autonomy: To guarantee the independence of the movement and its right to proceed in accordance with our objectives.
- Transparency: To promote cooperation and synergies between member groups, regions and other structures of the movement and to avoid competition.
- Solidarity: To ensure that all structures of the movement have access to the resources necessary for their basic functioning.
- Care: To look after the use of the resources of the movement and for the well-being of the people in the movement.

For an event of the magnitude of the 8th Conference and following a commitment that has existed since the birth of the movement, the member organisations and the regions made a political commitment to contribute to the financing of the conference.

The mobilisation of resources for the conference was a success, ensuring the participation of all the expected delegates thanks to a significant financial contribution from the regions and national organisations, which covered the entire budget of the event.

While the conference absorbed much of the collective's work, the other key processes of the Financial Autonomy Strategy, such as training, relations with donors and allies, and ongoing policy discussions for decision-making, were not neglected.

In addition, in articulation with other global social movements, we are promoting a space for training and

collective reflection on financial autonomy, and in particular on philanthropy, and on how the movements, with their own strategy, could enter into dialogue with donors and foundations so that donors understand the importance and impact of working directly with global social movements.

In the next phase, and on the basis of the new action plan defined at the 8th Conference, it is up to us as a movement to continue with the work of financial autonomy. Prioritizing the processes of accompaniment and political coordination, the movement can achieve greater financial autonomy for the regions. This will enable regions to implement their political plans, engage in articulation and debate with donors and funders, and undertake ongoing training processes.

### b) La Via Campesina Communication Collective

In 2023, advancing the consolidation of the LVC Communication Collective, the international days of action and the commitment to weave a global communication strategy were the political priorities of the collective.

Throughout the year, the Communication Collective has promoted the organisation of the 8th International Conference during the most important international days of action: 17 April (International Day of Peasant Struggles), 16 October (Global Day of Action for Food Sovereignty and against Transnational Corporations), as well as during all other global and regional events organised by the movement.

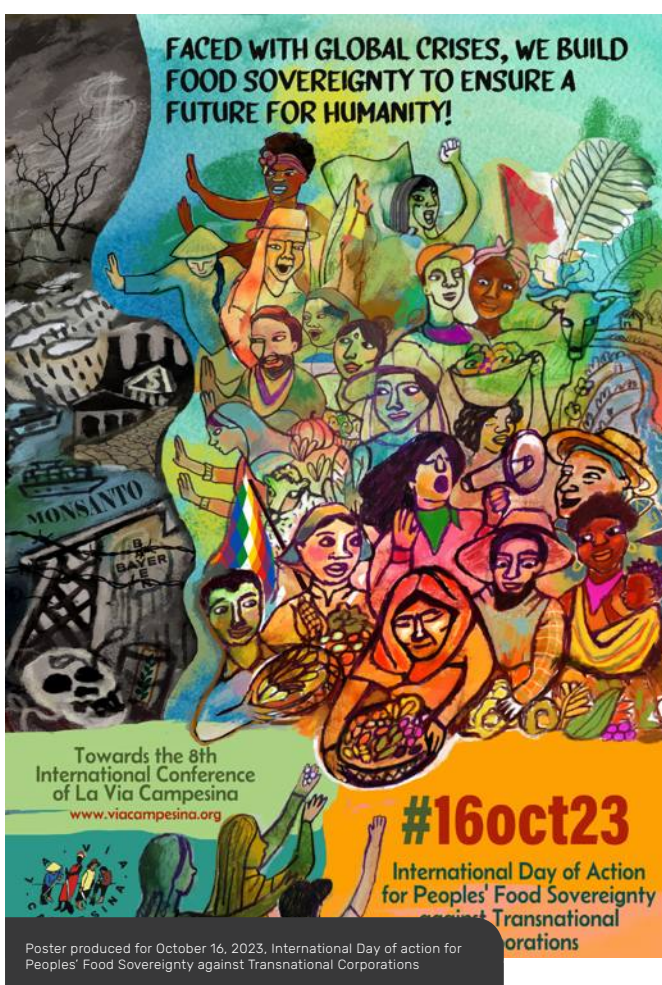
After the pandemic, the collective strengthened its organic dynamics by holding continuous virtual meetings to follow up on the communication needs of the movement. In addition to the meetings of the regional secretariats in which members of the collective participated, the collective has also benefited from face-to-face training on technical communication issues.

Since its creation at the 7th International Conference of La Via Campesina, the Communication Collective has made progress in training and capacity building of peasant leaders in technical issues of communication, media and campaigning (see Box 4 below).

#### Box 4: Some Regional Communication Initiatives

At the regional level, the training processes promoted by members such as CLOC-La Via Campesina (the Latin American Coordination of Rural Organisations of La Via Campesina), through its School of Communication, which in 2023 carried out a series of virtual training sessions, were an important initiative that helped consolidate the communication process towards the 8th International Conference of La Via Campesina.

Also noteworthy are the efforts of the West and Central Africa region to provide face-to-face training to peasants in several countries on issues related to the technical strengthening of communication tools, closely linked to the defence of food sovereignty and the promotion of peasant agroecology.



#### c) Formative Processes in La Via Campesina: Struggles are Midwives of Formative Processes

*“Education is key to interpret the present and the future with a historical perspective. Change doesn’t come from intellectual forms of consciousness, but from the movement of history, from actions and contradictions and, above all, from the ability to unite minds and hearts around an emancipatory project.”*

In 2023, the Formation Collective focused on the construction of the 8th International Conference. The collective organised several spaces for political training, with the aim of creating critical spaces for reflecting on reality, as well as mobilising the regions and bringing contributions, debates and proposals within the framework of the 8th Conference.

#### Planting Seeds: Preparatory Documents for the 8th Conference

Within the framework of the 8th Conference, a set of documents were prepared to help delegates elaborate the movement analysis about the international context, the struggle for food sovereignty, the feminist struggle, the conquest of peasants’ rights, as well as a number of emerging issues such as the struggle against racism or for gender diversity.

#### Countering the Narrative of Technological Agriculture

The importance of food systems is now increasingly recognised. Recent studies show that commercial agriculture and related land use changes are major contributors to climate change. In response, corporations and philanthropic capitalists are investing billions of dollars in initiatives designed to move us towards a more sustainable future. But these initiatives do not focus on truly moving away from fossil fuel dependent agriculture, or on improving the distribution of power and decision-making (governance). Instead, they prioritise the development and application of new agro-industrial technologies that have a very high potential for profitability. However, these technologies and the corporate governance that accompanies them pose major risks to food sovereignty, agroecology and peasant autonomy.

The rise of cutting-edge agricultural technologies, encompassed by the concept of ag-tech, presents a major challenge to movements struggling for food sovereignty around the world. Together with our allies from the ETC Group, we worked on a process of building a counter-narrative to technological agriculture.

From May to July 2023, La Via Campesina, with the support of its allies from the ETC group and Growing Culture, organised a virtual training process on counter-narratives in technological agriculture called “From the Genes to the Web.” Around 30 people from the different regions of La Via Campesina participated in 4 virtual training sessions. We counted on the participation of one representative from each region



to take part in the whole process. We had two narrative analysis sessions: one based on the tools of narrative analysis and the other one on analysing the narratives of our opponents. The second block focused on creating our own stories, so we analysed the narrative power of the media, how to create our own stories and how to strengthen our stories.

As a result of this collective reflection and construction, the booklets “Autonomy in the Face of Technology” and “The Politics of Technology” were published.

### **Strengthening the Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas**

In August, La Via Campesina and CETIM organised a training session for trainers on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP). Each region ensured the participation of two delegates. Gender and generational balance were guaranteed.

Members of La Via Campesina in Africa organised a continent-wide training event in May in Harare, Zimbabwe. This training also benefited members of the African Youth Articulation, who held their meeting at the same time. Later, in August 2023, a virtual training process was organised over a two-week period. This online training used interactive training materials, including audio-visuals. The sessions covered the history and process that led to the adoption of UNDROP, key rights in the UN Declaration, concrete cases of violations of peasants’ rights, and the tools for the implementation of UNDROP. Members actively participated and will hopefully be able to replicate the training at their national and/or regional levels.

### **Understanding Sexual and Gender Diversity: Equality and Justice for LGBTI+**

From 14 to 27 September, the III Seminar on LGBTI+ Diversity was held in Brazil, with international participation from the South American region and representatives from other regions of La Via Campesina. The international aspect of the seminar focused on understanding that respect for sexual and gender diversity transcends geographical and cultural boundaries. The struggles for equality and justice for the LGBTI+ community are universal, and La Via Campesina has consolidated itself as a space where these struggles can be connected and strengthened.



La Via Campesina Brazil holds the Third Sexual and Gender Diversity Seminar. (MST - La Via Campesina)

### **Collective Care Brigade**

As part of La Via Campesina’s policy of promoting respectful behaviour and protection against sexual harassment, exploitation, abuse and discrimination of any kind, the movement held two training sessions to form a Collective Care Brigade during the 8th Conference. In October, two virtual training events were organised. One aimed at forming the brigade, with delegates from the different regions, so that they can become references in conflict resolution and help build a space free of all forms of harassment at the conference. And another training moment focused on the prevention of harassment and all forms of discrimination.

## 3

## WORKING COLLECTIVES AND ARTICULATIONS AT THE SERVICE OF OUR MOBILISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL WORK

### 3.1 Youth Articulation: Unity in Diversity, Youth Peasants Change the World!

*“We are not just resisting. We are here together, tools in hand, ready to shape our common future.”*

In 2023, La Via Campesina Youth Articulation experienced dynamic progress (see Box 5). The year began with active participation in the Young Farmers’ Forum (YFF) in Germany, where we voiced our concerns about corporate domination of agricultural policies and the inadequate support for CFS and CSIPM in their quest for sustainable food systems. The Young Farmers Forum in Berlin is part of the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA), an international conference on global food systems organised by the German Ministry of Food and Agriculture, which brings together every year in Berlin some 70 international ministers of agriculture.

#### Box 5: Major Regional Initiatives in 2023

In Africa, the African Youth Gathering in Zimbabwe in May 2023 produced [recommendations](#) urging African governments to reverse land access restrictions and support the agroecological transition to empower peasant communities.

In Asia, the Nepali Youth, gathering in July 2023, focused on agricultural innovation and change, and resulted in a [ministerial commitment](#) to enact legislation for food sovereignty. In Sri Lanka, youths actively participated in the National Agroecology Forum. In Thailand and Indonesia, young members organised a series of agroecology training events, culminating in a regional meeting in Surin, Thailand. Young members in Thailand are particularly working on the rejection of carbon credit policies as a threat to food sovereignty and peasants’ rights.

In Europe, the Youth Coordination published a [study on the working conditions of young farmers](#) and highlighted the importance of UNDROP. In Latin America, youth people gathered in the [Dominican Republic in August 2023](#) to reflect on communication and to participate in a camp with allied youth organisations. At the international level, the youth have been very active in the UNDROP virtual training sessions organised in August 2023. The youth of La Via Campesina reaffirm their commitment to the movement, taking on new responsibilities with the inclusion of 10 representatives (1 per region) in the new ICC.

As we approached our 5th Youth Assembly at the 8th International Conference of La Via Campesina, the Youth Articulation saw a gradual increase in participation of youth members from different parts of the world. Throughout the year, a series of regional and global meetings, both virtual and face-to-face, were held to strengthen the articulation, identify common challenges faced by the rural youth, propose viable solutions, and lay the groundwork for a comprehensive four-year action plan.

A key event in 2023 was the Global Assembly in Banten, Indonesia, held from 29 May to 2 June. This gathering, attended by nearly one hundred delegates from all regions, served as a fundamental space for formulating the first version of the 2024-2028 Action Plan. During this meeting, working groups were set up to develop the programme, communication strategies, methodology, and overall atmosphere of the 5th Youth Assembly. The process continued from May to December through virtual working group meetings, regional assemblies and a global pre-assembly in November 2023, where the proposed action plan, agenda, methodology and assembly atmosphere were collectively ratified.

The 5th Assembly of the International Youth Coordination of La Via Campesina convened on 1 December 2023 in Bogotá, Colombia. ICC members provided a concise analysis of the current situation, reviewing the coordination’s work of the articulation from the 7th Conference held in Derio, Basque Country, in 2017, to the present.



Collage of images of La Via Campesina International Youth Articulation meeting held in 2023, Banten, Indonesia

## 3.2 Women Articulation: Peasant Feminism in Movement

*“With conviction, we are paving the way for peasant and popular feminism, building food sovereignty and fighting against crises and violence.”*

In 2023, the main task was the realisation of the VI International Women’s Assembly, for which there were several preparatory spaces, such as the 1st International Women’s School held in Mozambique in March 2023. Likewise, the Days of Action, both on 8 March and on 25 November, helped to put forward our main political lines, reflections and proposals both for the assembly and for the conference as a whole.

### 1st International Women’s School of La Via Campesina

The realisation of the 1st International Women’s School of La Via Campesina has been an objective for the movement for several years but could not be realised due to the pandemic of COVID-19. From 7 to 14 March 2023, 68 women from the 10 regions of the movement and from 39 countries met in Mozambique with many exchanges of experience, learning and cultural diversity.

The challenge was to provide interpretation in 9 languages (Portuguese, English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Thai, Bahasa Indonesia, Korean and Nepali). A generational balance was achieved, with the delegates being women between the ages of 23 and 77 years old.

During the school there was time to deepen the meaning of peasant and popular feminism in the territories, to evaluate the Stop Violence Against Women campaign and to define common strategies. It was decided to hold International Women’s Schools every two years, and to have continental schools in 2024.

### Box 6: Peasant Women March in Maputo and around the World to Commemorate 8 March 2023

During the month of March, peasant and indigenous women in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas organised numerous solidarity actions, events, demonstrations and other processes in their territories in the context of the International Day of Struggle for Women’s Rights (#8M23). Through a virtual gallery, La Via Campesina documented at least 68 actions that took place in different corners of the world. These March solidarity actions affirmed peasant and popular feminism as militant and anti-systemic, in opposition to the heteropatriarchal, racist and colonialist system that imposes various forms of oppression on peoples and communities.

### 6th International Women’s Assembly in Colombia

The Women’s Assembly is always a key moment in the international conferences of La Via Campesina because women are essential protagonists in the different struggles, activities and political leadership of the movement. After the 1st International Women’s School, and up to August 2023, all 10 regions of the movement were guided to organise preparatory processes of reflection and analysis for the VI Assembly and the 8th Conference. The aim was for each region to make an intervention during the assembly.



The agenda focused on the 30th anniversary of La Via Campesina, aiming at identifying the contribution of women in the process and where we can move forward, and counted on the participation of historical panellists such as Nettie Wiebe from North America, Francisca Rodriguez from South America and Anuka Da Silva from Asia for the Youth Articulation. More than 180 women comrades from the 10 regions that make up La Via Campesina attended and participated in the conference.

Finally, the assembly concluded with a panel on La Via Campesina, peasant and popular feminism, food sovereignty and overcoming violence. The Final Declaration of the Assembly is available on our website.



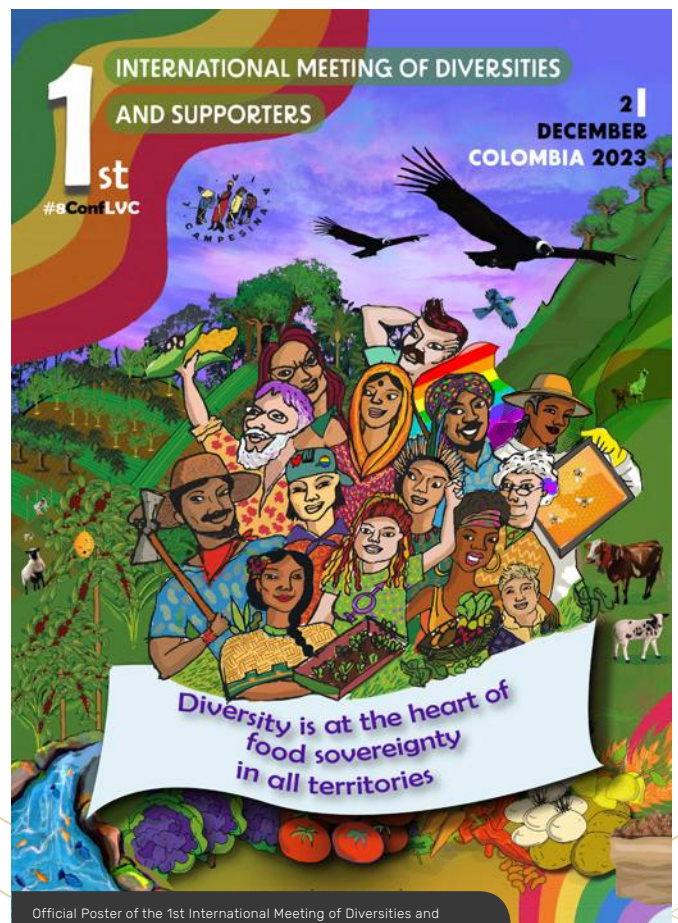
La Via Campesina women's march to mark March 8, 2023, Maputo, Mozambique

### 3.3 / First International Meeting of Diversities

*“Diversities are at the heart of food sovereignty in all territories!”*

As a result of a ten-year process of collective reflection and construction, the First La Via Campesina Diversity Meeting was a historic moment for the movement. The meeting allowed the presentation of an overview of the diversity processes and their contributions to key issues on the La Via Campesina agenda.

The meeting concluded with the official launch of an International Articulation of Diversities. This new articulation proposes to include diversity issues in the general agenda of La Via Campesina, in order to, as we can read in the declaration issued during the conference, *“continue to transform the way we relate to each other in order to end all discrimination, prejudice and all forms of violence suffered by gender non-conforming people.”*



Official Poster of the 1st International Meeting of Diversities and Supporters, held before the VIII International Conference of la Via Campesina, in Bogota on December 2, 2023

## 3.4 Thematic Working Collectives:

### 3.4.1 Public Policies, Food Sovereignty and Rome Processes:

The Public Policies Collective has been active on several fronts all along 2023 in particular in international spaces linked to the global food governance, such as the Civil Society and Indigenous' Peoples' Mechanism (CSIPM) for the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the UN Decade of Family Farming (UNDF) and FAO. Our delegates have contributed to bringing into these spaces the grassroots voices of our peasant movement, negotiating guidelines, intervening in various events, advocating with governments for the rights of peasants and for the rights of the peoples to access healthy and just food.

During 2023, La Via Campesina kept occupying the role of Second Vice-Chair of the International Steering Committee (ISC) of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDF). Under this mandate, between the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023, La Via Campesina coordinated a joint action involving all producer organisations active in the ISC to revitalise the commitment of governments in the ISC to actively participate in and support UNDF. The result was a joint letter circulated to all government missions in the three Rome-based agencies.

The conjunction of this action and the political work conducted by the UNDF Joint Secretariat led to the appointment of the Dominican Republic as the new ISC Chair. In this revitalisation phase of the ISC under the new directorship, La Via Campesina co-organised, in February and May 2023 respectively, the eighth and ninth ISC meetings and, prior to these, two meetings with family farmers' organisations.

In the framework of the official follow-up of the Decade, La Via Campesina took part in the development of a questionnaire and coordinated its distribution both through La Via Campesina regional secretariats and La Via Campesina organisations located in countries having UNDF processes. Finally, the results contributed to the monitoring exercise that was presented to the UN General Assembly in October 2023. Efforts were also made to strengthen the connections with other key processes, such as: the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) regarding youth work; the Civil Society and Indigenous

People Mechanisms (CSIPM) through the definition of a common strategy to identify UNDF as an implementation mechanism for the CFS products and to oppose the enlargement of the CFS Bureau; and the process of Nyéléni Europe and Central Asia with a presentation during an event in Brussels in June. During the CFS 51st Session, La Via Campesina also co-organised a side-event on the links between the CFS products and UNDF.

In the frame of the Committee on World Food Security, our members in the CSIPM Coordination Committee actively engaged in two negotiation processes concerning data and gender.

The CFS Policy Recommendations on Strengthening Collection and Use of Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) Data were endorsed during the CFS plenary following several sessions of negotiations.

Despite the difficulties experienced and the limited results obtained, this process effectively allowed La Via Campesina to strengthen and expand its knowledge of critical and complex issues such as technology, data, digitization and dematerialization in food systems. Our delegates were also able to share their experiences related to digital agriculture and data collection and the alternatives to the private sector control of our data, our knowledge, and our land, seeds, livestock, production systems and genetic resources. La Via Campesina also expressed how the control on technology and data is a threat to peasants, Indigenous People, food producers and consumers as we struggle for food sovereignty and agroecology.

The CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition (VGs on GEWGE) were also endorsed during the CFS plenary after a long and delayed process and several rounds of virtual and in-person negotiations.

The CSIPM supported the endorsement of the document with the request of adding an explanatory note to the Annex, expressing its main concerns related to the text. In particular, the CSIPM assessed that several important points are missing in the final text, including the recognition of land as a common, free prior and informed consent for Indigenous Peoples,



the rights of LGBTQIA+ peoples, the redistribution of unpaid care work, as well as mentions to agroecology and intersectionality. It was agreed that the text can be considered as a starting point for continuing discussions in the CFS to achieve gender equality in food systems.

During the CFS plenary, La Via Campesina delegation actively brought to the CSIPM, the CFS plenary and side-events, as well as in bilateral exchanges with governments and other actors La Via Campesina, contents on crucial issues towards the achievement of food sovereignty. Among other things, our members advocated for a full implementation of UNDROP, for the development of Family Farming policies, for the defence of inclusive UN institutions in the face of an increasing multi-stakeholder approach and corporate capture.

On 6-7 June 2023 at FAO Headquarters in Rome, La Via Campesina participated in the informal dialogue that was held between FAO and key civil society organisations and actors from different constituencies and geographical perspectives. The so-called Civil Society Organisations Pre-Forum aimed at taking stock of experiences in engaging with FAO at national, regional and global levels.

Following the Pre-Forum, the IPC Facilitation Committee meeting was held between 8-9 June with the following objectives: i) Keep strengthening the IPC by evaluating and reflecting on the decisions taken in 2022; ii) discuss the issue of multistakeholderism and corporate capture and to what extent the IPC needs to re-adapt its strategies to work in institutional spaces (FAO, CFS, UN); iii) prepare for the Nyéléni International Steering Committee meeting and agree on the kind of leadership role the IPC should take.

#### Box 7: Towards the Next Nyéléni Global Forum

All along 2023, we have been engaged together with the International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty (IPC) in the process leading towards the next Nyéléni Global Forum, scheduled in India for 2025. The main objectives of this process are to strengthen the food sovereignty movement, to create a new momentum for grassroots organisations and peoples in order to elaborate a common strategy for the years to come, to join forces to challenge the multiple crises we are experiencing and to change this system of oppression.

A meeting was organised in June 2023 in Rome with the IPC and other allied organisations to collectively shape the process that will be continued in 2024 with regional consultations and preparation meetings. The results will be presented at the Global Forum in India in 2025, where representatives will discuss strategies for creating just and ecological food systems and renew a global alliance towards the achievement of food sovereignty.



Towards the next Nyéléni social forum

### 3.4.2 Peasants' Rights Collective: A Victorious Year for Peasants' Rights

Almost five years after the adoption of UNDROP by the UN General Assembly in 2018, La Via Campesina and its allies achieved a major victory when the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution in October 2023 to create a working group.

Following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions in 2021, La Via Campesina and its allies resumed their struggle to promote and defend peasants' rights at national, regional and international levels. One of the ways proposed to promote peasants' rights was to call for the creation of a UN Special Procedure on UNDROP. After many consultations and engagements with allies, key states (sponsors) and the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, advocacy and lobbying for the creation of the special procedure was intensified in Geneva in 2023. In parallel with the work in Geneva, other efforts were made to raise awareness, to change public policies at national and local levels, and to initiate a critical dialogue in other UN bodies, such as the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).



However, the journey was fraught with many challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic, the staff changes in UN bodies and the volatile political situation in Bolivia meant that the creation of an implementation mechanism for UNDROP by the UN Human Rights Council was moving at a slow pace and the prospect of such a mechanism being created by the end of 2023 seemed impossible.

Despite these challenges, we continued to send delegates to Geneva to lobby country representatives to support the creation of the UN Special Procedure. During March, June, and September sessions of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, La Via Campesina was present and participated in all the spaces for dialogue to justify the need for such an implementation mechanism. In collaboration with CETIM, La Via Campesina delegates used the opportunities created during the HRC sessions to highlight the violations of rights in their localities and the need to implement UNDROP to address such violations.

The tireless efforts of La Via Campesina and its allies, CETIM and FIAN, finally paid off during the 54th session (September–October 2023), when an overwhelming majority of member states of the United Nations Human Rights Council took a historic step by voting (38 votes in favour, 2 against, and 7 abstentions) in favour of a resolution introduced by the Plurinational State of Bolivia and co-sponsored by Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Gambia, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Paraguay, Portugal, South Africa, Spain and Uruguay. The Resolution 54/9 paved the way for the establishment of a UN Working Group with a three-year term, composed of five independent experts with balanced geographical representation, to focus on the effective implementation of UNDROP. Following this victory, La Via Campesina started a process in

regions to get applications for candidates for the UN Working Group on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. The movement also supported the process with letters of recommendation, including lobby work with the core countries of UNDROP in the UN Human Rights Council. Most of the materials related to UNDROP have been pooled together in the platform <https://defendingpeasantsrights.org/>. Various training materials can be found here, as well as updates from members on cases of violations of peasants' rights around the world.

#### Box 8: Major Regional Initiatives in 2023

**Africa:** UNDROP was translated into 8 African languages. In Kenya, our member organisation is fighting to uphold the Kenyan ban on GMOs, using UNDROP cited in the legal case. In Congo, our member organisation is taking initiative to bring the UN Declaration to Congolese peasants and to involve them in the negotiations on the next Agricultural Orientation Law.

**Asia:** In Nepal, our member organisation continues to promote UNDROP at the national level.

In Indonesia, food sovereignty zones were defined, and various training sessions in La Via Campesina Southeast and East Asia region were organised. Notable efforts to ensure the adoption of the Resolution 54/9 of the UN Human Rights Council were made especially in Indonesia, Nepal and Pakistan.

**The Americas:** In Colombia, the government is currently very friendly to the idea of the implementation of UNDROP at the national level. The inclusion of peasants as subjects of rights in the Colombian Constitution, the definition of some peasant reserve areas, and the organisation of a seminar on the "implementation of UNDROP in Latin America" in Bogota are examples of this important will.

In Canada, for the first time UNDROP has been explicitly cited by a provincial court in a case relating to the rights of migrant workers. Major efforts to ensure the adoption of the UN Human Rights Council Resolution 54/9 were made, particularly in Bolivia, Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay.

**Europe:** the "Friends of the Declaration" coalition in Switzerland has been very active in implementing the Declaration in national policies and in support of peasants. Major lobbying efforts took place in Europe between August and September 2023 to ensure that the Resolution 54/9 of the UN Human Rights Council would be passed, with Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium voting in favour.



Delegates from two African regions of La Via Campesina attending a training on UNDROP in Harare, Zimbabwe, May 2023

### 3.4.3 Environmental and Climate Justice

*“From fields to forums, we expose false solutions and advocate a just transition, through agroecology and peasant rights.”*

In 2023, the International Collective on Climate and Environmental Justice, comprising representatives from various member organisations of La Via Campesina, worked throughout the year and organised two virtual meetings, one in April and another one in October. Among the participants were members of the organisation Boricuá from Puerto Rico, the National Farmers Union of Canada, Confédération Paysanne of France, Korea Women Peasant Association from South Korea, Zimsoff from Zimbabwe, the Association of Field Workers (ATC) from Nicaragua, COAG from Spain, and regional instances of the movement such as the European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC) and the South Asia region.

During the first semester, ECVC delegates within the collective strengthened our collaboration with the Real Zero Europe coalition, with whom they promoted [campaign briefings](#) on the Carbon Removal Certification Framework. The Collective on Climate and Environmental Justice also met from 8 to 11 August in the United States. At this meeting, representatives from La Via Campesina member organisations, the organisation Boricuá from Puerto Rico, and the National Farmers Union from Canada joined other organisations in the global alliance for climate justice, known as the “It Takes Roots” – an alliance of grassroots climate justice organisations and historical allies of La Via Campesina. The meeting led to agreements on three key collective strategic approaches at COP27: 1. Indigenous rights and human rights (also peasants’ rights); 2. climate reparations (versus financial mechanisms e.g. the ones promoted by the World Bank), and 3. no to false solutions, including carbon markets and offsetting (Article 6), geoengineering, and so-called “green” energy projects. La Via Campesina continues to be invited to participate in this strategic alliance moving towards COP29, COP30, and beyond. Israel’s participation in COP28 and its genocidal actions in Palestine resulted in La Via Campesina joining the boycott of the event. However, representatives from CNA (Peru) and the Landworkers Alliance (UK), both members of La Via Campesina, attended the event. They connected with other social movements and joined the global demand for stronger agreements benefiting peasants and other frontline sectors amidst the climate crisis. Using the report prepared by the Environmental and Climate Justice

Collective, synthesizing COP27, the movement was able to engage with official spaces and side spaces, strengthening alliances with social movements for climate justice. The 8th International Conference was a crucial moment of reflection, during which members of the collective participated in a working group bringing together representatives from 30 countries to address the challenges posed by the climate crisis. Proposals were presented regarding the promotion of agroecology schools, the democratisation of energy, combating extractivism, climate reparations, organisational exchange processes, political education, and solidarity with local needs through the creation of international climate brigades, as well as a roadmap for mobilisation towards COP30 in 2025. Also, in 2023 the collective continued its training processes, focusing on exposing false climate solutions. As part of the fight against extractivism in the context of the climate crisis, a webinar in response to the political crisis in Niger was organised, recognising the interests at stake around uranium and the neocolonial response of the European Union through economic sanctions that impacted the Nigerians’ right to food. The collective’s political development has led to clear positions against fossil fuels, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) programs, smart agriculture, and carbon capture projects promoted by multinationals and neoliberal governments.



Chukki Nanjudaswamy from the Karnataka State Farmers' Association (KRRS) speaks at a forum on Climate Change & Indian Agriculture held in Bangalore in 2023.

#### Box 9. Major Regional Initiatives in 2023

The organisation Boricuá from Puerto Rico organised panel discussions and press conferences, along with its Agroecological Brigades, addressing legal strategies to protect agricultural lands from industrial projects and prevent their conversion into energy production sites. On the same topic, Confédération Paysanne of France produced information materials on agrivoltaism, denouncing the seizure of peasant lands for solar panel installation for private interests. Additionally, La Via Campesina accompanied Confédération Paysanne in demonstrations against the construction of water reservoirs in water-stressed areas, which benefit agro-industrial groups. They produced declarations and materials opposing the megabasins. At the regional level, in Europe, ECVC mobilised against the European Union’s CRFC proposal and published reports and videos on just climate transition. In South Asia, farmers from the Pakistan Kisan Rabta Committee joined protests for climate justice, demanding concrete actions from the Global North. Over in India, farmers gathered for a forum in September, delving into the impact of the climate crisis on Indian agriculture and sharing insights on droughts and floods across various regions.

### 3.4.4 Land, Water and Territory and against TNCs: Towards a New International Conference on Agrarian Reform and the Right to Land to Cool the Planet

*“Our struggles for land, water and the defence of territory in the front-line of our movement.”*

Rural communities are exposed to a very high concentration of land in a few hands and continued land grabbing in a context of wars, ecological destruction, climate change, extreme inequalities and persecution of communities and leaders who demand land, water and territory to overcome marginalization and poverty. To achieve food sovereignty, La Via Campesina mobilises and advocates for agrarian reform in territories.

The Land, Water and Territories Collective organised two virtual meetings during 2023. In the first meeting in April, the members of the collective shared updates on the state of the right to land in their local communities and countries as well as the initiatives and struggles happening in the regions to stop land concentration (see below the section on the initiatives in the regions).

The collective has drafted an initial proposal to launch a call for an International Conference on Agrarian Reform to be organised in 2026 and has called upon our allies in the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) to join in this endeavour. The proposed conference would draw inspiration from the process that led to the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) in 2006, in particular the inclusive process in which organisations of small-scale food producers, Indigenous Peoples and civil society played an important role, in dialogue with governments.

The collective held a second virtual meeting in November 2023 to prepare the 8th International Conference of La Via Campesina and the contributions of the collective to the new Action Plan in relation to the right to land, Agrarian Reform, land grabbing, extractivism and public policies for the regulation of the access to land.

#### Institutional Work

One of the efforts made at institutional level was related to FAO's initiative to create a Global Land Observatory (GLO) which aims to generate and make available data, evidence and analyses on the status

of land tenure and governance issues as part of its role as a UN agency responsible for the realisation of the human right to food and nutrition and coordinating the implementation of the Tenure Guidelines. The Land, Water and Territories Collective of La Via Campesina has nominated several leaders to integrate the Advisory Group of GLO together with our allies in the International Planning Committee (IPC).

Another institutional space where the working collective has been involved was the 9th session of the UN Human Rights Council, called *Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group (OEIGWG) on Transnational Corporations (TNCs) and other Business Enterprises with Respect to Human Rights*, which was held in the Palais des Nations in Geneva from 23 to 27 October 2023. At this occasion, the Global Campaign to Reclaim Peoples' Sovereignty, Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity organised a week of mobilisations with activities both inside and outside the UN building. A delegation of 73 people from Asia, Africa, Latin America, the United States and Europe attended the formal session and other related events, and also organised events inside the UN, a photo exhibition and demonstrations. These interventions showed the Global Campaigns' commitment to the elaboration of an ambitious Binding Treaty reflecting the needs and interests of peoples affected by TNC's violations. A La Via Campesina delegation participated actively during the week of negotiations and the preparatory meetings prior to the negotiations.

The 9th session of negotiations held last October has been a historic moment for the Binding Treaty process and for the Global Campaign. The opening of the week of negotiations began in a combative manner: for more than four hours, a group of states from the Global South rejected the Chair's attempt to impose an [illegitimate text](#) as the basis for negotiations. La Via Campesina, together with the organisations and movements of the Global Campaign, denounced these manoeuvrers and questioned the intentions behind them. Thanks to this growing pressure, important provisions were reintroduced into the negotiating text such as: direct obligations for transnational corporations; the primacy of human rights over free trade and investment agreements; the importance of recognising and including the concept of affected communities; the importance of establishing that TNCs not only abuse human rights, but also violate them; and the need to strengthen provisions to establish accountability along value and production chains.



### Box 10: Land Grabbing and Regional Initiatives in 2023

For many years, the European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC) has been demanding the realisation of the right to land as defined in Article 17 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. In March 2023, ECVC proposed a European Directive on Agricultural Land to stop land concentration and ensure more farmers in Europe. The directive outlines how European Union institutions can implement fair, democratic and sustainable land policies to combat the economic, ecological and climate crises and guarantee food sovereignty, as without access to land, farmers cannot produce good quality food for the population.

After years of advocacy with allies through the Stop Land Grabbing Campaign, (National Family Farm Coalition) successfully introduced the [Farmland for Farmers Act of 2023](#) in the U.S. Congress. This policy proposal would ban large-scale corporations from all future farmland purchases (and leasing) in the U.S. The policy proposal is groundbreaking because until this point, public institutions have been operating under the legal argument that most kinds of land governance can only be regulated at the sub-national (state) level. This proposal rejects that assumption, arguing that given the growing scale of corporate land investments (driven by the recruitment of capital from sub-national public institutions, private equity firms, and pension funds) in the U.S., it is legitimate for the national government to regulate this national trend. The 4th edition of the West African caravan Right to Land, Water and Peasant Agroecology: a Common Struggle! took place in November 2023 cross-crossing the remotest corners of the 5 itinerary countries to meet communities and authorities. The Caravan started in Burkina Faso, from where it moved on to Côte d'Ivoire, then Mali, Senegal and finally Mauritania. Under the banner of the climate emergency, the overall aim of this edition was to contribute to the strengthening of the fight against climate change by raising awareness and promoting peasant agroecology as an alternative to false solutions.

In France, the struggle against mega-basins has brought together environmentalists, trade unions and peasant organisations, such as Confédération Paysanne, in mobilisations alongside hundreds of activists for a fair distribution of this vital common. Many of these demonstrators have been prosecuted in court proceedings aimed at scaring off the growing population that opposes these extractivist projects. La Via Campesina expressed the deep solidarity of our global peasant movement with the peasants in France who have been fighting for several years against water grabbing and the imposition of mega-basins promoted by the government and the agribusiness.

### 3.4.5 Agroecology, Peasant Seeds and Biodiversity

*“We are committed to building an agroecological transition that guarantees food sovereignty and peasants’ rights.”*

The movement affirms the need to work for an agro-ecological transition as a fundamental basis for food sovereignty, in the face of the multiple global crises. Peasant agroecology, together with the defence of peasant seeds, is the strongest proposal of the global peasantry.

During the year, La Via Campesina stepped up its struggle to promote peasant agroecology in the face of crisis situations and as a concrete commitment to food sovereignty. Actions for peasant agroecology are part of a transversal axis that accompanies struggles and mobilisations for food sovereignty in its different global processes, including the negotiation of seed treaties, struggle against genetically modified seeds, climate justice in the mobilisations against COP28 and the climate negotiations. The collective also accompanied regional mobilisations in Europe and Africa. It helped to make visible the work of Latin American Agroecology Institutes (IALAs) and agroecological training processes in Asia, the Americas, Africa and Europe. It also played an important role in the political discourse during the 53rd session of the UN Human Rights Council, held in Geneva from 19 June to 14 July and at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture, held in Berlin from 17 to 20 January. During the 8th International Conference of La Via Campesina, our movement decided to focus its political action on promoting agro-ecological transition processes as a response to the multiple global crises. There is a clear determination to continue and expand training processes in agroecology, incorporating popular methods for the transmission of this knowledge, as well as to strengthen the defence of peasant, indigenous and creole seeds together with the protection of the environment.

In 2023, the Agroecology Collective met virtually to agree on priority activities for the coming years. It underlined its concern to relaunch the “Peasant Seeds Campaign, Heritage of the Peoples at the Service of Humanity,” in its more than 20 years of existence. It also aims to direct its local and regional processes towards the Nyéléni Global Forum (India, 2025), where the movement needs to make its peasant agroecology processes visible as a political commitment in the struggle for food sovereignty, land, territory, social and environmental justice.



Protests against mega basins in France. In March 2023, 25,000 people gathered in the commune of Sainte-Soline, western France, as part of an international mobilisation against the construction of one of the largest water reservoirs for irrigation and other water-grabbing projects.

### Institutional Work

As part of the [International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty \(IPC\)](#), a La Via Campesina delegation participated in the Open-Ended Working Group to improve the functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-Sharing . This working group is a global mechanism of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT-PGRFA) that facilitates access to samples of seeds and plant, crop and fodder species. A peasants’ delegation attended to defend peasants’ rights to seeds and genetic resources, against the biopiracy of the seed industry supported by large transnational corporations and rich countries.

### Material

During the first semester of 2023, La Via Campesina continued with the dissemination of training modules on peasant seeds, a product of the systematisation of the knowledge that the movement has accumulated in the defence of seeds historically, culturally, legally and from the perspective of food sovereignty. A series of 5 modules were designed to strengthen the movement’s training processes at the local, regional and international levels. The documents are available in English, French and Spanish, and they will continue to be disseminated in 2024, especially in the virtual sphere.

**Box 11: Key Regional Initiatives in 2023**

Agroecology schools and training processes continue to be a stronghold of the movement. In these spaces, ancestral knowledge is passed on and new peasant knowledge and practices are constructed for the transformation of agri-food systems towards food sovereignty. The ongoing activities of schools in India, Thailand, Mali, Colombia, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Chile, Puerto Rico, Cuba, among others, stand out.

The European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC) has been fighting throughout the year against the legislation of new genetically modified organisms (GMOs) destined for the European market. The proposal presented by the European Parliament openly favours biopiracy and the privatisation of seeds by patent-holding companies. Today, the European small-scale farmers continue to insist that the European Council and Parliament maintain their position of defending the peasants’ rights to seeds and that the European legislation on seeds be amended.

From 31 August to 3 September 2023, 150 activists from various organisations, including La Via Campesina, from different parts of Spain gathered in Hornachuelos (Córdoba) in a camp dedicated to agroecology and food sovereignty, to ratify the need to break with the agro-industrial food model and system. Under the slogan “we stand up,” the meeting took a stand in favour of a fair and sustainable food model and a living rural world.

In Southern and Eastern Africa, the Kenyan peasantry, through the Kenya Peasant League (KPL), continue their struggle to defend their country’s food sovereignty against the introduction of GMOs. Although they won a major legislative victory in 2022 by banning the cultivation and importation of GMOs, the Kenyan state, influenced by big corporations, tabled several amendments to lift the ban. The struggle continues and many La Via Campesina members expressed their solidarity with the resistance of African peoples against agribusiness and neo-colonialism.



Cover of one of the 5 training modules on Peasant Seeds (module 4)

### 3.4.6 Migration and Waged Workers Collective

*“We mobilise to demand justice for the lives stolen from us by racist migration policies and to denounce the exploitation of labour we experience in the agribusiness fields. We build solidarity for the rights of migrants and refugees.”*

The year 2023 was a very important moment for the movement who denounced the violation of human rights and demanded justice for all missing migrants in the Mediterranean Sea, on the borders of Mexico and the United States, on the Asian and African continents.

La Via Campesina highlighted the enormous pressure of the European Union, in collusion with other governments, to deny mobility and basic rights to migrants and refugees, as in the case of Tunisia, where human rights violations are being committing. The critical conditions experienced by rural migrant workers in the agro-industrial sectors, most of which are linked to the supply of food to European markets, were denounced by many regions.

The Migration and Agricultural Workers' Collective of La Via Campesina also made progress in strengthening its links with the global movement for the defence of migrants' and refugees' rights in their common struggle for a Global Solidarity Pact and in opposition to the UN Global Compact for Migration. During the 8th International Conference of La Via Campesina in Bogota, Colombia, we issued a declaration of solidarity and commitment to the rights of migrants and refugees around the world. The declaration recognised the issue as an urgent and necessary struggle for our peasant movement. On 18 December 2023, the International Migrants' Day, this declaration was a loudspeaker for La Via Campesina to demand that states ratify and implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrants and their Families. It also rejected the European Union's proposed migration pact and highlighted once again the need for a Global Solidarity Pact.

The collective met virtually twice in 2023 in order to discuss on its main axis of work related to the defence of the rights of agricultural waged workers and migrants' rights. The collective discussed about solidarity actions to be carried out in migrants' countries of arrival and departure, and about greater efforts to coordinate workers' unions within La Via Campesina and beyond.

The collective also highlighted several key areas of the work of La Via Campesina to which it could make a meaningful contribution, such as the work on peasants' rights and UNDROP, the issue of criminalisation, education, the transition to agroecology and food sovereignty, among others.

#### Alliance Work

The collective contributed to the organisation, together with the Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF), with a series of online events co-organised by civil society organisations/coalitions, social movements and trade unions engaged in the defence and promotion of civil, political, gender, social, cultural and environmental rights. From 23 to 25 June 2023, a La Via Campesina delegation of 6 people from ECVC and ArNA regions participated in a series of joint actions with allies on the occasion of the fifth edition of the Maghreb Social Forum of Migrations, held in Nador (Morocco), in commemoration of the tragedy suffered by migrants at the Barrio Chino border post on 24 June 2022.

At the same time, a series of activities were organised as part of the Caravana Abriendo Fronteras in Melilla, on the other side of the border. Activities mainly included exchanges with local activists and organisations, participation in plenary sessions, thematic workshops and the participation in a march in Melilla on 24 June. LVC delegates intervened in the opening plenary and in several thematic workshops, strongly presenting our position and analysis on migration and labour issues. The forum was an important moment to strengthen our alliances and meet new organisations, such as associations of families of disappeared migrants and sub-Saharan migrants living in Morocco.

#### Box 12: Major Regional Initiatives in 2023

At the European level, several activities have been carried out in support of agricultural workers' struggles such as commercial pressure on distributors and mutual support among ECVC members (see newsletter for the highlights).

ECVC published the result of a recent study written by Priscilla Claeys and Barbara Van Dyck from Coventry University in collaboration with our Youth Articulation, "Working and Learning Conditions of Young Agricultural Workers, Interns and Volunteers across Europe."

The Landworkers' Alliance contributed to the production of an interesting report on "Debt, Migration and Exploitation: The Seasonal Worker Visa and the Degradation of Working Conditions in UK Horticulture," which analyses the systemic drivers of exploitation in the UK immigration system in relation to seasonal fruit and vegetable pickers.

In the ArNA region, particular attention has been paid to the agreements signed by the Tunisian governments on migration issues. A declaration of solidarity has been published against the worrying agreement signed



on 16 July between the European Union and the Tunisian government, ostensibly aimed at curbing “illegal” migration, following the situation in Sfax, Tunisia, which has reached a critical point since July 2023, with extreme tensions surrounding migrants from various sub-Saharan African countries.

In South Asia, a farm workers’ strike in Bangladesh was organised by the Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation in July 2023. The farm workers’ struggle for better wages and working conditions forced the government to set up a committee to study the issue and provide recommendations.

This year, La Via Campesina commemorated 20 years of Lee Kyung Hae’s sacrifice in the framework of the action day against the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). During these global mobilisations, LVC announced that it is determined to build an alternative framework for global trade in agriculture based on food sovereignty, written by the peasants and for the people. These actions were promoted by the Trade, Market, and Income Collective (*the collective took on this new and expanded name at the 8th International Conference in Bogota*).

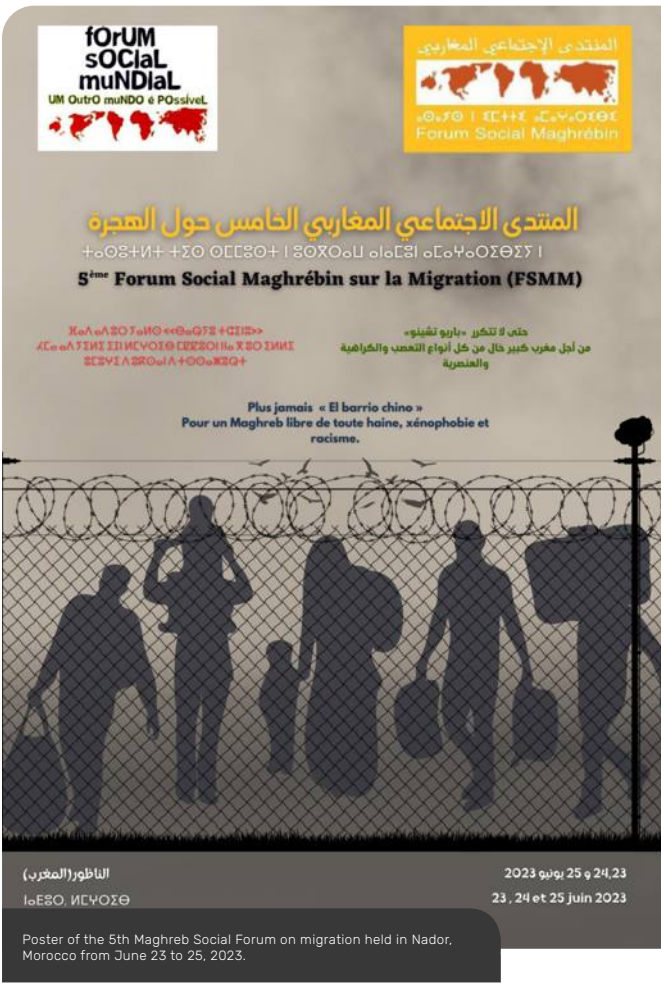
For nearly three decades, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has promoted neoliberalism, resulting in marginalisation, exploitation and expropriation of the most vulnerable. This system, riddled with injustice, poverty and environmental degradation, no longer serves the people. Even companies and nations recognise the WTO’s weaknesses, but this trade regime maintains its power through clandestine trade agreements and deceptive tactics.

Peasants, the world’s genuine food producers, face a stark reality: falling incomes, rising debt and shrinking access to commons and territories—while the industrial food system continues to perpetuate unsustainable methods, amass corporate profits and consolidate food chains. This is why in 2023 the members working in the Trade Collective agreed to come up with a real alternative to seek a complete overhaul, not a reform, of the global trade system.

The collective then embarked on the work of proposing a framework that prioritises food sovereignty, environmental stewardship, workers’ rights and global solidarity. This anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and pro-justice system emphasises people and the planet over profit. Numerous consolidations in the form of meetings and regional consultations were undertaken throughout the year to compile our collective knowledge of agriculture and food trade. This effort also coincided with the 20-year commemoration of Lee Kyung Hae’s sacrifice, serving as a tribute to him, whose life and battles represent the daily struggles of farmers everywhere.

The collective subsequently presented the framework consultation at the 8th Conference in Bogota, Colombia. During the second day of the 8th International Conference, an agroecology fair was organised in tribute to Lee Kyung-Hae.

Following the 8th Conference, the framework will undergo an additional stage, involving the collection of inputs from entities outside La Via Campesina, as well



### 3.4.7 Trade Collective: End the WTO and Build an Alternative Trade Framework Based on Food Sovereignty

*“Let us remember Lee Kyung-Hae, who took his life in Cancun, Mexico, in 2003 with the chant of ‘WTO kills farmers’, to alert the world to the atrocities of the WTO. It has been 20 years since our comrade passed away, but we have continued to fight against WTO violence with our comrades around the world. Although Lee Kyung-Hae is no longer with us, his fighting spirit will be with all peasants around the world.”*

as the pursuit of endorsements from states and UN bodies. Additionally, efforts will be made to determine the most suitable international institution(s) to anchor this initiative.

***“Food must not be used as weapons for geo-political and trade wars. As peasants we have concrete proposals on how to conduct international trade based on the principles of food sovereignty, cooperation and solidarity.”***

The collective built upon the success of the global mobilisation against WTO (within the framework of the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference 2022) in Geneva.

Early March, La Via Campesina received a request to participate in a civil society “council” from the WTO executive. After careful consideration, we decided to decline this invitation and issue an open letter to explain why the movement believes it is impossible to reform the WTO in a way that is favourable to peasants and, more generally, to the interests of the people.

Some members from Asia, Europe and the Americas were deeply involved in drafting the alternative trade framework based on food sovereignty. The drafting team recognized the importance of young members in this endeavour.

There is still a lot of scope to improve the involvement of the movements from Africa and Latin America. Additionally, there was a call for youth involvement to further emphasise the collective’s trade-related work.

#### Box 13: Major Regional Initiatives in 2023

**South Asia:** Indian Farmers held a forum on trade, climate and seed issues. Coconut farmers in India protested about falling prices. PKRC, member in Pakistan, protested against the austerity, inflation, price hike and new regressive taxes – especially promoted by IMF loan condition.

**Europe/CLOC:** Civil society and social movements in Europe called for actions around the EU-Latin America and Caribbean (EU-CELAC) Summit in Brussels and especially against EU-Mercosur FTA. A statement signed by numerous organisations, small and medium-scale farmers from Europe and South America have condemned the EU-MERCOSUR Free Trade Agreement as undemocratic and a violation of peasants’ rights and climate commitments. Actions in Europe in 2023 have been building up to bigger mobilisations in the issue of trade, market and income. La Via Campesina delivered a fiery speech inside the European Parliament, calling out Free Trade Agreements, Colonialism and Unilateral Sanctions. A joint statement and analysis of the modernisation of the EU-Chile agreement was released. LVC organisations in Europe and Chile came together to reject both the agreement and the European Commission’s attempt to propose an interim agreement in order to accelerate the conclusion of this FTA and avoid ratification by the national parliaments of the European countries.

**Southeast and East Asia:** Serikat Petani Indonesia (SPI) denounced the government’s plan to import more rice in 2023 and demanded the government to improve the functions of Bulog (public stock-holding body in Indonesia). SPI also called for the implementation of agrarian reform for the medium and long-term solution.

**NFU Canada** stated that trade should prioritise people and planet over profits. Trade agreements with ISDS clauses let corporations sue governments for changing laws, even if they are to protect people or the environment. Canadian mining and oil companies use these clauses the most.



On the second day of the 8th international conference, an agroecological fair was organised in tribute to Lee Kyung-hae.

## 4

## INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

## 4.1 / For Peace and Solidarity

In a global context of multiple crises with new wars and conflicts, instabilities linked to the climate crisis, volatile global markets and the ruthless behaviour of TNCs in defending their interests, solidarity is key. Excluding Colombia, Palestine and Haiti, which we provide in detail in 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 respectively, below we highlight some of the solidarity actions in 2023. With our member organisation in Niger, the Plateforme Paysanne du Niger, La Via Campesina mobilised against the planned military intervention in Niger and

supported them to bring their case to the Human Rights Council in Geneva demanding the immediate and unconditional lifting of all coercive measures imposed on the people of Niger. In France, our member Confédération Paysanne, along with many other allies, has been taken to court for demonstrating against the Sainte Soline mega water reservoir. Dozens of activists were arrested by the anti-terrorist police. Together with Confédération Paysanne, La Via Campesina protested against this repression and the dissolution of Les Soulèvements de la Terre, an organisation which campaigns against land and water grabs and the destruction of ecosystems.



In the face of the repression and severe criminalisation of the Peruvian people, La Via Campesina has supported the Peruvian people and denounced this situation before human rights bodies.

In Peru severe repression took place against the Peruvian people in the context of the political and social upheaval that has affected the country since the institutional collapse of December 2022. La Via Campesina supported our members in Peru to submit a complaint to various UN human rights mechanisms in Geneva to denounce these human rights violations.

## 4.2 / Peace Process in Colombia

La Via Campesina continues, in its role as a member of the Instance of International Accompaniment to the Peace Accords, to accompany the Colombian peasantry in its struggle for a just, lasting and total peace. The Solidarity Process with Colombia has seen important progress following the change of government in favour of the demands of the peasant and social movements. It now faces the enormous challenge of implementing peasants' rights and moving forward with a comprehensive agrarian reform. In mid-2023, the Congress of the Republic passed a law

recognising peasants as political subjects and including their rights in the country's political constitution. At the same time, the government also sent a diplomatic note to the General Secretary of the United Nations, expressing the state's decision to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. It emphasises the implementation of the right to land.

Progress has been made in the implementation of agrarian reform, the transfer of *hacienda* land and the





Colombia : Progress has been made in the implementation of agrarian reform, but La Via Campesina, as a member of the International Accompanying Body the Peace Accords, continues to highlight the challenge of implementing these Accords.

legal regulation of lands and territories, as agreed in the 2016 Peace Accords. The implementation of the Agrarian Courts, as a new agrarian justice system, has also begun to resolve land conflicts in rural areas of the country, which often pit peasants against large corporations. LVC organisations have highlighted the challenge of their implementation, as the appointed lawyers are expected to be trained in peasants' rights and agrarian reform.

### 4.3 / La Via Campesina Activates an Urgent Process of Support for the Palestinian People

As a reaction against the Israeli answer to the attack in October 2023, La Via Campesina coordinated our solidarity with the Palestinian people supporting our member organisation UAWC, organising marches of solidarity, mobilising for donations, providing full humanitarian aid and calling for an immediate ceasefire together with a negotiated solution for this conflict. On Monday 23 October, La Via Campesina leaders participated in the demonstration against the war in Palestine in front of the Broken Chair in Geneva.



Delegates to the 8th International Conference of La Via Campesina march in solidarity with Palestine in Bogota, Colombia (Rafael Stedile)

Despite the political will of the new government to implement the agrarian reform and to guarantee the effectiveness and materialisation of peasants' rights, the progress of the reforms has been limited by institutional obstacles and the continuation of the armed conflict. The violent struggle for land and territory continues to be a constant risk factor for the lives of social leaders, organisations and the implementation of the reform.

La Via Campesina had the opportunity to accompany the mobilisations of the Colombian peasant movement twice during

the year. The first was in May, when we accompanied the Colombian movement's political advocacy to advance its recognition as a political subject of rights and its link to the right to land. The second was with the 8th International Conference of La Via Campesina, where we were also able to approach the various processes of dialogue between the peasant movements in Colombia, the Colombian government and international institutions to advance towards the implementation of UNDROP.

This action was co-organised by the Global Campaign to Reclaim Peoples' Sovereignty, Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity in the framework of the week of mobilisations both inside and outside the UN building. We also called upon allied organisations to join the campaign for an "International Conference of Governments to Protect Palestinians and Support their Self-Determination" as explained in La Via Campesina's Call to Action of 15 November 2023. During the 8th Conference, the inauguration ceremony, as in most of the event, was strongly marked by La Via Campesina's unconditional expressions of solidarity with the Palestinian people. The constant demand for an end to the occupation and an end to the genocidal war was accompanied by the delegates' participation in a solidarity demonstration organised in Bogota by the Central Union of Workers of Colombia (CUT) and other local social organisations.

## 4.4 International Solidarity Mission to Haiti: Against Neo-Colonialism and for the Haitian Solution

*“Haitian Solution for Haiti: this slogan condenses the movement’s demand to find a way out of the multidimensional crisis in Haiti. We reject the neo-colonial interference of the US and its allies; Haitian rights in the face of economic interests.”*



La Via Campesina delegation and their allies during the solidarity mission at the 50th Congress of the MPP held in Haiti from August 5 to 11, 2023.

La Via Campesina has strengthened its strategy of solidarity with member organisations in Haiti in response to the intensification of the security crisis and the threat of a new foreign intervention under the control of the United States, and the involvement of the Kenyan government and its police. As part of this process, a solidarity mission was organised in August 2023, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the Paypaye Peasant Movement (MPP), which was held from 5 to 11 August 2023.

MPP, as part of La Via Campesina for three decades, brought together over 1500 delegates, including representatives from Tet Kole and the Mouvmman Peyizan Nasyonal Papay (MPNKP), other LVC member organisations in Haiti. The congress focussed on the ratification of the MPP’s five-year plan, which is based on agroecology, peasant feminism and agrarian reform. These objectives are driving the resistance of the Haitian peasantry against land grabbing and the anti-peasant policies of the de facto government, which are generating violence and insecurity. The international delegation of La Via Campesina, made up of the General Coordinator and representatives of La Via Campesina member organisations such as

FEDECARE, Confédération Paysanne and the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST), came to express solidarity and to understand the daily reality of the Haitian people. More than an isolated mission, it sought to strengthen the process initiated

virtually, to support local solutions and to face up to the challenges of the Haitian crisis, marked by the government’s inaction in the face of the gangsterism of the country and its call for a new foreign

intervention, in direct opposition to the popular will for a democratic and participatory transition.

This mission not only strengthened the movement’s ties with Haiti, but also contributed to the development of a short and medium-term strategy to confront the threats to Haitian sovereignty. It also facilitated the creation of new alliances with other peasant and civil society organisations actively involved in grassroots processes in Haiti.

### Box 14: The Collaboration between the Kenya Peasant League and La Via Campesina Haitian and Dominican Republic Members

The process started in Haiti led us to articulate the struggles of the peasant organisations of La Via Campesina in Kenya, the Dominican Republic and Haiti against the Kenyan police intervention. Through virtual meetings in September and October 2023, we strengthened collaboration, established links, drafted key messages and designed an online campaign plan in support of Haiti. We also identified past Kenyan police interventions and built a strong case against the intervention in Haiti.



## 4.5 Solidarity in the Face of Natural Disasters and other Disasters Caused by Climate Change

The Arab and North Africa region was affected by natural disasters in 2023 in the form of earthquakes in Turkey, Syria and Morocco, and a destructive storm in Libya.

In February, La Via Campesina expressed its solidarity with communities in Turkey and Syria affected by the devastating earthquakes. The peasant movement beyond offering solidarity actively mobilised resources to support the rebuilding of their homes and livelihoods.

In September, an earthquake struck Morocco affecting regions such as Rabat, Azila, and as far as Marrakesh. Thousands of lives were stolen, and some were injured. The majority of those affected were the marginalised peasant workers, the backbone of our food systems, historically overlooked and left behind in the march towards urban-focused development.

La Via Campesina expressed its solidarity with the people of Morocco and called upon the government to support the rural communities through providing more state resources. In Morocco and in Turkey, we supported the mobilisation of relief efforts with allied organisations.

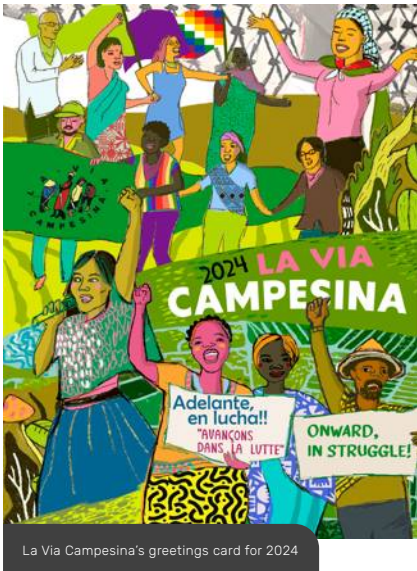
In September, La Via Campesina expressed its unwavering solidarity with the Libyan people who were affected in Derna and the nearby villages by a devastating impact of Storm Daniel. Natural disasters are fundamentally rooted in the capitalist production model which continues to worsen climate change and environmental degradation, thereby intensifying the severity of disasters.



Libyans in Derna and nearby villages hit by the devastating Daniel Storm.



# 5 LOOKING AHEAD



La Via Campesina's greetings card for 2024

Building on the success and outcomes of the 8th International Conference and the major victories in 2023, La Via Campesina resolutely looks to the future. In December, at the conference, the peasant movement built an ambitious unifying plan of action for the next

four years: 2024–2028. Together with many allied movements, in the face of the worsening global crisis, we have reaffirmed our collective commitment to build convergence at international level to ensure a better future for humanity and the planet with social justice, equity and dignity.

We are aware of the many challenges that lie ahead. The condition of many peasants is extremely critical. In Palestine, Ukraine and Sudan, wars are killing tens of thousands of people and displacing millions more. In Haiti and West Africa, armed groups are terrorizing populations, often in connection with capitalist and imperialist interests. Everywhere, the climate crisis is getting worse over time, and people are having to cope with its dramatic consequences: droughts, floods, violent storms, heatwaves, among others. Far-right political parties have taken power in several countries, further aggravating the suffering of racialised people, all those who do not fit into the mould, and the working poor in general. The grabbing of land, water and seeds is often made worse by so-called green policies, which give priority to the interests of multinational companies over the rights of the people and the planet.

La Via Campesina, along with other social movements, has concrete and realistic answers to offer to this multi-dimensional crisis: food sovereignty,

popular peasant feminism, redistribution of wealth, the end of extractivism, social and solidarity economy, peasant agroecology, peasants' and human rights, among others.

Thus, social movements have a duty to organise themselves to resist and carry the hope of peace, justice and reconciliation with Mother Earth. It is in this spirit that La Via Campesina proposes, in collaboration with our main allies, to start an international engagement process of the world's main social movements: feminist movements, peace movements, indigenous peoples' movements, anti-racist movements, youth movements, anti-imperialist movements, environmental movements, health movements, housing rights movements, workers' unions, and others. The goal is to collectively decide on and define areas of work, priorities for action and a common agenda capable of launching a structured responses at global level.

In 2024, as a movement, we look into the future guided by four main pillars:

1. **Build unity in diversity:** Our global movement aims at creating unity among peasant organisations and working-class organisations around the world.
2. **Build solidarity:** As a fundamental human value in addition to occasional difficulties, it must be permanently motivated and cultivated. It goes beyond one day, one campaign.
3. **To be the voice of and to struggle with peasants and rural workers at international level:** With our global movement, we take our space, make the crucial role of peasants recognised and we represent ourselves in international official decision-making spaces.
4. **Joint struggle at the international level to defend peasants and change the world together:** The multi-dimensional crisis we face today means that these challenges should be tackled collectively at all levels. This is the reason why in La Via Campesina we implement joint struggles at the global level to defend the peasants and rural workers and to enable systemic changes against capitalism, patriarchy, racism, imperialism and extractivism.



La Via Campesina, founded in 1993, brings together more than 200 million people: peasants, landless workers, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, fisherfolk, migrant farmworkers, small and medium-size farmers rural women, peasant youth, as well as people of all genders and diversities.

This international movement brings together 180 local and national organisations in 81 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas and Oceania. It is an autonomous, pluralist and multicultural multicultural movement, independent of any political party or economic economic affiliation. Our struggles are based on the principles of unity and solidarity solidarity to defend peasant farming and food sovereignty.

# **LA VIA CAMPESINA**

## International Peasant Movement

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