

International Symposium on Agroecology at the FAO in Rome

Press Release- La Via Campesina



"Today a Window was opened in what for 50 years has been the Cathedral of the Green Revolution"

The International Symposium on Agroecology for Food and Nutritional Security was held on the 18th and 19th of September of 2014, at the headquarters of the Food & Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) in Rome. This marked the first time that the FAO has ever officially and directly addressed the topic of agroecology. In his closing remarks at the Symposium, José Graziano da Silva, Director General of the FAO, said that: "Today a Window was opened in what for 50 years has been the Cathedral of the Green Revolution." The delegation of La Via Campesina, that participated in the Symposium, welcomes this opening, but recommends caution, given the attempts to coopt agroecology that were observed at the event. According to La Via Campesina, the science, practices and movement of agroecology are the product of centuries of accumulated peasant and indigenous knowledge, knowledge of how food was produced for humanity since long before farm chemicals were invented. This knowledge has been organized through a 'dialog of knowledges' (dialogo de saberes) with the western sciences of ecology, agronomy, rural sociology, etc. Support for agroecology, among rural social movements, consumers, environmentalists and others, has grown a lot in recent decades, in part because of its sharp critique of, and it's alternatives to, the badly-named 'Green Revolution' of industrial agriculture. For La Via, peasant agroecology is a fundamental building block in the construction of food sovereignty. [Read more ...](#)

UN-masking Climate Smart Agriculture
Press Release La Via Campesina
History presents itself first as tragedy, and the second time as a farce.
 As women, men, peasants, smallholder family farmers, migrant, rural workers, indigenous, and youth of La Via Campesina, we denounce climate smart agriculture which is presented to us as a solution to climate change and as a mechanism for sustainable development. For us, it is clear that underneath its pretense of addressing the persistent poverty in the countryside and climate change, there is nothing new. Rather, this is a continuation of a project first begun with the Green Revolution in the early 1940's and continued through the 70's and 80's by the World Bank's Poverty Reduction projects and the corporate interests involved. These projects, such as the so-called Green Revolution, decimated numerous peasant economies, particularly in the South, to the extent that many countries, like México for example, that were self-sufficient in food production, became dependent on the North to feed their population within a short couple of decades. [Read more ...](#)

Open Letter to the Secretary of ITPGRFA on Farmers' Rights

On the 18th September 2014, various organizations from around the world prepared and sent an open letter to the Secretary of International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) expressing their keenness to see full implementation of Farmers Rights. The Preamble of the Treaty and Article 9 on Farmers' Rights, recognizes the contribution that local and indigenous communities and farmers of all regions of the world have made and will continue to make for the conservation and development of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA). It also explicitly recognizes that Treaty Members have the responsibility of realizing farmers' rights. [Read open letter ...](#)

Mayan People's Movement Defeats Monsanto Law in Guatemala

(Guatemala, September 15, 2014) - On September 4th, after ten days of widespread street protests against the biotech giant Monsanto's expansion into Guatemalan territory, groups of indigenous people joined by social movements, trade unions and farmer and women's organizations won a victory when congress finally repealed the legislation that had been approved in June. The demonstrations were concentrated outside the Congress and Constitutional Court in Guatemala City during more than a week, and coincided with several Mayan communities and organizations defending food sovereignty through court injunctions in order to stop the Congress and the President, Otto Perez Molina, from letting the new law on protection of plant varieties, known as the "Monsanto Law", take effect.



Nim Sanik, Maya Kaqchikel from Chimaltenango comments on the victory over the Monsanto Law: "The fight to preserve collective property of Mayan communities such as vegetable seeds, which historically have served as a source of development and survival for the Mayan civilization, is a way to confront the open doors that the neoliberal governments have widely open in favor of national and transnational corporations that genetically modify and commercialize the feeding of mankind. We have just taken the first step on a long journey in our struggle to conquer the sovereignty of the people in Guatemala." [Read more ...](#)

U.S. Farmworkers and Palestinian Farmers share 2014 Food Sovereignty Prize

Honorees Represent Communities Defending Their Human Rights to Food in the Face of Policies of Land and Water Grabbing, Migration, and Militarization

(Des Moines, IA, September 9, 2014) The US Food Sovereignty Alliance (USFSA) is honored to name the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) of Palestine, based in Gaza and the West Bank, and Community to Community Development/Comunidad a Comunidad (C2C) of Bellingham, Washington, as co-recipients of the 2014 Food Sovereignty Prize.

Their stories of continuous struggle to defend the rights of their communities – farmers and fishers in the occupied Palestinian territories and migrant Mexican farm workers in Washington State, both seeking to produce their own food, on their own land, in their home communities – stand in stark contrast to the storylines coming from agribusiness: that technological changes to crops can meet human needs and resolve hunger. [Read more ...](#)

Invitation to sign on statement to denounce corporate takeover of Climate Summit.



We call upon all fellow social movements, peoples organizations and environmental and climate justice movements to sign on this statement and join us in this call to action.

On the 23rd of September, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, will host a Climate Summit in New York, bringing political leaders, big business and a highly select few civil society representatives. The Summit has been surrounded by a lot of fanfare but proposes voluntary pledges for emission cuts, market-based and destructive public-private partnership initiatives such as REDD+, Climate-Smart Agriculture and the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative. These are all false solutions of the green economy that seeks to further commodify life and nature and further capitalist profit. The undersigned social movements that all together represent more than 200 million people around the world, denounce this corporate takeover of the UN and the climate negotiations process and call for a deep systemic change. [Read more ...](#)

Honduras: longtime campesina leader murdered

(Honduras, September 2014) Masked men shot and killed Honduran campesino movement leader Margarita Murillo the night of Aug. 26 on land she farmed in the community of El Planón, Villanueva municipality, in the northern department of Cortés. Murillo reportedly began working for campesino rights at the age of 12. During the 1980s she was a founder of the Campesino National Unity Front (FENACAMH) and the General Confederation of Rural Workers (CNTC). [Read more ...](#)

Condolence messages in memory of Sarath Fernando, founding member of LVC movement, Sri Lanka

(Sri Lanka, September 9, 2014) Sarath Fernando, a founding member of LVC Movement for National Land and Agricultural Reform (MONLAR) in Sri Lanka, passed away on the night of September 8th. He was one of the top leaders of La Via Campesina in South Asia Region. He was leader of Sri Lanka who advocated for agroecology, land to the landless, and agrarian reform. Via Campesina South Asia pays tribute to Sarath Fernando. [Read more condolence messages ...](#)

ECVC asks Brussels for measures to control the effects of the Russian veto on dairy products

ECVC -Press release

(Netherlands, Brussels September 2, 2014) On the 3rd September, in the meeting of the Milk Advisory Group, representatives from different European organisations who are members of the European Coordination of Via Campesina will request measures to ensure that that the Russian veto of EU dairy products, equivalent to 2 2000,000 tonnes of milk, does not cause a huge imbalance in the milk industry and disastrous prices for farmers.

From the ECVC we demand that market and production regulation measures be applied urgently, to avoid surpluses and low prices for agricultural products, such as meat and milk, which could happen as a result the Russian veto. [Read more ...](#)

Hundreds of women demand a People-Centered Agenda for SADC

La Via Campesina Africa, WoMin and Rural Women's Assembly (RWA) Press Release

(Zimbabwe, Bulawayo, August 18, 2014) – Women and Mining (WoMin), Via Campesina Africa and Rural Women's Assembly (RWA) contributed to demands made to the SADC Head of States during the just ended SADC People's Summit held in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe from the 15th to the 16th of August 2014. Our delegates were part of the more than 2,500 delegates drawn from grassroots movements, community and faith-based



organizations, women's organizations, labor, student, youth, economic justice and human rights networks and other social movements. La Via Campesina and RWA met under the agriculture and food sovereignty cluster while WoMin met under the extractives and climate cluster, and developed their own statements, which were included in the communiqué submitted to the Heads of States. The Summit concluded with the traditional SADC Peoples' march of more than 2,000 delegates from the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair grounds to the City Hall to hand over their demands to representatives of the Zimbabwean government for submission to the SADC Heads of State meeting. [Read more ...](#)

The Peasant Movement Defines its Position on the Climate and Food Crises in the Region

Peasant Assembly of the CLOC-LVC-CA

(September 2, 2014) The member organizations of CLOC-Via Campesina Central America, from Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, are together in assembly in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, this August 31st and September 1st, 2014. After carrying out consideration and analysis of the grave situation in the Central American countryside and the peasant movement in the region, we reach out to the Central American public, the governments of the region and the international community with the following conclusions:

The effect of climate change and the lack of preventive measures by the neoliberal governments in the last 20 years have combined to aggravate the food and climate crises in the entire Central American region, to such a degree that today we face a near-total loss of the first harvest of the year due to a severe drought. More than three million peasant families currently face insolvency and a complete inability to attempt a second harvest—without seeds, credit, or water. The immediate effects of this crisis are malnutrition, accelerated migration, and massive increases of school dropouts, as well as food hoarding and speculation by the private sector. [Read more ...](#)

La Confédération paysanne occupies Cargill headquarters in France

(France, September 25, 2014) To denounce the imminent signing of CETA and demand a stop to negotiations on TTIP, the Confédération paysanne (2nd largest farmer union in France) occupied yesterday headquarters of Cargill FR, the first food processing multinational in the world.

The hundred activists unfurled a banner of 25m x 10m on the front of the head office, with the following message: "Holland, Juncker, Obama: don't offer farmers and citizens to multinationals, Stop TTIP/CETA". They occupied buildings and the trading floor the whole day, until they got an appointment with the office of Secretary of State for French Foreign Trade, Mr. Matthias Fekl. [Read more ...](#)

New videos on Via Campesina TV



- **The Jakarta Documentary** [click here to watch](#)
- **Land Rush- Why Poverty:** This documentary follows American sugar developer Mima Nedelcovych's Sosumar scheme – a \$600 million partnership between the Government of Mali to lease 200-square kilometers of prime agricultural land for a plantation and factory. [Click here to watch documentary](#)
- **Family Farming and Research:** Yudhvir Singh participated and presented at the International Encounters event on "Family Farming and Research" attended by 235 participants from 70 countries. [Click here to watch his presentation](#)

