

IV INTERNATIONAL
VIA CAMPESINA
CONFERENCE

Brazil - São Paulo -

14th to the 19th of June, 2004

PRELIMINARY DOCUMENTS

CREDITS

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PRESENTATION

The IV International Via Campesina Conference will take place in Brazil from the 14th to the 19th of June, 2004, marking a hugely important juncture in the history of our movement. In its 10 years of existence, Via Campesina has come to be recognised as the international voice of peasants and has managed, along with other social movements, to advance the fight against the neo-liberal model with some important successes. The WTO's recent disaster in Cancún was just one of several important examples that we could mention. Preparations for this conference began in May 2003, with a meeting of the International Coordinating Committee which discussed the importance of guaranteeing the presence of both affiliated and unaffiliated (though sympathetic) organisations. It was decided that the most effective way of doing this would be to organise a large collective effort to begin to debate themes and methodology for the conference at the grassroots level in each country and region. Everyone should know what is going to be discussed.

For this reason, the proposed methodology calls for regional and national meetings in which all the activists of the peasant organisations (including those that will not participate directly in the conference in São Paulo) will discuss and participate in the construction of conference themes and issues. The Second Women's Assembly and the First Youth Assembly can only be important if they also are fruit of a previous discussion process, thereby enabling them to make a valuable contribution to the IV International Conference.

The main objectives of this conference will be to analyse and evaluate our proposals and strategies, strengthen our internal organisation, integrate new organisations, and prepare ourselves for success in the coming struggles.

To improve conference preparations, we have put together a set of working documents, divided into three parts:

. The first part contains two texts, the first regarding the current agricultural conjuncture at the international level and second on the need for a clear policy of alliances;

. The second part contains documents related to various Via Campesina issues and perspectives. This section proposes debates regarding the need for political education, for a communications policy, for debate on the gender question, as well as the political platform to which it is assumed that all member organisations subscribe. It also contains the programme prepared during the Belgium meeting, with key questions on internal conduct and relations with international institutions.

. Finally, the third section contains a proposal made by organizations from East and Southeast Asia, in the form of an “International Declaration of Peasant Rights” for discussion at the conference. It also contains the proceedings of the Paraguay meeting of the Seed Campaign.

We hope that this work will facilitate the best possible preparation of all the organisations, regions, work commissions and the coordinating committee itself to make the IV Conference an important step in the development of our international peasant organisation.

I - THE STATE OF AFFAIRS

1. THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF AGRICULTURE

João Pedro Stedile - MST - Brasil

1.1. Historical Background

1. Over the last five centuries humanity has moved to a capitalist means of production as its main mode of organising production and as a solution for people's needs. The economic evolution of this mode of production took place principally in Europe, beginning with commercial capitalism. From that point on, colonialism was implemented in the countries of the southern hemisphere in order to take control of their natural resources and local agricultural products. From the nineteenth century onwards, industrial capitalism has developed, introducing manufacturing methods for food production and an increase in agricultural production. Finally, in the last two decades of the twentieth century, capitalism has reached its current stage, which is characterised by the domination of financial capital as the most important means of accumulation and reproduction as a system. This phase has brought new changes in world agriculture.

2. Throughout its history, the process of domination by capital has always been through constant crises and advances, which have resulted in the increased or decreased exploitation of the labour force.

Alongside this, as always, there have been many struggles and much popular resistance. Many of the world's peoples have experienced other economic alternatives. Some were successful, others are still in transition, and the majority have been defeated by the hegemony of capital. However, for the purposes of our preparatory studies for the fourth Via Campesina International Conference, we will only cover the economic aspects here, analysing how capitalism came to dominate world agriculture. For a broader study of the development of capitalism, we should take into consideration the contradictions engendered by capital and, above all, the innumerable forms of resistance and struggle of the world's peoples. There is enough reading material available on this subject for those militants that are interested in it.

3. History has already registered (and it is common knowledge) the significance of the different forms of exploitation developed by capital in its phase of commercial capitalism combined with the colonisation and political domination of the peoples of the south. Colonialism imposed its organisation of agricultural production through the plantation. This method of organising agricultural production in the poorer countries was based on large estates, monocultures, which would cultivate products that were demanded by the colonial metropolis, and worse still, their profits were based on slave labour or other degrading forms of exploitation of native labour.

During colonialism, which for most countries lasted four centuries, millions of people all over the world paid with their lives in order to facilitate this process of capital accumulation.

4. During the period of industrial capitalism, the logic of accumulation and the need for capital to reproduce itself imposed new changes also in the means of production and in the exploitation of agricultural labour. Over the last hundred years, the world has seen industrial capital take control of world agriculture.

Some general rules that stand out in the domination of industrial capital over agriculture are:

a) The subordination of agriculture to industry. Agriculture moved on to being organised based on the logic of profit, and production was no longer of food, but “commodities”. Production supplies the internal and external markets, but only what gives profit is produced.

b) Capital imposes the logic of private property on the soil. During this period, land, which was previously treated by most civilisations as a common good for all given by nature, is now, under industrial capitalism, transformed into a commodity. A special kind of commodity however, since despite not being a product of human labour, capital imposes a price. A price measured by the accumulated revenue of the land, in other words, its profit potential. Access to land is privatised. And now, as a commodity, only those with money – capital – have access to it. At the same time, the poor peasants still living on the land are induced to sell it, trade it, as a mere commodity. They then migrate to the cities, becoming

cheap labour for industry, so closing the perverse cycle of capital.

c) The expulsion of peasants and native populations. It is at this point that, as a result of this same logic, the largest migration process that humanity has ever experienced takes place. In most nations, populations stopped living predominantly in rural areas, to crowd into big cities.

d) Industry introduces its logic in the production of food. As the majority of the population started living in the city, food supply required long distance transportation and storage. Farmers stopped producing food and started producing only raw materials for agroindustrial companies.

e) Industrial capitalism seeks an increase in the physical productivity of the land and in the productivity of the farmer's labour, by introducing methods of labour division in agriculture and the technological developments of industry. Consequently, in this period the agricultural materials produced by industry such as chemical fertilisers, poisons, pesticides and farm machinery, are introduced. In order to make the purchase of all these goods from industry viable, rural credit is introduced. Large, modern farms are born, based on a large capital investment and little work.

5. These technological changes were preached by capital as being the "green revolution". In fact, it was not a revolution, since it only increased poverty and the sacrifice of the people who lived in rural areas. Nor was it "green", once it turned out to be highly damaging to the equilibrium of the environment and for the preservation of nature. It was capital's "brown counter reform" against rural workers"!

1.2 Domination of Agriculture by Financial Capital

6. In the last two decades, we have witnessed a crisis in the model of industrial capital, caused by various factors which this limited space does not allow me to explain, and the advent of the hegemony of financial capital, as the predominant means for capital to accumulate, exploit and reproduce itself all over the world.

7. The marriage of financial capital with new technologies developed in information technology, in micro-electronics, in fine chemistry, which have revolutionised the world of work, brought as a consequence two complementary processes: the reproduction of

capital through investment of money in loans to obtain high interest rates, and the purchase of profitable company stocks. By doing so, they were forced to share profits with the capital of banks. On the other hand, this volatile form of capital allowed the capital from the Northern Hemisphere, controlled by large corporations, banks and monopolies to circulate very quickly, almost instantaneously, in all countries of the world.

8. Thus, the natural consequences of the way financial capital's logic works were as follows:

a) An increase in capital concentration in the hands of large transnational companies, which have become real oligopolies, simultaneously controlling large sectors of production, trade, services and finance. Thus, nowadays, the 500 largest transnational companies, with headquarters in the United States, Europe and Japan, control 58% of the world's GNP, but employ only 1.8% of the economically active population. They control a quantity of wealth superior to the sum of the GNP of 133 poorer countries.

b) The globalisation of capital: a single company, be it in the industrial or service sector, can operate in almost every country in the world and seek profit, benefiting from differences between countries and the complete freedom to act in trade, services and investments.

9. This logic of the transnational companies, which have started to control different sectors of activities and are connected to international financial capital, has reached the world's agriculture. Companies such as Monsanto, Cargill, Du Pont, Sygenta, Novartis, Nestlé, Danone, Bunge, Wall Mart, Carrefour, Makro, etc. are present in most countries, and in all continents.

10. What were the main changes in our agriculture caused by this form of domination?

a) Companies started to dominate global agricultural trade, especially in grains, and they started controlling national markets, imposing international prices, independently of local production costs, making it difficult for nation states to implement public policies of social interest, in the area of stockpiling and prices.

b) An accelerated process of concentration and de-nationalization of agro-industrial companies, in all countries.

c) The standardisation of food, and the poor quality of that food. The worst element in the process of concentration of control by agribusiness is its attempt, now, to standardise food throughout the world in order to facilitate its production, its internationalisation and so the profit of the holding companies. This process of standardisation of humanity 's food, in the whole world, threatens our culture, our habits and also the planet's biodiversity.

d) The exclusion of the state apparatus and of protective national policies for agriculture and farmers: according to the logic of the internationalisation of financial capital, the state no longer plays a role. The functions of that part of the public sector in charge of agriculture are eliminated, to make space for the market. The "market" is only a euphemism to hide the interests of capital. And so, all over the world, we observe the withdrawal of the state from implementing protective policies for agriculture. There are no more public policies for prices, stockpiling, research, technical assistance, or rural credit for farmers.

e) Capital makes investments for total control of new techniques to be implemented in agricultural production. All large companies are making investments in order to control biotechnology, nanotechnology, and above all, they are taking advantage of those techniques to try to impose new GM varieties, on which they can impose private and intellectual property rights, and then charge royalties. To do so, they also need to have access to, and private ownership of, the biodiversity that exists on the planet.

f) Finally, international capital also tries, through its companies, to control the private ownership of fresh water across the world. Since drinking water seems to have become a finite resource, capitalists dream of obtaining endless profits.

11. For this process of accumulation and domination by capital, which is being dominated by financial capital and its transnational companies, to work, they need above all TOTAL FREEDOM OF ACTION. The word neoliberalism represents this ideological necessity of capital. They need a NEW, complete freedom, so that capital can do as it pleases with land, trade, services, prices, investments, without stumbling over state policies, national policies and least of all, farmers

movements

12. To make this project of domination work, international capital needs legal protection, in other words, international agreements that will ensure this freedom of action in all countries, all sectors, including agriculture. These guarantees are being proposed by means of various mechanisms serving the interests of capital. First of all, through the political actions of the UN, and the agreements of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which are manipulated by the group of 7 richest countries. Then in hemispheric agreements, such as the European Union, FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas), or in the free trade area in Asia. They are also ensured through the bilateral agreements and impositions, which frequently occur between rich countries and poor countries, the latter submitting to any and every condition. International organisms are also used, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and sometimes even the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), to impose the wishes of capital.

13. When legal agreements are not enough, when those instruments do not manage to carry out the wishes of transnational capital, the process moves towards militarization, with the merciless aggression of war, demanding human lives to satisfy profit's rage. Behind the war in Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, the Colombian civil war and the attempt to overthrow the president of Venezuela, there is capital's need to control energy sources (oil), markets and biodiversity and thus renew itself, accumulate and escape from crisis.

14. It is evident that this process represents the will of capital. But it is not consolidated yet. We are in the middle of the situation, and there will undoubtedly be a lot of resistance in all countries.

Yet, on the other hand, it is known that if this model succeeds in imposing itself, we can already foresee grave social consequences, such as:

a) There will no longer be any need for agrarian reform and land distribution. An increase in production and productivity will be sought through the control of large corporations over the estates and the production process;

b) Land will cease to be a fundamental element of capital accumulation, as capital controls trade, services, agro-industry and above all, technology;

- c) An increase in poverty and social inequality all over the world;
- d) The unfeasibility of family and peasant agriculture. In an astonishing process of rural exodus in all countries of the world.

1.3 Perspectives for the International Farmer's Movement in this Context

15. The logic of the international domination of capital has many contradictions within it, and it is up to the world's farmer's movements to learn their lessons and look for new ways of acting together and resisting, so as to be able to confront this new situation. This certainly is the greatest challenge of Via Campesina as an international organisation: to discover the changes in the way capital and its companies work, in order to be able to develop new methods of struggle within the various movements and countries, and at international level.

16. This stage of financial capital and its domination of agriculture brings the following contradictions and challenges for peasant movements:

- a) The globalisation of capital, which imposes the same methods of exploitation in all countries, obliges peasant movements to have strategies of international articulation too, rupturing their corporate and local methods.
- b) The enemies of the peasants are the same everywhere now: transnational companies and the international bodies which act to develop the logic of capital.
- c) The problems we have in countries everywhere, with prices, markets, etc, all have their origins in the domination of international trade by private companies.
- d) National struggles and mobilisations need to incorporate the defence of a new kind of agrarian reform. Not just the classical agrarian reform, of land redistribution. Now, agrarian reform needs to distribute land, set up cooperative agro-industries, defend the food sovereignty of our people, defend the right to produce using our own seeds, develop new farming techniques adjusted to the scale of peasant economy and to the equilibrium of the environment, develop new social forms of production in agriculture, matched inseparably with education for all, with schooling in rural

areas.

e) If capital has become international and uses international methods, peasant movements must also internationalise their forms of struggle and develop new and creative ways to confront a common enemy.

f) Develop forms of social struggle involving other sectors of the working class and above all the support of the whole of society.

2. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

Paul Nicholson - CPE - Europe

Introduction

In this document we present information about the current status of alliances with networks and relations that the Vía Campesina has with international institutions. This is followed by a framework for a Vía Campesina strategy.

It is important to collectively analyze the current context in which we function and how we can take steps to strengthen our capacity to mobilize and initiate concrete changes in policies.

There are alliances that are built at the international level but there are more and more alliances that grow from local and national realities. It is important to consider these different dynamics.

Vía Campesina has a big responsibility because it is seen by many as the international reference in the struggle against neo-liberal policies. We need to discuss how we can best assume this responsibility and what the role of the Vía Campesina should be over the next few years. What spaces should we occupy and what spaces do we want?

It is also important to discuss the ways of participating in alliances and a ways of working.

2.1. The current context/situation of strategic alliances

The Vía Campesina is developing several sector-based networks and collaborations. Many Vía Campesina organizations are already involved in coalitions and networks at the national and regional level.

A central space at the international level is the assembly of social movements that was set up during the 1st World Social Forum and that continues to function. Within the framework of the World Social Forum a space for social movements has been established. This is an important space to articulate our international mobilization agenda

and develop open alliances among movements and sectors. New alliances are being constructed. For example, the collaboration with youth in the Black Block evolved to a higher level in Cancun where we collaborated in close and positive ways. We have not yet developed and strengthened common strategies with other sectors (workers, women, indigenous peoples and fishers). Via Campesina is working at the moment with Friends of the Earth International (in opposition to the WTO and the Seed Campaign). The Vía Campesina is part of the the 'agri-trade group', Our world is not for sale (OWINFS), and it supports the initiative around intellectual property rights. The Vía Campesina collaborates with the WFFP and WFF (global fisherfolk fora) mainly through the agri-trade group and OWINFS on themes like the WTO and foodsovereignty.

There are few contacts with the trade-union movement. The one exception is the Public Services International (PSI) which is part of the Our World is not For Sale coalition. The experiences with the IUF/UITA have not been very positive to date, although some collaboration might be possible in the future. Focus on the Global South has organised two round tables with participation of Via Campesina to stimulate contacts between social movements and trade unions.

With IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) there is only a limited exchange of information. With Greenpeace International there is no direct collaboration but Vía Campesina organizations do work with Greenpeace in a number of countries (US, Spain, Germany, Canada, Mexico . . .). There was some limited collaboration around the boat project for Qatar. There is no direct collaboration/contact with Pesticide Action Network-International (PAN). However at the national level there are strong contacts with PAN groups.

The Vía Campesina has no direct collaboration with the International Indigenous Networks except the International Indigenous Treaty Council (IITC) through the work of the IPC with the FAO (this is explained below).

There is a dialogue with OXFAM International especially on

their trade campaign. Although mutual understanding is growing and OXFAM International is more open to our positions there remain important differences. For Via Campesina Paul Nicholson and the International Operative Secretariat have provided follow-up on this issue.

There are no contacts with womens networks, networks working on militarisation/peace, Amnesty International, IFHR (International Federation for Human Rights), World Wildlife Fund and Consumer International, organisations of urban interests, Churches, etc.

2.2. Vía Campesina relations with International Institutions

Regarding WTO, Worldbank and IMF Via Campesina has a 'confrontative strategy.' The goal is to delegitimize these institutions and decrease their influence. Via Campesina does not engage in dialogue or consultative processes with these institutions as these efforts do not bring any positive changes and would contribute to their legitimation. Therefore, the Vía Campesina's key issues (food sovereignty, agrarian reform, etc.) should be dealt with in an alternative, democratic framework. We have yet to further develop this alternative framework.

A similar attitude is taken towards CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research). This group of International research institutions (i.e. IRRI) was the main promotor of the 'green revolution' and is now focused mainly on genetic engineering. The only possibility of reform appears to be to convince the donors (mainly governments) to put their money in alternative programs.

GFAR (Global Forum on Agricultural Reserach) was created to furnish a space where stake holders could meet and define orientations for agricultural research through CGIAR and national research insititutions. In practice, GFAR does not appear to have accomplished anything. Contrary to the Vía Campesina's demand that GFAR open up a space for the Vía Campesina the GFAR continues to try to force Via Campesina and the International Federation of Agricultural producers (IFAP) into one space and into common positions. We are also put in the position of having to

arrive at « consensus » with other stakeholders (also TNCs like Monsanto) on controversial issues such as GMO's and patents. Via Campesina decided at the last ICC meeting (Porto Alegre 2003) not to participate in the next GFAR Conference in Dakar in may 2003. This means that for the time being Via Campesina continues to occupy the space but does not participate.

Regarding the International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) no relation exists. ILO could be an interesting space for Via Campesina as it works also on the control of TNCs and workers' rights violations.

Via Campesina is actively involved in the work around the United Nations Committee on Human Rights.

2.3. Relations with the FAO – Food and Agriculture Organisation

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) : After the NGO Forum on Food Sovereignty at the World Food Summit Rome+5 (June 2002) the International Planning Committee (IPC) in which Via Campesina participates started a dialogue process with the FAO. This dialogue led to a first agreement between the Director General (Jacques Diouf) and the IPC. Via Campesina engaged in this dialogue to struggle for positive change in an institution that could become a counter reference to WTO.

The risks of this undertaking are following:

- The dialogue is turned into a 'public relations' act that mainly serves the interests of the institution, negatively affects our political profile and absorbs significant leadership capacities that are needed elsewhere.
- At the international level the FAO may make all kinds of interesting commitments. However, at the national level the FAO may still behave as before by supporting policies that go against our objectives.

Potential advantages could be following:

- We could use this institution to introduce important issues like food sovereignty, landreform, rights to seed etc into the governmental debate. This could be done by having more progressive governments introduce these issues (on our behalf) to the FAO. This would help to break the governmental consensus on the neo-liberal policies.
- We could mobilize resources for concrete initiatives at the national/regional level.
- We could generate « official » research capacity and analysis that strenghtens or criticism on the current neo-liberal policies.

2.4. Current Vía Campesina position

The Via Campesina has succeeded in establishing itself as an important global voice for peasant and small-scale farmers in less than a decade of work. It has done so by articulating a strong peasant agenda, mobilizing and working in solidarity across great geographic and cultural diversity. In order to build on those gains and become a more effective force, it is imperative to continue to build strategic working relations with others who support our agenda and to effect changes in the international institutions and agencies which are currently destroying peasant agriculture.

The Via Campesina is committed to “bring Via Campesina’s objectives to the international arena of the FAO, IMF, WB, WTO and other international forums of the United Nations and the ILO.” (Proceedings from the II International Conference of the Via Campesina, April, 1996. page 3).

This discussion paper outlines some of the principles and strategies the Via Campesina should adopt in shaping its relations with Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Peoples Organizations (POs) and official institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO and agencies of the United Nations.

2.5. Strategies for engagement

We live in a complex, integrated world where there are many players and agendas. We do not have a choice as to whether we interact with others who are engaged in our arena – but we have choice on how we work to effect the changes we desire.

There are a multitude of ways of engaging with others to defend our interests. The two ends of the spectrum are:

1. to mobilize and demonstrate in opposition to the policies and institutions that are hostile to our interests in order to prevent or change them.
 2. to negotiate and collaborate in order to influence policy changes.
- Many variations on these methods are possible – and necessary.

The history, political context, culture and issues all have to be taken into account. Mass demonstrations, boycotts and direct action have been and continue to be very effective strategies in certain contexts and at specific political moments. In other venues, where there is space to negotiate, cooperation and collaboration are the most effective ways of creating positive changes.

Recommendation : The Via Campesina should seek to achieve its goals by using the most effective non-violent strategies available, ranging from refusal to participate and direct action to full cooperation and negotiations.

2.6. Principles of Engagement

As the authentic global voice of peasant movements, the Via Campesina must work in respectful, trustworthy and egalitarian ways. The following principles should serve as guidelines:

1. We must always retain clarity and commitment to peasant interests at the center of our analysis and actions.
2. We must seek to achieve consensus on the positions which are presented as Via Campesina positions internationally. This necessitates broadly based consultation and agreement within the Via Campesina prior to publicly presenting the position.
3. The Via Campesina must model the respect and accountability we demand within our movement when we relate to other agencies and organizations. Building a better world entails modeling our values in our relationships.

Our efforts to defend peasant agriculture/culture and rural areas cannot succeed without cooperation with others.

Where we share objectives and can join forces over particular issues with another organization the Via Campesina should enter into strategic alliances. Such alliances must be politically useful,

carefully articulated in a formal agreement with a specified timeline and mutually agreeable.

Our work with NGOs and POs must be undertaken in responsible ways. The terms of collaboration must be agreed on in advance. And the Via Campesina must do what it can to ensure that the credibility and trust of our peasant movement is not jeopardized by failure on our part to fulfill our undertakings.

2.7. Terms of Engagement

Since its inception the Via Campesina has received many invitations to participate in or support various events, campaigns, organizations and initiatives – far too many to accept. The following are some criteria we should use to determine our relations with other groups and/or participation in events.

- The Via Campesina must have autonomy to determine the space it will occupy with the objective of securing a large enough space to effectively influence the event. It is not acceptable to participate on the invitee's terms in ways which subsume or erase our identity and use our credibility without giving us space to articulate our own interests and select our own representatives.
- The Via Campesina must be able to engage on its own key issues. Although there is a great breadth of issues relating to rural life, the Via Campesina must give priority to the theme issues which define our agenda and use limited resources in ways which propel these issues forward. (Initiatives or venues which distract us from our key issues should only be considered where these are necessary for important strategic alliances in the future.)

II - PERSPECTIVES

3. THE NEED FOR POLITICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF PEASANTS

Fausto Torres - ATC - Nicaragua

Presentation

This document is an integral part of the text on political education to be debated by Via Campesina in the IV International Conference in Brazil. Its fundamental purpose is to facilitate analysis and discussion of Via Campesina's role in education and training. Via Campesina is an active participant in the current process of articulation of international struggle and mobilisation, at a time in which the majority of the world's population lives in rural areas and depends upon agricultural production.

Hand in hand with other social movements, Via Campesina is extending its influence through campaigns and mobilisations and also through concrete grassroots initiatives, such as seed exchanges, land occupations, the fight against GMOs, seed banks, the defence of traditional knowledge and modes of production, etc.

With all of these challenges it is crucial to articulate the system of education and training, and to make the most of the discussions to be held at the IV Conference, the II Women's Assembly, and the first Young People's Assembly, so as to recognise the transcendental importance of this issue in the future organisation of the peasants of the world.

3.1. The need for education and training

The organisations of Via Campesina share and defend common values and agendas. However, VC has remained independent as a social movement, and does not have a specific ideology.

This is an important task for Via Campesina, which is carried out by means of:

- . International training schools
- . Education in action (a common practice in member organisations)

- . Exchange of experiences
- . Texts, talks, videos, forums, conferences and in virtual form
- . Systematisation of experiences
- . The training centres of peasant organisations
- . Alliances or joint actions with institutions with experience in rural issues, etc.

The need for education and training arises from the actions which peasant organisations are engaged in on a daily basis to improve living conditions, reach specific goals, mobilise for action and bring initiatives and proposals before governments, international agencies and third parties with which we share common agendas and class struggles.

3.2. The importance of education and training

Education and training should be organised as a fully integrated system, employing different modes of teaching departing from the culture and reality of family agriculture, with focuses such as: appropriate technologies, management, commercialisation, development of projects and promotion of cooperative forms of organisation.

The student of peasant organisations should acquire organisational, political, motivational, administrative and agricultural skills, and a thorough understanding of the rural environment, an analytic and proactive spirit, and a highly developed ability to organise and communicate.

Peasant organisations should seek for their leaders and activists to capacitate themselves whilst training, through a variety of techniques and rigorous and systematic training with a theoretical and practical base departing from their individual and collective abilities.

Without strong peasant organisation, there is no peasant agriculture. It is imperative, therefore, to push for an education and training which promotes values and attitudes towards work and organisation that resist marginality and create proposals to escape from it, the alternative being mass evictions of the rural population, causing ever more exclusion of rural labourers.

Peasant organisations must devise innovative education programmes in order to re-evaluate of the rural environment, improve food production, strengthen centres of production (be these individual plots, cooperatives, or work centres), develop a producer to producer methodology, and promote the transfer of assets and the growth of productivity. The final result of all which will be to promote a new, productive and enterprising social actor of a sustainable peasant agriculture, that is to say, one that is economically viable, socially just and environmentally sound.

3.3. Objectives of a Programme of Education and Training of Peasants

The central aim will be the integrated training and education of the student through the acquirement of a theoretical knowledge which is practical in developing skills and abilities which build towards an improved running of the peasant organisation, increasing social cohesion though an improved understanding of one's heritage and rural identity, and the promotion of new alternatives to avoid exclusion from the social world.

This also involves capacitating and educating to promote actions which find popular support in diverse sectors of society (labourers, peasants, students, shopkeepers, technicians, professionals, etc) so as to increase the capacity for mobilisation and response to the discourse of neoliberalism, globalisation and the reactionary forces of capital.

The objectives in this context are:

- a) To educate and capacitate in order to keep resisting with alternative proposals so as to avoid total exclusion from society
- b) To strengthen leadership and develop viable ideas for the organisation within its rural setting
- c) To prioritise the education and training of women and across generations
- d) To provide more opportunities for leadership
- e) To educate and capacitate in order to expand the role of other sectors of society to enrich organised expression in the countryside.
- f) To educate and capacitate to revive the mystical element of the struggle through a participative pedagogy, which leads by example.
- g) To increase peasant income by improving practices of production,

administration and post-harvest practice.

3.4. Educational Experience and Practice of Member Organisations

There is no shortage of plans and programmes for education and training, what is needed is to harmonise all of these aspects in one system, in which education and training are a fundamental base for action.

This education need not be completely uniform, but instead must follow the interests of the individual organisations and work towards a horizon with a series of entrance and exit points so that the students are given opportunities to further themselves according to the interests of the group and the individual.

Most schools already have schoolhouses and education plans, some will have them in time, and others are under construction. However, the school in which teams are trained should not be understood to be the four walls of the building – education happens through action in the encampment, in the mass struggle, and by example.

Some organisations have been highly successful in the area of education and have academic programmes of a technical, professional nature. Teams are sent on these courses to improve the organisation's capacity for mobilisation, management and action. These programmes take different forms: they might be run by the organisation alone, with government assistance, or with support from an international agency or NGO.

The challenges to our organisations are the following:

- a) How can we harmonise existing plans and programmes to create a system of training at all levels of the organisation?
- b) How can we maximise our resources to carry out the task of training?
- c) In what way might we exchange our best experiences in order to enrich the process of integration?
- d) Why not strengthen the experience of CLOC in Latin America with its schools in Brazil, Cuba and Nicaragua?
- e) What can be done to avoid desertions in teams that have already been formed?
- f) It is important that the organisations ensure that their leaders

improve their academic level and professional technique. How can this be done?

g) In what way can we combine our efforts in order to move towards ideological political positions without putting our autonomy at risk?

h) What have our experiences been of education through action, covering experience of mobilisation, political action and fighting for the demands of the peasant struggle?

i) What methodology should we employ?

j) Which are the areas to be developed?

k) How can we achieve sustainability in education? How can we measure this drive?

l) How can we push the most experienced leaders forwards in the process of education? Etc, etc, etc.

3.5. Research and Training

This theme should be included as a very important area through which to improve training and define new arenas of struggle for our organisations. This new challenge is combined with research into action for the improvement of the living conditions of the men and women who make up the organisations. In terms of relevance these are:

- . Sustainable agriculture
- . Food sovereignty
- . Local power
- . Family agriculture
- . 'Clean' production
- . Organisation of work and the masses
- . Empowerment of organisations
- . Focus on gender and age
- . Methods of struggle
- . The mystical element of struggle
- . Teaching techniques
- . Negotiating techniques
- . Political formation
- . Agro-economic and administrative training

- . Diagnosis of the needs for training
- . Leadership, etc.

4. ELEMENTS FOR DEBATE ON THE GENDER QUESTION IN RURAL AREAS

Francisca Rodriguez -ANAMURI - Chile

Presentation

Women have a long tradition of harvesting, selecting and propagating varieties of seeds for both nutritional and medicinal purposes. They are the principal guardians of the world's genetic resources and biodiversity. Their traditional knowledge should be honoured and respected, and their skills passed on to new generations so they may continue with their vital role in the protection and improvement of biodiversity. The future of the human race depends upon this (Bangalore, First International Assembly of Rural Women). Taking on board the reality and the demands of rural women has been a challenge for the world peasant movement, which was initially pushed forward by the women themselves, and has since been taken up to a degree by the Via Campesina group of organizations. The first International Women's Assembly, which took place in the setting of the III International Conference of Via Campesina, in Bangalore, India, put forward a number of proposals. These can be summed up in one of the accords from the Declaration of the III Conference: *"Via Campesina is a movement that recognizes the complete equality and the value of both men and women. This conference has demonstrated this through a structural change which ensures that the men and women of the countryside share equal responsibility, seeking to strengthen the open and democratic processes within our movement."* In the time that has passed since the third conference, a series of actions have been taken at local, regional and international level, particularly in Latin America and Europe, where regional meetings have been held on various themes. A range of declarations have reaffirmed the orientation and policies of V.C., in each case placing emphasis on the approach to gender within each thematic area and in their plans of action.

We are acutely aware of the fact that the current process of

globalisation brings with it great threats: the countryside, the environment, modes of production and cultures are all threatened with disappearance, in order to make space for the universalisation of massive centres of GM production, far from the ideal of sustainability and preservation of the environment.

This process imposes patterns of life on women which, by dint of the sexual discrimination which continues to affect us, places us outside of the game as producers with access to land, as processors of foodstuffs, as citizens with rights – in effect, as people – while new definitions of these tasks are determined by the market and not by the people of the countryside.

Emigration related to impoverishment, social and sexual violence in the countryside, displacement of populations, evictions from productive land, all conspire against the survival of peasant communities and their alternatives of sustainable development, and place women in situations where they experience greater discrimination: in the countries which receive them as immigrants or in urban areas.

Forms of temporary or contracted employment, ever more prevalent, are in general lacking in labour and social guarantees, subject to unexpected lay-offs and rarely subject to labour laws. Furthermore, the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides directly effects the health of the producers, who do not benefit from a social security system which provides them with the required attention.

In spite of these processes of exclusion, we would like to highlight the great advances and strengthening of our own women's organisations at the heart of mixed organisations. The processes of self-organisation and self-empowerment which we women are building constitute the new source which will push forward struggle for agrarian reform. (Declaration of the International Seminar, Bolivia "Agrarian Reform and Gender")

4.2. Peasant Rights

This is why, conscious of the importance of the preservation of the countryside as a social entity for the future of humanity, the life of the planet, and the strengthening in gender equality in the countryside, the women of CLOC defined an agenda with 21 key

points as priority areas for action to develop in the immediate future. We believe that these are important points to consider in this 2nd International Women's Assembly and in the IV Conference of V.C. as a whole. Bearing in mind that the application of a real and effective policy on gender in all of the organisations of V.C. and in their spheres of reference passes through a struggle with social and political demands, a content which reflects the great hopes of the men and women of the countryside. This should be incorporated into the declaration of Peasant Rights which this conference is to present for recognition and validation within the framework of the fundamental declaration of the United Nations. We propose:

1. The preservation of the countryside as a site of social activity, a way of life, a set of human relations and natural and cultural diversity, where gender equality should be at the centre of its social redefinitions. This implies an urgent implementation of a vision of development that depends upon the women of the countryside, their knowledge and vision of sustainability.

2. The application of international agreements and national legislation which guarantee equality between the genders, especially those related to women's access to land, natural resources and inheritance, and which make development in agricultural production possible. To achieve this, policies, programmes and resources must be strengthened make the enforcement of rights and economic justice viable.

3. The reorientation of the process of globalisation towards the development of processes of global integration based on solidarity and economic justice which put an ethical vision of satisfying human needs in harmony with nature at the centre of rural development policy.

4. The cancellation of the external debt and the recognition of reparations to women of the countryside and countries' ecosystems, for the damage caused by transnational corporations and the application of the current economic model.

5. The immediate implementation of a complete agrarian reform which allows for a fair distribution of income, access for the poor to land and natural resources which have been appropriated by

transnationals and local elites, and the development of management models which place human needs above profit.

6. Agriculture and food production should remain at the margin of commercial agreements, especially those of the FTAA and the WTO. The preservation of the environment, the rights and citizenship of the people of the countryside, economic justice and sustainability should be central considerations in drawing up any social or economic policy.

7. The prioritisation of rural development and gender equality as principal elements in curbing immigration. The strengthening of the countryside as the site for the lives of millions of people and a multitude of cultures should be a priority, which will in turn bring sustainable solutions to many urban problems.

8. Respect and encouragement of cultural and natural diversity, and of a range of alternatives in development which are found amongst many peoples and groups who live in the countryside. The lands of indigenous populations cannot be commercialised like any other commodity, as they are the base for the preservation of biodiversity and ancient cosmovisions and cultures.

9. Technology should be considered as a resource for the improvement of working conditions in the countryside and not for the destruction of nature and the overexploitation of the earth's resources. Under this principle, we advocate the development of appropriate programmes which guarantee women access to technology and the implementation of positive action initiatives, which allow for a closing of the gap between the sexes in this area.

10. The implementation of national legislation and international accords in labour relations in the countryside. The abolition of slave labour of any kind and respect for workers' rights in temporary or contracted forms of production, which should be governed by a respect for human, labour and social rights.

11. The putting into effect of sustainable and participatory programmes for the eradication of the poverty which affects the women of the countryside should contemplate specific measures to wipe out malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, all of which acutely affect women.

12. The immediate adoption, on the part of the international community, of the proposal of food sovereignty, which is based upon the local production of healthy foodstuffs for consumption, and on the exchange of surpluses in line with criteria defined by the producing countries; an indispensable measure for the eradication of hunger.

13. Ethical frameworks for research in and application of Biotechnology should be strengthened, and pressure for the eradication of GM seeds, whose products are harmful to human health and that of the planet.

14. International and state entities should develop programmes and direct resources to achieve the recuperation of healthy seeds, the revitalisation of farmland, the protection of water resources and the use of organic fertilisers as prerequisites for the revival of agricultural production and guaranteeing sustainability.

15. The use of pesticides should be strongly combated. These are harmful to agricultural workers and communities, and the consumers. The states and the transnational and national corporations should implement the Montreal and Stockholm Treaties, along with other instruments which regulate the use of chemical products in agriculture.

16. Compensations and reparations should be established for women and all those whose health has been affected by the use of pesticides. Transnational and local corporations should make amends for the damage caused to ecosystems, civilisations and peoples destroyed or endangered by the use of these products.

17. The earth, its products, natural resources and the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples cannot nor should they be patented. They should be universally preserved by agreements such as TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights).

18. National and international policies should be outlined which regulate the prices of agricultural products, giving preferential treatment to goods produced locally and by women. These cannot enter into competition with GM products produced by the multinationals, in just the same way as the products of the countries of the South cannot be at the mercy of the dumping practised by

the companies and countries of the North.

19. The enforcement of full human rights in the countryside is an urgent issue. Specific measures must be taken towards the eradication of sexual violence, repression and other human rights violations which occur in the countryside.

20. Measures should be taken to develop programmes to protect women's health in the countryside, especially concerning their sexual and reproductive rights, which are threatened by discriminatory demographic policies and genocidal practices, such as forced or obligatory sterilisation.

21. Mechanisms of participation amongst women of the countryside in outlining local and global policies, in the management of these, and opening their access to education and technology.

**WOMEN OF THE COUNTRYSIDE REVIVING
HOPE LET US BUILD EQUALITY AND
JUSTICE IN THE STRUGGLE STRUGGLE!**

5. COMMUNICATION : A MOVE FROM THE MEANS TO THE ENDS

Oswaldo León - ALAI - Ecuador

The strategic meeting of Via Campesina is a timely occasion to approach the challenge to integrate the constitutive and constituent factors of the communication process.

We must remember that VC emerges as an innovative creative/ alternative organisational process for international forms of articulation (bellow manufacturing union) which stood out last century, from start it faces global issues, shaping itself as a cultural-educational movement (competing of the senses).

The development and consistency that VC reaches in large and important measure will depend on the communicational flow and the channels established among its members, and at the same time to its surroundings. That means to assume that communication is a space of strategic dispute (“If we don’t do it, the others will take our voices and lie, outside of our will, it will look like it came out of our mouth”).

A strategy for communication is necessary, to establish agendas for: stating the cohesion and identification of its members (so they can feel part of VC and participate out of their own initiative), without destroying plurality; creating and sharing values (common vision/ discourse); to facilitate the identification, selection and combination of efficient mediums to reach the aimed objectives; making the coordination of actions more efficient.

To the outside, it is a change to: create conditions for a constructive dialog with the various relevant actors around (articulation of alliances for concerted actions); to influence strategic spaces of decision; and position itself before the public opinion.

From what has been pointed out above, a media policy will be needed. We can then advance to some considerations.

Internally, the potential of VC is considerably reduced due to the existing dispersion. In order to counteract it, we can advance a

media articulation/coordination and communicational equipments for the member organisations, which will allow us to configure a basic multimedia platform for coordinated actions. An important resource that has been incorporated is the Internet (email and web), without forgetting the threats that set a trap to it.

Among our allies, there are other similar coordinations and networks which are also implementing answers to this plan, since the settlement of agreements will contribute for a mutual boost, and strategically, to the configuration of a communicational network of the movements.

There is also the *alternative* media and the independent newspapers that are favourable to the cause of VC; their support can be very significant if a specific way of dealing with them is implemented. In particular, the large networks can be a key support to the of the day to day follow up (consecutive actions, such as campaigns for example)

Considering the heavy weight of the mass communication media (MCM) in shaping public opinion, for VC is essential to gravitate around them, but no at any cost. For one thing, a predominant criteria in the MCM in the “celebrity”, up until what point VC will play that game? Considering that the behaviour of MCM varies from country to country, that will determine what each country can do. It is not certain that a global space has been configured in which VC can have a potential for intervention, providing one of the actors of the movement of globalisation. When and how to intervene is a crucial issue that the strategic meeting must address.

The importance that VC gives to communication will have to reflect in two important choices: the resources allocated and the capacitation in each country.

6. POLITICAL PLATFORM OF VIA CAMPESINA INTERNATIONAL

- Proposal to be discussed in the regions and to be concluded in the IV Conference -

Presentation

This platform text presents the key values and positions the organisations of Via Campesina are defending. It reflects the main lines along which Via Campesina as an international peasant movement develops its analysis, strategies and actions.

It was presented and discussed at the strategic meeting in Natoye-Belgium and includes contribution of the ICC.

1. Nature

We must respect our planet's biodiversity which includes all of nature's assets, the ecosystems and cultures of its peoples. Biodiversity encompasses all of the different forms of plant and animal life, human and economic relations, and people's habits, cultures and forms of governance. Diversity is our own way of life and we must defend it. We must respect and protect, for future generations, all the natural resources of our planet such as land, water, flora and fauna and use farming techniques which produce healthy foodstuffs and which respect our environment.

2. Land

Land is an asset from nature that must, in the first place, serve life and benefit society. That is why we defend the democratization of its ownership and use. We are against the concentration of land ownership and use, in order to exploit other people or other nations. We defend an agricultural reform that guarantees everyone the right to work on the land, and that democratizes its ownership, giving priority to familial, social and cooperative forms of agriculture. We defend the rights of peasants to organize themselves in different ways within their communities and places where they live. We defend the necessity of governments and states to protect and stimulate family,

peasant and cooperative farming with adequate agricultural pricing policies, technical assistance and guarantee of markets, as a means of producing foodstuffs and preserving our culture.

3. Food sovereignty

We defend food sovereignty as the right of peoples and countries to define their agricultural and food policy, without dumping vis-à-vis third countries. Food sovereignty includes the prioritizing local agricultural production in order to feed the people, access of peasants and landless people to land, water, seeds and credit, the right of farmers, peasants to produce food and the right of consumers to be able to decide what they consume, and how and by whom it is produced, and agricultural prices.

4. Seeds

Humanity has arrived where we are thanks to the free production and democratization of the use of seeds. We defend the principle that farmers and their communities have the right and the duty to produce seeds. We are against the use of transgenic seeds of which there is no security for the health of farmers, consumers and the environment. We are against the trade monopoly of seeds by transnational firms.

5. Gender equality

We men and women are all equal. We must combat all forms of cultural and sexist prejudice. We defend the right to equality of women and youth, without any discrimination based on gender, sexism, age or colour of skin.

6. Human rights

People who live in rural areas of our planet still suffer many kinds of violence; the violence of exclusion from their rights which prevents them from having access to fundamental rights such as food, work, decent housing, education and culture. There is physical violence that condemns them to sacrifices; forced labour without remuneration, torture, prison, migration, exile and even assassinations. We struggle so that human, social and individual rights are respected in all communities, in all social groupings, and by all political regimes and governments.

7. Agribusiness

The urbanization process of our planet drove the need for the industrialization of food to ensure its transportation and storage.

Agribusiness, however, is being used by large firms as a form of exploitation of workers, and concentration of economic power and of political power. We advocate that agribusinesses be distributed within countries and be organized in associative and cooperative structures, so that workers and farmers benefit from their technical progress.

8. Agricultural trade

Agricultural trade cannot be an instrument of exploitation of farmers, of consumers or exploitation of one country by another.

Agricultural trade must be based on relationships of equality and fair exchange. Food cannot be marketed as mere goods in order to obtain economic and political advantages. Agricultural trade must be subject to fair trade relations between peoples.

9. International bodies

The international bodies in operation in our planet, such as the IMF, the WTO and the World Bank, have been used solely as instruments of domination by large firms and transnational corporations and by rich countries against poor countries. Proposals to regulate trade relations through plans such as those of the WTO, the FTAA, etc. are mere instruments of domination and exploitation of capital against peoples and workers. For this reason, we defend the reformulation of all international bodies and the reconstruction of others, based on equality, justice and the representation of peoples.

10. Values

All social relations of our societies must be based on the cultivation of values that humanity has been building throughout millennia, such as solidarity, social justice and equality. Those values do not just constitute declarations of principles, but they must set the course of our day-to-day behaviour, of our movements, organizations, political regimes and States.

7. DEBATE ON OUR POLITICAL POSITIONS AND LINES OF ACTION

- Issues proposed by the ICC-Via Campesina for regional and national discussion in preparation for the IV Conference -

Presentation

For the last 10 years since its foundation, in 1993, Via Campesina has succeeded in constructing an international space for peasant voices to express and articulate their demands and interests. It has provided an autonomous forum for progressive rural organisations throughout the world to conduct collective analysis, to exchange ideas, experiences and strategies, and to work collaboratively towards collective mobilisation against neoliberalism.

Due to Via Campesina's efforts, land reform regained recognition at the international level and food sovereignty is gaining space as a viable alternative to neoliberalism. Through the years, Via Campesina has supported many local struggles and generated hope that another agriculture is possible. It has also played a very important role in the construction of alliances between social movements and non-governmental organizations. Peasants have become important actors in the world struggle against neoliberalism, and Via Campesina, as an international movement, has successfully resisted bureaucratisation and hierarchical organizational structure, in favour of an organizational model that emphasizes localities and regions. All these successes have created new issues and situations for Via Campesina. As a result, in May of 2003, 35 representatives met in Natoye, Belgium, spending four days analyzing the advances, strengths and weaknesses that Via Campesina has experienced over the last decade. They also articulated possibilities for future political lines of action. This summary presents the results of this Strategy Meeting and formulates "key questions" for discussion for regional and national Via Campesina organizations.

This document should generate a widespread debate at all levels of the Via Campesina organization in preparation for the IV International Conference, in addition to the First Youth Assembly and the Second Women's Assembly, taking place in São Paulo, Brazil, from June 12-18, 2004.

The following questions are related to Via Campesina's goals, strategies, and to its internal organization. Thus, it is of utmost importance that all regions discuss these points and prepare responses, positions, and regional proposals.

7.1. International Articulation Strategies - Strengthening the Movement

- Observations from the ICC -

Via Campesina is an international movement that works in opposition to neoliberalism. We demand a complete transformation. We respect the autonomy of each organization and are open to political, religious, and cultural diversity, taking these as a strength of our movement. Even though we are very diverse, we have as a common axis our struggle against neoliberalism and our determination to favour the interests of peasants, landless, rural women, agricultural workers, and indigenous communities (**see the proposed political platform document**, a text that seeks to reflect the most important axes and values that Via Campesina holds in common).

We have a clear identity as an autonomous international peasant movement that successfully articulates transparent positions and strategic visions in global debates. Via Campesina's alternative to neoliberalism is food sovereignty, based on a model of peasant agriculture, genuine agrarian reform, fair trade, respect for peasant rights, full and representative participation for women, and social justice.

We prioritize unity and seek to maintain our capacity to define our own agenda and identity. Solidarity is critical and forms an integral part of our value system. When we act in solidarity we show our strength and even further, illustrate the weaknesses of neoliberalism. The integration of new members should be based on their agreement with Via Campesina's political platform. Our values are firmly defined in the document entitled "International Political

Platform for Via Campesina”.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you agree with the proposed International Political Platform for Via Campesina?
2. What are our common values?
3. What is our identity?

7.2. Participation of youth and women

- Observations from the ICC -

Via Campesina has achieved important advances towards increasing the participation and representation of women. For example, the International Coordinating Committee is now comprised of one woman and one man from each region. However, formal structure doesn't guarantee gender equality in Via Campesina's daily reality, and on several occasions Via Campesina Delegations have been dominated by men. Concrete measures must be taken to ensure gender equality.

Via Campesina should also seek creative means to integrate youth. Equal participation by women and youth will allow Via Campesina to be more efficient in its struggle against neoliberalism.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How can we strengthen the incorporation of women into Via Campesina and better integrate their interests in Via Campesina's activities and positions? (cap. 4, pg.32)
2. How can we strengthen the incorporation of youth into Via Campesina and better integrate their interests in Via Campesina's activities and positions?

7.3 Collective action strategies

7.3.1 Mass mobilization and collective action

- Observations from the ICC -

We believe that supporting local struggles is key. Our participation in international activities is fundamentally based on local struggles and our opposition and resistance is based on our concrete experiences. To be more effective, we need to strengthen our own bases and improve coordination between Via Campesina's member organizations. To create a significant impact, we should also carry out our coordinated actions and mobilizations at the global level.

Mobilization is still our principal strategy. We are committed to developing a positive agenda that is able to influence the current balance of power. Via Campesina's concept of food sovereignty is a strong alternative to the neoliberal model within the agricultural sector, and is gaining ground around the world. Food sovereignty is our main priority, but we should deepen our understanding of it and also of other theoretical concepts. We need to concretize our ideas, including the idea of food sovereignty, and work more efficiently to implement alternatives for production, consumption, and for the construction of local economies.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Regarding Via Campesina actions and mobilizations:

1. How can we make action agendas from the international level more compatible with struggles at the local level?
2. What are the objectives of our mobilizations? More specifically, what should be the objective of a coordinated mobilization at the international level? Should it be to create consciousness, to pressure governments and international institutions, to mobilize other social sectors, to achieve concrete changes in the short-term?
3. What is the best way to carry out coordinated mobilization at the international level? Organizational styles differ in Bolivia, Mexico, India, and Brazil. Should we find a common form or style of mobilization or should each organization make its own decisions? Should we place increased emphasis on the 17th of April as a common day of action, or strengthen collective mobilization during events such as the WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun? Are there other possible forms of coordinating action and mobilization at the international level?

7.3.2. Our Global Campaigns

a) The Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform

For several years, Via Campesina and FIAN have worked together in the Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform. This campaign seeks to support struggles for land in different countries, and to develop a supporting presence at the international level.

The Campaign has centralized its activities in several priority countries, particularly in the areas of investigatory missions and urgent action alerts. The priority or “focus countries” are currently: Colombia, Brazil, Honduras, Guatemala, Bangladesh, Philippines, and South Africa.

At the international level, we have organized meetings to exchange experiences (Honduras, Bolivia, Indonesia), in addition to creating a presence for the Campaign at events including the World Social Forum, FAO Summits, etc. The Campaign is also developing a strategy against the World Bank’s policy of market-based land reform.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How can we re-define the campaign to better meet the needs of Via Campesina organizations?

b) The Seed Campaign

Via Campesina launched the Global Seed Campaign at the 2002 World Social Forum and subsequently at the FAO Summit in June 2002. The principle objective of the Campaign is the defence of peasant seed varieties and of their original/traditional knowledges, through exchanges of seeds and knowledge between peasants. In addition to strengthening the use of peasant seed varieties, the campaign seeks to act as a “vehicle” to discuss and strengthen the movements around related topics, such as patents and trans-genics. The campaign currently has begun to act in South America (Chile and Brazil) and has created a coordination committee. It now seeks the integration of other regions. For the campaign to succeed it is necessary for all of Via Campesina’s regions to participate in outlining goals, strategies, and actions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How each region will participate in the campaign?

7.4 Our Social Alliances

-Observations from the ICC -

At the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Seattle, in November 1999, Via Campesina adopted the strategy of “Globalize Struggle, Globalize Hope.” Since then, we have worked to create alliances around the world with other social movements and with civil society organizations

that share our thinking. This important work should continue if we want to construct a global movement against neoliberalism. A proposed policy of alliances was discussed at the 3rd International Via Campesina Conference in Bangalore in 2000. This position was updated and needs to be discussed more profoundly at all levels of Via Campesina in order to better define the groups with which we want to work, how we want to work with them, and what types of strategic alliances we wish to establish.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How should Via Campesina continue constructing alliances?
2. What kinds of alliances should Via Campesina seek?
3. What should be the goals and objectives of these alliances?
4. How can potential allies be identified?

7.5 Use of the mass media

-Observations from the ICC -

Media communications play an important role in making our struggles and mobilizations visible and thus creating pressure on governments. The principal question is whether it's better to influence and/or create more space within the existing means of communication or to create our own means of communication working with alternative media. (See also Cap. 5 pg39).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How can we develop a Via Campesina strategy for dealing with the mass media (TV, Internet, Radio, the Press)?
2. Should Via Campesina develop its own media communications center?
3. Should we establish a media communications group or coordinate communication with existing venues and also work with alternatives?

7.6 Strategies for relations with international organs

- Observations from the ICC -

Participants agreed that Via Campesina's position should be clear, to avoid contradictions between what occurs at the national level and political discussions carried out at the international level. Via Campesina is strongly opposed to the WTO, the IMF, and the World Bank and will continue attacking them, as they are powerful

instruments of neoliberalism.

We believe that there are various means to defend the interests of rural populations and that these strongly depend upon local and national contexts. One example of this is that if, at local or national levels it may be strategic to work with the World Bank, but at the international level Via Campesina adopts a strategy of confrontation, we need to be flexible and accept that the relations of Via Campesina member organizations depend upon local and national contexts and their existing legal frameworks.

We participate in direct actions against Trans-national Corporations (TNCs), especially those that are involved with genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Via Campesina's position differs from the general focus of the FAO. We have a dialogue with the FAO as a body of the United Nations and work with the FAO in a regional and international process to obtain positive results. The FAO's doors are open to civil society and we feel that it is important to occupy this space, at this time.

However, we must be constantly alert to the possibility of manipulation and instrumentalization by the institution and we should develop means to avoid this. Via Campesina is currently a member of the International Steering Committee, a structure that facilitates working dialogue with the FAO. We need to develop strategies to deal with the FAO and methods to place our ideas about food sovereignty at the forefront of our work with this institution.

We need to demonstrate strong public opposition when the FAO makes decisions contrary to the interests of rural people, for example in the case of its recent decision in favour of GMOs.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How should Via Campesina relate to international institutions like the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), etc.?
2. How can we ensure that Via Campesina and its members are not co-opted in cases where we have a more "gentle" position with the FAO?
3. How can we ensure that the focus of the critical dialogue that

we have with the FAO contributes to Via Campesina's struggles?

4. How can we be sure that the FAO won't use this dialogue to distract our attention or to legitimate other actions that go against peasant interests?

5. Who can protect Via Campesina if at some point the WB or WTO initiates a campaign against us, offering projects to members of Via Campesina to divide us, and to delegitimize us in the media, etc?

7.7. Internal conduct of Via Campesina & Articulation between peasant organisations

7.7.1 Functioning of working groups

- Observations from the ICC -

Via Campesina has a number of working groups, for example: Commission for commerce and food sovereignty; biodiversity and genetic resources; agrarian reform; sustainable agriculture; and human rights. We still need to consolidate commissions for gender, migration, and salaried agricultural workers. These commissions have been critical in supporting the development of Via Campesina's positions and proposals over many topics. The problem is that many groups have lost their dynamism and some even never got started; the majority don't function adequately and suffer from many problems including lack of leadership, organizational responsibility, communication, translation capacity, economic resources, and follow-up procedures. We need to reactivate all the working groups as they play a critical role in unifying local and regional themes and processes with international spaces. The International Coordinating Committee is also key in helping Via Campesina to better and more collectively share knowledge and experiences, and in developing proposals and specific strategies.

This reactivation can occur:

- By defining the composition of the working groups. Each commission should have one representative from each of the eight Via Campesina regions. In support of our commitment to gender equality, each commission should be comprised of 50% women;

- By developing an action plan; each commission should have their plan of action;
- By ensuring effective internal communication between all of the members of each commission and between all of the commissions;
- By regularly exchanging information between the commissions.

7.7.2. How to improve our internal communication

- Observations from the ICC -

Currently, great variety exists in the strength of each region.

Some regions are stronger than others. It is of critical importance that Via Campesina works to consolidate and strengthen the regions.

Concrete proposals to strengthen the regions include:

- Distribute information and improve communication within and between regions; ensure that Via Campesina announcements and information are distributed within the national organizations; elaborate materials at national, regional, and international levels around central themes and amply distribute them;
- Integrate the needs of each region;
- Increase the capacity of each region to be able to manage communication needs;
- Improve work in Africa and Asia and especially increase our presence at meetings in these regions to deliver information about Via Campesina;
- Address the topic of lack of human and financial resources needed to establish regional offices in each region;
- Resolve the problem of lack of translation in the regions;
- Strengthen the Operating Secretariat to improve the coordination of communication and distribution of information between regions and working groups.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How can we reactivate Via Campesina's international working groups?
2. Who is your regional representative in each of the Working Groups?

7.8. Entrance of new organizations and member criteria

- Observations from the ICC -

Via Campesina is a diverse and open movement but few people are aware of the Affiliation Statutes, and the role and responsibilities of the different internal structures. During the strategy meeting, participants agreed that Via Campesina needs to:

- Clarify the criteria for becoming a member of Via Campesina.
- Formalize the process of integration between Via Campesina Conferences.
- Clarify the roles, expectations, and responsibilities of members, regional coordinators, regions, and international working groups.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. If the regions consider Via Campesina's international strategy to be important, how can we ensure that information reaches local and base levels?
2. How can we ensure that information and national-level proposals are distributed to the regional and international levels? This is important and strengthens Via Campesina's international work.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. To facilitate the integration of new members and ensure successful functioning is it necessary to clarify affiliation criteria?
2. Do we need to change Via Campesina's internal bylaws?

7.9 Education, training, and capacity-building

- Observations from the ICC -

We affirm the importance of working on political education and of continuing to strengthen Via Campesina. Currently, specific and advanced knowledge is concentrated in few people, when it should be equally distributed. Via Campesina needs to:

- Elaborate documents and pamphlets on Via Campesina's positions for distribution at the base;
- Find additional resources for training, for developing capacity, and for exchanges;
- Organize events that increase leader capacity and training of more leaders on the diverse themes of Via Campesina, so that more organizations are able to represent Via Campesina at different events

and processes;

- Exchange information and experiences between Via Campesina organizations that already have experience in leader training;
- Work with supporting organizations that have advanced knowledge of issues, however ensure that it is Via Campesina that determines the training agenda;
- Conduct training focusing on key themes (like WTO, food sovereignty, nano-technology, GMOs, the conduct of the FAO, etc), developing theory and practice as well as mobilization. Utilize participatory methods and integrate various cultural dimensions;
- Develop an exchange program between Via Campesina organizations.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are regional needs in terms of education, capacitybuilding, and training in international issues and for the work and functioning of Via Campesina?
2. How can we carry out effective, stimulating, and economical capacity-building that meets the felt needs of member organizations and is also easy to multiply?

III – REGIONAL DOCUMENTS

8. DECLARATION OF VIA CAMPESINA SOUTH EAST ASIA AND EAST ASIA ABOUT THE PROTECTION OF THE PEASANT RIGHT

Preamble

The regional conference on peasant right Southeast Asia and East Asia on April 1-5, 2002 at Jakarta, Indonesia. Organized by Via Campesina and participated by landless peasant and peasant from the region south East Asia and East Asia.

Acknowledging base on the Universal Declaration of the Human Right, Peasant has right to enjoy the freedom of the civil-politic right and free from the frightened and this only can be reached if everyone can enjoy the Economic, Social, Civil-Politic and Cultural Right;

Acknowledging base on the International convention on civilpolitic right, state should guarantee and respect all civil politic right of the peasant without any discrimination on nation, race, gender, language, religion, political view, or other opinion, ethnic or social, wealthy, birth or other;

Acknowledging base on the International convention on the economic, Social and Cultural right, state obligates the right of the peasant to achieved the proper living standard for ourselves and our family and right to be free from hunger through the action of the agrarian reform;

Considering that the agriculture condition now day has threaten the life of the peasant, worsening the environmental, decreasing the peasant productivity and decreasing the welfare of the peasant;

Considering that the peasant condition become worse because the executive government exclude the peasant in their policies decision, by using the national military displace the peasant with violation and using TNC's to exploitative the natural resources;

Considering that capitalism globalization works on the agreement and international decision has tied the peasant life;

Considering that peasant will struggle for their life, for the

environmental damage, for the weakness of their productivity, with our own resources or together with other group who support the peasant struggle.

Desiring to state the Peasant Right formulation to be uphold and protect

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

Right to live and proper living standard

1. Peasant man and woman and their family have right as other people, as guarantee in the United Nation Universal Declaration of Human Right.
2. Peasant man and woman and their family have right on the protection of the security of our live.
3. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to live in the proper way, welfare and dignity.
4. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to have enough food, healthy and nutritious.
5. Peasant man and woman and their family have right on the health service and other social service such as sport, entertainment, transportation, electricity, clean water, communication and reliable information.
6. Peasant man and woman and their family have right on good quality of the education and training.
7. Peasant man and woman and their family have right on the proper income to fulfil the basic need of themselves and their family.
8. Peasant man and woman and their family have right on the fulfillment of the proper housing and clothing.
9. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to consume their agriculture production properly for their family's basic need and have right to distribute their agriculture production to other people.
10. The right of the man and woman peasant on life and their basic need should be protected by the law, by the state or other national and international independence institution without discrimination on gender, age, religion, social and culture.

ARTICLE II

Right to the agrarian resources

1. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to own the proper land collectively or individually for their housing and farming.
2. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to toiling on their own land.
3. The right of the peasant man and woman and their family have right on the ownership of land or access to the agrarian resources and personal capacity in front of the law and do not discriminate the gender, religion, status, race and culture.
4. Peasant man and woman and their family has right to toiling and own the non productive state land which already become their economic income and the livelihood of the community.
5. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to the clean water.
6. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to use the water resources for their farming.
7. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to manage the water resources in their region.
8. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to get support on the facilities, technology and fund from the state to manage the water resources.
9. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to manage, conserve, and take benefit from the forest.
10. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to reject all kind of land shifting for the industrial purpose.
11. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to have law protection on their farming land, their housing and other agrarian resources. Protection from claim of other community or institution and protection from the contamination and pollution because of the environment activities.

ARTICLE III

Right on the seed and agriculture

1. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to determine varieties of the plants they want to grow.
2. Peasant man and woman and their family has right to reject

varieties of the plant which dangerous economically, ecologically, and culturally.

3. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to determine the system or how they want to do farming.

4. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to conserve and develop their local knowledge in the agriculture.

5. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to use the agriculture facilities.

6. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to choose their own product, varieties, amount, quality and the way to do farming individually or collectively in the way of democratic.

7. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to grow and look after their farming with their own technology or they technology they choose with the principle of human health and environmental conservation.

8. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to grow and develop their local varieties.

ARTICLE IV

Rights For Capital and Means of Agricultural Production

1. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to obtain funds from the state to develop agriculture.

2. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to the capital guarantee for agriculture.

3. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to get capital from unbinding side.

4. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to involve actively in planning, formulating, and deciding the budget for peasant and agriculture.

5. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to the irrigation means for agriculture.

6. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to obtain the materials and tools for agriculture.

7. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to the transportation facilities to market the agriculture product.

8. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to choose the aid from other side to struggle for their right.

ARTICLE V

Right to access the information and agriculture technology

1. Peasant men and women and their family have right to obtain the correct and balance information about capital, market, policies, prices, and technology, ect, related with peasant's need.
2. Peasant men and women and their family have right to obtain the information about national and international policies.
3. Peasant men and women and their family have right to obtain the production tools and other efficient technology benefit to the peasant without ignoring the ethnic-social values.
4. Peasant men and women and their family have right to get complete and correct information about goods and services, in case of deciding what they want to consume and how they want to consume.
5. Peasant men and women and their family have right to get the sufficient and correct information in the national and international level, as individual or institutional in the shape of volunteer cooperation or with fair payment on various information and knowledge on agricultural and preservation on the genetics resources.

ARTICLE VI

Right for Freedom in Determining Price and Market for agricultural production

1. Peasant man and women and their family have right to prioritise their agricultural production for their family and society needs.
2. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to store their production for the family and for the seed at least for one season or as long as predicted by scientist will be harvest failure.
3. Peasant man and woman and their family have right for the fair market.
4. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to get beneficial price for their production.
5. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to determine the price individually or collectively.
6. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to obtain the market and distribution guarantee for their agricultural product.

7. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to get reasonable payment for his working, to fulfil his family needs.
8. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to get proper price for their production.
9. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to process and store their production base to their skill and knowledge as long as not against the principle of the human health and environmental preservation.
10. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to conserve and produce local goods and services and control economically and use by generations in the community.
11. The right of peasant man and woman and their family cannot be limited by the gender, religious, groups and culture.
12. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to market their production and this right must obligate by national and international law. And also obligation to get the material and tools for agriculture production process.
13. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to get guarantee of quality on goods and services of their agriculture product nationally or internationally.

ARTICLE VII

Rights for protection of Agriculture values

1. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to obtain the protection and appreciation of culture and local agriculture values.
2. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to develop and preserve local knowledge at agriculture.
3. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to reject all intervention, which can destroy the local agriculture values.

ARTICLE VIII

Rights for Biological Diversity

1. Peasant man and woman and their family have right for the protection and preservation of biological diversity.
2. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to plant, to develop and conserve the biological diversity individually or collectively.

3. Peasant man and woman and their family have right to refuse all kind of patent on plants, food, medicine, culture and other biological diversity.

4. Peasant man and woman and their family have right for the protection of law concerning biological diversity from bio piracy, claims and environmental polluted.

5. Peasant man and woman and their family as a community have the rights to cancel the intellectual property right of goods and services own, maintain, discover, develop or produce by the local community.

6. Peasant man and woman and their family as family or collectively, have the right to get protection of law nationally or internationally to maintenance, exchange, and preservation of genetic and biological diversity as the richness of resources from the local community and the indigenous community.

ARTICLE IX

Rights for Environmental Preservation

1. Peasants man and woman and their family have the right to get clean and health environment

2. Peasant man and woman and their family have the right to preserve the environmental based on the local knowledge.

3. Peasant man and woman and their family have the right to reject all forms of agrarian exploitation, which cause the environmental damage.

4. Peasant man and woman and their family have the right to suit and claim for the environmental damage and get the compensation from the impacts of the environmental damage.

ARTICLE X

Rights for Freedom of associates

1. Peasant both man and woman as well as his family have the right to united, assemble and voice the opinion start from local, regional, national and international level

2. Peasant both man and woman as well as his family have the right to obtain the protection for all kinds of independent peasant's organization

3. Peasant both man and woman as well as his family have the right

to free in application with other organizations

4. Peasant both man and women as well as his family have the right to obtain the protection and law-defence both in front of and outside of judgment

5. Peasant both man and women as well as his family have the right for a public column and public facility to state and express himself

6. Peasant both man and women as well as his family have the right to obtain the protection for extortion looting, manipulation and forcing from other people and the bigger institution for his autonomy and using of his creativity

7. Peasant both man and women as well as his family, individually or as a group have the right to obtain the protection of national and international law involve in expressed himself in the case of local and custom language, local culture, religious and idiom literature neither local art nor custom

8. Peasant both man and woman as well as his family have the right; freely without any obstacle from anyone, and nation to establish and organized organization and economic association for the importance of himself neither group nor importance of together

Jakarta - 2002, april.

9. VIA CAMPESINA SEED CAMPAIGN

Synthesis of the Committee Meeting – Caaguazu/Paraguay

Introduction

At the Porto Alegre Via Campesina Assembly, it was deemed necessary to call a meeting for representatives of VC and Friends of the Earth to establish a general framework and define our focus, challenges, and projections for the Seed Campaign. The meeting took place in Caaguazu, Paraguay, on April 21-22, 2003. Participants in this meeting included: ANAMURI-Chile, MST-Brazil, CONAMURI-Paraguay, Friends of the Earth-Uruguay and Paraguay, and GRAIN-Chile.

The World Seed Campaign was initiated by VC and Friends of the Earth in Rome, at the World Forum on Food Sovereignty (as part of the World Food Summit “Rome +5”) and during the 3rd World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, it was launched as a global campaign “**Seed—Patrimony of the People, at the Service of Humanity**”. This campaign is committed in its objectives to all communities and social movements.

Between meetings, many interesting things happened within the campaign. First of all, we became aware of its political potential, and of the importance and impact of its social, cultural, and economic implications. Secondly, the degree of sympathy, commitment, and community adhesion has been extraordinary. This requires us to validate our principles and clearly establish action strategies.

9.1 Deepening the campaign

Seeds are the work of peasants and indigenous people, a collective creation that reflects the history of all peoples, especially women, that were their initial creators, principal guardians, and that maintained and improved them throughout history.

We understand that seed is much more than a productive

resource. Seeds are simultaneously the foundation and the product of cultures and societies throughout history. Seeds incorporate values, affections, visions, and forms of life that link them to realms of the sacred.

Without seeds, people's sustenance and sovereignty become impossible. When seeds disappear, cultures, rural populations, and communities also fade away. The disappearance of cultures also brings about the disappearance of seeds.

Seeds are the beginning and the end of the cycle of peasant production. Diversity and the existence of peasant seed varieties allows the assurance of abundance and food diversity in each locality, serving as a base for adequate nutrition and allowing the development of culturally adequate and desirable culinary traditions. Therefore, seeds and the knowledge associated with them are a fundamental and nonsubstitutable part of all people's food sovereignty.

As has already been demonstrated, seeds cannot be appropriated. They should maintain at all times their character as collective patrimony, in the face of which exist inalienable rights and responsibilities, including the right to use and enjoy this patrimony. The Campaign, as a result, is opposed to intellectual property rights and to all forms of appropriation of life.

9. 2 Campaign Principles

The Campaign is based on multiple forms of indigenous and peasant knowledge around seeds, agriculture, and biodiversity and starts from the conviction that these forms of knowledge are intrinsically valid and thus do not require external, scientific, or any other kind of validation.

The Campaign seeks effective means to involve and commit all sectors of society. This includes involving and using the support of technicians and scientists when the process of biological and cultural erosion makes their participation necessary. Leadership and final decision-making should remain at the discretion of Via Campesina and of peasant, indigenous, and community organizations.

The Campaign is part of the struggle to defend, reinforce, and/or recuperate the political, cultural, economic, and food sovereignty of all peoples, and stands within a larger struggle against the neoliberal

capitalist system. It forms part of the search for alternative popular projects.

Equally important, seeds cannot be defended if the necessary conditions for the continuity of the cultures that maintain and gave them origin are not also defended. The Campaign, therefore, must be intimately tied to the defence of land and territories and to indigenous and peasant cultures.

In addition, within its identified principles the Campaign will promote localized and decentralized methods of decision-making and development of initiatives, knowledge, and technology.

9.3 Strategies to be developed

The contents, methodologies, and initiatives of the Campaign will be defined from a peasant and indigenous perspective. Leadership for the campaign will at all times be exercised from within Via Campesina and from peasant and indigenous organizations.

People that hold popular knowledge and indigenous and peasant specialists, especially women, are fundamental actors of this campaign. It is important to acknowledge the historical and current contributions of these specialists, identify and acknowledge them at local levels, and create conditions for their contributions to be valued, recognized, and socialized.

Reactivate the knowledge and diversity of use of crops and seeds. Foment and reactivate culinary and artesanal traditions, and other seed uses. Value and reinforce ritual uses, and promote the diversity of crops and technologies. Link agriculture and reforestation. Support and make more dynamic all forms of seed and knowledge exchange between indigenous and peasant communities. Support autonomous and decentralized methods for strengthening and amplifying the production and reproduction of seeds.

Strengthen/defend/reactivate processes and mechanisms to create and socialize knowledge within indigenous and peasant communities. Develop local research methods based on peasant principles, preoccupations and objects of focus. Give renewed impulse to larger struggles that help to ensure the necessary conditions to maintain peasant and indigenous knowledge systems.

Promote and socialize an ethical framework based on the

principles of the Campaign that contributes to future initiatives and orientations within the Campaign. Give renewed energy towards peasant meetings and exchanges that define principles of conduct around seeds. Promote a debate that permits the establishment and identification of rights and responsibilities in relation to seeds and biodiversity.

Recognize with pride and confidence in our own strengths the unquestionable and non-substitutable contribution of peasant seed varieties to humanity. Highlight that this Campaign is based upon our own resources, capacities, and our own knowledges, and thus is an exercise of sovereignty that does not require the consent of authorities or other nodes of power. Emphasize at all times its character of hope. Involve all sectors of society through cultural activities, education, and festivals that create consciousness and mysticism in relation to seeds and to the role of indigenous people and peasants. Create consciousness that peasant seed varieties are the basis of food and of food sovereignty.

Link the Campaign to other Via Campesina campaigns, as well as to the struggle against international free trade agreements, diverse forms of globalization, cultural homogenization, and privatization, and against international financial institutions.

9.4 Elements of Organization

a) Three groups or committees are proposed to carry the Campaign forward:

. **Coordinating Committee:** Convened by Via Campesina, this committee should define how and with which groups to seek strategic alliances. Its responsibility is to coordinate activities and actions of the Campaign and to carry it forward.

. **Consultative Committee:** Convened by the coordinating committee, this committee will be comprised of academic specialists, scientists, and peasant and indigenous specialists and will provide information, support, and pertinent and specialized documentation.

. **Committee of Notables:** The purpose of this committee is to disseminate information and give greater credibility, support, and coverage to the campaign (among others, the names of Galeano,

Boff, Rigoberta Menchú, etc have been proposed).

b) A seed commission or special working group should be installed within Via Campesina to act in permanent coordination with the biodiversity commission.

c) Alliances should be established in line with the principles defined within the Campaign.

d) After Brussels, Via Campesina should produce a document in which the principles of the campaign are clearly explained. The document should appear on Via Campesina's web page.

e) The book about seeds as patrimony of humanity coordinated by the MST should be postponed until Via Campesina completes the definitions and diffusion of Campaign principles, so that these principles can serve as a framework and guide for the reflections of those invited to collaborate, and not the opposite.

f) The Campaign is defined as a "permanent campaign" that combines actions with precise planning and orientation as a continual and long term process.