

Agroecology Meeting in Ghana from the 5th to the 11th of September, 2011

Tuesday 13 September 2011, by [Via Campesina \(Africa 1\)](#) (Date first published: 12 September 2011).

The strength of La VIA CAMPESINA is the richness of knowledge, convictions and visions of the peasant and small-scale farming world. In the framework of food sovereignty which La VIA CAMPESINA has developed since 1996, agroecology is a key alternative to the neo-liberalism system that is destroy the smallholder farmer's way of life, even though for centuries peasant farmers have fed the world, continue to do so today, and will in the future.

The alternative of agroecological peasant farming has been supported by a number of United Nations bodies like the FAO and by Olivier de Shutter, the UN Special Reporter on the Right to Food. In fact, the main cause of hunger today, and of the impoverished of small-holder farmers, is the industrial farming system promoted by a handful of corporations and financial speculators. This dominant model is destroying the land, impoverishing farmers, and failing to adequately feed the world. The number of people suffering from hunger keeps growing even though there is sufficient food and even wasted and spoiled food. It is access to food that is causing problems, due to private sector speculation with food inventories that place food prices beyond the reach of poor consumers.

We are struggling on our farms day in and day out from to build a different and better food system, based on ecological farming practices that value our traditional knowledge, protect our natural environment and our communities. This is called Agroecology. We know that small scale family farming is the key to fighting hunger in the framework of food sovereignty, and to cooling the planet. For these reasons reason, agriculture policies must be put into place that help to stop land grabbing and guarantee access for peasant farmers to land, water, local seeds and other natural resources, of which the biodiversity is crucial, as well as strengthened local food markets that guarantee both a fair price to consumers and a decent standard of living to farmers, for a life with dignity.

Agroecology is a practice based on respect for life and the Earth, as we are all living in an ecological system that we must keep in equilibrium. By recovering our autonomy as farmers and by using practices in harmony with nature, we can reconstruct peasant dignity based on feeding ourselves and on our historic task of feeding our people and our nations.

Many meetings on agroecology have already been held within la Via Campesina, in Latin America, Asia and also in the Africa region 1. Today, it is the farmer organizations of the Africa region 2 that are in Ghana and the meeting is hosted by ECASARD. Representatives from Congo Brazzaville, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo have come together to exchange and strengthen the network in order to become a force in the region.

Our farmer organizations will develop agroecology resource and training centers to share and learn from our collective know-how and innovations.

When we visited an « ECASARD » office, located on an organic farm, we found out witnessed an agroecology farming program (AFOPAB) which incorporates more than 400 local farmers in and around Techiman. This is an organization that is experimenting with practices of agroecology in its training center, such as composting, water management, preservation of local seed varieties and

innovation in seed selection, organic soil management, intercropping, etc. The successful experiences are disseminated among the members, with a strong emphasis on young people. This offers local farmers the means to practice agroecology and sustainable farming which preserves the environment and health, as well as generating employment and sustaining life in the region.

This type of successful local experience will be multiplied in the Region 2 of Africa by our organizations, based on the action plan that we are developing at this meeting.

La Via Campesina Africa 2 Region

P.S.

* More on www.viacampesina.org