

La Via Campesina Call to Action

# **17 April 2010 - Join the International Day of Peasant Struggle: Say 'No!' to Corporate Control of Agriculture and Food!**

Tuesday 23 February 2010, by [La Via Campesina](#) (Date first published: 23 February 2010).

To commemorate the International Day of Peasant Struggle on April 17<sup>th</sup> 2010, the international peasant movement La Via Campesina calls upon member organisations, allies and supporters to unite against transnational corporations (TNCs), which seek complete control over food and agriculture systems around the world.

On April 17<sup>th</sup> 1996, nineteen landless Brazilian peasants who were defending their right to produce food by demanding access to land were massacred by the military police. Since the massacre at El Dorado dos Carajás, every year on this date actions are organised around the world by farmers' organisations, communities, student groups, non-governmental organizations and activists, in order to demand food sovereignty and peasants' rights to produce food.

The year 2009 ended with three international summits: the Food and Agriculture Organization World Summit on Food Security in Rome, the World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference in Geneva and the United Nations' Climate Summit in Copenhagen. At each event, TNCs displayed their intention to control food and agriculture systems, markets, lands, seeds and water—indeed all of nature—worldwide. TNCs such as Monsanto Company, Cargill, Archer Daniels Midland and Nestlé deployed armies of lobbyists at these events to shape policies to their benefit.

For example, US-based Monsanto Company is lobbying to receive public subsidies for Roundup Ready soybeans, which are genetically-modified to resist glyphosate (sold by the corporation as Roundup), the most widely used herbicide in the world. Monsanto claims Roundup Ready soybeans reduce climate change because resistance to Roundup means the soybeans can be grown without ploughing the soil (which releases carbon dioxide), known as 'no tillage' or 'conservation tillage' agriculture. Monsanto argues that it should therefore be eligible for carbon credits from the Clean Development Mechanism of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change.

Yet the reality is that Monsanto and other TNCs are some of the primary contributors to climate change and other environmental crises, because they promote an unsustainable model of industrial agriculture.

Additionally, TNCs exacerbate poverty and economic recession, worldwide. As they consolidate their control over lands and agricultural markets, TNCs expel small farmers and peasants from their lands and reduce employment opportunities in rural areas, thereby swelling urban slums with even more desperate and unemployed families.

TNCs are making huge profits while hunger and poverty are on the rise. Thus, an offensive against TNCs is now a priority for La Via Campesina. Our movement envisions a world in which TNCs such as Monsanto, Cargill, Carrefour and Walmart, and their destruction of nature and humanity, will

cease to exist. To replace them will be billions of peasants on small and medium-sized farms, producing healthy food for local and regional markets, preserving biodiversity, protecting water aquifers, sequestering carbon and revitalizing rural economies.

To mark the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2010, La Via Campesina calls upon its members and allies to join forces and increase resistance against TNCs, and to amplify the voices and rights of peasants worldwide.

### **What can you do?**

- To raise awareness about the destruction being caused by TNCs, and the benefits of peasant agriculture, organise an event or action in your community, school, city or organization. Possible events might be a protest, public debate, direct action, film screening, farmers' market, heirloom seed exchange, song or picture contest;
  - Subscribe to La Via Campesina's 17<sup>th</sup> of April mailing list to stay informed about the actions being organised around the world, to receive our mobilisation kit, and to tell others about your plans.  
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  - Tell us what you are planning as early as possible to be included in the activities' list published on [www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org)
  - Send us pictures, articles and videos after the event at [viacampesina.org](http://viacampesina.org)
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