

Via Campesina

*International farmers movement
Movimiento campesino internacional
Mouvement paysan international*

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Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 24th of february 2004

Call for worldwide action on the 17th of april 2004 the International Day of Farmers' Struggle

WTO, Worldbank and transnationals out of agriculture and food!

In Cancun during the Ministerial Conference, peasants, indigenous, youth and other sectors organized strong mobilisations against neo-liberal policies and the WTO. We were able to stop the WTO in Cancun through strong actions in Cancun and other parts of the world. We successfully convinced certain governments to resist neo-liberal policies and to stop destructive international negotiations that provoke disintegration, increase impoverishment and misery in the rural areas. We have strengthened our strategic alliances.

We went through a very sad moment, the self-immolation of our friend Lee, in a deliberate act of despair, convinced that his sacrifice would contribute to strengthen our struggles and victories ; Lee was a person profoundly committed to the peasant cause.

The Via Campesina felt supported and inspired by the letter from the Zapatistas that we received in Cancun.

During the World Social Forum and the International Peasant Forum held in Mumbai, India, in January of this year we discussed strategies and plans of action with social movements in resistance and struggle against neo-liberal policies. We elaborated a common action agenda. The 17th of April, the International Day of Peasant Struggle is an important part of this common agenda. Therefore, we call everybody, worldwide, to action on this day.

We call to focus mobilisations on three key issues :

1) Demand for genuine agrarian reform and rejection of the land policies of the World Bank,

2) Demand for peasant-based sustainable agriculture for people and strong opposition to the control and dominance of transnational corporations, especially Nestl, and Monsanto,

3) Elaboration of policies focused on domestic production and consumption, and rejection of dumping practices and the liberalisation of markets imposed through policies of WTO, FTAA and other regional and bi-lateral free trade agreements.

We defend our peasant rights and we want our key demands to be taken into account at the national, regional and international levels. We demand :

- the implementation of the principles of peoples' food sovereignty ;
- genuine agrarian reform ;
- the maintenance and protection of seeds as a heritage of peasants men and women, and indigenous peoples ;
- a ban on the use of GMOs and patents and other forms of intellectual property rights on life forms ;
- full respect and participation of women, indigenous people, the f Dalits ,, and other marginalized and excluded groups in our societies ; We denounce at the international level the Human Rights violations against peasants and indigenous people. These days of struggle will be dedicated to our friends worldwide that are in prison or suffer persecution.
- Recognition, respect, and promulgation of Peasant Rights at the national and international levels.

Through our list-serve "viacam17april" and our web page we will circulate more information, and documents that can be used during the actions.

April 17th is the International Day of Farmers' Struggle. We hope that it will be a day of strong protest that will contribute to strengthen pressure on our governments for changes to current policies. Let's engage in a strong day of international struggle!

Let's globalise the struggle,
let's globalise hope!

INTERNATIONAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE
OF VIA CAMPESINA

If you want to receive all the information on the 17th of April please subscribe to the list by sending a blank message to viacam17april-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

)† The 17th of April is the celebration of the International Day of farmers struggle, established because of the massacre of 19 farmers of the Landless Movement (MST) in Brazil on the 17th of April 1996 during the second conference of Via Campesina in Tlaxcala Mexico.

For more information on the 17th of April and the positions of Via Campesina please contact the members of the International Co-ordinating Committee of Via Campesina in your region:

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