

# Women from around the world march for food sovereignty

7<sup>th</sup> International Meeting of the World March of Women

Thursday 6 November 2008, by [VIVAS Esther](#) (Date first published: 26 September 2008).

Around 150 women came from more than forty countries participated in the 7<sup>th</sup> International Meeting of the World March of Women that took place from October 14<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> in Panxón (Galicia). The meeting allowed to establish the lines of action for the organization's next two years, to strength its coordination across continents and to approve different strategic documents.

Among the meeting's main conclusions, of particular note was the organization of a global action towards peace and demilitarisation next October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010, in the Great Lakes region of Africa. In parallel, it plans to organize simultaneous local actions in the rest of the world. This initiative holds as its objective both to strengthen international solidarity and to more clearly envision the women's struggle. The action's theme was drawn from the meeting's conclusions which point out that "war impoverishes women, provokes violence against them, facilitates great powers appropriation of natural resources and sanctions rape as an arm of warfare".

## Fair and forum

The meeting of the World March of Women included a series of public activities that linked the work of feminism to the fight for food sovereignty. During the weekend, on October 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, Vigo hosted a forum and a fair for food sovereignty. Hundreds of people took part and the fair received the support and collaboration of various Galician collectives, such as the Sindicato Labrego Galego (Galician peasant union), NGOs, food cooperatives, fair trade shops and ecological groups.

Within the forum, women representing rural organizations and consumers from various countries indicated food sovereignty as a strategy capable of guaranteeing the people's control over food and agriculture policies, as well as their access to natural resources and food sources. Speakers pointed out the difficulties rural women currently face in their access to food production, agrarian exploitation, administrative guarantees, etc. As the ex-secretary of the Sindicato Labrego Galego, Lúdia Senra, affirmed: "It is necessary to vindicate the shared ownership and nature of agrarian exploitation, which typically, as exploitation of family, falls on man and woman, as such, doesn't have her right to produce guaranteed."

Various interventions all raised the issue of women's fundamental tasks in world food production: working lands, making foods, raising livestock, accessing water, etc. One must remember that 80% of food production in Southern countries falls on women, when paradoxically, together with children, women are most affected by hunger. Therefore, the director of the women's section of ALAI (Latin-American Information Agency), Irene León, stressed the fact that "women feed humanity, but we do not aim to continue doing so from a disadvantaged position". She also underlined capitalism's responsibility in this invisible usurpation of female labor: "Knowledge regarding food production, accumulated by women

over the centuries, has now been patented by multinational corporations”.

### **Street action**

Within the framework of the 7<sup>th</sup> international meeting, women from the march also took their struggle to the streets. Performances were staged in front of Vigo’s major supermarket, where they targeted the role of large-scale structures in rural impoverishment, irresponsible consumption and the growing insecurity of our food supply. Women waved violet flags and displayed banners and giant models of Danone, Coca-cola and Nestlé products, promoting an alternative model of food production, distribution and consumption.

Another highlight was the protest held on Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup>, with ten thousand people, principally women, lining Vigo’s streets. Some of the slogans heard most forcibly denounced ‘macho’ acts of violence and patriarchy, as well as many voices rallying both pro-choice and pro-food sovereignty. The protest ended with the intervention of women representatives from organizations in Africa, Latin America, Europe and Asia, who denounced the impact of a patriarchal and a capitalist system on women. As was affirmed by the chair of the International Secretariat of the Women’s March, Míriam Nobre, at the conclusion of the protest: “We are women fighting against the commodification of the world, against capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism, racism, and against all forms of oppression and exclusion”.

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### **P.S.**

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