

Feed the planet? - Via Campesina denounces the takeover of the World Expo by corporate interests

Saturday 30 May 2015, by [La Via Campesina](#) (Date first published: 27 May 2015).

(Zimbabwe, Harare, May 27th 2015) La Via Campesina (LVC), a worldwide movement representing millions of peasants, agricultural workers, indigenous villages and nomadic peoples, denounces the corporate takeover of the World Expo in Milan as well as the governmental complicity. The theme of the Expo is "Feed the planet; energy for life".

The Expo in Milan serves as a showcase for multinational businesses that control the world market of food, genetic material of animals and plant seeds, pesticides and chemical fertilizers. These businesses work constantly to privatize and commercialize the public commons including the water, land, forests, minerals and seeds. They transform food into a commodity and reject the fact that food is a human right. Food is treated as a commodity, produced on a large scale using a lot of pesticides and GMOs for people of limited economic means while healthy food is only within the financial grasp of the economic elite.

One highly visible company at the Expo is Coca-Cola. Aside from producing products with no nutritional value whatsoever, it is among others involved in killing Colombian trade unionists trying to protect water resources and labor rights [1]. McDonald's, known not only for their poor record on workers' rights and healthy food, also has a large presence at this Expo [2]. The Milan Expo clearly serves the interests of these companies in promoting their agro-industrial, elitist and capitalist model.

Most of the participating governments have spent millions of Euros of public money to build a forum to "sell" their technological products. It is a space to promote the false solutions to hunger and climate change, for example, the climate-smart agriculture, REDD programs pushed by the new G8 Alliance, AGRA and others.

Another contradiction is the fact that the Expo center was built in an area where farmland had previously existed, which is needed to assure fresh, healthy food for the urban population. [3]

The theme of the Expo demonstrates a cynical lack of understanding of the political problem that is world hunger.

The World Expo in Milan ignores the small-scale food producers who are responsible for growing 70% of food worldwide while creating employment without contaminating nature or exploiting their workers in the process. La Via Campesina denounces this vision pushed by the Expo and reaffirms that food sovereignty constitutes an alternative based on the people's right to ensure their livelihoods all while respecting the environment through agroecological practices that cool down the planet and provide healthy food in locally adapted food systems. LVC proposes a solution to the multiple crises that our societies are facing. LVC also urges a paradigm shift so that decisions about what people produce and eat, as well as how, where and for whom they do so are driven by the people who grow and consume said products and not by the corporate entities who sell them as

commodities.

La Via Campesina will participate in the People's Expo in Milan to propose real alternatives to the hopeless model suggested in the "official" Expo.

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Footnotes

[1] <http://www.cetim.ch/es/interventions/383/violaciones-de-derechos-humanos-por-parte-de-coca-cola-en-colombia>

[2] Terranuovaedizione.it

[3] http://www.altreconomia.it/site/fr_contenuto_detail.php?intId=4579