

La Via Campesina to UNDFE Midterm Forum: “We refuse to let this be the decade of the extinction of peasant farmers - systemic transformation must happen now, or never!”

Sunday 27 October 2024, by [La Via Campesina](#), [ODY Morgan](#) (Date first published: 16 October 2024).

This week, from the 14th to 18th October, La Via Campesina delegates are in Rome participating in the Global Family Farming Forum, an event on the *Midway of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028)*. Morgan Ody, the General Coordinator of La Via Campesina spoke during the opening ceremony about the international peasant movement’s main demands for Food Sovereignty and the urgency for systemic transformation. Below is Morgan’s intervention at the high-level opening ceremony of the Global Family Farming Forum plenary on “Family Farming at the heart of sustainable agrifood systems, challenges and opportunities” on the 15th of October.



Dear All

For La Via Campesina, the Decade of Family Farming has two main objectives:

- 1- **recognition of the indispensable role** of small-scale food producers, peasants, artisanal fishermen, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, and especially women and young people
- 2- **putting an end to all attacks on small-scale** food producers, so that we can all enjoy a dignified life, live in peace and have decent working conditions and remuneration.

Now that we’re halfway through the Decade, it’s time for an initial assessment.

On the first objective, we note that the Decade is a **useful instrument** for highlighting the fact that small-scale producers are essential not only for producing healthy food sufficient to feed the world’s populations, but also for cooling the planet and protecting biodiversity. This recognition was particularly clear during the COVID-19 epidemic.

However, with regard to the second objective, it has to be said that over the last five years, **attacks on peasant farmers and other small-scale producers have continued unabated**. Everywhere

on the planet, we are witnessing the multiplication of land grabs and forced evictions from our territories. Seeds are patented. Water is privatized. Our products are paid for below the cost of production. Our organizations are criminalized and repressed. Worse still, we see that, in wars and despite international law, hunger is used as a weapon of war.

In most countries, being a peasant means being poor, exploited and oppressed. Is it any wonder that young people are forced to leave the countryside, migrate to the cities or to other countries where they hope for a better future?

We have five years left. We refuse to let this be the decade of the extinction of peasant farmers, artisanal fishermen, indigenous peoples and pastoralists. We must react.

La Via Campesina proposes four major projects to meet this challenge.

1 - Place at the heart of national public policies and the work of the FAO, **the defense of human rights**, especially the Right to Food, the rights of Indigenous Peoples as recognized in the UNDRIP and the Rights of Peasants as recognized in the UNDROP, the respect of States' obligations under international conventions and treaties, such as the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD).

2 - Launch a new global process for **agrarian reform**, with ambitious policies for the redistribution of land, water and territorial use rights, placing young people and women at the heart of agrarian reform, and protecting the territories of Indigenous Peoples as total habitats where they can develop their culture and identity. At the same time, implement in a participatory manner the instruments available to the FAO, such as the Guidelines on Land Governance and those on Artisanal Fisheries. We call on governments and the FAO to organize a new International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.

3 - Replace the World Trade Organization and the Free Trade Agreements with a **new framework for international trade based on food sovereignty**, so as to ensure fair prices for both small-scale producers and consumers, and free food from speculation, competition by the lowest bidder and the monopolistic power of multinational corporations.

4 - Set up **dozens and hundreds of agroecology schools** in every country, so as to disseminate on a massive scale the knowledge and know-how of indigenous peoples, peasant farmers and artisanal fishermen on how to care for the Earth while producing healthy, abundant food.

These four major projects concern **public policies**. Unfortunately, in too many countries, public money is going to very large industrial operations rather than to small farmers. We note that, all too often, policies are designed to meet the demands of large multinational corporations rather than the general interest.

But don't you see our world collapsing? Scientists are warning that of the 9 planetary limits, 6 have already been exceeded. Wars are multiplying. The humanist values expressed in the United Nations Charter are being flouted with impunity.

We call on you to react. The peoples of the world are watching, and we will hold you responsible for better or worse. Our proposals are a reasonable way of preserving what is essential for humanity.

We have not lost hope that you will listen to us, and we are reaching out to you to work with you. But this systemic transformation must happen now, or never.

Morgan Ody, the General Coordinator of La Via Campesina

P.S.

• LVC. 17 October 2024:

<https://viacampesina.org/en/la-via-campesina-to-undff-midterm-forum-we-refuse-to-let-this-be-the-decade-of-the-extinction-of-peasants-farmers-systemic-transformation-mu/>