



*“Food sovereignty now!
Unity and struggle of the people”*

FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF LA VIA CAMPESINA

October 16th to 23rd, 2008 - Maputo, Mozambique

PRESS KIT

- 1 - Facts and figures about the Fifth International Conference
 - 2 - Participation and accreditation of journalists
 - 3 - The Fifth International Conference of La Via Campesina
 - 4 - Main topics
 - 5 - History of La Via Campesina
 - 6 - Some facts about Mozambique
 - 7 - Member organizations of La Via Campesina
- Appendixes

<p>International Operative Secretariat (IOS) Jl. Mampang Prapatan XIV No. 5 Jakarta Selatan DKI Jakarta Indonesia 12790 Tel : +62-21-7991890 Fax: +62-21-7993426 Email : viacampesina@viacampesina.org</p>	<p>UNAC (National Farmers' Union) Rua Valentim Siti, 39 R/C Maputo, Mozambique Tel : +258 21 306 737 Fax : +258 21 306 738 Email : unacexecutiva@tvcabo.co.mz</p>	<p>Regional office of La Via Campesina for Africa Rua Dr Jaime Ribeiro, n°104 Maputo, Mozambique Tel/Fax: +258 21 327 895 Email: vcafrica@gmail.com</p>
--	--	--

1. Facts and figures on the Fifth International Conference of La Via Campesina

Who are we?

La Via Campesina (www.viacampesina.org) is an international movement of peasants, small and medium-sized producers, landless men and women, indigenous people, rural youth, and agricultural workers. The movement is pluralist, multicultural, autonomous, and independent of any political or religious orientation.

It is 15 years old and arose in a context of political, social, and economic changes and in a context of affirmation of industrial agriculture that endangered the rights of small farmers.

It is a movement that unites organizations from the North and the South in defense of common objectives such as the rejection of the liberal and neoliberal models of rural development and the demand for inclusion in the process of developing agricultural policies. It also struggles for the recognition of food sovereignty as a right and for the right of peasants worldwide to have a dignified life. (For more detailed information, see “The History of La Via Campesina”, p.10.)

La Via Campesina has gained an ever-bigger space in the struggles for the rights of small- and medium-sized farmers. In little more than a decade, it has become one of the most active social movements on the international scene, making its presence known and its voice heard in defense of the rights of all peasants.

At the time of the last International Conference of La Via Campesina in 2004, the movement was made up of 149 organizations from 56 countries.

All the regions of the world are represented:

- Africa - member organizations in Mozambique, Mali, Senegal, Madagascar and South Africa;
- North America - member organizations in Canada, Mexico, and the United States;
- South America - member organizations in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, Paraguay;
- East and Southeast Asia - member organizations in Thailand, the Philippines, East Timor, South Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Japan;
- South Asia - member organizations in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and India;
- Central America - member organizations in El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama, Belize, Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua;
- Cuba and the Caribbean - member organizations in Cuba, Haiti, in the Windward Islands, and the Dominican Republic;
- Europe - member organizations in 15 countries through the European Coordination Via Campesina.

This list enumerates the countries represented before the incorporation of new members, which will take place in Mozambique on the occasion of the Fifth International Conference.

A new complete list of the members of La Via Campesina will be published at the closing of the Fifth Conference.

Our initiatives:

La Via Campesina has been present on the international scene through its participation in world events as well as through its promotion and organization of international meetings.

Some of the recent events at which La Via Campesina was present:

- World Trade Organization (WTO) Conferences: Cancun 2003, Hong Kong 2005, Geneva, 2008;
- International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICCARD) in Brazil in 2006;
- Mobilizations at the G8 Conference in Rostock (2007) and in Hokkaido (2008);
- Mobilizations at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Summit, 2008;
- Co-organization of the World Forum on Food Sovereignty, Nyeleni, February 2007;
- Mobilizations on Biodiversity (Convention on Biodiversity), in Curitiba in 2006 and in Bonn in 2008;
- International Treaty on Phytogenetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, 2007;
- Protests against Free Trade Agreements, Agreements on Economic Partnerships...

And many others...

The International Conferences of La Via Campesina:

- First International Conference of La Via Campesina, 1993, Belgium
- Second International Conference of La Via Campesina, 1996, Mexico
- Third International Conference of La Via Campesina, First Women's Assembly, 2000, India
- Fourth International Conference of La Via Campesina, Second Women's Assembly, First Assembly of Youth, 2004, Brazil

What is an International Conference of La Via Campesina?

Our International Conferences are a crucial moment in the organic life of La Via Campesina. In fact, the conferences are the major way we make decisions and are held every four years, bringing together men and women peasants and small farmers from all over the world.

Where will the Fifth Conference be held?

Central School of FRELIMO Party
Rua do IMAP
Talhão 540
C.P. 29
+258 21 781732
Matola - province of Maputo, Mozambique

The location where the conference will be held is approximately 10 km from the center of Maputo. A mini-bus will transport journalists from the hotel where the Communication Team will stay but it will also be possible to take a taxi from Maputo to Matola, a trip of approximately 30 minutes.

When?

From October 16th to 23rd, 2008

What are the main objectives of the Fifth International Conference?

- To strengthen La Via Campesina as an international movement of peasants and small producers for a greater representation;
- To build an alternative model of rural development;
- To define strategies and common action plans for the next four years;
- To analyze the international situation through the frame of the peasants' struggle;
- To analyze the impact of trade agreements, of the issue of biodiversity and seeds, of agrofuels, of climate changes and of the models for production on Food Sovereignty.

Who will come to Mozambique in October 2008?

- Five hundred men and women delegates, peasants and small farmers, members of more than 130 organizations that are active in more than 70 countries,
- Forty volunteer translators and interpreters from all over the world.

Structure of the Fifth Conference of La Via Campesina

Location

The Fifth Conference of La Via Campesina will take place in the Central School of the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) Party, in the city of Matola, around 30 minutes from Maputo.

The infrastructure available for the Conference includes: an auditorium for more than a thousand people, another auditorium for 300 and two other rooms that hold 80 and 25 people. There will be an exhibition space.

Besides these spaces, there will be two tents with a capacity of 100 and two tents that hold 50 people, allowing adequate space for work.

There is also a dining room. Internet access will be available in a room reserved for this purpose.

Food

Meals will be prepared on site. All the food for the meals of the conference participants will be produced by the farmers of Mozambique, members of UNAC, in a spirit of adhering to the values of Via Campesina.

Schedule of meetings

October 16 and 17: Second Assembly of the Youth of La Via Campesina

October 17 and 18: Third Worldwide Assembly of the Women of La Via Campesina

October 19, 20, 21: Fifth International Conference of La Via Campesina (admission reserved for members on the 19th and 20th)

October 22 and 23: Assembly of La Via Campesina International with its Allies.

2. Participation and accreditation of journalists

Accreditation of the media for the Fifth Conference

The Fifth Conference will be open to the media on October 21 (at noon), 22, and 23, 2008.

Journalists should be accredited ahead of time by the Media Team. Because of the lack of space and our busy schedule, we have to limit the number of accreditations. If you are interested, please fill out the form on the following page and we will get in touch with you!

In the meantime, interviews with participants can be organized by the Media and Communication Team.

For your convenience, we ask that accredited journalists find their own lodging in Maputo. However we will suggest a hotel from which we can organize daily transportation to and from the Fifth Conference (around 30 minutes by car).

Our budget does not allow us to cover journalists' expenses such as transportation to Maputo, lodging, and food.

Accreditation Form

Name:

Nationality:

Address:

E-mail:

Cell phone number:

Name of media organization:

Your position in this media organization (editor, free lance...):

Production expected from the conference (will write articles, publish photographs, produce videos?):

Main issues that you intend to cover during the conference:

Visits to farms/Field visits

During the course of the Conference there is the possibility of organizing visits to the countryside, mainly in the province of Maputo, for those who wish to get to know more closely the reality of family farming in Mozambique. These trips can be organized by La Via Campesina but must be charged to the journalists and press organs.

Would you be interested in joining a visit to a family farm to have contact with local farmers on October 24 and 25?

Please send this form to:

La Via Campesina International, Jakarta, Indonésia

Isabelle Delforge

Secretary of Communications,

La Via Campesina - International Secretariat:

Cell phone: +32 498522163

e-mail: idelforge@viacampesina.org

UNAC - National Peasants Union, Maputo, Mozambique

Fredson Guirramela Lopes Guilengue

Advocacy, Cooperation, and Communication

National Peasants Union - UNAC

Rua Valentim Siti, nº 39 R/C

Maputo, Mozambique

Telephone: +258-21-306737, Fax: +258-21-306738

Cell phone: +258-82 89 05 190

E-mail: fguilengue@gmail.com

3. The Fifth International Conference of La Via Campesina

For La Via Campesina, this international conference will be the third event of international importance on the African continent, following the World Social Forum in Nairobi (January 2007) and the International Forum on Food Sovereignty, in Nyéléni, in Mali (February 2007).

The International Conference of La Via Campesina is the highest level space for proposing and making decisions within the movement. It's here that all the key issues, positions, and policy orientations for the next four years are discussed and defined. It is also the space where the rules, mechanisms, and structures for participatory and democratic functioning are laid out. Before the International Conference itself, the Second International Assembly of Youth and the Third International Assembly of Women will be held.

According to the Movement's statutes, the International Conference must be held every four years: the last one took place in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in June 2004. There it was decided that the Fifth International Conference would be held in 2008 in Maputo, Mozambique, under the coordination of UNAC, one of the five current members of La Via Campesina in Africa and a member of the International Coordinating Committee.

Goals of the Fifth International Conference

The main goal of the Conference is to strengthen La Via Campesina as an international movement of peasants and small producers so that it can better defend the interests of rural communities throughout the world. The goal will also be to effectively build an alternative model of rural development based on strengthening its members' decision-making processes and structures so that they are inclusive, participatory, and democratic.

The strengthening of La Via Campesina as the largest international social movement encompasses, among other things: analyses by the whole group of international and regional political situations, the development of strategies regarding governments and international institutions, drawing up of strategies in relation to transnational corporations, carrying out of a strategic action plan, strengthening of alliances with other urban and rural social movements, integration of new member organizations, strengthening of the participation of women and of youth, etc.

The schedule for the Fifth Conference

For eight days, from October 16 to 23, 2008, 500 representatives of peasant organizations that are members of La Via Campesina from all over the world, men, women, and young people will be gathered in the outskirts of Maputo.

October 16 and 17 : Second Worldwide Assembly of Youth of La Via Campesina

October 17 and 18: Third Worldwide Assembly of Women of La Via Campesina

October 19 and 20: Fifth International Conference of La Via Campesina (entry reserved for members only on the 19th and 20th)

October 22 and 23: Assembly of La Via Campesina International with its Allies

Site where meetings will be held:

Central School of the FRELIMO Party

Matola, District of Maputo, Mozambique

Putting into practice the people's right to Food Sovereignty

La Via Campesina promotes the idea of “food sovereignty” as an answer to the concept of food security that created more hunger in the world and more poverty among farm families. Food sovereignty is an alternative concept that supports the people in their struggle against neoliberal and liberal policies such as those that are imposed by the international financial institutions, the WTO, and the transnational agribusiness corporations through free trade and the liberalization of agriculture.

Food sovereignty is a people's right to nutritional and culturally appropriate foods that are accessible, produced in a sustainable and ecological way and their right to decide on their own food and production system. This concept places those who produce, distribute, and consume foods at the heart of the systems and food policies above the demands of the markets and corporations. It offers us a strategy to resist and dismantle free and corporate trade and the current food regime and to orient food, farm, grazing, and artisanal fishing systems to prioritize local economies and local and national markets. It grants power to peasants and family farmers, to artisanal fishermen and to traditional shepherds, and places food production, distribution, and consumption on the bases of sustainability of the social and economic environment. Food sovereignty ensures that the rights to access and manage our land, our territories, our water, our seeds, our animals and biodiversity are in the hands of those who produce food. Food sovereignty assumes new social relations, free of oppression and inequality between men and women, racial groups, social classes and generations.

Landless people, peasants, and small farmers must have access to land, water, seeds, and productive resources such as adequate public services. Food sovereignty and sustainability must be the top priority for trade policies.

In this spirit, the peasant members of UNAC will supply all the food needed for the eight days of conferences and meetings, wanting to show that despite conditions that may not always be easy or favorable, it can be done.

4. Principal topics to be discussed during the Conference

Besides defining the strategies and the plan of action for the next four years and voting on the international headquarters and the admission of new members, the Conference will deal with various topics that have an important impact on peasant agriculture:

- **The daily struggle to survive as a peasant:** analysis of the situation of peasant agriculture in various parts of the world and the difficulties that are encountered. Testimonies.
- **Transnational corporations:** the recent world situation has shown that food sovereignty, mainly of the poorest countries, is far from being a given fact. How to explain that many of the countries experiencing difficulties are importers of such a basic commodity as food and that their populations, already so vulnerable, dedicate 60% of their income to eat? However, international agencies, instead of analyzing the causes that would lead to the food crisis with a goal of implementing long-term solutions, make proposals that appear to be along the same line that caused the problem: more liberalization...

Food is too important a topic to be left in the hands of agribusiness. The commodities that constitute a basic need cannot be the fruit of speculation or handled merely as a business matter.

- **Trade agreements, the WTO and food sovereignty:** The crisis that has marked the last few months, provoking a sharp rise in the prices of foodstuffs, protests in the cities of various countries of the world, and speculation is the result of more than three decades of neoliberal and liberal policies. The latest FAO summit, whose theme was the Food Crisis, was particularly worrisome when, instead of pointing to a change in direction, announced the continuation of liberalization of trade, which can only bring a worsening of the problem and increase the dependency of the importing countries.
- **Seeds and biodiversity for food sovereignty:** The development of genetically-modified seeds throughout the world (with Latin America becoming the preferred market, given the resistance in Europe) and the proliferation of projects for a “new” Green Revolution in Africa, the growing power of the multinational corporations represents a serious danger for biodiversity, traditional preservation of seeds. and the independence of small farmers.
- **Territories vs climate changes and agro-fuels:** The industrialized countries launched themselves into the promotion of large-scale production of non-fossil-based energy. However, contrary to what is stated by those advocating agrofuels, it is not proven that these reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, thus reducing the factors that cause climate change. In fact, the energy surplus from the whole production chain of these fuels is negative (that is to say, they consume more energy in their production than what they end up furnishing). Besides this, the agrofuels will lead to the exploitation of the developing countries, worsening the situation of the small farmers whose lands will be plundered to provide space for monoculture. Finally, the agrofuels will have a negative impact on the environment: deforestation, spoilage of water resources, soil degradation...
- **Production models:** La Via Campesina upholds a sustainable production model that respects the land and the men and women peasants, their customs, and the foods of each region...Such a model implies that production and trade are local and therefore is in complete contradiction to the intensive liberal and neoliberal model.

5. Historical overview of La Via Campesina

by Annette Aurélie Desmarais

La Vía Campesina emerged in a particular economic, political and social context that was undermining the ability of peasants around the world to maintain control over land and seeds.

It emerged during a time when a particular model of rural development was altering rural landscapes, threatening to make local knowledge irrelevant and denigrating rural cultures. Key elements in this phenomenon were the encroaching globalization of a modern industrial model of agriculture, on the one hand, and the search for an alternative approach among those most harmed by the epidemic of dislocation left in its wake.

In May 1993 at a conference held in Mons, Belgium, forty-six representatives (men and women) of organizations of peasants, small farmers, indigenous peoples and farm workers from various regions formally created La Via Campesina. But, the roots of La Via Campesina stretch way back. Throughout the 1980s the founding members of La Via Campesina participated in dialogue and exchanges with counterparts within their regions and internationally. This eventually led to the creation of regional movements like the CPE in Europe as well as ASOCODE and the CLOC in Latin America.

The dialogue and exchanges also led to the signing of the Managua Declaration signed by representatives of eight farm organizations from Central America, the Caribbean, Europe, Canada and the United States who had gathered to participate in the Second Congress of the Unión Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos held in Managua, Nicaragua in 1992.

La Vía Campesina formed in the North and south around common objectives: an explicit rejection of the neo-liberal model of rural development, an outright refusal to be excluded from agricultural policy development and a fierce determination not to be “disappeared” and a commitment to work together to empower a peasant voice. Through its strategy of “building unity within diversity” and its concept of food sovereignty, peasant and farmers’ organizations around the world are working together to ensure the well-being of rural communities.

The goal of La Via Campesina is to bring about change in the countryside - change that improves livelihoods, enhances local food production for local consumption, and opens up democratic spaces change that empowers the people of the land with a great role, position, and stake in decision-making on issues that have an impact on their lives. The movement believes that this kind of change can occur only when local communities gain greater access to and control over local productive resources, and gain more social and political power.

Since the signing of the Uruguay Round of the GATT in 1994 representatives of rural organizations from the North, South, East and West organized in La Via Campesina have walked together in the streets of Geneva, Paris, Seattle, Washington, Québec, Rome, Bangalore, Porto Alegre, Cancun and Hong Kong, among other cities. Whenever and wherever international institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO), World Bank, and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) meet to discuss agricultural and food issues, the Vía Campesina is now there. La Via Campesina is also there in local communities when peasants and farming families in locales as diverse as Honduras, Mexico, Brazil, Guatemala, Indonesia, Europe or Canada are resisting the spread of genetically-modified seeds or are being evicted from their land to facilitate urban sprawl, the development of golf courses, intensive shrimp farms, large pig barns or plantations of eucalyptus.

For many this is all very surprising. For over a hundred years those who thought they knew what was happening in the countryside around the world have predicted the disappearance of the peasantry. Surely, by now they should all be gone! Instead, integrated into La Via Campesina peasants are turning up everywhere, a troublesome and discordant voice in the chorus extolling the praises of globalization.

La Vía Campesina presence has not gone unnoticed. Wearing dark green caps, pañuelos, white t-shirts and waving green flags embossed with its brightly colored logo while energetically chanting slogans, the Vía Campesina has become an increasingly visible and vocal voice of radical opposition to the globalization of a neoliberal and corporate model of agriculture.

This resistance took an extreme turn on September 10, 2003 -the first day of the Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the WTO held in Cancún, Mexico - with the tragic death of the Korean farm leader, Lee Kyung Hae. Lee, along with another 120 Koreans had joined the Vía Campesina delegation in Cancún in efforts to get the WTO out of agriculture. Wearing a sign -- “WTO kills farmers” -- Lee walked up to the high wire fence that had been build to “protect” trade negotiators from protestors and stabbed himself to death. This ultimate and tragic act of resistance symbolized what La Via Campesina had been saying all along: liberalization of agriculture is a war on peasants, it decimates rural communities and destroys farming families. Lee’s desperate cry for change subsequently helped strengthen the Vía Campesina as it has since declared September 10th an International Day of Protest Against the WTO. On that day, organizations in many countries mobilize for food sovereignty. Clearly, Lee’s death has not been in vain.

The growing visibility of La Via Campesina as a key social actor, strongly rooted in local communities while at the same time being increasingly engaged and more skillful in the international stage, has attracted the attention of many rural organizations in search of alternatives. Between 2000 and 2004 the movement grew by over forty-one percent. During the movement’s Fourth International Conference held in Itaici, Brazil in June 2004, forty-two organizations joined La Via Campesina.

La Via Campesina now includes 149 organizations from fifty-six countries. Much of La Via Campesina’s success is due to the fact that it is balancing - with great care and effort - the diverse interests of its membership as it openly deals with issues such as gender, race, class, culture and North/South relations, which could potentially cause divisions. According to La Via Campesina the conflict is not between farmers of the North and peasants in the South. Rather, the struggle is over two competing - and in many ways diametrically opposed - models of social and economic development. On the one hand, a globalized, neoliberal, corporate-driven model where agriculture is seen exclusively as a profit-making venture and productive resources are increasingly concentrated into the hands of agro-industry. La Via Campesina, on the other hand, envisions a very different, more human, rural world, a world based on food sovereignty. Here, agriculture is peasant-driven, based on peasant production, uses local resources and is geared to domestic markets. In this model agriculture plays an important social function while at the same time being economically viable and ecologically sustainable.

The formation and consolidation of La Via Campesina is living proof that peasant and farm families have not been compliant accomplices during this process of economic restructuring, nor have they been passive victims in the face of increasing poverty and marginalization. Instead, they are actively resisting the globalization of a corporate model of agriculture. Indeed, peasants and farmers are using three traditional weapons of the weak - organization, co-operation and community - to redefine ‘development’ and build an alternative model of agriculture based on the principles of social justice, ecological sustainability and respect for peasant cultures and peasant economies. This involves building viable alternatives ranging from small agricultural cooperatives, local seed banks, fair trade ventures to reclaiming traditional farming practices. It also means linking these efforts beyond the local by working at the national, regional and international levels.

In forming La Via Campesina, peasant organizations effectively internationalized and succeeded in carving out a space in the international arena. La Via Campesina is filling that space with peasant voices, articulating peasant demands and peasant alternatives in efforts to resist the imposition of a corporate model of agriculture. The solidarity and unity experienced with La Via Campesina yield perhaps the most precious gift of all, hope. Hope that ‘another’ agriculture is possible. Indeed, La Via Campesina enables us to imagine that change is possible and that an alternative project is being created. This is clearly captured in La Via Campesina’s slogan “Globalize the Struggle - Globalize Hope.”

Commemorative Dates:

La Via Campesina has two important dates, the occasion of diverse manifestations throughout the world, serving as instruments to globalise the struggle:

- **17 of April - The International Day of Peasants Struggle:** this date marks and pays

homage to the death of 19 peasants in Brazil (in Eldorado de Carajás) on the 17th of April 1996, during a manifestation in favour of agrarian reform.

-
- **10 of September - The International Day of Struggle against the World Trade Organisation (WTO):** On the 10th of September 2003, Mr Lee Kyun Hae, a Korean peasant emulated himself during the manifestations against the WTO in Cancun, Mexico. In the placard he was carrying one could read: “The World Trade Organisation kills the farmers”.

6. Some facts about Mozambique

<http://www.african.gu.se/aa/pdfs/aa01006.pdf>



Mozambique is an African state situated on the east coast of Southern Africa. It is surrounded by various countries: South Africa and Swaziland in the South, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi in the West and Tanzania in the North. The country has a coast more than 2000 km along the Indian Ocean. Maputo is the capital city.

The climate varies from South to North, going from subtropical to tropical and humid.

The surface of the country is 799.380 km² and it has a population of 20 069 738 inhabitants, according to the 2007 census.

Administratively Mozambique has 11 provinces, and each province is subdivided into districts and administrative posts.

It is a former Portuguese colony and Portuguese is the official language, even though the Bantu languages are widely used and only 6% of the population has Portuguese as its maternal language (1997 census).

Mozambique has a wide ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity: as an example, the South of the country is characterised by patrilineal societies whereas in the North matrilineal societies are dominant and Initiation Rites are

practiced. As far as national languages are concerned, it is difficult to obtain consensus on their relative numbers, but according to some sources they exceed 40. The difficulty in quantifying with certainty the number of languages spoken in the country is due to the fact that there are numerous regional variations within the main linguistic groups... The linguistic divisions reflect ethnic divisions; we can mention some of the language families: Macua, Nyanja and Sena in the North, Shona in the centre and Tsonga-Changana in the South. However this division is often considered reductionist. Although somehow a little simplistically we can assert that the Mozambican population is made up of 46.1% Macuas, 53% Tsongas, Malavis and Chonas and 0.9% others.

This diversity is also reflected at religious level: in the 1997 census, 24.2% of those interviewed identified themselves as Catholics; 24.25% declared they had no religious affiliation; 18.7% practiced Zionism; 17.8% were Muslim; 11.45% stated they practiced "other religions, non-Catholic" and 3.6% reported themselves as "other". Nevertheless, according to other sources, Animism could account for 40 % of the population.

Literacy rates amongst adults, according to 2005 data, is 38,5%, and the rate of primary school education has increased in the last few years as a result of the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programmes (65%), although the rates of secondary school education remaining very low (7%).

Mozambique is characterised by a predominance of a rural population, that is poor and illiterate, and whose subsistence depends on agriculture. As a result of the unequal wealth distribution, generalised corruption, the exclusion of peasants from the process of defining social and economic policies, and the absence of initiatives to promote local development, this part of the population is increasingly marginalized.

More data...

Population Density - 18.6

Birth Rate - 46.1

Mortality Rate - 18.5

Population growth rate - 0.9 (1985/90)

Urban population - 30%

Population younger than 15 years of age - 44%

Population older than 65 years of age - 3,2%

Female Population - 51.3%



An overview of Mozambique: from independence till now

Mozambique¹ was a victim of Portuguese colonial domination and exploitation during approximately 500 years. This ended thanks to the armed insurrection against the Portuguese colonial regime (1964 - 1974) carried out by a national liberation movement based on an alliance between peasants and nationalist intellectuals. The objectives of the armed insurrection were to liberate men/women and the land from colonial subjugation. These objectives were achieved with the declaration of national independence on 25 June 1975, which resulted in the dismantling of the colonial system and the consequent nationalisation of private property (land, buildings, means of production) in favour national interests. The period that followed independence was characterised by the exercise of popular power, where all the people, men and women, had a role to play in the building of the new society free from colonial domination. The dream of the young nation was to guarantee equality of opportunities to all Mozambicans, developing an economy that served the people, in which workers and peasants assumed an uppermost role.

The pressure exercised (military attacks) by the regime of Ian Smith in Rhodesia (actual Zimbabwe) and by the apartheid regime in South Africa against Mozambicans during the 1970s and 1980s, together with the civil war that started immediately after independence, weakened the country economically. These acts were carried out by capital in the name of its struggle against communism. In truth, it was the reaction of the exploitative capitalist class against the insurrection by the people who, tired and indignant with the violation of legitimate human rights, rose to put an end to this crime against humanity. The commitment of the Mozambican people to continue fighting the Rhodesian and apartheid regimes did not fade away. As a result both these regimes came to an end and Mozambique made its contribution.

The economic crisis that battered the people, led the Government to turn to the West in search of a solution to end the crisis in the country. The reply was the invitation for Mozambique to join the Bretton Woods Institutions to gain access to financing. In 1987 Mozambique received the first loan from the World Bank, an institution that a few years before had given considerable loans to the apartheid regime, against the will of the United Nations. That first loan was the first sign of the reinstatement of capitalism in Mozambique. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) imposed the PER (Programme for Economic Rehabilitation) and a myriad of reforms that included privatisation or extinction of state enterprises, of public banks, basic services (health and education), agricultural extension services, institutions for supply management and led to a weakening of the state capacity to provide services to the population. Today the country continues to implement strategies devised by the World Bank (e.g.: PRSP- Poverty Reduction Strategies,

Market Liberalisation). These reforms have led to the resurgence of a rich minority class in face of the increasing impoverishment of the people. The new class of the rich is, today, made of some of those that one day, dreamed of a society with social justice.

After nearly 20 years of dependency in relation to the Bretton Woods Institutions and funders, the country still receives from these institutions approximately 60% of funds towards its Overall State Budget (Orçamento Geral do Estado), thus slowly increasing its external debt and it continues to import the majority of basic products for the country's needs. The country stopped investing in agriculture (the most important sector in the national economy) at the end of the 1980s and the majority of services that the State rendered at the time to the peasants/small producers were privatised or shut down. Despite pressure from funders and the World Bank, the State managed to resist the privatisation of land, but nevertheless one witnesses numerous violations of the Land Law (Lei de Terras - a Law approved with the active participation of the farmers) carried out by the national and foreign bourgeoisies for speculation, tourism and commercial agriculture, in front of the indifferent and serene gaze of the authorities, and sometimes even with their complicity. At the moment the country is experiencing pressure from European and American investors for the production of agro-fuels. Approximately 1/8 of the national territory will probably be used for the production of feedstock (ethanol and bio-diesel). Mozambique is essentially rural with more than 70% of the population living and working in rural areas. Today, peasants and their families play a fundamental role in the production of health food supplies, and in the protection of biodiversity. This role is being threatened by the mad rush towards agro-fuels, promoted by multinational enterprises. The appeal to the green revolution - conducted by AGRA (Alliance for the Green Revolution in Africa), with the perspective of using large scale irrigation, agro-chemicals and modified seeds - as a panacea to end hunger in the country, presents itself as a dangerous threat to seed diversity and forms of cultivation that are environmentally and humanly sound. UNAC, the National Peasants Union, which amalgamates various peasant associations throughout the country, has pointed out to the Government and society in general the need to promote food sovereignty as an alternative to the neo-liberal capitalist model.

7. The member organisations of the Via Campesina

Via Campesina is constituted by 149 organisations from 56 countries.

At its 4th International Conference, Via Campesina had 149 member organisations from 56 countries from the different continents: Asia (East, Southeast and South), Africa, North America, Central America Central and South America, Caribbean and Europe.

A detailed list of the member-organisations of the Via Campesina is available on the Internet:http://www.viacampesina.org/main_en/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=60

Maputo, July 2008.

ANEXES



History, vision and mission of UNAC, União Nacional de Camponeses (National Peasants Union)

UNAC (União Nacional de Camponeses) is a non-profit movement of peasants in the family sector in Mozambique. It is constituted by agro-cattle producers who may or may not be organised in associations, co-operatives and mutual aid groups, and it operates throughout the country.

UNAC was established in April 1987, when in view of the prevailing socio-economic conditions and in the context of the implementation of the Programme for Economic Recovery, small and medium scale agricultural producers felt the need to create a national association capable of representing them and defend their rights. Producers organised in agro-cattle associations and co-operatives established, at the time, the *Núcleo de Apoio às Cooperativas do País* (Centre for Support of Cooperatives in the Country) that functioned since then, until the UNAC's Constituent General-Assembly was held in April 1993, when its Statutes and Programmes were approved. UNAC was juridically recognised in 1994.

UNAC has more than 65 000 members, organised in 58 unions e 1243 associations e co-operatives, besides its individual members.

Mission and strategic objectives of UNAC

UNAC struggles for a greater participation of peasants in the building of a more just, prosperous and solidarity-based society, and for the defence of their rights. It promotes the autonomous organisation of producers and food sovereignty and it tries to carry the voices of the peasantry to government, so as to influence agricultural policies.

OBJECTIVE 1:

"Promote and amplify (qualitatively and quantitatively) the autonomous organisation of peasants (women, men and youth), towards a dynamic strengthening of communities".

OBJECTIVE 2:

"Intensify actions that contribute towards guarantying the Food Sovereignty of the peasant families".

OBJECTIVE 3:

"Increasingly be the representative and audible voice that defends the social, economic and political interests of peasant men and women, so as to achieve sustainable development".

OBJECTIVE 4:

"Increase its capacity as a movement, to actively respond to grassroots challenges".

Areas of work of UNAC:

- Strengthening rural communities
- Land
- Commercialisation
- Participatory rural extension
- Peasants political voice
- Food sovereignty
- HIV/AIDS

- Gender

UNAC's achievements

Throughout its existence UNAC has, amongst other activities related to the defence of peasants rights, promoted rural associations; technical and administrative training; the elaboration and implementation of rural development projects/programmes and actions to mitigate the effects of calamities; etc.

Besides, UNAC made a valuable contribution to the elaboration of the current Lei da Terra (Land Law) and through its efforts, integrity and transparency it gained credibility in the eyes of Government institutions and co-operating national and international partners.

Today UNAC has a profile within the Countries that have Portuguese as the Official Language (*Países de Língua Oficial Portuguesa*) and at international level, through its membership of the Via Campesina.

UNAC's gender strategies

One of the fundamental areas of work of UNAC is to actively promote the capacities and participation of women in all sectors and at all levels within the organisation. Towards this goal, the following initiatives were planned:

- Specific capacity building for women's training.
- Plan courses that allow women's participation.
- Facilitate women's participation in internal and external events.
- Facilitate the application of acquired knowledge within their communities through supervision and different evaluation mechanisms.
- Increase women's motivation to actively participate in building capacities and opportunities, through supervision and evaluation.
- Facilitate women's integration in the decision-making processes of the movement.

UNAC and the Via Campesina

UNAC had its first contacts with the Via Campesina in 1997 through a visit by the MST (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem-Terra, Brazil) to Mozambique. Officially UNAC became part of the Via Campesina in 2004, when the Via Campesina - Africa region was established, whose secretariat headquarters were set up in Maputo (Mozambique). UNAC is one of the organizations that coordinate the movement in the African continent together with CNOP (Coordenação Nacional das Organizações Camponesas - National Co-ordination of Peasant Organisations) from Mali, and Diamantino Nhampossa from UNAC is the (male) representative from Africa in the International Coordinating Committee.

Relations between UNAC and local, national, regional and international organisations

At **national level**, UNAC is a member of several networks and forums of civil society that struggle for greater participation in decision-making processes:

- FÓRUM MULHER (Woman's Forum): brings together organisations that defend the equality of men and women and equality of opportunities.
- GRUPO MOÇAMBICANO DA DÍVIDA (Mozambican Group on Debt): a group that was prominent in the struggle for cancellation of external debt and that now focuses on the supervision and evaluation of public plans. Currently UNAC is a member of the Board of this group.
- FÓRUM SOCIAL MOÇAMBICANO (Mozambican Social Forum): since 2002, after its

participation in the World Social Forum, UNAC joined forces with other organisations to divulge the principles and positions of the WSF, especially in issues that are of relevance to the country. Currently UNAC is a member of the Coordination Group of the Mozambican Social Forum, whose first edition was celebrated in October 2006.

- GRUPO DAS ORGANIZAÇÕES DA SOCIEDADE CIVIL QUE SUPERVISIONAM A POBREZA - G20 (Group of Civil Society Organisations that Supervise Poverty- G20) : answering the call made by civil society, the government established the Observatório da Pobreza (Poverty Observatory). This is an official forum where government, funders, and society sit together at the same level, to evaluate the performance of all in the struggle against poverty through the supervision of the implementation of PARPA (Plano de Acção para a Redução da Pobreza Absoluta- Plan of Action for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty). Civil society has 20 representatives in this forum and UNAC participates in the representation of male and female peasants. UNAC is a member of the Coordinating Group. The G20 is the National Platform of the Mozambican civil society for participation in the Poverty Observatory. It was constituted by 20 members representing associations, foundations, religious orders, trade unions, the private sector, NGO networks, specialised NGOs, technical and professional organisations, and academic and research institutions. Its objective is to facilitate the participation of civil society in the Poverty Observatory, facilitate the commitment of civil society organisations in the analysis and the debate on development policies, especially in the process of elaboration of PARPA, as well as its implementation, supervision and evaluation, and contribute towards capacity building in matters of policy and negotiations with state powers, with the objective of ensuring that the voice of the poorest is heard during decision-making processes.

UNAC works with several services provided by the Ministry of Agriculture of Mozambique, in which it tries to propose food sovereignty as an alternative to improve family sector agriculture. It participates in the management of some rural development programmes, together with PAMA (Programa de Apoio aos Mercados Agrícolas- Programme for Support of Agricultural Markets) and FARE (Fundo de Apoio à Reabilitação Económica- Fund for Support for Economic Recovery).

At international level UNAC is a member of the Via Campesina and of the Organização das Cooperativas dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (OCPLP- Organisation of the Cooperatives of Portuguese Speaking Countries).