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Women

# Women Farmers Share Their Visions

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**Lidia, Waheba, Nandini, Ilona y Ana Paula are women farmers from Paraguay, Palestine, Norway, India, and Mozambique. On the occasion of the 4th Women's Assembly of La VÃ-a Campesina, These women have gathered in Jakarta, Indonesia, to give voice to the situations faced by women in their respective countries. Although they live very different realities and contexts, these women share a common struggle: the struggle for the rights of women farmers and farmworkers and the defense of women as the mothers of food sovereignty.**

**“Since the 1990s, we women farmers have been resisting the major offensive of liberalism”.**

In our continent, the decades of the the 60s, 70s, and 80s were marked by dictatorships that perpetrated violence and repression that greatly impacted women. It is precisely those women who were impacted who became the primary organizers of the struggle for democratic processes. Since the 1990s, women farmers have been resisting the major offensive of liberalism, that has been promoted in particular by the policies of North American imperialism. Only when fighting towards an end to the repression of one gender over another will we be able to achieve a more just and egalitarian society. It is necessary to defeat capitalism and transnationals in order to end the conquest of women farmers and afro-descendents. (LÃ-dia Ruiz, Paraguay. (Via Campesina South America).

“In Palestine, women are strong and clever and fight for their survival”.

Palestine is a hysterical and very religious country and it is packed with historic sites. We have a good climate and we produce olives, wheat, fruits and vegetables of all kinds. The Palestinian people love their land and freedom. Yet, the country is currently victim of an occupation; the Israeli Occupation. Every day, we experience armed confrontations that decimate our lands , orchards, and trees, with bombs and rockets. This is a very serious situation, but call fro the recognition of our our right to national sovereignty as a people..In Palestine, a woman is strong and clever, since often she has a brother, father or son who has been imprisoned, and she has to take care of the children, cultivate the land and fight for her survival. I affirm that to solve the problems of the world, women have to work together. Waheba Shamali, Palestine.

“The only things governments do is to apply antiquated policies under a purely masculine point of view”. We are few men and women farmers in Norway. The majority of the population goes to cities to work and the government imports products from impoverished countries. What we wish to do, is to produce food in Norway and achieve food sovereignty – also for the other European countries. Violence is not only physical and sexual; a very common form of violence is psychological and social, - in our homes and in the public sphere. Women are marginalized from decision-making bodies and the governments only create implement policies with a purely masculine point of view. Ilona Drivdal, Norway (European Coordination VÃ-a Campesina).

**“We must teach men to treat women as human beings”.**

In India, violence against women begin the day a female child is is born; in rural areas a boy is considered active whereas a girls are passive; a girl is considered a burden, especially due to the obligations involved with the need to

produce a dowry in order to guarantee an arranged marriage and with traditional wedding expenses. As a result, we have high rates of abortions of female fetuses; abortions decided based on the gender of the baby. In rural areas, girls begin to work when they are six years old and they work until they are 66 years old. Domestic violence is very common, so common that a woman with a high tolerance for violence is even respected by other women. This all brings along health problems among women in India. Not only do we need to teach women in the countryside, we especially need to teach men to treat women as human beings. Nandini Singadowda, India

## **“In Mozambique, women are a bargaining chip.”**

In Mozambique they teach us to protect the men, and despite the fact the we produce the food for our families, we do not have any decision-making power. There is no balance, no equality or parity; only men occupy bodies of power. We get married young so that our parents can have more money since they are paid once we get married; we are a bargaining chip; that is why we always get married. It is imperative to raise awareness among women about the importance of literacy, to train and teach women in order for them to have the courage to report what happens to them. Ana Paula, Mozambique (União Nacional de Camponeses UNAC).

*Jakarta, June 7, 2013*

[Via Campesina](#)