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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 10, 2003

NFU AND VIA CAMPESINA WANT FOOD OUT OF WTO AGREEMENT

CANCUN, Mexico.— The Via Campesina held a press conference yesterday in Cancun, Mexico. The Via Campesina is a global farmers' movement made up of 97 farm organizations from 43 countries. Canada's NFU was a founding member. Cancun is the site of the World Trade Organization's Ministerial meeting.

NFU Youth President Martha Robbins spoke at the Via Campesina (VC) press conference. Commenting on the VC's position that food should be removed from the WTO agreement, she highlighted the threat that unbalanced trade liberalization poses to farmers' collective marketing agencies and to supply management systems. She also criticized the farmer-unfriendly intellectual property framework contained within the WTO agreement and similar treaties.

"One of the key reasons for our opposition to the WTO agreement on agriculture stems from the threat that it poses to supply management and collective marketing systems in Canada. The loss of these systems, which work to the benefit of farmers, would be a severe blow to Canadian farmers," said Robbins.

"The WTO also helps to expand and enforce a system of patenting and private ownership of seeds and genes. Farmers need collective, public ownership of seeds where farmers are permitted and encouraged to save their own seeds and to share our communal resources. The alternative is to have a few companies own and control all biological resources, a prospect that threatens biodiversity and peasants' and small farmers' livelihoods," said Robbins.

"The NFU is here in Cancun because we are a member of the Via Campesina and because we believe that a united farm voice on the international level is necessary. Decisions are increasingly made on the global level and farmers need an international voice to influence the discussion," concluded Robbins.

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While in Cancun, Robbins can be reached at:

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via Campesina



INTERNATIONAL FARMERS AND INDIGENOUS FORUM

COMUNIQUE No. 2
Cancún – Mexico, Septiembre 7, 2003

The International Farmers' and Indigenous Forum "Food Sovereignty" cordially **INVITES** the different civil society organizations to:

- Join us in our Forum in which approximately 2,500 peasant and indigenous delegates from Asia, Africa, Europe, America and the Caribbean will participate.
- Participate in the International Farmers' March Protest: "For Farmers' Rights and Food Sovereignty" on September 10, starting at 1 p.m. from the Gimnasio "Cuxil Baxaal". In this protest we expect about 10,000 delegates of the Farmers Forum and other civil society organizations.

We also reaffirm our participation in the International March on September 13, called by different civil society organizations to protest the WTO Ministerial Conference and WTO policies.

WTO Out of Agriculture! Food Out of the WTO!
No to patents on life!

How to contact the Vía Campesina delegation in Cancún (September 5-15):

- For media inquiries: (0052-998) 896 4148
(press coordination cell phone for the Vía Campesina delegation)
- Vía Campesina speakers outside of the official conferences space, who participate in actions, marches and other events: (+52-998) 896 5543 (cell phone),
- Vía Campesina speakers inside the official conference space:
(+52-998) 896 5150 (cell phone),
- For questions about the program of logistics: (0052-998) 884 - 6675 (office line), Email: viacam@gbm.hn with copy to: nico.verhagen@t-online.de, or to comunicacion@unorca.org.mx

Rafael Alegría President of La Vía Campesina	Alberto Gómez Flores President of UNORCA Coordinator of La Vía Campesina for the region of North America Secretario Operativo de La Vía Campesina
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