

**Via Campesina to hold 5th International Conference Oct 16-23 in Maputo**

La Via Campesina is holding its 5th International Conference in Maputo, Mozambique, from October 16 to 23, 2008. This congress will gather more than 500 men and women farmers leaders from more than 70 countries, at a time when the food crisis is at the top of the global agenda.

Three delegates from the National Farmers Union of Canada will be attending this event: Colleen Ross - NFU Women's President; Nigel Smith - NFU Youth President; and Kalissa Regier - NFU Youth Vice-President.

This event begins with the Rural Youth Assembly on October 16, while the world is celebrating the World Food Day. It will be followed by the Women's Assembly and later by the Conference itself.

La Via Campesina offers a real vision and proven solutions to address the current food crisis. More than ever, small farmers around the world are struggling for their very survival. The crisis in the agricultural sector, along with the current financial crisis, the unprecedented climate and environmental crises, the energy crisis and a profound and global social crisis are all the symptoms of the failure of the same model, the neo-liberal model under which the whole society is organized around profit making.

Since its creation 15 years ago, La Via Campesina has become the primary global network of small farmers, peasants, landless and small-scale food producers whose voice is now being heard in the international press as well as in forums such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation in Rome and the Human Rights Council in Geneva. La Via Campesina is also recognized and respected within anti-globalization networks and among other social movements that are being invited to join the Conference in Maputo.

The International Conference is the major meeting of the organization which takes place every four years, and at which most organizational and political decisions are collectively made. Delegates will present their analyses of the current situation and debate lines of action for the future. The conference is hosted by UNAC, the National Peasants Union of Mozambique.

Small producers from the South and from the North have been struggling for years to defend a model of agricultural production based on family farms and sustainable agriculture, and to oppose the industrial, export-oriented model of agriculture which has led to the destruction of livelihoods, rural communities and the environment. The current crisis has revealed that a food system based on imported food and the so called « green revolution » is not reliable and in fact generates hunger and poverty. The time has now come for localized food production, sustainable and low-fossil-oil intensive agriculture and the empowerment of small farmers.

*This conference will give journalists the opportunity to interview farmer leaders from every continent, to document their stories and to better anticipate the strategies that will be adopted by family farmers to solve the current crisis. It will also give you a chance to meet the emerging Mozambican farmer movement and to meet local producers in the fields.*

*Due to logistical limitations and to the internal nature of the conference, only a few journalists will be accredited to cover the conference from October 21 to 23. However, we can organise media interviews by phone (or other means) during the conference and send high resolution pictures and video images to any media willing to cover this event from their home base.*

*Press kit and special coverage on [www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org)*

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