



WORLD FORUM ON ACCESS TO LAND

WFAL 2016



Address by Vicent Garcès, 3rd plenary meeting of the “Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggles” assembly for common action strategies at the World Social Forum in Tunis, March 27th, 2015.

Hello everyone. Thank you; thank you Chantal. My name is Vicente Garcès, I'm from Spain. I'm speaking on behalf of the International Organizing Committee of the World Forum on Access to Land and Natural Resources.

Struggles over land and water have taken place throughout human history. The 20th century began with Emiliano Zapata's cry “Tiera y liberated” and “Zapata vive” (Zapata lives).

“Land and freedom!” is a cry for human rights, **for people's rights**, and for farmer's rights to food, to health, to education, and to culture. It is also a demand for the right to public goods, above all for the rights to land, water, and natural resources: seeds, forests, fish. These natural resources feed the planet; they feed humanity. This is why the fight for natural resources and land is so important.

At the beginning of the 21st century, social movements and farmers made explicit demands for food sovereignty. We have organized multiple events, forums, and debates - and discussed many proposals - with this goal in mind.

I would like to inform you that we are currently involved in a process that will end in 2016. It is called the World Forum on Access to Land and Natural Resources. The goal of the forum is to take stock of the ways in which land, water, and natural resource access have evolved since the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, an event organized by the FAO and the government of Brazil that took place in Porto Alegre in 2006.

Now is the time to evaluate what has happened over the last 10 years. We are not any closer to the goal of food sovereignty today than we were ten years ago; in fact, we have witnessed a process of counter-agrarian reform and land, water, and natural resource grabbing. This is why it is so important to assess the situation. We must identify the causes of current trends; and in order to do so, we must create an open, inclusive, and plural space for dialogue, where we can discuss proposals for the future.

This process, which will culminate in 2016 with the World Forum on Access to Land and Natural Resources, is being piloted by an International Organizing Committee made up of farmers' organizations, social movements, public institutions, governmental representatives, and experts and individuals who are involved with land and natural resource issues “on the ground.” I am the coordinator of the committee, and I invite everyone here to take part in this process. We have documents for you to consult. We have a “call” that we invite you to sign. You can become involved at any point this year; regional meetings and events will be organized to advance forum goals throughout 2015.

I would also like to use this opportunity to request that the WFAL be treated as a component of a global process of convergence connecting land and water struggles taking place all over the

world. You and I both know that these struggles begin on the ground, with farmers. But they also develop at the institutional level, between institutions, and at the political level, between political parties. Finally, the fight for land and natural resources develops as a natural part of struggles for the human right to food. This is why it is necessary to take action at each of these levels; to create alliances at each of these levels; to foster coordination at each of these levels. We would like the forum to be viewed as an essential part of this global process of convergence that unites all struggles for land, water, and natural resources.