

**The domination of capital over agriculture - bulletin 4 - 18th June**

Via Campesina

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### Noti-Via Campesina #4

"In the last two decades, we confronted a new stage of capitalism, characterized by the domination of financial capital that reaches all countries through globalization ; that is the mechanism used by financial capital to be able to act in every country and in all sectors of the economy." With these words, João Pedro Stédile, of the national leadership of Brazil's Landless Workers Movement, began his speech about the tendencies of capital and the challenges of the peasant movement during the 4th International Conference of Via Campesina.

Agriculture, which was subordinated to industrial capital in the decade of the 80's through the agro-businesses of foods and chemical inputs, is now subordinated to the interests of international financial capital, which acts much more rapidly and concentrates on the most profitable businesses according to the wishes of big monopolies and transnational corporations. In world agriculture there are 10 large multinationals (such as Monsanto, Bayer, Cargill, Nestle, Sygenta, BASF, Novartis, ADM) which are based in distinct sectors related to agricultural production, and the same multinational corporation controls commercial agriculture, agrobusiness, the agro-toxins, and seeds, according to Stédile.

As an effect of this movement of capital - he emphasized - these multinationals began to operate in a concentrated and centralized throughout the world. Moreover, this form of capital does not only control trade, raw materials and industries as it has done for many years, but it also tries to establish a food model for the whole world, so as to be able to unify eating habits and earn ever-greater profits. The multinationals can do this by inducing and manipulating people to buy and eat the same products, independent of the countries in which they reside.

The MST leader emphasized that now capital is not content to buy labor and hold land as private property, but it also wants to turn knowledge, technology, farm technologies and seeds into private property. The GMO seeds are part of this logic of capital for increasing the physical productivity of plants.

In this way, he said, "we are watching an international redivision of labor that is shared by the 500 largest multinationals and by the governments that are submissive to them, which have been transformed from defenders of the interests of the people who elected them into governments that defend the interests of these multinationals."

Under this model, family and peasant farming is becoming invisible and the only survivors are a small sector of peasants submitted to the interests of agro-industry

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and export.

Capital no longer has any interest in being the owner of land. Now they want to make bio-diversity, water, and seeds their private property. And the result is that they use bio-technology as a way of increasing the exploitation of peasants and a way of increasing the productivity per acre. If this agrarian model of capital is consolidated, millions of peasants throughout the world will be dislocated, Stédile added.

This new reality places great challenges before the international peasant movement. As the methods of exploitation are internationalized, they have also created a common enemy for all the peasant movements. And this makes our struggles and demands common as well. We have to think in a new agrarian model that does not only restrict itself to day-to-day demands", stated the MST leader.

He emphasized moreover that it is necessary to think of a new role for the State. "Our movements must defend national sovereignty and the role of this other State, which is the only power of the people that can make changes and help build a more egalitarian society. We have to unite to confront the international organizations and the agreements that they make, which represent the interests of capital."