

Task Force on the Americas
DELEGATION TO VENEZUELA: Sowing Food Sovereignty:
Women confronting economic war by empowering a nation to feed itself
May 9-17, 2016 (with optional add-on trip to Cata Beach May 18-20)
Delegation Fee: \$1150

Venezuela is at the crossroads of hunger. Just two years after the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) praised the nation for reducing hunger by half, Venezuela today is scrambling to feed its citizens. A vicious economic war that seeks to topple the Bolivarian Revolution, combined by the dramatic plunge in global oil prices (95% of the nation's revenue) and a long dependence on food imports, has led to empty food shelves and long lines of anxious citizens.

The flip side of the crisis is a new awakening in Venezuela of the need to wean itself of oil dependence and food imports. With a dramatic decline in the nation's income (today it costs almost as much to pump a barrel of oil as its worth on the global market)



Venezuela has taken on national food production like a battle cry. Plans are being set in motion to produce food massively, in the expansive countryside long abandoned to the oil industry, and in cities where 85% of the population live. All this will be done without the use of GMO seeds, as specified by the new Seed Law -perhaps the most progressive law of its kind in the world.

The leaders in this urgent race to food sovereignty are the same ones who have always carried the weight of feeding their families on their shoulders: **women**. They are picking up hoes and shovels and transforming urban

wastelands and abandoned rural fields into lush food gardens. Women are directing the new Urban Agricultural Ministry and are leading the *Back to the Conuco* movement (Venezuela's traditional version of permaculture). They have initiated seed saver collectives. They are at the forefront of the biggest farmer-to-consumer cooperative in Latin America, and have organized cooperatives to process and distribute food equitably.



Come to Venezuela this May – the sacred month of spring rains - to witness the unfurling of this new post-petroleum food revolution. The delegation will meet with women leaders in the government who are directing this food sovereignty movement. They will travel to the states of Lara, Yaracuy and Aragua to experience multiple local grassroots food-producing initiatives led by women. The delegation will end with the Feast of San Isidro, patron saint of farmers, with a colorful celebration in the Andes foothills.



An optional add-on to the pristine white beaches of the Bahia de Cata will be offered for those hoping to relax and recharge batteries for a few days before returning home.

A special treat will be the enjoyment of meals made by Venezuelan chef Pachi Rodriguez who will prepare delicious cuisine made from locally-sourced food during the group's stay in the Andes Mountains and Caribbean shore.

The delegation fee of \$1150 covers all meals, lodging, in-country transportation, translation, materials. ***It does not cover international travel to and from Caracas.*** **The fee for the Cata beach trip is \$250.**

Delegation leader Lisa Sullivan has lived in Venezuela for three decades, planting lots of trees and vegetables in her mountain home where the group will stay for a few days.

Interested? Contact Lisa: lisavenezuela@gmail.com or Teri: Teri.Mattson@yahoo.com

