

Report

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Decentralising or disintegrating? The World Social Forum at 5

March 2005

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For six days in January, roughly 155 000 participants from around the world gathered in the sweltering heat of Porto Alegre to declare that “Another World is Possible”. Following the success of the 2004 meeting in Mumbai, India, the fifth World Social Forum returned to its origin to address the challenges of globalisation once again.

In the thousands of debates, workshops, and networking sessions that took place over the course of the week, participants tackled issues such as poverty, debt, trade, human rights, the environment, and war. Highlights of the week included visits from Brazilian President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, the launch of the Global Call to Action against Poverty, a 200 000-strong “March for Peace”, an array of cultural performances, as well as countless individual exchanges.

Attracting unprecedented numbers, WSF 2005 was viewed by many as a huge success. The year was also marked by some significant firsts—the first inclusion of political personalities, previously banned by the Charter of Principles; a new “self-organised”, bottom-up methodology; and the release of a World Social Forum “Manifesto” by key WSF actors.

However, the 2005 World Social Forum also showed signs of growing pains. Despite organisational and structural changes made to improve this year’s Forum, many participants claim that the event has become too large and unwieldy and that the large number of attendees limited participation and interaction. Familiar tensions over the purpose of the World Social Forum also re-surfaced. While some participants are eager to see the forum take on a political role as the global voice of a unified civil society, others feel it should continue to represent the diversity of its participants. Opinions also clashed over the continuing debate whether to focus the Forum on achieving “visible action and tangible outcomes” or to maintain the Forum as “an open space for dialogue”.

With preparations underway for multiple World Social Forums next year, many questions remain unanswered. Where will the ‘decentralised’ Forums take place? How can the many regional Forums recreate the diversity which not only characterises but defines the World Social Forum? How will the new, smaller Forums integrate with regional, national, and local Forums? Is the shift from one single Forum to multiple Forums a sign of success, of the World Social Forum’s ability to grow and change? Or, is it a warning sign that the WSF is disintegrating, unable to manage its own successes and challenges, let alone make “another world possible”? What, if any, is the continuing role for the WSF? As participants left Porto Alegre this year with many of these questions in mind, the future of the World Social Forum remains somewhat unclear.

INTRODUCTION

Given the vast size of the World Social Territory as well as the enormous number of activities in this year's Forum, it is only possible to provide a small glimpse of the bigger WSF picture. Moreover, due to language constraints—the overwhelming majority of the sessions were held in Portuguese with only limited translation into French, Spanish, and English during the larger sessions—this report may reflect a different perspective than others. Consequently, this report is not intended as a summary *per se* of the fifth World Social Forum, but rather as an attempt to convey some of the many messages, thoughts, and criticisms emanating from the Forum. This report also draws upon media sources and relevant articles have been referenced to provide greater detail for those interested.

BACKGROUND ON THE WSF

What is the World Social Forum?

According to the World Social Forum official website¹, the WSF is “an open meeting place where social movements, networks, NGOs, and other civil society organisations opposed to neo-liberalism and a world dominated by capital or by any form of imperialism come together to pursue their thinking, to debate ideas democratically, to formulate proposals, to share their experiences freely, and to network for effective action. The WSF proposes to debate alternative means of building a globalisation of solidarity, one which respects universal human rights and those of all men and women of all nations and the environment and is grounded in democratic international systems and institutions at the service of social justice, equality, and the sovereignty of peoples.

According to its website, the World Social Forum is further characterised by “plurality and diversity” and is “non-confessional, non-governmental, and non-partisan”.

Moreover, the WSF considers its purpose to “facilitate decentralised coordination and networking among organisations engaged in concrete action towards building another world at any level from the local to the international but it does not intend to be a body representing world civil society”. As such, the WSF claims it is neither a group, nor an organisation. Because the WSF does not have a ‘deliberative character’, it also does not officially promote campaigns, nor issue final declarations. The WSF rationalises that this allows it to maintain participant diversity while assisting participants to interact and propose their own concrete actions.

The WSF functions according to its Charter of Principles, a 14-point document that outlines the objectives of the WSF.²

History of the WSF

The World Social Forum emerged from the post-Seattle protests as a collaborative effort of several NGOs and social activists. Founding members included Bernard Cassen, head of the French NGO ‘ATTAC’ (the Association for Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens), Oded Grajew, head of a Brazilian employer’s organisation, and Francisco (Chico) Whittaker, head of the

1 www.forumsocialmundial.org.br

2 Please see “WSF Charter of Principles”, Appendix A.

Association of Brazilian NGOs. With the aim of creating a “world civil society event”, the group secured the support of the municipal and state governments of Porto Alegre and Rio Grande do Sul and the ruling Brazilian Workers’ Party (PT) and the World Social Forum was born.

Originally considered as a counterpoint to the World Economic Forum, the annual meeting of world’s political and corporate powers in Davos, Switzerland, the World Social Forum (WSF) was created to provide an open platform to discuss strategies of resistance to what was considered the WEF model of ‘economic and corporate’ globalisation.

According to its Charter of Principles, the WSF is “not an organisation, nor a united front platform, but an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of thoughts and inter-linking for effective action by groups and movements that are opposed to neo-liberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a planetary society directed towards fruitful relationships among humankind and between it and the Earth”.

The first World Social Forum, held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001, attracted 20 000 participants, mainly Brazilians, with some representation from Europe. The second Forum, held in Porto Alegre in 2002, expanded to nearly 50 000 participants, again mainly from Brazil and Europe. However, by the third Forum, held in Porto Alegre in 2003, the numbers had doubled—nearly 100 000 people from around the world attended, marking a significant increase in numbers as well as in diversity of participants. The fourth WSF, held in Mumbai, India, again attracted some 100 000 participants, this time including mostly Asians due to the Forum’s location. This year’s forum, the fifth WSF, returned to Porto Alegre, attracting an unprecedented 155 000 participants.

The call ‘Another World is Possible’, the slogan of the WSF, has now echoed around the world, spawning local, regional, national, and thematic forums in many countries. As the social forum movement continues to grow in size and geographical representation, it is increasingly recognised by many as one of the most significant civil and political initiatives of the past several decades.

WSF Organisers

The WSF International Council consists of the International Secretariat of the World Social Forum (the Brazilian Organising Committee and the Indian Organising Committee) and includes delegates from numerous organisations.³ The European, Americas, African, Mediterranean, Pan-Amazonian, and Thematic Social Forums also hold observer status in the International Secretariat.

WORLD SOCIAL FORUM 2005

Participants

According to the WSF website, all organisations, social movements, and civil society entities that are in accordance with the Charter of Principles, as well as any unaffiliated individuals, may take part and propose events at the WSF. Government entities and political parties, however, are welcomed only as observers, permitted to participate on a personal basis only, although this point was contested at this year’s Forum. The WSF also rejects the use of violence and thus has banned the participation of “military organisations”.

³ For a complete list of WSF organising organisations and contact information, please see Appendix B.

In total, it is estimated that 155 000 participants representing some 5 700 organisations and/or movements attended WSF 2005. Of these, roughly 35 000 took part in the Intercontinental Youth Camp (IYC) and roughly 7 000 participated in the WSF as speakers/presenters. Nearly 3 000 volunteers contributed their efforts to ensure that the 2 500 WSF activities ran as smoothly as possible.⁴ Volunteers were responsible for providing the infrastructure of the World Social Territory, tourist information, registration of alternative/solidarity housing within the IYC, event organisation, administrative tasks, communication, and translation/interpretation.⁵ It is also estimated that 5 400 journalists attended this year's Forum. Nearly 200 000 people took part in the WSF "March for Peace" which kicked off this year's Forum.⁶

WSF Organisers also estimate that at least 135 countries were represented at this year's Forum, although it is also believed that between 80 and 90 percent of this year's participants were Brazilian. Second to Brazil, the United States, Italy, and France had the greatest representation, respectively. As in the past, participants from Asia, Africa, Arab and Eastern European countries were under-represented in Porto Alegre this year.⁷

This year's direct participation of political parties also represented a break from the past where the parties were banned but participants could attend as individuals. According to the communist publication "Worker's World", of the 30 communist parties present this year, the PC do B (Brazilian Communist Party) had the largest presence, alongside its anti-war organisation, CEBRAPAZ. Communist party delegations from Cuba, China, Vietnam, Uruguay, Peru, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Catalonia, Greece, Paraguay, Portugal, Venezuela, France, Spain, Belgium, India, Denmark, the Netherlands, Italy, and the United States were among the communist parties represented at this year's WSF.⁸ No statistics on other political parties were available.

Like previous World Social Forums, achieving adequate representation from marginalised groups was difficult. Some critics pointed out that, unlike the WSF 2004 in Mumbai, however, the poor were considerably under-represented in this year's Forum. According to a group of Jesuit participants, "One could not see the poor in the halls and the streets of the venue. The forum seems to be occupied by what one called 'organised and articulate civil society', by those like us who speak for the people."⁹

Other critics noted that, aside from presenters and panellists, nearly all of the participants were high school and university students.¹⁰

Finances & Fees

The budget for WSF 2005 was estimated at 7.7 million Swiss Francs (approximately 6.6 million US dollars). Of this, nearly 2.6 million comes from NGO and large foundation donations; 922 000 comes from the City of Porto Alegre; another 922 000 comes from the state of Rio Grande do Sul, and approximately 3 million comes from the Government of Brazil.¹¹

To participate in the WSF 2005, organisations from the "geo-political North" (defined as OECD members) paid a sum of 300 Brazilian Reais per organisation (130 Swiss Francs), plus 30 Reais per

4 www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/dinamic.php?pagina=encerra2005_ing

5 "Volunteer work attracts more than 2 500 people across the globe to the V WSF", *noticias.info*, January 28th, 2005.

6 "A Fiesta of Protest at Porto Alegre", *YaleGlobalOnline*. January 31, 2005.

7 "World Social Forum seeks new momentum in Brazil", *AFP*. January 26, 2005.

8 "Communist Parties at World Social Forum", *Workers World*. February 13, 2005.

9 "Members of the Jesuit-led delegation report on the WSF", *website unknown*. January 2005.

10 "A Fiesta of Protest at Porto Alegre", *YaleGlobalOnline*. January 31, 2005.

11 "A savoir: forum social mondiale" *Liberation*. January 26, 2005.

participant (13 Swiss Francs). For organisations from all other countries, including Brazil, each organisation was charged 150 Reais (65 Swiss Francs), plus 12 Reais per participant (5.50 Swiss Francs). The registration fees are used to maintain the “self-sustainability” of the World Social Forum.

WSF 2005 Organisers

The fifth World Social Forum was organised by the Brazilian Organising Committee:

- ABONG (Associação Brasileira de Organizações Não Governamentais)
- AMB (Confederação Nacional das Associações de Moradores)
- ATTAC (Ação pela Tributação das Transações Financeiras em Apoio aos Cidadãos)
- CONAM
- Cáritas Brasil
- CAT (Central Autônoma de Trabalhadores)
- CBJP (Comissão Brasileira de Justiça e Paz da CNBB)
- CIVES (Associação Brasileira de Empresários pela Cidadania)
- CLACSO (Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales)
- CMP (Central de Movimentos Populares)
- Comitê Organizador do Acampamento Intercontinental da Juventude
- Comitê Afro do FSM
- CUT (Central Única dos Trabalhadores)
- FBOMs (Fórum Brasileiro de ONGs e Movimentos Sociais para o Meio Ambiente e o Desenvolvimento)
- GTA (Grupo de Trabalho Amazônico)
- Ibase (Instituto Brasileiro de Análises Sociais e Econômicas)
- IPF (Instituto Paulo Freire)
- Jubileu Sul Brasil
- Marcha Mundial das Mulheres
- MST (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra)
- Rede Social de Justiça e Direitos Humanos
- UJS (União da Juventude Socialista)
- UNE (União Nacional dos Estudantes)

Methodology

Following complaints of “centralised”, “top down” organisation in past years, WSF 2005 employed a new, consultative methodology. Nearly 1 900 organisations participated in the consultation process used to identify this year’s discussion topics. Organisations submitted their proposals for sessions, then attempted to link with groups proposing similar ideas. The decision to divide WSF 2005 events into “thematic terrains” was taken in an effort to further facilitate this process by allowing organisations and movements to form ‘aggregate groups’. Each aggregate group would then become responsible for consolidating and linking similar workshops and activities within that particular thematic terrain. These aggregate groups were also responsible for organising the “larger activities” (conferences, panels, testimonies, and round tables with capacity for 600 plus participants), a responsibility that had previously only been taken by the International Council. This move toward ‘self-organised’ activities marked a significant shift from past WSFs where such ‘top-down’ organised activities were met with resistance from some groups.¹²

¹² www.forumsocialmundial.org.br; “WSF Closing Ceremony”, IndyMedia SF Bay. January 31, 2005.

In the end, this year's vast programme covered the entire spectrum of topics. Nearly 3 000 officially registered events took place. A three-hour time slot was allocated to each session, with the first session of the day beginning at 8:30 am and the last finishing at midnight, although many informal meetings were also scheduled outside of the official programme.

WSF Terrain & 11 Thematic Terrains



World Social Territory
Source: K. Simonson

This year, all WSF activities were grouped into 11 “thematic areas”, as defined through last year's consultation process. Each of the eleven themes had its own space within the larger 150 000 square metres dubbed the “World Social Territory”. This change of structure resulted from International and Brazilian Organising Councils' efforts to combine similar events in order to promote and consolidate a convergence of struggles.¹³ For instance, while water-related activities have been discussed at more than 100 different events in past Forums, this year's structure allowed them to be combined within one defined area, thus increasing networking and coordination opportunities. The eleven thematic terrains were as follows:

- Autonomous Thought, Re-appropriation and Socialisation of Knowledge and Technologies
- Defending Diversity, Plurality, and Identities
- Art and Creation: Weaving and Building a Culture of Resistance
- Communication: Counter-Hegemonic Practices, Rights, and

Alternatives

- Assuring and Defending the Earth and People's Common Goods: Alternatives to Commodification and Transnational Control
- Social Struggles and Democratic Alternatives: Against Neo-Liberal Domination
- Peace, Demilitarisation, and Struggle against War, Free Trade, and Debt
- Towards Construction of International Democratic Order and People's Integration
- Sovereign Economies for and of the People: Against Neo-Liberal Capitalism
- Human Rights and Dignity for a Just and Egalitarian World
- Ethics, Cosmovisions, and Spiritualities: Resistances and Challenges for a New World¹⁴

This year's “World Social Territory” also reflected a deliberate change in location. In response to a survey of past participants which indicated an over-representation of “elite” participants at the expense of poor and marginalised sectors of society, WSF 2005 organisers decided to move the grounds away from the ‘intellectual’ Catholic University to a city park on the banks of the Guaiba River, a more central location open to the general public. Chosen for its symbolism, the Guaiba River, like the World Social Forum, has no owner, was not artificially constructed, and belongs to everyone and no one at the same time.

Within the World Social Territory, nearly 500 tents and temporary buildings were constructed primarily from recycled or natural materials.

¹³ “World Social Forum 2005”, CADTM. www.cadtm.org/imprimer.php3?id_article=1027

¹⁴ Official WSF 2005 programme.

Solidarity Economy—Fair Prices, Ethical Consumption

One of the cross-cutting themes of this year's forum, as well as the focus of one of the 11 thematic terrains, was the 'solidarity economy'. Defined as "an economy where the production, management, direction, and appropriation of the products are carried out by the workers themselves in a self-organised manner", the solidarity economy was seen as an integral part of the WSF slogan, "Another world is possible". More than 280 debates and workshops were held on this topic in an attempt to deepen WSF participants' understanding of the central role it plays in the WSF process. In addition to workshops and debates, solidarity economy events included campaigns to boycott major multinational corporations and information sessions to promote conscientious consumption.



Solidarity Economy Store
Source: K. Simonson

Out of the total WSF budget of 14 million Brazilian Reais (approximately 7.7 million CHF), fifteen percent was directed through the "solidarity economy" for the purchase of products and services from cooperatives, associations, and other self-managed enterprises. According to WSF statistics, 60 000 WSF handbags, 11 000 IYC handbags, 10 000 ecological soaps for the IYC, 2 000 WSF t-shirts, 65 translation booths, 300 pieces of electronic transmission equipment, 10 venue floors, and 1 000 WSF bandanas were produced through the solidarity economy. Roughly 1 500 workers joined the 'solidarity economy' in their service to the WSF.¹⁵

Mural of Proposals and the Living Memory website

WSF 2005 also introduced the concept of a "mural of proposals". Designed to make the conclusions and proposals emanating from Forum discussions and activities more visible, the mural of proposals will be available at the World Social Forum's "memory website" (www.memoria-viva.org).

During the Forum, 352 proposals emerged from the discussions and assemblies, although WSF participants continue to submit proposals via email. Once all of the submissions have been received, similar proposals will be combined, thus allowing organisers to better coordinate their actions. In an attempt to enhance the 'collective memory' of the WSF, all groups that hosted activities during the WSF are also requested to write a report on their session and any follow-up activities.

WSF Information Technology

In accordance with the principle of "open systems for open politics"¹⁶, WSF organisers pledged to use as much open source technology (non-corporate controlled, i.e. Microsoft) as possible. As such, free software was installed on all 1 000 computers in operation at WSF 2005. For the first time in WSF history, the official website was developed using 'php', an open source language. Nomad, the international translation software designers who presented their free technology in Mumbai, again

¹⁵ "WSF: The Theory and Practice of the Solidarity Economy", www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/dinamic.php?pagina=econ_solid_ing

¹⁶ "Open Systems for Open Politics", IPS. January 26th, 2005.

volunteered their services for this year's WSF. In addition, a Tunisian group has developed technology allowing them to store and broadcast video footage via the Internet, thus allowing virtual participation in more than 400 WSF panels and workshops.¹⁷

Speakers/Presenters

For WSF 2005, organisers abandoned the practice of inviting paid speakers. While invited speakers had all expenses covered in past Forums, WSF 2005 broke with tradition and used the money saved to create a "solidarity fund" instead. The money saved was then used to subsidise the transportation and other costs of participants coming from distant and financially poor countries

Translation & Interpretation

As in the past, this year's WSF relied on translation and interpretation provided by the volunteer organisation, Babels. Since its birth at the European Social Forum in 2002, the Babels group has grown to include more than 7 000 people and 60 languages. More than 500 "Babelitos" attended WSF 2005, providing translation and interpretation into 16 languages.

Despite their emergence as an organisation independent of the WSF, some members of Babels describe a tension existing between them and WSF organisers. Reflecting their belief in 'horizontality', many Babelitos reject the WSF's organisation as "hierarchical", preferring to organise themselves 'as equals' instead. As a result, this has resulted in some Babelitos questioning their role in social forums in the past, particularly following the European Social Forum in London in 2004. Moreover, faced with the prospect of multiple, decentralised World Social Forums in 2006, some Babelitos expressed their frustration with WSF organisers for "taking them for granted" and for "giving them insufficient time to organise for the next WSFs".¹⁸

World Social Library

Established at the WSF 2001, the World Social Library is a collection of books on themes relevant to the social forum movement. At this year's Forum, participants were encouraged to donate books on any topic and in any language that could help make "another world possible". Eventually, organisers of the World Social Library hope that the resources will be made available online in a virtual library.¹⁹

ISSUES & CAMPAIGNS

Of the thousands of activities that took place at this year's WSF, the following section attempts to identify some of the main themes of discussion.

Trade

In the first WSF session to include representatives from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, speakers and participants exchanged ideas on international trade. World Bank representative John Garrison welcomed pressure from civil society to make governments and

¹⁷ "WSF: IT Powerhouse Strikes Back", IPS. January 27, 2005.

¹⁸ "Babels and the Politics of Language at the Heart of the Social Forum", Znet, February 12, 2005; personal communication.

¹⁹ "Project collects books to set up World Social Library", WSF website. January 5, 2005.

corporations deliver on their promises, but maintained his position that free trade is the key to achieving global wealth.²⁰ IMF Senior External Affairs Officer Simonetta Nardin claimed that their presence at the WSF shows “there has been change...we are much more attentive to the question of growth and to the question of poverty reduction.”²¹ Regarding the pace of change, however, Nardin acknowledged, “It is true that we are lagging behind [civil society]”. At the same time, she also cautioned the WSF participants against underestimating the power of their own countries. “Your governments are not puppets of the IMF and the World Bank,” she claimed.²²

Critics of their participation, however, doubt that dialogue with IMF and World Bank representatives will change anything for the poor. As Ted Von Kees, from Oxfam International, explained, “Both institutions are responsible for permanent structural tsunamis against the poor...I know them very well, they just cannot get away from their rigid belief that liberalisation and free trade is the answer to all ills.”²³

For those attending one of many parallel sessions on poverty and debt, the IMF and World Bank have also failed to relieve themselves of responsibility. According to the Lameck Simwanza of Women for Change, the organisation hosting the event, ““Biased international trade and inhuman lending conditions have compelled us to join the global campaign against the West. They are playing double standards in the international trade market...While they are telling us to stop subsidising our peasant farmers, they have continued to heavily subsidise theirs.” Simwanza also pointed to the IMF and the World Bank as the root of the poverty problem in Zambia. “We are at their mercy over this evil debt. Hence, we shall join the demonstrations”.

Oxfam’s “Make Trade Fair” campaign echoed these sentiments. Calling on world governments to “change the rules that govern trade so that it can benefit poor farmers and not just rich countries and big business,” Oxfam urged participants to sign their “Big Noise” petition. The Sekala Brothers, one of Zambia’s top music groups, was on hand to provide the “noise” at the WSF.²⁴

In preparation for a “Global Week of Action on Trade”, scheduled for April 10-16, 2005, trade activists gathered to discuss the desired changes to the current trade situation. The network of NGOs launching the event seeks to “raise awareness on the unjust trade agreements, indiscriminate liberalisation and privatisation that the rich and powerful impose upon the poor, violating their rights to food, a decent livelihood, water, health, and education.” The main message is “No to the rich and powerful imposing unjust trade agreements, indiscriminate liberalisation, and privatisation on the poor, Yes to everyone’s right to food, a livelihood, water, health, and education”. Plans for the Week of Action were finalised at last year’s WSF and all groups, networks, and individuals are invited to participate in this “open action”. The Global Week of Action on Trade is promoted by the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, the Africa Trade Network, The Alliance for Responsible Trade, the Alternative Information and Development Centre, Christian Aid, Focus on the Global South, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Our World is Not for Sale network, Oxfam, Public Citizen, and Third World Network.²⁵

The World Trade Organisation was also the focus of many WSF debates. In one session entitled “The G20: What Achievements and in Whose Interests?”, high level officials from G20 countries, former trade negotiators, journalists, farmers, and workers representatives gathered to discuss the impacts of the changing balance of power in global politics. The event was organised by Focus on the Global South, ATALC-Friends of the Earth Latin America & Caribbean, Freidrich Ebert Stiftung, REBRIP Brazil, and the Hemispheric Social Alliance, analysed the role of the G20 within the WTO.

20 “A Fiesta of Protest at Porto Alegre”, YaleGlobalOnline. January 31, 2005.

21 “Globalisation activists debate IMF, World Bank”, Reuters. January 31, 2005.

22 “World Bank, IMF make first foray into debate at WSF”, AFP. January 30, 2005.

23 “IMF and World Bank face the WSF: agree to disagree”, IPS. January 30, 2005.

24 “Diary: the WSF”, BBC News. January 31, 2005.

25 For more information, please visit www.april2005.org.

Various groups also gathered in preparation for the upcoming Ministerial Meeting of the WTO in Hong Kong in December 2005. The groups reflected on how the WTO was derailed in both Seattle and Cancun and brainstormed ideas and strategies to derail the upcoming meeting. The session was organised by Focus on the Global South, the Hemispheric Social Alliance, the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, Globalisation Monitor (Hong Kong), Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, Attac Japan, Stop the New Round (Philippines), FTA Watch (Thailand), Institute for Global Justice (Indonesia), Social Movements Network, Our World is Not For Sale network, Friends of the Earth International, Globalise from Below, All Together (Korea), and KPAA WTO & FTA (Korea).

Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)

Having passed the January 30th, 2005, deadline for the implementation of FTAA (or ALCA in Spanish), activists celebrated their 'victory' in blocking the agreement. Although US government officials plan to restart the negotiations later this year, many WSF participants claimed that even the delaying of its implementation symbolised a success for the 'alter-globalisation' movement.²⁶



WSF participants march against the FTAA
Source: E. Quadros

The session "Continental Assembly against the FTAA" discussed in detail the various potential threats posed by the trade agreement. Despite the 'failure' of the FTAA, Cuban labour leader Leonel Gonzalez warned the crowd that FTAA-alternatives, primarily in the form of bilateral free trade agreements, represent an equally serious threat."²⁷

WSF 2005 also featured a city-wide march against the FTAA and the American-led neo-liberal economic agenda. It is estimated that more than 40 000 people took part in the march.²⁸

Foreign Aid

The topic of many WSF 2005 discussions, foreign aid was also the focus of the International Campaign for Food, Agriculture, and Rural Development Aid to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty, also known as "More and Better". The campaign invited WSF participants to join them in advocating increases in both the quality and quantity of aid to developing countries. Linked to the Millennium Development Goals, "More and Better" calls for a decrease in the number of hungry and malnourished people and those living in poverty, a major increase in development aid, and significant improvements in the quality of aid provided.²⁹

The "More and Better" international coordinating committee consists of IFAP (International Federation of Agricultural Producers), Via Campesina, ROPPA (Network of Peasant Organisations and Producers in West Africa), MAELA (the Agroecological Movement of Latin America), ActionAid International, Green Movement of Sri Lanka, IRDF (Integrated Rural Development Foundation, Philippines), CENESTA (Centre for Sustainable Development and Environment, Iran), CRDA (Christian Relief and Development Association, Ethiopia), Kenyan Federation of Agricultural Producers, CIPRES

²⁶ "WSF ends with protests against imperialism", AP. February 1, 2005.

²⁷ "Cuba spotlighted at WSF", Periodico 26. January 31, 2005.

²⁸ "Porto Alegre marches against the FTAA", Choike. January 27th, 2005.

²⁹ For more information, please visit www.moreandbetter.org

(Centre for Research, Promotion, and Rural and Social Development, Nicaragua), Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Bread for the World USA, UK Food Group, Italian Food Sovereignty Campaign, and the Norwegian Development Fund.

Debt

On the first day of the Forum, representatives from India, Indonesia, and other countries affected by the Asian tsunami issued a call for their nations to be granted total debt relief. Argentine Nobel laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivel called for immediate cancellation of all debt from the affected countries in order to stop the “social genocide” that is occurring.³⁰ Jubilee South, one of the participating networks of NGOs, social movements, and political groups, also voiced its concern that the IMF, the World Bank, and individual countries will use the tsunami as an opportunity to saddle devastated countries with even more interest payments. Echoing these fears, Indian representative Vinod Raina argued that debt cancellation would do far more good in the long term than issuing cash advances that will have to be paid back with interest.³¹

In the “Assembly for People’s Owed Ecological, Social, and Historical Debts”, WSF participants discussed how developing countries are actually the “creditors” of social, ecological and historical debt, thus overturning the idea that developing countries “owe” the First World. The event was organised by Jubilee South, Attac, World Confederation of Labour (WCL), and International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

The Committee for the Abolition of the Third World Debt, in collaboration with Economistas de Izquierda (EDI) from Argentina, UNAFISCO from Brazil, Red Venezolana contra la deuda from Venezuela, and others, launched the International Debt Observatory. The session also examined the case of Argentina and its suspension of debt repayments as a possible model for other ‘indebted’ countries.

Environment

Members of the Global Justice Ecology Project, together with individual WSF participants, issued a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan expressing the “disappointment of many environmental activists at the use of the emissions trading market to tackle the problem of global warming”.³² The letter goes on to state that the organisations and individuals gathered at the WSF wished to convey two convictions: first, that another world is possible, and second, that it will not be possible if people do not have a climate they can live in. The letter concludes that more effort has to be made to limit fossil fuel use and that grassroots and civil society networks need greater support from those wishing to achieve such objectives.³³

Friends of the Earth International hosted its own tent during the World Social Forum with the aim of “assuring and defending the Earth and people’s common goods” and “as an alternative to commodification and transnational control”. The tent hosted a variety of seminars and workshops, community testimonials, community awards, video festivals, and cultural presentations.



30 “Porto Alegre s’ouvre par une marche”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*. January 26, 2005.

31 “Global counter-forum draws over 100 000 social activists”, *Chicago Tribune*. January 26, 2005. “Jubilee South calls for cancelación inmediata de las deudas”, *IndyMedia Puerto Rico*. January 26, 2005.

32 “Outside View: letter to Kofi Annan”, *UPI*. February 15, 2005.

33 The entire letter can be viewed at www.washtimes.com/upi-breaking/20050215-013534-7920r.htm

Environmental issues draw crowds to Terrain “E”
Source: K. Simonson

Topics for discussion included water privatisation, biodiversity, international financial institutions, forests, corporate accountability, and events coordinated by the “Our World is Not for Sale” network.

The Campaign against Climate Change also held an open meeting calling for mass demonstrations around the world to press for urgent action against climate change. The group discussed the importance of the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol on February 16, 2005 and the Climate Conference talks which will take place in November this year.³⁴

Water

During the WSF 2005, numerous events were held on the topic of water. In fact, much of the thematic terrain “Defending Earth and People’s Common Goods” was dedicated to water. Topics ranged from alternatives to commodification to control by transnationals, sharing strategies for the defence of water, water and free trade agreements, water wars, the human right to water, constitutional reforms to protect water, and so on.³⁵

Some of the organisations involved with water-related events include: Alianza Social Continental, Amigos de la Tierra Paraguay, ASSEMAE (Brazil), ATALC-Friends of the Earth Latin America/Caribbean, Both Ends, Bread for the World Germany, Centre of Housing Rights and Evictions, CESTA (El Salvador), Church World Service, COECOceiba (Costa Rica), Comisión Nacional en Defensa del Agua y de la Vida (CNDAV, Uruguay), Comité international organisateur du forum Alternatif Mondial sur l’eau (FAME), Comité international pour le Contract Mondial de l’eau, Corporate Europe Observatory, Development VISIONS, FECON (Costa Rica), FENTAP (Peru), FIAN International, FNSA, FNU, Freedom from Debt Coalition, Friends of the Earth International, Fundación Rosa Luxemburgo, Ghana National Coalition against Privatisation, IBON, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Institute Casa Bertolt Brecht, International Forum on Globalisation, Jubilee South, Koalisi Anti-Utang, Movimiento Madre Tierra (Honduras), Polaris Institute (Canada), Public Citizen (USA), Public Service International (PSI), REBRIP, Red de Ecología Social, RED VIDA, South Asia Pacific Movement on Debt and Development, Swiss Coalition of Development Organisations, The Council of Canadians “Blue Project”, Transnational Institute, and War on Want.



Maude Barlow and others push for UN treaty on right to water
Source: K. Simonson

In one session, Council of Canadians Chairperson Maude Barlow outlined the need to establish a UN treaty on the right to water. Arguing that a convention on water (covering ecological, social, and economic aspects) would clarify water’s status as a right in itself (rather than indirectly through other rights), Barlow pushed for urgent action in order to take advantage of the existing momentum on the topic and pointed out the example of Uruguay which recently declared water a human right.³⁶

Water activists also shared ideas in preparation for the next World Water Forum which will take place in Mexico City in 2006. Water activist and Council of Canadians Chair Maude Barlow called WSF participants to join forces. “This is a planning meeting for us to take over the World Water Forum in 2006,” she declared. Suggested ideas included on-line donations to mobilise greater numbers of campesinos and indigenous peoples, convening an international tribunal against privatisation, and linking water campaigners into one large movement.³⁷

34 For more information, please contact info@campaign.org.

35 “Is another world possible? A water activist reports from Porto Alegre”, Common Dreams. February 23, 2005.

36 “Council of Canadians to build international network on right to water”; CNW. January 24th, 2005.

37 “Is another world possible? A water activist reports from Porto Alegre”, Common Dreams. February 23, 2005.

RED-VIDA (Red Interamericana de Vigilancia para la Defensa y el Derecho al Agua), the Latin American network of NGOs working on water-related issues, together with Public Services International (PSI), IDEC (Instituto Brasileño de Defensa del Consumidor), and ASSEMAE (Asociación de los Servicios Municipales de Agua y Saneamientos) discussed the need to internationalise their campaign in order to “keep water in public hands”.³⁸

Regarding privatisation, Friends of the Earth International (FOEI) released a special report on the negative social and environmental impacts of water and biodiversity privatisation at the WSF. Arguing that the case against privatisation is growing, the report traces 30 case studies from around the world. “More and more people find themselves priced out of privatised water markets, water delivery and quality have hardly improved, and water sources are being depleted rapidly,” said Tatiana Roa of CENSAT AGUA VIVA/ Friends of the Earth Colombia.³⁹ The report also examines the effects of “carbon parks”, parks that are developed to offset the carbon emissions caused by fossil fuel-addicted Northern consumers, and “biopiracy”, the privatization of biodiversity through rapidly growing amounts of patents on life forms and related traditional knowledge.⁴⁰

A new book written by water utility managers and civil society activists from more than 20 countries was also launched during the fifth WSF. The book, entitled, “Reclaiming Public Water”, makes similar conclusions on the role of water privatisation. Co-author and Transnational Institute representative Satoko Kishimoto claims, “Donor governments and institutions like the World Bank need to acknowledge the failure of privatisation and instead concentrate on boosting the performance and coverage of public utilities.”⁴¹ The book includes case studies from Porto Alegre (Brazil), Santa Cruz (Bolivia), Olavanna (Kerala, India), Penang (Malaysia), Grenoble (France), Bogota (Colombia), Recife (Brazil), Cochabamba (Bolivia), Savelugu (Ghana), Harrismith (South Africa), Manila (Philippines), among others. The book is published by Transnational Institute.

Revolution



WSF participants overflow onto street to hear ‘revolutionary’ authors
Source: K. Simonson

One of WSF 2005’s most popular debates was entitled “Changing the World without Seizing Power”. Thousands of WSF participants crowded into one room, some spilling out into the street, to hear Alex Callinicos, author of “Anti-Capitalist Manifesto”, Michael Hardt, co-author of “Empire”, and John Holloway, author of “Change the World without Seizing Power”, discuss the prospects of revolution. Describing the global transformation resulting from the expansion and multiplication of little rebellions as an “interstitial revolution”, they argued that, for such a revolution to succeed, it would have to maintain internal cohesion and avoid fragmentation. Indeed, many of the sessions on “living outside of the capitalist system” seemed to hold great appeal to WSF 2005 participants, often drawing crowds too large for even the largest venues.⁴²

38 “FSM organizaciones elaboran plataforma por el derecho al agua”, Consumers International. January 28, 2005.

39 “New report blasts water and biodiversity privatisation”, Friends of the Earth International. January 28, 2005.

40 The full report can be viewed at <http://www.foei.org/publications/link/privatization/index.html>.

41 “‘Public Water Works’, say utility managers and activists”, CommonDreams. January 25, 2005.

42 “Thoughts on the World Social Forum”, Alternatives. February 14, 2005; “A peine né, le ‘portoalegrisme’ fait grincer des dents”, Le Courrier. January 31, 2005.

Anti-War/Anti-Imperialism/Anti-Militarism

Timed to coincide with the elections in Iraq on January 30th, various anti-war movements, coalitions, and organisations joined forces in an Anti-War Assembly.⁴³ At the end of the workshop, the group issued a report of the proposed activities entitled “Call to Action of the Anti-War Assembly”⁴⁴, asking WSF participants to mobilise around the world on March 19th and 20th to mark the second anniversary of the beginning of the War on Iraq. Pakistani activist Tariq Ali appealed for the “support of the world as [Iraq] continues to confront a US militarism that endangers the existence of humanity.”⁴⁵ Organisers of the event claim that 33 countries were represented in the meeting, including participants from Iraq and Palestine.⁴⁶



Korean anti-war call
'Bush the Biggest
Terrorist'
Source: K. Simonson

In one of many anti-war sessions this year, well-known Bush critics, American linguist and author Noam Chomsky and Indian author and activist Arundhati Roy, expressed their frustration with the current US administration. Addressing an overcrowded stadium, the two speakers received cheers of support for their scathing critiques of President Bush’s War on Terror. However, both speakers also pointed to recent anti-war ‘successes’ as indications that the tide is finally turning. Emphasising the need to remain positive when faced with the American Empire, Chomsky said that the anti-war protest movement, particularly the movement within the US, is one reason for hope. “Protests in the US are at a level that has no historic precedent...It reveals public unwillingness to tolerate war”.⁴⁷ Pointing to the protest movement as a success in itself, Roy said, “We, all of us gathered here, have laid siege to the empire. We have stood up and forced it to drop its mask”.⁴⁸

However, some key WSF personalities, such as Bernard Cassen from Attac France, voiced concern over anti-war focus of WSF 2005, instead calling for the WSF to re-focus itself on “uniting struggles, particularly those against capitalism”.⁴⁹

In another event, the International Action Centre drafted an “Open Letter to the World Social Forum on the Occupation of Iraq”. Appealing to WSF participants to endorse worldwide actions on March 19-20, 2005, the letter also called for the end of the “criminal occupation of Iraq” and urged the WSF to express its solidarity with the “courageous Iraqi resistance that has derailed the US Empire”.⁵⁰



Approaching the issue of Iraq from yet another angle, the Brazilian organisation C with 35 other groups, launched a petition to try US President George W. Bush humanity. The petition, which is to be presented to the UN General Assembly in September 2005, is aimed at reminding the UN that US forces invaded Iraq illegally, destroyed Iraq’s infrastructure, and

Plans for March anti-war protests

Source: K. Simonson

43 To view the “Call from Social Movements for Mobilisations against the War, Neo-Liberalism, Exploitation, and Exclusion”, please see Appendix C.

44 To view the complete document, please see Appendix D.

45 “World Social Forum decries US occupation of Iraq”, *Periodico 26*. January 31, 2005.

46 “Forced labour, Iraq war take centre stage at WSF”, *AFP*, January 28, 2005.

47 “Chomsky, Roy shred Bush and Co.”, *IPS*. January 28, 2005.

48 “Chomsky, Roy shred Bush and Co.”, *IPS*. January 28, 2005.

49 “WSF 2005: an Irish eyewitness report”, *IndyMedia Ireland*. February 11, 2005.

50 www.uruknet.info/colonna-centrale-pagina.php

committed genocide, according to Socorro Gomes, a CEBRA PAZ spokesperson. In flagrant violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Gomez argues that “US troops, with the consent of the President, instituted a regime of systematic torture as a method of war and domination”.⁵¹

In preparation for WSF 2005, the Transnational Institute also posted a “Statement of Concern” regarding the threat of violence in the resolution of political differences in general. The statement claims that some groups have resorted to death threats and physical attacks against those engaged in various forms of struggle against militarism and capitalism. The statement also warns that well-known WSF personalities such as Walden Bello may face the threat of assassination and statement calls for solidarity with those facing such threats.⁵²



CEBRA PAZ balloon
Source: K. Simonson

At a meeting of numerous ecumenical organisations, panellists discussed the inter-related topics of international ethics, religious conflicts, and peace. The coalition, which included the World Council of Churches, discussed the current situation in Palestine, Northern Ireland, Sudan, Sri Lanka, as well as the 2002-2003 conflict in Gujarat. Through this discussion, organisers hoped to identify resources within religion for overcoming violence.⁵³

Representatives from Belgian NGO ‘For Mother Earth’ and several other NGOs launched the “Boycott Bush” campaign, a boycott of major American multinationals

More than 600 WSF participants from the US, Belgium, Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, Japan, South Korea, Sweden, among others attended the launch to symbolise their rejection of Bush-style politics. Slogans such as “My Daddy Said I Could Have an Empire” and “No Money for War” were stamped on the “Bush dollars” handed out at the event. In recognition of what the organisers deemed a “failure of other approaches” (i.e. millions of people protesting on February 15, 2003), the Boycott Bush campaign is a new attempt to stop American unilateralism in Iraq and to force the US to join the International Criminal Court and the Kyoto Protocol. Belgian boycott coordinator Pol D’Huyvetter said, “The boycott is an effective, non-violent tool that allows the world to vote with their wallets against the aggressive politics of the United States...As consumers we do not want our money to be used to fuel wars, environmental destruction and human rights violations”⁵⁴ The six major targets of the boycott are American multinationals Altria (Kraft & Philip Morris), Exxon Mobil, Chevron Texaco, Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and McDonalds.⁵⁵

Palestine

Several Palestinian and Syrian NGOs, known as the Occupied Palestine and Syrian Golan Heights Advocacy Initiative (OPGAI), called for support for their campaign to end the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights. The group appealed to WSF participants to “undertake urgent action and bring about a new era in which the indigenous people can return to their land and properties and are compensated for damages and suffering incurred, and in which all people in Palestine can freely exercise their basic individual and collective rights”. The coalition consisted of the Alternative Tourism Group, BADIL Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Defence for Children International, The East Jerusalem YMCA and YWCA, the

51 “World Social Forum has Bush in its sights”, Pravda. January 28, 2005.

52 To read the statement and view the signatories, please visit: www.tni.org/socforum-docs/concern.htm

53 “Towards an ethics of solidarity: religion, conflict, and peace at the WSF”, WCC. January 31, 2005.

54 “Los participantes del FSM convocan de nuevo boicot económico”, IndyMedia Colombia. February 3, 2005.

55 For more information, please visit www.boycottbush.org

Environmental Education Centre, the Jerusalem Centre for Women, and the Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign.⁵⁶

The “Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign” was also present at the Forum, calling on WSF participants to sign petitions and protest against the building of the West Bank wall as well as demand the return of lands confiscated for its construction.⁵⁷

Human Rights

Human rights was one of WSF 2005’s major themes. With more than 450 activities dedicated to the topic, discussions ranged from anti-terrorism and human rights, , rights of victims and the International Criminal Court, ESCE (economic, social, cultural, and environmental) rights, corporate social responsibility, to corporate accountability, and so on.

The Human Rights Development Caucus hosted an event aimed at highlighting the “role of human rights as a powerful tool to bring change and overcome the obstacles to achieving a world of dignity, peace, and justice”.⁵⁸ The event, which drew a sizeable crowd, was hosted by Dignity International, PIDHDD (Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia, y Desarrollo), ESCR-Net (International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, ICCO (Inter-Church Organisation for Development and Cooperation), Ecumenical Coalition/APRODEV, FIAN (FoodFirst Information and Action Network), Child’s Rights in the WSF, and FIDH (Fédération Internationale des Droits de l’Homme), among others.

Corporate accountability was the focus of another session. Testimonies on corporate abuse of human rights and the environment were heard from around the world, including in-depth case studies on the oil and gas industry in Nigeria, Coca Cola’s practices in Latin America, and the Bhopal chemical spill. To conclude the session, the organisers pushed for greater corporate accountability, binding norms on corporate behaviour, the creation of global standards, and collective days of action to shame poor corporate behaviour.⁵⁹ The day-long event



Corporate accountability sessions at FOE tent
Source: K. Simonson

was hosted by Greenpeace International, Friends of the Earth International (FOEI), Amnesty International, ESCR-Net (International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), CORE (Corporate Responsibility Coalition), Christian Aid, War on Want, ActionAid International, FIDH (Fédération Internationale des Droits de l’Homme), Corporate Accountability International, Justicia Global, International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal, Earthrights International, FOCO de Argentina, Observatorio Social de Brasil, Observatorio de las Transnacionales de PLADES de Peru, Ciro Torries, PIDHDD (Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo), and RAID (Rights and Accountability in Development).

Another coalition of NGOs focussed their human rights activities on three main areas: establishing extraterritorial obligations (regulating human rights at the international rather than state level), ensuring basic income for all, and implementing agrarian reforms. This group included Bread for the World, EED (Protestant Development Service), FIAN (FoodFirst International Action Network), Lutheran World Federation, PAD and EUROPAD (Processus de Articulação e Diálogo entre Agências

⁵⁶ “Palestinians at WSF: End the Israeli Military Occupation”, ElectronicIntifada.net, January 27, 2005.

⁵⁷ For more information, please visit www.stophthewall.org

⁵⁸ “Human Rights Activities”, private communication.

⁵⁹ “Human Rights Activities”, private communication.

Ecumên Européias e Entidades Parceiras no Brasil), CESE Brazil (Coordinadoria Ecumênica de Serviço), APRODEV (Association of World Council of Churches related Development Organisations in Europe), ICCO (Inter-Church Organisation for Development and Cooperation)

The human right to water was also a common issue at WSF 2005, with many discussions centring around a possible United Nations treaty on the human right to water. More information on the human right to water can be found under the section, “Water”.

Over the course of WSF 2005, several human rights groups organised a Coalition for the International Criminal Court (ICC) and mobilised organisations in an attempt to “halt the US offensive against the ICC”. In an information session on the initiative, Reed Brody, special counsel to Human Rights Watch, denounced US pressure on other countries to withdraw from the ICC or risk losing economic aid from the United States, as in the case of the Bahamas. Alirio Uribe, Secretary General of the International Federation for Human Rights, also pushed for the strengthening of the ICC as an “instrument for the universalisation of justice”.⁶⁰

This year’s Forum was also attended by the United Nations Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights Vernor Muñoz. Expressing support for the adoption of an optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCRs) that would allow the Committee on ESCRs to consider complaints from individuals and groups, Mr. Muñoz also reaffirmed the right to education as a fundamental human right and not, as the current trend indicates, a ‘negotiable service’. Consequently, the Special Rapporteur also announced that he would dedicate his 2006 report to the right to education of girls.⁶¹

Another highlight of WSF 2005 was the first meeting of the World Dignity Forum. More information on the WDF can be found under the section, “Highlights”.

Poverty

At an assembly of urban social movements, various citizen’s networks, tenant’s unions, members of indigenous groups, and housing rights activists discussed the need to establish a common agenda for action. In an appeal for unity among social activists, Cesare Ottolini from the International Alliance of Inhabitants (IAI) stated, “The time has come to join our struggles...We want to create a global solidarity ground for urban social movements for confrontation and common initiatives”.⁶² Focussing on the more than one billion people living in poor housing around the world, Ottolini called for the end of debt repayment as a pre-condition for improving the housing situation for the poor.

Several sessions were also geared toward preparation for the upcoming meeting on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which will take place in New York in September 2005. As the coordinating ‘umbrella organisation’ for numerous other Catholic NGOs (CAFOD, Cordaid, CCFD, Misereor, Trocaire, and others), International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity (CIDSE), is planning a widespread campaign to exert pressure on governments to meet the MDGs. The three issues the group has identified as priorities are: more and better forms of international aid, the cancellation of foreign debt, and the reforming of trade relations in favour of the poor.⁶³

60 “The Champions of Injustice”, IPS. January 31, 2005.

61 “UN expert supports measure to allow individuals to lodge complaints of economic, social, and cultural rights violations”, I-newswire. February 9, 2005.

62 “World Social Forum: Slums Search for a Global Voice”. AllAfrica.com, January 24, 2005.

63 <http://www.coc.org/resources/articles/display.html?ID=980>

During the Forum, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and other members of the Helsinki Process, a 2002 Finnish-Tanzanian initiative geared toward fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals, released several reports outlining the progress achieved so far. Commenting on the challenge of reaching the MDGs by 2015, José Olivio Oliveira from ICFTU described the ongoing problem of obtaining funding for measures aimed at meeting these goals. “Some propose imposing taxes on certain activities, but we would have to study this strategy carefully to ensure that it serves as an incentive. There couldn’t be taxes on weapons sales, for example, because that would mean that the eradication of poverty would depend on the continuation of this trade. A tax on this activity should be used to curb the arms trade.”⁶⁴ The Helsinki Process also called for the expansion of the Group of Eight leaders (G8) to the “G20” in order to improve its international representation.



Lula calls on world leaders to act on poverty

Source: People’s Daily Online.

The launch of the Global Call to Act against Poverty (GCAP) by Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was one of this year’s Forum highlights. Calling poverty a matter of international security, Lula called on poor countries to put pressure on rich nations to eradicate global poverty, reduce foreign debt, and establish fair trade agreements. He said, “The rich must understand that we will never have a peaceful world unless we tackle poverty.”⁶⁵ More information on GCAP can be found under the section, “Highlights”.

Food Security/Food Sovereignty/GMOs

During WSF 2005, a coalition of nearly 100 environmental groups, including Greenpeace and MST (the Brazilian Landless Peasant’s Movement), demonstrated in front of the Porto Alegre office of American agribusiness giant Monsanto to demonstrate their rejection of genetically modified foods.⁶⁶ Chanting “Monsanto, Don’t Play with our Food and Future”, demonstrators explained, “The families of farmers are denouncing the devastation Monsanto is producing with transgenic soya.” Greenpeace and Via Campesina also coordinated an action where protesters boarded a freighter laden with 32 000 tones of transgenic soy en route to France.⁶⁷

The Brazilian Women Farmers Movement also pushed for wider support for a proposed ban on genetically-modified foods. According to Luciana Passinato Piovesan, there are two main obstacles to their struggle. “In a system as capitalist as it is macho, we are oppressed on two fronts: as women and as workers.” As part of their campaign, the group has built several ‘anti-GMO’ floats for the upcoming Brazilian Carnival parades.⁶⁸

In time for WSF 2005, ActionAid released a report entitled “Power Hungry: Six Reasons to Regulate Global Food Corporations” outlining how the “activities of multinational food and agribusiness companies and their subsidiaries (Nestlé, Monsanto, Parmalat, Syngenta, and Unilever, in particular)

64 “North-South meets, more reforms needed for MDGs”, IPS. January 28, 2005.

65 “2005 WSF kicks off in Porto Alegre”, Democracy Now! January 28, 2005.

66 “Forced labour, Iraq war take centre stage at WSF”, AFP, January 28, 2005.

67 “World Social Forum protests transgenic foods”, AFP. January 28, 2005.

68 “Women sow seeds for Brazil’s future”, swissinfo. January 27, 2005.

threaten the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of poor farmers and often undermine basic rights”.⁶⁹

Hunger and the human right to food were also popular topics. Claiming that more than 800 million people go hungry each day, Rolf Kunnemann, Secretary General of Foodfirst International Action Network, described the urgent need to establish a ‘basic income’ and make good on the right to food. “Basic income creates a universal right and avoids exposing and stigmatising the hungry. The poor know what to spend their money on.”⁷⁰ Many sessions also critiqued the Brazilian government’s own anti-hunger initiative, “Fome Zero” (Zero Hunger), claiming that it is both insufficient and costly to operate. Panellists for this session included Jean Ziegler (UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food), José Graziano da Silva (Special Advisor to Brazilian President), Phillippe Van Parijs (co-founder of the Basic Income European Network), and Rolf Kunnemann.

Indigenous Peoples



Indigenous peoples host ‘mini-forum’ on land rights
Source: R. Stricher

At the opening ceremony of WSF 2005, a gathering of indigenous movements from Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, and Bolivia made a declaration to all other WSF participants: “Do not look at us as something ‘folkloric’. The most important characteristic of the WSF is the freedom to express ourselves, the respect human beings deserve and the acknowledgement that each social sector has its own demands. We, indigenous peoples, have come to this forum because we believe that, until now, we have not been taken seriously, mainly by our own governments. It is very difficult for white people to understand the spirituality of indigenous peoples; it is because of this spirituality that we continue to survive through many centuries.”⁷¹

In their own “mini-forum”, nearly 400 representatives of indigenous peoples worldwide gathered to highlight the need for their governments to safeguard indigenous rights to land. Sebastiao Haji Manchineri from COICA (Coordinating Body for Indigenous Organisations of the Amazon Basin) said, “We are here to expose how mining and forest companies are invading our lands and stealing our resources.” Manchineri added, “Our governments are often passive in the face of pressure from multinationals”.⁷² The mini forum concluded with a declaration urging members of the international community to assure indigenous peoples the right to live peacefully on their lands and the right to determine the uses of their own resources.

Land Rights and Agrarian Reform

The “Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform”, an NGO-led campaign that emerged from the December 2004 World Forum on Agrarian Reform, set out to discuss how agrarian reform is not just an issue for particular groups, but rather, its effects are felt by several hundred million peasants around the world. Egyptian economist Samir Amin, a panellist at the WSF session, declared, “The rights of

69 “One Planet, Two Very Different World”, Guardian Unlimited. January 26, 2005.

70 “Basic Income and the Eradication of Hunger and Poverty”, FIAN. January 21, 2005.

71 <http://www.coc.org/resources/articles/display.html?ID=980>

72 “Les peuples indigenes au FSM”, Le Nouvel Observateur. January 27, 2005.

women are not only of interest to 3 billion women, but to the 6 billion people of the world, men and women alike. The same is valid for the rights of peasants and rural people.”⁷³ The NGO coalition, including Land Centre for Human Rights (Egypt), the Landless Peasant Movement (MST, Brazil), Coordinadora Indígena Y Campesina (Colombia), Comissão Pastoral da Terra (Brazil), FSPI (Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International, Phillipines), the Land Research Action Network (Mexico), among others.

Also during this year’s Forum, members of the MST (Brazilian Landless Peasants Movement) hosted WSF delegates in order to give them a “closer look at rural realities in Brazil”. One group, including participants from Swiss news agency, SwissInfo, visited a camp of 200 families, and was shocked to see that less than three percent of the Brazilian population controls more than two-thirds of Brazil’s arable land.⁷⁴ “The contrast between the camp’s tightly packed tents and the abandoned property highlights the absurdity of the system”, the SwissInfo article stated.⁷⁵ The landless peasants are currently awaiting a court decision on whether 100 of them will be able to occupy the property. If not, the group will be forced to move elsewhere.

Gender

A two-day “Feminist Dialogue” was held before the official opening of WSF 2005. The event gathered organisations from seven international feminist networks and organisations to discuss different feminist perspectives on issues of concern for women’s movements. This year’s focus was on the intersections between militarization, war, fundamentalism, and neo-liberal globalisation as well as on more effectively intervening in the broader WSF process as feminists.⁷⁶ The coordinating group for the event included ISIS International (Manila), Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era (DAWN), INFORM (Sri Lanka), Women’s International Coalition for Economic Justice (WICEJ), Articulación Feminista de Mercosur (AFM-Latin America/Caribbean), African Women’s Development and Communication Network, FEMNET Africa, and the National Network of Autonomus Women’s Groups (India).

The World March of Women held their own march hours before the official opening march of the WSF. The march, which mocked traditional perceptions of ‘women’s issues’, was designed to draw attention to the issues of abortion and negative images of women in the media. The World March of Women also announced the upcoming launch of the “Women’s Global Charter of Humanity”. The Charter, which will begin in March 2005, will pass through more than 50 countries, including both rural and urban areas. The event’s slogan is, “Whatever the journey, keep walking!”⁷⁷

The World Council of Churches hosted a session entitled “Women’s spirituality, life, and dignity” which examined different views on how women from their particular perspective can contribute to ‘building another world’, one which overcomes gender and racial discrimination, violence, and hierarchical structures.” Reverend Eunice Santana from the Christian Church of Puerto Rico argued, “It has always been the women who have refused the decisions of the powerful and the destruction of Mother Earth. It has always been the women who shout out ‘No more mouths to suffer hunger, no more hands to remain empty, no more children to become the targets of machine guns’.”⁷⁸

⁷³ “Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform stages events at WSF”, FIAN. January 21, 2005.

⁷⁴ “Cutting the Wire”, IndyMedia Brasil. January 27, 2005.

⁷⁵ “Landless peasants hope for a new future in their camp along the highway”, SwissInfo. January 26, 2005.

⁷⁶ “Feminist dialogue at the WSF”, ISIS website. www.isiswomen.org/onsite/wsf/fd2005.html

⁷⁷ “Whatever the journey, keep walking!”, Penelopes.org. Date unknown. For more information on the Women’s Global Charter for Humanity, please visit <http://www.marchemondiale.org/en/>.

⁷⁸ “Ecumenical presence at the WSF”, The Christian Post. January 28, 2005.

The International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN) also met to discuss how the 10th anniversary of both the inception of the World Trade Organisation and the UN World Conference on Women present a key moment to assess how women's rights have been affected by trade and investment liberalisation. The event, organised by IGTN and AFM (Mercosur Feminist Articulation), REBRIP (Rede de integração dos povos), AMB (Brazilian Women Articulation), and ActionAid International, attempted to identify strategies in preparation for the December 2005 WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong and discussed methods for improving South-South and North-South collaboration in the struggle against neo-liberal trade policies.

Nuclear Weapons

Abolition 2000, a global network of over 2 000 organisations in more than 95 countries, held a panel and workshop to promote the idea of a global movement for the abolition of nuclear weapons in conjunction with the Mayors for Peace campaign. The group also proposed May 1st, 2005, as an international day of action for a nuclear free world as it coincides with the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty Conference at the United Nations in New York. With the help of anti-war groups such as United for Peace and Justice (USA), protests are already being organised in large urban centres worldwide.⁷⁹

'For Mother Earth', a Belgian affiliate of Friends of the Earth, announced its international peace walk to mark the 60th anniversary of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. For Mother Earth organisers expect hundreds of participants will join the walk to promote a treaty for a worldwide ban on nuclear weapons. The walk will commence on July 26th in Ypres and will end at the NATO nuclear weapons base at Kleine Brogel, passing the NATO Headquarters in Brussels along the way. During the march, activists will seek support from mayors as part of the "Mayors for Peace" initiative. The march will conclude with a peace camp from August 6th to 9th at Kleine Brogel.



Greenpeace floats an anti-nuclear message above WSF
Source: R. Stricher

Small Arms Control

The campaign for a treaty on the international trade of small arms was led by Oxfam, Amnesty International, and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) with participation from Viva Rio, Instituto Sau de Paz, and the Arias Foundation. Organisers collected photos of WSF participants as part of their "Million Faces" petition in support of the arms treaty.⁸⁰

Reform of the United Nations

In one of the many sessions on the reform of international institutions, WSF participants discussed the creation of a second chamber in the United Nations. According to Peter Hesse of CONGO (Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with the United Nations), the chamber, which would consist of elected representatives from each country, would also allow for countries with 10 million

⁷⁹ "Abolition Now! at the WSF in Porto Alegre, Brazil", IndyMedia Brazil. January 26, 2005.

⁸⁰ For more information, please visit www.controlarms.org.

or more people to have extra representation.⁸¹ However, critics of this proposal pointed out that representation of indigenous populations and religious entities under this proposal could be problematic.

At the same session, some WSF participants called for the World Social Forum to be developed into the second chamber of the UN. Again, critics like Johan Wittkamper of the Global Youth Action Network pointed out the infrastructure to enact such changes does not yet exist. Others felt that, before any other changes could take place, power dynamics within the UN needed to change. As Jennifer Opiyo, a Kenyan participant, explained, “The UN is too weak. We can’t use it to initiate change. We need to give the UN power first for it to be able to do it.”⁸²

On the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, the ability of the organisation to deal with “superpowers” also came into question, particularly given the United States invasion of Iraq. In the session entitled, “UN or USA? What do you Prefer?”, WSF participants debated how to make “Another UN possible, one with the people”. Italian host NGO Tavolla della Pace pushed for the creation of an entirely new UN. “The UN we want is a UN of the Peoples, not a UN of armed sovereign states.”⁸³

UN reform activists also called for “new, major global mobilisations against poverty, war, and unilateralism and for justice, peace, and democracy” on September 10, 2005, the fifth anniversary of the UN gathering to assess progress on the Millennium Development Goals.⁸⁴

At a more general level, The World Campaign for In-Depth Reform of the System of International Institutions urged all civil society groups at WSF 2005 to join forces to strengthen democratic rule internationally. Following the London Declaration made in 2004, the World Campaign calls on “all citizens of the world, all its peoples, and particularly, its political leaders, to give their full support to promoting a process of in-depth reform of the system of international institutions in order to establish a framework for fair, democratic global governance that can safeguard present and future generations from war, poverty, injustice, the tendency toward cultural uniformity, and environmental degradation”.⁸⁵

Media & Communication Rights

Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS), together with Inter-Press Services (IPS), Le Monde Diplomatique, and the Observatoire International des Media convened a panel to raise awareness of media and communication issues as well as to call for increased democratisation of the media. Faced with the challenges of government and corporate cooptation of the media, the undemocratisation of the Internet, the commodification of knowledge and culture, the panel sought to increase public space for sharing civil society actions and initiatives.

CRIS also outlined its three “communication priorities” for 2005, including: increasing awareness of the Tunisian government’s violation of rights of access to information, freedom of expression, and respect for privacy, particularly as the host country of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2005; defending communication rights against free trade impacts while respecting cultural and

81 “To reform UN, get folk involved: the WSF as UN’s second chamber?” IPS. January 28, 2005.

82 “To reform UN, get folk involved”, IPS. January 28, 2005.

83 “Reclaiming ‘our’ UN—and changing it”, IPS. January 29, 2005.

84 “Reclaiming ‘our’ UN—and changing it”, IPS. January 29, 2005.

85 For more information, please visit www.reformcampaign.net

media diversity; and, calling on social movements to initiate a communication rights movement at the grassroots level.⁸⁶

On a more positive note, those gathering for the Fifth International Independent Information Exchange (known as Ciranda in Portuguese), reasserted their ability to resist media hegemony. Affiliated with Planeta Porto Alegre and the publication *Other Words*, Ciranda claimed that its network has successfully resisted numerous attacks on its independence because of its ability to disclose information in real time, thereby preventing any possible 'cover-ups' or 'oversights' by the mass media. As media activists gathered at WSF 2005 to exchange ideas and build solidarity, some claimed that the alternative media movement could only get stronger.⁸⁷

WSF 2005 was also marked by the first Information and Communication World Forum. For more information on the event, please see the section, "Parallel Events".

Information Technology

Open-source technology enthusiasts gathered at WSF 2005 to discuss the advantages of non-corporate controlled software. According to the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a cyberspace civil liberties group, Brazil is already spending more on licensing fees on proprietary software than it spends on hunger. In response, WSF panellist and open software activist John Barlow argued, "Poor nations can't solve their problems unless they stop paying expensive software licensing fees."⁸⁸ The solution, according to these groups, lies in "weaning oneself from Microsoft" and persuading countries to use the Linux operating system in its place.

In front of a crowd of WSF participants, Brazilian Minister of Culture and renowned musician Gilberto Gil described his plan to challenge Bill Gates and other information-technology corporations on various cultural topics—music, film, and digital technology. Claudio Prado, the Brazilian government official responsible for overseeing Brazil's planned switchover to open software, commented, "Free software and digital access is the most subversive alternative to the consumer world". He added, "It marks a change in the concept of civilisation from what we have today—in how things are produced, broadcast, and disseminated. In the long term, it will all be about equality."⁸⁹

The WSF also hosted events for open source technology activists, including the "Free Knowledge Laboratory", at the Intercontinental Youth Camp.

G8 Summit

Many groups also used the WSF 2005 to prepare for the upcoming G8 summit which is set to take place in Gleneagles, Perthshire, Scotland from July 6th to 8th, 2005. In the Assembly of Social Movements, calls were made to mobilise a massive resistance to the meeting. The anti-G8 network 'Dissent!' took a leading role in coordinating the various actions. A direct action protest against the nuclear submarine base in Faslane, Scotland is planned for July 4th, citywide blockades are planned for July 6th, and a Day of Action against Climate Change is booked for July 8th.⁹⁰

86 "CRIS statement to Social Movements Assembly", private communication. January 2005.

87 "Forming the 5th International Independent Information Exchange", Planeta Porto Alegre, January 20, 2005.

88 "Activists urge free open-source software", AP. January 29, 2005.

89 "Brazil's 'intellectual Woodstock' beings to drive the global agenda", American Prospect. February 11, 2005.

90 For more information, please visit www.dissent.org.uk.

CIDSE (International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity) also gathered WSF participant signatures on a “giant postcard”. The card will be sent to the G8 leaders as part of the Global Call for Action against Poverty and will urge the leaders to fulfil their commitments by meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

Trade & Labour Unions

This year, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and World Confederation of Labour (WCL) jointly organised a series of events entitled “The Social Dimension of Globalisation”. The new level of coordination between the two groups was designed to “showcase a new era for the labour movement in Porto Alegre” and to facilitate the development of new ways to pressure governments and international institutions to address the social agenda. At WSF 2005, the groups issued a joint statement calling for the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the report of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) report on last year’s World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation.⁹¹ Despite some progress over the past year, the ICFTU feels as though there is still much more to do, particularly when it comes to establishing proper channels of communication for workers’ concerns in institutions such as the World Trade Organisation.⁹²

Both groups also strongly endorsed the launch of the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) at the WSF. Following their participation in this year’s WSF, ICFTU Secretary General Guy Rider and WCL Secretary General Willy Thys travelled to the World Economic Forum to spread the message about workers’ rights and the GCAP.⁹³

In other WSF sessions on labour issues, panellists discussed the importance of building solidarity among trade and labour unions worldwide. “We think in this age of globalisation we can no longer work only in one country,” said Dieter Eich of the Confederation of German Trade Unions. “Brazilian unions dealing with a German company are limited in how much pressure they can apply. But if German unions can also apply pressure, it can have a lot of impact.”⁹⁴

Several labour-related panels also addressed concerns over child labour and slave-like conditions around the world. With an estimated 27 million people, mainly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, currently employed in sub-standard, if not slave-like, conditions, trade and labour unions discussed the possibility of exporting the ‘Brazilian model of fighting forced labour’⁹⁵

Despite a strong showing at this year’s World Social Forum, some critics have claimed that the international labour movement has yet to successfully use the WSF to advance its agenda. Considered “late on the scene”—the ICFTU only decided to engage with civil society at the WSF in 2004, some have questioned the Forum’s ability to engage important social actors like labour unions, a potentially serious weakness of the WSF.⁹⁶

91 For more information on the report, please visit www.ilo.org/wcsdg.

92 “WSF: Trade unions attempt more unity”, IPS. January 25, 2005.

93 “WSF: Trade unions and civil society outline basis for fair globalization”, ICFTU Online. January 31, 2005.

94 “Alternative world forum pushes for UN development goals”, SFGate.com, January 29, 2005.

95 “Forced labour, Iraq war, take centre stage at WSF”, AFP, January 28, 2005.

96 “The future of the World Social Forum”, IndyMedia Boston. February 13, 2005.

HIGHLIGHTS

Opening Ceremony/March for Peace

On January 26th, 2005, more than 200 000 people flooded the streets of Porto Alegre to mark the official opening of the fifth World Social Forum.⁹⁷ Among those walking in the “March for Peace” were representatives of social movements, NGOs, trade and labour unions, religious groups, indigenous peoples, student and youth groups, and so on from all corners of the world.⁹⁸ While some demonstrators carried a large blue planet, others carried placards denouncing war, Bush, the World Bank and IMF, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and the World Trade Organisation. A small group of demonstrators used sticks to beat an effigy of President Bush before setting it alight.⁹⁹ As the march wound back and forth through the streets, marchers chanted “Nao a la Guerra” (No to War), “Bush, Blair Assassinos” (Bush, Blair Assassins), and “Um outro mundo e possivel!” (Another World is Possible). The march concluded with one minute of silence for the victims of the 2004 tsunami and marchers calling for the cancellation of all debt owed by the 11 affected countries.¹⁰⁰

Cultural Performances



Pôr-do-Sol Amphitheatre
Source: K. Simonson

WSF 2005 emphasised the role of culture in ‘transferring’ the Forum from Mumbai back to Porto Alegre. More than 300 cultural performances took place within the World Social Territory, including music, art, audiovisual displays, protests, ‘circus’ performances, dance, theatre, poetry, and narration. The Pôr-do-Sol Amphitheatre also played host to some celebrity performers, including French/Spanish rock group Manu Chao, Indian jazz group Amit Heri, folk performer Rabbi Shergil, and Brazilian Minister of Culture and musician Gilberto Gil.

This year’s Forum also saw the return of the “Cultural Network”, a ‘horizontal’ structure created at the WSF 2003 to transform the world through art and culture. Including participants from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Peru, the group pushed for NGOs to join forces with governments and other entities in order to effect greater social change. As Argentine activist Ricardo Talento explained, “A mix of theatre, dance, music, and art, among other cultural expressions, is essential so that people no longer feel alienated...To shake up this population, cultural programmes help a great deal.”¹⁰¹

97 www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/dinamic.php?pagina=encerra2005_ing; “The Movement Meets in Brazil”, Socialist Worker, February 5, 2005; “WSF 2005: an Irish eyewitness report”, IndyMedia Ireland. February 11, 2005.

98 “Social Movements Realise Protests in WSF”, IndyMedia Brazil, January 28th, 2005.

99 “Social Forum activists rail against Bush”, Sydney Morning Herald. January 29, 2005.

100 “World Social Forum seeks new momentum in Brazil”, AFP. January 26th, 2005.

101 “Culture a tool to change the world”, IPS. January 31, 2005.

The Global Call for Action against Poverty (GCAP)

One of this year's key events was the launch of the Global Call for Action against Poverty (GCAP). Backed by an alliance of more than 100 NGOs from around the world, the GCAP was launched in front of nearly 13 000 WSF participants by Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (commonly referred to as Lula). The Call to Action is a worldwide campaign to force world leaders to live up to their promises and adopt concrete policies to fight poverty. The Call asks leaders of the G8 countries—Germany, France, Italy, Japan, UK, US, and Canada, to make history in 2005 and help millions of people out of poverty by acting to cancel poor countries' debt, increase aid, and take action to make trade fair. During WSF 2005, as well as upcoming events such as the G8 and FTAA meetings, and the UN Millennium Summit in September 2005, activists were urged to wear white headbands or armbands to signify their support for the GCAP.¹⁰²

The WSF launch of the GCAP was backed by Nobel laureate Jose Saramago, former Director General of UNESCO Federico Mayor Zaragoza, former Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano, Head of IPS Roberto Savio, Brazilian Chief Minister Luis Dulci, Director of Le Monde Diplomatique Ignacio Ramonet, Nobel laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivé, among others. The GCAP was also launched at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland by a group of leading political and civil society actors including Bono, UK Chancellor Gordon Brown, former Irish Prime Minister Mary Robinson, President of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) Sharan Burrow, and French Finance Minister Herve Gaymard¹⁰³



WSF participants watch Lula launch the GCAP on the big screen

Source: L. Abreu

Commenting on the need for the GCAP, Katia Maia from Oxfam International said, "In 2005, the leaders of rich countries have the opportunity to lift millions of people out of poverty. The world has never been wealthier, yet rich nations are giving less and less. Across the globe, millions of people are being denied the most basic human needs—clean water, food, health care, and education. People are dying while their leaders delay debt relief and aid."¹⁰⁴ ActionAid International's Asia Director, John Samuel, added, "This is a wake-up call for the world's leaders. For far too long we have lived in a world of unprecedented poverty and injustice. Now is the time for change. We demand that rich countries increase aid and make it work better for poor people, cancel world debt and change the rules of world trade so that they favour the interests of the poor." ActionAid Americas Director Adriano Campolina Soares also noted, "It is not acceptable that 30 000 children die needlessly everyday from the causes of poverty. That is why we want 2005 to be remembered as the year that changed the world. It is up to everyone to play their part, whether that be by wearing a white band or attending a demonstration. We want to show the world's leaders that they must take action—at the end of the year, they will be judged on whether they have delivered a breakthrough."¹⁰⁵

Despite much of the optimism and excitement surrounding the launch of the GCAP, many WSF participants also looked upon the event with some cynicism. Arguing that world leaders have failed to fulfil promises in the past, some felt that the GCAP was just another 'empty promise'.

¹⁰² For more information, please visit www.whiteband.org.

¹⁰³ "Celebrities at World Social Forum publicly support Global Call to Action against Poverty", Oxfam. January 29, 2005.

¹⁰⁴ "Oxfam at WSF: World leaders must act to make a breakthrough on poverty in 2005", Oxfam International. January 25, 2005.

¹⁰⁵ "President Lula takes on challenge to tackle poverty", ActionAid International. January 26, 2005. For more information please visit www.whiteband.org.

Lula

To the more than 15 000 cheering supporters packing the stadium, Brazilian President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva's launch of the Global Call to Action represented the peak of this year's World Social Forum. In his address, Lula also described his foreign policy achievements over the past years while fans sporting "100% Lula" roared with applause.

For others, however, Lula's silence regarding his government's inability to fulfil the election promise of "lifting millions of Brazilians out of poverty" spoke volumes. The failure of Brazil's "Fome Zero" (Zero Hunger), combined with Lula's turn toward neo-liberal policies (including the signing of an agreement with the IMF, the rollback of pension rights, and taking sides with employers in a union strike) could explain why, amidst the thousands of cheering fans, a small group of demonstrators heckled the President, shouting "traitor".¹⁰⁶

Meanwhile, outside the stadium members of the PSTU (the Socialist Party of Unified Workers) chanted, "What treason, What a sad thing, This formal metal worker now working for the elite!"¹⁰⁷ Another anti-Lula demonstrator representing the MST (Brazilian Landless Peasant's movement) explained his growing frustration with the government. "We are in opposition to the current government of President Lula because they are implementing anti-worker policies and because they have not met their promises from before the elections". However, the representative also acknowledged, "Our struggle by workers and peasants is a fight not just against the Brazilian economic system but against capitalism which is the source of our problems."¹⁰⁸

Although Lula acts as one of the only known "bridges" between the World Social Forum and the World Economic Forum, the annual gathering of top political and economic decision-makers, his role in conveying the message of the poor is on shaky ground. While some see Lula fulfilling a key function as the "voice of developing nations", others feel that Lula has become a "defender of the capitalist structure"¹⁰⁹. As Belgian theologian and WSF participant Francois Houtart noted, "If [Lula] is hailed once again [at the World Economic Forum], we have to fear for the future of Brazil, since you cannot serve two masters".¹¹⁰ WSF founder Chico Whittaker also warned that Lula must "face his problems" and take note that of the message that "you were elected to change things in Brazil, especially social problems, and nothing has happened."¹¹¹

Meanwhile, some Forum participants complained that the presence of such 'celebrities' at WSF 2005 served only to obscure key issues and stifle important debates such as the Brazilian government's stance on the Free Trade Area of the Americas and the World Trade Organisation, as well as Lula's 'broken promises'. Others argued that, by including Lula, PT members and Lula supporters used the World Social Forum as political rally and an opportunity to "burnish Lula's credentials" before fleeing for the World Economic Forum.¹¹²

106 "Another World Turns", The Nation. January 30, 2005; "WSF 2005: an Irish eyewitness report", IndyMedia Ireland. February 11, 2005.

107 "Raucous return to Porto Alegre", IPS. January 27, 2005.

108 "WSF 2005: an Irish eyewitness report", IndyMedia Ireland. February 11, 2005.

109 "Brazil's Lula tries to woo both rich and poor", Reuters. January 27, 2005.

110 "Brazilian president jeered in World Social Forum", Mercosur. January 28, 2005.

111 "WSF ends with protests against imperialism", AP. February 1, 2005.

112 "Crossroads for the movement", Socialist Worker. February 4, 2005.

Chavez

While some WSF participants reluctantly welcomed Brazilian President Lula, the greeting of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez could only be described as enormously enthusiastic. With nearly 30 000 participants crowding into the Gigantinho Stadium, and many more waiting outside, some groups in the crowd began chanting “Lula no, Chavez yes”, reflecting their strong support for the Bolivarian revolutionary leader.¹¹³ In return, Chavez endorsed the World Social Forum as the “most important political event in the world”.¹¹⁴



Chavez addresses thousands of cheering fans at WSF 2005
Source: I. Jardim

During his address to the crowd, Chavez cited radicals of the past, including Marx, Lenin, Mao, Castro, Che Guevara, later exposing his red Che t-shirt to the crowd. Calling for the “reclaiming of socialism as a thesis, a project, and a path,” Chavez also expressed the need for a “new type of socialism, a humanist one which puts humans, and not machines or the state, ahead of everything...This is the debate we must promote around the world”.¹¹⁵

In his speech, Chavez also taunted President Bush with calls that the (“Where is the ALCA mister? The ALCA is dead”).¹¹⁶ His attacks on the failed FTAA drew massive applause from WSF participants¹¹⁷. Regarding the FTAA, Chavez also took advantage of the opportunity to promote his response to the ALCA (or Free Trade Area of the Americas in English), the “ALBA” (the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas). In his plan, Chavez outlined greater cooperation with Cuba and all its Latin American neighbours, and the launch of TeleSur, a Latin American television network.

Defending Lula from the hecklers, Chavez described the difficulty of effecting social change. While calling on Lula’s critics to be patient, Chavez also asserted that the era of American power was soon coming to a close. “When imperialism feels weak, it resorts to brute force. The attacks on Venezuela are a sign of weakness, ideological weakness. Nowadays, nobody defends neo-liberalism”.¹¹⁸

During his stay in Porto Alegre, Chavez also visited a community of landless peasants to draw attention to the problem of landlessness in Latin America.¹¹⁹

World Dignity Forum

At the fourth WSF in Mumbai, social movements and people’s organisations gathered from all over the world to support each others’ efforts in the fight for justice, equality, and human rights, especially those of the Dalits and other oppressed sectors of society. The resulting “World Dignity Forum” was established to address the problem of ethnic discrimination and launch a global campaign for dignity as an “intrinsic right to be guaranteed to every human being”.



113 “WSF 2005: an Irish eyewitness report”, IndyMedia Ireland. February 2005.

114 “World Social Forum delegates demand better world”, Prensa Latina. February 2005.

115 “WSF 2005: an Irish eyewitness report”, IndyMedia Ireland. February 2005.

116 “Chavez blasts US at social forum”, AP. January 31, 2005.

117 “Venezuelan leader ends World Social Forum”, Big News Network. February 2005.

118 “Chavez vows WSF”, Green Left. February 9, 2005.

119 “Global counter-forum draws over 100 000 social activists”, Chicago Tribune. January 29, 2005.

The World Dignity Forum at WSF 2005 was organised by World Dignity Forum, National Conference of Dalit Organisations, Heinrich Böll Foundation, All India Pasmada Muslim Mahaz, National Forum for Forest People and Forest Workers, ActionAid International—Asia, Nepal Dalit NGO Federation, Social Network for Justice and Human Rights, Via Campesina, Brazilian Landless Workers Movement (MST), Social Movements Network, Criola, Sustainable and Democratic Brazil (FASE), Inter-American Platform for Economic, Social, and Cultural Human Rights. The day-long event brought together representatives of the Colombian Qulombola community, peasant, indigenous, and African-American leaders from across the Americas, Dalits and other members of the lower castes in India, and others. At the end of the World Dignity Forum, participants agreed on the importance of creating a nexus for resolving the problems they hold in common. “We are all brothers and sisters and we face the same kinds of problems. We only want a space to make these problems known,” said Joenia Wapichana, indigenous representative from Brazilian state of Roraima.¹²⁰

Speakers at World Dignity Forum
Source: K. Simonson

Despite the World Dignity Forum’s attempts to bring Dalit issues back into the spotlight this year, some WSF participants felt that there has been too little progress since WSF Mumbai. Although the World Social Forum was seen as an opportunity to frame demands at the international level, some felt that this did not happen and that, following the meeting in Mumbai, there was no follow-up to strengthen the movement. Ramesh Haralkar of the Sweepers’ Organisation said, “We are the same as we always were. There is no reservation problem here—cleaning work is 100 percent reserved for the Dalits. Even at the WSF in Mumbai too, we cleaned the garbage.” Haralkar claimed that, despite all of the good intentions to include Dalits at last year’s WSF, Mumbai did little to change his situation. “It did not involve the Dalit forces...Yes, the WSF created a good atmosphere...but we did not use the spirit, we did not follow up. Left parties have started giving importance to the caste question but they did not do this in the WSF. The Dalits are a major force, they could have been used.”¹²¹

Puxirum of Indigenous Arts and Knowledge



Indigenous culture showcased at WSF
“Puxirum”

Source: I. Jardim

This year’s WSF featured a special terrain to showcase the culture and struggles of indigenous peoples from Latin America. Roughly 400 native people representing some 100 different indigenous groups displayed their art, handicrafts, foods, forms of resistance, and spiritualities at the Forum. The 4-tent “Puxirum”, organised by COICA (the Coordinating Body for the Indigenous Organisations of the Amazon Basin), aimed to show that indigenous life is “another world” in itself. Based on the principles of solidarity, the “Puxirum” is an effort to live according to the meaning of the Guarani word: “a joining of efforts for a common goal”.¹²²

¹²⁰ “United by dream of a world without discrimination”, IPS. January 31, 2005.

¹²¹ “For India’s Dalits, little change a year later”, IPS. January 28, 2005.

¹²² “Indigenous peoples from Latin America show their ancestral culture”, WSF website. December 28, 2004; “Indigenous peoples claim their own space”, IPS. January 19, 2005.

MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE WSF

There was widespread criticism among WSF participants this year that, of the little mainstream media news coverage of the WSF, the majority of it centred on the Brazilian President. In interview with Democracy Now!, Njoki Njoroge Njehu from 50 Years is Enough network commented on WSF media coverage. “The New York Times and mainstream media continue to distinguish themselves by kind of missing the boat all the time on important things that are happening, especially with social movements”. Though Njehu acknowledged that it was important to have coverage of the launch of the Global Call to Action against Poverty, she argued that “what is really important is that on the platform with President Lula, people from all over the world are talking, and not about UN proposals, but about initiatives and strategies and innovations and engaging in the fight against poverty... The New York Times perhaps could have written about the referendum in Uruguay where that country has decided that water is a human right, not a need, and it’s guaranteed to everyone. And Argentina is looking at the same kind of thing, so there are a lot of wonderful stories to be told here. Interesting stories, colourful stories of music and resistance and dance and creativity, but they are missing it. Then again, I’m not surprised.”¹²³

Some independent media, such as The Dominion, a Canadian non-profit publication, claimed that the mass media, particularly from Canada, were notably absent from this year’s WSF. While arguing that Canadian and American media “flocked to Davos to cover the World Economic Forum,” they were “completely missing in action from this year’s Social Forum”, even despite this year’s WSF attracting record numbers. According to Dr. Elizabeth Smythe, Concordia University, “Much of the focus even of [Canadian] news is on isolated events, individuals, and what might more broadly be called ‘infotainment’...[not on] social structures and economic processes that generate inequality.”¹²⁴

There are also great expectations for Venezuela’s new media creation “TeleSur”, a pet project of President Hugo Chavez described during his speech to WSF masses on January 31st. Seeking to counter the “media dictatorship of the big international news networks”, Chavez outlined his plans to use TeleSur as a “united voice from the South to the rest of the world”. The Venezuelan based network will include Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and possibly Uruguay, once the satellite is operational.¹²⁵

PARALLEL EVENTS

In the days before, during, or immediately following the fifth World Social Forum, more than 20 parallel events took place. Some of these are described below.¹²⁶

Information and Communication World Forum (ICWF)

The first “Information and Communication World Forum” was convened on January 25, 2005, in preparation for the fifth World Social Forum. The day’s events included a panel discussion on mass media and the need for strategies to challenge corporate power over the media. Panel participants

123 “2005 WSF kicks off in Porto Alegre”, Democracy Now! January 28, 2005.

124 “Canadian media missing from World Social Forum”, The Dominion. February 4, 2005.

125 “Venezuela aims to channel voice of the South”, IPS. January 25, 2005.

126 Other parallel events included the World Health Forum, the World Judges Forum, the World Parliamentary Forum, and the World Social Forum on Health.

included French academic Armand Matellard, Le Monde Diplomatique editor Ignacio Ramonet, Novib/Oxfam Netherlands representative Adrie Pagma, Greenpeace Brazil director Marcelo Furtado, European Parliament member Giulietto Chiesa, AMARC (World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters) President Steve Buckley, and American academic Andrew Calabrese. The session was moderated by IPS Director General Mario Lubetkin, Media Watch Global Secretary General Roberto Savio, and Nexus Research representative Sean O'Siochru.

Participants agreed that, thus far, WSF coverage has been “passive” and that “little effort has been made to bring the meeting’s message to the mainstream media”. Reaching out to the world, however, was viewed as a priority in order to promote diversity, rather than “confusion”. ICWF participants also called for journalists to transmit a common global message regarding the WSF, rather than just having NGO journalists speaking to their own fragmented audiences. A proposal to extend WSF coverage beyond the dates of the WSF and include issues and events throughout the entire year was also met with approval, given that so few people understand the WSF as an ongoing process and not just a five or six-day annual meeting.¹²⁷

However, ICWF participants also noted that the mass media, with its narrow focus on sensationalism, constitutes a serious obstacle to achieving these goals. As Ignacio Ramonet argued, “In France, a defence contractor just bought Le Figaro. The danger of this is that the corporations, who are buying up major media companies have no, or very little, connection with the media industry and thus no commitment to journalistic integrity”.¹²⁸

Participants at the ICWF also pledged their ongoing support for Media Watch Global and backed the CRIS (Communication Rights in the Information Society) campaign’s preparations for the upcoming World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) which will take place in Tunisia in December 2005.¹²⁹

World Migration Forum

Approximately 600 representatives from 35 countries gathered in Porto Alegre in advance of the World Social Forum to discuss the realities of global migration and the roughly 175 million migrants worldwide. At the conclusion of the World Migration Forum, the group produced a statement outlining the causes, consequences, and alternatives to the current situation, and warned that, without a change of course, “There will not be stability in the migration rate until around the year 2050.”¹³⁰ In the meantime, the group called for an examination of the “mechanisms of globalisation” (including domestic and foreign regulation) that violate human rights and called for the establishment of ethical guidelines to resolve complex migration problems.

World Forum on Theology and Liberation

From January 21 to 25th, more than 180 theologians, including youth delegates, gathered in advance of the WSF for their own “World Forum on Theology and Liberation”. Organised by ecumenical organisations in Latin America and supported by international bodies such as the World Council of Churches, the Forum aimed to support the WSF slogan “Another World is Possible” while focussing its own interfaith discussions on how to achieve such a world. Forum coordinator Luis

127 “Fighting for the Right to Information”, IPS. January 26, 2005.

128 “WSF discusses corporate control of the media”, IndyMedia Bay Area, January 29, 2005.

129 “The challenges of the WSF and the responsibilities of communicators”, IPS. January 27, 2005.

130 “In search of a decent life”, IPS. January 28, 2005.

Carlos Susin stressed the Forum as an opportunity for “mutual dialogue for Christian theologians of all continents...in a context that is marked by violent conflict between religions”.¹³¹

Intercontinental Youth Camp (IYC)

Under the impression that only representatives of ‘organised parts of civil society’ were welcome to participate in the first WSF, some youth activists felt excluded from the WSF process. Occupying Parque Harmonia in downtown Porto Alegre in protest, the group formed the first Intercontinental Youth Camp to devise specific ways for youth to insert themselves into the WSF and discuss relevant topics (the environment, spatial relations with the citizens of Porto Alegre, sustainable development, bio-construction, and activism).

The IYC 2002, dedicated to Carlo Guiliani (the Italian activist killed in the Genoa protests), attracted some 15 000 youth activists. In 2003, the IYC was recognised as a legitimate, yet different, space by the WSF for the first time. The third IYC “City of Cities” attracted more than 25 000 youth to Parque Harmonia. The fourth IYC, held for the first time outside of Porto Alegre in Mumbai, India, attracted more than 5 000 campers.



With the return of the IYC to Porto Alegre in 2005, IYC organisers aimed for the camp to serve as a “focal point to alternative and anti-capitalist practices, experiences, discussions, and exchange”.¹³² IYC organisers also promoted the horizontal structure and self-managed nature of the camp as a model for social organisation. The Organising Committee of the IYC, the group responsible for representing the IYC within the WSF process, includes individuals, organisations, and social movements.

Within the IYC, tents were clustered in miniature ‘neighbourhoods’, with many urban services readily available—food, recycling, medical assistance, childcare, etc. For many of the campers, the IYC represents the manifestation of the WSF slogan, “Another World is Possible”. In the words of one camper, “All these people from many different countries are living in this small space and using the same resources! It is possible to do this.”¹³³

Specific campaigns undertaken by the fifth IYC included the “flag of flags”, an attempt to collect flags from around the world to represent the diversity of participants; the “mosaic of books”, an effort to further the World Social Library’s collection of texts and books in various languages on the themes of the WSF; the “memory project”, a multi-media exhibition of the four previous camps; as well as anti-multinational boycotts and information/education sessions on various WSF and IYC relevant topics (free information, environmental impact reduction, etc.).

The “Caracol Intergalaktika”, the meeting place of the IYC, also called on activists to mobilise for upcoming events such as the IMF/World Bank annual meetings in Washington in April, the G8

¹³¹ “Seeking a theology for another possible world”, WCC. January 24th, 2005; 2005.

¹³² www.acampamentofsm.org

¹³³ “Inside the Youth Camp”, IPS. January 31, 2005.



“Nomads” at the Caracol Intergalaktika
Source: K. Simonson

summit in Scotland in July, the FTAA meetings in Argentina in November, and the WTO Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong in December.

The Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion (FLASI)

The Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion took place in Porto Alegre on January 25th, 2005. The event brought representatives of urban movements together in an attempt to build stronger bridges with the WSF. The Forum was followed by a meeting between FLASI representatives and city officials.¹³⁴

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

With the agenda of this year's World Economic Forum more focussed on 'social issues', some spoke of a "convergence of values" between the World Economic Forum in Davos and the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre. At the WEF's annual general meeting of the business and political elite, discussions revolved around the theme of "Taking Responsibility for Tough Issues", with topics such as equitable globalisation, governance, and climate change on the agenda for discussion.

Despite the apparent "common ground" between the WEF and the WSF, though, many critics argue that the "new style Davos agenda is only skin deep".¹³⁵ According to one WEF commentator, there is a glaring contradiction in Davos between "voting poverty the number one problem facing the world today" and "donning black ties and long gowns to celebrate their endeavours".¹³⁶ A representative of Attac Switzerland argued that WEF participants are the "very same individuals whose actions deny the world's peoples access to such vital rights as water, food, health care, education, and freedom of movement."¹³⁷

However, there are also those who believe that the World Social Forum has strongly influenced the WEF agenda. Some point to the inclusion of issues such as poverty, debt, and aid as evidence of the WSF's success. However, even among the optimists, it is widely recognised that pressure on the WEF must be maintained. As Fatima Melo, WSF Organiser and representative of the Association of Brazilian NGOs, points out, progress at the World Economic Forum does not mean that the WSF has been made irrelevant. "Many of our approaches have been incorporated by Davos and by institutions like the World Bank. But here, we follow a genuinely different system of social relations. With their multinationals and financial institutions, we think Davos is far from achieving what we have here."¹³⁸ And, as Salil Shetty, Director of the UN Millennium Development Goals campaign, adds, "Davos is slowly starting to increase its involvement in these issues, but the Social Forum remains an important source of pressure...Its work is crucial and it's going to carry on."¹³⁹

134 "Slums Search for a Global Voice", IPS. January 24, 2005.

135 "Wish you were here?" The Observer. January 23, 2005.

136 "Competing Visions: Social Forum, Economic Forum", The Dominion, February 3, 2005.

137 "Time to tackle tough choices", IPS. January 25, 2005.

138 "World Social Forum gets under way", BBC. January 27, 2005.

139 "Unity and Diversity at 'other Davos'", BBC. January 30, 2005.

CHALLENGES FACING THE WSF

As the World Social Forum movement celebrates its fifth anniversary, there are those who laud its successes, as well as those who point out its weaknesses. The following section outlines some of the major debates and criticisms regarding the World Social Forum movement.

The Return to Porto Alegre

Following what many deemed to be a huge success in Mumbai, the return of the World Social Forum to its origin of Porto Alegre was met with mixed feelings. According to Hilary Wainwright (Red Pepper), the fourth WSF in Mumbai faced open hostility from state authorities, thus forcing the Indian Organising Committee to rely on the resources of the movements. As a result, she believes the WSF was more reflective of grassroots priorities. In contrast, the Brazilian organisers were able to rely on the extensive backing of the Workers' Party and other local providers in Porto Alegre rendering this year's WSF more dependent on 'outside resources'.

Some also complained that, by returning to Porto Alegre, the World Social Forum has taken a step backwards. Participants argued that the Forum has 'lost its lustre' and its international appeal. As one critic pointed out, "What was once a very exciting space for debating and dreaming about the future now offers no surprises—the predictability could increasingly be the WSF's liability¹⁴⁰. Building on these sentiments, author and WSF participant James Petras explained, "In the beginning, the social forums were positive, coming together, discussing, meeting each other, forming networks, approving a few declaration, but it has almost turned into a ritual, more like a social gathering where people get together, invite a few personalities, have a march and then everyone 'goes home'".¹⁴¹

Also, some participants commented that many of the presentations were repetitive, both in terms of content as well as speakers, and much of this year's content was similar to previous World Social Forums. Many of the speakers were well-known WSF personalities and though they may have successfully drawn numbers to their sessions, some felt that this overshadowed some of the lesser known speakers. With some of this year's key speakers presenting more than five times each, the repetition added to the sense of frustration for those who said that they had "heard this message before".

New methodologies: self-organised activities

In recognition of some of the problems of past World Social Forums, WSF 2005 organisers attempted some structural and organisational changes. With growing tension over the role of the WSF Central Organising Committee, the decision was taken this year to implement a "self-organised" methodology.

For some, the new "self-organised" format was better and more reflective of grassroots priorities. Others praised the "new horizontal space" as a step toward achieving maturity of the WSF process by allowing the grassroots to take control from the ideological elites that initiated the forum.¹⁴²

140 "Less Euphoric, the WSF returns to Brazil", Focus on the Global South. January 26, 2005.

141 "Manifesto for action raises controversy", Green Left. February 9, 2005.

142 "Porto Alegre à maturité", Liberation. February 1, 2005.

On the other hand, some felt that without the larger, ‘unifying events’ hosted by the WSF organisers, WSF 2005 seemed to lack direction. With only two major ‘unifying’ events—the Presidential addresses from Lula and Chavez, many WSF 2005 participants claimed that there was a lack of “common experience” to this year’s Forum. Although the change failed to please everyone, many participants felt that the attempt was well-intentioned. As Gus Massiah from CRID (Centre de recherche et d’information pour le développement) observed, “It was a change that needed to take place and although it was a “radical and somewhat risky option... it allowed different groups to express themselves.”¹⁴³

WSF 2005: Outcomes or Open Space?

Initially conceived as an “open space for debate”, the World Social Forum was not designed to lead or take decisions on behalf of movements, but rather to enable movements to coordinate their actions and exchange experiences. However, there is increasing impatience from some within the Forum who are eager to see the WSF to take on a more political role.

Indeed the “open space” of the Forum has become bitterly contested territory, and familiar tensions over the purpose of the WSF re-emerged at this year’s Forum. For what might be the first time, key personalities expressed some frustration with what they deem a ‘lack of outcomes’. In an interview during the opening march, Nobel Peace laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivel wondered how long the protesters were “going to keep complaining”, later adding, “I hope that this year there is a qualitative leap in comparison to previous Forums, and progress in defining strategies for putting ideas into practice. The diagnosis has been made. Now we need to design the actions.”¹⁴⁴

For those seeking more action-oriented outcomes from the Forum, WSF 2005 left some participants feeling exasperated and calling for further changes to the WSF methodology and purpose. According to Joao Felicio, General Secretary of the Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (CUT), Brazil’s largest trade union, the answer lies in pushing “three or four joint efforts”, instead of remaining “caught up in academic debate”.¹⁴⁵ US Director of Western Hemisphere Studies at John Hopkins University Riordan Roett argued that, once again, the lack of a structured outcome “could be interpreted as a sign that the forum has outlived its usefulness”.¹⁴⁶

Well-known WSF speaker and Director of Focus on the Global South Walden Bello also expressed his view that “being an open space is not enough”. Warning that “we must de-romanticise ourselves and professionalise this movement so that it remains relevant”, Bello pressed for the WSF to adopt a political stand and become more action-oriented. “We are no longer the second superpower of the world”, he claimed.

Rejecting this stance, however, WSF founding member Chico Whittaker argued, “The WSF is not a movement with common objectives. The WSF should not come up with strategies, as the forum is not directed at solutions. Strategies should be formulated by the organisations themselves, not the WSF”.¹⁴⁷ Guacira de Oliveira, Co-Director of the Feminist Studies and Advisory Centre (CFEMEA) also maintains that the “richness of the WSF lies in its diversity”.¹⁴⁸ Oliveira stated that she would prefer to see “thousands of proposals presented, and if some of them bring together a large number of

¹⁴³ “Les altermondialistes se réorganisent pour faire face aux critiques”, Le Monde. January 25, 2005.

¹⁴⁴ “Raucous return to Porto Alegre”, IPS. January 27, 2005.

¹⁴⁵ “Porto Alegre Puts Mumbai’s Lessons Learned to the Test”, IPS. January 21, 2005.

¹⁴⁶ “WSF ends on anti-imperial note”, AP. February 1, 2005.

¹⁴⁷ “Being an open space is not enough”, IPS. January 30, 2005.

¹⁴⁸ “Porto Alegre Puts Mumbai’s Lessons Learned to the Test”, IPS. January 21, 2005.

organisations, so much the better. “But,” she added, “It’s also good for proposals that don’t attract as much participation to be aired because it is important to ensure that lower profile issues are not forgotten”.

Internationalising the WSF

Despite the title of World Social Forum, each edition of the WSF held so far has attracted an overwhelming number of participants from the host country. The first three World Social Forums, for instance, attracted less than 15 percent of its participants from outside of Brazil. It is estimated that similar figures apply to both the WSF in Mumbai as well as this year’s forum. In recognition of the need to ‘internationalise’ the WSF, next year’s World Social Forums will be “decentralised” and will take place in several locations simultaneously. Whether this new format will appease critics by attracting more “international” participants remains to be seen.

Participation of Political Parties & Personalities

The participation of more than 30 political parties in this year’s WSF marked a distinct break from the past. Banned from participating in past World Social Forums, this year saw the Cubans and Venezuelan Communist parties share a “solidarity tent” and the PC do B (the Brazilian Communist Party) host its own “welcoming tent” within the World Social Territory. According to the Socialist Party publication “Worker’s World”, the new development which resulted from the diminished decision-making ability of the Central Organising Committee, was a huge improvement. With WSF organisers more or less focussed on controlling WSF activities, political parties were left to “organise their own activities without interference”.¹⁴⁹

However, given that the Charter of Principles of the WSF explicitly bans “party representations” from participating in the World Social Forum, the prominence of political parties and political leaders such as Lula and Chavez was strongly criticised by many participants. Some felt that Lula’s address to the Forum was “nothing more than a Brazilian Worker’s Party (PT) rally,” and not at all reflective of “horizontal” structures, while others slammed WSF organisers for allowing an outright violation of the WSF Charter of Principles.¹⁵⁰

With South Africa a likely candidate to host the WSF 2007, those critical of the participation of political parties are keeping a watchful eye on the African National Congress. Activists slammed the ANC government for trying to capture the Forum while simultaneously abandoning its promises of social change and embracing a neo-liberal agenda. South African activist and former political prisoner Dennis Brutus claims that, if the ANC manages to win the WSF in 2007, the “Left will be on the outside demonstrating”.¹⁵¹

149 “Communist Parties at World Social Forum”, Workers World. February 13, 2005.

150 “WSF 2005: an Irish eyewitness report”, IndyMedia Ireland. February 11, 2005; “Critical Reflections on the Fifth WSF”, Znet. February 8, 2005.

151 “Crossroads for the movement”, Socialist Worker. February 4, 2005.

Growing Size and Cost

With this year's Forum once again attracting record numbers, some are beginning to feel that the World Social Forum has reached an unmanageable size where 'dialogue' is no longer possible. The Forum, now frequently described as "gigantic", "incoherent", and "unmanageable", may now be suffering from its own success.¹⁵² Given the "overwhelming" diversity of issues and opinions, one participant complained that the Forum has become "so large, it looked as if everybody was talking a different language and no one understood anyone else."¹⁵³ One participant suggested that a "WSF Orientation" was needed in order for first time WSF participants to find their way around.

Yale Professor Dominic Sachsenmaier also claims that, although the WSF succeeds in gathering a much more diverse group of participants than the WEF, this diversity may also be its weakness. "The open space and diversity that make the anti-Davos gathering attractive may also prevent it from rising above the cacophony as an effective voice of a global civil society". He adds, "There is a certain danger of the WSF turning into an amorphous carnival of initiatives and projects". He believes that, if the WSF is to initiate much-needed dialogue with the WEF, it must narrow its agenda and attempt to formulate a coherent—or at least compatible—set of political opinions and a defined set of global objectives.¹⁵⁴

Even Lula, once a keen supporter of the World Social Forum, argued that unless the Forum could narrow its focus, it could risk becoming a mere "marketplace for ideological products, where everybody buys and sells whatever they feel like".¹⁵⁵

For many participants at this year's Forum, the problem of an overwhelming diversity of topics was compounded by the sheer size of the World Social Territory. Participants complained of missing too much because they were forced to walk long distances between venues. Although the separation of activities into thematic terrains was designed to reduce the amount of walking between sessions on similar topics, it too was criticised for reducing the possibility for the "cross-pollination" of ideas and campaigns.¹⁵⁶

The 11 thematic terrains were also blasted by participants for giving equal importance to all topics. As Lee Sustar of the Socialist Worker argues, "With an entire axis of the conference given over to New Age spirituality, the discussion on meditation techniques was put on equal footing with another on the campaign for Third World debt relief. The effect was to muffle the radical politics that characterised the WSF in the past."¹⁵⁷ Sustar also complained that the decision to hold more numerous and smaller meetings had the effect of sidelining other important arguments, particularly those on Iraq.

As concern over the size and numbers of this year's Forum surfaced, so too did fears about the growing cost of the World Social Forum. According to one participant from CADTM (Comité pour l'Annulation de la Dette du Tiers-Mondes), "The WSF is slowly evolving into a huge machine that costs a huge amount to run. The WSF budget, directly managed by the Brazilian secretariat, comes to at least six million Euros. It is a lot of money. Things can go



Navigating the 150 000 m² of "World Social Territory"
Source: K. Simonson



¹⁵² "The future of the World Social Forum process", IndyMedia Boston. February 13, 2005.

¹⁵³ "Members of the Jesuit-led delegation report on the WSF", website unknown. January 2005.

¹⁵⁴ "A Fiesta of Protest at Porto Alegre", YaleGlobalOnline. January 31, 2005.

¹⁵⁵ "World Social Forum gets under way", BBC. January 27, 2005; "Lula's star dims for anti-globalists", International Herald Tribune. January 27, 2005.

¹⁵⁶ "WSF 2005: An Irish eyewitness report", IndyMedia Ireland. February 11, 2005; "Critical reflections on the fifth WSF", Znet. February 8, 2005.

¹⁵⁷ "Crossroads for the movement", Socialist Worker. February 4, 2005.

wrong.”¹⁵⁸

Many participants also complained that, given the cost of participating in the Forum, large networks and social movements with fewer resources have more difficulty participating than highly funded NGOs, many of which come from developed countries. As a result, some claim that the Forum is currently suffering from imbalanced representation.¹⁵⁹ In fact, the “prominence of large, well-endowed NGOs” proved to be a major point of contention this year. Some participants alleged that large, well-established NGOs were using the forum to hold events that were really policy workshops for professionals rather than strategy sessions for global justice activists.¹⁶⁰ Others pointed to the launch of the Global Call to Action against Poverty as evidence of politicians and large NGOs co-opting the WSF agenda.¹⁶¹

Although WSF 2006 organisers are attempting to address some of these complaints by decentralising the Forum into many Forums, the proposed changes to the WSF are also coming under fire. Some WSF participants are particularly concerned about the ability of social movements to participate in multiple Forums. Faced with the decision of picking just one venue to attend or struggling to represent their movement at all of the WSF venues, some feel that decentralisation may only cause more problems.

As a result, there is increasing support for the World Social Forum to abandon its single venue format in exchange for smaller, regional forums. According to some participants, this would allow popular grassroots organisations to focus more directly on confronting their own key challenges.¹⁶² It may also address other concerns. As Hilary Wainwright of Red Pepper adds, “For some organisations, this was the fourth or fifth year that they had spent precious resources sending delegates to the five day Forum, funding travel and hotels and losing valuable local organising time of individual activists”.

Consensus—or a break from the WSF process?

At the end of this year’s Forum, a group of nineteen prominent WSF personalities issued a highly controversial document entitled, “The Porto Alegre Manifesto”¹⁶³. The Manifesto, which outlines a twelve-point platform toward making “another world possible, calls for the cancellation of debts, a Tobin tax on international financial transfers, the dismantling of tax havens, an end to environmental destruction, local control of the food supply, implementation of anti-discrimination policies, and the democratisation of international financial institutions.

Notable non-signatories and Brazilian International Council members Candido Grzybowski and Francisco “Chico” Whittaker criticised the document as a break from the horizontal nature of the

158 “World Social Forum 2005”, CADTM. www.cadtm.org/imprimer.php3?id_article=1027

159 “World Social Forum sprouts wings”, People’s Democracy (Communist Party of India). February 2005.

160 “Crossroads for the movement”, Socialist Worker. February 4, 2005.

161 “The Last Porto Alegre”, Znet. February 14, 2005.

162 “The future of the World Social Forum process”, IndyMedia Boston. February 13, 2005.

163 To view the document, please see Appendix D. Signatories to the Manifesto included Aminata Traoré (Malian Minister of Culture), Adolfo Pérez Esquivel (Argentine Nobel laureate), Eduardo Galeano (Uruguayan political writer), José Saramago (Portuguese writer and Nobel laureate), François Houtart (Belgian theologian), Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Portuguese sociologist), Armand Mattelart (Belgian communications expert), Roberto Savio (Italian/Argentine President Emeritus of IPS), Ricardo Petrella (water activist), Ignacio Ramonet (Director of Le Monde Diplomatique), Bernard Cassen (French editor of Le Monde Diplomatique), Samir Amin (Egyptian economist), Atilio Boron (Argentine author), Samuel Ruiz Garcia (Mexican bishop), Tariq Ali (Pakistani writer), Frei Betto (Brazilian intellectual), Walden Bello (Thai Director of Focus on the Global South), Emir Sader (MST leader), Immanuel Wallerstein (American sociologist).

World Social Forum. Although neither disagreed with the content of the Manifesto, both sharply criticised its authors and stated that, despite carrying significant weight, the Manifesto “does not generate consensus.”¹⁶⁴ According to Grzybowski, “The contents of this proposal are perfect, and I believe 80 percent of the forum participants would agree with it...What kills this proposal is the method with which it was created and presented. It goes against the very spirit of the forum. Here, all proposals are equally important”.¹⁶⁵

To the authors of the Manifesto, however, the document represents a significant breakthrough. “Now no one can say that we have no programme. Now we have the Porto Alegre Consensus and we are sure—we’re confident—that the great majority of the people of the Forum will agree with this proposal”, said Ignacio Ramonet. Ricardo Petrella, another signatory added, “It’s not possible to continue to speak of ‘another world is possible’ if we do not make some proposals about how to reach this other world.”

Upon reading the Manifesto, WSF participants expressed mixed feelings. Some hailed the document as a ‘WSF consensus’ guiding the forum into the future while others criticised it as a break from traditional, horizontal WSF philosophy. Professor Kamal Mitra Chenoy, member of the WSF Indian Organising Committee, commented, “As for this document, I would consider it a declaration from inside the forum, but not of the forum. Even if 3 000 organisations sign it, it will not be a WSF declaration”. One Brazilian Committee member went further, arguing that the Manifesto was merely a project of “the same old ‘celebrities’ who cannot swallow being part of the masses they once led”.¹⁶⁶

UPCOMING EVENTS

With preparations underway for multiple, decentralised Forums in 2006, many are speculating as to the locations. While Morocco, South Korea, and Venezuela have been mentioned as possible sites, nothing will be confirmed until the meeting of the International Council in April 2005.¹⁶⁷

Regarding WSF 2007, Forum organisers are agreed that Africa will host the Forum, although the host city has yet to be determined.

In the meantime, WSF participants are gearing up for several other events.¹⁶⁸ Global anti-war demonstrations are planned for March 19th and 20th to mark the second anniversary of the US-led invasion of Iraq, a Global Week of Action on Trade will take place in April, anti-G8 Summit actions are planned for Scotland in July, the Global Charter of Humanity organised by the World March of Women will kick off sometime in October, anti-FTAA events are scheduled for November in Mar del Plata, Argentina, and actions to derail the Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organisation in Hong Kong are planned for December.

164 “The Consensus of Porto Alegre?” IPS. January 30, 2005.

165 “A divisive consensus”, IPS. January 31, 2005.

166 “The Consensus of Porto Alegre?” IPS. January 30, 2005.

167 “Growing pains, gains for solidarity”, The Dominion. February 12, 2005.

168 For more information on these events, please see Appendices C and D.

THE FUTURE OF THE WSF

As organisers prepare for multiple World Social Forums next year, many believe that the movement stands at a crossroads. Given the many challenges identified over the past years, the World Social Forum faces a somewhat uncertain future. Although some believe that the move toward multiple, decentralised Forums signifies that the movement is expanding into a truly global force, others contend that the move represents the disintegration of a once unified movement.

Indeed, many important questions facing the WSF remain unanswered following the fifth Forum. Where will next year's 'decentralised' Forums take place? How will many, smaller Forums recreate the diversity which not only characterises but defines the World Social Forum? How will the new, smaller Forums integrate with regional, national, and local Forums? What, if any, is the continuing role for the WSF?

In spite of the criticism and uncertainty surrounding the future of the WSF, many participants still strongly believe that the Forum has come to represent an alternative to the global status quo. In an article in *The Nation*, the author states, "Whatever its shortcomings, the ability of the WSF to 'decentre' the US and Europe is a major achievement...As this motley movement has self-consciously shifted from protesting problems to proposing solutions, it has shoved the US upstage."¹⁶⁹ For other participants, including Swiss Parliamentarian Liliane Maury Pasquier, the Forum still functions as an important 'rallying point' for civil society activists. "My feeling is the same as last year," she said. "This forum produces lots of energy".

In fact, for many participants, the Forum fulfils an even more basic function, particularly in the wake of last year's demoralising developments. With the re-election of Bush, the Asian tsunami, and the continuing war in Iraq, participants look to the World Social Forum to give them the sense that "we are not alone". To them, regardless of its flaws, the World Social Forum simply represents 'hope'.

In conclusion, although the future of the WSF remains relatively cloudy, what is certain is that there is a growing number of people around the world dissatisfied with the status quo, a group that is slowly working to, through various means, make "another world possible".

¹⁶⁹ "Another World Turns", *The Nation*. January 30, 2005.

APPENDIX A: WSF CHARTER OF PRINCIPLES

1. The World Social Forum is an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neo-liberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a planetary society directed towards fruitful relationships among Mankind and between it and the Earth.

2. The World Social Forum at Porto Alegre was an event localized in time and place. From now on, in the certainty proclaimed at Porto Alegre that "another world is possible", it becomes a permanent process of seeking and building alternatives, which cannot be reduced to the events supporting it.

3. The World Social Forum is a world process. All the meetings that are held as part of this process have an international dimension.

4. The alternatives proposed at the World Social Forum stand in opposition to a process of globalization commanded by the large multinational corporations and by the governments and international institutions at the service of those corporations' interests, with the complicity of national governments. They are designed to ensure that globalization in solidarity will prevail as a new stage in world history. This will respect universal human rights and those of all citizens – men and women – of all nations and the environment and will rest on democratic international systems and institutions at the service of social justice, equality and the sovereignty of peoples.

5. The World Social Forum brings together and interlinks only organizations and movements of civil society from all the countries in the world, but intends neither to be a body representing world civil society.

6. The meetings of the World Social Forum do not deliberate on behalf of the World Social Forum as a body. No-one, therefore, will be authorized, on behalf of any of the editions of the Forum, to express positions claiming to be those of all its participants. The participants in the Forum shall not be called on to take decisions as a body, whether by vote or acclamation, on declarations or proposals for action that would commit all, or the majority, of them and that propose to be taken as establishing positions of the Forum as a body. It thus does not constitute a locus of power to be disputed by the participants in its meetings, nor does it intend to constitute the only option for interrelation and action by the organizations and movements that participate in it.

7. Nonetheless, organizations or groups of organizations that participate in the Forum's meetings must be assured the right, during such meetings, to deliberate on declarations or actions they may decide on, whether singly or in coordination with other participants. The World Social Forum undertakes to circulate such decisions widely by the means at its

disposal, without directing, hierarchizing, censoring or restricting them, but as deliberations of the organizations or groups of organizations that made the decisions.

8. The World Social Forum is a plural, diversified, non-confessional, non- governmental and non-party context that, in a decentralized fashion, inter-relates organizations and movements engaged in concrete action at levels from the local to the international to build another world.

9. The World Social Forum will always be a forum open to pluralism and to the diversity of activities and ways of engaging of the organizations and movements that decide to participate in it, as well as the diversity of genders, ethnicities, cultures, generations and physical capacities, providing they abide by this Charter of Principles. Neither party representations nor military organizations shall participate in the Forum. Government leaders and members of legislatures who accept the commitments of this Charter may be invited to participate in a personal capacity.

10. The World Social Forum is opposed to all totalitarian and reductionist views of economy, development and history and to the use of violence as a means of social control by the State. It upholds respect for Human Rights, the practices of real democracy, participatory democracy, peaceful relations, in equality and solidarity, among people, ethnicities, genders and peoples, and condemns all forms of domination and all subjection of one person by another.

11. As a forum for debate, the World Social Forum is a movement of ideas that prompts reflection, and the transparent circulation of the results of that reflection, on the mechanisms and instruments of domination by capital, on means and actions to resist and overcome that domination, and on the alternatives proposed to solve the problems of exclusion and social inequality that the process of capitalist globalization with its racist, sexist and environmentally destructive dimensions is creating internationally and within countries.

12. As a framework for the exchange of experiences, the World Social Forum encourages understanding and mutual recognition among its participant organizations and movements, and places special value on the exchange among them, particularly on all that society is building to centre economic activity and political action on meeting the needs of people and respecting nature, in the present and for future generations.

13. As a context for interrelations, the World Social Forum seeks to strengthen and create new national and international links among organizations and movements of society, that - in both public and private life - will increase the capacity for non-violent social resistance to the process of dehumanization the world is undergoing and to the violence used by the State, and reinforce the humanizing measures being taken by the action of these movements and organizations.

14. The World Social Forum is a process that encourages its participant organizations and movements to situate their actions, from the local level to the national level and seeking active participation in international contexts, as issues of planetary citizenship, and to introduce onto the global agenda the change inducing practices that they are experimenting in building a new world in solidarity.

APPENDIX B: Contact Information for Delegate NGOs/Social Movements of the WSF

50 Years is Enough!

50years@50years.org - www.50years.org

ABONG - Associação Brasileira de ONGs

abong@uol.com.br - www.abong.org.br

ACTU - Australian Council of Trade Unions

mailbox@actu.asn.au - www.actu.asn.au

AFL-CIO - American Federation of Labour-Congress of Industrial Organizations

feedback@afcio.org - www.afcio.org/home.htm

Africa Trade Network

aidc@iafrica.com - <http://africatradenetwork.com>

AIDC - Alternative Information on Development Centre

aidc@iafrica.com - <http://aidc.org.za>

ALAI - Agencia Latinoamericana de Información

info@alainet.org - www.alainet.org

ALAMPYME – Assoc. Latino Americana de Pequenos e Médios Empresários

apyme@rcc.com.ar - www.apyme.com.ar

Aliança Por Um Mundo Responsável e Solidário

lille@alliance21.org - www.alliance21.org

All Arab Peasants & Agricultural Co-operatives Union

F7Garab@maktoob.com

ALOP - Assoc. Latino Americana de Organismos de Promoção

info@alop.or.cr - www.alop.or.cr

Alternative Information Centre

sergio@alt-info.org - www.alternativenews.org

Alternatives Information Centre

aidc@iafrica.com - <http://aidc.org.za>

Alternatives

alternatives@alternatives.ca - www.alternatives.ca

Alternatives Rússia

dhr@online.ru

Amigos da Terra

foe@foe.org - www.foei.org

APRODEV

aprodev@aprodev.net - www.aprodev.net

Arab NGO Network for Development

annd@cyberia.net.lb - www.annd.org

ARENA - Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives

arena@asianexchange.org - www.asianexchange.org

Articulación Feminista Marco Sur

mujeresdelsur@mujersur.org.uy - www.mujeresdelsur.org.uy

ASC - Aliança Social Continental

sri_cut@uol.com.br - www.ascahsa.org

Asemblea de los Pueblos del Caribe (APC)

habitatcarib@hotmail.com, pedroarg@tricom.net - <http://movimientos.org/caribe/>

Assemblée Européenne des Citoyens

cedetim@globenet.org - www.cedetim.org/AEC

Assembléia das Nações Unidas dos Povos

flavio@perlapace.it

Associação para o Progresso das Comunicações

anriette@apc.org - www.apc.org

ATTAC- Brasil

attacsaopaulo@attac.org - www.attac.org/brasil

ATTAC France

attac@attac.org - <http://attac.org>

Babels

wsfsm@babels.org

Bankwatch Network

jozseff@bankwatch.org - www.bankwatch.org

CADTM- Comité pour l'Annulation de la Dette du Tiers Monde

cadtm@skynet.be - <http://users.skynet.be/cadtm>

Caritas Internationalis

caritas.internationalis@caritas.va - www.caritas.org

CBJP - Comissão Brasileira de Justiça e Paz

intercom@cidadanet.org.br - www.cbjp.org.br

CEAAL – Cons. Educação de Adultos da Am. Latina

ceaal@laneta.apc.org - www.ceaal.org

CEDAR Internacional

cedar@asser.nl - www.cedarinternational.net

CEDETIM- Centre d'Etudes et d'Initiatives de Solidarité Internationale

cedetim@globenet.org - www.cedetim.org

Central de Trabajadores Argentinos
cta@rcc.com.ar - www.cta.org.ar

CES – European Trade Union Confederation
etuc@etuc.org - www.etuc.org

CETRI
[cetribelgium.be](mailto:cetri@cetribelgium.be) - www.cetri.be

CIDSE
postmaster@cidse.org - www.cidse.org

CIOSL - Confederação Internacional de Organizações Sindicais Livres
internetpo@icftu.org - www.cioslorit.org

CIVES
cives@cives.org.br - www.cives.org.br

CLACSO
clacsofsm@clacso.edu.ar - www.clacso.org

CLC - Canadian Labour Congress
sbenedict@clc-ctc.ca - www.clc-ctc.ca

CMT – Confederação Mundial do Trabalho
info@cmt-wcl.org - www.cmt-wcl.org

COMPA – Convergência de los Movimientos de los Pueblos de las Américas
colectivoredom@hotmail.com - rgf@alum.vassar.edu

CONAIE
info@conaie.org - <http://conaie.org>

Congresso Nacional Indígena do México
ceatl@laneta.apc.org

Conselho Mundial de Igrejas
info@wcc-coe.org - www.wcc-coe.org

Coordinación del Foro “El Otro Davos”
Page2@fastnet.ch

Coordinadora de Centrais Sindicais do Cone Sul
eduardof@aebu.org.uy

Corpwatch
corpwatch@corpwatch.org - www.corpwatch.org

COSATU - Congress of South African Trade Unions
cosatu@wn.apc.org - www.cosatu.org.za

Council of Canadians
Jdunn@canadians.org

CRID – Centre de Recherche et d’Information pour le Développement
info@crid.asso.fr - www.crid.asso.fr

CUT – Central Única dos Trabalhadores
sri-cut@uol.com.br - www.cut.org.br

Encuentros Hemisféricos contra el ALCA
joel@mlking.sld.cu

ENDA
taoufik@enda.sn - www.enda.sn

Euralat
Criera@aepdc.org

Euromarches
euromarches@ras.eu.org - www.euromarches.org

FAMES
rabi@enda.sn

FECOC - Frente Continental de Organizações Comunitárias
mlongoria@laneta.apc.org

Federación Mundial de Juventudes Democráticas
wfdy@wfdy.org - www.wfdy.org

Fédération démocratique internationale des femmes (FDIF)
fdif@fdif.eu.org - www.fdif.eu.org

Fundación per la Pau/International Peace Bureau (IPB)
mailbox@ipb.org - www.ipb.org

FIAN – Food First International Action Network
fian@fian.org - www.fian.org

FIDH – Fed. Internacional Direitos Humanos
rsanchez@fidh.org - www.fidh.org

Focus on the Global South
admin@focusweb.org - <http://focusweb.org>

Fórum Dakar
Residel.kaolack@sentoo.sn

Forum Mondial des Alternatives
ftm@syfed.refer.sn - www.alternatives-action.org/fma

Forum of the Poor
fopthai@asiaaccess.net.th

Fórum Social Italiano
vagnoletto@lila.it

GLBT South-South Dialogue
dialogo@fedaeps.org

Global Exchange

admin@globalexchange.org - www.globalexchange.org

Global Policy Network

gpn-listowner@epinet.org - www.globalpolicynetwork.org

Greenpeace

greenpeace.brazil@dialb.greenpeace.org - www.greenpeace.org.br

Grito dos Excluídos

gritoexcluidos@uol.com.br - www.movimientos.org

Grupo de Trabalho Amazônico

www.gta.org.br

Habitat International Coalition

habitat@jazzfree.com - www.habitat-international-coalition.org

IATP – Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

khoff@iatp.org - www.iatp.org

IBASE

ibase@ibase.br - www.ibase.br

ICAE – Conselho Internacional de Educação de Adultos

icae@icae.ca - www.web.net/icae

IFAT - International Federation of Alternative Trade

info@ifat.org.uk - www.ifat.org

IFG – International Forum on Globalization

ifg@ifg.org - www.ifg.org

International Gender and Trade Network

secretariat@coc.org - www.genderandtrade.net

International Network of Street Papers (INSP)

l.maclean@bigissuescotland.com

International Rivers Network

irn@irn.org - www.irn.org

Instituto Paulo Freire

ipf@paulofreire.org - www.paulofreire.org

IPS – Inter Press Service

kosi@ips.org - www.ips.org

Jubilee South – Asia

vinod.raina@vsnl.com - www.jubileesouth.org

Jubileo South – África

aidc@iafrica.com - www.jubileesouth.org

Jubileu 2000

kitazawa@jca.apc.org

Jubileu Sul América Latina

keeneba@wamani.apc.org - www.jubileusul.hpg.com.br

KCTU - Korean Confederation of Trade Unions

inter@kctu.org - www.kctu.org

KOPA

kopa@jinbo.net - <http://antiwto.jinbo.net/eroom/index.html>

Land Research Action Network

wellington@nlc.co.za - wellington@nlc.co.za

MST – Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra

srimst@uol.com.br - www.mst.org.br

Narmada

subbu@narmada.org - www.narmada.org

NIGD - Network Institute for Global Democratization

katarina@nigd.u-net.com - www.nigd.org

North-South Centre

Fifi.BENABOUD@coe.int - www.coe.int/T/E/North-South_Centre

OCLAE - Continental Organization of Latin America and Caribbean Students

oclae@jcce.org.cu - www.oclae.org

Oneworld

jason.nardi@unimondo.org - www.unimondo.org

Organization of African Trade Unions Unity

oatuu@ighmail.com

ORIT – Org. Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores

info@cioslorit.org - www.orit-ciosl.org

OXFAM Internacional

information@oxfaminternational.org - www.oxfam.org

Peace Boat

y-nami@peaceboat.gr.jp - www.peaceboat.org

Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo

regional@pidhdd.org - www.pidhdd.org

Projeto K

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ilpanelerose@hotmail.com

Public Citizen

tgeron@citizen.org - www.citizen.org

Red Latinoamericana Mujeres Transformando a Economía

mleon@interactive.net.ec

remte@fedaeps.org - <http://movimientos.org/remte>

Rede APM – Agricultures paysannes, sociétés et mondialisation
pvuarin@fph.fr - www.zooide.com/apm

Rede CONSEU (Conferencia de Naciones sin Estado de Europa)
activitats@ciemen.org

Rede Dawn de Mulheres
dawn@is.com.fj - www.dawn.org.fj

Rede de Solidariedade Ásia Pacífico
intl@dsp.org.au

Rede Latino-Americana e Caribenha de Mulheres Negras
criola@alternex.com.br - www.criola.org.org

Rede Mulher e Habitat
gem@agora.com.ar - <http://www.redmujer.org.ar>

Rede Mundial de Mulheres pelos Direitos Reprodutivos
office@wgnrr.nl - www.wgnrr.org

Rede Palestina de ONGs
bisanrd@palnet.com - www.pngo.net

Rede Social de Justiça e Direitos Humanos
redes@social.org.br - www.social.org.br

Rede Transforme!
elgauthi@internatif.org

Redes Socioeconomia Solidaria
creintjes@ideas.coop - www.reasnet.com

REPEM – Rede de Educação Popular entre Mulheres
repem@repem.org.uy - www.repem.org.uy

SIGTUR - Southern Initiative on Globalisation and Trade Union Rights
rlambert@ecel.uwa.edu.au

Social Watch
socwatch@chasque.net - www.socialwatch.org

Solidar
solidar@skynet.be - www.solidar.org

TNI – Transnational Institute
tni@tni.org - www.tni.org

TWN – Third World Network
tw@igc.apc.org - www.twinside.org.sg

UBUNTU - Foro Mundial de Redes de la Sociedad Civil
ubuntu@ubuntu.upc.es - www.ubuntu.upc.es

Union Internacional de Estudiantes

ius@cfs-fcee.ca - [www. ius-ue.org](http://www.ius-ue.org)

Via Campesina

viacam@gbm.hn - <http://ns.rds.org.hn/via/>

World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (Amarc)

amarc@amarc.org - <http://www.amarc.org>

World March of Women

www.ffq.qc.ca/marche2000/en/index.html

dmatte@ffq.qc.ca

Znet

sysop@zmag.org - www.zmag.org

OBSERVERS

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Organizing Committee of the European Social Forum

wsf@fse-esf.org

www.fse-esf.org

Organizing Committee of the Mediterranean Social Forum

activitats@ciemen.org

fsmedi@terra.es

Organizing Committee of the of the Pan-Amazonic Social Forum

cri-pmb@belem.pa.gov.br

www.fspanamazonico.com.br

Organizing Committee of the Thematic Social Forum: Democracy, Human Rights, War and Drug Traffic

forosocialtematico@cable.net.co

www.fsmt.org.co

FNTG - Funders Network on Trade & Globalization

mark@fntg.org

www.fntg.org

APPENDIX C: WSF 2005: CALL FROM SOCIAL MOVEMENTS FOR MOBILISATIONS AGAINST THE WAR, NEOLIBERALISM, EXPLOITATION AND EXCLUSION

We are social movements gathered in the 5th WSF. The great success of the plural and massive participation in the Forum gives us the possibility and the responsibility to organize more and better our campaigns and mobilizations, to expand and strengthen our struggles.

Four years ago the collective and global call for ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE broke the lie that neoliberal domination is unavoidable as well as the acceptance of the “normality” of war, of social inequalities, racism, casts, patriarchy, imperialism and the destruction of the environment. As people take this truth as their own their strength becomes unstoppable and it starts materialising in concrete actions of resistance, for demands and proposals.

Therefore what is new about our proposal is the outbreak and the scale of the social movements in all continents and their ability to build within diversity new convergences and common actions at global level.

In that frame, tens of millions of men and women were mobilized in all corners of the world for peace, against the war and the invasion led by Bush against Iraq. Summits like the G8 and the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank, where few intend to decide for everybody, were questioned and de-legitimized by the action of social movements. Popular struggles in defence of nature, the rights of people and the common good, against their privatization, such as in Bolivia, Uruguay and other peoples, demonstrated the possibility of creating a crisis for neoliberal domination. New spaces for political and social struggle were opened to us.

Neoliberalism is incapable of offering a dignified and democratic future to humanity. Nevertheless, nowadays it again takes the initiative responding to its crisis of legitimacy with force, militarization, repression, criminalization of social struggles, political authoritarianism and ideological reaction. Millions of men and women suffer every day. We want here to remember the war in Congo that has already caused four million victims. For all that, another world is not only possible, but necessary and urgent.

Conscious that we still have a long way ahead of us, we call all movements of the world to fight for peace, human, social and democratic rights, for the right of people to decide their destiny and for the immediate cancellation of foreign debt from the countries of the South, from the AGENDA that we share in the 5th World Social Forum:

AGENDA OF STRUGGLES

► We call all organizations and social movements which have participated in the World Social Forum and those who could not be in Porto Alegre, to work together in the campaign for the IMMEDIATE and UNCONDITIONAL CANCELLATION OF THE FOREIGN and illegitimate DEBT of the countries of the South, beginning with the countries victims of tsunami and other that have undergone terrible disasters and crisis in the recent months.

► We support Social Movements from the South that declare themselves CREDITORS of historical, social and ecological debts. We demand the end of the implementation of projects and “integration agreements” which facilitate the looting of natural resources from the countries of the South.

We support demands from peasant and fisherfolk Social Movements in areas affected by the Tsunami, in order to have the resources for emergency aid and reconstruction managed directly by local communities in order to avoid new debts, colonization and militarization.

► After two years of the Iraq invasion, global opposition to the war is constantly increasing. It is time for the anti-war movement to increase actions and do not retreat.

We demand the end of the Iraq occupation. We demand the US to stop threatening Iran, Venezuela and other countries. We commit to establish more contacts with the occupation forces in Iraq and the Middle East. We will strengthen our campaigns against transnationals committed with the invasion, we support soldiers who oppose to participate in the war and we defend activists that have been persecuted for being against the war. We call all movements to organize on March 19th a global day of actions to demand the retreat of US troops from Iraq. No more war!

- ▶ We support all campaigns for disarmament and demilitarization, including the campaign against US military bases in the world, the campaigns for nuclear disarmament, for the control of arms trade and the cut on military spending.

- ▶ Under the pretext of "Free Trade" neoliberal capitalism advances under the weakness of the US, in the de-regulation of economies and the "legalization" of privileges for transnational corporations through free trade Agreements (FTAs). After the failure of FTAA due to popular pressure, now Central America and other countries have been obliged to subscribe to Bilateral Free Trade Agreements that we the people reject. In Europe the European Union Bolkenstein directive wants to impose the complete privatization of public services. We call everyone to mobilize during the Global Action Rally, from April 10th to 17th, in the Summit of the People of the Americas, in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in November 2005; and during the 6th WTO meeting in Hong Kong, in December 2005.

- ▶ We support the Women's World March which is organizing a campaign of global feminist actions throughout the world starting from São Paulo on March 8th and ending on October 17th in Burkina Faso, to restate their commitment with in the struggle against neoliberalism, patriarchy, exclusion and domination. We call all movements to organize feminist actions during this period against free trade, sex trade, militarization and food sovereignty.

- ▶ We support the efforts of social movements and organizations that promote the struggle for dignity, justice, equality and human rights specially the dalit movement; afro-descendents, indigenous people, romas, burakumins and the most oppressed and repressed sectors of society.

- ▶ We call for mass mobilization against the G8 meeting in Scotland on July 2nd to 8th. We will take to the streets and will participate in the counter-meeting in Edinburgh and Gleneagles. We demand: poverty to go to history, to stop the war, to cancel debt and impose a global tax on financial transactions to finance development.

- ▶ We protest against neoliberal policies and the EU military support in Latin America. We call for a solidarity mobilization among the peoples during the Meeting from Latin American and European Union Presidents in May 2006, in Vienna, Austria.

- ▶ We struggle for the universal right to healthy and sufficient food.

We struggle for the right of the peoples, nations and peasants to produce their own food. We manifest against subsidies to exports which destroy the economies of rural communities. Let's avoid food dumping.

We reject GMO foods because besides threatening our health and the environment, they are an instrument for five transnationals to have control of all markets. We reject patents on any form of life and in special on seeds, since the intention is the appropriation of our resources and the knowledge associated to them. We demand the Agrarian Reform as a strategy to allow the access of peasants to land, and healthy and sufficient food, and not to be concentrated in the hands of transnationals and latifundiários.

We demand for actions against peasants around the world to be called off, for the immediate liberation of peasants and political prisoners, and the end of militarization of rural areas.

We support sustainable production based in the preservation of natural resources: soil, water, forest, air, biodiversity, water resources etc. We support the development of organic and agro-ecological production.

We call for mobilizations during the national peasant day on April 17th; and on the anniversary of the death of Mr. Lee on September 10th against the WTO.

- ▶ We support campaigns and struggles in defence of water as a common good, against its privatization and for the recognition of the right to access to water as a human right, such as the campaign "No to Suez in Latin America". We invite all to participate in International Forum from March 18th to 20th in Geneva.

- ▶ We share the demands to build an alliance between social movements and networks for a "World contract on climate: a solar world is possible".

Energy is the right to life and it is a common good. The struggle against poverty and climate change demands sustainable energy to be among the priorities of initiatives and campaigns from social movements. We support the international march on climate in November.

- ▶ The "Social Responsibility of Transnationals" did not manage to eliminate abuses and crimes committed by transnationals. It must be seriously challenged. Movements will work together to take power away from transnationals and stop their abuses and crimes. Communities must have the freedom to protect themselves, their environment and society against the power of transnationals.

- ▶ We support campaigns against transnationals that violate human, social and trade union's rights, such as those against Nestlé and Coca-Cola in Colombia and Pepsi and Coca-Cola in India.

- ▶ We support the struggle of the Palestinian people for their fundamental and national rights, including the right to return, based on the international law and in the UN resolutions.

- ▶ We ask the international community and governments to impose political and economic sanctions to Israel, including an embargo on Arms. We call social movements to also mobilize for de-investments and boycotts. These efforts aim at pressuring Israel to implement international resolutions and to respect the decision of the International Court of Justice for the immediate stop and destruction of the illegal apartheid wall and the end of occupation.

- ▶ We support Israeli activists for peace and the refusenik for their struggle against the occupation.

- ▶ We condemn the unfair embargo of Cuba and demand a fair trial to the five Cubans who have been arrested in the US. We also demand the withdrawal of military foreign troops in Haiti.

- ▶ We recognize diversity in sexual orientation as an expression of an alternative world and we condemn mercantilization. Movements commit to participate in the struggle against exclusion based on identity, gender and homophobia. We will unite our voices against all forms of mercantilization of the body of women and GLBT.

- ▶ We support the process of building a global network of social movements committed to defend migrants, refugees and displaced peoples.

Neoliberalism and the policies of "the war against terror" have increased the criminalization of migrants, the militarization of borders, clandestine operations and the access to cheap labour. We support the campaign to ratify the United Nations Convention for the rights of migrants, which no government from the North wants to accept. We support the campaign to establish an independent organism to sanction governments that do not respect the Geneva Convention for refugees and the rights of migrants.

- ▶ We support campaigns and struggles for children's rights, against labour and sexual exploitation, against the trade of children and sexual tourism.

- ▶ We support the call of the excluded, of those with no voice, to develop an active solidarity campaign to propel a world march in which the oppressed and excluded of the planet will raise their voice to conquer the right to a dignified life.
- ▶ From September 14-16th, in the general Assembly of the UN, government heads of the whole world will make decisions about the agrarian reform in the United Nations and will revise their commitments to eradicate poverty. They are mainly responsible for the critical situation of humanity now. We support the call for international networks which invite to mobilize globally on September 10th for a new world democratic order and against poverty and the war.
- ▶ We support the call for a mobilization on November 17th, international student day, in defence of public education, against privatization and the trans-nationalization of education.
- ▶ In solidarity with Venezuela, the youth of the world is calling to participate in the 16th World Youth Festival and of the Students from Venezuela between August 7th and 15th.
- ▶ Communication is a fundamental human right. We support the call for mobilizations during the World Conference of the Communication Society, in Tunis from November 16th to 18th. We support the call for a strong international convention about Cultural Diversity and we oppose the mercantilization of information and communication from the WTO.
- ▶ We support social economy as a concrete expression of an alternative for a fair, mutual, democratic and equitable development.
- ▶ In defence of public health and against its privatization, we call all peoples of the world for a permanent struggle. We call for mobilizations during the General Assembly in Defence of the Health of the People, in Cuenca, Peru, in 2005 and in the World Health Forum during the World Social Forum in Africa in 2007.

This is a small demonstration of the struggle of social movements.

GLOBALISE STRUGGLE! GLOBALISE HOPE!

APPENDIX D: CALL TO ACTION OF THE ANTI-WAR ASSEMBLY

World Social Forum 2005, Porto Alegre, Brazil

On the day of elections in Iraq, anti-war movements, coalitions and organizations the world over came together in an Anti-War Assembly and called for massive mobilizations on March 19 and 20. Representatives from over 33 countries, including Iraq and Palestine, also discussed strategies and actions beyond March 20. This is the report of the proposals made at the Assembly. To get involved with the different campaigns, please email: info-assembly@riseup.net

Two years after the invasion of Iraq, there is more opposition to the war in the US, in the coalition countries, and all over the world than ever before. The justifications for the war have all been proven to be lies. A widespread and popular resistance has risen up against the occupation forces. Over 100,000 Iraqis and over 1,500 coalition soldiers have been killed. With the global condemnation of the war and the inability of the United States to quell the resistance in Iraq, we stand at a critical moment in which there is a real chance that the war could be stopped.

Now is the time for the anti-war movement to take action, not to retreat. It is time to escalate the protests, not to give up. A defeat for US-led forces in Iraq will be a victory for everybody facing US aggression globally.

We demand an end to the occupations of Iraq and Palestine.

We demand that the US desists from attacking Iran, North Korea, Syria, Cuba, Venezuela and other countries. We must highlight the dangers of global war especially in Latin America where the US threatens to intervene in many countries. We call for a Global Day of Action against War on March 19/20 demanding troops out of Iraq now, no more wars. We call for a rolling wave of massive demonstrations, civil disobedience, and other forms of protest around the world.

IRAQ

We call for the immediate withdrawal of occupation troops and support all efforts to bring them home. We support efforts to organize soldiers, conscientious objectors, and military families against the war. We support the counter-recruitment campaign and demand political asylum for deserters.

We support the right of the Iraqi people to resist occupation while condemning the killing of innocent civilians. We support efforts to understand the full range of civil, political, and armed resistance in Iraq to further strengthen our campaigns. We commit to deepening our links of solidarity with the people of the Middle East.

We demand the closure of US military bases around the world and support efforts towards the abolition of nuclear weapons, the banning of the arms trade, and other moves towards demilitarization.

We support efforts to stop the economic occupation of Iraq by corporations and international financial institutions. And we will escalate our campaign against these war profiteers through boycotts and direct action.

We call for protests against Bush and his allies wherever they go.

PALESTINE

We support the Palestinian people's struggle for justice, self-determination, a sovereign independent state with Jerusalem as its capital and the implementation of the right of return in accordance with UN resolution 194.

We call upon the international community and governments to impose political and economic sanctions on Israel, including an embargo on armaments. We call upon the social movements to mobilize also for divestment and boycotts. These efforts aim to force Israel to implement international resolutions, and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, to stop and take down the illegal wall and end all occupation and apartheid policies.

We support the Israeli anti-colonialist, anti-Zionist activists who share this struggle.

We reaffirm the call for a Global Day of Action on March 19/20 and a wave of protest to stop war and end the occupations.

*To send plans for demonstrations on March 19/20, email: website@march19th.org or office@march19th.org. For more information on campaigns, email info-assembly@riseup.net

COUNTRIES DEMONSTRATING ON MARCH 19/20 (preliminary list): Iraq, Palestine, Argentina, Brasil, India, US (400 cities), Italy, Greece, Ireland, Japan, Britain, Turkey, Macedonia, Cyprus, Philippines, Australia, Thailand, South Africa, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Hungary, Poland, Canada, Austria, Mexico, Spain (Barcelona, Madrid), Hawaii, Venezuela, New Zealand, The Netherlands.

DETAILED ACTION PLAN**PROPOSALS FOR MARCH 19/20:**

- Common slogan: Troops Out of Iraq Now! No more wars! Each country is, of course, free to use their own slogans.
- To hold big demonstrations or other forms of protest in your own countries
- List all cities and countries demonstrating on a common website: www.march19th.org

Proposals for building links with the middle east and strengthening the resistance:

- Organize a roundtable conference outside Iraq inviting all the different groups and anti-occupation forces in Iraq to dialogue with the global anti-war movement
- Support the existing campaigns that build links between civil society in Iraq and other countries.
- Send a team to Iraq to work with Iraqis to produce a multimedia project, Voices of Resistance, that shows all the different forms of resistance in Iraq to serve as a mobilizing tool to get rid of US occupation.
- Make use of all opportunities to link with the Middle East, including the Cairo Conference March 24-27, the Mediterranean Social Forum in June, the World Tribunal in Iraq in 2005 and the World Peace Forum in Vancouver, Canada on June 21-27, 2006.
- Encourage all groups to share contacts and information so as to avoid replication of efforts.

Proposals to oppose other us threats of intervention

- Because George Bush is the symbol of global war, there should be protests wherever he goes:

- (1) July 2nd-6th: Edinburgh Scotland, Global Action against Bush and the G8.
- (2) November: Mar del Plata, Protest against Bush and American Summit of Presidents.
- Link our anti-war work to campaigns against attacks or threats of intervention in Iran, North Korea, Syria, Cuba, Venezuela and other countries.

Proposals against war profiteers and international financial institutions

- Strengthen protests and direct action against the 2 largest war profiteers: Halliburton and Bechtel.
- Encourage people not to buy goods from US/UK multinationals and encourage people instead to buy from local businesses.
- Encourage socially responsible companies to take a stand against the war
- Protest against the World Trade Organization (WTO), especially on the 6th Ministerial on December 13-18 in Hong Kong
- Launch a campaign to stop Iraq from becoming a member of the WTO
- Disseminate materials on the war profiteers in Arabic

Proposals for Palestine

- Send civilian missions to Palestine
- Launch a campaign of sanctions, boycott and divestments
- Launch a campaign for embargo on arms and suspension of economic agreements with Israel

Proposals for war resisters

- Organize a gathering of anti-war forces from the countries that support the coalition forces in Iraq to coordinate strategies
- Strengthen efforts to encourage young people NOT to join the military
- Provide support for soldiers who refuse to fight in Iraq including:
 - (1) encourage countries like Canada and individual cities to provide asylum
 - (2) organize speaking tours of dissenting soldiers
 - (3) collect stories from various countries of soldiers who refused to fight

Proposals against military bases and nuclear proliferation

- Support and get involved in the process of building an international movement demanding the closure of foreign military bases around the world Show solidarity with the struggle of the Okinawans to stop the construction of US bases in Henoko
- Support global actions on May 1 to demand the abolition of nuclear weapons

On the 60th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, call for global actions on August 6-9 to say 'No more Hiroshimas! No more Nagasakis.'

APPENDIX E: THE PORTO ALEGRE MANIFESTO:

Twelve proposals for another possible world:

Since the first World Social Forum took place on January 2001, the social forum phenomenon has extended itself to all continents, at both national and local levels. It has resulted in the emergence of a worldwide public space for citizenship and strife, and permitted the elaboration of political proposals as alternatives to the tyranny of neoliberal globalisation by financial markets and transnational corporations, with the imperialistic, military power of the United States as its armed exponent.

Thanks to its diversity and solidarity between its actors, and the social movements of which it is composed, the alternative global movement has become a force to be taken into consideration globally. Many of the innumerable proposals which have been put forward on the forums have been supported by many social movements worldwide. We, the signers of the Porto Alegre Manifesto, by no means pretend to speak in the name of the entire World Social Forum, but speak on a strictly personal basis.

We have identified twelve such proposals, which we believe, together, give sense and direction to the construction of another, different world. If they would be implemented, it would allow citizens to take back their own future. We therefore want to submit these fundamentals points to the scrutiny of actors and social movements of all countries. It will be them that, at all levels - worldwide, continentally, nationally and locally- will move forward and fight for these proposals to become reality.

Indeed, we have no illusions about the real commitment of governments and international institutions to spontaneously implement any of these proposals, even though they might claim to do so, out of opportunism.

Another different world must respect the rights for all human beings to live, by the implementations of new economic measures. Therefore, it's necessary to:

1. Cancel the external debt of southern countries, which has been already paid many times over, and which constitutes the privileged means of creditor states, local and international financial institutions, to keep the largest part of humanity under their control and sustain their misery. This measure needs to be complemented by the restitution of the gigantic sums which have been stolen by their corrupt leaders.

2. Implement international taxes on financial transactions (most notably the Tobin tax on speculative capital), on direct foreign investments, on consolidated profit from multinationals, on weapon trade and on activities accompanied by large greenhouse effect gas emissions. Such financial means, complemented by public development help which should imperatively be 0.7% of the GNP of rich countries, should be directed towards fighting big epidemics (like AIDS), guarantee access to all humanity to clean water, housing, energy, health services and medication, education, and other social services.

3. Progressively dismantle all forms of fiscal, juridical and banking paradises, which do nothing more than facilitate organized crime, corruption, illegal trafficking of all kinds, fraud and fiscal evasion, and large illegal operations by large corporations and even governments. These fiscal paradises are not only limited to certain states, existing in areas of non-legality; they also exist within the legislation of developed countries. In a first instance, it would be advisable to strongly tax capital flux entering and leaving these 'paradises', as well as all establishments and actors, financial or otherwise, taking part in these gigantic transactions.

4. All inhabitants of this planet must have the right to be employed, to social protection and retirement/pension, respecting equal rights between men and women. This should be an imperative of all public polity systems, both national and international.

5. Promote all forms of equitable trade, reject all free-trade agreements and laws proposed by the World Trade Organization, and putting in motion mechanisms allowing a progressive upward equalisation of social and environmental norms (as defined under the conventions by the International Labour Organization) on the production of goods and services. Education, health, social services and culture should be excluded from the scope of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) by the WTO.

The convention on cultural diversity, currently being negotiated at UNESCO, must result in cultural rights and politics of public cultural support to explicitly prevail over commercial rights.

6. Guarantee the right to for all countries to alimentary sovereignty and security by promoting peasant, rural agriculture. This means a total suppression of all subventions to the export of agricultural products, mainly by the USA and the European Union, and the ability to tax imports to avoid dumping practices. In the same way, every country or group of countries must be able to decide in a sovereign way to forbid the production and import of genetically modified organism, meant for consumption.

7. Forbid all type of patenting of knowledge on living beings (human, animal or vegetal) as well as any privatization of common goods for humanity, particularly water.

B. Another possible world must sustain community life in peace and justice, for all humanity. Therefore is it necessary to:

8. Fight by means of public policies against all kinds of discrimination, sexism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and racism. Fully recognize the political, cultural and economic rights (including the access to natural resources) of indigenous populations.

9. Take urgent steps to end the destruction of the environment and the threat of severe climate changes due to the greenhouse effect, resulting from the proliferation of individual transportation and the excessive use of non-renewable energy sources. Start with the execution of an alternative development model, based on the sparing/efficient use of energy, and a democratic control of natural resources, most notably potable water, on a global scale.

10. Demand the dismantling of all foreign military bases and the removal of troops on all countries, except when operating under explicit mandate of the United Nations. Specially for Iraq and Palestine.

C. Another possible world must promote democracy from the neighbouring level to the global level. Therefore, it's necessary to:

11. Guarantee the right to access information and the right to inform, for/by all citizens, by legislation which should:

a) End the concentration of media under gigantic communication groups b) Guarantee the autonomy of journalists relative to actionnaires

c) Favour the development of non-profit press, alternative media and community networks.

Respecting these right implies setting up a system of checks and balances for citizens, in particular national and international media observation institutions.

12. Reform and deeply democratize international institutions by making sure human, economic, social and cultural rights prevail, as stipulated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This implies incorporating the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization into the decision-making mechanism and systems of the United Nations. In case of persisting violation by the USA of international law, transfer the United Nations headquarters outside New York, to another country, preferably southern.

Porto Alegre, January 29 2005