

## **Porto Alegre II**

### **The final statement**

*The social movements agreed this statement calling for peace and social justice, and resistance to neo-liberalism, war and militarism*

*Some 60,000 people attended the second meeting of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, from 31 January to 5 February 2002.*

1) In the face of continuing deterioration in the living conditions of people, we, social movements from all around the world, have come together in tens of thousands at the second World Social Forum in Porto Alegre. We are here in spite of the attempts to break our solidarity. We come together again to continue our struggles against neo-liberalism and war, to confirm the agreements of the last Forum, and to reaffirm that another world is possible.

2) We are diverse - women and men, adults and youth, indigenous peoples, rural and urban, workers and unemployed, homeless, the elderly, students, migrants, professionals, peoples of every creed, colour and sexual orientation. The expression of this diversity is our strength and the basis of our unity. We are a global solidarity movement, united in our determination to fight against the concentration of wealth, the proliferation of poverty and inequalities, and the destruction of our earth. We are living and constructing alternative systems, and using creative ways to promote them. We are building a large alliance from our struggles and resistance against a system based on sexism, racism and violence, which privileges the interests of capital and patriarchy over the needs and aspirations of people.

3) This system produces a daily drama of women, children, and the elderly dying because of hunger, lack of health care and preventable diseases. Families are forced to leave their homes because of wars, the impact of 'big development,' landlessness and environmental disasters, unemployment, attacks on public services and the destruction of social solidarity. Both in the South and in the North, vibrant struggles and resistance to uphold the dignity of life are flourishing.

4) September 11 marked a dramatic change. After the terrorist attacks, which we absolutely

condemn, as we condemn all other attacks on civilians in other parts of the world, the government of the United States and its allies have launched a massive military operation. In the name of the ‘war against terrorism,’ civil and political rights are being attacked all over the world. The war against Afghanistan, in which terrorists methods are being used, is now being extended to other fronts. Thus there is the beginning of a permanent global war to cement the domination of the United States government and its allies. This war reveals another face of neo-liberalism, a face which is brutal and unacceptable. Islam is being demonised, while racism and xenophobia are deliberately propagated. The mass media is actively taking part in this belligerent campaign which divides the world into ‘good’ and ‘evil’. The opposition to the war is at the heart of our movement.

5) The situation of war has further destabilised the Middle East, providing a pretext for further repression of the Palestinian people. An urgent task of our movement is to mobilise solidarity for the Palestinian people and their struggle for self-determination as they face brutal occupation by the Israeli state. This is vital to collective security of all peoples in the region.

6) Further events also confirm the urgency of our struggles. In Argentina the financial crisis caused by the failure of International Monetary Fund structural adjustment and mounting debt precipitated a social and political crisis. This crisis generated spontaneous protests of the middle and working classes, repression which caused deaths, failure of governments, and new alliances between different social groups. With the force of *cacerolazos* and *piquetes*, popular mobilisations have demanded their basic rights of food, jobs and housing. We reject the criminalisation of social movements in Argentina and the attacks against democratic rights and freedom. We also condemn the greed and the blackmail of the multinational corporations supported by the governments of the rich countries.

7) The collapse of the multinational Enron exemplifies the bankruptcy of the casino economy and the corruption of businessmen and politicians, leaving workers without jobs and pensions. In developing countries this multinational engaged in fraudulent activities and its projects pushed people off their land and led to sharp increases in the price of water and electricity.

8) The United States government, in its efforts to protect the interests of big corporations, arrogantly walked away from negotiations on global warming, the Antiballistic Missile Treaty, the Convention on Bio-diversity, the United Nations conference on racism and intolerance, and the talks to reduce the supply of small arms, proving once again that United States unilateralism undermines attempts to find multilateral solutions to global problems.

9) In Genoa the G8 failed completely in its self-assumed task of global government. In the face of massive mobilisation and resistance, they responded

with violence and repression, denouncing as criminals those who dared to protest. But they failed to intimidate our movement.

10) All this is happening in the context of a global recession. The neo-liberal economic model is destroying the rights, living conditions and livelihoods of people. Using every means to protect their ‘share value,’ multinational companies lay off workers, slash wages and close factories, squeezing the last dollar from the workers. Governments faced with this economic crisis respond by privatising, cutting social sector expenditures, and permanently reducing workers’ rights. This recession exposes the fact that the neo-liberal promise of growth and prosperity is a lie.

11) The global movement for social justice and solidarity faces enormous challenges: its fight for peace and collective security implies confronting poverty, discrimination, domination and the creation of an alternative sustainable society.

Social movements energetically condemn violence and militarism as a means of conflict resolution; the promotion of low intensity conflicts and military operations in the Colombia Plan as part of the Andes regional initiative, the *Puebla Panama* plan, the arms trade and higher military budgets, economic blockades against people and nations especially against Cuba and Iraq, and the growing repression against trade unions, social movements, and activists.

We support the trade unions and informal sector worker struggles as essential to maintain working and living conditions, the genuine right to organise, to go on strike, to negotiate collective agreements, and to achieve equality in wages and working conditions between women and men. We reject slavery and the exploitation of children. We support workers’ struggles and the trade union fights against casualisation, subcontracting of labour and lay-offs, and demand new international rights for the employees of the multinational companies and their affiliates, in particular the right to unionise and space for collective bargaining. Equally, we support the struggles of farmers and people’s organisations for their rights to a livelihood, and to land, forests and water.

12) Neo-liberal policies create tremendous misery and insecurity. They have dramatically increased the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and children. Poverty and insecurity creates millions of migrants who are denied their dignity, freedom, and rights. We therefore demand the right of free movement; the right to physical integrity and legal status of all migrants. We support the rights of indigenous peoples and the fulfilment of International Labour Organisation article 169 in national legal frameworks.

13) The external debt of the countries of the South has been repaid several times over. Illegitimate, unjust and fraudulent, debt functions as an instrument of domination, depriving people of their fundamental human rights with the sole aim of increasing international usury. We demand unconditional cancellation of

debt and the reparation of historical, social, and ecological debts. The countries demanding repayment of debt have engaged in exploitation of the natural resources and the traditional knowledge of the South.

14) Water, land, food, forests, seeds, culture and people's identities are common assets of humanity for present and future generations. It is essential to preserve bio-diversity. People have the right to safe and permanent food free from genetically modified organisms. Food sovereignty at the local, national, and regional level is a basic human right; in this regard, democratic land reforms and peasants' access to land are fundamental requirements.

15) The meeting in Doha confirmed the illegitimacy of the World Trade Organisation. The adoption of the 'development agenda' only defends corporate interests. By launching a new round, the World Trade Organisation is moving closer to its goal of converting everything into a commodity. For us, food, public services, agriculture, health and education are not for sale. Patenting must not be used as a weapon against the poor countries and peoples. We reject the patenting and trading of life forms. The World Trade Organisation agenda is perpetuated at the continental level by regional free trade and investment agreements.

By organising protests such as the huge demonstrations and plebiscites against the Free Trade Area of the Americas, people have rejected these agreements as representing a re-colonisation and the destruction of fundamental social, economical, cultural and environmental rights and values.

16) We will strengthen our movement through common actions and mobilisations for social justice, for the respect of rights and liberties, for quality of life, equality, dignity and peace.

We are fighting:

- for democracy: people have the right to know about and criticise the decisions of their own governments, especially with respect to dealings with international institutions. Governments are ultimately accountable to their people. While we support the establishment of electoral and participative democracy across the world, we emphasise the need for the democratisation of states and societies and the struggles against dictatorship;
- for the abolition of external debt and reparations;
- against speculative activities: we demand the creation of specific taxes such as the Tobin Tax, and the abolition of tax havens;
- for the right to information;
- for women's rights, freedom from violence, poverty and exploitation;
- against war and militarism, against foreign military bases and interventions, and the systematic escalation of violence. We choose to privilege negotiation and non-violent conflict resolution. We affirm the right for all people to ask for international mediation, with the participation of independent actors from civil society;



- for the rights of youth, their access to free public education and social autonomy, and the abolition of compulsory military service;
- for the self-determination of all peoples, especially the rights of indigenous peoples.

In the years to come, we will organise collective mobilisations such as those in 2002 on:

- 8 March: International women's day
- 17 April: International day of peasant's struggle.
- 1 May: Labour day.
- 7 October: World day for the homeless.
- 12 October: Cry of the excluded.
- 16 October: World food day.

Other global mobilisations will take place:

- 15-16 March: Barcelona (Spain), summit of the European Union.
- 18-22 March: Monterrey (Mexico), United Nations Conference on Financing for Development.
- 1 May: 'International day of action against militarism and for peace'
- end of May, 4th preparatory meeting for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Indonesia
- 17-18 May: Madrid (Spain), summit of Latin America, Caribbean and Europe.
- May, Asia Development Bank Annual Meeting, Shanghai, (China)
- June: Rome (Italy), world food summit;
- 22-23 June: Seville European Union summit
- July: Toronto and Calgary (Canada), G8 summit.
- 22 July: USA campaign against Coca Cola
- September: Johannesburg (South Africa), Rio+10.
- September: Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM), Copenhagen
- October: Quito (Ecuador), Social continental forum 'A new integration is possible'
- November: Cuba, 2nd Hemispheric meeting against Free Trade Area of the Americas
- December: Copenhagen (Denmark), summit of the European Union.

In 2003:

- April: Buenos Aires (Argentina), summit of the Free Trade Area of the Americas.
  - June: Thessalonika, European Union Summit
  - June: France, G8
- The World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank will meet somewhere, sometime. And we will be there!

**INSERT  
ROUTLEDGE  
ADVERT FROM  
LAST ISSUE  
ENDPAPERS 73  
JOB No 12178**