

Call of the World Social Movements

**Porto Alegre,
Brazil
January 2003**

The World Social Forum brings together social movements and non-governmental organisations from across the world. In January, it met for the third time in Latin America. Resisting the war on Iraq and other conflicts figured high on its agenda, as this statement from the Forum makes clear. We follow it with interventions made in Porto Alegre by Noam Chomsky, Arundhati Roy and Ken Coates.

We are meeting in Porto Alegre in the shadow of a global crisis. The belligerent intentions of the United States Government in its determination to launch a war on Iraq pose a grave threat to us all, and are a dramatic manifestation of the links between militarism and economic domination.

At the same time, neo-liberal globalisation itself is in crisis: the threat of a global recession is ever present; corporate corruption scandals are daily news, and expose the reality of capitalism.

Social and economic inequalities are growing, threatening the social structures of our societies and cultures, our rights and our lives.

Biodiversity, air, water, forest, soil and sea are treated like commodities and are for sale.

All this threatens our common future.

We oppose this!

For our common future

We are social movements that are fighting all around the world against neo-liberal globalisation, war, racism, castism, poverty, patriarchy and all the forms of economic, ethnic, social, political, cultural, sexual and gender discriminations and exclusions. We are all fighting for social justice, citizenship, participatory democracy, universal rights and for the right of peoples to decide their own future.

We stand for peace and international cooperation, for a sustainable society answering the needs of people for food, housing, health, education, information, water, energy, public transportation and human rights.

We are in solidarity with the women engaged against social and patriarchal violence. We support the struggle of the peasants, workers, popular urban movements and all those who are urgently threatened by being deprived of homes, jobs, land and their rights.

We have demonstrated in millions to say that another world is possible.

This has never been more true and more urgent.

No war!

The social movements are against militarisation, the increase of military bases and state repression that create countless refugees and the criminalisation of social movements and poor people.

We are against the war on Iraq, the attacks on the Palestinian, Chechen and Kurdish peoples, the wars on Afghanistan, Colombia, in Africa and the growing threat of war on Korea. We oppose the economic and political aggression against Venezuela and the political and economic blockade by the United States Government against Cuba, and elsewhere. We are against all kinds of military and economic actions designed to impose the neo-liberal model and undermine the sovereignty and peace of peoples around the world.

War has become a structural and permanent part of global domination, using military force to control people and strategic resources such as oil. The United States government and its allies are imposing war as a more and more common solution for resolving conflicts. We also denounce the deliberate attempts made by imperialists to increase religious, ethnic, racist, tribal and other tensions and strife all over the world in order to pursue their selfish interests.

The majority of public opinion around the world is opposed to the coming war on Iraq. We call on all social movements and progressive forces to support, participate in and organise world-wide protests on February 15th 2003. These protests are already planned and co-ordinated by all those who oppose the war in over 30 major cities around the world.

Derail the World Trade Organisation

The World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), and a proliferation of regional and bilateral trade agreements such as the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the proposed Central America free trade agreements are used by multinational corporations to promote their interests, to dominate and control our economies, and to impose a development model which impoverishes our societies. In the name of trade liberalisation, every aspect of life and nature is for sale and people are denied their basic rights. Agri-multinationals are trying to impose genetically modified organisms (GMOs) world-wide; people suffering from HIV/AIDS and other pandemics in Africa and elsewhere are denied access to cheap generic drugs. In addition, countries of the South are trapped in a never-ending cycle of debt that forces them to open up their markets and export their wealth.

In the coming year our campaigns against the World Trade Organisation, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and trade liberalisation will grow in size and scope.

We will campaign to stop and reverse the liberalisation of agriculture, water, energy, public services and investment, and to reassert peoples' sovereignty over their societies, their resources, their cultures and knowledge, and their economies.

We are in solidarity with the Mexican farmers who say '*el campo no aguanta mas*' ('the farmers are fed up') and in the spirit of their struggles we will mobilise locally, nationally and internationally to derail the World Trade Organisation and

the Free Trade Area of the Americas. We support the world-wide movement to fight for food sovereignty and against the neo-liberal models of agriculture, food production and distribution. In particular, we will organise mass protests around the world during the 5th ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation in Cancun, Mexico, in September 2003, and during the ministerial meeting of the Free Trade Area of the Americas in Miami, United States of America, in October.

Cancel the debt

The full and unconditional cancellation of Third World debt constitutes a prerequisite condition in order to fulfil even the most basic human rights. We shall support any indebted country that would stop its external debt payment and would break its agreements with the International Monetary Fund, especially the Structural Adjustment Programmes. Centuries of exploitation of the Third World people, their resources and environment have given them the right to reparations. We ask 'who owes whom'? These issues will be raised in the major campaigns being held in 2003; G8 (Evian/June), World Trade Organisation (Cancun/September) and the International Monetary Fund and World Bank annual meeting (Washington/September).

Opposing the G8

We call on all the social movements and progressive forces to be part of the mobilisation to denounce the illegitimacy and also to reject the policies of the G8 that will be meeting in Evian, France, from 1-3 June 2003. This mobilisation will also be organised all around the world, with an international gathering at Evian that will include an alternative summit, alternative camp and a huge international demonstration.

Women: promoting equality

We are part of the actions promoted by women's movements on 8th March, International Women's Day, to fight against all forms of violence and patriarchy and for social and political equality.

In solidarity

We call for solidarity from all progressive social forces, movements and organisations across the world for those peoples such as the Palestinians, Venezuelans, Bolivians and others who are facing extreme crisis at this very moment in time.

Enhance our international network

Last year during the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre we adopted a declaration that defines our aims, our struggles and the ways we build our alliances (see *Spokesman 74*). The spirit of this text is still living and will inspire our coming mobilisations.

Since then, the world has been changing very quickly and we feel the need to

take a new step in our decision-making processes, in our co-ordinations and alliances; the need to promote a broad, radical, democratic, plural, internationalist, feminist, non-discriminatory and anti-imperialist agenda.

We now want to build a framework articulating our analyses and commitments to our mobilisations. This requires the active participation of all the movements, keeping in mind that the social forums are independent from governments and political parties (as given in the World Social Forum Charter of Principles) and keeping a respect for their autonomy. This framework would be strengthened by all the different social actors contributing and sharing their experiences and concrete social practices. Further, this would be in accordance with the different forms of political expression and organisation of the social movements, and with regard to the diversity of ideologies and cultures.

We feel the need to constitute a network of movements that is responsive, flexible and sustainable; yet is also broad and transparent. Its responsibilities should be to enrich and feed the process, to promote its diversity and to assume the necessary degree of co-ordination. The aims of the network will be to enhance the engagement of movements around the world in a deeper political debate, to facilitate common action and to strengthen the initiative of concrete actors fighting for social interests. Its work should be both horizontal and effective.

To this end we propose to build a contact group as a resource and tool for our international mobilisations, including preparing meetings, promoting debate and democracy by promoting a web site and mailing lists. This contact group would be established for a period of between six and twelve months and it will draw on the past experience of the supporters of the network of social and popular movements that are based in Brazil.

This arrangement is transitional and to ensure continuity. The main task of this provisory group is to facilitate debate so that the social movements around the world define concrete procedures to work together. It is an ongoing process. A first review of the new contact group will take place at meetings of the network of social movements during the mass mobilisation against the World Trade Organisation in Cancun in September 2003. A second review, again in assemblies of the network of social movements, will follow during the World Social Forum meeting that is expected to be held in India in 2004.

Among other things, the reviews will consider the effectiveness of the co-ordination and seek new ways to enhance it. It will also consider how to proceed from one year to the next, and how to include national, regional movements and thematic campaigns. In the meantime, we need a large debate among organisations, campaigns and networks to articulate the proposals for a more permanent and representative structure.

In the months to come we will have many occasions to experiment, improve and build this process through our campaigns and mobilisations.

We call for all networks, popular and social movements to sign this statement and send your signatures to movsoc@uol.com.br