



Whose New Asia?

International Conference on Peoples' Struggles and Alternatives

Balay Kalinaw, UP Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines
13-14 August 2015





MESSAGE FROM FOCUS STAFF

This year, Focus on the Global South (Focus) celebrates 20 years of a dynamic, interesting and rewarding life. Founded in 1995 at the height of the globalist project, Focus has witnessed many political, economic and environmental crises and confronted them head on. Focus has joined hands with numerous organisations, movements, unions, thinkers and activists to challenge economic and financial globalisation, neoliberalism and dictatorial regimes. We have continued to oppose war, military occupation and human rights violations, and fight injustice and inequality at multiple levels. Our methodology from the onset has been to link paradigms with practice, and trends and actions from global to local levels.

Alongside resistance to injustice and inequity has always been a firm commitment to building alternative systems and frameworks to replace the structures of market capitalism and neoliberalism. These include deglobalisation, feminist economics, food sovereignty, agro-ecology, agrarian and aquatic reform, the commons, climate justice and transitions to low-carbon economies and societies. A critical component of our vision is democratic accountability from states and inter-governmental bodies to the peoples of the world.

Over the past 20 years, Focus has also experienced significant changes as an organisation: we have expanded and contracted our size, opened, closed and reopened offices, and adapted ourselves to changing circumstances, while remaining true to our core beliefs. We have provided a home to numerous activists and researchers, and the Focus family now extends to many regions of the world.

In essence though, Focus is today as it was in 1995: a collective of activists committed to progressive change, healthy environments, justice, equality, dignity, peace, feminism and pluralism. We are both, proud and grateful to be able to celebrate our 20 years of life with the people, movements and organisations that have founded, shaped and supported us and kept us honest. This conference is an important space to celebrate milestones, foster dialogues about the future, renew unities, strength and solidarities, and forge new partnerships. We look forward to working together with present and future allies to build a better tomorrow.



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Context

Asia is experiencing persisting inequalities, social, economic and political injustices and environmental destruction amidst remarkable economic growth. Leaving Europe behind as a hub of dollar billionaires, this New Asia is a region of tremendous wealth and has seen the rise of mega cities, special economic zones for manufacturing and hi-tech industries, as well as increased investments from transnational corporations. However, deep pockets of poverty and widespread inequality within and between its rural and urban areas have also increased and intensified, with the economic boom largely having been built on intense exploitation of its human and natural resources by states and corporations.

For over two decades, free trade and investment agreements have been central instruments for governments across Asia to pursue their development plans. In the Asia-Pacific region, the number of bilateral Free Trade Agreements increased more than 500 percent over the past decade. The 2008 global economic crisis led to unprecedented trade contraction—particularly affecting countries well-integrated into the global economy—put into serious question the viability of export-led economic development as the engine of sustainable economic growth. In the aftermath of the crisis, however, major economies in the region seemed to have made only small adjustments in their trade and economic policies, albeit reflecting a more aggressive push towards trade and investment liberalization via these bilateral and regional agreements.

An alarming rise in land, water and natural resources grabbing across the region has been spurred by agricultural, industrial, infrastructure and financial investments, real estate booms, urbanization and extractive industries. Agro-industrial food regimes are hastening the erosion of indigenous seeds and their replacement by hybrids or genetically engineered varieties, which negatively impact overall biodiversity. As landscapes are privatized and natural resources commoditised and sold in distant markets, entire communities are being dispossessed of their homes, wealth and assets and being pushed into precarious livelihoods. Distress out-migration from rural areas has increased, and rich and diverse local agricultural traditions and knowledge that sustain biodiversity and environmental health are being lost.

Climate change and climate-induced disasters pose another major challenge to many Asian countries and their citizens, compounding existing vulnerabilities and





creating new ones—with differentiated impacts across class, gender, ethnicities and geographical locations. Dubbed as the ‘new normal,’ the rapidly changing climate hinders peoples’ capacities to sustain their lives and to build resilient communities.

As the impacts of climate change expand and intensify, the poor, who already lack access to productive resources face more social and economic suffering. Land, water and forests already threatened by investment projects and trade agreements are made further vulnerable to market capture through carbon financing and emissions trading schemes such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and the green economy.

There is limited recognition among policy makers of the dangers of the extractivist development model pursued by most governments, especially about how it exacerbates the climate crisis and its far-reaching impacts on peoples and environments. Those who advocate for alternative approaches are branded as security threats acting against their societies and nations. Human rights violations are a major concern in Asia. Peoples' resistance to development aggression has been met with shrinking democratic spaces, political repression, rising militarism, extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances and criminalization of dissent. Indigenous peoples, undocumented migrants, stateless peoples and refugees face further marginalization and exclusion.

A crucial task now is to strengthen and re-energize civil society and social movements, and support the building of new development paths and social-economic alternatives.





Conference Goals

- Provide a space for collective reflection and discussion on development in Asia and the world, and the state of peoples' resistance and alternatives.
- Draw out examples, cases, and narratives of peoples' alternatives along key themes of economy and finance, commons, nature, environment and climate, democracy and human rights, and social movements and power.
- Gather inputs and suggestions for Focus' work over the next five years, in terms of research, analysis and collaborations with social movements, grassroots partners, academe, media, policy makers and development partners.

Outcomes

Focus hopes that the ideas and contents that will be generated in the conference will feed into broader debates and initiatives on peoples' struggles and alternatives, especially in Asia. Three outcomes that Focus envisages emanating out of this conference are:

- Strengthened ties and partnerships between Focus and its partners
- Possible new projects or areas of collaboration/future work
- Ideas for future work of Focus—in terms of its core areas of work: research and analysis, political education/capacity building, social movement building, and advocacy/campaigns



SESSIONS

Keynote Address

Focus: A Backward Glance, A Forward Look

Dr. Walden Bello will give a 30-minute speech on the state of Asia's economy today and will offer a comprehensive critique of the development model that governments have taken and alternatives to this model.

Opening Plenary

Where is Asia Now?

Asia in Relation to the World

The opening plenary will feature renowned activists and leaders from social movements in Asia to discuss key trends and challenges on the state of Asia now and its relation to the world. The speakers will tackle burning issues of the day— inequality and vulnerabilities in the region, and critique of capitalism and mainstream development models. They will also touch on specific development themes such as climate and environmental justice, the commons, trade and investments, public health, human rights and democracy, social movement, organizing, strategies and engagements.

Moderated Session

What Do We Mean by Peoples' Alternatives?

This TV interview-style/roundtable session aims to kickoff the thematic discussions around peoples' alternatives. The speakers will be asked the following questions: *Alternative to what? What are the principles? What are the scope? What levels? How do you achieve these alternatives? What are existing and potential examples of peoples' alternatives?*

World Café Workshops

The major objective of the World Café workshops is to generate lively discussions around the question and issue of peoples' alternatives—on four themes: alternative economic and financial system, the commons, climate and environmental justice, and social movement, organizing, strategies and engagements. The World Café is a methodology that aims to foster collaborative dialogue, active engagement and constructive possibilities for common actions. The Café is built on the premise that



people already have within them the experience, knowledge/wisdom and creativity to confront even the most difficult challenges.

Struggles and Alternatives: An Indigenous Peoples' Perspective

Timuay Santos Magay Unsad will offer his insights on the indigenous people's worldview of what "good development" means based on principles of safeguarding their closeness to natures, collective leadership, communal ownership of property, equal status in society, the 'good *fedew*' as basis of justice, peace and development, and *Lumut Minanga* or progressive pluralism.

Panel Discussion Struggle for Alternatives Across the Globe and Implications to Asia

The panel will feature activists and thinkers from Europe and Latin America to tackle current events in their regions such as the Euro crisis, struggles of movements to protect biodiversity and the commons, and the global campaign to forge legally binding international instruments to tame the power of Transnational Corporations (TNCs). The speakers will offer insights on the implications of these trends to Asia and other parts of the world.

Closing Plenary on Peoples' Alternatives

The final plenary will tackle the key big ideas and emerging narratives or discourses around peoples' alternatives such as feminist economics/alternatives, commons and food sovereignty, global justice, systemic alternatives with a focus on climate justice and *Buen Vivir*, and new politics.

The final plenary will link with the 4 thematic World Café sessions and speakers will be asked to comment on the synthesis from their particular positions: What can they add to make these ideas richer? How can their ideas be put into practice to shape/build a different Asia? What are the priorities for action?

Celebrating 20 Years of Focus

With messages from Focus Executive Director Shalmali Guttal and Focus Board Members. Solidarity messages and greetings on our 20th Anniversary from Focus allies across the globe. Special performance from independent Filipino musician Tao Aves.

CONFERENCE

DAY ONE | AUGUST 13

8:30-9:00	Registration
9:00-9:15	Opening Remarks Surichai Wun'gao, Chulalongkorn University
9:15-9:45	Keynote Address Focus: A Backward Glance, A Forward Look Walden Bello, Focus on the Global South
9:45-11:15	Opening Plenary: Where is Asia Now? Asia in Relation to the World Premrudee Daoroung, TERRA Henry Saragih, La Via Campesina Amit Sengupta, People's Health Movement Lidy Nacpil, Asian People's Movement on Debt and Development Max de Mesa, Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates Moderator: Seema Mustafa, The Citizen
11:15-12:00	Open Forum
12:00-1:00	Lunch Break
1:00-1:45	Moderated Session: What Do We Mean by Peoples' Alternatives? Jenina Joy Chavez, Action for Economic Reforms Charles Santiago, Member of Parliament-Malaysia Nuchanart Thanthong, Four Regions Slum Network Moderator: Peter Rosset, La Via Campesina
1:45-2:00	Focus' World Café: Explaining the Methodology and Breakout Sessions
2:00-3:30	World Café on Alternative Economy and Financial System Introduction from Polly Jones, Global Justice Now
3:30-4:00	Coffee Break
4:00- 5:30	World Café on the Commons

Emcees: Joseph Purugganan and Mary Ann Manahan

PROGRAMME

DAY TWO AUGUST 14

9:00-9:15	Struggles and Alternatives: An Indigenous Peoples' Perspective Timuay Santos Unsad, Timuay Justice and Governance
9:15-10:00	Panel: Peoples' Struggles for Alternatives in Other Parts of the World and What They Mean for Asia Christophe Aguiton, ATTAC-France Silvia Ribeiro, ETC Brid Brennan, Transnational Institute Moderator: Judy Pasimio, Lilak (Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights)
10:00-10:20	Open Forum
10:20-10:30	Coffee Break
10:30-10:40	World Café Instructions
10:40-12:10	World Café on Climate and Environmental Justice
12:10-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:30	World Café on Social Movements, Organizing, Strategies and Engagements
2:30-3:00	Coffee Break
3:00-3:30	Synthesizing the World Café Discussions
3:30-4:30	Closing Plenary on Peoples' Alternatives Marina Durano, UP Asian Center/Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era Peter Rosset, La Via Campesina Pablo Solón, Fundación Solón Seema Mustafa, The Citizen Moderator: Shalmali Guttal, Focus on the Global South
4:30-5:15	Open Forum
5:15-5:30	Closing the Conference Final Synthesis Closing Remarks: Indra Lubis, Focus on the Global South Board
Emcees: Nicola Bullard and Afsar Jafri	
5:30-6:30	Celebrating 20 Years of Focus Slide Show Message from Shalmali Guttal (Focus new Executive Director) Intermission and Songs from Tao Solidarity Messages from Friends and Partners Message from the Board Songs from Tao Closing Remarks
Emcees: Sophea Chrek and Niabdulghafar Tohming	
7:30-onwards	Focus 20 Years Party at Conspiracy Bar and Restaurant

Emcees: Ros Sokunthy and Raphael Baladad



Combining Research & Activism for Political & Social Change

What We Do

For 20 years, Focus on the Global South has consistently presented critical perspectives on globalisation, governance and development, grounded in our commitment to social, economic, ecological and gender justice, peoples' democracy and plurality. At the same time, we have used our resources and skills to support peoples' struggles and to help create and build spaces where peoples' voices can be heard.

What We Have Achieved¹

Since we were founded in 1995, we have provided strong critiques of neoliberalism and corporate-led economic and financial globalisation; as the global justice movement emerged, Focus connected Asian movements and



realities with the global context; while struggles emerged and were being fought at multiple levels, we deepened our work in Thailand, Philippines, India, the Mekong countries and regionally, examining the persisting inequalities and injustices amidst the economic growth of the 'New Asia'.

Achievements that capture the scope and consistency of our work over the past 20 years include:

Building and supporting international networks and processes – for example, the Our World is Not for Sale, World Social Forum, Land Research Action Network, Food Sovereignty and Climate Space – by bringing in grassroots voices and movements from Asia, providing timely research and analysis, and organising, mobilising and campaigning.



Developing and popularising “deglobalisation” as an alternative to neoliberal globalisation. Deglobalisation continues to be a rich source of ideas and debates as the search for alternatives accelerates.

“Derailing” the Doha round of WTO talks. Although corporate-driven trade liberalisation is far from dead, the WTO has yet to recover from the multiple setbacks of Seattle, Cancun and Hong Kong, and Focus’ contribution to these has been significant.

Strengthening peoples’ movements. In external evaluations, partners have consistently cited Focus as a significant contributor to their growth, greater voice and confidence.

Publishing more than 150 editions of Focus on Trade, an electronic newsletter that has consistently provided high quality, up-to-date analyses and perspectives from the Global South on current events and key issues.





Regaining alienated commons, especially in terms of rights to land and public water, agrarian reform and stopping privatisation. Our partners in these areas attribute part of the success to resourcing provided by Focus.

Exposing the root causes of climate change and the dangers of REDD, climate-smart agriculture and other carbon market mechanisms, while working closely with national climate justice platforms to demand greater action on climate change.

Establishing strong and trusted links with social movements and activists regionally and internationally, complemented by rooted programmes in Thailand, Philippines, India and Cambodia.

Who We Are

Focus on the Global South is a collective of committed activists working with citizens, social movements, workers, policy makers and progressive organisations in our common quest for ecological, social and economic justice. With offices in Bangkok, Manila, New Delhi and Phnom Penh, and working locally, nationally, regionally and internationally, the Focus team has a wealth of experience and skills, as well as diverse cultural perspectives, educational and work backgrounds, languages and ways of working. Our organisational structure reflects our commitment to horizontality and democracy, while the team structure aims to maximise inter-connections between issues, levels of analysis and geographic locations.

What We Believe

We believe that progressive social transformation happens through the continued empowerment of critically aware social movements and communities, and expansion of democratic spaces.



The Change We Seek

Righting the injustices and imbalances of the current system requires deep political, structural, social and ethical change. While this must be advanced on many fronts, some central elements of the transformation we seek include:

Re-embedding societies and economies within ecosystems, based on the principles of subsidiarity, peoples' participation and sustainability.

Socialising/democratising control of and access to energy, food, land, water, soil, forests, as well as essential goods and services, to ensure the realization of rights, justice, well-being, peace and freedom.

Re-imagining genuinely democratic institutions and forms of governance that can deliver economic and social justice and well-being within planetary limits.



Looking Ahead

We are embarking on a new program of work in 2015-2017 called **'Peoples' Alternatives for Asia'**. We shall continue our monitoring and critiques of neoliberalism, economic and financial globalisation, privatization, corporate-driven trade and investments, control and destruction of natural resources, and rights violations, but as we interrogate and expose these issues, we shall also strengthen the promotion of different kinds of alternatives and peoples' resistances.

Across Asia, social movements, peasants, indigenous peoples, workers and others envision a more just world, and are taking steps to make that world a reality. With 2015 marking the twentieth anniversary of Focus on the Global South and its close collaboration with many Asian social movements, we will continue to use a combination of participatory research and analysis, campaigning with allies and political education to strengthen these movements and further advance alternatives to neoliberal development and governance.

We are committed to our work and to our vision. We look forward to your partnership.

Find out more about Focus and how to support its work by visiting www.focusweb.org

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- 1 External evaluations have consistently highlighted Focus' positive and valued contributions to critical analysis, promoting alternatives, building links across continents and sectors, and supporting progressive social movements. The achievements listed here have been highlighted by evaluations and are indicative rather than exhaustive.

SPEAKERS

Premrudee Daoroung

TERRA

Premrudee Daoroung is the Co-director of Toward Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (TERRA) and has been working in the Mekong for more than 20 years on ecological issues.

Henry Saragih

La Via Campesina

Henry Saragih is Chairman of the Indonesian Peasant Union (SPI-Serikat Petani Indonesia), and the former General Coordinator of La Via Campesina. La Via Campesina is an organization of organizations, part of a global movement of peasants, family farmers, indigenous and landless people.

Amit Sengupta

People's Health Movement

Amit was trained in medicine and works on issues related to public health, pharmaceuticals policy, and other S&T policy issues like Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). He is associated with the People's Science Movement in India and the Global People's Health Movement. He has also been involved

in implementation of a number of research projects related to health, IPRs and Medicines Policy. He held/still hold positions of: General Secretary, All India People's Science Network, Co-Convenor, People's Health Movement-India (PHM-India), Associate Co-coordinator, Global Secretariat of People's Health Movement (Global), and Managing Editor of Global Health Watch.

Lidy Nacpil

Asian Peoples' Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD)

Lidy Nacpil, who recently joined 350.org's board of directors, is an activist from the Philippines working on economic, environmental, social and gender justice issues in national, regional and global campaigns. She is the Coordinator of APMDD, Co-coordinator of the Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice (DCJ), and member of the Coordinating Committee of the Global Alliance on Tax Justice (GATJ). She also serves as the Vice President of the Freedom From Debt Coalition (FDC) in the Philippines and Convenor of the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ).



Max de Mesa
Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA)

Max de Mesa is the Chairman of PAHRA, an advocacy centre that has been committed to working towards the respect, promotion, protection and fulfillment of human rights since 1986.

Jenina Joy Chavez
Action for Economic Reforms (AER)

Jenina Joy Chavez coordinates the AER Industrial Policy Team. She was a Senior Associate and Philippines Programme Coordinator with Focus on the Global South until 2011. She works on the political economy of industrial policy, the nexus of economic policy making and public health, and regional social policy. She volunteers for the Solidarity for Asian People's Advocacy on the strengthening of the social dimension in regional integration and the democratization of ASEAN processes to include non-state actors; and the Right to Know. Right Now! Coalition on the campaign for the passage of the People's Freedom of Information Act.

Charles Santiago
Member of Parliament-Malaysia

Charles Santiago is a Malaysian economist and Member of Parliament.

Prior to his election, he worked for NGOs such as the Coalition Against Water Privatization and Monitoring the Sustainability of Globalization Malaysia. He is the Co-coordinator of the EU-ASEAN FTA Campaign Network and is part of the international organizing committee of the Asia-Europe Peoples' Forum (AEPF).

Nutchanart Thanthong
Four Regions Slum Network

Nutchanart is an urban poor and land activist in Thailand and is one of the key active members of the Four Regions Slum Network and People's Movement (PMove).

Christophe Aguiton
ATTAC-France

Christophe Aguiton is a French alter-globalization activist and a board member of Focus on the Global South. In the 1980s, Christophe Aguiton co-founded the union Solidarity, Unity, Democracy (SUD). He is also a co-founder of Attac France, and a member of the International Council of the World Social Forum.

Silvia Ribeiro
Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC)

Silvia Ribeiro is the Latin America



Director for ETC group and a board member of Focus on the Global South. She has a background as a journalist and environmental campaigner in Uruguay, Brazil and Sweden and extensive experience in social and environmental advocacy. As a civil society representative, she has attended and followed the negotiations of several of United Nations environmental treaties. She has also been an invited speaker at many civil society events around the world speaking on transgenic and other new technologies, corporate concentration, intellectual property, indigenous and farmers' rights.

Brid Brennan **Transnational Institute**

Brid is a researcher with TNI's Economic Justice and Alternatives Program. She is co-founder of the European Solidarity Centre for the Philippines and most recently, RESPECT, a Europe-wide anti-racist network for migrant domestic workers. Brid is also one of the prime movers of the Global Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity.

Marina Durano **UP Asian Center/DAWN**

Marina Durano is currently a professor

at the University of the Philippines Asian Center. Before joining the university, she spent more than 15 years engaged in strengthening women's political engagement with macroeconomic policies and global economic governance structures with DAWN or Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era and with the International Gender and Trade Network.

Peter Rosset **La Via Campesina**

Dr. Peter Rosset is a food rights activist, agroecologist and rural development specialist based in Chiapas, Mexico, where he is a researcher at El Colegio de la Frontera Sur (ECOSUR) and at El Centro de Estudios para el Cambio en el Campo Mexicano, and Co-coordinator of the Land Research Action Network. He is also a member of the technical team of La Via Campesina. Peter was board member for many years of Focus on the Global South.

Pablo Solón **Fundación Solón**

Pablo Solón is Focus on the Global South's former Executive Director (2012-2015). He was also previously the ambassador of Bolivia, under the



Evo Morales government, to the United Nations. As ambassador, he became known as a tireless advocate for the rights of nature; he delivered the now famous speech explaining why Bolivia chose to “stand alone” by not signing the Cancun climate agreement in 2010. Before holding this post, he was a social activist involved in indigenous movements, workers’ unions, student associations, human rights and cultural organizations in his native Bolivia. He is also extensively involved in the global justice movement.

Seema Mustafa **The Citizen**

Seema is the Editor-in-Chief of The Citizen, India’s first independent online daily newspaper in English. She is also the Director of the Centre for Policy Analysis (CPA), an independent and non-profit policy research centre based in New Delhi and a board member of Focus on the Global South. Seema is a senior journalist who has worked in and edited several newspapers, including Patriot, Indian Express, The Telegraph, Economic Times and Asian Age. She was also with the News X channel as their National Affairs Editor. She has covered conflict in both India and abroad, and writes

extensively on politics. She has authored two books V.P. Singh: The Lonely Messiah; and more recently Azadi’s Daughter. She has edited a book of essays on Journalism: Ethics and Responsibilities.

Timuay Santos Unsad **Timuay Justice and Governance**

Timuay Santos Unsad is a Téduray leader from Upi, Maguindanao. He is a member of Minted sa Inged (Supreme Council) of the Timuay Justice and Governance (TJG) with the position of Titay Bleyen (Assistant Supreme Chieftain). Timuay Justice and Governance (TJG) is an Indigenous Political Structure (IPS) or customary governance system of the Téduray and Lambangian Tribes in South-Central Mindanao.

Polly Jones **Global Justice Now**

Polly Jones is the head of the policy and campaigns of Global Justice Now in the UK. Polly was International Officer for UNISON, the public service trade union. She has worked with trade unions and other civil society groups all around the world, in particular southern Africa and Latin America. Her areas of expertise include international development, trade and public services.

Musical Performance

Tao

Tao sings and writes her own songs, and acts on stage and in film. She works as an assistant operations manager and events Booker. She was Task Force Pride's Communications and Campaigns Committee Co-Head for the 20th Metro Manila Pride March in 2014. She headed Lesbian Activism Project, Inc.'s staging of "Hubad: Mga Kwento ng Kalayaan",

a collection of monologues about Coming Out, in 2012 and 2013. She worked in Quezon City Hall's Gender and Development Resource and Coordinating Office as a documentor in 2013 and 2014. Her most recent role onstage was as the 14-, 35-, and 55-year old Carmen "Nanay Mameng" Deunida in Nanay Mameng: Isang Dula, produced by Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap and the Urban Poor Resource Center of the Philippines.





We would like to thank our past and current donors for generously supporting our work over the past 20 years. We are grateful for your partnership in achieving our objectives so far and hope to continue working closely with you well into the future.

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BILANCE, Boyd Reimer	KEPA
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Chula Unisearch	Oxfam Australia
Community Aid Abroad	Oxfam GB
CORDAID	Oxfam Hong Kong
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