

Defending the Right of Peasants and Small Scale Food Producers: Towards an International Convention on the Rights of the Peasant

21 February 2009 / 11 am – 1pm / B2 107

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and current human rights regime and mechanisms are important instruments in the contemporary peasants and rural communities. Nevertheless, there are major gaps in the interpretation and implementation of these mechanisms when applied to peasants. For several years, La Via Campesina, an international peasants movement, has been taking steps towards institutionalizing the protection of the rights of peasants. Peasants need a special provision, and a future International Convention on the Rights of the Peasants (ICRP) is a logical thing to do. This initiative also works as a basis for challenging the neo-liberal model and building alternatives, especially within the ASEAN scope where peasants is the backbone of the society.



FOCUS ON THE GLOBAL SOUTH

is a non-profit policy analysis, research and campaigning organisation, working in national, regional and international coalitions and campaigns, and with social movements and grassroots organizations on key issues confronting the global south. Focus was founded in 1995 and is attached to the Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute (CUSRI) in Bangkok, Thailand. It has country programmes in the Philippines and India.

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FOCUS on the
Global South

EVENTS at the ASEAN PEOPLES' FORUM



Focus on the Global South's Co-Organized Workshops at the APF



Emerging crises: De-globalisation and Alternative Regionalism?

Opportunities and challenges for regional alternatives

21 February 2009 / 9-11 am / B2 106

The global financial system is unravelling at great speed. This is happening in the midst of a multiplicity of interlinked crises in relation to food, climate change and energy arising from the workings of the currently dominant global neo-liberal model. The failure of this economic model has been forcefully made evident. Finding solutions to the global crises has now become the major concern across the globe. This workshop will highlight the debate around the idea of 'de-globalisation' and the challenges and possibilities of moving forward in the concretisation of regional alternatives to the economic, financial, food, climate and energy crises and instead place the interest of people and the planet at its center. It will aim to encourage cross-fertilisation from experiences on regional alternatives among social movements and civil society organisations from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe.

PROGRAMME

The Global Crisis and the Need for Multiple-Level Responses
Walden Bello, Focus on the Global South

Opportunities and Challenges for Regional Response

* Lessons and Experiences from Latin America: Gonzalo Berron, Hemispheric Social Alliance

* Lessons and Experiences from East Asia: Aehwa Kim, Korea Alliance of Progressive Movements

* Lessons and Experiences from South Asia: Meena Mennon, Focus-India Programme

* Lessons and Experiences from Europe, and People's Initiatives (PAAR): Cecilia Olivet, Transnational Institute

Open Discussion

Facilitation, Synthesis and Summing Up

Jenina Joy Chavez, Focus-Philippines Programme

This workshop is co-organized by the People's Agenda for Alternative Regionalisms, Focus on the Global South, Transnational Institute, and Hemispheric Social Alliance.

China-ASEAN Relations: People's Views, People's Responses

21 February / 14:00 – 16:00 / B1 103/1

We are witnessing a global economic crisis, growing poverty, the widening gap between the rich and the poor and ecological disasters. ASEAN countries and China are facing these challenges in social, economical as well as environmental dimensions although the specific problems confronted by each country might not be the same. The increasing economic influence of China and the enlarged trade activities of Chinese corporations are already felt in the region. China is now a major dialogue partner of the ASEAN and many ASEAN countries have already signed economic partnership agreements with China or negotiating one.

However, organizations and movements in China and ASEAN countries are not yet familiar with the outcomes of such economic partnerships and their impacts to local livelihood. Moreover, there is very little interaction between movements and networks from ASEAN countries and groups in China. There is already a growing recognition that another globalization and regional integration are possible. We need to find alternatives that are sustainable, people-centered and based on social and environmental justice. This workshop hopes to start a dialogue and contribute to a strong people to people cooperation.

PROGRAMME

Speakers: Ms. Kingkorn Narintarakul (FTA Watch - Thailand), Ms. Alice Raymundo (Integrated Rural Development Foundation – Philippines, and Mr. Mao Weizhun (China WTO Network)

Introduction to the topic and facilitation: Ms. Dorothy Guerrero, Focus on the Global South

Workshop Co-Organizers: Stop the New Round Coalition Philippines, FTA Watch Thailand, and China WTO Network

This workshop is co-organized by Stop the New Round Coalition Philippines, FTA Watch Thailand, and China WTO Network

Workshop on Climate Justice and ASEAN

21 February 2009/ 11 am - 1pm / B2 108

According to the UNDP Human Development Report 2007/2008, three ASEAN countries are among the top 30 greenhouse gas emitters of the world (Indonesia - 14, Thailand - 22, and Malaysia - 26), and two of them have the fastest rates of increase in emissions in 14 years between 1990 and 2004 (Thailand - 180% and Malaysia - 221%). Per capita emissions of these two countries are among the highest of the developing world, higher than China; Malaysia's in particular (at 7.5 tons) is about the same level as some of the EU countries. The facts show the richer countries in ASEAN are already significant contributors to the current climate change problems.

It is clear to many of us that the current model of economic growth that is based on the accelerated consumption of fossil fuels is the basic problem. It's also clear to us that the current model of growth benefits the top 10-20% income brackets the most, while it is the majority poor that are the most vulnerable to the adverse ecological impacts of such growth. Yet, there is little willingness on the part of Southern elites to depart from the high-growth, high-consumption model inherited from the North, and a self-interested conviction that the North must first adjust and bear the brunt of adjustment before the South takes any serious step towards limiting its greenhouse gas emissions.

Given the urgency of the situation, anyone in the right mind would see that it is imperative that the North immediately shifts to a low-carbon economy, while the South should be entitled to necessary resources and technology to begin to make this transition at the same time. In reality, however, what governments have been doing at the UNFCCC for many years was acting on the basis of self-interest, with the North using negotiation tactics to avoid any obligations and the South ready to trade away the rights of their peoples over natural resources.

The purposes of the workshop is to 1) identify ASEAN peoples' common agenda in relation to the issues of climate justice and UNFCCC negotiations, 2) to strategize on how to jointly engage in climate justice advocacy at the ASEAN level effectively during the period leading to the COP 15 in Copenhagen, and 3) to discuss possible long-term cooperation.

This workshop is co-organized by Thai Working Group on Climate Justice and Focus on the Global South

People's Energy Security Workshop

21 February 2009 / 9-11 am / B2 10

The most glaring injustice in the whole climate crisis that is befalling us all is the fact that poor people all over the world, who have the least access to fossil fuel and consume only a small amount of energy per head, are going to be disproportionately affected by the impact of climate change. Moreover, there are initiatives in rural communities to generate renewable energy for local consumption, which constitutes carbon credits that have so far gone unrecognized.

Meanwhile, when ASEAN governments discuss energy security, they usually talk about big traditional engineering projects to secure more oil, gas and electricity (e.g. gas pipelines, dams, coal-fired and even nuclear power plants) that are geared towards big consumers in the industrial and urban areas, but which are inevitably destructive to the natural environment and could pose immediate threats to livelihoods security of many communities.

In the event that the draft Blueprint for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community has proposed to "promote regional cooperation on conservation of energy and the use of clean, alternative and renewable energy in the region" (the only reference to the issues of climate change in the whole document), it is time the peoples of ASEAN come together to start discussing how to make the development of clean, alternative and renewable energy a national and regional priority.

PROGRAMME

- Case studies of small-scale, community-based, renewable energy production: Wichitra Chusakul, NET Foundation, Surin
- The overall picture of energy supply in the region, trends in governments' energy development, relevant regional actors and potential conflicts: Witoon Permpongsacharoen, MEENET
- Why nuclear power and hydrodams are not the answers and what are viable alternatives for the region? Tara Buakamsri, Greenpeace Southeast Asia
- Discussion of what recommendations to take to ASEAN

This workshop is co-organized by Thai Working Group on Climate Justice, Greenpeace Southeast Asia

Critical Views on the ASEAN-EU FTA: Main Areas of Concern and Campaigning Opportunities

21 February 2009 / 9-11 am / B1 108

Even though the negotiation to form a free trade area between the European Commission (EC) and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) started since mid 2007, the relevant information available for the public has been extremely limited.

The APF gives an important opportunity for researchers or activists who are expert on different issues to present their comparative studies and share their knowledge with campaigners and stakeholders in the region. With a better understanding on EU's FTAs and the potential impact on different ASEAN countries, campaigners and the public could engage more effectively with the authorities in respective countries and also at the regional level in order to achieve an agreement that will not hinder but helps promote a just and sustainable development.

P R O G R A M M E

- Overview ASEAN integration strategy and its FTA approach: Joseph Purugganan, Focus on the Global South, Philippines
- EU's Aggressive IPR Agenda and its Impact on Access to Medicine: Jiraporn Limpananont, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
- EU-ASEAN FTA Implication on Biodiversity and Agriculture: Kannikar Kitiwatchakul, FTA Watch, Thailand
- Southeast ASIAN Women Workers' Perspectives on FTAs: Irene Xavier, Transnational Information Exchange-Asia (TIE-ASIA), Malaysia
- Facilitation: Jacques-chai Chomthongdi, Focus on the Global South, Thailand

This workshop is co-organized by FTA Watch (Thailand), EU-ASEAN FTA Campaign Network, Committee for Asian Women (CAW), and Service Centre for Development Cooperation (KEPA)

Peace Building and People's Security (3 workshops)

21 February 2009 / 9 -11 am, 11-1 pm, 2-4 pm / B2 106/2

In all but a few countries in Southeast Asia, war or the threat of war remains a daily reality. Instead of improving, the prospects for a different future have instead deteriorated in the previous years: In the Philippines, the war against the Moro people threatens to escalate as a result of the recent collapse of the peace talks; an armed communist movement remains active in the countryside. In Thailand, the war in the south shows no signs of abating. In Burma, the regime's grip on power has strengthened, thereby prolonging the conflict between it and the different ethnic groups. In Indonesia, a fragile peace agreement in Aceh holds tenuously, while people struggling for self-determination in West Papua continue to be repressed.

Meanwhile, the global context in which Southeast Asia is situated has changed considerably. The US, long an external power whose actions have profoundly impacted the region, has been weakened economically, militarily, and diplomatically. Whether it can continue to hold as much power and influence over the region and its peoples has been put in question. China, on the other hand, has not only deepened its economic relations with Southeast Asian countries, it has also began to seek military ties with them. Even Russia, whose re-emergence as a global power has been marked in recent years, is slowly making its presence felt in the region. As the world changes, so will Southeast Asia.

But how should it? This series of workshops aims to provide an opportunity for civil society and social movements to come together and discuss: What should Southeast Asia's peoples, civil society organizations and social movements, and governments, as well as the ASEAN, do to promote peace in their own countries, in the region, and in the world?

P R O G R A M M E

- Workshop 1 (9-11am): Updates from the Frontlines--What is the state of peace in Southeast Asia today?
- Workshop 2 (11-1pm): The Big Picture: What is the regional and global context today?
- Workshop 3 (2-4pm): The Task Ahead: What should we do?

This workshop is co-organized by GPPAC-SEA, Youth for Peace, Social Agenda Working Group Thailand

Peoples' Food Sovereignty and Agrarian Reform: Solutions to the Food, Fuel, Financial and Climate Crises

21 February 2009 / 2-4 pm / B2 107

The workshop will explore and discuss Peoples' Food Sovereignty and comprehensive agrarian reform as lasting solutions to the food and financial crises that the world is facing. Speakers will show why short term, technocratic “fixes” that do not change the fundamentals of our current economic system, will not address the crises in any meaningful manner. They will also present cases for why Peoples' Food Sovereignty and comprehensive agrarian reform are essential at this juncture, as the world's peoples are realising the importance of regaining democratic control over our collective resources and capacities. And finally, participants will be encouraged to discuss strategies to build broad societal support for Peoples' Food Sovereignty and comprehensive agrarian reform in the ASEAN countries.

This workshop and the workshop entitled Defending the rights of peasants and small scale food producers are co-organized by Federation of Indonesian Peasants (FSPI), Northern Peasant Federation and the Land Research and Action Network

