

# FOCUS ON THE GLOBAL SOUTH

NEWSLETTER | FOCUS ON PARIS (#COP21andBeyond)

Volume II Number 3 • DECEMBER 2015



Commemorating the struggle against the Pak Mun dam—one of the largest dams to affect the Mekong river. Photo by Shalmali Guttal

## Climate Justice from Below! Linking Struggles for Justice

By Shalmali Guttal

*The dams built on the Mekong mainstream and other rivers in the region have resulted in severe changes in the Mekong's ecosystems, endangering life, livelihoods, and the economy of the entire region. Indigenous peoples, women, and children are most affected by these changes. The dams have also worsened the impacts of climate change that we are already facing.<sup>1</sup>*

continued on page 2 ↪

### WHAT'S INSIDE

The Paris climate talks:  
Is no deal better than a bad deal?  
By Walden Bello ..... 4

#COP21andBeyond  
COP 21: A new disguise  
for an old agreement  
By Pablo Solón ..... 7

INDCs from the South:  
Commitments, Conditions  
and Contradictions ..... 9

Statements from  
NATIONAL campaigns  
and STRUGGLES ..... 16

Sustainable Peasant's  
Agriculture ..... 19

TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE  
ONLINE VERSION OF  
FOCUS ON THE GLOBAL  
SOUTH NEWSLETTER,  
PLEASE HEAD TO  
OUR WEBSITE AT  
[www.focusweb.org](http://www.focusweb.org)

## ➡ from page I

On November 26, a statement signed by more than 8000 people from local communities living in the Mekong basin and supported by 77 organizations was sent to the governments of Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam. The statement expresses alarm at the continuing construction of dams in the Mekong basin and asks the region's governments to assess the full costs of these dams on peoples' lives, livelihoods, environments, and the climate. Seventeen dams are currently in planning and/or construction directly on the Mekong mainstream in China, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Cambodia, with several more in river systems that flow into and enrich the Mekong River.

Over 60 million people living in the Mekong basin depend on the Mekong river system's waters, fisheries, soils, lands, and forests. The disastrous impacts of the Mekong dams on their lives and valuable eco-systems have been raised repeatedly by affected communities and researchers. But governments and the immensely profitable dam industry remain undeterred. Hydropower is projected as "clean energy" despite growing evidence that dam reservoirs are large emitters of methane, and that dam construction materials (e.g., cement) and ancillary infrastructure have massive climate footprints, including destroying forests and wetlands that are valuable carbon sinks. Peoples and communities mobilizing against the Mekong dams—and other dams—are fighting for their own survival and also for our futures.

Climate justice cannot be separated from other forms of justice. While

the climate crisis is global, people experience its impacts differently, depending on their economic, social, and political circumstances and gender, race, and geographic location. For thousands of rural and coastal communities, survival entails daily battles to protect their lands, forests, rivers, coasts, plants, animals, and fish from predatory capital and marketeers who give little thought to the climate footprint and consequences of exploiting nature.

The most important and critical battles for climate justice are being led by local communities who are

fighting to stop mining, oil and gas drilling, large dams, fracking, land and water grabbing, deforestation, luxury property development, etc. Many of them are frontline communities in every way: they face the brunt of extreme weather events and the risks of climate unpredictability, and are also most negatively impacted by fossil fuel-driven development responsible for anthropogenic climate change. The fights of frontline communities for their rights must also become our fights to build a just, equitable, and peaceful way of life that respects nature.



**Traditional fishing in Cambodia.** Photo by Shalmali Guttal

---

***As the COP 21 buzz intensifies, it is important to not lose sight of the most powerful forces for positive change: social movements and alliances of frontline and other local communities***

---

Across Asia, rural and urban communities have long been struggling against a development paradigm that is extractive, polluting, destructive, and unjust, that breeds poverty and inequality, displaces peoples, and fractures societies. While Asian governments rightfully demand greater emission cuts from developed countries on the basis of historical responsibility and the right to development, the economic growth-obsessed development model they promote back home serves largely elite and corporate interests. National development policies tend to favor corporate/state investments in dirty energy, extractive industry, agribusiness,

industrial agriculture, real estate, and infrastructure; not smaller scale, sustainable, and healthy local economies and food systems and renewable energy. Development does not exist as a right for majority of Asia's factory, plantation and mine workers, or for those who are poor and marginalized. Nor do public policies recognize and valorize the crucial contributions of peasant, artisanal food producers and indigenous peoples in cooling the planet, nurturing biodiversity and feeding communities.

Resistance to hydropower projects, industrial agriculture and aquaculture, and mining and logging are at the same time struggles for social-economic justice as well as climate justice. The historic victory of the Dongria Kondh peoples in Odisha, India against attempts by Vedanta Resources to mine bauxite in the Niyamgiri hills was a victory for self-determination and social, economic, political, and climate justice. Forest-based farming communities in Southern Thailand are fighting the palm oil industry to both reclaim their common lands for reforestation as well as slow down climate change. Local communities, indigenous peoples, and civil society organisations in the Philippines have organized to oppose the 1995 Philippines Mining Act and halt mining operations across the country. Coastal communities displaced by natural disasters in India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and the Philippines are fighting for their rights to return to their traditional lands as well as stop destructive property development that will further endanger coastlines. Forest communities reject the various manifestations of REDD+ because they see clearly

how it enables the commodification and financialization of nature.

The COP 21 in Paris is a crucial moment in global climate talks. In order to save ourselves from the chaos and catastrophes of the deepening climate crisis, we urgently need deep emission cuts, significant reduction in fossil fuel extraction and military expenditures, increased public financing for adaptation, mitigation, loss and damage, and a complete shift towards a non-capitalist, non-extractive society. It is unlikely, however, that our governments will come anywhere close to a deal intended to deliver climate justice. Instead, we can expect more lucrative public-private partnerships that enable corporations and so-called climate "experts" to profit from the climate crisis by rolling out even more dangerous and misleading false solutions that include offsets, techno-fixes, and financialization.

As the COP 21 buzz intensifies, it is important to not lose sight of the most powerful forces for positive change: social movements and alliances of frontline and other local communities who are learning and sharing knowledge about living within nature's boundaries, defending their rights to live, and building climate justice rooted in their grounds and waters. Paris is a clarion call for us to look, organize, and act beyond the COPs, and join frontline communities in collectively building actions and solutions that our governments are not prepared to deliver.

---

I Mekong governments: Listen to the people! Statement by local people on dams in the Mekong Region. <http://www.terrapeer.org/web/en/node/1716>



# The Paris climate talks: Is no deal better than a bad deal?

By Walden Bello\*

What has been billed as the meeting that will determine the fate of the planet will take place in Paris from November 30 to December 10.

The outcome of the Conference of Parties 21 (COP 21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will determine whether the world might be able to keep the average mean temperature for the 21<sup>st</sup> century to 2 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial average and perhaps avoid disaster, or it won't and thus rush towards certain catastrophe.

The stakes are high, the outcome is uncertain.

COP 21 is supposed to come up with a treaty to replace the Kyoto Protocol of 1997. The original aim of the post-Kyoto negotiations, which have been going on for a number of years, is to produce a binding agreement that would have climate polluters undertake deep cuts in their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and provide the resources for poor countries to address damage already created by global warming and prevent

---

*We want a  
planet that  
sustains life,  
not one that is  
driven on the  
road to death by  
corporate greed*

---



Survivors of super typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) lined the street with candles to commemorate the anniversary of the climate disaster that killed thousands. Tacloban, Philippines. 2014. Photo by Joseph Purugganan

or limit further negative impacts. The operative principle has been that of common but differentiated responsibility, that is, that those who have contributed the most to the volume of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere should carry the main burden of reducing carbon emissions and coming up with the resources to support the efforts of the poorer countries to protect themselves from global warming.

Unfortunately, the road to an effective climate regime to succeed Kyoto has, so far, been blocked. Foremost among the obstacles is the United States, the country that has contributed the greatest volume of greenhouse gases. The US refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, providing a terrible example to others, in particular, to the government of former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who took Canada out of the agreement last year.

The US and Canada, however, are not the only villains of the piece. The so-called Big Emerging Economies like India and China have risen fast up the ranks of climate polluters, while refusing to take responsibility for their role in deepening the climate crisis. If the US still holds the prize of having contributed the greatest amount of greenhouse gases historically, China is now the world's biggest polluter on a yearly basis.

While tarring each other as climate villains, the US and China have, in fact, found each other's opposition of great value since it has given the other an excuse for not agreeing to undertake deep, mandatory cuts in GHG emissions. Of the two, however, the US is the bigger problem since, unlike in Beijing, where there is a recognition of the climate crisis,

Republican denialists, or politicians who do not believe that climate change is man-made, hold US climate policy hostage owing to their control of Congress.

A jarring setback to a viable accord was the US-China Climate Agreement, which the two powers sprang on the negotiations during the last days of COP 20 in Lima last year. The non-binding deal exempted China from reducing its emissions until 2030 and committed the US to a niggardly 26 to 28 percent emissions cut from 2005 levels. Essentially Beijing and Washington's separate peace derailed the multilateral process since they were telling the world that they would not be bound in the unlikely event a tough deal emerged in Paris.

But what was perhaps most harmful in the US-China accord was the redefinition of the principle of common but differentiated responsibility to "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances." This text was then reproduced word for word in the Lima Call for Climate Action that came out of COP 20. In international negotiations where every word of the agreed text is decisive, this was a major, major change, a very significant watering down of the basic principle guiding the negotiations to the benefit of the big climate polluters.

### The Folly of INDCs

With the big climate culprits subverting the multilateral process, the UNFCCC has retreated from demanding the mandatory GHG cuts under Kyoto to accepting

"INDCs" or Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). INDCs are voluntary. They are unilaterally determined by a national government instead of being the outcome of a negotiating process. Their implementation will not be monitored by any mechanism, nor will there be sanctions imposed should a government not meet its target.

Replacing mandatory targets with INDCs is not the only worrisome development in the COP process leading up to Paris. While countries agreed to set up a Green Climate Fund of \$100 billion yearly to support efforts by the poor countries to climate-proof themselves, contributions have been slow in coming, with only \$10.2 billion raised as of May of this year. Moreover, the amount is paltry compared to the tremendous needs for adaptation by poor countries on the forefront of climate disasters like the Philippines. Also, there are no guidelines on where the money will come from. The Green Climate Fund is a clear example of the aphorism that the devil is in the detail, or in this case, in the lack of detail.

### Essentials of an Acceptable Paris Accord

If an agreement on a post-Kyoto accord is reached on the basis of INDCs instead of deep mandatory cuts and on vague promises of financial assistance to those most in need, then we will surely be on the way to a 2 degrees Celsius plus world, indeed, perhaps even towards a 4 degree Celsius plus world, with all the catastrophic consequences of such a condition, with sea-level rise,

continued on page 6 ➞



**10,000 strong March for Climate Justice in Manila. 28 November 2015.** Photo courtesy of Greenpeace.

## from page 5

super-typhoons, prolonged droughts, and massive flooding becoming the “new normal.” One study of the INDCs submitted so far concludes that the total will not prevent global mean temperature from a planetary warming of 3 degrees Celsius, or one degree above the 2 degrees Celsius benchmark.

At a minimum, a viable climate deal must have deep mandatory cuts in GHG emissions by all developed (“Annex 1”) countries and the Big Emerging Economies, and it must have secure commitments for massive funding for poor countries to compensate for the damage done by global warming to their ecologies and finance their current and future efforts to climate-proof themselves. Over the next two weeks, global civil society must mobilize to pressure the representatives of governments assembled in Paris to produce a post-Kyoto agreement with these essential provisions.

Civil society must also tell the governments in Paris to stop

wasting time on schemes favored by corporations like carbon trading, carbon offsets, and tree planting programs like REDD+. These are false solutions that only deflect attention from the need for binding commitments.

## No Deal is Better than a Bad Deal

Without these binding commitments and sanctions for climate polluters that fail to meet them, the world must reject a Paris climate deal since such it will simply legitimize inaction and irresponsibility, thus accelerating instead of addressing the climate crisis.

Philippine civil society must insist that the Aquino administration not be party to such a dangerous and dishonest deal.

Faced with the greatest threat to our planet, we cannot afford a bad deal. With such high stakes, no deal is better than a bad deal.

## Towards a Permanent Solution

Even if an acceptable deal is reached, it will provide only a temporary solution to the climate crisis. A Paris deal must be followed up by an agreement to keep coal, oil, and other fossil fuels in the ground, with fair compensation to developing countries dependent part of their income. Strategically, the solution lies in the world’s turning away from capitalism, a mode of production that insatiably and incessantly transforms living nature into dead commodities, creates destabilizing growth, and promotes over-consumption. However, a mandatory Paris climate deal is a necessary first step away from this condition of uncontrolled production and consumption that has brought our planet to the edge of disaster.

We want a planet that sustains life, not one that is driven on the road to death by corporate greed.

\* Walden Bello is a former representative of the Akbayan party-list in Congress. He has been active in global civil society discussions and mobilizations around the climate. This piece was first published in the online media platform Rappler.



# #COP21 and Beyond

## COP 21: A new disguise for an old agreement

By Pablo Solón\*

The Climate Paris Agreement carries with it the shadow of the Cancun Agreement and like it, will fail. Both agreements are based on voluntary pledges that prioritize the interests of polluting corporations and governments rather than the needs of humanity and life on Earth.

To limit the temperature increase to 2°C, the Cancun Agreement should have had guaranteed the reduction of annual emissions of greenhouse gases to 44 Gt of CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2020. But from the pledges in Cancun, we shall have instead 56 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2020.

The Paris Agreement should ensure that global emissions drop to 35 Gt of CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2030, but according to the voluntary INDCs (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions) submitted by governments, we will be at a level which is almost double the limit 60 Gt of CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2030.

Both agreements deliberately obviate the most important task at hand: to set a limit to fossil fuels (oil, coal and gas) extraction, which is responsible for 60 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. If 80 percent of known fossil fuel reserves are not left under the ground, it is impossible to limit the temperature increase to below 2°C.

Also, the Paris Agreement does not guarantee the goal of zero deforestation by 2020 set in the recently agreed Sustainable Development Goals, knowing that this activity generates 17 percent of global emissions. By contrast, the

agreement continues on the path of carbon markets and offsets allowing countries to “replace” deforestation of native forests with monoculture tree plantations.

Finally, these Cancun and Paris agreements do not have mechanisms

to ensure that they will be legally enforced. The insufficient finance makes adaptation and mitigation uncertain, and in reality the emperor has no clothes.

continued on page 8 ➞



## Making Another Tomorrow Possible

Despite the agreements, the future is not yet written. It still depends on what we do now. What happens at COP 21 is the result of a long process through which big corporations have captured governments and climate negotiations at the United Nations. The Paris agreement is a good deal for politicians that seek popularity and re-election because it does not force them to do anything. For the extractive industries, it is also a good deal because they can continue with business as usual and benefit from new carbon markets like REDD+, Climate Smart Agriculture, Clean Development Mechanism+, land use change offsets, and also from false technologies like carbon capture and storage, bio-energy, and geo-engineering.

To build another tomorrow we have to regain our ability to dream and get out of the apocalyptic mentality to which we have been accustomed by mass media. A quick and timely transition out of fossil fuels is possible. The technologies to do this are within reach. Solar and wind power costs have dropped dramatically and will continue to do so.

The possibility that countries like Bolivia, with a high solar radiation, can have 25 percent of its electricity by 2020 from photovoltaic cells is absolutely feasible. The development of nuclear projects and large mega hydroelectric dams are not justified by environmental and economic reasons. It has never been more

possible to think of a world of solar energy, wind energy, micro-hydroelectric and other sustainable initiatives than at this moment in history.

The main issue is not only the type of technology but who controls it, what is its scale, and who does it serve. The transition we need is not only out of fossil fuels, but also away from capitalism. The solar energy that we should promote is not big plantations of solar panels that evict indigenous and rural populations. Instead we should promote family, community, and municipal solar energy projects that empower society and transform peoples from being mere consumers to becoming producers of energy.

Today the fight against climate change is the struggle for the defense of our forests that are being destroyed by agribusiness. Native forests are a major source of food if we know how to live with them through different initiatives of ecologic agroforestry. Each deforested hectare, besides emitting around 300 to 500 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, is a serious threat to biodiversity, the generation of oxygen, the cycle of water, and the indigenous peoples who inhabit the forests. To “compensate” a deforested hectare, only in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> capture, eight to 16 hectares need to be reforested and 10 to 15 years for the trees to grow. From all points of view, it is better to stop deforestation of native forests. Family, peasant, and community agriculture is cooling planet and can cool even more the planet. Peasant agroecology is a real option against the poisoning created by agro-toxics and genetically modified organism used by agribusiness.

The future we want will not be built mainly by the state or the

private sector. Both must stop being the center of the economy and politics in order that society can carve its own destiny. What we need are initiatives that decentralize and democratize economic and political power now concentrated in the hands of banks, transnational corporations, state bureaucracy, and military.

The alternative to climate change is real democracy. The answer lies in a self-organized, self-conscious, and empowered humanity that believes in itself and nature more than in technology and market forces.

Solutions will not come from above, but have to be built from below, from local and concrete efforts at the grassroots that can engender change in patterns of consumption, production, and life as a whole. But COP 21 does not address climate crimes that are spreading all over the world.

System change is something that has to be built on a daily basis, in struggles such as “Ende Gelände” that targets the largest coal mine in Germany, the protests in India against nuclear power plants, initiatives to develop community-based solar energy in Bolivia, mobilizations to expand peasant agroecology that cools the planet and saves our forests, and many other actions.

The process of mobilization for COP 21 should serve to re-launch, coordinate, and strengthen these diverse initiatives in which is found the seed of another tomorrow.

\* Pablo Solon was Executive Director of Focus on the Global South from 2012 to June 2015, and former lead climate negotiator of the Plurilateral State of Bolivia.



# INDCs from the South: Commitments, Conditions, and Contradictions

By Joseph Purugganan, Afsar Jafri, Niabdulghafar Tohming, and Galileo Castillo



Photo courtesy of Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ)

How the Paris Climate talks can be touted as the most important global conference this year, one that is aimed at finding a solution to the climate crisis, when the main agenda of emission cuts and mitigation targets will be off the negotiating table, is the height of folly, if not hypocrisy. COP 21 has a 'bottom-up' approach that will make targets voluntary on the part of both developed and developing countries in the form of pledges referred to

as Intended Nationally-Determined Contributions or INDCs.

The INDC approach has caused two tectonic shifts in the climate negotiations. The first is the move away from top-down targets and binding commitments under the Kyoto Protocol to a 'laissez-faire' approach where countries pledge to do what they can instead of being obliged to comply to globally-set targets. The second fundamental shift

is the call on all countries, developed and developing, high emitters and low emitters alike, to consolidate their own national mitigation plans.

Around 150 countries have already submitted their INDCs, which will amount to 90 percent of global emissions. Assessments done by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the UNFCCC

continued on page 10 ➞

Secretariat, and civil society organizations are unanimous in saying that the combined pledges are inadequate to meet the target of limiting global emission levels to 42 billion tonnes in 2030, and will result in temperature rise of just under 3 degrees Celsius (breaching the 2 degree limit set by science) if the plans are fully implemented.

Even with this grim scenario, a silver lining is being propped up and that is the possibility of a ratchet to scale up commitments. UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres sees the current pledges as a floor that “provides the foundation upon which ever higher ambition can be built.”

Our own review of submissions made by three countries in the South—India, Thailand, and the Philippines—shows that a lot more issues are at play at the national level, as they not only define the level of commitment countries from the South are willing to make as part of global effort, but perhaps more importantly indicate how these global commitments impact on peoples’ lives and long drawn struggles for justice.

## India

Keeping in view its development agenda, particularly the eradication of poverty and its commitment to continue on low carbon path to progress, and remaining sanguine about the availability of clean technologies and financial resource from around the world, *India hereby communicates its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) in*

*response to COP decisions I/CP.19 and I/CP.20 for the period 2021 to 2030:*

1. To put forward and further propagate a healthy and **sustainable way of living** based on traditions and **values of conservation and moderation.**
2. To adopt a **climate friendly and a cleaner path** than the one followed hitherto by others at corresponding level of economic development.
3. To **reduce the 25 level of emissions intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35 percent by 2030.**
4. To achieve about **40 percent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel based energy resources by 2030**, through transfer of technology and low cost international finance, including from Green Climate Fund (GCF).
5. To **create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent** through additional forest and tree cover by **2030.**
6. To better adapt to climate change by enhancing investments in development programs in sectors vulnerable to climate change, particularly agriculture, water resources, Himalayan region, coastal regions, health, and disaster management.
7. To mobilize **domestic and new and additional funds** from developed countries for the implementation of above mitigation and adaptation actions in recognition of the resource required and the resource gap.
8. To **build capacities**, create domestic framework and international architecture for

quick diffusion of cutting edge climate technology in India, and for joint collaborative R&D for such future technologies.

## Key Highlights

- India plans to cut emissions at 2005 level by 33-35 percent by 2030.
- India projects to achieve a renewable energy capacity addition of 175GW by 2022 and increase the renewable energy in the mix to 40 percent by 2030. It seeks funds explicitly from the Green Climate Fund. (The fund the developed countries agreed would create projects in underdeveloped/developing countries).
- To create a carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion tons of CO2 equivalent through forests and trees by 2030.
- India estimates its climate change mitigation plan will cost \$2.5Trillion from now until 2030.

## Assessment: Broad Points

- It says “**India’s Intended Nationally Determined Contribution: Working towards Climate Justice**”. However there is no information about the process which indicates that it was adopted after a transparent and participatory process. Thus, it cannot be described ‘nationally determined’ as there was not much public discussion and consultation (only with industry) before this 38-page document was submitted to the UNCCC on 1st October 2015. The INDCs were also

not discussed and debated in the Indian Parliament or at the state legislatures. India's INDCs are purely a result of top-down exercise which neither reflect the people's aspirations nor chart an alternative path. It is only business as usual.

- The document is touted as “working towards Climate Justice.” This description seems to be unique to the India INDC submitted to the UNCCC, but the Indian Government only co-opted this from the North's consumption model so that it can burn coal, destroy forests for coal and other ‘non-coal’ energy harvesting like Hydro, and pollute the environment for nuclear energy, all in the interest of rural electrification, poverty alleviation, and now, *climate justice*. But generation of energy in the name of the poor and downtrodden is

meant only for the elite of India, thus ignoring a key aspect of this term that is “equity and equitable distribution.”

By misappropriating climate justice, India also wants to convey to the Annex I countries that even though India has not harmed the planet as much as they have had, India is still committed to make the earth a better place to live in without compromising its development agenda.

- This document also skips one key aspect, i.e. what will be India's peak emission level and when (in which year) this be reached.
- India's INDC is just government's development roadmap with some concerns about climate change and emission cut.

amount of nuclear power of up to 63 GW, conditional upon India obtaining fuel from abroad. As per the INDC document, India would achieve a target of 60 GW of wind power, 100 GW of solar energy, and 10 GW from Biomass by 2022. But India has set an ambitious target of 63 GW installed capacity by 2032 from nuclear power, which would incur high cost and enormous risks. India has also decided to pursue another anti-ecology and environment policy to harness 100 GW from hydro from the current 46 GW, which is a matter of great concern because of the vast destruction of the fragile mountain ecology by mega dams, causing in turn huge human displacement.

- Another great concern for India's INDC is the continued prominence of coal as “reliable, adequate and affordable supply of electricity.” This contradicts the emphasis given to the renewable sources of energy because coal extraction causes huge destruction of forests, causing emissions and displacing local communities.
- **Transport:** India's INDC also indicates that the Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs) which have been introduced across India (e.g. 1520 km Mumbai-Delhi Western Corridor) will lead to reduced emissions of over 457 million tons that will be achieved over 30 years. But this document fails to mention that the Freight Corridor projects will involve 150 kms on either side of the railway track of high infrastructure development,

---

**Another great concern for India's INDCs is continued prominence given to Coal as “a reliable, adequate and affordable supply of electricity”**

---

## Sectoral Issues & Criticism

- **Energy:** India's INDC sets a voluntary emission reduction of its GDP by 33-35 percent of the 2005 levels by 2030, despite having no binding mitigation obligations as per the Convention. And to meet this target, India is aiming to generate 40 percent of electricity from renewable sources by 2030, but this is conditional on technology transfer and financial support (approx. 2.5 trillion USD at 2014-15 prices) from the developed countries.

The 40 percent generation of ‘clean’ energy from non-fossil fuel sources will include 175 GW of solar and wind energy, four times greater than present levels, besides hydro and a huge



such as major ports, a national highway, a number of high investment regions (IR) with a minimum area of 200 square km or Investment Areas (IA) with a minimum area of 100 square km. There will also be investment zones at various locations like SEZs, integrated agro-processing zones, knowledge cities, skills development centers, airports, real estate development, etc., which would cause huge emissions, thus defeating the purpose of setting up of low carbon transport aimed at emission reduction.

India's INDC is replete with such contradictions in the approach to achieve emissions through sustainable and low carbon approach.

## Thailand

Thailand's INDC pledges to reduce its greenhouse gas emission by 20 percent of 2005 levels. However, the reduction can reach 25 percent, if there will be adequate and enhanced access to technology transfer and development, financial resources, and capacity building support under the agreement with UNFCCC. The INDC recognizes roles of market-based mechanisms in enhancing cost effectiveness of mitigation, and has therefore indicated the potentials of bilateral, regional, and international market mechanisms.

In its seven-page submission, Thailand claims to have achieved four percent GHG emission reduction and is well on track to reaching its target of seven percent

of the 7-20 percent before 2020 that the country has pledged at the COP 20 in Lima. Thailand aims, in terms of climate and environment, to achieve "sustainable, low carbon, and climate-resilient growth."

## Energy and Transportation Sector

Thailand admits that the biggest share of emission is from the energy sector. In 2012, this sector produced 73 percent of total national carbon emission. Therefore, the mitigation efforts under INDC will be primarily directed at energy. Three plans define how to achieve the target: (1) Power Development Plan (PDP), which aims to achieve 20 percent share of power generation from renewable sources by 2036; (2) Alternative Energy Development Plan (AEPD), targets 30 percent share of renewable energy in the total energy consumption by 2036; and (3) Energy Efficiency Plan (EEP), which looks at reducing energy intensity by 30 percent below 2010's level by 2036.

## Security, Economy, and Ecology

The overarching goal of energy and renewable energy plans listed in INDC which will lead Thailand to meeting its ambitious target is having equal emphasis on "Security, Economy, and Ecology" as important aspects.

In the past years, it has been observed that there is aggressive push for coal as clean and reliable source of energy, especially by the Electricity Generating Authority of

Thailand (EGAT). According to the Thai Climate Justice Working Group (TCJ), the Power Development Plan (PDP) of 2015-2036 attempts to push for and establish new coal power plants. Energy security is the justification for these projects. However, according to EGAT, coal and new coal power projects are necessary substitutes for natural gas, as the reserves in the gulf of Thailand are projected to last for only few years. Without new coal power plants, the energy security and country's economy will be affected.

For TCJ, the PDP 2015-2036 is indication that Thailand has no valid reason and urgency to build such projects for at least 12 years, as current energy reserve is still high and able to meet the demand for energy. There are contradictions in policies of Thailand on energy and renewable energy. On one hand, Thailand aims to increase ambitiously the share of renewable energy, but according to PDP 2015-2036 the country will be depending more on coal.

There is little effort being made by government to support and promote investments in renewable energy. Interested entrepreneurs often face technical obstacles, particularly in connecting to the grid and achieving quota system in solar energy imposed by the energy ministry.<sup>1</sup> These obstacles are hindering the country's ability to achieve its ambitious target in renewable energy. They will also work against the INDC, which indicates a lack of investment in renewable energy.

The process of drafting energy plan has been criticized for limiting

people's access to information and participation, casting doubt on its transparency and the interest it serves.

## What About Ecology?

In recent months, government has pushed the construction of two new coal power plants in Krabi province and in Thepha district of Songkhla province, respectively. Despite government's claim that coal power plants are needed to respond to the increasing demand for energy by the people and tourism industry in southern region, these power plants would primarily serve as source of energy for the existing and new heavy industries such as chemical, metal and petroleum sectors, which are part of Southern Region Industrial development Master Plan. There has been no adequate participation by affected communities and proper assessment of social and environmental impacts on the matter.

Aside from coal power plant, there is a plan to build a port in Krabi to facilitate the transport of coal supply to the power plant. The aggregative impacts on environment and health inflicted upon the villagers around Mae Moh "clean" coal power plant in northern region resulting in several deaths have further worried local communities about the dangers of these projects.

Livelihood, environment, and energy are on the same side of the coin. In the struggle against new coal power plant, without compromising ecology and livelihood of local communities, local groups have proposed an alternative energy plan. The plan builds upon existing

renewable energy projects, laying down concrete steps for expanding its capacity to produce renewable energy without depending on dirty energy. This proposal from the people has been rejected.

The resistance both in Krabi and Thepha mirrors the broader struggles of local communities against mining, dirty energy, and destructive mega projects. Concrete demands and proposals of people drawn from their local knowledge, initiatives, and experiences are often ignored and never materialize. Instead, government imposes projects and pressures the poor, local communities, and indigenous peoples who have already been marginalized, to sacrifice their wellbeing for the so-called public interest and national economic growth from which they never receive their equal share of benefit. It is always the elites who reap and enjoy the benefits at the expense of the marginalized communities.

In defending land, environment, and livelihood, power and rights are integral in the demands and proposals of people. These form a crucial ground for the people to determine not only their fates as individuals and a community, but also to create a model of economic and development that country should pursue.

In summary, not only are Thailand's INDCs replete with contradictions with government's own plans and with reality on the ground, Thailand is also missing an opportunity to fundamentally shift towards becoming a genuinely low carbon society, built upon local initiatives that respond to the global climate crisis and brings justice to the peoples.

## Philippines

In its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution, the Philippines commits to the international community an ambitious 70 percent GHG CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions reduction by 2030. This will be achieved through a business-as-usual scenario (BAU) in the period 2000-2030. Compared to the INDCs of its Southeast Asian neighbors Thailand (20 percent by 2030) and Indonesia (26 percent by 2020), the 70 percent reduction is high, especially for a low-emitting (< 1%) country like the Philippines. The caveat is that the INDC being offered is conditional on the external aid that will be made available after the climate negotiations in Paris.

"The PH INDC is conditional on support from international climate financing, technology transfer, and capacity development. The mitigation options to support the 70 percent reduction from BAU by 2030 will require an investment of at least \$12.5 billion," said Climate Change Commissioner Lucille Sering.

The Philippine Climate Change Commission (PCCC) used average annual population growth of 1.85 percent and projected an annual average of 6.5 percent GDP growth to come up with the 70 percent reduction that will come from five sectors: energy, transport, waste, forestry, and industry. The Philippine INDC is premised on the philosophy of pursuing climate change mitigation as a function of adaptation. Consequently, there is a separate section for adaptation in the Philippine INDC. The following methodology/tools were used: 2006 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate



Photo courtesy of Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ)

Change guidelines for the GHG inventory, Agriculture and Land Use (ALU) Software, Long Range Energy Alternative Planning (LEAP), and Multi-criteria Analysis (MCA). According to Commissioner Sering, the Initial INDC submission of the Philippines is based on current available data and will be updated as more data become available.

### Contradictions Between Mitigation and Growth Projection

The PCCC has said that mitigation measures will be pursued in line with sustainable development that promotes inclusive growth. But this kind of low-emission development is very difficult to imagine, given

the projected 6.5 percent energy-hungry growth. About 50 countries have failed to submit their INDC and half of them are either carbon neutral or do not have the capacity to come up with an INDC. Oil producing countries and members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) comprised the other half. It is not rocket science to put two and two together and see the inverse relationship between emissions reduction and economic growth. The PCCC is now being questioned for its emission reduction targets when the Philippines, a developing country that is not even required to submit an INDC based on the Warsaw agreement, may not be able to meet such targets given its growing economy.

This argument on the right to development, including emissions in relation to gross domestic product and population growth, goes back to the climate talks of 2013. Developed countries then rejected the idea of a legally-binding commitment (implying mandatory actions) for their mitigation and pushed for contribution for all, both developed and developing economies. There has since been a transition from a top-down to a bottom-up approach in addressing the climate crisis. So rather than having a concrete emissions reduction target distributed to all nations following the principle of common but differentiated responsibility that will translate to a below 1.5 degrees centigrade increase in global temperature, we are now left



with weaker voluntary actions that are to be pooled together through INDC communications to the UNFCCC. These INDCs are not an assurance that global mitigation targets shall be met.

## Process, Transparency, and Semantics

The concept of coming up with an INDC started earlier than the 2014 COP 20 in Lima, but the Philippines belatedly started its own process January of 2015 (the deadline was last October 1). A mere nine months were left to produce something that required a very rigorous technical research and entailed very high costs. This was the reason why the Philippine INDC process was foreign funded (and hence the question of foreign influence in the outcome).

There are a lot of questions that need to be answered: Was it political process (both internal and external to the PCCC) or was it technical capacity (or lack of it) that slowed down the formulation of the Philippine INDC? How can we say that the Philippine INDC consultations were comprehensive enough to satisfy the qualification of it being “nationally determined”? What is meant by “intended”—are INDCs intended by the whole world or just by the Philippines?

There was no substantive debate, not even an opportunity to exchange points of view. There were two ‘consultations’ where the draft INDC text was only presented to, not discussed with, civil society organizations. Their inputs were not required—that is, if they were even given the time to submit in the

first place. There was a clear lack of transparency in the way the pledges had been crafted by the PCCC. Certain sectors, particularly the Department of Agriculture, felt that they were not being consulted on the Philippine’s climate action plan, leading to their decision to opt out of the INDC.

Originally, the PCCC proposed a measly 20 percent emissions reduction, with 10 percent each coming from the energy and transport sectors only. After contributions from the forestry and waste sectors were integrated, the INDC went up to 40 percent. Subsequently, consultations with the Office of the President and the Department of Finance were done and the numbers shot up to 70 percent.

Considering the continued approval of coal power plants (59 and counting in the current Aquino administration), this ambitious 70 percent attempts to project a strong “commitment” at the international level, while government actually pursues contradictory policies and dismal climate action at the national and local levels. Clearly, the INDC is just another empty promise by the Philippine government and one that would not at all curb rising global temperature, extreme weather events, and climate change.

Another important issue that must be highlighted is the meaning of “mitigation” and “adaptation.” In the climate justice framework, mitigation should be done in a just and equitable manner, with a fair sharing of efforts across nations and within nations, and without people and environment carrying the cost.

A core part of this is transforming energy systems. Adaptation, on the other hand, should mean building resilience and undertaking changes needed to deal with irreversible impacts on eco-systems such as food, water, and health. Enabling and empowering people to deal with impacts, economic empowerment, essential services, and disaster risk reduction, are at the heart of this. These are what should be clearly articulated.

## On Loss-and-Damages and Climate Restitution and Reparation

The Philippine INDC has a specific section on loss-and-damages: “The Philippine INDC assumes that Loss-and-Damages from climate change and extreme events will not require diversion of substantial resources for rehabilitation and reconstruction thereby adversely affecting the country’s capacity to meet national development targets as well as mitigation commitments under this INDC.” However, the missing link is the section on climate restitution and reparation to the vulnerable countries and sectors. The process of raising and mobilizing the climate finance (public and non-debt creating) and technology necessary and ensuring its equitable and appropriate use should not be forgotten.

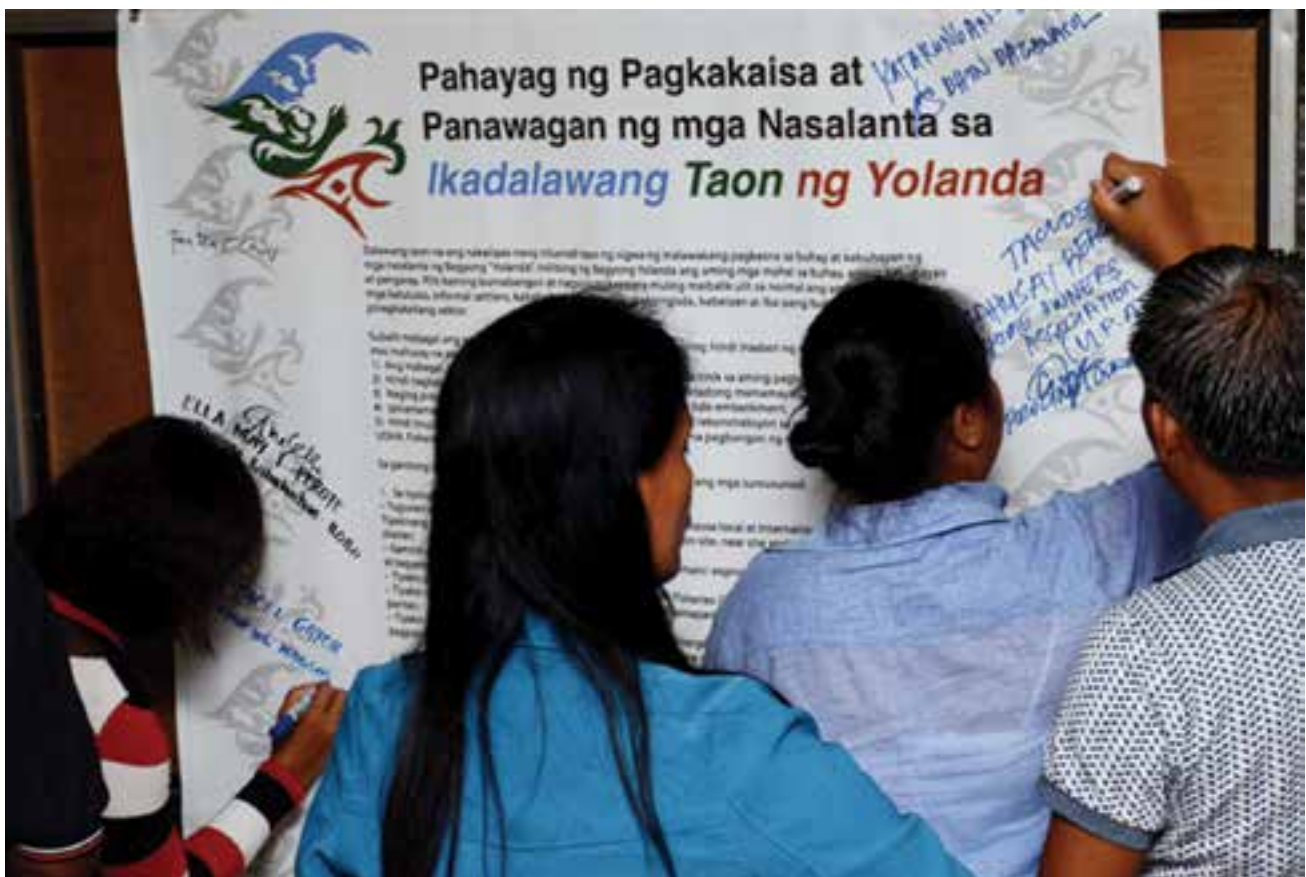
---

I Press release from Thai Climate Justice Working Group on the review of the Power Development Plan 2015 (In Thai language), released on May 15, 2015, available on <http://www.thaiclimatejustice.org/knowledge/view/122>

# Statements from NATIONAL campaigns and STRUGGLES

## A DECLARATION OF UNITY AND PLEA OF THE YOLANDA-AFFECTED SURVIVORS AND LEADERS On the Occasion of the Second Year Commemoration of Super Typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan

(Translated from the original text in Filipino)



**Yolanda survivors sign symbolic statement of unity.** Photo courtesy of Canadian Catholic Organization for Development & Peace (CCODP).

Two years ago, super typhoon Yolanda brought massive destruction to our lives and livelihoods. It buried our loved ones, our livelihood, and our dreams. We have tried hard to bounce back and restore our lives as farmers, fisher folks, informal settlers, indigenous people, women, youth, and other vulnerable and deprived sectors.

But our recovery is slow and the help has not reached most of us survivors so that we can fully recover. There are many reasons behind this:

1. Government response is slow, incomplete, and complicated, which seem like a thorn in our recovery;
2. Participation of affected

citizenry has not been significant;

3. Major infrastructures have been prioritized, such as the tide embankment project in Tacloban City;
4. Management of rehabilitation and reconstruction in many affected areas have been give to private corporations;
5. Recurring problems are not

being addressed when their resolutions should have been the key to our full recovery. Examples are the poor implementation of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997 (IPRA), Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Extension Program with Reforms (CARPER), Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992, and the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998.

Given the above conditions, we unite to demand from government the following:

#### 1. On Settlement

- Respond to the immediate problems of relocation according to local and international standards. Ensure more decent, humane, and safe living areas in the city (on-site, near-site, and in-city or in-town permanent shelter);
- To use its power of eminent domain/expropriation and presidential proclamation to acquire lands, and urgently make lands available for housing;
- Ensure the right to residence of the fisher folks according to the provisions in the Philippine Fisheries Code;
- Ensure that all housing projects are provided with social services as part of people's human rights;
- Ensure equal and impartial distribution of the Emergency Shelter Assistance (ESA), including its implementation in communities located in danger zones.

#### 2. On Agrarian Reform and Ancestral Domain

- Speed up and ensure the implementation of agrarian reform and IPRA;
- Distribute immediately the Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) and Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) to farmers and indigenous peoples;
- Install the CLOA farmer-beneficiaries in lands Ormoc City and other places that have already been awarded to them;
- Ensure that the beneficiaries of Presidential Decree 27 (P.D. 27) will no longer pay dues or share their produce to their former landowners;
- Provide appropriate and functional support services to the agricultural sector, such as irrigation in Basey and other farming communities.

#### 3. On Livelihood

- Rehabilitation, including livelihood projects, must reach all affected areas, including remote or isolated communities;
- Provide women and other vulnerable sectors immediate and suitable livelihood programs;
- Implement appropriate and immediate alternative livelihoods for fisher folks, informal settlers, indigenous people, and all other affected sectors;
- Enforce a three-year moratorium on irrigation fees in all affected areas;
- Provide infrastructural support to all affected areas.

#### 4. On Participation and Rehabilitation Mechanism

- Establish a mechanism imbued with the necessary authority to take appropriate steps to remove all impediments to rehabilitation and reconstruction;
- Set up accountability mechanisms among government agencies involved in rehabilitation of Yolanda-affected areas, including regular reporting and transparent process of implementation;
- Uphold the participation of people in the implementation of rehabilitation programs in the Yolanda-affected areas and make sure that decisions will come from them.

#### 5. On Human Rights, Climate Justice, and Ecological Justice

- Immediately have a moratorium on the implementation of tide embankment project in Leyte while it is under study since it did not go through a consultation process and thorough review with the people who will be affected by the project;
- Put a stop to mining and other projects that pose threats to the environment and people's livelihoods (such as in Manicani Island), and thus exacerbate climate injustice;
- Cease militarization in the countryside and immediately investigate cases of human rights violations in Basey and other Yolanda-affected areas;

continued on page 18 ➞



- Provide indemnification to the victims of oil spills in Estancia, Iloilo;
- Integrate disaster risk reduction in local governance and link it to climate change adaptation;
- Strengthen and sustain support to sustainable agriculture;
- Promote the use of renewable energy as primary source of energy to protect the environment.

We sincerely believe that meeting the appeals mentioned above is key to genuine, humane, and just rehabilitation. The realization of

our demands indicates sincere and honest response of the government to the plight of Yolanda survivors.

This is also our final plea to President Noyonoy Aquino in last few months of his term: that he fulfils his promise, so that we can recover from the hardships and worsening poverty caused by extreme natural calamities. Let this plea also serve as challenge to the next president and his/her administration. Their positive responses will serve as tribute to those who continue to risk their lives and justice to us who only dream of getting back our normal lives. Super typhoon Yolanda and its continuing impact has become the nation's nightmare; the destructions it brought to lives and properties

should be collectively addressed by the people with sustained support from the government and civil society organizations. We remain hopeful that we will welcome the New Year with new beginnings and renewed hope.

*Approved and signed by the representatives of the Yolanda survivors and leaders during the All-leaders Forum held on November 4-5, 2015 at Fersal Hotel, Malakas Street, Quezon City, Philippines. The event was organized by the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, National Secretariat for Social Action/Caritas Philippines, Freedom from Debt Coalition, Focus on the Global South, together with other Development and Peace partners in the Philippines.*



# Sustainable Peasant's Agriculture

## SURIN DECLARATION: FIRST GLOBAL ENCOUNTER ON AGROECOLOGY AND PEASANT SEEDS

November 6 -12, 2012

Surin, Thailand

La Via Campesina International delegates, representing our regional member organizations, are meeting in Surin province of Thailand in Asia to have the First Global Encounter on Agroecology and Seeds. The main objective is for La Via Campesina to share experience and construct a strategy and vision on agroecology and seeds, in the holistic understanding that both are part of the struggle to achieve food sovereignty.

Thailand has been chosen as the place of the meeting because in this country there is a growing shift made by small-scale farmers to move from the green revolution based model of industrial farming into agroecology. The presence of international delegates will support the growth of the agroecological farmers movement in Thailand, who declare that "the survival of small-scale farmers is the survival of society!" The delegates as part of this encounter are learning much from this experience as to strengthen peasant farmer agroecology.

After sharing the experience and thoughts of the delegates and debating on the challenges, we are convinced that agroecology is the corner stone of food sovereignty. We cannot achieve food sovereignty if agriculture is dependent of inputs controlled by corporations, if the impact of technology destroys Mother Earth, if we do not challenge the commodification and speculation of food and land, and if we do not make better livelihoods for those who make available healthy and accessible food to our communities.

There are countless names for agroecological farming all over the world and Via Campesina is not concerned with names or labels, whether agroecology, organic farming, natural farming, low external input sustainable agriculture, or others, but rather wants to specify the key ecological, social and political principles that the movement defends. For Via Campesina, truly sustainable peasants agriculture comes from the recovery of traditional peasant farming methods, the innovation of new ecological practices, the control and defense of territories and seeds, and well as social and gender equity. And we welcome conventional farmers to come towards this movement.

We are clear that a feudal land holding cannot be considered agroecological even if it is chemically free. A farm that is controlled only by men without decision making power for women or if women's global workload is higher, it is not agroecological either. Organic farming which replaces expensive chemical inputs for expensive organic ones without touching the structure of monoculture is not agroecological, such as in the way neoliberal "organic" programs (such as "India Organics") do, and which we strongly reject.

The experience, the practice and the reflections of Via Campesina for at least the last four years, have shown that agroecology is a strategic part in the construction of food and popular sovereignty.

We understood that agroecology is an intrinsic part of the global answer to the main challenges and crises we face as humanity.

On the first place, small scale farming can feed, and is feeding humanity and can tackle the food crisis through agroecology and diversity. Despite the common misconception that agribusiness systems are more productive, we now know that agroecological systems can produce much more food per hectare than any monoculture, all the while making food healthier, more nutritious, and available directly to the consumers.

Secondly, agroecology helps confront the environmental crisis. Peasant agriculture, coupled with agroecology and diversity, cools down the earth; keeping carbon in the soil and providing peasants and family farmers with the resources for resilience to climate change and the increasing natural disasters. Agroecology changes the oil dependant energy and agriculture matrix, a main part of the systemic changes needed to stop emissions.

Third, agroecology supports the common good and the collective. While it creates the conditions for better livelihoods for rural and urban people, agroecology, as a pillar of Food and Popular Sovereignty, establishes that land, water, seeds and knowledge are reclaimed and remain as a patrimony of the peoples at the service of humanity.

continued on page 20 ➞

Through agroecology we will transform the hegemonic food production model; permitting the recovery of the agricultural ecosystem, reestablishing the functioning of the nature-society metabolism, and harvesting products to feed humanity. As the Philippine farmers say “Kabuhayan, Kalusugan, Kalikasan” (for economy, for health, and for nature).

For us, as peasant farmers and family farmers, agroecology is also an instrument to confront transnational agribusiness and the predominant agri-export model. We won't liberate farmers from the structure of oppression built up by the corporations unless we gain technological and economical autonomy from the current forms of agrarian and financial capital. Also, within the context of farm workers and other agricultural laborers as in the case of the U.S., if we do not recover this labor force that has been being enslaved by capital. Therefore, agroecology is an essential part of the construction of social justice in a new equal social system, not dominated by capital.

Agroecology is giving a new meaning to the struggle for agrarian reform to empower the people. The landless farmers who fought to reclaim back their land, and those who received land through land reform programs in Brazil and Zimbabwe,

are implementing agroecology as a tool to defend and sustain their farming, not only for their families, but to provide healthier food for the community. Therefore, land reform, together with agroecology, has become the contribution of peasant and family farmers to give better and healthier food to our societies. In Argentina we stand behind this affirmation by saying “somos tierra para alimentar a los pueblos” (we are land, to feed the peoples).

Our colleague farmers from India shared that there have been more than two hundred and seventy five thousand farmer suicides since 1995 because of the trap of debt due to industrial input dependence. Fortunately, the new agroecology movement method has permitted farmers to find a light of hope among that darkness, encouraging thousands of families to stay in their villages and keep on growing food with better livelihoods. This movement of Zero Budget Natural Farming has given life back to rural areas in India.

In Europe, the economic and financial crisis is also giving evidence of the potential of agroecology as a proposal of the peasant movement to the society by re-localizing markets and make food available with a much lower dependence on fossil fuel, giving a new dynamism to local economies, and creating jobs for the unemployed that are moving back to the countryside, as in the case of Eastern Europe. Agrarian reform

and market regulation towards food sovereignty through agroecology is also a solution for European and U.S. farmers that suffer from low prices due to competing with cheap imports.

The peasants and small farmers from Mali, as in the rest of Africa, that have been for years under the attack of AGRA (Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa) to push the introduction of the green revolution are showing how their own indigenous agro-ecological models of production are sustaining the food and livelihoods of millions of people; and tackling the climate shifts without any external inputs, through the sovereign management and sharing of local agro-biodiversity and knowledge.

Agroecology is also an alternative for rural youth to stay in the countryside and have a dignified livelihood, as well to stay committed to food production and distribution for the community. These are who will feed future generations.

For 20 years La Via Campesina has fought strongly for land reform, and in this historical moment, it needs to reflect on its practice to qualify it. As Brazilian landless workers shout “ocupar, resistir, produzir!” (occupy, resist, produce!), peasants around the world are already fighting for land, resisting to defend it, and now, we define that agroecological farming will feed the people. It's time to produce.



## Focus on the Global South

4th Floor Wisit Prachuabmoh Building, Chulalongkorn University Phayathai Road, Bangkok, 10330 THAILAND  
website: [www.focusweb.org](http://www.focusweb.org) email: [info@focusweb.org](mailto:info@focusweb.org)

**Issue editors:** Joseph Purugganan and Clarissa Militante **Lay-out:** Amy Tejada  
**Photographs and Images courtesy of** Shalmali Guttal, Joseph Purugganan, Pablo Solon, CCODP, Greenpeace and Philippine Movement for Climate Justice