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Present at the creation: Focus and the march from Seattle to Porto Alegre

The last year will probably go down as one of those defining moments in the history of the world economy, like 1929. Of course, the structures of the current global economic regime appear to be solid, with many in the global elite in Washington, Europe, and Asia congratulating themselves for containing the Asian financial crisis and trying to exude confidence about launching a new round of trade negotiations under the World Trade Organisation (WTO). What we witnessed, nevertheless, was a dramatic series of events that might, in fact, lead to that time when, as the philosopher says, “all that is solid melts into thin air.”

Expressing the way the dominance of certain trends go beyond the conventional time-categories we want to divide history into, historians talk about the “long” 17th century” and, in the case of Eric Hobsbawm, about a “short” 20th century that began in 1914 and ended in 1989. Similarly, we can speak about the “long” year of 2000. For global capitalism, the year began a month early, on Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 1999, when the Third Ministerial of the WTO collapsed in Seattle. It ended in the last week of January 2001, with the face-off between the World Economic Forum held in Davos, Switzerland, and the upstart World Social Forum which took place in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

The dominant feature of the period was the descent into a deep crisis of legitimacy of the key institutions of the current global economic regime: the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Davos Forum. Focus, as a participant in the events that shook these institutions, enjoyed a ringside view of the development of the crisis and the rise of a vast and a varied global movement against corporate-driven globalization.

Seattle: the turning point

The definitive history of the Seattle events still needs to be written, but they cannot be understood without the explosive interaction between the militant and unrelenting protests of some 50,000 people in the streets and the rebellion of developing country delegates inside the Seattle Convention Centre. Much has been made about the different motivations of the street protesters and the Third World delegates and the differences within the ranks of the demonstrators themselves. True, some of their stands on key issues, such as the incorporation of labour standards into the WTO, were sometimes contradictory. But most of them were united by one thing: their opposition to the expansion of a system that promoted corporate-led globalisation at the expense of social goals like

justice, community, national sovereignty, cultural diversity, and ecological sustainability.

Still, the Seattle debacle would not have occurred without another development: the inability of the European Union and the United States to bridge their differences on key issues, like what rules should govern their monopolistic competition for global agricultural markets. And the fallout from Seattle might have been less massive were it not for the brutal behaviour of the Seattle police. The assaults on largely peaceful demonstrators, including myself, by police in their Darth Vader-like uniforms in full view of television cameras made Seattle's mean streets the grand symbol of the crisis of globalisation.

When it was established in 1995, the WTO was regarded as the crown jewel of capitalism in the era of globalisation. With the Seattle collapse, however, realities that had been ignored or belittled were acknowledged even by the powers-that-be whose brazen confidence in their own creation had been shaken. For instance, that the supreme institution of globalisation was, in fact, fundamentally undemocratic and its processes non-transparent was recognised even by representatives of some of its stoutest defenders pre-Seattle. The global elite's crisis of confidence was evident, for instance, in the words of Stephen Byers, the UK Secretary for Trade and Industry: "The WTO will not be able to continue in its present form. There has to be fundamental and radical change in order for it to meet the needs and aspirations of all 134 of its members."

UNCTAD X

Seattle was no one-off event. Bitter criticism of the WTO and the Bretton Woods institutions was the not-so-subtle undercurrent of the Tenth Assembly of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD X), held in Bangkok in February. Focus had been requested by the UNCTAD to set up the Civil Society Conference that would accompany the official meeting. We agreed and helped bring over 100 NGOs to Bangkok to dialogue with UNCTAD. It is unlikely, however, that the cautious UNCTAD secretariat was pleased to hear what Focus had to say, for we urged them to take

advantage of the crisis of legitimacy of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to push for principles and rules for world trade that would promote the interests of developing countries.

UNCTAD officials demurred and UNCTAD X ended up like most other UN conferences: dull and inconclusive. Indeed, what brought an otherwise uneventful international meeting to the front pages of the world press was the pie-splattered face of outgoing IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus, who was on the receiving end of a perfect pitch from anti-IMF activist Robert Naiman.

Washington, DC, Chiang Mai, and Melbourne

Naiman's act helped set the stage for the first really big post-Seattle confrontation between pro-globalisation and anti-globalisation forces: the spring meeting of the IMF and the World Bank in Washington, DC. Focus joined the 30,000 protesters that descended on America's capital in the middle of April and found a large section of the northwest part of the city walled off by some 10,000 policemen. For four rain-swept days, the protestors tried, unsuccessfully, to breach the police phalanx to reach the IMF-World Bank complex at 19th and H Sts., NW, resulting in hundreds of arrests. The police claimed victory. But it was a case of the protestors losing the battle but winning the war. Just the mere fact that 30,000 people had come to protest the Bretton Woods twins was already a massive victory according to organisers who said that the most one could mobilise in previous protests were a few hundred people. Moreover, the focus of the media was on Washington, and the first acquaintance of hundreds of millions of viewers throughout the world with the World Bank and IMF were as controversial institutions under siege from people accusing them of inflicting poverty and misery on the developing world. From Washington, DC, the struggle shifted to Chiang Mai in the highlands of Northern Thailand, where the Asian Development Bank (ADB), a multilateral body notorious for funding gargantuan projects that disrupted communities and destabilised the environment, held its 33rd Annual Meeting in early May. So shaken was the ADB leadership by the sight of

some 2000 people asking it to leave town that soon after the conference, ADB President Tadao Chino established an vice presidential level “NGO Task Force” to deal with civil society. Fearful of even more massive protests in 2001, the ADB also shifted the site of its next annual meeting from Seattle to Honolulu in the belief that the latter would be a secure site.

Chiang Mai had significance beyond the ADB, however. With a majority of the protesters being poor Thai farmers, the Chiang Mai demonstrations showed that the anti-globalisation mass base went beyond middle class youth and organised labour in the advanced countries. Equally important, key organizers of the Chiang Mai actions, like Bamrung Kayotha, one of the leaders of the Forum of the Poor, had participated in the Seattle protest, and they saw Chiang Mai not as a discrete event but as a link in the chain of international protests against globalisation.

In the lead-up to the ADB meeting, Focus produced commentaries and studies critical of ADB projects in the Philippines, Thailand, and Laos, zeroing in on the agency’s promotion of the privatization of public services. And during the demonstrations, we proudly took our place at the side of farmers, fisherfolk, and NGOs who told the ADB that they would no longer tolerate dislocation, resettlement, impoverishment, and environmental degradation brought about by its projects.

The battle lines were next drawn Down Under, in Melbourne, Australia, in early September. The glittering Crown Casino by Melbourne’s upscale waterfront had been chosen as the site of the Asia-Pacific Summit of the World Economic Forum (Davos) which had become a leading force in the effort to put a more liberal face to globalisation. The casino, many activists felt, was a fitting symbol of finance-driven globalisation. In nearly three days of street battles, some 5,000 protesters were at times able to seal off key entrances to the Casino, forcing the organisers to bring some delegates in and out by helicopter, again in full view of television. And again, as in Seattle, rough handling of demonstrators by the police, many of them mounted, magnified the global controversy over the event.

As in Seattle, Washington, DC, and Chiang Mai, Focus was asked by the organizers in Melbourne to provide its analysis of the role and behavior of multilateral institutions and transnational corporations and our proposals for changes in the global economy at various speaking engagements and rallies. We were glad to do this.

The battle of Prague

Later in September came Europe’s turn to serve as a battleground. Some 10,000 people came from all over the continent to Prague, prepared to engage in an apocalyptic confrontation with the Bretton Woods institutions during the latter’s annual meeting in that beautiful Eastern European city in the most beautiful of seasons. Prague lived up to its billing. With demonstrations and street battles trapping delegates at the Congress Centre or swirling around them as they tried to make their way back to their quarters in Prague’s famed Old Town, the agenda of the meeting was, as one World Bank official put it, “effectively seized” by the anti-globalisation protesters. When a large number of delegates refused to go to the Congress Centre in the next two days, the convention had to be abruptly concluded, a day before its scheduled ending.

As important as the protests in Prague was the debate held on Sept. 23 at the famous Prague Castle between representatives of civil society and the leadership of the World Bank and the IMF, an event orchestrated by Czech President Vaclav Havel. I was asked by the organizers to be one of the three members of the civil society panel, a role I was more than willing to fill. Unfortunately, instead of bridging the gap between the two sides, the debate widened it, since, in response to our requests and demands, World Bank President James Wolfensohn and IMF Managing Director Horst Koehler were not prepared to go beyond platitudes and generalities, as if worried that they might overstep the bounds set by their G-7 masters. George Soros, who defended the Bank and Fund at the debate, said it all when he admitted that Wolfensohn and Koehler had “performed terribly” and had blown their most important encounter with civil society.

After Seattle, much talk about reforming the global economic system to bring on board those “being left behind” by globalisation was emitted by establishment personalities like Bill Gates, Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, Kofi Annan, and Nike CEO Phil Knight. The Davos Forum, in fact, placed the question of reform at the top of the agenda of the meetings it held for the global elite.

Over a year after Seattle, however, there has been precious little in the way of concrete action. The most prominent reform initiative, the Group of Seven’s plan to lessen the servicing of the external debt of the 41 Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) has actually delivered a debt reduction of only \$US 1 billion since it began in 1996—or a reduction of their debt servicing by only 3 per cent in the past four and a half years!

Over a year after the Seattle collapse, talk about reforming the decision-making process at the WTO has vanished, with Director General Mike Moore, in fact, saying that that the non-transparent, undemocratic “Consensus/Green Room” system that triggered the developing country revolt in Seattle is “non-negotiable.”

When it comes to the question of the international financial architecture, serious discussion of controls on speculative capital like Tobin taxes has been avoided. An unreformed IMF continues to be at the centre of the system’s “firefighting system.” A pre-emptive, pre-crisis credit line at the Fund (which no country wants to avail of) and a toothless Financial Stability Forum—where there is little developing country participation—appear to be the only “innovations” to emerge from the Asian, Russian, and Brazilian financial crises of the last three years.

At the IMF and the World Bank, similarly, there is no longer any talk about diluting the voting shares of the US and European Union in favour of greater voting power for the Third World countries, much less of doing away with the feudal practices of always having a European head the Fund and an American to lead the Bank. The much-vaunted consultative process in the preparation of “Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers” (PRSP) by governments

applying for loans is turning out to be nothing more than an effort to add a veneer of public participation to the same technocratic process that is churning out development strategies with the same old emphasis on growth via deregulation and liberalisation of trade, with maybe a safety net here and there. At the Bank, strong resistance to innovations that would put the priority on social reforms led to the resignation of two reformers: Joseph Stiglitz, the chief economist, and Ravi Kanbur, the head of the World Development Report task force.

Debate in the Hague

The protests throughout the year had a strong anti-TNC (transnational corporation) strain, with the World Bank, IMF, and WTO regarded as servitors of the corporations. A strong distrust of TNCs had, in fact, developed, even in the United States, where over 70 per cent of people surveyed felt corporations had too much power over their lives. Distrust and opposition to TNCs could only be deepened by the collapse in late November of the Hague Conference on Climate Change, owing to US’s industry’s unwillingness to significantly cut back on its emission of greenhouse gases. At a time that most indicators are showing an acceleration of global warming trends, Washington’s move has reinforced the conviction of the anti-globalization movement that the US economic elite is determined to grab all the benefits of globalization while sticking the costs on the rest of the world.

Sunrise in Porto Alegre

But the Hague was not the last word of this memorable year. 2000 ended on a high note at the World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre, Brazil, which was organized as a counterpoint to the World Economic Forum, the annual global elite event taking place in Davos, in Switzerland.

One of the highlights of the WSF was a televised trans-Atlantic debate between Porto Alegre and Davos. Since I had been in Davos last year, the producers requested that I make the opening statement for the Porto Alegre side. I obliged with the following: “We would like to begin by condemning the arrests of peaceful

demonstrators to shield the global elite at Davos from protests. We would also like to register our consternation that while we in Porto Alegre have painstakingly come up with a diverse panel of speakers, you in Davos have come up with four white males to face us. But perhaps you are trying to make a political statement.

“I was in Davos last year, and believe me, Davos is not worth a second visit. I am here in Porto Alegre this year, and let me say that Porto Alegre is the future while Davos is the past. Hemingway wrote that the rich are different from you and me, and indeed, we live on two different planets: Davos, the planet of the superrich, Porto Alegre, the planet of the poor, the marginalized, the concerned. Here in Porto Alegre, we are discussing how to save the planet. There in Davos, the global elite is discussing how to maintain its hegemony over the rest of us. In fact, the best gift that the 2000 corporate executives at Davos can give to the world is for them to board a spaceship and blast off for outer space. The rest of us will definitely be much better off without them.”

The holding of the weeklong World Social Forum was nothing short of a miracle. Proposed by the Workers’ Party of Brazil (PT) and a coalition of Brazilian civil society organisations, supported with significant funding by a number of civil society donors and provided with strong international support by the French monthly

Le Monde Diplomatique and Attac, the European anti-globalisation alliance, the event was put together in less than eight months’ time. The idea of holding an alternative to the annual retreat of the global corporate elite in Davos simply took off. While there were some glitches here and there, the event was resoundingly successful, despite the massive challenge of co-ordinating 16 plenary sessions, over 400 workshops, and numerous side events.

The sharing in Porto Alegre focused not only on drawing up strategies of resistance to globalisation but also on elaborating alternative paradigms of economic, ecological, and social development. Militant action was not absent, with Jose Bove, the celebrated French anti-McDonalds’ activist, and the Brazilian MST

(Movement of the Landless), leading the destruction of two hectares of land planted with transgenic soybean crops by the biotechnological firm Monsanto.

Porto Alegre achieved its goal of being a counterpoint to Davos. The combination of celebration, hard discussion, and militant solidarity that flowed from it contrasted with the negative images coming out of Davos. Focus made a big commitment of time, personnel, resources, and energy to the Porto Alegre process, and we were happy to see it succeed. We are committed to establishing Porto Alegre as the premier forum for the discussion and solution of the planet’s many problems.

The alternative

The key institutions that run the world economy are suffering a severe crisis of legitimacy in the wake of the long hot year of 2000. Now the time is ripe for proposing alternatives to these institutions and to the obsolete paradigms that increasingly serve as cages for the vast majority of the world’s population. Without alternatives the window of opportunity for restructuring the global system could vanish.

At the various activities and events that we participated in, we in Focus did not only speak about resistance to the forces and institutions creating global poverty, inequality, and injustice. Drawing from our research, analysis, and capacity building work at the grassroots, we also talked about alternatives to the global regime. We disagree with the view that thinking about the alternative is a task that for the most part is still in a primeval state. In fact, we feel that that many or most of the basic or broad principles for an alternative order are already with us, and it is really a question of specifying these broad principles to concrete societies in ways that respect the diversity of societies.

Work on alternatives has been a collective past and present effort, one to which many North and South have contributed. Allow us to synthesize the key points of this collective effort under the rubric “deglobalisation.” While the following model addresses principally the situation of countries in the South, many points have relevance as well to societies and economies in the North.

Deglobalisation

What is deglobalisation? We are not talking about withdrawing from the international economy.

We are speaking about reorienting our economies from the emphasis on production for export to production for the local market;

- about drawing most of our financial resources for development from within rather than becoming dependent on foreign investment and foreign financial markets;
- about carrying out the long-postponed measures of income redistribution and land redistribution to create a vibrant internal market that would be the anchor of the economy;
- about de-emphasising growth and maximising equity in order to radically reduce environmental disequilibrium;
- about not leaving strategic economic decisions to the market but making them subject to democratic choice;
- about subjecting the private sector and the state to constant monitoring by civil society;
- about creating a new production and exchange complex that includes community co-operatives, private enterprises, and state enterprises, and excludes TNCs;
- about enshrining the principle of subsidiarity in economic life by encouraging production of goods to take place at the community and national level if it can be done so at reasonable cost in order to preserve community.

We are talking, moreover, about a strategy that consciously subordinates the logic of the market, the pursuit of cost efficiency to the values of security, equity, and social solidarity. We are speaking, to use the language of the great social democratic scholar Karl Polanyi, about re-embedding the economy in society, rather than having society driven by the economy.

Deglobalisation or the re-empowerment of the local and national, however, can only succeed if it takes place within an alternative system of global economic governance. What are the contours of such a world economic order? The answer to this is contained in our critique of the

Bretton Woods cum WTO system as a monolithic system of universal rules imposed by highly centralised institutions to further the interests of corporations—and, in particular, US corporations. To try to supplant this with another centralised global system of rules and institutions, though these may be premised on different principles, is likely to reproduce the same Jurassic trap that ensnared organisations as different as IBM, the IMF, and the Soviet state, and this is the inability to tolerate and profit from diversity. Incidentally, the idea that the need for one central set of global rules is unquestionable and that the challenge is to replace the neoliberal rules with social democratic ones is a remnant of a techno-optimist variant of Marxism that infuses both the Social Democratic and Leninist visions of the world, producing what Indian author Arundhati Roy calls the predilection for “gigantism.”

A plural world

Today’s need is not another centralised global institution but the deconcentration and decentralisation of institutional power and the creation of a pluralistic system of institutions and organisations interacting with one another, guided by broad and flexible agreements and understandings.

We are not talking about something completely new. For it was under such a more pluralistic system of global economic governance, where hegemonic power was still far from institutionalised in a set of all-encompassing and powerful multilateral organisations and institutions that a number of Latin American and Asian countries were able to achieve a modicum of industrial development in the period from 1950 to 1970. It was under such a pluralistic system, under a General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) that was limited in its power, flexible, and more sympathetic to the special status of developing countries, that the East and South-east Asian countries were able to become newly industrialising countries through activist state trade and industrial policies that departed significantly from the free-market biases enshrined in the WTO.

Of course, economic relations among countries prior to the attempt to institutionalise one global free market system beginning in the early 1980's were not ideal, nor were the Third World economies that resulted ideal. They failed to address a number of needs illuminated by recent advances in feminist, ecological, and post-post development economics. All we wish to point out here is that the pre-1994 situation underlines the fact that the alternative to an economic Pa Romania built around the World Bank-IMF-WTO system is not a Hobbesian state of nature. All we want to stress is that the reality of international relations in a world marked by a multiplicity of international and regional institutions that check one another is a far cry from the propaganda image of a "nasty" and "brutish" world. Of course, the threat of unilateral action by the powerful is ever present in such a system, but it is one that even the most powerful hesitate to take for fear of its consequences on their legitimacy as well as the reaction it would provoke in the form of opposing coalitions.

In other words, what developing countries and international civil society should aim at is not to reform the TNC-driven WTO and Bretton Woods institutions, but, through a combination of passive and active measures, to either a) decommission them; b) neuter them (e.g., converting the IMF into a pure research institution monitoring exchange rates of global capital flows); or c) radically reduce their powers and turn them into just another set of actors coexisting with and being checked by other international organisations, agreements, and regional groupings. This strategy would include strengthening diverse actors and institutions as UNCTAD, multilateral environmental agreements, the International Labour Organisation, and evolving economic blocs such as Mercosur in Latin America, SAARC in South Asia, SADCC in Southern Africa, and a revitalised ASEAN in Southeast Asia. A key aspect of "strengthening," of course, is making sure these formations evolve in a people-oriented direction and cease to remain regional elite projects.

But above all, it would support the formation of new international and regional institutions that would be dedicated to creating and protecting the space for devolving the greater part of

production, trade, and economic decision-making to the national and local level. The primal role of international organisations in a world where toleration of diversity is a central principle of economic organisation would be, as the British philosopher John Gray puts it, "to express and protect local and national cultures by embodying and sheltering their distinctive practices."

More space, more flexibility, more compromise—these should be the goals of the Southern agenda and the international civil society effort to build a new system of global economic governance. It is in such a more fluid, less structured, more pluralistic world, with multiple checks and balances, that the nations and communities of the South—and the North—will be able to carve out the space to develop based on their values, their rhythms, and the strategies of their choice.

In conclusion, in this post-Seattle, or should we now say, post-Porto Alegre, world, our side has the momentum, the initiative, the ascendancy. Of course, the structures of corporate-driven globalization seem as firm as ever. While guarding against unwarranted optimism, we must also not underestimate the possibilities in the more fluid situation of the moment. Let us remember that power structures ultimately cannot survive without the perception that they are legitimate. We have a window of opportunity as we enter 2001. Focus is determined to contribute its share to make ensure this window does not slam shut.

Walden Bello
Executive Director

Economic, Financial and Trade Liberalisation

Economics and finance

The main work in 2000 was monitoring, research and policy analysis, and helping build networks and campaigns on the IMF, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, currency transactions taxes (CTT) and capital controls, financial architecture and Financing for Development (FFD), debt, the impacts of the Asian financial crisis, and developing frameworks for alternatives to the existing structures and institutions of international finance.

Specifically, Focus was extensively involved in the preparations and the educational, public and official events during the Washington and Prague meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund and the Chiang Mai meeting of the Asian Development Bank. This included writing and publishing articles and reports for the events, speaking on panels and in workshops, extensive media contact, attending both official and parallel meetings and debates, and developing networks for information exchange and coordination.

Some of the highlights included the International Forum on Globalisation's (IFG) teach-in prior to the Washington meetings and the "Prague Castle" debate prior to the annual meetings in September. All of these activities were reported extensively in *Focus on Trade*.

Two Focus dossiers were prepared for the Chiang Mai and Prague events: *Creating Poverty: the ADB in Asia* and *Prague 2000: Why we need to decommission the IMF and the World Bank*. Both are available on the Focus website in pdf format.

Financial architecture

The debates on financial architecture ground to a halt in 2000, reflecting the G7 consensus that there is no further need for reform or debate (insofar as there has been any at all). Interest was revived briefly just weeks before the April IMF and World Bank meetings when the report of the US Congressional International Financial Institution Advisory Commission, better known as the "Meltzer Report", recommended a radical downsizing of both institutions. And while this was a short-lived debate, the report is still something of a "sleeping" in Washington DC and could at any time be dusted off to serve a more reactionary Republican sentiment. This, of course, would create renewed political opportunities for progressive and public debates about financial architecture and the role of the IFIs.

The institutions themselves have done little to reform except at the level of rhetoric, with both promising to focus on their core competencies and mandate, yet engaging in an ever greater project of imperial expansion.

This is of course the risk when there are no clear-cut demands being made on the institutions. For example, the expectations from some governments and NGOs that the IFIs should adopt a human rights framework risks an uncontrolled extension of their scope of action and conditionalities. In Focus' view, the institutions are deeply undemocratic and hegemonic and are too embedded in their own history and interests to undertake the necessary ideological, personnel and structural changes. They have outlived their usefulness (if they ever had any). Again, this analysis and these views have been extensively aired in our publications, and in meetings and public events.

The Focus Dossier *Prague 2000: Why we need to decommission the World Bank and the IMF* is a significant contribution to the debate on institutional and structural issues, especially the article by Walden Bello "From Melbourne to Prague: the struggle for a deglobalised world" which begins to articulate a framework for alternatives.

This dossier also includes an important update on the impact of IMF policies in East Asia. Written by Jacques Chai Chomthongdi, who joined Focus in 2000, "The IMF's Asian Legacy" reviews the impacts of IMF policies and assesses the extent to which the IMF can claim any credit for the so-called "recovery" in Asia.

In response to the past twelve months of protest, the IFIs have attempted to deepen the divisions between the so-called "reformists" and the "abolitionists." However, the level of collaboration and coordination between most groups remains high and many are questioning the limits of reform. For example, some NGOs and governments who have supported the Enhanced Highly Indebted poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) as "steps in the right direction" are now becoming increasingly frustrated with the lack of real change. Twenty years of structural adjustment programmes has provided enough empirical evidence to support calls for the radical transformation or even abolition of the IMF and the World Bank and, in most quarters, the institutions new-found interest in poverty alleviation is met with scepticism.

Given that the legitimacy of the IMF and the World Bank are at an all-time low, regaining credibility is paramount. The Bank, the Fund, the WTO and the UN, especially through the offices of Secretary General Kofi Annan, seem to be converging in their strategy to promote "globalisation with a human face." This started to emerge during the Davos meeting of the World Economic Forum in January 2000, and was fully realised at the June 2000 World Summit on Social Development +5 in Geneva when the report "A better world for all" effectively tied the UN into the language and development agenda of the Bretton Woods Institutions.

Similarly, the UN-initiated Global Compact — an unenforceable, non-binding and voluntary "gentleman's agreement" which asks corporations to "support" human rights principles — is an attempt to manage the processes of globalisation without dealing with the fundamental contradictions. It has been called a "blue wash" for corporations, and even international financier George Soros has expressed deep reservations, saying "I think it is well intended, but it does have an element of whitewash or blue-wash in it... It's very hard for business to sort of step out of its skin. Business is basically run for profit." It is, however, supported by labour and civil society groups such as the ICFTU, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and WorldWide Fund for Nature, together with various business councils and a long list of corporations.

Financing for development

In the coming year, the Financing for Development (FFD) process will be where many of these debates continue. Although this is the conference and the agenda that developing countries have been asking for, early signs are not promising. There seems to be an assumption that integration into global markets is the equivalent of development, and therefore all financing should meet this end. As Kofi Annan remarked in his address to the 2001 World Economic Forum in Davos, "better targeted" official development co-operation is necessary to make countries "more attractive as investment destinations". Presumably, the rest can then be left to the private sector. Debt cancella-

tion (let alone restitution and redistribution) or alternatives to global market oriented “development” are simply not on the agenda.

While there has been general agreement that the involvement of the Bretton Woods Institutions is central to the success of the FFD, the opening remarks from the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank at the second session of the preparatory committee reinforced their unwavering commitment to a pro-liberalisation, pro-market policies. Developing countries, the UN agencies and civil society groups will have to form strong alliances if they are to stop the wholesale transfer of the Washington consensus to the UN. The US delegate to the FFD indicated the magnitude of this task when he asserted that his government would “oppose any attempt to interfere in the governance and decision-making mechanisms of the World Bank and the IMF” and that any attempt to do so would “seriously undermine” the credibility of the UN.

Capital controls, currency transaction taxes and debt

The international campaigns for debt cancellation, a tax on currency transactions (CTT), closing of tax havens, regulation of hedge funds, capital controls and regulation of foreign direct investments are closely tied to the work on the international financial institutions, financial architecture and democratising finance.

In 2000, Focus started work on capital controls and CTTs in East and Southeast Asia. A short research project reviewing the level of public and policy discussion on the CTT and capital controls was carried out in six countries – the Philippines, Korea, Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia and Thailand. This, together with a policy paper on the feasibility of a regional CTT or capital controls, will be part of efforts to build a campaign in Southeast Asia to raise political and public debate on financial regulation. This will be undertaken in collaboration with other regional groups such as the Asia Regional Exchange for New Alternatives (Arena) and the International Council of Social Welfare (ICSW) and will be integrated into plans to develop a regional civil society response to the Financing for Development agenda. As in other countries,

the practical proposals for a CTT, regulating speculation and closing tax havens are not merely objectives in themselves, but an important channel for education, raising public awareness and mobilising campaigns on a broad range of financial and economic policies.

In September 2000, Focus on the Global South and Zed Books published *Global Finance: New Thinking on Regulating Speculative Capital Markets*. It is a collection of papers from the March 1999 conference “Economic Sovereignty in a Globalising World” and is edited by Walden Bello, Nicola Bullard and Kamal Malhotra. Details are available on the Focus website. Focus also co-published with the Toda Institute and Latrobe University *Reimagining the Future: Toward Democratic Governance*, which includes a chapter by Kamal Malhotra and Marco Mezzera “Governance of global financial flows”. Publication details of both books are included at the end of this report and on the Focus website.

Focus has worked with the Jubilee debt networks over the past year. In particular, Focus was involved in many aspects of the Jubilee South regional meeting held in Bangkok in October which resulted in the formation of the Asia Pacific Coalition on Debt and Development. In addition to helping with many practical issues, Focus provided speakers for several panels and resource people for workshops. Focus researched and published a dossier for the event *The Transfer of Wealth: Debt and the making of a Global South*. This is available in PDF format on the Focus website.

Trade and agriculture

Focus did extensive research and provided analytical support to developing countries in the agricultural negotiations in partnership with the South Centre in Geneva. This work contributed to three papers which were jointly submitted by about twelve countries to the WTO on the Development Box, The Green Box and Market Access. These papers are posted on the Focus website.

As part of the work with governments, Focus also took part in a workshop for trade negotiators organised jointly between South Centre and

Oxfam on Institutional Reform held in January. In this workshop, we gave a paper outlining the relevant issues from a developing country perspective. We highlighted, in particular, the development needs of countries, which the WTO agenda contravenes.

In October, Focus co-sponsored a workshop entitled 'WTO Negotiations on Agriculture: Setting the Right Agenda'. The other sponsors of the workshop were South Centre, IATP and Action Aid. Focus staff gave a presentation entitled 'Special and Differential Treatment for Developing Countries' highlighting the problems of forcing down an industrial-type agricultural export model onto developing countries' small farmers.

In response to interest by some developing country delegates, Focus also developed a paper critiquing the WTO's single undertaking from a historical and development perspective, suggesting that a more development-centred multilateral trading system would consist of plurilateral agreements which governments could sign on to if they felt that the area was of interest to them, rather than taking an all or nothing WTO package.

The other component of the trade-related activities was working in solidarity with other NGOs. In this vein, Focus took part in the NGO workshop preparing for the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) workshop in Dresden, in July. Focus presented a paper entitled 'Politicising Research: Trade and Agriculture and an Enabling Institutional and Policy Framework'.

Focus took part in another NGO workshop 'The Two-thirds Minority – Developing Countries in the WTO', organized by Germanwatch in October and presented a paper on 'WTO Transparency – View of a Southern NGO'. We also participated in a "brainstorming" meeting on the proposed Trade and Sustainable Human Development Report organised by UNDP in October.

Two major pieces of research were undertaken in 2000. The first was commissioned by the Protestant Farmers in Germany on 'Non-trade Concerns in Agriculture: Comparative Analysis

of Asian and European Perspectives'. The work included highlighting the non-trade concerns of developing countries, the impact of agricultural liberalization in Thailand and the Philippines, the implications of EU agricultural subsidies and an analysis of what an agenda for sustainable agriculture for developing countries would look like.

The other research piece is entitled 'Small Farmers and the Need for Alternative, Development-friendly Food Production Systems'. The paper looks at the problems small farmers in developing countries encounter when they are thrust into an industrial / export agricultural production system and suggests livelihood sustaining alternatives.

These papers are posted on the Focus website.

Focus on Trade

The monthly electronic bulletin *Focus on Trade* is the main channel for disseminating Focus' written material on economic, financial and trade liberalisation. It is published every month and has a subscription list of more than 4,000. The bulletin is re-posted on several other lists and articles are frequently requested for re-printing elsewhere or translation into other languages, including Bahasa Indonesian, Thai, Japanese, Korean, German and French.

In 2000, thanks to the initiative and excellent translations of Gerard Coffey, an activist living in Ecuador, *Enfoque sobre Comercio* is now available in Spanish. If you would like to subscribe, send an email to anoop@focusweb.org

Security and Conflict

Contrary to expectations, conflicts have not abated with the end of the Cold War. In fact, in many cases, conflicts and tensions have increased, with the flaring of antagonisms along cleavages that were ‘frozen’ during the Cold war, such as ethnic and cultural differences. Today’s conflicts are derived from a mixture of antagonisms that are a legacy of the Cold War, old territorial disputes, struggles over resources or potential resources, North-South struggles, class, ethnic, cultural and gender differences. Dominant patterns of globalisation have also contributed to the emergence and re-emergence of both new and traditional forms of violence.

Focus combines two approaches to security issues. On the one hand, it is squarely in the tradition of the peace movement by advocating withdrawal of military bases, disarmament and conflict resolution through diplomacy, collective security and multilateral arrangements. On the other hand, Focus realises that stabilisation and conflict resolution mechanisms are not enough. It is necessary to address the roots of conflict, and this lies in resolving inequalities engendered by differential access to natural resources, food, property and income. It also means addressing environmental degradation, since this is becoming a key source of potential conflict among states. In the past year Focus has addressed some of these issues.

Nuclear disarmament conference

Focus India and Bangkok offices in cooperation with the Community Development Library (CDL), a local organization in Bangladesh, co-organized the nuclear disarmament conference entitled *“Peace Builds Bombs Destroy: Let’s Make Asia Nuclear-Free”*, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, February 18-20, 2000. About 150 participants from South Asia, East Asia and Southeast

Asia countries and the U.S gathered to discuss the impact of nuclear weapons on society and security. The conference called on the global community, in particular, the U.S, Russia and China, to ratify nuclear treaties and strengthen the call for global nuclear disarmament. Rallies to the Indian and Pakistan embassies in Dhaka were organized to present the Dhaka Declaration.

The South Asia Peace Coalition has been consequently formed after the nuclear conference in Dhaka. In which the Focus India office plays a key role.

The Focus India office has invited Admiral L. Ramdas to be its advisor to the Security Programme. Admiral Ramdas is a former Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) of the Indian Navy. He is currently the Chairperson of the Indian chapter of the Pakistan India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy, and an active campaigner for total abolition of nuclear weapons. His key advisory responsibilities include enhancing the function of South Asia Peace Coalition as well as anti nuclear campaigning in India and South Asia.

People’s security conference

Japanese groups based in Tokyo and Okinawa, and Focus on the Global South jointly held the “Okinawa International Forum for People’s Security” conference prior to the G8 summit in Okinawa, Japan, from June 29-July 1, 2000. Around 100-150 from the Asia Pacific countries participated in the event. The discussions focussed on the presence and impact of US bases and its impacts in the regions and the concept of people’s security. Visits to the location of a new heliport as well as local NGOs offices and groups fighting against the US presence were arranged.



Speakers at the Okinawa Conference

ASEM III – Asia-Europe meeting 2000

Focus was a member of an International Organizing Committee (IOC) of the social forum, parallel to the official ASEM meeting in Seoul, October 17-21, 2000.

The joint cooperation on ASEM III meeting helped strengthening Focus's collaboration with the South Korean groups.

ASEAN activities

Throughout the year Focus had taken part in ASEAN activities conducted by Forum Asia and other organizations. On July 21, 2000, a symposium called "ASEAN 2000 and Beyond: Putting people First" was co-organized by Forum Asia and Focus parallel to the ASEAN Ministers Meeting (AMM) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held in Bangkok, Thailand. The keynote speech "The Challenges of the ASEAN in 2000 and Beyond" was given by the East Timor leader and Noble Peace Prize laureate Jose Ramos Horta. A proposal for an alternative model of ASEAN as well as conflict resolution in problematic countries like Burma, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, etc. were discussed. The adopted resolutions were presented at the meeting between the group of participants and Thailand Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ministry. An ASEAN embassy tour was also made presenting the same resolutions.

Focus staff also participated in the ASEAN People's Assembly 2000 (APA) held in Batam,

Indonesia, during November 24-26, 2000, a parallel meeting to the informal ASEAN leaders summit in Singapore. About 300 participants from ASEAN countries plus others from Japan, Canada, US, and European representatives gathered there. The failure of official ASEAN structure and how people's participation can be strengthened were actively debated.

Global governance reform project

The project entered its final phase in March 2000, when a series of working group meetings took place in New York under the auspices of the Queens College and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. During those meetings, which were attended by various United Nations officers, academicians, and personalities such as Professor Richard Falk and former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, the three written components of the work were closely scrutinized and modified. That preparatory work resulted in a policy advocacy booklet, entitled *Reimagining the Future: Towards Democratic Governance*, which was presented to the United Nations Millennium Assembly at the beginning of September 2000. The book was jointly produced with Latrobe University in Australia and the Toda Institute in Hawaii. This book is available from Focus.

A review of security program

The Security programme underwent an extensive review in the last months of 2000. The review team has come up with two activities to be conducted as initial steps of further actions. One is a mapping exercise on the current security situations in the regions – South Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia to see how to appropriately respond to the present realities and needs. In particular this project will focus on the inter-related processes of militarisation, democratisation and liberalisation. The second is a project on the Reunification of the Koreans. The latter supposed to be a gathering of all concerned parties to analyze both negative and positive elements of the reunification as such.

To effectively fulfil and accomplish the mapping research, a new senior analyst is to be recruited to work closely with staff both in Mumbai and Bangkok offices.

State, Market and Civil Society

Mobilising civil society

Throughout 2000, there were many political and strategic discussions within Focus on our role in the struggles against corporate globalisation and neo-liberalism. These have been open and constructive with a strong consensus and shared understanding. We see ourselves as a movement-oriented NGO and we hope to maintain a critical perspective of our own role and legitimacy within civil society. In the course of these discussions we have made clear decisions which support our views. These include expanding and diversifying the Board membership, consciously attempting to work more closely with labour, social movements, farmers organisations and other mass-based movements, and trying to articulate alternatives which come from real experiences. Nonetheless, we think that the work of research, policy analysis, articulating and disseminating ideas, networking, accessing information and technology, and establishing useful links between different levels of actions, sectors and regions is essential.

The UNCTAD X conference was held in Bangkok in February 2000. Focus was approached several months earlier by the UNCTAD secretariat to facilitate and coordinate the civil society input to the official conference. It was decided that this was a good opportunity to mobilise and engage local organisations in

some of the international debates about globalisation. It was also the first major meeting of trade ministers post-Seattle.

Focus produced the first dossier for 2000 for this meeting *Why reform of the WTO is the wrong agenda: four essays on four institutions*. This is available in pdf format on the Focus website.

Focus staff working in the Thai programme were heavily involved in translating materials, information sharing and helping to coordinate different aspects of the Thai response to the UNCTAD X. Others were engaged at the regional and international level especially to ensure broad-based participation in the civil society forums. It was decided that in addition to the official “NGO Caucus” there would be an alternative event. This was called the “Alternatives to neo-liberalism” and was organised principally by NGO CORD, the main Thai NGO network. About 150 representatives attended the official NGO caucus and twice that number the alternative conference. Media events, protests and street theatre highlighted the local impacts of neo-liberal economic policies and many Thais commented that during the UNCTAD events the local media momentarily lost its usual antagonism towards activists and NGOs.

The official NGO meeting produced a carefully crafted statement reflecting the negotiated position of a wide range of groups. However, the alternative event produced the *Bangkok Declaration* which was both shorter and clearer and became the “springboard” for a group in Geneva to organise the alternative events during the World Summit on Social Development in June.

The local organising for UNCTAD X was also a springboard for the very successful mobilisation for the Asian Development Bank meeting in Chiang Mai in April also reflects the success of the UNCTAD civil society events in articulating and energising links between the local, regional and global spheres of action.

Linking the local and the global

There is a strong link between the alternative events in Bangkok and Geneva in 2000 and the Porto Alegre World Social Forum in early 2001. For example, organisers of the Geneva events used the *Bangkok Declaration* (see box) as their starting point, while the World Social Forum was launched in Geneva. More importantly, though, these events are activist and movement-oriented and seek to articulate alternatives to neo-liberalism. Social movements, trade unions and NGOs from the South and the North have been able to carve out a new space for political and social engagements, and as John Lloyd, writing in the Financial Times about the World Social Forum, said there is a sense of “being astride a movement.”

Trade unions and civil society

In mid-2000, Focus was approached by the Freidrich Ebert Stiftung to facilitate a discussion between trade unions and NGOs on the issue of trade and labour standards. We agreed, but only if the scope could be broadened to include a wider discussion on workers and globalisation. While planning and progress has been rather slow, the meeting will be held in early March 2001, and will include representatives from social movements, trade unions and NGOs. Depending on the outcome, this could lead to a closer dialogue with trade unions and the labour movement in the future.

From Focus’ perspective, the traditional trade union movement has not effectively challenged neo-liberalism. On the other hand, though, neo-liberalism can never be challenged without an organised presence of workers in both the North and the South and in the formal and non-formal sectors. It is vital that unions, NGOs and social movements find ways of organising and educating which once again give meaning to the word solidarity. This is one of the most interesting challenges ahead of us, not only at Focus but also for everyone.

Underlying all of our work is a debate about development: What is development? What is the market? Can we imagine a world which is neither market nor state, but something else? In the next years it will become even more important to speak about alternatives and to make concrete proposals for change if we are to build on the momentum of the past two years.

Bangkok Appeal to the People of the World

The events of Seattle have changed the balance of forces between the social movements opposed to globalisation and the G7 leaders, governments, corporations and global economic institutions, including the IMF, World Bank and WTO, that drive the globalisation project.

Seattle gave expression to the growing international rejection of this new form of exploitation that violates on a massive scale peoples' human rights including, social, economic, cultural, environmental, political and democratic rights.

Seattle showed that we are able to unite against this global project. Our challenge now is to continue our resistance, and deepen the debate amongst ourselves in order to articulate and promote common alternatives.

In that regard, we need to improve our capacity for mobilisation at a national and international level, and to strengthen international co-operation.

We therefore appeal to all social movements, North and South, to fight for the cancellation of all debt of developing countries which in the judgement of civil society is illegitimate, immoral or unpayable; to end the IMF's structural adjustment policies in indebted nations; to call for a moratorium on any new negotiations that would increase the power and scope of the WTO, and to exclude from the jurisdiction of the WTO such issues as peasant agriculture, social services, and intellectual property claims; and to impose controls and taxes on capital.

We call on social movements to mobilize in large numbers and unit against globalisation wherever world leaders gather and meet. In particular we call on movements to focus on two main forthcoming events. First, on the UN General Assembly Social Summit Review in Geneva on 26 - 30th June, 2000. On this occasion, we will assemble to organise the debate, discussion and articulation of our alternatives; and also to prepare for a mass mobilisation in New York in September 5-6, 2000. This will be the Summit of World Leaders in New York, on the occasion of the UN's Millennium General Assembly on 6-9th September. Simultaneous actions will be organised around the world.

Bangkok, February 2000

Culture and Globalisation

Islamic revivalism and the politics of liberation and reform in Mindanao, Aceh, and Malaysia

After some initial difficulties, the first project of the programme was finally launched at the end of August. A researcher was appointed from within Focus to team up with a local journalist from the Philippines and to start doing field work on Mindanao, the first of the three selected areas for the comparative study – the other two being Aceh and the Malaysian states of Terengganu and Kelantan.

The goals of the research, as formulated in the project proposal, were to understand the rise of revivalist Islamic movements to political prominence in the three countries and to provide an analytical base to guide progressive forces in relating to these movements. Further, the comparative approach of the study was also supposed to identify some historical patterns on how those movements were formed and their dialectical relations to the homogenising forces of globalisation. Attachment to religion, in this case Islam, was thus to be regarded as a powerful means to counterbalance such forces, although dangerously open to political manipulations and to regressive tendencies.

By the end of the year, researcher had successfully completed two trips to the Philippines and

to Mindanao in particular. Although the security situation on the ground was far from ideal, also given to the large scale military offensive launched at the end of April, various meetings were arranged with experts and with key supporters and opponents of the main Islamic movement in the area: the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Under tight security measures, a long interview was also taken with the MILF Vice-Chairman for Military Affairs.

While working intensively on the Mindanao issue, parallel attempts were successfully completed to contact local journalists in Aceh and Malaysia as well.

The first phase of the project is to due to be completed by September 2001.

South East Asian Transition Economies

Programme activities in mainland Southeast Asia to date are more accurately described through Focus' framework on the Southeast Asian Transitional Economies (SEATEs) and can be grouped in two broad categories: in-country activities in the Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam, and regional activities that span the SEATEs sub-region with links to other sub-regions in Asia. Many of these regional activities also involve work with Thai civil society and peoples' movements. Further, in keeping with Focus' organisational strategy, activities have been conceptualised in response to three of Focus' thematic areas: Economic and Financial Liberalisation; Security and Conflict, and Culture and Globalisation.

Lao PDR

Training in macroeconomics, policy and research methodology with the National Economic Research Institute (NERI)

Between December, 1999 and March, 2000, two workshops were conducted for staff from The National Economic Research Institute (NERI), the National Statistical Institute and the State

Planning Committee (SPC). The first workshop focussed on fundamental concepts of macroeconomics and the second workshop focussed on research methodologies for policy researchers. Resource persons at these workshops included Focus staff and Dr. Joseph Lim, a visiting professor from the University of Philippines. As follow-up from the workshops, Focus staff have been assisting workshop participants to develop a proposal for a small-scale study on outward migration from rural areas to Vientiane, the capital city. The study seeks to examine the broad push and pull factors that result in such migration, the links between migration and poverty and the state's response to migration. The process is ongoing and is likely to be completed in the first part of 2001.

The overall process of capacity building through workshops and guided practice has been positive for both NERI and Focus. NERI staff participating in this process are also involved in other regional research efforts co-ordinated by the Australian Mekong Resource Centre (AMRC), with whom Focus has an ongoing programmatic relationship. Focus staff participated and assisted in workshops organised by the AMRC on Impact Assessment of Infrastructure projects in the Lower Mekong, and has joined a sub-regional network co-ordinated by the AMRC.

The level of trust between NERI and Focus appears to have deepened and NERI has now suggested further areas for collaborative study and training.

Promotion of local technologies to support agricultural production

Following from exchange activities and discussions initiated since early 1998, the Executive Director and Programme Director for Sustainable Development from the Institute for Food and Development Policy (Food First) visited the Lao PDR in October-November, 1999 to finalise agreements for future work on local, artisanal production of organic crop protection technologies. This visit was then followed by a visit by two resource persons from the Agricultural University in Havana, Cuba, to the Lao PDR from February to April, 2000. The resource persons worked with staff from the Department of Agriculture Extension in conducting a feasibility study for local production of organic crop protection technologies, and recommended future actions by which local production capacity can be established in the Lao PDR. Food First is currently continuing discussions with the Lao Government on moving to the next stage of implementing the recommendations of the Cuban-Lao resource team. Oxfam Solidarity Belgium will continue to co-ordinate this effort in-country while Focus will remain involved in facilitating broader regional and international linking.

Training and other support to strengthen capacity among NGO networks

Focus was involved in two principle efforts in this area. The first was a workshop in November 1999 for the informal Micro-Macro Issues Network on the Lao domestic economy. The workshop covered a range of topics from basic macroeconomic principles and a history of development to the structure of the Lao economy and regional influences on the Lao economy. Resource persons at the workshop included Focus staff, Lao NGO programme directors, and the co-ordinator of the Cambodian civil society network. As follow-up action,

participants at the workshop discussed the possibility of setting up a small study group to explore specific policies in some detail.

The second effort was an evaluation of the Lao Gender and Development Group (GDG), an informal NGO network to provide recommendations on how the network can be more responsive to the changing situation in the Lao PDR. The evaluation was conducted in June 2000, and the network's participants have since convened two planning workshops to discuss how some of the recommendations can be put into practice.

In addition to the above, Focus has continued to provide information materials to selected NGOs for wider dissemination among NGO networks and government as they find appropriate.

Cambodia

Support for the Cambodian civil society network on development and policy issues

Focus provided support to the Cambodian civil society organisations network through participation in two workshops organised by the Cambodian NGO Forum, both on the Poverty Reduction Strategy process initiated by the World Bank. Focus staff served as external resource persons on the broader implications of the involvement of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank in national poverty reduction strategies.

In November 1999, the coordinator of the civil society network participated in the workshop on the Lao domestic economy that was organised in Vientiane. A similar workshop on the Cambodian domestic economy was planned for 2000, but did not materialise owing to the heavy work schedules of network members, and also concerns that such a workshop be preceded by shorter, more specific, issue based seminars to create a common conceptual foundation among network members. The network has already organised at least two issue-based seminars in this year and the longer workshop will likely be held in 2001.

Vietnam

Collaborative research with the National Institute for Science, Technology, Policy and Strategy Studies (NISTPASS)

Focus increased contact with NISTPASS in this year through meetings, workshops and joint proposal development for a study on local economies. In February and May, Focus participated in seminars organised by NISTPASS on coastal resources, trade and economic integration. Staff from Focus and NISTPASS also worked together in two regional policy workshops organised by the AMRC.

As a precursor to longer term research collaboration, Focus has been working with NISTPASS to develop a small-scale study of the impacts of the Yalli Falls hydro-electric project on the local economy of the area—Sathay District in Kon Tum province in the central highlands. Since the study would be based on participatory research principles, the proposal development process requires several consultations with community members, District and Province staff in the study area. The proposal is likely to be completed by early 2001 and, given timely funding support, the study should be completed by September, 2001.

Developing relationships with civil society organisations and NGOs

Focus increased its linkages with joint NGO-civil society efforts in Vietnam in this year through visits of Focus staff to Vietnam, and visits by Vietnamese colleagues to Focus' initiatives in Bangkok. For example, in May, Focus participated in a national conference on Vietnam's economic integration organised by Action Aid in Hanoi. In July, staff from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and the National Committee for the Advancement of Women attended a workshop on gender and economics that Focus organised in Bangkok. In addition, Focus has continued to provide information materials on issues such as trade, the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), debt and global finance to colleagues

and organisations in Vietnam. Focus' own materials seem to be more widely circulated than before and many continue to be translated into Vietnamese. Focus will continue to play a low-key, "informational" role in Vietnam and supplement it wherever possible with more empirical work on key transition issues such as privatisation and trade liberalisation.

Regional

As envisaged in 1999, regional activities served a useful linkage function across mainland Southeast Asia. These activities included training, research and advocacy efforts, some initiated solely by Focus, but many in collaboration with regional partners.

Training/capacity building

Strengthening individual, organisational and institutional capacities to understand, analyse and address the impacts of development policies has been a crucial programmatic goal for Focus. In 2001, Focus moved towards this goal through a variety of activities: organising and conducting workshops and conferences, participating in externally organised conferences and workshops, and through writing and publications. Focus staff served as resource persons in several conferences and workshops in the region on such diverse issues as large dams, women and economic globalisation, the impact of economic globalisation and trade liberalisation on small farmers and marginalised communities, trafficking in women, debt, and poverty reduction strategies. Highlights of specific capacity building activities in relation with the Mainland Southeast Asia region are described below.

Focus hosted and co-ordinated the UNCTAD X Civil Society Caucus in February 2000. Following the formal Caucus meeting, the Thai NGO Co-ordinating Committee in collaboration with international partners hosted another conference titled "Alternatives to Neo Liberalism," which was attended by activists, representatives from peoples' movements, grassroots networks and progressive academics. The

conference consisted of plenary discussions and a number of workshops on trade, finance, the environment, labour and agriculture. Focus staff served as resource persons in a number of these workshops and brought their experience of the region to international panels. Focus also published a collection of Walden Bello's articles on free trade, neoliberalism and international financial institutions, and the WTO for these events.

Focus played an active role in planning and organising the Peoples' Forum 2000, a parallel civil society conference during the ADB's annual general meeting in Chiang Mai in May 2000. The Forum was organised by the Thai NGO Co-ordinating Committee and attracted activists, academics, NGOs, labour unions, farmers' and fisher's networks, indigenous peoples' groups and women's organisations from across Asia. Focus staff made presentations in plenary and workshop sessions, and along with Thai NGOs, provided background support to citizen's groups protesting the negative impacts of ADB projects and sectoral policies. Focus also prepared publications in Thai and English titled *Creating Poverty, the ADB is Asia*, which provided critiques of the ADB's overall policies and projects. These efforts were also extremely helpful for Focus to identify its own strategies regarding research and advocacy on the ADB, which are described in the following section.

In an effort to initiate greater discussion about gender differentiated impacts of economic globalisation, Focus organised a workshop on gender and macroeconomics in Bangkok, in July 2000. The workshop was timed to coincide with the launch of the UNIFEM report, *The Progress of the World's Women*, in Bangkok. Dr. Diane Elson, the co-ordinator of the report, was also the main resource person at the Focus workshop. The workshop was attended by NGOs, academics and government representatives mostly from Thailand, but with some participants from the Lao PDR and Vietnam. Focus took this opportunity to translate selected documents and information materials on gendered impacts of economic globalisation into Thai. Following from the workshop, the Thai women's network has set up an informal working group on women and globalisation and

plan to monitor the national budgetary process as well as social sectoral policies in Thailand from the perspectives of women. The Vietnamese delegation expressed interest in expanding such workshops to Vietnam and discussions are under way for suitable activities in the coming year.

Focus supported the Jubilee 2000 movement for debt cancellation since its inception, and joined the Jubilee South network in November 1999. Focus was elected to serve as a member of the Asia Pacific Co-ordinating Committee and in collaboration with other members of the Committee, organised the Asia Pacific Assembly on Debt and Development in Bangkok, October 2000. The primary aim of the Assembly was to bring together the diverse groups involved in debt issues in an attempt to strengthen a region wide movement against debt financed development. The Assembly was attended by a variety of peoples' organisations, citizens' groups and NGOs from across the Asia-Pacific region, and consisted of educational sessions as well as strategic planning sessions. Focus staff served as resource persons in both plenary and workshop sessions, and also provided overall organising support to the Assembly. Focus also prepared a special publication on debt for the Assembly, *The Transfer of Wealth: Debt and the Making of a Global South*, which consists of broad critiques of debt creating development policies, specific debt relief programmes and discussions of region-specific debt situations. The final declaration and action plans that emerged from the Assembly are currently being finalised, and it is anticipated that region-wide campaigns on debt and related issues will be intensified in the coming years

The above activities have underscored to Focus the importance of truly democratising access to information about development, economic globalisation and related issues to people at various levels and capacities in the region. The experiences of Focus staff in conferences, workshops and seminars have been that Focus' analyses are both current and useful, even if some audiences (such as government officials) may not accept them in their entirety or are unable to act on them directly. The materials produced by Focus—whether papers, presenta-

tion notes or publications—have been widely appreciated by activists, academics, government officials and members of the press. A feedback offered by many, which Focus has taken extremely seriously, is that Focus must produce more materials about these issues more regularly, and also try to orient materials for more specific audiences, such as community level organisations and government policy makers. Another important lesson that Focus has learned from its capacity building efforts in the region is that more empirical work needs to be done on the specific issues that Focus is engaged in, in order to give our work greater substance and credibility.

Perhaps the most valuable result of Focus' capacity building efforts have been the widening and strengthening of our relationships with partners at different levels and from various backgrounds, whether non-governmental or governmental. We have developed solidarity and lasting friendships with a number of organisations, networks and individuals through our activities, and learned how we can make our work more meaningful to the wide variety of people who are working towards alternative forms of development that are socially, economically and politically just. These lessons will most certainly shape our capacity building efforts in the coming years.

Research and advocacy

This year, Focus was able to intensify its research and advocacy work in the mainland Southeast Asia region in part because of stronger networking with other groups and organisations, but equally important, because of welcome additions to its team. Chris Adams came to Focus in April 2000 as a visiting researcher from Community Aid Abroad in Melbourne, Australia. He has been working with Shalmali Guttal and Joy Chavez on development issues in mainland Southeast Asia, particularly, the ADB's involvement in infrastructure development in the region. Jacques-chai Chomthongdi joined Focus in July 2000 and has been working with both the Paradigms, as well as the Micro-Macro Issues Linking Programme on regional financial issues.

A joint study by Save the Children Fund UK (SCF UK) and Focus specific to the Philippines—*The Micro Impact of the Asian Crisis (Focus on Filipino Households and Children—* was completed in this past year. The study report was finalized, and was subject to the first of a series of roundtable discussions on childhood and children's rights co-sponsored by the SCF UK Philippines Office and the University of the Philippines' Center for Integrative and Development Studies – Psycho Social Trauma Department (UP CIDS-PST) in November, 2000. The report is now undergoing presswork and will be released in late March, 2001. A brief summary of the report was also published in the November 2000 issue of the Child Rights and Information Network (CRIN) Newsletter (Issue Number 13 on Children and Macroeconomics) in November, 2000. A Monograph titled *Household Adjustment and Child Welfare: Lessons Learned from the Asian Financial Crisis*, was also completed in December, 2000 for publication by the UP CIDS-PST in early 2001.

As already mentioned above, the planning process for the Peoples' Forum 2000 during the ADB's annual general meeting, as well as the actual conference helped Focus to identify and conduct more focussed research on those aspects of the ADB's policies and operations that we consider critical and where we think we can make significant contributions. The following issues were identified by the Focus team as our main areas of study on the ADB: the ADB's shift from project to policy lending and its implications for national and sub-national sectoral reform; the ADB's programme on sub-regional economic cooperation (including the Greater Mekong Sub-Regional Cooperation, the South Asia Triangle, etc.); the ADB's increased emphasis on expanding the role of the private sector in physical and social infrastructure, and its accompanying co-financing initiatives; and the ADB's internal contradictions in its operations and governance structures. Focus staff prepared briefing papers on each of the above, which were published in a Focus publication: *Creating Poverty, the ADB in Asia*, as well as in the Focus electronic bulletin, *Focus on Trade*. Focus staff also presented critiques of the ADB's operations, overall policies and relationships with other

international financial institutions (IFIs) in a number of conferences and workshops in the Asia region, including Australia. Such focussed research will continue in the coming year and research issues will be added and/or deleted depending on their currency and importance.

Focus has become more involved with the newly re-organised NGO Forum on the ADB, and will continue to collaborate with organisations and networks in both Southeast and South Asia in conducting research and advocacy on the ADB. While collaboration with existing partners such as TERRA, the AMRC and the Thai NGO network continues, new partnerships have been initiated with organisations working on debt and power sector reform across Asia. Such cross-regional perspective is proving to be extremely helpful to us in sharpening our analysis in the Mainland Southeast Asia region. In June, Focus joined the Mekong Social and Environmental Analysis Network (MSEAN) coordinated by the AMRC, which brings together representatives from governmental and non-governmental policy institutes in the Mekong riparian countries to examine the role of infrastructure development in the sub-region. Focus also participated in a regional meeting of activists, peoples' movements and NGOs working on water resource issues and will continue to work with this new network: Rivers Watch East and Southeast Asia.

As anticipated, Focus intensified its work on debt in the region, as well its linkages with groups such as the Alternative Development Information Centre (AIDC) in South Africa, who are playing coordinating roles in similar activities in their respective regions. In preparation for the Asia Pacific Assembly on Debt and Development, Focus prepared position papers on the debt situation of the SEATEs, the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC), debt in Southeast Asia following the Asian economic crisis, micro- and farmers' debt, new forms of publicly guaranteed debt, and the effects of trade liberalisation on debt. Many of these papers were collated and presented in the Focus publication *The Transfer of Wealth: Debt and the Making of a Global South*. Others were presented at the debt Assembly as well as in other workshops and conferences in the region. Focus will continue its research on debt in the

region along with advocacy about alternative strategies for development financing that are not debt creating or inducing. Focus will also continue to strengthen collaborative research, advocacy and capacity building activities on debt and development with local, regional and international groups within the Jubilee South network, as well as in other networks.

Another set of issues that were not specifically planned for, but which emerged as an important area to monitor are the poverty reduction strategies advanced and promoted by the IFIs and OECD donor countries. Although the major donors and lenders to the region have always highlighted poverty alleviation as a central aim of their development assistance programmes, by the end of 1999, it was clear that the World Bank, the IMF, the ADB and the OECD were attempting to integrate their respective poverty reduction strategies through policy coherence with trade and investment liberalisation, and privatisation programmes. Given Focus' ongoing examination of the impact of liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation in the region, we decided to direct efforts towards examining the implications of these strategies on transition countries in the Mainland Southeast Asia region.

To date, Focus staff have prepared briefing papers on the poverty reduction strategies of the major donors and lenders to the region, which have appeared in Focus' publications, and have been presented at regional and international conferences. In September, Focus staff participated in the OECD's expert consultation on poverty reduction organised in the Netherlands, and offered both a critique of, and alternatives to the economic growth oriented approach to poverty reduction. This approach, while well intentioned, does not fundamentally challenge the historical and structural factors that entrench poverty. Focus has also decided to monitor the poverty reductions processes led by the World Bank and the ADB since they will constitute the pillars around which future grants and credits to the region will be determined.

A global initiative that Focus engaged in from the Southeast Asia regional perspective is the World Commission on Dams (WCD). The WCD was established in late 1997 as a multi-

stakeholder process to examine the overall development effectiveness of large dams throughout the world. In 1998, Focus was invited to join the WCD Forum, a reference group of about 70 local, national and international agencies, whose task was to monitor the overall quality and direction of the Commission's work and process. As a Forum member, Focus staff reviewed and provided inputs to a number of thematic studies on the social and economic impacts of large dams, and the public participation and decision making processes that have characterised large dam projects. Focus staff also made a submission on public participation at the Southeast Asia hearing of the Commission held in Vietnam in February, 2000, and have worked with the International Commission on Dams, Rivers and People (ICDRP), a broad based civil society network monitoring the work of the WCD. An extremely important aspect of Focus' engagement in the WCD has been to facilitate and support the inputs of peoples' movements in dam affected areas into the WCD study process, as well as provide information and updates about the WCD's work to local-regional organisations and networks. Here, Focus has been particularly active with the Assembly of the Poor in Thailand (in relation to the Pak Mun dam) and the Narmada Campaign in India. The WCD recently launched its final report globally and regionally, and Focus was active in assisting regional movements of dam-affected peoples and other concerned NGOs in presenting their analyses of the WCD's final report. Focus will continue to work with local, regional and international movements and civil society organisations in tracking the implementation of the WCD's recommendations by governments and international institutions.

Focus expects to expand its research and advocacy work to include Burma in the coming years. Focus staff have increased contact with Burmese democracy groups based in Thailand, as well as selected international groups who are interested in supporting research on alternative development strategies for Burma. Key areas to be taken up initially will include: private and public investment in Burma, project financing trends and arrangements, and the impacts of the above on resource tenure regimes. In addition, greater attempts will be made to show the

empirical links between food and livelihood insecurity of ordinary people with increased internal militarisation within the country. The role of external financing agencies will be also be scrutinised in relation to domestic and border militarisation, and appropriate advocacy strategies will be developed through consultation with the Burmese democracy movement.

Thailand Regional Programme

This year for Focus in Thailand can be characterized as the year of all out effort to put into practice Focus' overall policy of integrating the work under the Regional and Global Paradigms Program and the Micro-Macro Issues Linking Program as well as the Thailand Program strategy of alliance-building and joint action with NGOs and academic institutions on national policy issues. Two international events provided perfect opportunities for the Thai civil society to become directly engaged in learning about and analyzing links between local development issues and the global drive for trade and investment liberalization, as well as in advocacy work both at the national, regional and international levels: the tenth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD X) which was held in Bangkok in February and the Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Chiang Mai in May.

On the micro-level, the concerns of small farmers on their chronic indebtedness resulting from government export-oriented agricultural policies and the initiatives of the people of Kud Chum community to deal with household debt and joblessness by launching their own community currency provided concrete capacity building and advocacy opportunities for deglobalisation.

Capacity building and advocacy

UNCTAD X

Starting with a presentation of Focus analyses that UNCTAD, as a democratic forum of 190 member countries, has the potential to counteract the WTO trade negotiations in the interests of developing countries and their people, Focus convened a consultative meeting with key leaders of the NGO community and active academics and solicited their interest in working together in order to push the UNCTAD agenda further. As a result a "Civil Society Working Group on UNCTAD X", comprising representatives from 15 NGOs, including Focus, and 4 academic institutions, established itself towards the end of 1999 with the objectives of promoting public awareness of the impact of trade liberalization and facilitating broad-based dialogue on issues concerning trade and development policies.

The Working Group, with Raevadee Prasertcharoensuk, Secretary-General of the NGO Coordinating Committee on Development, at the helm, worked almost full time during the 2-months period from mid December 1999 to mid February 2000. 3 national level conferences were organized which were attended in all by over 500 grassroots representatives, government officials, academics,

students and NGO workers and the local press. Presentations and discussion were conducted on a variety of issues under the conference themes of “From Seattle to Bangkok: UNCTAD X”, “Thailand’s stakes in UNCTAD X”, “Free Trade in Agriculture and Thai Farmers”. Recommendations from these fora were compiled by the Working Group and formally presented to the Thai government delegation to UNCTAD X in a specially-requested meeting chaired by the Foreign Minister.

Apart from attending the international NGO Plenary Caucus to deliberate on civil society input into UNCTAD, the Working Group also collaborated with international organizations, notably the International South Group Network and the International Council of Social Welfare, to convene a 3-day civil society forum entitled “Alternatives to Neo-Liberalism” in order to provide learning opportunities for Thai NGOs, people’s organizations and academics on global issues involving the impact of neo-liberal globalization such as public debt cancellation, the Agreement on Agriculture, core labour standards, human rights instruments as guiding principles, etc.

The Assembly of the Poor decided to organize a daily demonstration in front of the conference in order to ensure that their point of view against the current so-called free trade was taken note of by the international delegates. This helped attract a great deal of attention. Focus staff’s role in facilitating their meeting with interested delegates and press conference constituted one concrete aspect of our micro-macro issues linking task.

During the whole period, there was an overwhelming response in the local Thai and English media, both print and electronic. Articles, news items, interviews and live debates appeared almost daily on the subject of free trade and the WTO and the forces and impact of globalization in general. The NGO statement to UNCTAD was translated into Thai and published in full in a progressive daily “Manager” with free copies made available to the hundreds of Thai delegates and participants at the conference venue. The Civil Society Working Group definitely achieved its objectives of raising public awareness the negative

side of globalization and the need to re-think seriously about trade and financial liberalization policies.



Demonstrations by Assembly of the Poor in front of the UNCTAD X conference venue

The Asian Development Bank

The NGO-Coordinating Committee took a more confrontational stance when it came to dealing with the Asian Development Bank. Small farmers in the Northern Region, who were members of the 10 watershed conservation groups, reacted strongly against the pressure from the ADB for the government to impose user fees on water use for agricultural purposes as part of their Agricultural Sector Reform Loan Program. NGO-COD therefore moved to utilize the ADB Annual Meeting held in Chiang Mai in May to advocate against the trends towards commodification and corporatisation of natural resources and social services, especially health and education, which were apparent in the Country Assistance Plan of the ADB.

The Thailand program and the Southeast Asian Transition Economies Program of Focus worked together to link the mobilization of the Thai NGOs and 38 local people’s organizations against the ADB with the existing region-wide NGO Forum on the ADB, which normally organized an NGO meeting alongside the ADB meeting to provide input into ADB programming. The resulting “People’s Forum 2000” was a vibrant exchange forum with a wide range of activities. Members of the NGO Forum on the ADB gave presentations on the

ADB's past record in Bangladesh, Pakistan and the Philippines; ADB plans for the Sub-regional Economic Zones and the energy sector were analysed by Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (TERRA) and Focus; a meeting was set up between ADB Executive Directors and 200 affected residents of the Khlong Daan District on the disputed Waste Water Treatment Project funded partly by an ADB loan; and finally the 2,000 participants' demands were formally presented to the Vice President of the ADB who was sent by the President to attend the session in response to the invitation of the Forum's host organizations.

Focus Thailand's main input for the majority Thai participants at the People's Forum was a compilation, translation, and dissemination of 1,000 copies of an 80-page dossier containing background materials on the ADB and critiques of various aspects of its policies. Focus staff, as in the case of the UNCTAD X, played a liaison role between the Thai protesters outside the ADB meeting venue and the regional members of the NGO Forum on the ADB that attended the various workshops hosted by the ADB.

Gender and macroeconomics

The Thai Program and the SEATE Program jointly organized a 2-day workshop on Gender and Macroeconomic Policies in June in cooperation with the Centre of Political Economy Studies of Chulalongkorn University. The well-known feminist economist, Dr Diane Elson, in her capacity as UNIFEM advisor, kindly donated her time to act as key resource person in the workshop. There was a good response from women's rights activists among the NGOs and academia and 70 participants turned up to hear Dr Elson's presentations on "gender bias in macroeconomics", "the care economy" and "gender budgeting" and discussed possible actions in advocating gender-mainstreaming in social and economic policies in Thailand.

At a later major national-level women's conference organized by women's organizations, Shalmali Guttal of Focus was invited to speak on "Women and Globalization". At this conference, it was agreed to establish a "People's Alliance for the Advancement of Women" with

the objectives of strengthening the existing informal networks among women's NGOs, national-level women's organizations, community-level women's groups and other committed individuals with some formal structures as well as broadening the network to include more grassroots level organizations. The goal is to produce stronger voices in policy dialogue and advocacy. The concept of "gender budgeting" presented by Dr. Elson is very much on the Alliance's agenda.

Public debt and farmers' debt

A seminar entitled "Solutions to Public Debt and Farmers' Debt" was organized in September by Thai Development Support Committee (TDSC) and Rural Alumni and Friends Association (RRAFA), both key Focus partners, as a capacity building activity for 50 farmers belonging to various farmers' groups and cooperatives. Focus Thailand staff acted as resource person on the issues of development and public debt and the global campaign on debt cancellation and also as facilitator in group discussion. For Focus, this seminar was seen as a preparation for participants to take part in the up-coming Asia-Pacific Jubilee South Summit to be held in Bangkok the following month with Focus as host organization.

In the seminar, government officials from the Revenue Department and the Public Debt Management Office presented the country's public debt situation, in which internal debt has outweighed external debt, and government policies of developing a local bond market as well as increasing the tax base to deal with on-going budget deficits. According to them, nationalization of private debt was the result of a law that guaranteed 100% recovery of all private deposits "which no other country had". The Deputy Manager of the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives, the major creditor for farmers' debt, presented BAAC's policies and criteria on debt cancellation and restructuring on a case by case basis, to which farmers responded that out of 30,000 cases proposed by the Northeastern Assembly of Small Farmers only 67 received debt deferment.

Farmers' debt as a result of export-oriented agricultural development policy and external debt that was tied up with policy conditionalities became the main concerns expressed by the Thai participants in the Asia-Pacific Jubilee South Summit later in October. A strong statement was made by Veerapon Sopa, an ex-farmer and representative of the Coalition of Farmers for Debt Cancellation, that any consideration of the issue of debt and development in Asia has to include agricultural debt which affects a very large number of Asian population. He has agreed to join the coordinating committee of the new Asia-Pacific Coalition on Debt and Development, of which Focus is also a member.

Thai community currency systems project (TCCS)

The Thai Community Currency Systems Project (TCCS) project has, for the last two years, explored ways to implement a CCS in Thailand. It works as follows: those who want to become members of the CCS go to the community bank where they can open an account. They can withdraw community currency, interest free, from this account. The money is in the form of a note called 'Bia', named after a seashell used as currency before the introduction of metal coins. These notes carry pictures of culturally and socially significant events designed by local school children, symbolising the fact that this money does not carry just a monetary value. By withdrawing 'Bia', money has been created which can then be used with whomever wants to accept it. It should be noted that the 'Bia' can be spent by villagers who are not members of the system (who do not have an account), however, it can not be spent outside the community. It is unlikely that somebody who lives outside the community, would actually accept the 'Bia' unless she is a regular visitor.

The CCS organisers, believe that community members will be able to rely on 'Bia' for their exchange of local goods and services, thereby reducing national currency expenses and dependency on credit. Furthermore, the 'Bia' will circulate within the community, creating more economic activity, as opposed to the national currency which leaves the community very quickly in its search for higher profits. In

effect the use of 'Bia' stops the leaking of resources from the community. If villagers choose to increase their use of 'Bia', an incentive will have been created to support local economic activities. This would make investments in, for example, herbal production and indigenous knowledge more likely.

It should be stressed that the CCS organisers do not seek to isolate the pilot villages from the outer world. CCS are a tool to increase bargaining power in trade relations with other markets by first strengthening the local economic base. One might suggest that a CCS could be undermined by free-riders (cheaters), but experience so far has shown that social controls prevent this from happening. Nevertheless to prevent problems in the initial phases the organisers have decided that a credit limit be imposed on the amount members can withdraw from their accounts. By turning this argument on its head, a strong case can be made that the co-operation and trust which the process of establishing a CCS engenders is vital to the accumulation of social capital.

The community started to use the currency system for the first time in March 2000. Its use attracted much attention from the mass media. Some, particularly government officials, feared the use of *bia* might violate the law or could be a danger to national security. The Bank of Thailand concluded that the use of Bia Kud Chum violated Article 9 of the Currency Act of 1958 and Article 9 of the Commercial Banking Act of 1962. As a result, the Bia Kud Chum working committee was forced to suspend the use of *bia* and decided to change the name of the system from '*bia Bank*' to the '*Community Self-Reliance Development Group*'. They also solicited the help of the Law Society of Thailand to support them in submitting a request to the Minister of Finance to review their case.

Though the community currency has been formally suspended; however, the villagers decided to informally (with out the approval of the authority) circulate the *bia* again in the later part of 2000. Even though the use of *bia* is still very limited, it has shown that it is a tool to promote an alternative community-based self-reliant economy. Some villagers started to shift their consumption patterns from using the baht

(national currency) only to buy products from outside the community to *bia* and buy goods which are locally produced.

Though several meetings and discussions, the villagers, the Board and the core group decided that an action research project on the use of the community currency system or the *bia* is needed. So that, a larger group of people can have a better understanding of this community system; also, the strength and weakness of this system in the rural context can be identified. Moreover, the research project would allow the use of *bia* which without violating the law.

Asian regional conference on sustainable agriculture

Focus was involved in the planning and organising of South East Asian Regional Conference on Sustainable Agriculture in collaboration with the Asian Partnership for Human Development (APHD). There were around 40 farmers and NGO staffs from several South East Asian countries participated in this conference. This event provided the opportunity for people at the grassroots level to exchange experiences and to build up their capacity in analysing the linkage between globalisation and their lives.

Field research and capacity building

Three years after the financial crisis

Focus staff revisited the Three Northern Thailand communities in order to study changes that might have taken place within the space of two and a half years after the first field study report was written about them at the beginning of 1998. The overall picture showed that situation continued to worsen.

Net income from baby corn, a major export crop of Mae Tha area, continued to fall due to falling prices and rising costs. There was more competition among school leavers for limited job openings at the Lamphun Industrial Estate. Farmers who went into debt to send their children onto secondary or higher level education could expect lower returns on their investment or none at all.

As a result of the field study, it was felt that communities like Mae Tha, which has been in transition from an agrarian system of production to suppliers of food for export agribusinesses as well as labour for export manufacturers in the province, could benefit from micro-macro issues linking activities in order to strengthen their capacity to deal with the changing situations and develop their own activities and program to resolve their problems more effectively.

The first workshop on community analysis was, therefore, organized in Mae Tha community by Focus, in cooperation with the Office of Thailand Research Fund for Development, a government institution, and facilitated by Dr Uthai Dulayakasem, an external consultant. This was attended by the women's group, youth group, alternative agriculture group and formal community leaders, numbering 40 participants. In analyzing the community situation, the workshop concluded that there has been a net outflow of all types of resources from the community, be they natural, social, human and financial. The decentralization process of the government has also meant that the community has been even more controlled by administrative rules and regulations mandated by the central government; the few remaining decisions at the sub-district level can made only by the elected sub-district council members. Community-wide consultation and direct participation in planning and implementing community projects has become a thing of the past. It was decided that the Office of Research Fund for Development would work with the youth group to conduct further participatory research into the situation of household debt and its impact on their capacity to work together for their own well-being.

The social agenda working group

The Working Group, comprising several NGOs and Three academic institutions based at Chulalongkorn University and Focus, which was born in 1998 out of concerns about the effectiveness of government policies and programs to alleviate the impact of economic crisis on the disadvantaged groups in society, this year joined forces with the "Civil Society Working Group on UNCTAD X" to look into

the human impact of globalization in general, and then with the NGO-COD to monitor the social sector reform program of the Asian Development Bank.

Towards the end of the year, the Working Group held a meeting to assess the country situation in terms of social policies and review the working group's role and potential in promoting policy dialogues between NGOs and people's organizations and government agencies. It was decided that the Working Group should continue with an emphasis on monitoring the implementation of the recommendations that came out of the UN General Assembly Special Session or Social Summit Plus Five. Rane Hassarungsee, who works half-time for Focus, will work part-time with the Working Group as a coordinator to plan and administer programs of the Working Group for next year.

The NGO members of the Working Group, i.e. Foundation for Women (FFW), The Foundation for Children's Development (FCD), Arom Pongpangan Foundation (labour issues) and Thai Development Support Committee (TDSC), participated in the process of drafting the "People's Agenda" organized by the NGO-COD, which culminated in a large multi-sectoral national conference in December to launch the Agenda in public. The Working Group would therefore also take up policy issues arising out of contradictions between the People's Agenda and the National Economic and Social Development Plans in order to plan field research to gather information and to organize a roundtable discussions with academics and government officials on such issues.

As a result, the publishing of each newsletter were delayed. This problem was being discussed among the contributing NGOs in order to seek more practical and viable solutions.

On Focus part, other channels for information dissemination, were already utilized more this year. Three articles were published in Thai in a local newspaper "Matichon" and "Pacharayasara" magazine. Three Thai language issues of Focus Files were published and distributed to participants in the above-mentioned capacity workshops and seminars. Focus staff also made presentations in a few seminars at the invitation of NGOs as well as government agencies.

Information dissemination

Focus continued to contribute an article every month to the newly-improved NGO newsletter "Prachathat" that analyzed the links between micro and macro issues, such as debt, poverty, social development and capital controls, etc. It turned out that this monthly commitment is more than other Thai NGOs can afford. TDSC had problems filling the allotted space to issues of political ecology, agriculture and local wisdom because the responsible NGOs could not produce the expected amount of writing on a regular basis on top of their normal work load.

India Programme

Micro-macro linking programme

Economic and financial liberalisation

Andhra reform programme

Monitoring and capacity Building

Since 1998, Focus-India Programme (IP) has been working with Centre for Environment Concerns (CEC) and its network of organisations in the southern Indian State of Andhra Pradesh in the area of capacity building, advocacy and analysis, to mobilize people for critiquing the macroeconomic as well as sectoral reform processes that have been undemocratically thrust on the people and more so the marginalised in Andhra Pradesh by their State Government in coordination with the World Bank and other bilateral/multilateral donor agencies. Carrying this process forward in the year 2000, representatives from CEC and various mass-based groups in Andhra Pradesh, participated in the National Consultation: “Globalisation, Liberalisation and Privatisation in the Indian Context – Possible Directions for Collective Action” organised at Mumbai during the months of July and August. During December 2000, Focus-IP along with Prayas-Energy Group, Pune, organised a workshop: “Understanding Power Sector Reforms in India”, where activists from Andhra Pradesh

were invited to share their critique of reform process in the power sector with activists from the states of Maharashtra, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. This event also provided these activists to share their concerns with regulators from the Central Electricity Regulatory Authority and the State Regulatory Commissions of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Capacity building workshop on MDBs & processes of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation

Building capacities of activists and analysts from organisations serving different constituencies at different levels for critiquing the neoliberal framework and the socioeconomic and political impacts of policies based on the same at the multilateral, regional, national and sub-national levels, has been the thrust of activities under this head. During the year 2000, Focus-IP undertook several such initiatives individually or with the help of other organisations and also piggybacked such activities with its other major events including the National Consultation of July-August, 2000. Some of the efforts include

- Address to a gathering of students at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences on various dimensions of globalisation in February 2000
- Unraveling various issues pertaining to globalisation and the functioning of the multilateral development banks at a workshop organised by CRY (Child Relief and You) for its partner organisations.
- Activation on NGO Working Group on MDBs in collaboration with CEC, Foundation for Public Interest, Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA) and Focus-IP.
- Conducting sessions at a refresher course attended by around 30 lecturers from social work institutes located in different States, at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences.
- Presentation on the impact of liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation on employment and employment opportunities at the workshop organised by 'Anubhav Shiksha' for students and activists.
- Discussion to a group of activists working with the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe communities at Dahiwadi (a village in Maharashtra) elaborating the impacts of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation at the village level
- Staff from Focus-IP and Focus Bangkok addressed a group of 30 participants from South Asian civil society groups on MDBs and debates surrounding globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation at PROSHIKA, Bangladesh
- Lecture to a gathering of activists attending the "National Conference on Human Rights, Social Movements, Globalisation and the Law" at Panchagani, Maharashtra as part of the workshop: "New Economic Policy and the Marginalised Communities" organised by Focus-IP

Follow up of the feminist economist workshop

This workshop was organised in January 2000 to understand and critically evaluate the gender dimensions associated with impacts of liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation at the international, national and the sub-national levels. The report of this workshop was circu-

lated to the participants and other interested individuals for their comments. Among the interesting set of suggestions that emerged at this Workshop, one was pertaining to create a better understanding on making the budgets at the state and national level more gender sensitive. It is in the context of this suggestion that Focus-IP and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences organised a meeting in June 2000 on 'Gender and Budget Analysis'. In order to create a public awareness on the impact of economic, social and political processes unleashed as a result of neoliberal agenda, on women, especially those belonging to the marginalised communities, Focus-IP had invited Prof. Ritu Dewan, University of Mumbai to address this issue at its workshop: "New Economic Policy (NEP) and the Marginalised Communities" which was organised a part of the proceedings of the "National Conference on Human Rights, Social Movements, Globalisation and the Law" at Panchagani, Maharashtra during December 2000.

Security and conflict

Participation & support to civil society initiatives in South Asia region

The nuclear rivalry between India and Pakistan that escalated after the Pokhran experiment (a series of controlled nuclear explosions in the Pokhran Desert) of India in May 1998 and strong urging of key participants at the Second CASAP Conference were instrumental in bringing the South Asia region within the purview of the Security Programme of Focus. The further escalation of tensions between India and Pakistan due the 'Kargil' episode (when India and Pakistan came close to war in Kashmir) vindicated Focus' decision to address the security concerns of the region in a collective and an innovative manner.

The work in this regard has unfolded via the South Asia Peace Coalition of which Focus-IP is the secretariat and the National Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace, where we are on the National Coordination Committee. Focus India Programme has provided support to the civil society initiatives and linked with the Pak-India Forum for Peace and Democracy by

becoming a member of the same and with support from other organizations is working extensively on the critical concerns of the region.

Focus-IP with other bodies organised the National Convention for Nuclear Disarmament during November 11-13, 2000 at New Delhi, which provided groups from various corners of the country to deliberate on constructing a moral, legal, political case against nuclear weapons. The deliberations ended with the adoption of an Action Plan and Interim Charter and election of the Co-ordination Committee. The Action Plan includes a number of programmes including advocacy and lobbying with political parties, “twinning” of 10 anti-nuclear weapon schools and colleges in India and Pakistan, institutionalising a “Nuclear Disarmament and Peace Week” from August 4th – 10th every year, setting up national federation of radiation victims, besides enhancing the South Asian peace movement’s presence in International Peace Forums.

New economic policy (NEP) and its impact on natural resources & marginalised communities with a focus on scheduled caste and scheduled tribe and women

This study is an effort to expose the rhetoric that “NEP in the Indian context has actually delivered, irrespective of the socioeconomic and political background of different sections of society”. In order to understand the various facets of issues surrounding scheduled caste (SC) and scheduled tribe (ST) communities and more so in order to reach out them effectively, Focus-IP is collaboratively carrying out this exercise with Samajik Nyay Pratisthan (SNP), an organisation that works with these communities in different districts of Maharashtra. To make the study representative and relevant, Focus-IP and SNP have had several rounds of discussions with activists working on this issue in Maharashtra before putting forward a questionnaire for surveying around 3000 SC/ST households in Maharashtra. At present, the sample survey and collection of relevant literature is in progress.

Micro-macro steering group meetings-two in a year

Such meetings took place in the form of fringe meetings during the National Consultation organised at the end of July 2000. During these meetings, the Bangkok as well as the India staff of Focus could meet the partners of the India Programme to get a better perspective of the Indian socioeconomic as well as security problems. Furthermore it also allowed Focus-IP an opportunity to evaluate its performance in terms of identifying issues and analysing the same from the perspective of the marginalised classes.

Regional and global paradigms programme

Economic and financial liberalisation

National consultation

The National Consultation: “Globalisation, Liberalisation and Privatisation in the Indian Context – Possible Directions for Collective Action” was organised during July 31-August 01, 2000 at Mumbai. Around 70 participants from mass based organisations, peoples groups, voluntary organisations, consumer groups, grassroots outfits and others participated in this event.

The programme agenda was formulated with a view to help participants critically evaluate the impact of decisions being taken at international platforms on policy sovereignty at the national and sub-national levels. Hence the first two sessions were dedicated to these issues. On providing such grounding, the programme then centered on issues of national concern, especially in the context of second generation reforms. This was an effort to make participants understand how democratic deficit in decision-making processes at the national level while adopting industrial, trade, regulatory, fiscal or monetary reforms negatively impacts setting up of developmental priorities. In terms of looking at state level reforms from the sectoral dimension, speakers critically evaluated the reforms in the power sector - a sector that has experienced

the most number of reform 'shocks'. Keeping in view the objective of this event in the area of collective action, a two-hour session was dedicated for discussion on this issue.

It also allowed Focus-IP to carry out a reality check with its partners in order to understand whether Focus-India Programme was moving in the right direction with respect to identifying issues and making timely as well as necessary and sufficient interventions, since its inception. It gave Focus-IP an opportunity to chart out as well as discuss the relevance its future activities and partnerships and decide on a framework which would help in making its programmes sharply focused, people driven and result oriented, given the accelerated implementation of IMF/WB agenda by governments at national and sub-national levels. More so it also provided an opportunity to the staff from the Focus-Bangkok Office to interact with Focus-India Programme partners, researchers and other activists for understanding the different dimensions of problems that have emerged at the national and sub-national level since neoliberal reforms were launched in 1991.

Reviewing the performance of the Asian Development Bank in the Indian context

This is one component of the study being undertaken by Focus with respect to analysing the impact of policies of the ADB at the macro as well as at the sectoral level. The aim is to show that strategies being adopted by the ADB are the same as those propagated by the World Bank and supported by the IMF with the objective to strengthen the neoliberal framework in the host countries, more so in an undemocratic manner.

The India paper concentrates on exposing how macroeconomic perceptions of the ADB about the Indian economy have made them come to wrong conclusions about various issues including poverty reduction.

Security and conflict

South Asia security conference – follow up and setting up of CASAP

The South Asia and Southeast Asia Peace Activist's Conference was organised on 18th-20th February, Dhaka, Bangladesh. The final narrative report of the conference was prepared by the India office and widely distributed. The key elements of the outcome of the conference were even published in Focus Files and in a partner organisation's publication Anubhav (in the English edition).

As a follow up to this activity Focus-IP actively co-ordinated with other bodies to organise the National Convention (describe above). After the National Convention in Delhi on 11th – 13th November 2000 some of the participants from the South Asia region met to discuss the formation of the South Asia Peace Coalition. This was the first meeting organized after the Dhaka Conference in February 2000. Focus-IP is now the secretariat of the South Asia Peace Coalition and Minar Pimple is an ex-officio member of the South Asia Peace Coalition. The meeting outlined the process of the setting up of the formal coalition which shall finally take place after all the South Asian nations have had similar national conventions as held in Delhi and nominated candidates for the same.

The major activities planned are revival of SAARC, NWFZ, demanding specific statements from India and Pakistan on freezing the nuclear weapons, peace delegation to go around the countries in the region and representation of the Coalition at South Asia Peoples' Summit. Eminent peace activists like Karamat Ali, Praful Bidwai and Admiral Ramdas represented the Coalition at the South Asia Peoples' Summit. Priority is being given to the peace delegation visit to the neighbouring countries and the energies of Varsha Rajan were spent in December in organising the same. Admiral Ramdas represents Focus in the visit.

Another important dimension that has been addressed as a follow up to the Dhaka Conference has been the initiative in the area of 'Gender and Security', a part of the overall effort made by Focus to come up with an alternative security paradigm.

Culture and globalisation

Scoping paper on undertaking Hindu right's response to globalisation

After India launched on the programme of economic reforms various anti globalisation organisations and movements from different social bases have emerged with varying agenda. The most prominent being the Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) belonging to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh family of organisations. We have witnessed in recent years some of the secular and progressive minded social activists joining the ranks with SJM, which is a cause of concern. On one hand, SJM from the Hindu right opposes globalisation while the Student Islamic Movement (SIM) opposes globalisation from the Muslim right perspective. Thus Focus-IP felt that it was critical to understand this phenomenon in more depth to arrive at an analysis of emerging social forces. A researcher has been recruited to work on the issue and produce a paper in three months.

Organisation Management and Development

The year was one of consolidation of management systems and policies, funding and personnel. It was also a year of hard work and commitment from all our staff, Board members, supporters and partners. We would like to acknowledge and thank everyone for their invaluable individual and collective contributions to our work.

Finances

This was the first year of Focus' 2000-2002 three-year work plan. Much of the first half of the year was spent in discussions with funders to set in place a sound financial base for the next three years' work. By mid year, more than 60 per cent of our core funding for the three-year plan had been secured, and our support base expanded. Most funders have agreed to provide general programme support on a multi-year basis. We believe this reflects their confidence in Focus' programme and we appreciate the opportunity this provides for long term planning and flexible and integrated programme development.

A complete list of donors for 2000 is listed at the end of this report.

Focus' finance manager Praphai Jundee visited our offices in Mumbai, India and Manila,

Philippines to review financial systems and assist in establishing more coherent practices between offices.

Staff

Several new staff joined Focus in 2000, filling several key positions. Anoop Sukumaran came from PRIA in New Delhi to manage our information technology and communications systems, while Jacques Chai Chomthongdi came from the Catholic Commission for Development in Thailand (CCTD) to work as a researcher linking the Thai country programme with the Paradigms trade and financial liberalisation programme. Both have made a significant and valued contribution in a very short time.

Marco Mezzera relocated from Bangkok to Singapore and is now the principal researcher for the Cultural Responses to Globalisation Project.

Parinya Boonridrerthaikul joined for three months at the end of 2000 while our administrative manager Soontaree was on maternity leave. Congratulations to Soontaree and her family on the birth of their third child, a boy, in September. Soontaree returned from leave at the beginning of 2001. Congratulations also to

Parinya who won a fellowship to undertake a human rights internship in Geneva.

Chris Adams took leave from Community Aid Abroad (Oxfam Australia) to be a visiting researcher with Focus and Naina Shakya worked in Manila on a joint project with Save the Children Fund UK on the impact of the Asian financial crisis on women and children.



At the staff retreat

Management, staff development and policies

The Focus management team consists of Walden Bello, Shalmali Guttal and Nicola Bullard, while Minar Pimple and Joy Chavez are responsible for managing the Mumbai and Manila offices. Praphai Jundee is responsible for finances and Soontaree Nakaviroj for administration.

The annual Focus staff retreat was held at Hua Hin in late May. This was probably the most dynamic and constructive retreat to date, where we not only reached agreements on several outstanding issues of staff policy and practice, but also built a much deeper understanding and consensus on Focus' framework and direction. There was also significant progress on programme integration and developing synergies between staff, across programmes and regions.

In August, Minar Pimple visited the Bangkok office to assist in reviewing all position descriptions and staff policy. This culminated in a two-day staff meeting during which many issues were finalised. Focus now has a staff policy valid until the end of 2001 outlining salaries and conditions grounded firmly in the principle of equity between staff and between countries.

Of particular importance was our decision to consciously and consistently provide opportunities for training and exposure through participation in events and meetings for new and young staff.

Focus Board

At the meeting of the Executive Board in June it was agreed to expand the Focus Board. Four

individuals were invited to join and we are pleased that they all agreed. They are Peter Rosset from Food First (formerly a Focus fellow), Binny Buchori from INFID (Indonesia), Nguyen Van Thanh from the Vietnam and Alejandro Bendana from International South Group Network and Jubilee South, Nicaragua. We warmly welcome them to Focus. Sadly, both Sara Larain from Chile and Charles Abugre from Ghana both found it necessary to resign from the Board due to other commitments and demands. We would like to thank them for their contribution to Focus. We would also like to thank the "old" Board members who continue to provide greatly valued intellectual, moral and political support and advice to us all.

Board members 2000

Alejandro Bendana

ISGN, Nicaragua (new member 2000)

Amara Pongsapich

Director, Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, Thailand

Binny Buchori

INFID, Indonesia (new member 2000)

Charles Abugre

Third World Network Africa (resigned 2000)

Gothom Arya

(Chair of Focus Board) National Electoral Commission, Thailand

Josefa Francisco

Development Alternatives for Women in the New Era (DAWN), Philippines

Leonor Briones

University of the Philippines, Philippines (on leave 2000)

Mikyung Lee

Member of the National Assembly, South
Korea

Muto Ichiyo

Peoples' Plan for the 21st Century, Japan

Nguyen Van Thanh

VUFO, Vietnam (new member 2000)

Peter Rosset

Food First, USA/Mexico (new member 2000)

Rajagopal P.V.

Ekta Parishad, India

Sara Larrain

Renace, Chile (resigned 2000)



Advisers

Dr Victor Karunan

Save the Children Fund UK, Thailand

Dr Martin Khor

Third World Network, Malaysia

Executive Director

Dr Walden Bello

Staff 2000

- Aileen Kwa
- Anoop Sukumaran
- Chanida Chanyapate Bamford
- Chirawatana Charoonpatarapong
- Chris Adams
- Jacques chai Chomthongdi
- Jenina Joy Chavez-Malaluan
- Marco Mezzera
- Marissa de Guzman
- Mayuree Ruechakieattikul
- Minar Pimple
- Nicola Bullard
- Praphai Jundee
- Raghav Narsalay
- Ranee Hassarungsee
- Shalmali Guttal
- Sonila Shetty
- Soontaree Nakarivoj
- Varsha Rajan Berry

Prestigious awards go to Dr. Walden Bello

By Akbayan

Dr. Walden Bello, executive director of Focus on the Global South, has been awarded the Suh Sang Don prize for 2001. The University of the Philippines professor and national chairman of Akbayan, the Philippine political party, evinced surprise at receiving one of Korea's most prestigious awards for contributions to economic justice. "This was totally out of the blue. I didn't even know I was a contender," he said.

*At the same time that Bello was receiving the award in Taegu, Korea, on Feb. 23, he was also named the recipient of the Chancellor's Prize for "Best Book" at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. He received the award for *A Siamese Tragedy: Development and Degradation in Modern Thailand* (London: Zed, 1998), which was co-written by former Focus staff members Shea Cunningham and Li Kheng Poh. The two awards came on the heels of his being named the recipient of the Denver Global Peace and Justice Award for 2000.*

The Suh Sang Don award was established to recognize outstanding contributors to global economic justice. Last year's awardee was Dr. Jagdish Bhagwati, the famous trade economist at Columbia University. According to the awards committee, Bello was unanimously chosen this year by over 50 judges drawn from all walks of life, for his intellectual and activist work aimed at "ending the debt bondage of developing countries." The award is named after one of Korea's national heroes, who led the national campaign to free the country from debt bondage in the 1920's.

Bello is one of the leading international critics of corporate-driven globalization. Much of his recent work has been directed at ending the financial subjugation of developing countries and promoting alternative development models that would be much less dependent on foreign capital. Over the last year, he has been involved in face-to-face debates with Horst Kohler, managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), James Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank, and George Soros, the financier. In these confrontations and in his numerous writings, he has called not only for cancellation of the debt of developing countries on the grounds that they have been paid many times over but also for the abolition or disempowerment of the IMF, World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

*Bello, who has a doctoral degree in sociology from Princeton University, first shot into prominence as principal author of *Development Debacle: the World Bank in the Philippines* (1982), which was an expose of World Bank projects based on 3,000 pages of confidential documents that he and his colleagues smuggled out of World Bank headquarters in Washington, DC. His *Dragons in Distress: Asia's Miracle Economies in Crisis* (1991) was a detailed study of the structural weaknesses of the economies of Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore that many critics hailed as "predicting" the Asian financial crisis of 1997. His 1994 work *Dark Victory: the US, Structural Adjustment, and Global Poverty* is regarded as a classic study of the economic and political rationales for IMF World Bank structural adjustment programs imposed on over 90 developing and transition economies.*

A recent article in the New Internationalist has this to say of Bello's intellectual influence: "Clear analysis and impressive scholarship have made him one of Asia's key progressive thinkers. Insistence on people-centered development grounded in ecological sustainability sets him apart from the elite consensus in Asia and is beginning to garner public support throughout the region."

Bello's intellectual work has been paralleled by a distinguished career of uncompromising activism. He hit the news over a year ago, when he was beaten up by the Seattle police for participating in the street demonstrations against the third ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization. Not only is he currently the national chairman of Akbayan; he is also executive director of Focus on the Global South, a research, analysis, and advocacy institute based in Bangkok, Thailand, that has become a leading center against corporate-driven globalization. He is also currently chairperson of the board of Greenpeace Southeast Asia and a member of the board of the International Forum on Globalization and several other international organizations.

Information and Communication

Publications

Focus produces publications in both hard and electronic format. Many of our publications are available on the website in high quality PDF files.

The Focus Dossier

One of the highlights of the publications in 2000 has been the creation of the “Focus Dossier” series, booklets produced in conjunction with key international and regional events. Listed below are the dossiers published in 2000.

1. *Why reform of the WTO is the wrong Agenda: Four essays on four institutions, WTO, UNCTAD, IMF and the World Bank* (February 2000)
2. *Creating Poverty: the ADB in Asia* (May 2000)
3. *Prague 2000: why we need to decommission the IMF and the World Bank* (September 2000)
4. *The transfer of wealth: debt and the making of a global south* (October 2000)
5. *Porto Alegre 2001*

All the publications are downloadable from the Focus website: www.focusweb.org

Books

Another major highlight of Focus publications was the book

Global Finance: New Thinking on Regulating Speculative Capital Markets, Edited by Walden Bello, Nicola Bullard & Kamal Malhotra, released in September 2000 by Zed books.

Another book that was published was the Report of the Global Governance Project *Reimagining the Future: towards democratic governance*, by Joseph A. Camilleri, Kamal Malhotra And Majid Tehranian. This book was produced in collaboration with the department of Politics, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Focus on the Global South, The Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, Tokyo and Honolulu

Focus Articles

The articles produced by Focus Staff or collaborators of Focus which came out in different publications, including Focus publications, can be accessed at the Focus website.

“Blowback:” a review essay on an academic defector’s guide to America’s Asia policy
by Walden Bello

A World Bank staffer’s odyssey in Kafka’s Prague

ADB 2000: senior officials and internal documents paint institution in confusion
by Walden Bello

All in the family: musical chairs in the neo-liberal establishment
by Chris Adams

Another one bites the dust: collateral damage in the battle for the Bank
by Nicola Bullard

Asian Monetary Fund revival?
by Kristen Nordhaug

Australia and the Asian Development Bank in the Mekong region
by Charlie Pahlman

Balancing the power of money
by Menno Salverda

Can workers beat globalisation?
by David Bacon

China: the country the West loves to hate
by Nicola Bullard

Civil society as global actor: promise and pitfalls
by Walden Bello

Club 51: insecurity and global uncertainty
by Kuan-Hsing Chen

Dangerous liaisons: progressives, the right, and the anti-China trade campaign
by Walden Bello and Anuradha Mittal

Davos 2000: an all-American show?
by Walden Bello

Davos 2000: global Cconspiracy or capitalist circus?
by Walden Bello

Davos 2000: has Asia really rebounded?
by Walden Bello

Euro-American rivalry poses challenge to Asia and developing world
by Walden Bello

Fallacies of the renegotiation of the Ecuadorian external debt
by Alberto Acosta

From hegemonic insecurity to peoples' security: an overview
by Mushakoji Kinhide

From Melbourne to Prague: the struggle for a deglobalized world
by Walden Bello

G-8 summit set for Japanese island that wants U.S. out
by Walden Bello

It's time for 'uncivil' society to act
by Nicola Bullard

Jurassic fund: should developing countries push to decommission the IMF?
by Walden Bello

Keeping debtors in place: debt relief under the enhanced HIPC initiative
by Shalmali Guttal

Malaysian NGOs call on government to reject launching of new WTO round.

Market access for LDCs: public relations disguised as development
by Aileen Kwa

Meltzer report on Bretton Woods Twins builds case for abolition but hesitates
by Walden Bello

Micro credit equals micro debt
by Chanida Chanyapate Bamford

Mr Moore: shallow and defensive at UNCTAD X
by Aileen Kwa

No time for reform
by Patrick Bond

Paradigms lost
by Nicola Bullard

Paving the way to a new world: let us globalise the struggle!

Payoff scandal hits ADB-backed power privatization in the Philippines

by Walden Bello

People's conference calls for demilitarisation of Asia Pacific on the eve of G8 summit in Okinawa

People's perspective of history

by Taira Osamu

Poverty, development and debt

by Shalmali Guttal

Private profits at public cost

by Shalmali Guttal

Public consultation and participation in the Nam Theun 2 hydroelectric project in the Lao PDR, submission to the World Commission on Dams Southeast Asia regional consultation

by Shalmali Guttal

Pursuing an agenda for development: the role of civil society in the south

by Shalmali Guttal

Redefine and practice our peace, our security, if they do theirs

by Muto Ichiyo

Reflections in the streets

by Rane Hassarungsee

Regional currency swap arrangement: a step towards Asian Monetary Fund?

by Walden Bello

Security: a comprehensive approach

by Marco Mezzera and Chirawatana Charoonpatarapong

'Son of a commoner' faces the Assembly of the Poor

by Wipaphan Korkeatkachorn

Struggle against military bases in Okinawa – its history and current situation

by Arasaki Moriteru

Struggle for a basic right to a livelihood

by Sanitsuda Ekachai

Thailand and ASEM: government's interests and civil society's hesitations

by Marco G. Mezzera,

Article published on the website of the Heinrich Boell

Stiftung: "ASED: Asia-Europe Dialogue", 2000

The a la carte undertaking: a new form of special and differential treatment?

by Aileen Kwa

The AGM 2000: more losses than victories

by Chris Adams

The Agreement on Agriculture: change requires a hero's journey

by Aileen Kwa

The armadillo and the chameleon: a cautionary tale

by Nicola Bullard

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations: a preliminary autopsy

by Walden Bello

The challenge from the Korean peninsula: The North-South summit and the United States in East Asia

by Samsung Lee

The dirty underside of the land of smiles: power company "guardians" burn protest village

The end of imagination: the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and poverty reduction

by Shalmali Guttal

The human rights of children and women under the U.S. military administration

by Azat Eiko

The IMF's Asian legacy

by Jacques-chai Chomthongdi

The many uses of poverty

by Shalmali Guttal

The Okinawa declaration

The Prague castle debate: a few questions for

Mr. Wolfensohn and Mr. Kohler
by Walden Bello

The sledgehammer and the nut
by Harrison George

*The success of being Ddangerous: resisting
free trade & investment regimes*
by Gerard Greenfield

*The turbulent and dismal record of World
Bank structural adjustment lending in the
Philippines*
by Maria Teresa Diokno-Pascual

The United Nations shows its true colours
by Nicola Bullard

*The WTO: boon or bane for the developing
world?*

Time for ADB to own up to its responsibility
by Jenina Joy Chavez-Malaluan

*Time for the ICFTU to move from anti-social
(inter)national partnerships to a real global
social partnership?*

*Tough crowd for IMF, World Bank leaders in
Prague*
by Steven Pearlstein, Washington Post

*Towards a just, comprehensive, and sustain-
able peace in the Asia-Pacific region*
by Walden Bello

Trading the environment
by Shalmali Guttal

*Transforming the global financial system: why
it is no longer possible to “square the circle”*
by Nicola Bullard

*Transparency and institutional issues a year
after Seattle*
by Aileen Kwa

*Truth, postmodernism and historical revision-
ism in Japan: reflections on Kokumin No
Rekishi*
by Tessa Morris-Suzuki

*UNCTAD and civil society: towards our
common goals*

UNCTAD security ‘half-baked’
by Harrison George

UNCTAD X: an opportunity lost?
by Walden Bello

*UNCTAD: time to lead, time to challenge the
WTO*
by Walden Bello

Venezuelan elections offer hope of real reform
by Mark Weisbrot

*Washington and the demise of the “third
wave” of democratisation*
by Walden Bello

*Washington protests demoralize IMF and
World Bank*
by Walden Bello

Who speaks for whom?
by Shalmali Guttal

Why reform of the WTO is the wrong agenda
by Walden Bello

Will WTO chief be sacrificial lamb?
by Nicola Bullard

With friends like this, who needs enemies
by Nicola Bullard

Women and globalisation—some dey issues
by Shalmali Guttal

*Women’s response to militaristic security: the
case of Aceh women*
by Melani Budianta

Focus on Trade

Focus on Trade is a monthly electronic bulletin providing updates and analysis of trends in regional and world trade and finance, with an emphasis on analysis of these trends from an integrative, interdisciplinary viewpoint that is sensitive not only to economic issues, but also to ecological, political, gender and social issues.

The bulletin is well-received and presently has about 4,000 subscribers. It is also re-posted on several other lists and several articles have been translated into French and German for the ATTAC network. Focus on Trade is posted on the website in both HTML and the PDF format, and all back issues can be found on the site.

We are also very pleased that Focus on Trade is now available in Spanish. This was the initiative of Gerard Coffey, an activist living in Ecuador, and he now translates the bulletin regularly. *Enfoque Sobre Comercio* is also posted on the Focus website.

If you wish to subscribe to either version, please send an email to anoop@fiocusweb.org.

Focus on Security

Focus-on-Security is an electronic bulletin service providing analysis, news briefs, and information on NGO activities related to pressing security issues in Asia Pacific. It has a highly targeted audience of 500 people. Focus on Security can also be viewed from the Focus website. Visitors can also see back issues of the bulletin from the site.

Focus on Philippines

Focus on the Philippines is an electronic newsletter, focusing mainly on Philippine news and issues brought out by the Philippine office of Focus on the Global South. Focus on the Philippines can also be viewed from the Focus website. Visitors can also see back issues of the bulletin from the site.

Focus Files

Focus Files are produced by the Focus India Office (please see the India report for details) and also in Thai by the staff in Bangkok

The Focus Website

The Focus website underwent a complete overhaul in September 2000. An attempt has been made to include all of Focus's work on the website. Printed publications from Focus also

have an electronic version on the website in PDF format, and these publications can be downloaded free from the site. The Focus website is designed so that web surfers with relatively older browsers and technology can access the web site without losing out on its interactivity. The web site will soon incorporate features which would be friendly to text reading software used by surfers who are visually impaired.

The traffic to the website has been increasing tremendously. In the four months September to December 2000, the Focus website had 176,965 successful hits, an average of 748 per day.

Financial Report Period January - December'2000***

Comparison of Revenue, Expenses and Budget

Amount in USD.**

| | Budget* | Exp.Actual | Var.fr.Budget | Revenue | Rev.over Exp |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| General management & Administration | 80,254.00 | 74,305.01 | 5,948.99 | 65,274.10 | 9,030.92 |
| National & Regional Micor-Macro Programme - India | 77,354.00 | 74,210.15 | 3,143.85 | 65,276.63 | 8,933.53 |
| National & Regional Micro-Macro Programme - SEATES | 76,058.00 | 49,949.88 | 26,108.12 | 42,166.21 | 7,783.67 |
| Natioanl & Regional Micro-Macro Programme - Thailand | 79,301.00 | 62,606.83 | 16,694.17 | 54,135.13 | 8,471.70 |
| National & Regional Micro-Macro Programme-Regional/ Global & others | 83,390.00 | 66,900.97 | 16,489.03 | 58,300.75 | 8,600.22 |
| Economic & Fianncial Liberalization | 135,527.00 | 86,747.23 | 48,779.77 | 82,375.40 | 7,371.83 |
| Security & Conflict | 47,137.00 | 37,113.74 | 10,023.26 | 73,767.03 | 36,653.29 |
| State, Markets & Civil Society | 34,128.00 | 19,572.72 | 14,555.28 | 21,213.93 | 1,641.21 |
| Culture & Globalization | 31,013.00 | 21,250.43 | 9,762.57 | 15,684.30 | 5,566.13 |
| Publications and Resources Center | 68,835.00 | 57,897.07 | 10,937.93 | 48,919.91 | 8,977.15 |
| Sub Total | 712,997.00 | 550,554.04 | 162,442.96 | 527,113.38 | -23,440.66 |
| Conference : UNCTAD X Feb'00 | 40,000.00 | 34,595.73 | 5,404.27 | 21,592.85 | -13,002.88 |
| Conference : Nuclear conf-Dhaka, Bangladesh Feb'00 | 60,000.00 | 48,131.72 | 11,868.28 | 30,100.78 | -18,030.94 |
| Conference : Okinawa conf.Jun'00 | 60,000.00 | 35,032.60 | 24,967.40 | 5,289.19 | -29,743.41 |
| Professional Fee | | | | 4,386.88 | 4,386.88 |
| Interest income | | | | 7,569.72 | 7,569.72 |
| Other income | | | | 1,094.84 | 1,094.84 |
| Revenue over Expenses 2000 | | | | - | 71,166.48 |
| Opening Balance Jan. 1,2000 | | | | | 274,518.13 |
| Total | 872,997.00 | 668,314.08 | 204,682.92 | 597,147.63 | 203,351.68 |

* Budget does not include Labour conference USD. 60,000 Postponed to March 2001

** Exchange rate 1 USD. = 37 BHT. (same rate as used in the Work Plan)

*** Does not include Phillipines funds which are direct through the country

Glossary

Exp.Actual = Actaul Expenditure

Var.fr.Buget = Variance from Budget

Rev.over.exp = Revenue over expenditure

Core Funders 2000

Christian Aid, UK
CORDAID (Bilance), The Netherlands
Development and Peace, Canada
Ford Foundation, USA
HIVOS, The Netherlands
Inter Pares, Canada
NOVIB, The Netherlands
Oxfam America, USA
Oxfam Hong Kong
Oxfam Great Britain
Solidago Foundation, USA
The United Methodist Church, USA
Trocaire, Republic of Ireland



We would also like to thank the following organizations for supporting the conferences and specific projects.

Heinrich Boell Foundation
Institute of International Education
The World Council of Churches
UNIFEM
Bread for All
Mac Arthur Foundation
UNCTAD