

Focus on the Global South Annual Report 2006





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CAN
BUILD
THEIR
OWN
FUTURE

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WORKING TOGETHER

2006 was another productive year in Focus' engagement in local, regional, and international struggles.

The year began with our participation in the historic January 9 mass action in Chiang Mai, Thailand by thousands of civil society activists that stalemated the US-Thailand Free Trade Agreement.

A key role in the opposition to the US-Thailand FTA was FTA Watch, which Focus had invested a great deal of its energy in helping to organize since 2002. In the Philippines, our engagement in issues of water, land reform, trade, and foreign policy reached a new stage with the launching of the Development Roundtable Series, which brought Focus together with local networks to forge alternative strategies in these areas. In India, we took advantage of 39th annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Hyderabad to help organize nationwide opposition to an institution which has taken the leading role in privatising communal and public resources throughout the subcontinent. Focus also worked with local activists in Mumbai to build resistance to the Indian elite's plans to transform Mumbai into a "global city" that would be a key link in the global corporate economy.

Engagement with local issues was paralleled by our engagement in work on alternatives at a regional level. Through the second ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC) held in Cebu in December 2006 and other forums, Focus has worked with others to create the space for an alternative project in Southeast Asia that works both within and without the ASEAN framework. Through its participation in formations such as the People's Dialogue on Alternative Regionalisms and Regional Alternatives to globalisation, Focus worked with other civil society organisations to draw lessons from and support alternative regional initiatives in different parts of the world.

At the international level, we worked with the Our World is not for Sale Network and other organisations to oppose the anti-development Doha Round of the World Trade Organisation. While the 6th ministerial meeting of the WTO barely pulled through, the Doha talks collapsed in July, owing greatly to opposition from developing country governments that were stiffened by resistance to neo-liberal trade policies on the part of international civil society.

Focus' work on peace issues at the international level intensified in 2006. One of our key activities was the organizing and sending of an International Peace Mission to Lebanon to witness the impact and consequences of Israel's invasion of that country in July and August. We also put a lot of effort into the creation of an international network for the abolition of foreign military bases.

Following our co-sponsorship of a well-attended workshop on economic and ecological trends in China during the WTO meeting in December 2005, our China program took off in 2006. At the three-week-long international course on "Globalisation, Social Justice, and Civil Society" that we co-sponsored with Chulalongkorn University's Masters Program in International Development, we brought nine Chinese activists together with 19 activists from other countries to share their organizing experiences. We also invested much effort in linking activists in Africa with activists in China to respond to the heightened economic and political involvement of China in Africa.

These were but a few of the highlights of a really busy year. It goes without saying that our work would not have gotten very far without the generous material support we received from our funders, who continued to believe in us. Nor would our successes have been possible without the close cooperation we received from allies, colleagues, comrades and other kindred spirits. Working in alliances and coalitions with others has been central to Focus "methodology" from the very beginning. We thank all of you who made 2006 an extremely productive year for Focus.



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RECLAIMING THE REGION

Joy Chavez

As globalised resistance to neo-liberalism continued to grow in the past decade, social movements and civil society started to discover the region as an arena of struggle and as a staging point for alternatives. In the Americas, the Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA) was established as a response by social movements to the United States' determination to dominate the continent with the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Carrying a strong critique of neo-liberal globalisation and cogent strategies, HSA campaigning defeated the FTAA and inspired similar regional initiatives to counter the ill effects of globalisation.

The region, through regional associations or projects, has been found to accommodate, support and advance the neo-liberal agenda, while failing to maximize the potentials of regionalism for the people. Increasingly, calls for reclaiming the region to advance genuine people's cooperation have been made. The convening of people's summits to parallel official meetings of regional associations and to provide a venue for movements to discuss issues of regional import is widely practiced. To counterbalance and challenge the official Summit of the Americas, the Southern African Development Community meetings (SADC), and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation meetings (SAARC), the HSA, the South African People's Solidarity Network (SAPS), and the South Asia People's Assembly (People's SAARC 2007) organize open gatherings of peoples and movements that assert the people's claim on the region and their demand to develop truly regional alternatives.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) People's Assembly (APA) has been convened since 2000, but unlike the People's Summits in South America, Southern Africa and South Asia, the APA is not movement-led and does not have a clearly anti-neo-liberal platform. It was only in the last two years that broader civil society advocacy and engagement with ASEAN have emerged, with the convening of the ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC) and the formation of the Solidarity for Asian People's Advocacy (SAPA) Working Group on ASEAN. These new initiatives focus on opening up ASEAN as an institution and as a process, as well as on the drawing up of agenda to push at the regional level. The SAPA WG on ASEAN, in particular, monitors and continues to assert people's right to the space as ASEAN formalizes its modes of operation and embarks on the building of the ASEAN Charter. In the region several initiatives also push for positive agenda – on an ASEAN Social Charter, an ASEAN Instrument on Migrant Workers, an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanisms, etc. These initiatives interact in many ways with the ACSC and the SAPA.

Regional associations and regionalist projects are generally state-centred and inaccessible to people. Not enough information is shared and little space is provided to civil society to engage, participate or protest. As a result, advocacy at the regional level is still at its early stages and have yet to reach the level of organisation and coordination achieved by global campaigns and movements. But as the importance of the region – in furthering globalisation

and as a potential source of alternative power and policy – increases, so would regional movements. Linking different regional movements for cross-fertilization of learning and solidarity also becomes a challenge. Early attempts at integrating learnings from regional struggles have been consolidated through the People's Dialogue on Alternative Regionalisms and Regional Alternatives to Globalisation, a project supported by the Alternative Information and Development Center (AIDC), Instituto Brasileiro de Análises Sociais e Econômicas (IBASE), Red Mexicana de Acción frente al Libre Comercio (RMALC), Focus on the Global South and the Transnational Institute (TNI). It hopes to foster the building of alternatives through intra-regional and interregional solidarity between peoples

ASEAN submissions to the EPG and the development of positions for the consultation of the HLTF; the formulation of the program template for the ACSC II national processes, the drafting of the program of the ACSC II and the final version of the conference statement. With help from colleagues at the TNI and the HSA, Focus also facilitated the attendance and participation of Dot Keet from South Africa, Maureen Santos from Brazil and Brid Brennan from the Netherlands to join the session on alternative regionalism.

The work on ASEAN helped ground Focus' work on alternative regionalism. Various presentation materials and articles were written. A dossier on ASEAN, titled Revisiting Southeast Asian

RE Linking different regional movements for cross-fertilization of learning and solidarity also becomes a challenge. gionalism

organisations, as well as facilitate relations with and between their governments, and to pose counter-challenges to effect fundamental changes in the currently dominant global economic system and build people's alternatives. The People's Dialogue links social movements and civil society groups from South America and Southern Africa initially, with the hope of integrating movements from Asia and Europe eventually.

In 2006, Focus did more systematic work on alternative regionalism, introducing a new layer of analysis, campaigning and struggle. Much of the work centred on Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Focus participated in the consultation processes conducted by the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) and the High Level Task Force (HLTF) on the ASEAN Charter, took part in the national processes in the lead up to the Second ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC II), helped steer the ACSC II, and joined the many initiatives of the SAPA. In particular, Focus took the lead in formulating the SAPA WG on

Regionalism, was published in December 2006. Work on regional social policy was also started, with initial focus on labour and migrant labour policy and the fostering of international solidarity. This work was presented in the International Forum on Social Policy organized by UNESCO and Mercosur in Argentina and Uruguay. Further work on regional social policy is being developed and initial presentations were made at the workshop on Global Social Policy and East Asia (Seoul, Korea in February 2007) and a seminar on Regional Integration (Bangkok, Thailand in March 2007). Focus participated in two major Peoples Dialogue activities in 2006 – the Methodology Workshop in May and the first South America-Southern Africa movements' meeting in November, both in Brazil, and in the People's Dialogue workshop on Work and Employment during the World Social Forum in Nairobi, Kenya in January. Focus also remains as a convenor and regional steering committee member of SAPA.

Free /Libre and Open Source Software (FLOSS/ FOSS) is more than a movement of techies. The open source community is fundamentally anti-monopoly. The very nature of open source is an example of a decentralized democratic community. It is a community that deeply and passionately guards the concept of the knowledge commons that is open and free.

The concept of 'free' does not only mean free in the monetary sense but also the lack of boundaries to modification, change and development according to the needs of the community. This is the reason that there is, in the FLOSS movement, a mind-boggling array of software that is designed to meet a wide range of requirements –from the obvious 'office' applications to library software, statistical software and even hospital management software. The FLOSS movement is large and growing and it is a community effort. The open source movement has challenged and proven the intellectual property rights (IPR) advocates wrong in the most fundamental way: by producing excellent software not for profits but for the sake of innovation and to benefit society at large. It has proven that innovation is not always dictated by monetary gains.

The belief in the concept of the commons where people create and contribute is a fundamental pillar of the movement. The diverse and truly global nature of the community provides many interesting examples and lessons. For instance, the inclusive process of open source development is a working example of a new democratic movement that embodies the essence of participatory democracy. Wikis, social networking websites, blogs, streaming video websites, podcasts and other innovations are revolutionising who has access to information,

how we learn, how we generate and value knowledge, form social relationships and create culture. These technologies are creating new forms of political power. For example, politicians are now using blogs to engage with the public, web-based movements such as MoveOn and Get Up have emerged, and debating spaces such as second life have been opened up. Institutional authority is being redefined. For example, Wikipedia is becoming a standard reference source. The success of Google and e-bay, have transformed the way business views online business and the relationship between producers and consumers. The key transformation is that the average internet user is no longer a passive recipient of information but an active player in producing information and participating in decision-making. This has been the main reason for the phenomenal success of Google, YouTube, and other Web 2.0 forums.

The global reach of the movement has also made open source distributions highly localised (1). They are available in many more languages than any proprietary software. As a community, the movement strives to break down barriers of language and region, facilitating access and reach to all who desire it. It is the acceptance of the fact that existing knowledge (and software) is built on the knowledge of the past and is a cumulative and collective effort. Its anarchic nature and inherent dislike of anything that tries to control it has been the hallmark of the movement. Whenever efforts have been made to control or commercialise open source products, the community has completely rejected it, simply stopped supporting that effort, or created a new effort that is opposed to the former.



FLOSS: not Just Good for your Teeth!

Anoop Sukumaran

The FLOSS movement is linked to every movement for social and economic justice and with every movement for the control of resources and for reclaiming the commons. FOSS deals with the access and control of information and the tools of information. Information is the backbone for the fight for rights, for the distribution of messages, for the globalisation of struggles. If we do not have the control over the tools and means of communication, information is always at risk of being hijacked and manipulated. FLOSS is a means to take back control over information and the tools of information which are the basis for asserting our rights.

The FLOSS movement within the Asian region is vibrant but has yet to gain mass appeal. Most Asian countries have Linux support groups and have active open source communities which regularly translate and localise open source distributions. There are signs that the movement will soon become a force to reckon with. The Government of Kerala (India) announced last year that all the government offices in the state will soon use an open source Linux distribution. Few national governments have taken explicit positions on the issue. In the Philippines, civil society groups organise regular Linux boot camps to spread the open source message. The struggle is huge, the movement is against some of the most powerful corporations in the world, and the fight is getting uglier. In Thailand, for instance, the previous government under Thaksin undermined a locally produced Linux variant for use in schools, and opted instead for a watered down version of Microsoft. There has been no movement to change this situation in the present regime.

Focus' contribution to the movement is not technical. Our input has been to propagate the message, to expose civil society groups to become part of the open source movement as a political weapon. We in Focus have internalised the struggle against monopoly capitalism, an expression of which is our shift from proprietary software to a Linux derivative called Ubuntu. Our website runs on open source CMS Joomla and is hosted on a Linux system.

At the WSF in Nairobi, Focus, along with the International South Group Network, was part of an initiative to popularise the open source idea. We had a working demonstration of open source tools on ten laptop computers for people to use so they could see the ease of use and range of options available. We also encouraged people to shift from Microsoft windows. There was a one-day seminar on the politics of open source which was extremely well-received.

A software distribution is a bundle of a specific software (or a collection of multiple software – even an entire operating system), already compiled and configured. It is generally the closest thing to a turnkey form of an open source source code for a software.

The concept of 'free' does not only mean free in the monetary sense but also the lack of boundaries to modification, change and development according to the needs of the community.

The experience of the Stop the New Round! (SNRI) campaign in 2003 showed that, beyond the unity in the call to stop a new round of negotiations in the WTO, the members of the SNRI coalition differed in the specifics and stresses of the longer-term reforms they would like the government to adopt. It was this realisation that spurred Focus to initiate a process aimed at achieving a higher level of understanding and integration of experiences and expectations that transcends personal and sectoral interests and helps build a broader reform agenda.

Hence, the Development Roundtable Series (DRTS) was formed. Inspired by the World Social Forum process, the DRTS is a platform or venue for different interest groups in the country to come together, collectively discuss and resolve dilemmas on development issues and policy-making and see how conflicting interests fit into a common policy platform. Through a series of consultations and negotiations, the DRTS seeks to reach consensus on concrete policy recommendations on a broad range of development issues.

Like any relevant project, the DRTS seeks to respond to the times. One core objective of the DRTS is to address the need for policies that incorporate broad aspirations of different sectors and to generate widespread and deep support for crucial policy reforms. The DRTS recognizes the failure of the government to integrate marginalized groups into the formal policy-making process, which has always been managed by a few public and private elites, and the limitations of state-sponsored dialogues which are usually a mere broadening of discussions on issues sanctioned by the state.

Committed to an inclusive and democratic process, organizers have conducted extensive consultations with different groups in setting the DRTS' objectives and methodology. The preparatory work in 2004 yielded five thematic areas: Trade and Industrial Policy, Foreign Policy, Water Resources and Services, Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, and Food and Agriculture. A parallel Mindanao roundtable was later created in 2005 upon the request of Mindanao-based organisations and in light of the diversity and complexity of issues specific to Mindanao.⁽¹⁾ The process is marked by substantial flexibility – no thematic area shares the same methodology. Aside from the process-oriented character of the DRTS, the common thread among the different thematic working groups is the two-step process: first, consolidation of the most specific, most reasoned and most practicable policy positions, and second, advocacy to draw the broadest constituencies around these positions.

The DRTS takes pride in the broadness of the groups taking part in it, and is in the process of expanding some more. Currently, the thematic working group members of the DRTS include a wide spectrum of actors: non-government organisations, peoples organisations, social movements, and political blocs alike, allied in the realization that the quest for alternatives is a common goal not only of like-minded groups.

The DRTS proved to be a most timely undertaking as, over the past three years, the search for alternatives has become even more urgent, fueled by a burgeoning discontent on the current political system.

The overall reality is that the Philippine state still lies in tatters, vulnerable to the shifts in the presidency and the unstable alliances between the executive and the legislature. The economy is chronically weakened by its inability to expand the domestic market and harness the private sector. Severe class contradictions remain, with a small monopolistic elite wielding political and economic power over the vast impoverished masses whose most basic demands for security, food and shelter remain unmet. These very same ruling elites recoiled from the necessary redistribution of wealth and power which could have expanded the domestic market and consequently spur sustained economic growth and development.

More recently, the Philippines finds itself saddled with a president whose legitimacy and credibility is on the decline and whose ability to serve has been severely impaired by the more urgent, self-interested task of remaining in power. Over the course of three years, a host of allegations has been raised against President Arroyo, from rigging the results of the 2004 elections, to misuse of government funds – all serious offenses which, had they happened a few years earlier, would have been sufficient grounds to dislodge a president from power via impeachment or insurrectionary non-electoral means.

The resolution to the crisis proves elusive, especially given the differences in what people perceive as the problem. There are some who believe that the problem is Arroyo and her allies, and thwarting their plans via impeachment or putting in place majority opposition forces in power is the solution. Others feel that seizing power to bring about change is the only effective recourse. Yet despite these diverging views, at the heart of these proposals is the same old promise for new politics and social and economic justice, the same ideals of the people who marched to EDSA (2) in 1986. And yet two more EDSA uprisings later, they have not been realized. That EDSA now lies empty is perhaps due to a realization that genuine political and social reform is an impossibility within the current system. That no matter who sits in Malacanang, nothing will change. That the solution must go beyond altering the balance of forces in Senate or Congress and beyond a change of presidency.

It is amidst this disillusionment, in the shrinking democratic space in Philippine politics today, and with a recognition of the need to build credible alternatives, that the DRTS hopes to provide new forms of mobilization, expression, engagement and collective alternatives-building. The challenge, and the difference of the DRTS in the breadth of initiatives, is to craft alternatives in an inclusive and participatory manner so that no single vested interest prevails. It hopes to respond to a need to forge alliances, rebuild old alliances, and overcome divisions in order to articulate our aspirations as a people and debate on the kind of reforms and changes we want to see in the country. In the process, the DRTS hopes to create not only opportunities to build alternatives, but also to carve out spaces to reclaim democracy.

(1) Mindanao is the Philippines' poorest island group. Four of the five poorest regions and six of the poorest provinces in the country are in Mindanao. It is also home to Muslim Filipinos, representing less than five per cent of the country's population, and indigenous tribes. Mindanao has a long history of marginalization in national development policy.

(2) Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, or EDSA, is one of the main avenues running North-South through Manila. It is famous as the site where hundreds of thousands gathered to topple two presidents, Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada, and to demand the ouster of the government of incumbent President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

Building Alternatives in the Philippines

Julie de los Reyes and Mary Ann Manahan

Development Roundtable Series Thematic Areas

The DRTS on Trade and Industry seeks to address the lack of understanding and communication between the various actors in the Philippine industrial sector, which translates to national trade and industrial policies that do not sufficiently address the needs of certain actors and that fail to stimulate substantial growth in the Philippine economy. By facilitating dialogue and negotiation between these actors, the DRTS on Trade and Industry aims to come up with an honest reappraisal of the Philippines' trade and industrial policies, with the overall objective of charting new paths for the country's economic development that takes into account the interests of the Philippine industrial sector as a whole. Consistent with the DRTS' commitment to complement and supplement existing research, the Thematic Working Group (TWG) decided to focus on the following strategic gaps and issues: privatisation, debt and national competitiveness, micro-enterprises and informal sector, overseas employment (as an economic sector), and international agreements and alternatives.

DRTS on Water and Services

Philippine water districts are beleaguered by a set of recurrent, readily identifiable issues whose resolutions have been difficult to achieve because of policy gridlocks and opposition from vested interests. The commonality of these "paradigmatic situations," which include salt water intrusion, industrial or agricultural contamination, and dilapidated infrastructure, also implies common experiences on the part of the affected actors. The DRTS on Water and Services will come up with alternative solutions by providing an opportunity for the affected actors to draw and consolidate ideas from their shared experiences while at the same time building a constituency of organisations that will engage in policy dialogues with relevant government agencies, elaborate and validate feasible alternatives to water resource management, and mobilize for institutional reform.

DRTS on Foreign Policy

The foreign policy of the Philippines has often been guided by the interests of its political elite. Foreign policy decisions are seen as the exclusive domain of politicians, diplomats, the military, and the business sectors, and are often enacted not with the interests of the Filipino people in mind, but in a way that benefits these sectors and individuals the most. The DRTS on Foreign Policy will provide a venue for articulating the collective interests of the Filipino people, as well as an opportunity for a broad and united constituency to come up with thoroughly-scrutinized, specific, and practicable recommendations for Philippine foreign policy.



DRTS on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development

Agrarian reform remains to be one of the most important programs which aims to transform relations and redistribute wealth and power in the rural areas. But Philippine efforts at agrarian reform have so far fallen short of expectations, if not failed, at redistributing access to and control of land and support services, which are the sources of livelihood for the country's rural poor. Almost eighteen years into the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), land—and, consequently, economic and political power—remains firmly entrenched in the hands of a few elites. The DRTS on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development recognizes that the shortcomings of the current agrarian reform program stems in part from a concerted effort of the country's landowning political elite to keep attempts at reform in check, and that pushing for the implementation of a genuine agrarian reform program will require a similar alignment of forces in favor of it. The process will create such an alignment by fostering the participation of all sectors in favor of agrarian reform in an atmosphere conducive to inputs from all concerned sectors. It will also provide a space for an organized, systematic documentation, reflection, and consolidation of learnings on agrarian reform advocacy in the Philippines to firm up arguments and clear policy positions on agrarian reform in preparation for the 2008 post-land acquisition and distribution scenario.

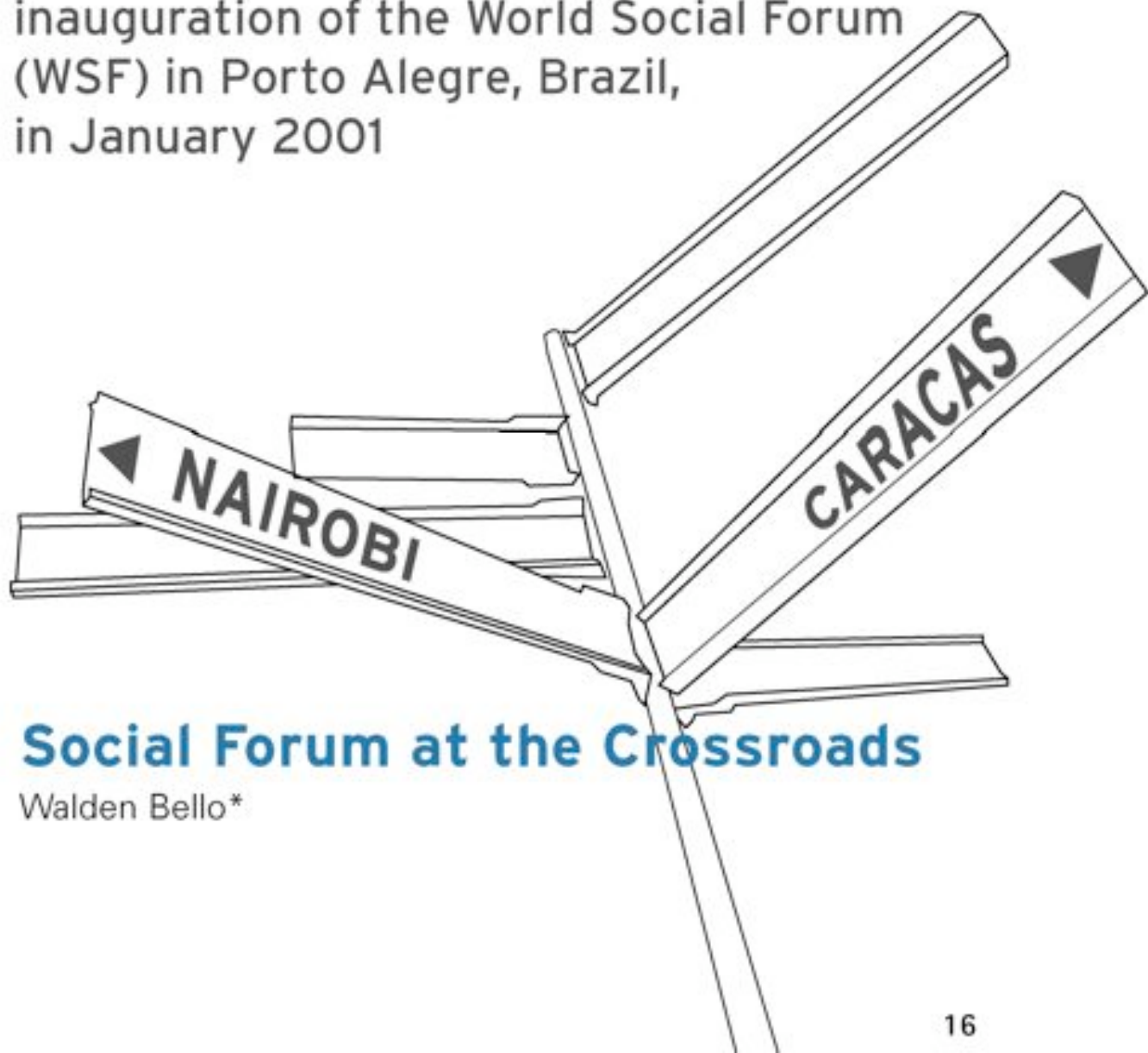
The DRTS on Food and Fisheries

The Development Roundtable Discussion Series on Food and Fisheries will address the need to look at the country's past and current food and agriculture policies, in particular on food security and the future of its small food producers. The process hopes to serve not only as an eye-opener, but as a venue that could compel the right people to undertake the necessary actions. Although the process is mainly a venue for discussion and dialogue, it could also result in forging negotiated arrangements between people towards mutual survival. The DRTS on Food and Fisheries will attempt to produce results—concrete policies, practices, initiatives—that promote mutual benefit, uphold sustainable production of food resources and bridge the contradictions between the different sectoral and political agendas.

DRTS on Mindanao- Food and Agriculture

The formation of the Mindanao TWG was a result of a strong request from Mindanao-based organisations. The TWG will serve as a conduit for parallel processes to be held in Mindanao along the lines of the five themes. The Mindanao-Food and Agriculture thematic will examine the nature of the food and agriculture problems and constraints facing Mindanao, with particular focus on issues unique to the region. This include conflicting land-uses between commercial versus food crops and fishery development; role of the tri-people culture and ethnic differences on the food security and sustainable agriculture movement in Mindanao; low agricultural and fishery productivity and unstable food supply situation; and armed conflict, food security and sustainable agriculture.

A new stage in the evolution of the global justice movement was reached with the inauguration of the World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in January 2001



Social Forum at the Crossroads

Walden Bello*

A new stage in the evolution of the global justice movement was reached with the inauguration of the World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in January 2001

The WSF was the brainchild of social movements loosely associated with the Workers' Party (PT) in Brazil. Strong support for the idea was given at an early stage by the ATTAC movement in France, key figures of which were connected with the newspaper *Le Monde Diplomatique*. In Asia, the Brazilian proposal, floated in June 2000, received the early enthusiastic endorsement of, among others, Focus on the Global South. Porto Alegre was meant to be a counterpoint to "Davos," the annual event in a resort town in the Swiss Alps where the world's most powerful business and political figures congregate annually to spot and assess the latest trends in global affairs. Indeed, the highlight of the first WSF was a televised transcontinental debate between George Soros and other figures in Davos with representatives of social movements gathered in Porto Alegre.

The world of Davos was contrasted with the world of Porto Alegre, the world of the global rich with the world of the rest of humanity. It was this contrast that gave rise to the very resonant theme "Another world is possible."

There was another important symbolic dimension: while Seattle was the site of the first major victory of the transnational anti-corporate globalisation movement – the collapse amidst massive street protests of the third ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation – Porto Alegre represented the transfer to the South of the center of gravity of that movement. Proclaimed as an "open space," the WSF became a magnet for global networks focused on different issues, from war to globalisation to communalism to racism to gender oppression to alternatives. Regional versions of the WSF were spun off, the most important being the European Social Forum and the African Social Forum; and in scores of cities throughout the world, local social fora were held and institutionalized.

The Functions of the WSF

Since its establishment, the WSF has performed three critical functions for global civil society:

First, it represents a space – both physical and temporal – for this diverse movement to meet, network, and, quite simply, to feel and affirm itself.

Second, it is a retreat during which the movement gathers its energies and charts the directions of its continuing drive to confront and roll back the processes, institutions, and structures of global capitalism. Naomi Klein, author of *No Logo*, underlined this function when she told a Porto Alegre audience in January 2002 that the need of the moment was "less civil society and more civil disobedience."

Third, the WSF provides a site and space for the movement to elaborate, discuss, and debate the vision, values, and institutions of an alternative world order built on a real community of interests. The WSF is, indeed, a macrocosm of so many smaller but equally significant enterprises carried out throughout the world by millions who have told the reformists, the cynics, and the "realists" to move aside because, indeed, another world is possible...and necessary.

Direct Democracy in Action

The WSF and its many offspring are significant not only as sites of affirmation and debate but also as direct democracy in action. Agenda and meetings are planned with meticulous attention to democratic process. Through a combination of periodic face-to-face meetings and intense e-mail and Internet contact in between, the WSF network was able to pull off events and arrive at consensus decisions. At times, this could be very time-consuming and also frustrating, and when you were part of an organizing effort involving hundreds of organisations, as we at Focus on the Global South were during the organizing of the 2004 WSF in Mumbai, it could be very frustrating indeed.

But this was direct democracy, and direct democracy was at its best at the WSF. One might say, parenthetically, that the direct democratic experiences of Seattle, Prague, Genoa, and the other big mobilizations of the decade were institutionalized in the WSF or Porto Alegre process.

The central principle of the organizing approach of the new movement is that getting to the desired objective is not worth it if the methods violate democratic process, if democratic goals are reached via authoritarian means. Perhaps Subcomandante Marcos of the Zapatistas best expressed the organizing bias of the new movements: "The movement has no future if its future is military. If the EZLN [Zapatistas] perpetuates itself as an armed military structure, it is headed for failure. Failure as an alternative set of ideas, an alternative attitude to the world. The worst that could happen to it apart from that, would be for it to come to power and install itself there as a revolutionary army." The WSF shares this perspective.

What is interesting is that there has hardly been an attempt by any group or network to "take over" the WSF process. Quite a number of "old movement" groups participate in the WSF, including old-line "democratic centralist" parties as well as traditional social democratic parties affiliated with the Socialist International. Yet none of these has put much effort into steering the WSF towards more centralized or hierarchical modes of organizing. At the same time, despite their suspicion of political parties, the "new movements" never sought to exclude the parties and their affiliates from playing a significant role in the Forum. Indeed, the 2004 WSF in Mumbai was organized jointly by an unlikely coalition of social movements and Marxist-Leninist parties, a set of actors that are not known for harmonious relations on the domestic front.

Perhaps a compelling reason for the modus vivendi of the old and new movements was the realization that they needed one another in the struggle against global capitalism and that the strength of the fledgling global movement lay in a strategy of decentralized networking that rested not on the doctrinal belief that one class was destined to lead the struggle but on the reality of the common marginalization of practically all subordinate classes, strata and groups under the reign of global capital.

What constitutes "open space"

The WSF has, however, not been exempt from criticism, even from its own ranks. One in particular appears to have merit. This is the charge that the WSF as an institution is not anchored in actual global political struggles, and this is turning it into an annual festival with limited social impact.

There is, in my view, a not insignificant truth to this. Many of the founders of the WSF have interpreted the "open space" concept in a liberal fashion, that is, for the WSF not to explicitly endorse any political position or particular struggle, though its constituent groups are free to do so.

The central principle of the organizing approach of the new movement is that getting to the desired objective is not worth it if the methods violate democratic process, if democratic goals are reached via authoritarian means.

Others have disagreed, saying the idea of an "open space" should be interpreted in a partisan fashion, as explicitly promoting some views over others and as openly taking sides in key global struggles. In this view, the WSF is under an illusion that it can stand above the fray, and this will lead to its becoming some sort of neutral forum, where discussion will increasingly be isolated from action. The energy of civil society networks derives from their being engaged in political struggles, say proponents of this perspective. The reason that the WSF was so exciting in its early years was because of its affective impact: it provided an opportunity to recreate and reaffirm solidarity against injustice, against war, and for a world that was not subjected to the rule of empire and capital. The WSF's not taking a stand on the Iraq War, on the Palestine issue, and on the WTO is said to be making it less relevant and less inspiring to many of the networks it had brought together.

Caracas versus Nairobi

This is why the 6th WSF held in Caracas in January 2006 was so bracing and reinvigorating: it inserted some 50,000 delegates into the storm center of an ongoing struggle against empire, where they mingled with militant Venezuelans, mostly the poor, engaged in a process of social transformation, while observing other Venezuelans, mostly the elite and middle class, engaged in bitter opposition. Caracas was an exhilarating reality check.

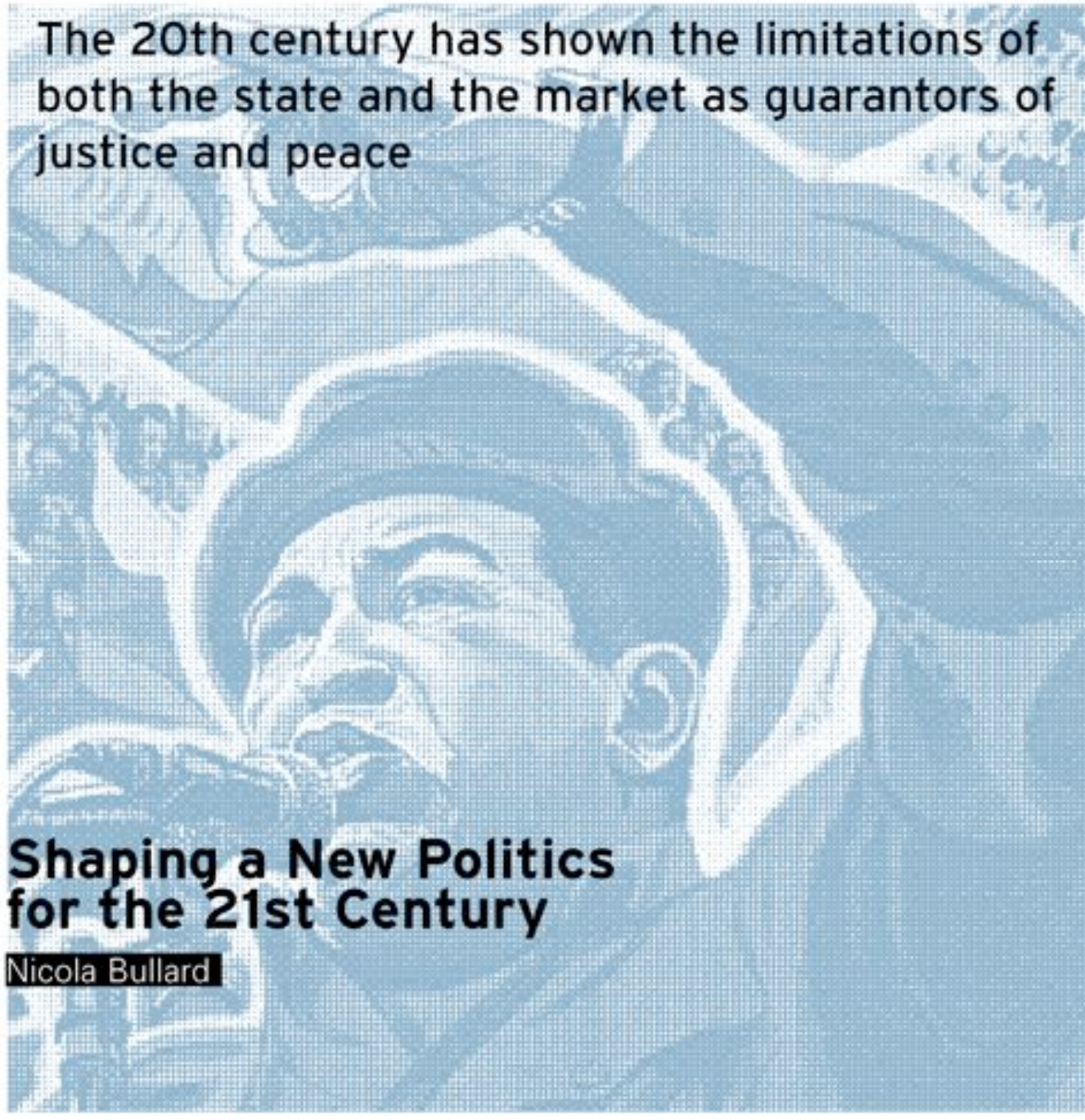
This is also the reason why the 7th WSF held in Nairobi was so disappointing, since its politics was so diluted and big business interests linked to the Kenyan ruling elite were so brazen in commercializing it. Even Petrobras, the Brazilian state corporation that is a leading exploiter of the natural resource wealth of Latin America, was busy trumpeting itself as a friend of the Forum. There was a strong sense of going backward rather than forward in Nairobi.

The WSF is at a crossroads. Hugo Chavez captured the essence of the conjuncture when he warned delegates in January 2006 about the danger of the WSF becoming simply a forum of ideas with no agenda for action. He told participants that they had no choice but to address the question of power: "We must have a strategy of 'counter-power.' We, the social movements and political movements, must be able to move into spaces of power at the local, national, and regional level."

Developing a strategy of counter-power or counter-hegemony need not mean lapsing back into the old hierarchical and centralized modes of organizing characteristic of the old left. Such a strategy can, in fact, be best advanced through the multilevel and horizontal networking that the movements and organisations represented in the WSF have excelled in advancing their particular struggles. Articulating their struggles in action will mean forging a common strategy while drawing strength from and respecting diversity.

After the disappointment that was Nairobi, many long-standing participants in the Forum are asking themselves: Is the WSF still the most appropriate vehicle for the new stage in the struggle of the global justice and peace movement? Or, having fulfilled its historic function of aggregating and linking the diverse counter-movements spawned by global capitalism, is it time for the WSF to fold up its tent and give way to new modes of global organisation of resistance and transformation?

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The 20th century has shown the limitations of both the state and the market as guarantors of justice and peace

Shaping a New Politics for the 21st Century

Nicola Bullard

A new stage in the evolution of the global justice movement was reached with the inauguration of the World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in January 2001. Ten years ago, countries across Latin America were following the Washington line, slavishly adopting neo-liberal policies of trade and financial liberalisation, and regurgitating the globalisation cant. Brazil, although on the other side of the world, was battered by the Asian financial crisis, proving that risks of financial liberalisation can spread very far indeed.

Ten years later, Latin America is unrecognisable: individual countries and the region as a whole are adopting more autonomous positions vis-à-vis the dominant powers and, in some cases, defying dominant economic thinking. The political landscape is a mix of overtly anti-imperialist governments, such as Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia and Ecuador, and centre-left governments with a nationalist orientation such as Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina. Pro-US and pro neo-liberal governments are now a minority, not least because of the extraordinary rise of radical social movements demanding a change from the devastating neo-liberal policies of the past two decades.

President Hugo Chavez is the most outspoken critic of the US and has even used Venezuela's vast and recently nationalized oil reserves to provide subsidized fuel to poor communities in the US: a brilliant public relations tactic to counter the anti-Chavez campaign in the US and to highlight poverty in the North. In Ecuador and Bolivia, popular leftist presidents have been elected with the strong support of social movements – especially indigenous movements – and moved quickly to nationalize gas and oil or renegotiate contracts with energy companies operating in the countries, to signal their break with the past and assert their sovereignty.

Even beyond these three countries, which are in the vanguard of attempting to reverse policies of trade and financial liberalization and privatisation that have impoverished the majority of their peoples, other nations are distancing themselves from the US and challenging the hegemony of the 'Washington Consensus'. Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia have all re-paid their outstanding debts to the IMF (indeed, Venezuela is now so flush with cash that many Latin American leaders call Caracas instead of Washington). In the WTO, Latin American countries are important actors in several groups opposing the negotiating positions of the US and the EU.

China's transition to a market economy, which had started in the late 1970s, culminated in 2001 when it joined the WTO after almost fifteen years of negotiations. Since then China has become the saviour of capitalism: hundreds of European and US companies survive by relocating their production to China, US consumer demand remains buoyant thanks to cheap China-made products, and across the world investors get fat returns on Chinese business. On the other hand, China is blamed for single-handedly driving down labour and environmental standards, as if China alone were responsible for the inevitable results of globalised capitalism. In all arenas – trade, finance, politics, security – China is now part of the big picture. India, too, is positioning itself to be a rising star in the global economy and the trio of Brazil, India and China (BRIC) are becoming influential players in economic and political spheres.

Developing countries are also making their own agreements outside of the WTO. Brazil, China and India, as well as Venezuela and South Africa and many others, are pushing ahead with South-South trade and investment agreements which circumvent or exclude the big economies. These new trading arrangements are not without their problems, as they are driven largely by the interests of northern transnationals based in the South and emerging Chinese, Indian and Brazilian TNCs rather than the spirit of South-South solidarity. What's more, they do little to challenge or reverse the resource intensive, finance-driven, export-oriented model of economic development that is the bedrock of neo-liberal thinking. There are, however, some efforts to create alternative models: such as the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), an attempt by Venezuela to build an alternative regional cooperation arrangement that explicitly challenges trade liberalization and imperialism.

CHINA



Contemporary China's Emerging Movements for Social Justice

Dorothy Guerrero

China continues to shake the world. Its re-emergence as a leading force in the global economy and its growing influence in the international community are increasingly felt by both the older industrialized economies and the South. China also continues to challenge common perceptions of political economy. Everyone who is concerned about China, those who live within or outside its borders, are grappling with the central paradox of understanding an authoritarian state fostering a free-market economy while espousing socialism.

Unfortunately, the economic leaders in many developing countries focus only on China's employment of a trickle-down type of development model that relies on foreign investments and job creation through massive infrastructure projects and sweatshops that are forcing laborers to work for 60-70 hours a week when they talk about emulating China to attain their own economic growth.



They fail to grasp that China's economic take-off was also aided by its use of economic policies such as protectionism, targeted investments, financial supports, etc. Many also neglect the fact that the Chinese people enjoy guaranteed access to land, education and basic services (although it is rapidly eroding now). Those that are beguiled by China's impressive growth rate and the way it compressed 150 years of market capitalism into three decades commonly underestimate the impacts of China's catch-up development track, which is now causing huge social and environmental problems to its people.

Unlike Japan in the 1970s and 1980s, China is exerting its political muscle to match its growing economic status. Within a short period, it managed to shift its foreign policy from that of an inward-looking developing country to one that could challenge the dominance of the US in various regions. Its fast-paced military build-up is increasing apprehensions in Pentagon about a possible rival superpower and Beijing's engagement with the international institutions is becoming increasingly visible and influential.

Although still tempered by its current hesitation to take a leadership position, China's role in the WTO, especially its identification with the G20 and the G33, is attracting speculation whether this could lead to possible strategic resistance against the major powers within the WTO. China's aggressive wooing of other developing countries into bilateral free trade agreements shows an increasing competition that could develop into wider "inter-imperialist rivalries" between China and the other big economic powers. Those outside the elite circle argue that such rivalry is not making other developing countries more prosperous and stable. On the contrary, it is leading to more desperate competition among the weak.

In the United Nations, China has veto powers in the Security Council. When the UN needs peacekeepers, it is turning increasingly to China, which is now the 13th largest contributor to missions. Its insistence on a "G77 plus China" position also poses the important need to watch if China's positioning on various issues like global warming, arms reduction, peace and security, etc. reflects or sets aside the concerns of the South. China has proven that it could also use its growing influence to hold tempting political carrots to its allies.

In international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the regional development banks, China is increasingly asserting its voice and power as well. China's export credit and guarantee agencies, particularly China EximBank and Sinosure, are now playing a crucial role in fostering the rapid expansion of Chinese trade and overseas investments and the China EximBank is now the world's third largest export credit agency. China's emergence as the new source of financing is felt not just by its Asian neighbors but also in Africa where it is one of the main sources of goods and finance. China is funding mines, dams and many big infrastructure projects in the continent.

Chinese transnational companies are also deepening their operations in Africa. There are now 800 Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) with a total investment of US\$6.27 billion. Heads of state and dignitaries from 48 African countries attended the Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) that was held in Beijing in November 2006. The FOCAC is the biggest international summit hosted by the Chinese capital to date. Its huge success shows China's new role in the continent. Although Africa is a very good case study from which to analyze China's new role in the South, it is equally important to monitor China's growing presence in other regions.

Activism in China is still generally at the level of individual activism that inspires a small group of volunteers. This is because the space for political organisation remains very limited. In the last few years, concern about the growing disparity between the living conditions of the rural and urban dwellers prompted the Party to introduce reforms in order to ease sentiments that could eventually challenge the legitimacy of its governance. Demonstrations

and riots have become near-daily occurrences as farmers protest loss of land to land developers, as workers lose their jobs, and as commercialisation and privatisation of social welfare and social security programs, especially in areas like housing, healthcare and education, continue to rise. It is estimated that over the last couple of years, one protest has occurred every six minutes in China. The Chinese Public Security Ministry reported that more than 87,000 "mass incidents" occurred in 2006 alone.

Considering the political environment in China, such reports of public protests foretell of nothing less than dramatic political possibilities. It is a sign that the people of China are no longer happy with the current trajectory of economic growth; they are now clamouring for that growth to be more equitable and to affect their lives positively. Due to the country's past isolation and limits in the political environment, many of these emerging groups do not link their local struggles with other domestic issues and global campaigns. Focus is making efforts to link these local struggles and activists to the networks and various social justice movements at the regional and global levels.

Focus is examining many of these issues, producing up-to-date analysis, as well as facilitating discussions that deal with the many aspects of China's new role in the global political economy. During the second ASEAN Civil Society Conference that was held in Cebu City in December, Focus organized a workshop on China's relationship with the ASEAN and its member countries.

We are engaging with various groups in China including the burgeoning Chinese civil society groups representing rural communities, the environment, women, workers, academics, especially those belonging to the New Left, which are advocating a "Chinese alternative" to the neo-liberal market economy, as well as some progressive people in the media.

There are real, remarkable and significant Chinese initiatives that are seeking to promote social justice ideals. Focus on the Global South is relating with the groups mentioned above, as well as the many newly emerging groups such as local networks that are seeking to work on issues that concerns the operations of international financial institutions, transnational corporations, etc. We cooperate with them through sharing of information, insights and views from abroad about China's global economic and political role, nature and directions of economic development inside China and how this is driving China's economic role abroad.

Focus also launched a three-week international course on "Globalisation, Social Justice and Civil Society" in October, which attracted 280 applicants from 54 countries. The course welcomed its first batch of nine young Chinese activists from different provinces and organisations that are working on issues that concerns the environment, development, food security and sustainable agriculture, HIV/AIDS, women, human rights and workers rights and migration of labor. These

activists, together with 19 other participants from Asia, Latin America and Africa benefited from the expertise of an international pool of lecturers, activists and in-house campaigners from Focus. The course offered them that rare opportunity to discuss and link their respective issues together. After the course, they visited India and met with various social movements there.

(1) Martyn Davies, "Yin and Yang," Financial Mail, February 2, 2007

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

Develop the framework of our engagement and partnership with progressive Chinese NGOs/institutions, social movements and individual activists
Contribute in the realization of positive changes in China through assisting progressive civil society organisations there
Engage Chinese activists, progressive academics and journalists in the global justice movement
Produce, in cooperation with progressive groups and individuals in China, analyses and assessments of political and economic trends that can be used for national or international campaigns
Help/facilitate linkages and relationships between Chinese organisations and groups from other parts of Asia, Latin America and Africa

Main activities in 2006

International Course on Globalisation, Social Justice and Civil Society in Bangkok, October 1-22
Public Seminar on China and Globalisation in Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, in October
China visit and discussions with local groups in Kunming, Beijing and Shanghai in April and in Beijing in November
Workshop on China and the ASEAN in Cebu City, Philippines, December



In 2006, Focus remained actively involved in numerous efforts by peoples' movements and civil society alliances to defend peoples' rights to resources, food, employment, housing and public goods and services. Prominent among these are movements for food and water sovereignty, integral redistributive land and agrarian reform, the rights of forest dwellers and indigenous communities to their territories, and the rights of urban poor communities to affordable and quality housing and services. Focus has worked in various coalitions to build and support popular campaigns against policies and measures that enable the expansion of corporate power into the economy, society, environment and politics.

Food, Land, Water: The Elements of Life

Shalmali Guttal and Mary Ann Manahan

Peoples' Food Sovereignty

"Peoples food sovereignty" was first articulated by La Via Campesina at the World Food Summit (WFS) in 1996. Although Via Campesina does not claim to have invented the concept, it has certainly promoted and popularised it. Peoples' food sovereignty offers both a strategy to resist and topple the corporate food regime, as well as directions for building alternative food and agriculture systems. It is rooted in a human rights framework and agro-ecological production. It advocates small producer-driven agriculture (as opposed to agribusiness, corporate and market driven agriculture) based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. It promotes the revitalisation of rural economies and the political and economic rights of all food producers (farmers, fishers, pastoralists, workers and indigenous communities) as preconditions to long-term food security.

Focus has worked closely with Via Campesina to elaborate the concept and flesh out policies and practices that can make food sovereignty a reality across the world. These include bringing down the WTO trade regime, dismantling corporate-friendly Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) regimes, promoting progressive agrarian reform, reinstating policies that protect small producers and workers from dumping and import surges, upholding the rights of producers and workers to productive resources, assets, technology and essential services, and reaching out to society about the importance of purchasing locally produced food.

In India, Focus is associated with a farmer led national campaign against genetically modified (GM) foods and seeds which aims to declare India a GM-free zone. Focus provides technical, organisational and modest material support to this campaign and to local seed banks and agro-ecological agriculture. Focus is involved with local and national farmers' unions to find long-term solutions to the deepening agrarian crisis, immediate ways to stop farmers' suicides, and steps that central and state governments must urgently take to relieve the economic distress of farmers and other food producers. Internationally, Focus has continued to advocate for food sovereignty as the guiding framework for trade and investment negotiations. From 2005 onwards, Focus was on the planning committee for an international forum on food sovereignty organised by peoples' movements and networks in Mali in early 2007.

Land and agrarian reform

Some of the most pitched resource battles in Asia have been for land and common territories. Land confiscation and grabbing, forced evictions and involuntary resettlement of local communities to make way for industrial agriculture, large infrastructure projects, tourism, extractive industry and luxury housing are commonplace across the region.

Focus has supported the struggles of peasant, forest, fishing, indigenous and urban poor communities to protect and reclaim their lands and territories in a number of ways. Through the Land Research and Action Network (LRAN) and on its own, Focus has documented and provided critiques of the impacts of the capitalist development model on communities' access to land and associated resources. Also through LRAN, Focus has highlighted the human rights violations, violence and repression being perpetrated on communities and individuals resisting incursions on their lands and territories. Focus has participated with La Via Campesina, the MST in Brazil, the Federation of Indonesian Peasants (FSPI) in Indonesia and other national movements in mobilisations against the takeover of community lands by state authorities and private companies. And finally, Focus has participated in numerous conferences and meetings where it has advocated the urgency of integral land and agrarian reform and protecting the rights of peoples and communities to their resources.

In India, Focus is a close ally of the National Forum of Forest Peoples and Forest Workers (NFFPFW) and in the past year, has worked with the network on several fronts: analysing the involvement of the World Bank and ADB in forestry sector reforms, monitoring issues such as carbon trading in the context of land and forest management and organising educational and strategy meetings on IFIs. Focus is an active member of the Maharashtra state and national campaigns against Special Economic Zones (SEZs), and the national campaign against the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), one of whose aims is to acquire lands for corporate investment and enforce private property regimes to attract foreign investment capital.

In Cambodia, Focus has documented the growing crisis of land and resource alienation and the violent repressions by state and private law enforcement authorities on communities resisting land and forest grabs. Focus has helped to organise national and regional meetings of affected communities and civil society organisations on issues such as industrial tree plantations, ADB involvement in natural resource management and governance of land and natural resources. Focus is also supporting the formation of informal local networks committed to preventing land grabs and reclaiming stolen lands.

In the Philippines, rural rights movements and advocates for agrarian reform are confronting a big challenge as the future of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme (CARP), one of the country's recent landmarks in the struggle for land and social justice, hangs in the balance. The law that extended additional funding for CARP implementation explicitly mentions that funding for the agrarian reform program will be until 2008 only. With 2008 fast approaching, questions are being raised within the government, to the government, and among potential agrarian reform beneficiaries and agrarian reform advocates on whether CARP's implementation will and should continue beyond 2008. On top of this, the remaining lands to be distributed are the most contentious—commercial farms and plantations owned by big landowners and corporations in the Visayas and Mindanao regions. Mining companies and agribusiness also threaten the access and control of communities, rural poor and landless to their land.

There is brewing social unrest in the countryside as big landowners and their employees disregard Philippine laws and engage with complete impunity in a wide range of criminal activities that seriously undermine the effective access of rural poor communities to land and productive resources. The Philippine state, on the other hand, is failing abjectly to fulfill its obligations to respect, protect and uphold the human rights of the rural poor, despite being a signatory to the various relevant international human rights law conventions. The rural rights movements and advocates of agrarian reform, human rights and social justice are waging extremely difficult struggles to defend the lives, rights and access to resources of the rural poor.

Against this backdrop, Focus started to actively engage in the national policy debate on agrarian reform through action research, mobilizations, roundtables and fora, networking, policy and legislative engagements. While building its stock knowledge and new information on emerging issues on land, Focus continued to work with peasant organisations and agrarian reform groups in the country such as the Aliyansa ng mga Maliit na Magbubukid at Mangingisda (AMMM), Pambansang Koalisyon ng mga Kababaihan sa Kanayunan, PARAGOS-Pilipinas, UNORKA, and Kilo! AR (Agrarian Reform Movement). It actively participated and supported the campaigns against the criminalization of peasant struggles. This included participating in international fact-finding missions, organizing press conferences and meetings, solidarity work, and producing educational materials in the form of multimedia presentations on the increasing agrarian-related human rights violations. Finally, as part of its commitments, Focus facilitated the linkages between groups in the country and regional/international movements such as La Via Campesina.

WATER

From Peru to Ghana, communities and peoples' campaigns have exposed the failures of privatised water services: skyrocketing water prices, broken pipes, unequal access to safe and affordable water and improved sanitation, increased debts, under-funding and non-investment. It has become undeniably clear that privatised water services benefit those who live in affluent areas. Private water companies are reluctant to meet their commitments to connect areas where the poor live to water supply mains. Their own aversion to what they consider 'high risk operations' is pushing them to scale down operations in developing countries and seek more affluent markets where they can be assured of revenues.

Suez was kicked out of Bolivia and Argentina. Campaigns against PepsiCo Inc. and Coca Cola Company in India exposed how the big bottling companies are draining the much needed groundwater of communities amidst intensifying water and agrarian crises. The southern Indian state of Kerala banned the production of Coke and Pepsi, and Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Chattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Delhi have banned the sale of these beverages in educational institutions. There is a constitutional court challenge in South Africa and the Philippines questioning the privatisation efforts of governments at the expense of public interest. In Mexico City, the site of the fourth edition of the corporate-run World Water Forum from March 19-22, thousands of 'water warriors', including rural and urban communities, students, trade unions, social movements, indigenous peoples, women groups, and NGOs, from various parts of the world gathered to take part in a week-long mobilization to defend the world's water.

At the same time, alternatives to water privatisation are being developed and implemented, i.e. progressive public water management models and systems and public-public partnerships (PUPs), which are new forms of local cooperation and not-for-profit partnerships between and among public water operators, communities, trade unions and other key groups. The experiences of cities and towns in Brazil, Malaysia, Indonesia – and even countries in the North such as France and Italy – prove that public water delivery services can be improved and that community participation and social control must be at the heart of these models. Even the United Nations has upheld water as a human right and has adopted PUPs as a model—promoting a "global water operator partnership" geared towards promoting the exchange of experiences and facilitating contact among utilities. The movements feel that they are turning the tide, that they are on the offensive.

Through its country programs in India and the Philippines, Focus participated in national campaigns to stop the privatisation efforts of governments and to build alternatives. In India, Focus is an active member of Mumbai Paani, an initiative of concerned citizens and groups in Mumbai to keep water under democratic control. It monitors and analyzes the water reforms project in Mumbai and prepares informational materials for popular mobilisation. Focus also played an active role in key water justice networks such as the Reclaiming Public Water network, a loose coalition of activists, public utility managers, trade unions, community leaders promoting alternatives to water privatisation. It continued to be a source of grounded and accurate analysis and information on emerging issues on the privatisation of the commons. For instance, it received numerous requests from national and international civil society organisations to provide trainings, inputs and talks on the experiences of countries in Asia. Its active participation, for the first time, in the Jornadas for the Defense of Water, the World Water Forum parallel civil society events in Mexico, was welcomed by the water justice movements. New contacts and linkages with regional and international researchers and activists monitoring these and related issues have also been made.

Our experiences of 2006 have strengthened our belief that movements, struggles, coalitions and alliances to defend and reclaim the commons have greater chances of success and of sustaining victories if they are locally and nationally grounded, rooted in genuine democracy, informed by thorough and accurate documentation and analyses, and able to mobilise broad and diverse societal support. Focus will continue to work along these lines in the future as well.

"We pledge to...support peoples' movements and organisations across the region in their efforts to reclaim people's democracy, sovereignty, self-determination and self-rule to create a better world." (1)

Gaining Strength against the World Bank and ADB in India

Benny Kuruvilla

The 39th Annual Governors' Meeting (AGM) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) held in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad in May 2006 offered a rare opportunity to turn the national spotlight on the ADB. Preparations for a counter summit began as early as September 2005. By April 2006, the Peoples Forum Against the ADB (PFA) had issued a 'Call to Action'

(see <http://www.asianpeoplesforum.net/twiki/tiki-index.php?page=CallForActionFeb2006>) and preparatory meetings were held in Kerala, Karnataka, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Chattisgarh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Orissa and New Delhi. Meetings were also held in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines. In the days preceding the AGM, street corner meetings were held in Hyderabad to spread local awareness about the ADB.

When the AGM began on May 3, the PF proved to be a credible counter to the hollow "pro-poor" development rhetoric from the convention center where the AGM was being held. Peoples' movements from India had set the tone for the rules of engagement and the PF did not dilly-dally with the official AGM process, though individual groups from outside India were free to participate in the official AGM events. The PF focused on getting out two clear political messages: one, the ADB is undemocratic, un-reformable and has to go; and two, there are several alternative visions of development and avenues of finance that governments must pursue. The local and national print/electronic media carried stories and news reports of the PF events for the duration of the AGM.

(see <http://www.asianpeoplesforum.net/twiki/tiki-index.php?page=PFAADBInTheNews> for an indicative list of media coverage.)

Focus on the Global South was deeply involved in the process of building the PF, mobilising participation from and support for peoples' movements in the PF, and organising the events in Hyderabad. PF events included plenaries on development-induced displacement, militarisation and reclaiming democracy, and testimonials from communities negatively affected by ADB loans and projects. The public meeting and rally on May 5 saw over 5,000 activists in the streets of Hyderabad demanding the ADB shut its operations. Focus coordinated the media activities of the PF.

(PressKitPFAADBMay2006 <http://www.asianpeoplesforum.net/twiki/tiki-index.php?page=PressKitPFAADBMay2006>)

Three press conferences were organised during the period of the AGM—all of them well attended—and overall, press/media coverage of the PF was extensive and balanced.

(For the entire list of press releases see http://www.asianpeoplesforum.net/twiki/tikiview_articles.php?type=Press+Release)

The PF, though formed for the duration of the AGM, continued to be the reference forum for ADB monitoring and mobilisations across the country. Expressing support and solidarity to the Hyderabad Pledge, the PF called upon peoples organisations and other civil society groups across India to observe August 9 as 'ADB Quit India Day'. In New Delhi, over 100 protesters entered the premises of the ADB country office demanding 'ADB Quit India Quit Asia Pacific'. The protesters blocked the gates to the building for an hour until the Delhi Police came to the rescue of the beleaguered ADB staff.

A little over a month after the AGM (June 14 2006), when the ADB held a so-called civil society consultation on its Public Communications Policy (PCP) in Bangalore, local PF groups and others staged a public walkout rejecting the PCP; among other things, for its failure to guarantee timely disclosure of all relevant project information to communities and local elected representatives.

The National Alliance of Peoples Movements (NAPM) organised its biennial convention in Bangalore from May 30-June 2, 2006. The convention issued a call against the World Bank and ADB and promised more intense campaigns across the country. The ADB-supported Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission was rejected by the NAPM and was identified among the key battles for the coming year. Focus was invited as a resource group on IFI and WTO issues for the convention.

In September the radar was turned on the World Bank. Focus, along with the PF and Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF), organised a two-day strategy meeting in New Delhi on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Over 40 activists participated in the meeting and pooled their collective knowledge for strategising against the institutions and for supporting alternatives to development financing and governance.

Later in the month, several Indian activists joined thousands of others from across the world at Batam, Indonesia to convene the International Peoples Forum (IPF) vs the IMF and the World Bank. This was the peoples counter-event to the IMF/World Bank Annual Meeting in Singapore from September 19-20.

The 2nd Annual Conference of the National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers (NFFPPFW) was held in November 2006 in Ranchi, the capital of Indian state of Jharkhand. Hundreds of delegates deliberated on diverse issues ranging from community control of forests, environmental politics and livelihoods, privatisation of forests and the role of IFIs. The conference issued a moratorium on the entry of IFIs and bilateral donors such as the World Bank, ADB and the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) into the forestry sector through projects such as monoculture plantations in poplar and eucalyptus. As an ally and supporter of the NFFPPFW, Focus participated in the conference and assisted with the press and media activities.

On December 8, 2006, the ADB's India Country Director Tadashi Kondo and Kerala's Resident Commissioner Inderjit Singh signed a loan agreement in New Delhi for the US \$316.1 million Kerala Sustainable Urban Development Project (KSUDP). The loan is expected to usher in wide-ranging urban sector reforms in Kerala. The ADB loan also kicked off a major political battle in the state. Several eminent citizens, progressive political parties, unions, social movements, environmental groups and activists came together under the banner of 'Kerala Anti ADB Loan Campaign Committee' to expose the anti-democratic and anti-development nature of the loan and to show that there is indeed a political and economic alternative to the ADB. Focus did a first level analysis of the conditionalities in the loan, which was widely used by the campaign in both English and Malayalam, the local language.

(<http://www.focusweb.org/india/content/view/855/>)

The campaign committee has filed a writ petition in the Kerala High court challenging the constitutional validity of the loan and has also held several public meetings across the state informing people about the need to stop this loan. Focus worked with the campaign committee on an open letter to the Kerala Chief Minister V. S. Achuthanandan urging him to reject the ADB loan and use the controversy around the loan to forge a new vision on urban development for the state. The letter, which identified several alternative democratic sources of development finance, was endorsed by over a 100 groups from across the country.

(<http://www.focusweb.org/india/content/view/862/>)

The successes in 2006 show that popular pressure, demonstrations and other actions coupled with the use of democratic channels can provide real opportunities to change the rules of how governments and societies engage – or not – with IFIs. India has access to alternative sources of development finance, economic expertise and institutional capacity to be able to reject both the ADB and the World Bank. What is absent is political will from a central government that is as committed to neo-liberal economic policies as the IFIs and which uses IFI conditionalities and policy reforms as cover to channel public and common resources to corporate India. An urgent task before peoples' movements and civil society organisations is to build a sufficiently broad and strong social and political base across the country to bring the Indian Government under democratic control, and ensure that it works for the good of the majority of its people, rather than for a handful of domestic and foreign private interests.

See <http://www.asianpeoplesforum.net/twiki/tiki-index.php?page=HyderabadPledge>

(1) Excerpt from 'The Hyderabad Pledge: ADB Quit Asia and the Pacific'. May 6, 2006. Signed by over 115 groups from across Asia at the conclusion of the 39th Annual Governors Meeting (AGM) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Hyderabad, India.

(2) The PF is a broad and diverse collective of over 100 social movements, struggle groups and civil society groups from across India and Asia, including the National Hawkers Federation, National Fishworkers Forum, Plachimada Solidarity Committee, New Trade Union Initiative, National Alliance of Peoples Movements, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Indian Social Action Forum and National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers. Focus on the Global South is PF Organising Committee member.

India's push to be a global player both politically and economically is reshaping urban India. Mumbai represents a microcosm of the sweeping changes in urban India. The push for a global and world class city of Mumbai is encapsulated in "Vision Mumbai" – a plan pushed by industry and government alike to make the city more attractive to global business, catering to a high-end service industry, free from the physical manifestations of poverty – "slums" and higher economic growth being the buzzword.

But in spite of campaigns such as "India Shining" and "India Poised" the reality on the ground belies these feel-good campaigns. The result of the National Sample Survey Organisation's 61st Round (2004-05) confirms jobless growth under reforms, with annual growth rate of employment hovering around 2.5 per cent during 1999-2005. The rate of unemployment during the same period went up to 3.1 per cent.

MUMBAI, the largest metropolis, in India is also witnessing this jobless growth. The city has today transformed from a manufacturing city to a service city. Once considered a Mecca by the migrating rural and unemployed population, today formal employment has shrunk while there is a sharp rise in informal employment such as street vending or hawking. Recent literature estimates that around 200,000 are working in the hawking sector. Out of this, around 30 per cent of the hawkers in Mumbai were once employed in the formal sector such as the textile mills. But in a city where the most precious resource is land, conflicts over this resource are frequent and intense. This conflict manifests as class conflict between the educated employed upper classes and the uneducated and unskilled lower classes. Over the years the hawkers in the country have organized themselves and come together to form an umbrella body – the National Hawkers Federation- and the conflict has played out in courts, the media and electoral battles. A fragile peace prevails today in spite of demarcated hawking and non-hawking zones with evictions and raids by the local municipal government – the Brihan Mumbai Mahanagar Palika continuing. Informalisation of labour and dismantling of pro-worker labour legislations has made the workforce in urban centres extremely vulnerable.

2006 saw the closing of the remaining open spaces in the city with its judgment on the much vexed and debated issue of mill land. The Supreme Court of India in early 2006 supported the right of the mill owners and builders to develop the 600 acres of land belonging to closed mills, to build shopping malls and high rise apartments in this traditional working class belt, without giving two thirds of the land to the city for open spaces, infrastructure, public housing and housing for mill workers, as they should have under the original law. Mill lands, now prime real estate in the centre of Mumbai was given to mill owners, at rock bottom prices and in many cases, on lease, a century ago.

Mumbai People's Action Committee, a broad umbrella coalition of labour groups, trade unions, civil society organisations, activists and non-governmental organisations including Focus on the Global South, among others, put up a strong resistance with demonstrations, public protests and lobbying with elected representatives.

Mumbai: City of Struggles

Meena Menon and Minu Jose*

Mumbai continues to have one of the HIGHEST priced real estate in the world.

Mumbai continues to have one of the highest priced real estate in the world. This fight over land has intensified over the years and housing remains the most contested of issues in the city. The government of Maharashtra in late 2006 bought out a draft housing policy for the state and invited suggestions from the public on the policy. The draft policy of the government reflected the corporate interests that control real estate and housing. Focus on the Global South took the initiative to mobilize urban activists, planners, architects and activists to prepare detailed comments on this policy to the government.

India's continued push towards liberalisation of its economy and of basic services such as health, education and water made its impact felt on urban India. With government spending on these sectors declining over the years and the slow withdrawal of the state from these services, basic services in Mumbai are being gradually pushed beyond the reach of the common people.

One of the basic services that is currently under attack in Mumbai is water. The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) has received a grant from the Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility (PPIAF) a consortium that includes the World Bank is funding a 30 million rupees study on water supply in K-East Ward of Mumbai. Though local government officials and the World Bank, which is the implementing agency for the grant insist that there is no privatisation involved, the contract involving Castalia, the consultant, and the World Bank shows the contrary.

Resistance to this move is growing in the city leading to the formation of a coalition Mumbai Paani, an initiative of individuals, groups, organisations and social movements to address concerns and intervene in the ongoing privatisation of water in the city of Mumbai. Initiated in late March 2006, the group has slowly expanded to include a myriad of groups ranging from individuals, community groups, non-governmental organisations, research organisations and larger people's groups and networks. Focus on the Global South is one of the initial and key members of this growing campaign.

Urban policy in India is a subject matter of the State government. But the Government of India launched two schemes in late 2005 to cover all urban areas in India – Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns and the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission. These schemes have a "carrot and stick" policy of money for reforms. Reforms which are the centrepiece of this approach include financial, governance, legislative reforms and those concerning the urban poor. Advocating private-public partnership in all projects including in basic services, the thrust of the approach is to towards removing constraints in the operations of free market in land. There is growing resistance to this vision of cities as engines of growth. Focus's role in this resistance is of facilitating, as part of MPAC, the evolving of a people's alternatives to the current vision of cities and providing a strong critique to this model. This exercise is critical to the development of resistance to the present urban development paradigm.

The widening of the chasm between the have and the have-nots – whether urban and rural, intra-urban or inter-urban – has become the hallmark of the "post-reform era". Class has become the defining identity in urban India today and one that determines all aspects of life. Mumbai, the urban capital of India, epitomizes this.

* Our comrade and friend Minu Jose died on 19 April 2007. We continue this work in her memory, inspired by her example.

2006 was a very turbulent year for Thailand, with great political tensions. The most popularly elected Prime Minister of all time, Thaksin Shinawatra, was faced with the nationwide campaign to oust him after the sale of his family's shares in the huge public company he had built, Shin Corporation, to Singapore's state-owned holding company Temasek. Demonstrations continued for several months in Bangkok and other urban areas, on occasion attracting more than 100,000 people. The People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) was led by a media czar, a veteran politician and leader of a radical Buddhist movement and three social movements activists from the democracy campaign, trade unions and a teachers' union. Democracy was the focal point of the opposition forces. Also joining the PAD were a wide range of civil society groups, including public sector trade unions, farmer groups such as the Alternative Agriculture Network, People living with HIV, FTA Watch and anti-privatisation coalitions, etc. It is important to note that significant number of people were middle-class urban people who had been, until then, largely politically inactive.

Although Thaksin was not able to satisfactorily clear the accusations of corruption and the alleged misuse of power, he still enjoyed significant support from the rural sector, especially from his base in the North and Northeast and from the direct beneficiaries of his community-level credit expansion policies. Moreover, he had full support from the police force and maintained his strong influence over government officials. Thus a deep division emerged in Thai society, between pro- and anti-Thaksin groups in both the rural and urban areas.

Thailand: State of Uncertainty

Chanida Bamford, Jacques-chai Chomthongdi
and Sajin Prachason

For FTA Watch, a coalition of NGOs, academics and social movements campaigning against free trade (of which Focus Thailand is a member) and many other progressive groups, Thaksin's regime was a threat to the sustainable and equitable development of the people. His destructive approaches and policies, including FTAs, privatisation, undermining the independent institutions of governance, to say nothing of persistent human rights violations, had to be challenged openly through democratic means. And for FTA Watch particularly, joining the PAD was also considered as an opportunity to debunk the myths of free trade. More importantly, a lot of participating civil society groups saw the need for the public to think about broader agendas of social and political reforms, rather than concentrating on specific corruption cases.

In the midst of fear of impending violent clashes between the pro- and anti-Thaksin groups, the smooth military takeover on September 19 was a welcome relief to many Thais. Many hoped that the removal of the controversial Prime Minister would help improve the political, economic and social situation, since the coup leaders were perceived by the media as honest people with no political ambition. However, although there were no violent clashes between Thaksin's supporters (including some sections of the armed forces) and his opponents, the general situation remains very doubtful. Firstly, Thaksin remains popular among the rural population and his political canvassers maintain their loyalty. Many believe that Thaksin will be able to return and regain political control. While remaining outside the country, Thaksin has effectively used his wealth and connections to undermine the new regime. Secondly, the new political elites, who were installed in the cabinet and the legislative assembly by the coup leaders, have increasingly distanced themselves from a number of academics, activists, NGOs, and social movements that were keen to see progressive changes. The lack of genuine economic and political reforms has failed to mark a change from the Thaksin era. Moreover, while the government has adopted what appeared at first glance to be a softer approach regarding the problems in Thailand's three southern provinces, violence keeps escalating with no sign of resolution. At this point, the government remains fragile. There is no indication of political and economic stability in the near future and there are even rumours that a new coup is looming, possibly by the same junta, to consolidate their power and adopt, this time, a harsher approach.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND NGOS BLOCK FTA

When the storm of national politics began to gather strength, the NGOs and social movements had an important but more complicated role to play. In the first week of the year, the biggest mass mobilizations to date against free trade agreements took place in Chiang Mai. More than ten thousand activists and members of various social movements rallied outside the hotel where the sixth round of the Thai-US FTA negotiations was being held. At one point, demonstrators stormed into the hotel at which point panicked negotiators fled out the service doors at the back of the hotel. That official meeting turned out to be the last round of the Thai-US negotiations. This was two months prior to the birth of the PAD, and it happened in Thaksin's home town, Chiang Mai. Central to this mobilization was FTA Watch.

While FTA Watch was successful in bringing the Thailand-US trade negotiations to a grinding halt, it has also played an important role in raising broader debates about free trade into the public arena. Although free trade capitalism still dominates the hearts and minds of the Thai elite and the majority of the population are not aware of its implications, signing a trade deal is no longer a piece of cake. When Thailand joined the WTO a decade ago, the parliament took no more than five minutes to ratify the accession, and since then no FTA has ever been presented for parliamentary scrutiny or debate. Under the current coup-installed government, however, the Japan-Thailand Economic Partnership Agreement (JTEPA) took nearly six hours of the National Legislative Assembly debate largely due to the successful campaigns of FTA Watch which raised the level of public awareness and forced the legislative assembly to take note of some of the contentious issues in the agreement, such as trade in waste and intellectual property rights.

Similar to FTA Watch, the anti-privatisation campaign has gained significant momentum over the last year. In mid-2006, a group of NGOs was able to put the privatisation process on hold, and even reversed, through legal means. This marked one of the most significant Administration Court cases of the year. Again, public education and mobilization was the crucial factor behind this. It is worth noting that what people may see as a successful resistance is, at least in the Thai experience, the result of a long process of studying the issues, working with the media and parliamentarians, raising public awareness, and good information exchanges with social movements.

FTA and privatisation are only parts of the bigger picture. Thus, there is an attempt to link these issues to the need for genuine public participation in policy-making. As a starting point, FTA Watch is now pushing for a Negotiation and Agreement Making Bill by engaging movements, NGOs, academics, and

the public. The proposal of this Bill, increasingly known as the 'People's Bill on Trade Agreement', has gained some momentum already and has started a broader debate on the need for participatory democracy.

2006 also brought dilemmas and divisions to Thai civil society and social movements. A number of progressive academics, journalists, activists and political groups criticize the PAD for its increasingly royalist stance, even demanding that the more progressive faction of the PAD pull out of the alliance. This division became more obvious following the September 19 coup. Although everyone denounced the coup, one camp was more deliberate and refused to participate in any process related to the coup while the other camp, larger in number, critically engaged in some policy issues particularly in the constitution-drafting process. FTA Watch and the majority of the anti-privatisation coalition have taken the later approach. Whether this division will lead to serious consequences or not is difficult to evaluate at this stage. Still, it is fair to state that it has not, thus far, resulted in any irreversible damage within the civil society sector.

Only one month after the coup and still under martial law, from October 21 to 23, 2006, a wide range of Thai civil society groups, totalling more than 70 and including both camps mentioned above, came together to organize the first Thai Social Forum (TSF). Around three thousand people participated in several dozens of workshops and panel discussions under the overarching theme of "An equal world is possible" with a one-day social movements assembly on "Social and Political Reforms" being a prominent feature at the forum.

TSF proved to be useful in terms of cross-network information exchange. For example, FTA Watch held a series of "Alternative Economy" workshops, where people from a variety of networks, such as anti-privatisation, alternative energy, anti-free trade campaign, consumer campaign, trade unions, farmers, members of provincial chambers of commerce, and so on, discussed alternative approaches both at the macro and micro levels. Nonetheless, there was neither a commitment nor strong signal that this process would continue at the same level. Indeed, there was no clear sign or decision about whether there would be a second TSF. It was evident that different groups which were involved in TSF continue to push for reform, but this happens in a more fragmented fashion.

In sum, civil society groups have contributed significantly to shaping what happened in Thailand in 2006 but whether or not that contribution has strengthened Thai democracy remains debatable. However, it could be argued that too much attention was given to national politics, compared to other dimensions of the society. Hence, different voices and concerns from the grassroots seemed to be overshadowed by the political conflicts at the national level.

PEACE

and people's security



Movements Changing the Course of War
Herbert Docena

The Birth of Peace Mumbai
Varsha Rajan Berry

2006. Iraq is fully pacified, ruled by a US-handpicked government. Its state-owned companies are now fully privatised and its oil resources taken over by the big oil companies. Over fourteen US military bases are spread out across the Tigris and Euphrates. Afghanistan, too, has been stabilized; its gas deposits booked in foreign corporations' accounts as future income for decades to come. The occupation of Palestine continues, the land is fragmented and a 12-metre concrete wall divides communities into isolated Bantustans controlled by the Israeli military. A new government has been installed having surrendered the right to return. Lebanon's south is under Israeli occupation and their soldiers guard the capital. Iran, meanwhile, had just been attacked; tens of thousands lay dead across the land. A new Middle East is born.

Emboldened by its success, the United States sets its sights and trains its guns on North Korea, Venezuela, Cuba, Somalia...Using its newly won sources of hard power, the United States proceeds to buttress the globalised economic system and prepares to launch yet more wars and interventions to export its brand of "democracy" and "freedom." A new world is about to be born.

The above is more or less what the US government, the neo-conservatives manning it and their allies around the world, envisioned would happen as a result of the wars launched after 9/11. That it did not come to pass reflects the state of resistance in 2006 and how this resistance has so far successfully managed to thwart the birth of a new world order built on brute force and aggression.

Movements Changing the Course of War

Herbert Docena

Structural factors, of course, posed limits to US ambitions. Any overextended military can only do so much despite its overwhelming power and resources. But it is not hard to imagine what could have happened if the world's peoples had passively accepted the United States' and its allies' efforts to radically remake the world on their terms.

What could have happened, for instance, if a global anti-war movement did not emerge to protest the invasion of Iraq? Governments around the world would have lined up to bankroll the war, send in troops, and provide the much needed legitimacy to prop up and prolong the occupation. That this did not happen was due to people protesting against the war, exposing the lies, marching on the streets and, in some instances, voting out their governments. What could have happened if the Iraqi people simply sat back, watched, and consented as the United States proceeded to install their preferred government, rewrite their laws, construct bases, privatise their economy, and take control of their oil?

What could have happened if the Palestinians grew weary, gave up, and walked away from their more than fifty-year struggle to reclaim their rights as a people? What could have happened if, in the face of the daily Israeli bombardment of August 2006, the Lebanese acquiesced and threw their hands up in the air? What could have happened if, in the mid-term elections of 2006, the American electorate decided to elect more Republicans to the US Congress and give President George Bush the signal to proceed as he pleases?

In 2006, resistance to wars and occupations deepened, advanced, and consolidated worldwide as evidenced by the unyielding opposition to the triple occupation of Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan; the victory of the Lebanese national resistance during the sudden aggression; and the growing rejection by the American people of the US' project in the region. In Iraq, the resistance movements have managed to foil the US' aim of pacifying the country, thereby frustrating its larger plans in the region. Despite efforts to starve their government of funds and blackmail them into renouncing their democratic choice, the Palestinians continue to oppose the expansion of settlements, the building of the apartheid wall, and any proposed resolution that forces them to forfeit their rights and demand for justice.

Globally, growing public opposition to the occupations have forced government after government to withdraw from the "coalition of the willing" occupying Iraq and Afghanistan. In Italy, for example, the anti-war movement has succeeded in pushing for the exit of Italian troops from Iraq and the demand for the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan is gaining momentum. Around the world, support for the Palestinian cause is growing; a movement for boycotts, sanctions, and divestments against Israeli apartheid is gaining traction. Churches, unions, social movements and other civil society organisations are organizing such campaigns in their own countries on a global scale. Campaigns against draconian measures and legislation enacted as part of the "global war on terror" are challenging the erosion of civil liberties and widespread human rights violations globally. Seeking to stop and prevent wars before they start, a dynamic international network is targeting the very machinery of global militarization by advocating the abolition of foreign military bases and other infrastructure used for wars of aggression and domination.

In Asia, little-known struggles for self-determination and against "internal" colonialism continue. Suppressed and brutalized by the Indonesian government for decades, the people of West Papua continue to fly their "Morning Star" flag. Betrayed by Manila, harassed by hawks in the military, and demonised by the "war on terror," the Moro and other indigenous people in Mindanao in the southern Philippines continue to try to overcome their differences and the weakness of their leaders to press for a measure of self-rule. In the south of Thailand, the uneasy truce between Bangkok and the local Muslim majority erupted into a deadly conflict following heavy-handed intervention from the Thaksin government in 2005. While the political demands of the Muslim population have not been expressed in a unified way, the conflict carries both Islamic identity and separatist sentiments. What is clear, however, is that the military response is not effective.

Within these global, national, and local movements for peace, justice, and self-determination, there continues to be vibrant and intense debates over ideology and strategy. For example, to what extent, on what grounds, and in what ways should secular progressive movements engage with Islamic movements that are arguably the strongest political forces resisting imperialism across West Asia? Given the imperialist strategy to drive a wedge among the forces arrayed against it, how can the progressive movements engage with Islamic movements without shedding their principles and without endorsing the other side's reactionary positions, such as, for example, their views of women, gays, and lesbians or their views on democracy and religious freedom? How should the movement respond to the Islamic movements' own critique of progressive notions of secularism and spirituality? What is the spectrum of Islamic political movements and how should the progressive movements deal with their pluralism and diversity? These questions are increasingly being raised more often among activists though a resolution or a consensus on the answers has yet to emerge. But that they have become current topics of discussion — in a way that they were not years back — only indicate the heightening engagement among the different forces resisting the imperialist offensive.

As left-wing governments take power in Latin America, another focus of debate in the movement is, in what ways should the movements engage with these governments to change the rules of the global order? Can they be depended on to push for peaceful and just solutions to the occupation of Palestine and Iraq, for instance? For some in the movement, Venezuela's and Cuba's own militarist policies, while acknowledged to be a response to the threats they are facing, must continue to be questioned and challenged. Across borders and movements, the age-old differences among anti-imperialists and anti-militarist pacifists on the question of violence have not disappeared; but neither have they served as barriers that could not be scaled when needed. As evidenced in the formation of an international anti-bases network that embraces both wings of the anti-war movement, in the campaign against the Trident nuclear weapons in the UK, or in the nascent campaign against the Ballistic Missile Defense in Eastern Europe, leftists and pacifists are working together more closely than they had since perhaps the end of the Cold War.

As self-determination struggles re-assert themselves over many places in the South, the question of "nationalism" is also being increasingly interrogated. In the Philippines, for instance, where the leftist tradition has strong nationalist undercurrents as a legacy of the long anti-colonial

struggle, the unresolved Moro/Muslim question is forcing a re-thinking of the ideas of nationalism and solidarity at a time of increasing militarization and political crisis. While mistrust and division between the Philippine left and the Moros remain, initiatives in recent years are bridging the gap but more needs to be done.

The decision to resist — and to continue to resist — is a conscious choice; it is seldom spontaneous. The historic February 15, 2003 anti-war protests — the largest globally coordinated demonstrations in history — would not have been possible without the relationships and structures of coordination built through the years with the emergence of the anti-globalisation movement. Opposition to the wars since then, as expressed in various global campaigns, would not have continued in their scale and dynamism without the contacts and organisation built through the World Social Forum process and other anti-war networks. Collective actions, in turn, come out of debates and discussions informed by knowledge and analysis generated and diffused through these networks.

Since May 2003, when Focus took the lead in convening an important anti-war gathering in Jakarta, Indonesia, Focus has been active in organizing gatherings and initiatives that seek to build links across movements divided by geography and issues. Noting the weakness in ties between the movements and the people of West Asia, Focus in 2004 helped organize a landmark conference in Beirut, Lebanon that brought together anti-war and anti-globalisation activists with fellow activists in that critical region. Since then, Focus has followed up on this with annual anti-war assemblies at the World Social Forums.

Building on all that has been achieved, work continued in 2006. Focus began preparing for a conference that will bring Iraqi civil society together with their counterparts outside Iraq to work on concrete projects aimed at ending the isolation of the Iraqi people and supporting their struggle to end occupation and overcome sectarian divisions. Throughout the year, Focus also continued its deep engagement in the project to build an international network for the abolition of foreign military bases by contributing to preparations for a conference on the issue in Ecuador in March 2007. At the same time, Focus continued to research and disseminate information and analysis on various dimensions of global ego-politics in the hope of engaging the movements in debates on how to move forward. Focus also sought to ground its work by deepening its movement-building efforts in the Philippines, India, and Thailand.



While keeping its focus on West Asia, Focus shifted more of its attention to South and Southeast Asia, the region considered by the US as the second front in its global "war on terror," and experiencing an intensifying regional geo-political competition involving India and China and ongoing homegrown self-determination struggles. Focus is building longer-term relationships with local organisations and on research projects documenting and analyzing US military intervention in the region, as well as the dynamics of the escalating conflicts in Mindanao, southern Thailand, Indonesia, Burma, as well as in Sri Lanka, Kashmir, and Nepal.

Programme objective

Roll-back militarization and military intervention in Asia

KEY ACTIVITIES FOR 2006

January : World Social Forum Anti-War Assembly, Caracas, Venezuela

January 26- February 7: Field research and interviews on the US "war on terror", Sulu and Zamboanga provinces Philippines

February 13: Forum on the US-Philippines Visiting Forces Agreement, Manila, Philippines

February 14: Mobilization against the Visiting Forces Agreement, Manila, Philippines

February 16: Forum with Mindanao People's Peace Movement, Manila, Philippines

February 24-26: Conference on Peace and Justice in South Asia, Mumbai, India

March 2: Mobilizations against US President George W. Bush's visit to India, Mumbai

March 5-9: Bud Dahu Centennial Commemorative events, Sulu and Zamboanga City

March 20: Mobilizations to mark Third Anniversary of Invasion of Iraq

May: European Social Forum Anti-War Assembly, Athens, Greece

April 24-26: Fact-finding mission on extra-judicial killings in Central Luzon, Philippines

June: World Peace Forum, Vancouver, Canada

June 4-8: Conference on Oil, Debt and Global Finance, Italy

July 28 - August 3: Preparatory meetings for the 2007 International Conference for the Abolition of Foreign Military, Quito, Ecuador

August 10-16: International Peace Mission to Lebanon

September 3-5: Asia-Europe People's Forum, Helsinki, Finland

September 7-10: Preparatory meetings for the 2007 International Iraq Civil Society Conference, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

September 27: Forum on 'Internal' Conflicts in Southeast Asia, Manila, Philippines

November 16-19: International Conference in Support of the Resistance, Beirut, Lebanon

November 24-26: Mediterranean links: Meeting of civil society organisations for promoting peace, social justice, human rights and democracy, Rome, Italy

November 25-28: The Asia-Pacific Consultation of Movements against US Military Bases, Tokyo, Japan

December 7-8: Conference on People's Foreign Policy, Mumbai, India

December 10-12: ASEAN Civil Society Conference, Cebu

The Birth of Peace Mumbai

Varsha Rajan Berry

The World Social Forum held in Mumbai in January 2004 galvanised several Mumbai organisations and individuals to come together to help organize the event, organize and participate in the thematic plenaries and workshops and be part of a global movement against imperialism, neo-liberal economic policies, war, militarisation, nuclearisation and discrimination of all forms. An international event of this scale and nature provided a unique platform for local Mumbai groups to discuss and debate issues across countries and regions and build solidarity and organic linkages with similar organisations, movements and individuals for continued action on common issues. Peace and justice has been one such issue that has required continuous attention particularly in light of the growing escalation of conflict and violence worldwide and the strengthening of the anti-poor neo-liberal policies and imperialistic designs of the rich countries.



India's growing military ties with the US, and its joint military exercises with US troops and huge arms trade with Israel (India is now Israel's largest customer for arms and defence equipment) will have serious ramifications not only on India's independent and sovereign status but for all of Asia in terms of security, trade and development. It is also a massive setback for the overall objective of disarmament. The Indian Government has aligned with the US-UK-Israeli axis and become part of the Global War on Terror, which has become the excuse for an illegitimate war against ordinary people of Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Lebanon and potentially any nation that does not toe the Washington line.

The organisations and individuals from Mumbai that came together during the WSF 2004 have resolved to continue to keep themselves updated on these issues, on the developments in South Asia, to sharpen their own positions and to link up with friends and colleagues across the nation, in Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and globally for coordinated civil society vigilance, protest and action on these issues. This collective of Mumbai organisations and individuals link together under the banner of Peace-Mumbai. This is a broad-based and open collective that links with national, regional and international campaign events and activities on peace and justice issues. Besides NGOs, civil society organisations and individuals, the collective is open to other sectors (political parties, movements, issue based networks and others) that wish to join civil society actions and processes for peace and justice.

Closer home, the tenuous peace processes in the South Asia region, the US role and, importantly, the marked shift in India's nuclearisation and foreign policy require strong and determined civil society protest and action against all forces that destabilise our region and impede the progress towards peace and justice. The Indian Prime Minister's July 2005 visit to the US and Britain marked a perceptible shift in India's foreign policy. The Indo-US nuclear deal and the increasing cooperation with the apartheid state of Israel is a betrayal of India's claims of non-alignment, our long standing support for the Palestinian cause and our quest for an independent nation. The stand taken by the government of India on the Iran issue at the International Atomic Energy Agency is a clear departure from an independent foreign policy.



Peace Mumbai constituents have been engaged in various activities around the issues of peace for the past couple of years but the "International Conference on Peace and Justice in South Asia" organized in Mumbai in February 2006 under the aegis of Peace Mumbai was the first event of such scale to be organized after the WSF in Mumbai 2004. The Conference brought together delegates from Mumbai and various corners of Maharashtra, from other parts of India, from Jammu Kashmir and the Northeast, from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. A few delegates came from the US, Europe and from across the globe. The event was about building solidarity and cutting across borders to forge a greater South Asian identity based on common cultural roots and heritage. However, the participants realised that a strong sense of unity can only be achieved through a democratic, peaceful, demilitarized and nuclear weapons-free South Asia. The conference deliberated on key issues such as: Can there be a South Asia that is based on peace and justice rather than war and injustice? Can there be a different framework going beyond national chauvinism and various forms of religious and communal identities, affirming the unity of being South Asian? What are the alternative paradigms that civil society can provide?

The Conference adopted a resolution and opened up immense possibilities for developing a collective South Asian campaign effort on peace and justice.

Following the Conference, Peace-Mumbai as a collective has continued to meet regularly. The following activities have been taken up:

Coming together on various events and activities around the anti-war week in March of every year.

Organizing activities and planned events to commemorate Hiroshima and Nagasaki days in August

Launching a citywide campaign called "Mumbai in White" along with schools and colleges as a response to the train blasts in Mumbai in July 2006.

Sending a fact finding mission to Sri Lanka along with the support of our local Sri Lankan hosts in September-October 2006

Sending a mission to Malegaon in Maharashtra as a response to the bomb blasts there.

Organizing a conference on "India's Foreign Policy and its shift" in December in Mumbai 2006.



The December conference resolved that India's foreign policy should be focused on developing friendly ties and strengthening equitable regional cooperation. For lasting peace, Asian solidarity and regional cooperation is crucial at the political, cultural and economic levels. The people of India need to be aware of the perils of the shift in policy being pursued by our Government. There is a need for discussion and dialogue in the international context as to how India should respond and as to what kind of foreign policy we need to adopt that is keeping with India's historical legacy of independence, sovereignty and solidarity.

Peace-Mumbai continues as an open collective. Decision-making is collective and consensual. A core group works towards providing continuity in sustaining the collective and taking its decisions forward. Peace-Mumbai intends to strengthen its collective process of analysis, decision-making and organisation. It intends to provide a platform for individual groups and persons to link on peace and justice issues and to develop local leadership for advocacy and action for South Asia engagements on peace and justice issues.

Constituents of Peace Mumbai
AIPSO, BUILD, New Trade Union Initiative (NTUI), PEACE, COVA, Yuva Bharat, CEHAT, Salokha, Vidroh, Action Aid International, Shodhan Weekly, Peoples' Media Initiative, Communist Party of India (CPI), Communist Party of India Marxist (CPM), Jan Mardha, Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (CNDP), National Alliance of Peoples Movements (NAPM), India Center for Human Rights and Law (ICHRIL), Asia South Pacific Bureau for Adult Education (ASPBAE), Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA), National Youth Federation (NYF), Pakistan-India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPFPD), Bombay Urban Industrial League for Development (BUILD), Focus on the Global South, India, Indo-Pak Youth Forum for Peace, Media for People, Vikas Adhyayan Kendra (VAK), Akshara, Documentation Research and Training Center (DRTC), Explorations, Initiative, Institute For Community Organisation and Research (ICOR), Movement for Peace and Justice (MPJ), Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Bombay Aman Committee.



TRADE

Fighting Free Trade, Imagining Alternatives

Marylou Malig

Waves of Resistance: Small Fisherfolks in the Anti-Globalisation Movement

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Dateline Geneva

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At the 6th Ministerial of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Hong Kong in December 2005, the big trading superpowers, with the help of Brazil and India, were able to pull out a deal at the last minute, which, if fully implemented, will be severely detrimental to the majority of the world's peoples. The deal in Hong Kong gave the multilateral institution new momentum. 2006 therefore began with an intensified campaign to stop this deal and to prevent the conclusion of the so-called Doha Development Round.

By July 2006 however, the WTO talks collapsed and the Doha round was declared comatose. This was hailed as the best possible outcome for developing countries. Social movements, national campaigns and people the world over then celebrated this collapse as a victory for the majority of world's peoples.

The trade campaign then dedicated more energy and resources in to pushing for alternatives to the WTO and to free trade. At the same time, it intensified the national, regional and international campaigns against bilateral and regional Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). The Focus trade campaign also continued its work on exposing and resisting war-driven free trade and the corporations that benefit from it. This work was done together with the Defending and Reclaiming the Commons program.



Fighting Free Trade, Imagining Alternatives

Marylou Malig

Key role in national, regional and international campaigns

Focus continued to support and play an active role in the national campaigns and coalitions in Thailand, the Philippines and India. In the Philippines, Stop the New Round! Coalition, of which Focus is a member, organized several events to spread its analysis of the deal produced in the Hong Kong Ministerial and to continue putting pressure on the Philippine government to reject the Doha Round. In Thailand, FTA Watch Thailand, of which Focus is a member, organized an international conference on FTAs which brought together a wide array of social movements and organisations campaigning against FTAs. In India, the Focus team worked closely with the Indian Peoples Campaign against the WTO in organizing workshops, media events and mobilizations against the WTO.

On the regional level, Focus, together with several organisations and social movements, organized two Regional Trade Strategy Meetings, one immediately after the Hong Kong Ministerial and the other at the end of the year, timed to take advantage of the presence of social movements and NGOs mobilizing against the ASEAN meeting in Cebu, Philippines.

Focus also continued to play a key role in the international campaign through its active role as part of the coordination team of the Our World is Not for Sale (OWINFS) network. Focus also continued to work with social movements and organisations in campaigning against corporate globalisation and in working towards alternatives to free trade.

Timely and innovative materials

In 2006, Focus produced timely and innovative campaign materials for popular education and mobilization. Following the success of its two previous campaign videos, "WTO: Why is it BAD for YOU?" and "WTO: Why is it REALLY BAD for YOU?", Focus produced two new videos. The third installment in the series was produced immediately after the 6th Ministerial of the WTO in Hong Kong entitled "WTO Hong Kong Deal: Why is it REALLY BAD for YOU?" This video explains what happened in Hong Kong, what the elements of the BAD DEAL are and what people can still do about it. The video explains in simple terms how there is no development in this supposed development round. It also features the massive resistance the peoples movements showed in Hong Kong and how people can still stop this round from being concluded.

The fourth and latest video, entitled "A World Without the WTO," was produced after the collapse of the WTO talks in Geneva. This provocative and inspiring video answers questions about life in a post-WTO era and invites people to imagine a world without the WTO. The past three videos all talked about how and why the WTO is BAD for you, on development, and for the majority of the world's people and what could be done about it. This latest video goes beyond that and instead presents the many alternatives to the WTO and how the world will be better off without the WTO.

Focus also produced an Occasional Paper, together with the Hemispheric Social Alliance, on the ALBA (Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas). The research provides useful analysis in the feasibility of transformation in a progressive direction of some regional associations and the emergence or creation of promising formations such as ALBA.

The Focus dossier "Destroy and Profit" (2006) exposes and provides examples of the links among free trade, war, the multilateral institutions and transnational corporations.

Strategic objective:

To stop and roll-back corporate-led globalisation so as to be able to create the space for building alternatives to the current system.

Major activities in 2006

Meeting with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group after Hong Kong January, 2005 Geneva

This was a meeting organised by the ACP Secretariat in Geneva after the Hong Kong Ministerial. Focus was asked to give an input to the ACP group on the services negotiations in Hong Kong and the implications of Annex C.

Various WTO Strategy Meetings, Polycentric Social Forum January 24-31, Caracas, Venezuela

Together with the Hemispheric Social Alliance and OWINFS, Focus participated in various strategy meetings on the WTO during the Polycentric Social Forum held in Caracas, Venezuela. The meetings aimed to analyze the results of the Ministerial and find ways of working together in the campaign to prevent the conclusion of the Doha Round.

Meeting with the ACP Group on Agriculture, February 2005, Geneva

Focus participated in a brainstorming / strategising meeting of the ACP group on agriculture negotiations. We gave an input on the strategies for the group, particularly focusing on the Group's need to put more attention on the disguised export subsidise in both the US and EU farm programmes.

Meeting with the ACP Group of Domestic Regulation, February 2005

The ACP Group wanted to prepare a paper for submission in the Domestic Regulation negotiations. Together with other experts, Focus provided an analysis for the ACP's consideration and presented this to the group.

Regional Trade Strategy Meeting, February 28-March 1, Bangkok, Thailand

It was a re-grouping of the movements and coalitions after the Hong Kong Ministerial to discuss and analyze the results of the Ministerial and to plot the next steps forward in order to prevent the bad deal from Hong Kong from being implemented and the Round from being concluded at the end of 2006. This meeting also aimed to strengthen the alliances among the groups and movements in the region.

This meeting followed from the previous successful regional meetings in Bangkok in 2003 and 2004 and also followed on the success of other regionwide meetings in 2005 such as the Colombo meeting and the strategy meeting in Busan, Korea. This meeting aimed to continue this regional process and strengthen it.

Various WTO Strategy Meetings, European Social Forum, April 4-7, Athens, Greece

Together with the Seattle to Brussels Network and other members of OWINFS, Focus played an active role in the strategy meeting on the WTO held during the European Social Forum in Athens, Greece. The meetings planned for, among other things, possible actions in Geneva and elsewhere.

OWINFS Strategy Meeting and Dialogue with Developing Country Negotiators, WTO General Council Meeting, May 15-17, Geneva, Switzerland

OWINFS organized a strategy meeting on the WTO from May 15-16 and a Dialogue with WTO Delegates from developing countries. The two day strategy meeting discussed the latest developments in the three major issues of Agriculture, Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) and Services. The meeting aimed to update the participants on the latest in the negotiations so as to inform the network's strategies and planned actions. The dialogue with developing country negotiators aimed to give a space for movements and civil society to have an open debate and dialogue with their delegates and pressure them to listen to the calls of the people.

NAMA Weekend with LDC / Small and Vulnerable Economies (SVE) Delegates on Collaborative Negotiations, June 2005

Together with the South Centre, we organised a weekend workshop on collaborative negotiations, as it applies to the WTO's non-agricultural market access (NAMA) negotiations. Delegates who attended the workshop were from LDCs and SVEs.

Counter Summits, Strategy Meetings and Week of Action, WTO General Council Meeting, July 23-29, Geneva, Switzerland

The WTO General Council in Geneva this July 27-28, 2005 was identified as a crucial moment in the negotiations for social movements and civil society organisations. For this reason, organisations, coalitions and movements from around the world agreed to converge in Geneva in July and have a strong presence in order to deliver the message to their Ministers that they did not want this bad deal.

Focus contributed to this mobilization by helping mobilize Asian movement representatives to Geneva. Focus worked closely with OWINFS, La Via Campesina, FOEI and the Kilusang Mangingisda (Fisherfolk Movement of the Philippines) in organizing and coordinating actions in Geneva together with local groups in Switzerland such as the Lemanique Social Forum, Uniterre and others. Focus supported the People's Flotilla and Rock Against the Round concert spearheaded by the fisherfolk movement. Focus also organized press conferences and produced statements on the collapse. Focus also played an active role in the OWINFS strategy meetings held during this week of action in Geneva.

Fighting FTAs: An international strategy workshop, July 27-29, Bangkok, Thailand

Organized by FTA Watch Thailand together with bilaterals.org, GRAIN and Médecins Sans Frontières, this international strategy workshop aimed to learn firsthand from people's experiences fighting FTAs in a range of different countries and regions. It also aimed to build strategies together that would strengthen national, regional and international struggles against FTAs.

The meeting resulted into a better understanding of how individual country experiences fit into the larger picture, new ideas for actions, a listserve to exchange information and a proposal of activities would be done together.

OWINFS Network Strategy Meeting, November 9-13, Sao Paulo, Brazil

OWINFS organized its internal network strategy meeting in Brazil. Focus played a key role in organizing this meeting, planning the agenda and in identifying the Asian delegation to the meeting. This meeting mapped the strategy and action plan of the network for the coming year not only in relation to the WTO, FTAs and EPAs, but also, among other things, on issues of climate change, militarization and alternatives to free trade.

WTO End of the Road, India Social Forum, November 12, New Delhi, India

Focus, as a key member of the Indian Peoples Campaign Against the WTO, was one of the facilitators of this event. The aim of this event was to issue a declaration with the objective to initiate a national mobilization of peasantry to signal the "End of the Road" for the WTO.

Regional Trade Strategy Meeting, December 9, Cebu, Philippines

This meeting aimed to gather movements and organisations around Asia to discuss the current impasse of the WTO and rise of bilaterals and to map a common strategy to keep the WTO derailed and to prevent the proliferation of bilateral FTAs.

2nd ASEAN Civil Society Conference, December 10-12, Cebu Philippines

Focus organized together with other organisations and social movements workshops and events during the 2nd ASEAN Civil Society Conference in Cebu on the ASEAN and related issues including on alternative regionalisms, bilateral and regional trade agreements and peoples security.

It started out as a crazy idea – small fishers from across Southeast Asia traveling to Hong Kong by boat to stage a fluvial protest against the powerful World Trade Organisation during its 5th Ministerial Meeting.

The brainchild of Kilusang Mangingisda or KM (Fisherfolk Movement) of the Philippines, the fluvial protest got the much needed support and encouragement from a number of networks and coalitions in and out the Philippines. Little did KM know that their little idea would signal the beginning of a campaign, a voyage of resistance that would take their message across the globe.

FISHERS' VOYAGE

Conceptualized as "Fisher's Voice, Fisher's Voyage" the campaign sought to highlight the plight of small fishers across much of Southeast Asia whose lives and livelihoods have been devastated by flawed development policies that have favored the exploitation of fishing grounds by commercial interests over food security; and where the bias is strong for meeting the demands of the export market over domestic needs.

The campaign was carried out through the Southeast Asia Fish Network for Justice (SEAFISH), a network of small fishers, advocates and campaigners for reforms in the fisheries sector from Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

In large part, the voyage that would take them to Hong Kong and Geneva started at the national level. In the Philippines, KM and research and advocacy group Tambuyog Development Center worked closely with Focus on the Global South in the campaign of the Stop the New Round! Coalition. Together these groups helped organize forums and various actions in the coastal areas across the Philippines articulating the analysis and perspectives of small fishers on the Doha round negotiations.

HONG KONG 2005

In December 2005, the fishers of Southeast Asia arrived in Hong Kong to join the resistance against neo-liberal globalisation. Two large boats donning banners and colorful flags navigated across the entire Hong Kong Bay in an unprecedented act of protest against the World Trade Organisation. Shouts of "WTO out of Fisheries" and "No Deal" alternating with calls to "Protect our livelihoods," and "Defend our Fishing Ground" traversed the cold waters of Hong Kong Harbour. At one point during the almost three-hour protest, four fishers jumped out of their boats in defiance of orders from the Maritime Police.

Later in the week, the fishers marched their way slowly towards the heavily guarded Hong Kong Convention Center, defying the police barricades, to deliver their petition bearing the signatures of thousands of small fishers across Southeast Asia against the WTO and the on-going round of trade negotiations. The small contingent of fishers were met at the entrance of the Convention Center by representatives from the Philippine negotiating panel.

Waves of Resistance: Small Fisherfolks in the Anti-Globalisation Movement

Joseph Purugganan

Fishers' Voices

The fishers' actions in Hong Kong sent out a clear message against the WTO and the Doha Negotiations on how the voices and interests of marginalized sectors like the small or artisanal fishers are ignored in the negotiations. The fisheries sector, where millions of small fishers across much of the developing world derive their livelihoods, has been lumped together with industrial goods like jewellery, clothes, and electronics in the Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) negotiations. The ambitious NAMA agenda being pushed by trade super powers like the United States and the European Union is totally unmindful of the sensitivities inherent in fisheries production and trade and the growing vulnerability of small fishers across the globe.

The colorful fluvial protest of the fishers' in Hong Kong was thus a strong statement from an un-represented sector in the negotiations not just for the recognition of their rights to secure their livelihoods but of their vigilant and militant opposition to the WTO and the agenda of corporate globalisation.

Geneva 2006

The militant protests in Hong Kong however were not able to stop the WTO from inching closer to a new multilateral trade deal. The Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting came out with a declaration that among other things laid the timetable for the conclusion of the round by 2006. Against the looming conclusion of the Doha Round, the fishers from Southeast Asia began contemplating a repeat of Hong Kong, this time right at the doorstep of the WTO – a fluvial protest action in Lake Geneva, a stone's throw away from the WTO headquarters.

The idea was to bring the spirit of resistance that was so evident in Hong Kong to Geneva. An added dimension was that instead of renting big boats as had happened in Hong Kong, the fishers themselves built the boats for the fluvial protest. So for close to four days and nights, the fishers, with support and assistance from local activists, labored to produce four small fishing boats, unlike anything that has ever sailed across Lake Geneva.

A few days before the scheduled protest in Geneva, the talks were indefinitely suspended. This news was warmly welcomed by farmers and fishers groups who came to Geneva geared up for a last ditch effort to stop the conclusion of the round.

On July 27, 2006, the protest action by "land and sea" took place in Geneva. The small boats that were created by fishers just days before launched the action. The fluvial protest was complemented by a march led by farmers from Via Campesina. The farmers and fishers protest in Geneva coming on the heels of the suspension of the Doha talks, drew attention to the need for governments across the globe to start the process of reflecting on and drawing up alternatives to the WTO.

The global resistance to the WTO and to the free trade agenda continues to gain strength as groups and networks across the globe consolidate and build stronger linkages among their respective campaigns. The experience of the small fishers of Southeast Asia, with their campaign to let their voices be heard, has shown that at the heart of this global resistance are the struggles of people and communities for better lives.



India's Farmers take on Corporate Agriculture

Afsar Jafri

India's economic surge is the big story today: analysts cite the soaring Bombay Stock Exchange Sensex figures (which recently crossed the 13,000 point mark), economic growth of 9% for 2006-2007, booming foreign direct investment, foreign exchange reserves at an all-time high (\$187.21 billion in February 2007) and increasing number of cellular phone users (crossed 115 million in February 2007). But economic development that benefits the upper and middle classes is diametrically opposite to the grim reality in much of rural India where millions of people are unable to access even two square meals and lack basic human amenities such as health, education, electricity and even potable water.

Given the distressing situation in rural India, farmers' movements in India have a lot to deal with. The last two decades have seen protests, rallies, sit-ins and hunger strikes by the farmers' movements against the neo-colonialist policies and the persistent government apathy towards brewing rural misery. The increasing suicide among farmers is a manifestation of the acute agrarian suffering. In just the first four months of 2007 around 350 farmers committed suicide in six districts of Vidarbha region in the state of Maharashtra. Farmers are also taking their lives in other states, such as Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Punjab, Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. The Indian peasantry, the largest body of surviving small farmers in the world, is facing extinction.

The three basic factors which are responsible for pauperizing rural communities and transforming the positive economy of agriculture into a negative economy for farmers are increasing costs of production, declining prices of commodities, and rising consumer prices.

The three basic factors which are responsible for pauperizing rural communities and transforming the positive economy of agriculture into a negative economy for farmers are increasing costs of production, declining prices of commodities, and rising consumer prices. And all these factors are rooted in the neo-colonial policies of agricultural liberalization, trade liberalization and corporate globalisation. Liberalization in the agriculture sector brought in the deregulation of the seed industry and the entry of the chemical-responsive seeds of Monsanto, Syngenta and DuPont; the shift from farm-saved seeds to seed monopolies and monocultures; opening of the private wholesale grain markets by agri-business like ITC and Cargill; shrinking subsidies; and a rapid increase in cost of production. Moreover, the unfair rules of multilateral global trade further aggravated the distress with depressed global and domestic prices thus denying Indian farmers adequate remunerative prices.

The shift from "food first" to "trade first" and production of food grains for export has exposed Indian farmers to the volatile world commodity market and unregulated competition from outside. The removal of quantitative restrictions (QRs) from 1,429 tariff lines in 2000-2001 under WTO commitments and unilateral trade reforms by the Government of India opened the floodgates for dumping of cheap subsidized food grains from developed countries into local markets. This placed small-scale, self-reliant farmers in competition with western industrial agriculture. Consequently the import of edible oil increased from 1061.99 thousand tonnes in 1995-96 to 5290.2 thousand tonnes in 2003-04, cotton imports increased from 2.92 thousand tonnes in 1996-97 to 253 thousand tonnes in 2003-2004, and sugar imports increased from 29 thousand tonnes in 1996-97 to 932.3 thousand tonnes in 2004-05. This caused sharp declines in farmgate prices in India and subsequently led to a decline in farmers' incomes and increased indebtedness, which then triggered large-scale suicides by farmers. Within 10 years of the WTO's establishment, India went from being a net agricultural goods exporting country, to a net food importing country.



The introduction of genetically modified (GMOs) seeds such as Bt cotton caused further misery among poor Indian farmers due to increased cost of production and large scale GM crop failure. Many were thrown out of farm and farming. The growing unemployment, reduced incomes, increasing consumer prices and shrinking public distribution system for food grains are causing unprecedented reduction in the per capita availability of food-grains for the rural poor, causing acute hunger and malnutrition. The National Sample Survey Organisation report, released on December 27, 2006, on Level and Pattern of Consumer Expenditure 2004-05 reveals that about one third of India's rural population (or over 200 million people) survive on less than Rs. 12 per day.

Faced with capital-intensive, trade-driven and corporate-controlled agriculture, several farmers movements emerged to deal with these new threats. The significant movements of the owner-cultivators or farmers that surfaced, during this period, include Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS) in Karnataka, Tamilnadu Farmers Association in Tamilnadu, Kisan Sangharsh Samiti in Madhya Pradesh and Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana. They challenged the wider exploitative relations between the self-reliant agrarian society/ system, on the one hand, and industrial/ international/ western capital on the other. They argued that the state and central governments are failing rural populations and that in their rush to attract high-end foreign investment, information technology companies and other rapid growth industries, the governments have neglected the needs and aspirations of farming communities.

These farmers' movements have not only challenged the obvious agents of neo-colonialism- for example Monsanto, Cargill and MacDonald - but also the whole of Indian society, especially the middle classes and the elites. These were manifested in the demolition of the Cargill Seeds Corporation factory in Bellary in 1993 and the ransacking of the Kentucky Fried Chicken outlets in Bangalore in 1996 as well as uprooting of GMO field trials in the late nineties and, most recently, the burning of several GM Rice field trials across India in late 2006.



Farmers' movements are continuously crusading against TNCs' control over seeds, imports of soya and other commodities, privatisation of wholesale grain markets, contract farming, patenting of seeds as well as the TRIPS and Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) in the WTO. The farmers' movements believe that the farmers of India can never get a better deal under the neo-liberal, export-oriented agricultural paradigm of the AoA/ WTO and therefore they launched a massive campaign for keeping agriculture and food out of the purview of the WTO. Their demands have been: WTO out of food and agriculture; ban on cheap subsidized imports; reinstating of quantitative restrictions; complete ban on GM seeds and foods; and formulation of a comprehensive national agricultural policy. Several protests and mass rallies were organized against the WTO in New Delhi and other major cities in the last three years, the biggest one in Mumbai just before the 2005 WTO ministerial when 80,000 farmers marched to the Mumbai port against subsidized imports. The Indian farmers also joined Korean and other developing country farmers in Hong Kong in November 2005 in a united fight against corporate-led agriculture in the WTO. In April 2006 and March 2007, Indian farmers protested WTO Director General Pascal Lamy's visit to Delhi to accelerate the process of WTO negotiations with India's support.

In the struggles of farmers' movements against corporate monopolies in agriculture, GMOs and the WTO, Focus on the Global South-India, aligned with their cause, provided all necessary intellectual, moral and technical support, and joined them in mass actions including providing secretarial help for these actions. Focus-India organized training programmes, debates and discussions on trade, intellectual property rights (IPRs) in agriculture, World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies and their implications on Indian agriculture and farming communities.

In view of the recent survey by the NSSO in which 40% of Indian farmers preferred to quit agriculture, the only way to protect Indian farmers from the onslaught of the present day corporate model of agriculture is to evolve a comprehensive agriculture policy. Focus India is working with research institutions, agriculture experts, economists, and farmers' leaders to help formulate an alternative agriculture policy to provide a new direction to policy-making and agriculture reforms for ensuring the survival of small and marginal farmers and promoting self-reliant agriculture.

(1) National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Govt. of India

GENEVA, 1 March, 2007: While the WTO Doha negotiations have formally resumed, most negotiators in Geneva are in the dark about what is really going on. The main negotiations are taking place among the G4 members – US, EU, India and Brazil. These negotiations have been held outside Geneva. The majority of the Membership are sitting in Geneva and getting increasingly frustrated at their lack of involvement. Many African delegates have denounced this process. The agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA) chairs are occasionally holding consultations (these are also only small group consultations) and there are 'open-ended' meetings once in while.

As one delegate put it: "We are not having a multilateral process, but the bilateral and plurilateral agreements are being 'processed' and passed through the multilateral route just to justify that the membership is on board. In actual fact, we are not having a member-driven negotiation."

He continued: "Resumption? This is a false resumption. The process is to legitimise the deal that the US and EU may come up with. Perhaps they felt that they were close to the conclusion of a deal or they were making progress, and they want the rest of the membership to endorse what they come up with so they called for a 'resumption'. But the reality is that the rest of the Membership is just sitting there waiting... The Chair's informal sessions (open to all Members held once in two or so weeks) is simply about information. You are told for example that the fireside chats did not make progress. It is a waste of time. These (open-ended meetings) are not negotiating meetings."

Dateline Geneva

Aileen Kwa

Washington politics drive the trade round

Washington politics is currently setting the rhythm and even the content of the WTO talks. The Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) and whether Congress would give the Bush administration an extension when it expires on July 1, 2007, will determine the life or death of the Round. However, as one US official shared informally, the extension does not have to be in place by July 1 when the current TPA expires. It could well be that there is a lapse of several months before Congress agrees to a new TPA for the purposes of concluding Doha and several FTAs (Peru, Panama, Colombia, South Korea). Obviously though, US Trade Representative Susan Schwab's negotiating authority vis-a-vis her trade partners would be diminished if the TPA lapses. A hard campaign is ongoing in Washington. Labour and environmental clauses for the FTAs are being discussed in order to draw the Democrats on board. Also, Democrats representing farm interests are being courted and asked what they want to get out of Doha and the Farm Bill. Whether the Administration's campaign will be successful remains to be seen.

In the WTO, the Lamy-Schwab-Mandelson strategy is to get a package on the table by May or June so that Democrats will be pressured to renew the TPA. Schwab does not think it is feasible to conclude all elements of the Doha Round by that time. The game plan by the WTO leaders is to get a 'framework' similar to the Hong Kong Declaration, although addressing more of the key issues.

Again, the small developing countries are worried that their issues will be sidelined in a 'partial modalities' scenario. Says one official informally "What about our issues? What will we do about preferences, commodities, Special Products and the Special Safeguard Mechanism? Will these be forgotten? And how will we put them back on the table if the main numbers have already been agreed upon? We will have no more leverage to get what we want!"

She went on to say "What if we are forced to give concessions just to have the TPA renewed and it does not get renewed? Then they will say, 'Let's build on what has been agreed upon'. And we can't get our concessions back and we could already have lost some of our key issues!"

US-EU reverse engineering: Blair House accord by another name?

Schwab commented in a press conference early in 2007 that the G6 forum was not useful. Instead, she has been advocating a 'reverse engineering' approach.

Explains one developing country delegate, Schwab's 'reverse engineering' is the process whereby the US and EU set the market access tariff-cutting formula aside in their negotiations, and instead focus on the products of market access interest to each other or products which are sensitive for their domestic constituencies. Agreement is worked out between them product by product. After that, the tariff cutting formula to be applied multilaterally, as well as the treatment for sensitive products, will be worked out to fit in with the bilateral agreement.

When they have decided upon their desired package, the talks are then expanded to include first India and Brazil, and then a small group of other Members (probably those involved in the plurilateral meetings held by the agriculture and NAMA chairs). The majority of WTO Members are finally presented with a take-it-or-leave-it package.

This process is not new. The Uruguay Round was famously concluded only after the US and EU met in Blair House (the official state guest house for the US President in Washington), and came up with the 'Blair House Accord' which they then proposed to the rest of the Membership for endorsement as a multilateral deal.

Agriculture talks

On January 31, the Administration unveiled 65 proposals for the US Farm Bill to Congress. While these remain only at the proposal stage, the trends are not particularly encouraging. More box-shifting is being planned for. This entails moving subsidies from WTO illegal categories to direct payments which, in the WTO, falls under the unlimited Green Box. In fact, the US already houses about 70% of its subsidies under the Green Box, which the WTO cotton case has revealed is anything but non-trade distorting. These moves towards direct payments will simply make non-transparent export subsidies and trade distortions. The increase in direct payments could be up to the tune of 5.5 billion. This means that the US can declare that it is WTO compatible but, in reality, will still be distorting trade.

Unfortunately, this deceptive game of box-shifting could unlock the current deadlock in the Doha Round. Due to high commodity prices because of biofuels, so-called 'trade distorting supports' of the US amounted to 11.5 billion in 2006, down from about 19 billion the previous year. In its last official agriculture offer in the WTO, in October 2005, US proposed binding their trade distorting supports at 22 billion. The G20 rejected this and has asked the US to bring supports down to 12.5 billion.

The US could conceivably accept the G20 position at this point. (Recent indications are that the US is offering to bind distorting supports at 15 billion). If so, the only stumbling block in the domestic supports pillar would be disciplines on the blue and green boxes.

The EU is also getting off scot-free in the area of domestic supports. By shifting supports into the Green Box in their latest 2003 Common Agricultural Policy, they are saying at the WTO that they no longer have trade-distorting

supports. In some products, the change will bring about lower output – e.g. beef. However, in cereals, output is projected to even increase. Dumping will continue. Hopefully, the G20 and other developing countries will wake up and push for strong disciplines in the Green Box, even caps (limits), and also disciplines for the Blue Box. The Green Box has been denounced by the Appellate body to have very trade-distorting elements. The G20 has articulated some of these disciplines but seem not to have pushed them hard in the negotiations.

Non-Agriculture Market Access (NAMA)

Very little in Geneva is taking place in the NAMA negotiations. The majors, particularly the US, is putting pressure on developing countries to get into the sectoral negotiations which are even more aggressive than the formula.

In G4 negotiations, the US and EU are putting pressure on India and Brazil to take on the coefficient of 15 in the Swiss formula. Developed countries, they propose, would have a coefficient of 10. Since developed countries have lower tariffs, a 10 coefficient would cut their tariffs by 23% - 25%, while for developing countries, a 15 coefficient would cut their tariffs by 60 - 70%. This contravenes that 'less than full reciprocity' in tariff cuts that developing countries were promised in Doha.

The NAMA negotiations are currently stalled as members are waiting for clarity in agriculture – the logic being that 'ambition' in agriculture will be matched by ambition in NAMA. Nevertheless, this is an area that developing countries also have grave concerns and may not be easily resolved even if the agriculture negotiations are resolved.

SERVICES

There were attempts at the end January Davos meeting by US and EU to get developing countries to agree to a date for the revision of their services offers. Again, developing countries have chosen to wait for clearer indication in agriculture before committing themselves further. No date has been set. Explaining why developing countries have not bitten the bait, a Caribbean delegate says "They [the US and EU] are attempting to have low ambition in agriculture and high ambition in services and NAMA. Given the current situation [where nothing has emerged in agriculture], there is no way I can account to my capital why I need to provide a revised offer."

Nevertheless, informal services clusters are taking place in the last two weeks of every month and pressure continues to be put on developing countries, usually bilaterally. Countries with sectors that the major corporations are interested in are particularly being targeted eg. Nigeria. China is reported to have put a very good offer on the table. So far, all countries' offers are conditional on what happens to other issues in the Doha Round and could be retracted. The majors are hoping that the Chinese offer will remain.

The domestic regulation talks have been continuing under the chairmanship of Singapore's Peter Govindasamy. The domestic regulation provisions, if agreed upon, are likely to tighten the ability of developing countries to regulate foreign investors operating in their countries. For example, when turning down a license application by a foreign investor, the country, if it has opened up that sector under GATS, will have to show the domestic legislation in question is 'objective' and 'reasonable'. Countries will be able to set domestic regulation objectives – but they may not be able to choose the way in which they meet those objectives! For example, a regulation that all banks will have to provide a certain amount of credit to small farmers or small enterprises could be challenged as being unreasonable.

The African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries have been airing their development concerns in the consultations in Geneva. Thus far, these have not been met enthusiastically by the major developed countries.

The Doha talks, if concluded will foreclose developing countries' development prospects. There are many issues around current trade policies pushed by the WTO and free trade agreements that need to be questioned: Why have increased exports not reduced poverty? How many developing countries have increased exports but have seen their level of industrialisation either stagnate or even drop?

An alternative agenda for the trading system will include getting off the liberalisation treadmill and taking a serious stab at regulating world trade instead of integrating world trade. This agenda will include having a mechanism that strictly monitors and disciplines dumping; overseeing competition policy at the multilateral level; putting in place commodity agreements that could stabilise and raise commodity prices; and regulating access to knowledge and innovation – including overseeing technology transfer, advocating open-source business models and knowledge-sharing.

ACTIVITY



TIES

India
Philippines
Thailand
2006

Activities Organised, Co-organised or Participated in



TRADE

January 7: Resource person on globalisation and trade and its negative impact on developing countries, organised by Oxfam and Asha Handicrafts, Mumbai

January 16: Resource person in public meeting on WTO, agriculture and farmers' suicides, organised by KRRS (farmers group in Karnataka, part of Via Campesina), Hassan District, Karnataka

January 26-29: Participated in meeting organized by FICCI (industry lobby) on WTO, Delhi

January 27: Resource person in meeting on WTO and Indian democracy, organised by NAPM and CITU, Pune

January 28: Attended National Convention of the All-India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) Meeting, in Nashik

February 28-March 1: Participated in Regional Trade Meeting, Bangkok

March 13: Organised meeting on WTO/Services with trade unions, SP Shukla and Ashok Rao, Mumbai

March 14: Resource person in meeting on WTO and impact of globalisation, organised by YMCA, Mumbai

March 20: Participated in meeting on WTO and India: Strategizing beyond Hong Kong, organised by FICCI and CENTAD, Delhi

March 24-25: Participated in national workshop on agrarian crisis, organised by Centre for Jawaharlal Nehru Studies, Jamia Millia University, Delhi

April 5: Resource person on GATS in interactive meeting with Pascal Lamy, organised by UNCTAD, Delhi

April 6: Were instrumental in organising farmers' rally against Pascal Lamy's visit, Delhi

April 6-7: Participated in meeting on WTO by ICRIER, Delhi

April 15: Spoke at meeting on agriculture and WTO, organized by Devinder Sharma and CECODECON (Sharad Joshi, Rajasthan) and other NGOs, Delhi

April 17: Resource person on WTO meeting, organised by YUNA, Nagpur

April 19: Participated in campaign meeting on FDI in retail as co-organisers, Mumbai

April 22: Resource person on globalisation and WTO at a training workshop organised by the India Centre for Human Rights and Law, Mumbai

April 25: Resource person in meeting on WTO, agriculture and alternative (Sustainable Agriculture), Hingoli in Maharashtra

April 27: Resource person in roundtable on farmers' suicides, organized by Peace Mumbai (of which Focus India is a part)

May 18-20: Participated in strategy meeting on GMOs, organized by Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Wardha

June 6-7: Participated in meeting on GATS and developing countries, organized by ICRIER, Delhi

July 1: Spoke in cotton farmers' meeting, organised by N D Patil, left leader in Akola, Maharashtra

July 16: Resource person in conference on agriculture and WTO, organised by Department of Journalism of Shivaji University, Kolhapur and Peoples Media Initiative

July 20-21: Participated in all-India meeting against foreign direct investment in retail trade, Delhi

July 25: Participated in meeting on WTO, on the Doha impasse, organized by CENTAD (Oxfam), Delhi

July 27: Were instrumental in organising workshop on WTO, future strategy, by the Indian Peoples Campaign against WTO, Delhi

August 30-31: Organized with BKU (farmers' organisation) a farmers' training on IFIs, WTO and agriculture, Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh

September 10: Resource person in meeting on WTO and agriculture, organized by local newspaper, Deshmatti Akola, Maharashtra

October 10: Resource person in farmers' rally, organized by CPI (Communist Party) in Azad Maidan, Mumbai

October 13: Organised a conference on farmers' suicide in Nagpur, Maharashtra

October 28: Resource person on globalisation and WTO at a training workshop, organised by the India Centre for Human Rights and Law, Mumbai

November 04: Participated in conference on farmers' suicide, organized by Gandhian organisations, Mumbai

November 5-7: Resource person in workshop on globalisation, trade and tourism, Delhi

November 12: Organised strategy meeting on stopping farmers' suicides and supporting livelihoods, India Social Forum (ISF), Delhi

November 15: Resource person on International Trade and Farmers Suicides at the Conference on Farmers' Suicides, Akola University, Akola

December 8-9: Participated in workshop on India-US Knowledge Initiative in Agriculture, Hyderabad

December 15-31: Meetings with various farmers' movements and activists on agricultural crisis and trade linkages, Wayanad, Kerala, December 19-20: Participated in National Conference on WTO, organized by CENTAD (Oxfam), Delhi

December 21-22: Resource person at training workshop with community-based organisations, organised by Action Aid, Lonavla, Maharashtra

DEFENDING AND RECLAIMING THE COMMONS

January 14: Resource person on globalisation and the urban poor at workshop organised by Committee for Right to Housing, Mumbai

February 13-15: Preparatory meeting to strategise towards the ADB General Body Meeting in May, Hyderabad

February 15-17: Participated in meeting on IFIs in South Asia, organised by Bank Information Centre, Delhi

March 9: Preparatory meeting for March to Vidhan Sabha by the mill workers and Mumbai Peoples' Action Committee on sale of mill lands, housing and other issues

March 14: March to Vidhan Sabha from Azad Maidan on Mill Lands issue, Mumbai

March 19: Co-organised Peoples' Forum against ADB campaign meeting in Thrissur, Kerala

March 24-26: Meeting on IFIs in Northeast of India, Shillong

March 28: Resource persons for Peoples' Forum Against ADB campaign meeting, Kolkata

April 1: Co-organised and was resource person for public meeting on water privatisation in Mumbai's K-East ward

April 8-9: Participated in the Water Sector Reform meeting, Bangalore

April 21: Resource person at media orientation workshop on ADB, organised by Bank Information Center and Samata, Hyderabad

Focus on the Global South, India, 2006

May 3-6: Co-organised the parallel events as part of Peoples' Forum against ADB during ADB-AGM, Hyderabad

May 15: Participated in stakeholders' meeting on water, organized by Bombay Municipal Corporation

May 29-30: Provided logistical support and participated in Narmada Bachao Andolan activists protest on Maheshwar Dam at Azad Maidan, Mumbai

June 10: Participated in the Forests Land Rights Meeting in Pune, organised by a campaign group of various social movements, Maharashtra

July 08: Co-organised and spoke at the Water meeting against privatisation in K-East, Mumbai

August 14-16: Participated in the organising committee meeting of the Peoples' Forum against ADB, Delhi

September 1-2: Organised in Delhi along with Peoples' Forum (of which Focus is an Organising Committee member) a strategy meeting on the World Bank and IMF, prior to the World Bank/IMF Annual meeting in Singapore

September 7-8: Participated in the Conference on National Urban Renewal Mission, organised by Action Aid, Nashik

October 7-8: Participated in training workshop on TNCs, Bangkok

October 12-13: Attended International Conference On Accumulation, Dispossession, Claims and Counter Claims - Transformative Cities in the New Global Order, organized by University of Mumbai, Mumbai

October 30-31, November 1-2: Participated and was part of the media coordination at the National Conference of the National Forum of Forest Peoples and Forest Workers, Ranchi

November 8: Participated in the planning meeting of the Peoples' Forum against ADB, Delhi

November 10: Organised a seminar on "Changing Urban Water Scenario" in ISF, Delhi

November 12: Organised a roundtable on "Our Cities, Our Vision" at ISF, Delhi

November 23-25: Participated in workshop on National Urban Renewal Mission, organised by NCAS, Delhi

November 29: Participated in rally against the Forests Bill at Azad Maidan, Mumbai

December 1: Participated in planning meeting on Campaign against the Foreign Direct Investment in Retail, Mumbai

December 4: Participated in the meeting on the Peoples Health Assembly, organised by CEHAT (Peoples Health NGOs), Mumbai

December 15-31: Field Visit to Kerala for ADB-related Work

PEOPLE'S PEACE AND SECURITY

February 24-26: Facilitated setting-up of Peace Mumbai network and organised a Conference on Peace and Justice in South Asia, Mumbai

March 2: Participated in the protest against Bush visit to India, organised by Muslim Organisations, Mumbai

March 19: Participated in the protests on the occasion of the anniversary of the Iraq War, Mumbai

May 20: Instrumental in organising a strategy meeting towards all-India campaign on India's foreign policy, Delhi

June 17: Organised follow-up meeting of all-India campaign on India's foreign policy in Delhi

July 10-26: Meetings with college students and youth groups as part of the "Mumbai in White Campaign" after the serial bomb blasts in Mumbai

July 26: Organised the "Mumbai in White Day" in Mumbai calling on all Mumbai citizens to wear white for peace

August 6-9: Attended the Hiroshima and Nagasaki commemoration events, Mumbai

August 12-14: Facilitated Indian delegation for the peace mission to Lebanon

August 19: Organised a press conference by the Indian delegates to the delegation to Lebanon, Mumbai

August 24: Organised the preparatory meeting on the Foreign Policy Conference, September 11: Co-organised meeting with Muslim groups to involve them in the preparations for the Foreign Policy Conference, Mumbai

October 6: Co-organised a lecture-workshop by Prof. Ram Bapat on India's foreign policy, Mumbai

October 30- November 3: Facilitated the Independent Indian Peace Mission to Sri Lanka, as part of Peace Mumbai

November 8: Participated in the National Committee Meeting of the CNDP, Delhi

November 11: Co-organised on behalf of CAWO a planning meeting for Conference and Campaign on Alternative Foreign Policy in the ISF, Delhi

November 12: Co-organised as part of the Anti War Network an Anti-War Assembly in the ISF, Delhi

November 16-19: Participated in the Beirut Conference on Support to Resistance in Lebanon, Beirut

December 1-3: Participated and provided Logistical Support for the Peace Festival, Mumbai

December 7-8: Facilitated the organising of the Peoples' Foreign Policy Conference, Mumbai

ALTERNATIVES

February 11-12: Participated in the India WSF IWC Meeting, Delhi

March 24-29: Participated in the World Social Forum, Karachi, Pakistan

June 10: Participated in the WSF Asia and Africa Support Group meeting, Mumbai

July 22-23: Facilitated a delegation to the Conference on WSF, Durban

August 21: Participated in the WSF Asia-Africa Group Meeting, Mumbai

August 24: Participated in the Western Region Consultation on ISF, Pune

September 28-30, October 1: Facilitated the participation of Mr. Sanjay Mango for a Seminar on Strategies of the Social Movements, Brussels

November 9-13: Participated and organised events at the ISF, Delhi

November 11: Participated in the Afro-Asian Social Movements Meeting in the ISF, Delhi

November 12: Participated in the Interim WSF Asia Council Meeting in the ISF, Delhi

GENERAL AND MISCELLANEOUS

January 14: Attended launch of a new political formation composed of social movements called Peoples' Political Front, Mumbai

February 1-3: Management team meeting, Bangkok

April 21: Attended meeting in Mumbai to facilitate Mr. Balkrishna Renke, farmer-activist in Maharashtra on his being nominated Chairman of Commission for Nomadic Tribes

May 17: Attended meeting on recent trend of anti-people judgments being handed down by Supreme Court and other Indian Courts, India

June 17-25: Staff retreat, Bangkok

Sept. 12-13: Board meeting, Bangkok

October 25- November 14: Visit of Chinese group under the China-India Exchange

December 18: Management team meeting, Bangkok

ALTERNATIVES

ALTERNATIVE REGIONALISM

February 5-6: The First Solidarity for Asian People's Advocacy meeting (Focus as Co-Convenor)

May 25-26 : People's Dialogue, Reference Group Seminar, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

September 3-5: Asia-Europe People's Forum, Finland

October 29- November 5: People's Dialogue, Workshop I: Land and Common Natural Assets, MST School, Sao Paulo, Brazil

ASEAN

April 15-17: ASEAN Charter: Submission on Perspectives on Regionalism and the Security Pillar, including pre-meeting, Ubud, Bali (with SAPA)

June 26-28: ASEAN Charter: Submission on the Economic Pillar, including pre-meeting, Singapore (with SAPA)

October 13-14: "The Philippines in the ASEAN: Facing the Challenges of Regional Integration:"

November 8-10: ASEAN Charter: Submission on Socio-Cultural Pillar and Institutional Mechanisms, Quezon City, including pre-meeting (with SAPA)Asean Civil Society Conference – Philippine Process (Focus as Co-Convenor)

December 10-12: Second Asean Civil Society Conference (ACSC II), Cebu (Focus as Co-Convenor)

DEVELOPMENT ROUNDTABLE SERIES (DRTS)

ROUNDTABLES

February 13: Foreign Policy Roundtable on "Reviewing Critical Issues in Philippine Foreign and Security Policies: Towards an Assessment of the Visiting Forces Agreement"

August 25: Trade and Industrial Policy Roundtable: "State of Industry, Labor and Capital: A National Scorecard"

September 27: Foreign Policy Roundtable: "ASEAN: A Sharing and Caring Community?"

November 7: Foreign Policy Roundtable: "Between Two Poles: ASEAN's relations with the United States and China"

November 21: Foreign Policy Roundtable: "The Philippines and ASEAN: Towards an Alternative Regionalism?"

November 14-15: Mindanao Launch: "Development Dialogues: The DRTS in Mindanao",

MEETINGS AND CONSULTATIONS

January 16: Water Services and Resources Organizing Committee/TWG meeting

January 18: Foreign Policy Organizing Committee/TWG meeting

January 24: Agrarian Reform Organizing Committee/TWG meeting

January 25: Trade and Industrial Policy Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

February 10: Foreign Policy Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

April 20: Water Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

May 9: Water Services and Resources Organizing Committee/ TWG consultation/dialogue with Manila Water and Binangonan Water Service Cooperatives

May 10: Food and Agriculture Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

May 19: Foreign Policy Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

June 30: Agrarian Reform Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

July 21: Agrarian Reform Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

July 28: Water Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

August 5: Trade and Industrial Policy Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

August 22: Mindanao-Food and Agriculture Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

August 28: Foreign Policy Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

October 5: Foreign Policy Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

October 24: Foreign Policy Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

September 18: Foreign Policy Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

September 22: Mindanao-Food and Agriculture Expansion Workshop

November 9: Agrarian Reform Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

November 9: Foreign Policy Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

November 8: Trade and Industrial Policy Whiteshop-Workshop

November 14: Mindanao-Food and Agriculture Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

November 16: Mindanao-Food and Agriculture Organizing Committee/ TWG meeting

November 17: Foreign Policy TWG Consultation/Meeting with Mindanao groups

December 6: Foreign Policy Consultation on the Research Proposal

PEACE AND SECURITY

March 5-9: Bud Dahu Centennial commemorative events, Sulu and Zambo City

March 20: Mobilization to mark Third Anniversary of Invasion of Iraq

April 24-26: Fact-finding mission on extra-judicial killings in Central Luzon

August 10-16: International Peace Mission to Lebanon

September 3-5: Asia-Europe People's Forum, Finland

September 27: Forum on 'Internal' Conflicts in Southeast Asia

December 10-12: Second ASEAN Civil Society Conference, Cebu

Focus on the Global South, Philippines, 2006

DEFENDING AND RECLAIMING THE COMMONS

March 17-19: Foro Internacional en Defensa del Agua, parallel civil society forum to the World Water Forum

April 18: Alyansa ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura/ AMA's (Alliance of Farm Workers) forum on Charter Change and its impacts to the farming sector
April 22: Input-presentation on the results of the ICARRD and IPC Parallel events in Porto Alegre and its implications to agrarian reform advocacy work in the Philippines to Mindanao groups working on agrarian reform, Davao City, Mindanao
May 5: Mass-Tribute for Ka Eric Cabanit, Porfirio Maglasang and all the slain-peasant leaders
 Presented two multimedia presentations on the struggle for land, and celebrating the lives and struggles of the victims of agrarian-related human rights violations, held in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform, Quezon City.

May: Technical support/assistance to the Philippine member of Via Campesina (dKMP-PARAGOS-Pilipinas) to attend Via Campesina's regional forums/meetings (Asia Pacific Forum on Rice and Food Sovereignty in Indonesia and Via Campesina Regional Meeting in Japan)

May: People's Forum against the ADB, Hyderabad, India

May 7: Support and active participation in the mobilization-final mass tribute for Ka Eric Cabanit, held in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform, Quezon City

May 9: Dialogue with Binangonan Water Cooperatives, Balay Kalinaw, UP Diliman, Quezon City. (DRTS)

June 2-15: International Solidarity for Land and Justice (ISLJ): An International Fact Finding Mission (nationwide: Luzon-Visayas [June3-4], and Mindanao [June 6-9]).

June 6-8: UNORKA's Fourth Congress- Focus/LRAN multimedia presentation on struggles for land

June 8: Speaker at forum on "Insights and Learnings on the Rights-based Approach in the Agrarian Reform Struggle," organized by the Alternative Forum for Research in Mindanao (AFRIM) and FIAN-Davao, Davao City.

June 9: Press conference on the initial findings of the International Fact-finding Mission-Davao Province leg, Davao City; Mobilization on the 18th Anniversary of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), Davao City

June 19: Public presentation of the findings of the International Solidarity for Land and Justice (ISLJ): An International Fact Finding Mission, Quezon City

July 13: Press conference on the "State of the Countryside- Assessment of the Alliance of Small Farmers and Fisherfolks (AMMM)," as a pre-State of the Nation's Address (SONA) of the government; Educational Discussion on the "State of WTO Negotiations and its Implications to Farmer-Fisherfolk Advocacy/Struggle"

July 20: Solidarity mass for Bondoc Peninsula farmers organized by Kilos AR (Agrarian Reform Movement), FIAN Philippines and the Department of Agrarian Reform Employees Association

August 22-23: 2nd Agrarian Reform Policy Roundtable Discussion organized by Kilos AR

September 16: P in front of the Singapore Embassy in the Philippines on the banning of Filipino activists, including peasant leaders of FSP; technical support for Via Campesina members in the Philippines to participate in the La Via Campesina events on the WB-IMF annual meetings, Jakarta

September 17: "Breaking Free: Conference on Shrinking or Replacing the IMF," Singapore

September 16: Plenary on the alternatives to the IMF, International People's Forum vs the IFIs, Batam, Indonesia

October 5: Roundtable Discussion on GTZ-Department of Agrarian Reform Study on Post-LAD Scenario

October 19: Participation in the technical working group meeting, House of Representatives Committee on Agrarian Reform

November 4-7: La Via Campesina Southeast Asia and East Asia Women Peasant study tour in the Philippines, with women peasant leaders from South Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Japan visiting areas of PARAGOS-Pilipinas and KMP in Luzon

November 15: Roundtable on "CARP After 2008: Which Way to Go?", Davao

December8: "No To ASEAN Regional Integration, Yes to ASEAN Community: National Agricultural and Fisheries Stakeholders Conference on the ASEAN"

Focus on the Global South, Thailand, 2006

ALTERNATIVES

February 26-27: Regional workshop on Asia WSF, co-hosted with Workers Democracy Group and APWLD, Chulalongkorn University

March 24: Presentation on Thailand's current political struggles, Forum-Asia

March 31: Presentation on Thailand's current political struggles, Jubilee South Asia-Pacific meeting, Siam Beverly Hotel

March-April: Joining Public People Alliance for Democracy (PAD) against Thaksin's policies on FTAs and other neo-liberal policies

April 6: Brainstorming meeting of the NGOs and POs networks to identify common agenda and strategies for political and social reform, National Human Rights Commission

April 26: Co-organizing the conference on Political Reform, Chulalongkorn University

May 5: Meeting of representatives of about 50 civil society organisations to make collective decisions on the organisation of Thai Social Forum (TSF) 2006, Thammasat University

June 29: Co-organizing a talk by Walden Bello on "Construction of Alternatives: the Experiences of Latin America", Economic Faculty, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok.

July 15: Presentation on "External Economic Relation and the Formulation of Public Policy in Thailand", Office of Health Promotion Fund, Nakorn Prathom

July 23: Organizing a brainstorming meeting between academics and activists on the proposal of trade negotiation bill, Chulalongkorn University

August 9-10: Participating in consultations on "Gross National Happiness," organized by Suan Nguen Mee Ma together with other organisations

August 28: Presentation on gender issues in Thailand's development, CCS Office

September 22: Urgent meeting of NGO-COD members to discuss the coup d'eta and prepare a statement in response, Thai Volunteer Service Building

September 23: Press Conference on the NGO-COD statement on the coup, Thai Volunteer Service Building

September 25: Meeting of the TSF Organizing Committee on the implications of the coup d'etat and the drafting of a statement, Thai Volunteer Service Building

September 26: Press Conference on the TSF Organizing Committee's statement in response to the coup, Thammasat University

October 19: Presentation on the World Social Forum at the orientation workshop for the volunteers of the Thai Social Forum, Thammasat University

October 21-22: Thai Social Forum 2006, Thammasat University, Rangsit Campus (Focus Thailand Program organized two half-day seminars on alternative economics theories and practices in Thailand, acted as moderator for a seminar on education privatisation and as panelists in other seminars on alternative ASEAN and gender and globalisation

October 21: Co-organized and made a presentation at the "Alternative Economic workshops" during the Thai Social Forum, Pathumthani

October 23: TSF rally and march at the Democracy Monument, Bangkok

December 4-12: Participated in the "Latin America People's Summit", Cochabamba, Bolivia

December 10-12: Participated in the 2nd ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC II), Cebu City, Philippines

TRADE

January 4: Spoke at a conference on WTO after Hong Kong, organized by the Strategic Policy on Natural Resources Base Project, National Human Right Commission

January 9-13: Mobilization against the 7th round of Thailand-US FTA negotiations in Chiang Mai(Focus as part of FTA Watch coordinated and worked with media)

January 10: Press conference on the WTO at the UN press room, Geneva

January 19-20: Lectured on "The WTO and its Implication in South East Asia," University of Bonn, Germany

January 28: Conference on "Investment Liberalization in Thailand-US FTA: What Thai People Must Be Aware," co-organized with Center for Social and Development Studies, Chulalongkorn University

February 2: Presentation on FTA impacts, Thammasat University

March 8: Lecturing on Impacts of FTAs and Trade Liberalization for Burmese participants, organized by the Catholic Commission for Ethnic Groups

March 10 : Meeting on Thai-US negotiation and its implication on human rights, National Human Rights Commission, Bangkok

March 15 : Presentation at the Foreign Affair Commission of the Senate on Thai-Japan FTA (JTEPA), Parliament

March 16 : Presentation on "WTO and the Role of Civil Society," at WTO Watch, Thammasat University

March 23: Presentation on "International Economic Relation and the Implication on Small Scale Farm Producers," for corn producer network, Petchaboon

March 30 : Co-organized workshop on "Thailand's Populist Policies and the View from the Grassroots", Economic Faculty, Chulalongkorn University

April 29: Presentation at a group discussion on "FTA and the Human Security," Chulalongkorn University

May 24: Co-organized and participated in the press conference on the Thai-Australian FTA (TAFTA), Chulalongkorn University

May 25: Presentation on "The Doha Round and its Consequences on Thai Farmers," at the Association for Small Scale Farmers and ThaiDHRR, Bangkok.

June 7-8 : Participated in a consultation workshop on developing a training kit on "Women and Food Sovereignty," organized by Women's Action Network (WAN)

July 8: Spoke in a panel on "Impacts of FTAs" in Phetchaburi province, organized by farmers' group

July 15: Presentation on "International Economic Relation and the Implication on Small Scale Farm Producers," for Lower-Northern Region Farmer network, Petchaboon

July 27-29: Participated in and Organized an international strategy workshop on "Fighting FTAs", in Bangkok, as part of FTA Watch. The conference was co-organized with bilaterals.org, GRAIN and Médecins Sans Frontières

August 4: Attended a seminar on lessons learned from US FTAs, organized by GSEI, Sol Twin Towers Hotel

August 4: Presentation in a UNI-TLC/ UNI-LCJ Seminar on Solidarity between "Thai and Japanese Labor on the Era of globalisation," Pattaya, Chonburi province

August 9: Presentation on "FTA and the Impact on Female Labourers," for Women Labour Unions Network, FES, Bangkok.

August 10: Workshop on ASEAN , co-organized with Thai Volunteer Service, Chulalongkorn University

August 15: Presentation on "Globalisation and the Thai Society" for Caritas Thailand, Chacheungsao

September 13 : Presentation on "FTA and the Trade Policy of Thailand," Ramkhamheang University, Bangkok

September 14: Lecture on "Power Politics in the WTO" at the Economic Faculty, Thammasat University

September 14: Lecture by Dr Jayati Ghosh on "India and Economic Cooperation: A Rising Pole in Asia", co-organized with South Asian Center, Institute of Asian Studies

September 29: Organized and participated in the FTA Watch's press conference on the coup d'eta and FTA at the Press Association of Thailand

November 7-8: Presentation on "Service and Investment in FTA: Impacts on Development" and "Intellectual Property Rights in FTAs" at the Indonesian Civil Society Learning Event on Indonesia's Regional Trade Agreement (RTA) Policy, Negotiations and Implications, Jakarta, Indonesia

November 18: Presentation on "Economic Rights: Human Rights on Equality and Diversity" for high-school students, organized by a student group from Political Science Faculty, Chulalongkorn University

November 22: Co-organized and participated in the press conference on the Thai-Japan FTA (JTEPA), Chulalongkorn University

November 27-29: Made a presentation and participated in press conference on the WTO and Development at ActionAid workshop, Hanoi, Vietnam

December 1: Presentation in a workshop panel on "The Network of Bilateral and Subregional Free Trade Agreements in Southeast Asia"

December 9: Participating in the Regional Trade Strategy Meeting, Cebu City, the Philippines, co-organized with other organisations

December 22: Co-organised and participated in press conference on the Thai-Japan FTA (JTEPA), Chulalongkorn University

DEFENDING AND RECLAIMING THE COMMONS

May 27-29: Participated in AAI Asia-Pacific Forum in Chiang Mai

June 16: Presentation on "Reclaiming State-owned Public Enterprises" at the Public Sector Trade Union Confederation of Thailand," Bangkok.

June 28-29: Attended the Political Economy Seminar on post-crisis dynamics of Thai capital, Chulalongkorn University

August 2: Spoke in a panel on "Thai Style CSR", organized by CSR Journal and other organisations

November 30: Participated in a conference on contract farming, organized by the Program for Health Promotion among Informal Labor in Agriculture, Surin province

December 7: Conference on "Carbon Trading and Solution to Climate Change", co-organized with MEAs Intelligent Unit and Center for Social and Development Studies, Chulalongkorn University

PUBICATIONS

**PUBLICATIONS,
PRESENTATIONS,
REPORTS,
MEDIA,
SEMINARS AND
EVENTS**

ALTERNATIVES

ALTERNATIVE REGIONALISM: ARTICLES AND REPORTS

- Azzi, Diego and David Harris, "ALBA Venezuela's answer to 'free trade': the Bolivarian alternative for the Americas," Focus on the Global South and Hemispheric Social Alliance, October 2006, <http://www.focusweb.org/alba-venezuela-s-answer-to-free-trade-the-bolivarian-alternative-for-the-ame.html>
- Barria, Susana, "Chavez's ALBA Project: The Dawn of a New Integration?," Focus on India, October 2006 Issue
- Bello, Walden, "China and Southeast Asia: Emerging Problems in an Economic Relation," in *Revisiting Southeast Asian Regionalism*, Focus on the Global South, December 2006, <http://www.focusweb.org/revisiting-southeast-asian-regionalism.html> <http://www.focusweb.org/revisiting-southeast-asian-regionalism.html>
- Chavez, Jenina Joy, "Revisiting Southeast Asian Regionalism", Focus on the Global South, December 2006, <http://www.focusweb.org/revisiting-southeast-asian-regionalism.html>
- Chavez, Jenina Joy, "A Social Charter for the ASEAN? Deepening Integration by Regionalizing Labor Solidarity and Social Standards", UNU-CRIS Occasional Papers O-2006/4, <http://www.cris.unu.edu/admin/documents/20060407155219.O-2006-4.pdf> <http://www.cris.unu.edu/admin/documents/20060407155219.O-2006-4.pdf>
- Chavez, Jenina Joy, "Making ASEAN Relevant", Yellow Pad Column, Business World, January 15, 2007
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Focus on the Global South, Bamako, Caracas and Karachi Social Forums, January and March, 2006 (various panels and discussions)

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THAILAND

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Chomthongdi, Jacques-chai, "It's time for the people to stop playing supporting role" September 2006 (published in INN Exclusive, weekly journal)

Chomthongdi, Jacques-chai, "The future of FTA under the junta" October 2006 (published in INN Exclusive, weekly journal)

Chomthongdi, Jacques-chai, "The key element of a trade negotiation bill" November 2006, paper prepared for FTA Watch meeting and various presentations

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MEDIA

Interviewed in five national broadcast radio programmes, two community radio programmes, three overseas radio programmes

Interviewed, talked, and discussed in twelve television programmes, including nation channel, ASTV, and Channel 9.

Printed interviews in various newspapers and electronic news outlet such as Bangkok Post, Matichon, Post Today, Thai Post, Prachathai, Prachadham, IPS. Regular columnist for INN News Journal, Justice and Peace Journal and CSR Journal. Responsible for editorial of the FTA Watch's website Campaigning materials on FTAs

TRADE

ARTICLES AND PRESENTATIONS

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INTERVIEWS

Barria, Susana, November 8: interview with Chetan Bjesure, FICCI (Industry lobby) on

India's FTA in Delhi; November 9 and 10: interview with Kalpana Sharma and S.P. Sharma, Assocham (Industry lobby) on India's FTA in Delhi; November 15: interview with Carlos Bermejo Acosta, European Commission's Delegation to India on India-EU trade agreement in Delhi; Susana Barria; November 29-30: participated in a meeting organized by CII (Indian industry lobby) on Retail in Mumbai

FOCUS ON TRADE

NUMBER 115, JANUARY 2006

Accession through the backdoor: how the US is pushing Iraq into the WTO

Mary Lou Malig

China, the WTO and globalisation: Looking beyond growth figures

Dorothy Guerrero

Humanitarian intervention: Evolution of a dangerous doctrine

Walden Bello

NUMBER 116, MARCH 2006

What happens when you run a country like a corporation: A primer on Thailand's political crisis

Alec Bamford and Chanida Chanyapate

The Bush-Manmohan nuclear compact: heightening insecurities in South Asia and beyond

Varsha Rajan Berry

State of emergency in the Philippines: Back to the future

Herbert Docena

Military radicalism in Venezuela: How relevant for other developing countries?

Walden Bello

US troops in Sulu: Has the Wood Brigade returned?

Herbert Docena

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Bello misrepresents School of the Americas

Letter from Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation

Lamy's rule-less negotiating procedures work against the weak

Aileen Kwa

Slash and burn: how the current negotiations in NAMA threaten development in the south

Mary Lou Malig

State of play: critical WTO negotiations go underground

Aileen Kwa

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The wisdom of Wall Street

Nicola Bullard

Thailand: Democracy, elections and legitimacy

Alec Bamford and Chanida Chanyapate

Critics plan offensive as IMF-World Bank crisis deepens

Walden Bello

"Aquí estamos y no nos vamos": The struggle for immigrant rights in the US

William I. Robinson

Bolivia's radical realignment under Evo Morales

Roger Burbach

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Take the IMF off life support

Soren Ambrose and Walden Bello

The Iran issue: Backgrounder

Prabir Purkayastha

The rise of the relief-and reconstruction complex

Walden Bello

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Standing by East Timor
Shalmali Guttal
Killing season in the Philippines
Herbert Docena
After Thaksin: the CEO state, nationalism and US imperialism

NUMBER 120, JUNE 2006

Standing by East Timor
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NUMBER 121, JUNE 2006

WTO members question process, yet again
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Services industry drives India GATS negotiations
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Africa to lose out from WTO negotiations, even in agriculture
Aileen Kwa

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Reactions to the collapse of the round
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Food Sovereignty Network

NUMBER 123, AUGUST 2006

Nasrallah: New Arab world hero
Seema Mustafa
Unbroken spirits fill highways of death
Seema Mustafa
Tracing a trail of destruction: Report from Lebanon 1
Walden Bello
Truce hopes emerge in fog of war
Seema Mustafa
Bombing till the last minute: report from Lebanon 2
Walden Bello
In Beirut, jubilation and trepidation
Herbert Docena
A bittersweet day: report from Lebanon 3
Walden Bello
Why did the Lebanese resistance accept 1701?
Feroze H. Mithiborwala

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A Siamese tragedy: The collapse of democracy in Thailand
Walden Bello
Fuelling discontent: the World Bank and IMF in Singapore
Shalmali Guttal
Microcredit, macro problems
Walden Bello

NUMBER 125, NOVEMBER 2006

Americans want a new direction, but will Democrats lead?
Walden Bello
Latin america, state power and the challenge to global capital: An interview with William I. Robinson
Nicaragua: a defeat for the US but no victory for the left
Alejandro Bendaña
Chain-gang economics: China, the US and the global economy
Walden Bello
Behind the great wall: US corporations opposing new rights for Chinese workers
Global Labour Strategies

DOSSIERS

Revisiting Southeast Asian Regionalism (December 2006)
<http://www.focusweb.org/revisiting-southeast-asian-regionalism.html>

Destroy and Profit: Wars, Disasters and Corporations (January 2006)
<http://www.focusweb.org/destroy-and-profit-wars-disasters-and-corporations.html>

The ADB and policy (mis) governance in Asia (May 2005)
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Silent War: The US' Economic and Ideological Occupation of Iraq (March 2005)
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SPECIAL REPORTS

Unconventional Warfare: Are US Special Forces Engaged in an 'Offensive War' in the Philippines? (January 2007)
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Lebanon: aggression and resistance (November 2006)
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When the Wind Blows: An overview of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) in India
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The Struggle for Land: A summary of discussions and Strategies at the Asia Land Meeting (November 2004)

Never Again: Cartoons on the Gujarat Carnage (December 2002)
<http://www.focusweb.org/never-again-cartoons-on-the-gujarat-carnage.html>

The Asian financial Crisis and Filipino Households: Impact on Women and Children
<http://www.focusweb.org/the-asian-financial-crisis-and-filipino-households-impact-on-women-and-chi.html>

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

Occasional Paper 1, "Globalisation and Change in Southern Laos" (January 2006) By Jonathan Cornford
<http://www.focusweb.org/occasional-papers-1-globalisation-and-change-in-southern-laos.html>

Occasional Paper 3, "ALBA Venezuela's answer to "free trade": the Bolivarian alternative for the Americas" (October 2006) By David Harris and Diego Azzi
<http://www.focusweb.org/alba-venezuela-s-answer-to-free-trade-the-bolivarian-alternative-for-the-ame.html>

BOOKS

Dilemmas of Domination: The unmaking of the American Empire, Walden Bello (March 2005)

Anti-Development State: The Political Economy of Permanent Crisis in the Philippines (September 2004), Walden Bello, co-authored by Mary Lou Malig, Herbert Docena and Mariessa de Guzman

Multilateral Punishment: The Philippines in the WTO, 1995-2003 (October 2004), Walden Bello

Behind the Scenes in the WTO (September 2003), Aileen Kwa and Fatoumata Jawara; Zed Books

The Future in the Balance: Essays on globalisation and Resistance (May 2001), Walden Bello

Global Finance: New Thinking on Regulating Speculative Capital Markets (November 2000), Edited by: Walden Bello, Nicola Bullard and Kamal Malhotra

CAMPAIGN MATERIAL

VIDEOS

A World Without the WTO (2006)

Why the WTO is Really Bad for you : the Hong Kong Deal (2005)

Why the WTO is Really Bad for you (2004)

Why the WTO is Bad for you (2003)

ACTIVISTS MANUAL

The Derailer's Guide to the WTO (November 2005)

STAFF RETREAT

On June 19-21, 2006, Focus held a staff retreat in Bangkok. This is the major planning and coordination opportunity for the whole year. However we organise regular conference calls between the programme teams and full staff meetings on conference calls occasionally. Three programme teams also held a face to face meeting in Bangkok on October 9-11, 2006.

FOCUS BOARD

There was a Board meeting on September 12-13. The first day was dedicated to a discussion of the campaign and programme updates. On the second day, the Board discussed funding and financial reports, organisation transition and management, and the role and composition of the Board. There will be some changes in the Board as we are planning to invite new members from Africa and Lebanon. The current board comprises 11 members and 4 advisors.

BOARD MEMBERS

Walden Bello
Focus on the Global South
Bangkok, Thailand

Alejandro Bendaña
Centro de Estudios Internacionales
Managua City, Nicaragua

Boua Chanthou
Padek
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Jayati Ghosh
Centre for Economic Studies and Planning-
Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

Somchai Homlaor
Internet Law Consultants Limited
Bangkok, Thailand

Abdul Hameed Nayyar
Sustainable Development Policy Institute
Islamabad, Pakistan

Peter Rosset
Centro de Estudios para el Cambio en el
Campo Mexicano (Center for Studies of
Rural Change in Mexico)
Chiapas, Mexico

Suwattana Thadaniti
Faculty of Architecture, CU
Bangkok, Thailand

Nguyen Van Thanh
Center for Development Study and Outreach
Vietnam Peace and Development Foundation,
Vietnam

Surichai Wun'Gaao (Chair)
CUSRI
Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

Yoon Youngmo
Korea Labour and Society Institute (KLSI)
Seoul, Korea

ADVISERS

Victor P. Karunan
UNICEF Headquarters
New York, USA

Martin Khor
Third World Network (TWN)
Penang, Malaysia

Kamal Malhotra
United Nation Development Programme
(UNDP)
New York, NY USA

Amara Pongsapich
Faculty of Political Sciences, CU
Bangkok, Thailand

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Chanida Chanyapate Banfords (deputy director)

Jenina Joy Chavez (coordinator Philippines
programme)

Meena Menon (coordinator India programme)

Nicola Bullard

Praphai Jundee (finance coordinator)

Shalmali Guttal

Walden Bello (executive director)

STAFF 2006

Afsar Jafri

Aileen Kwa

Anoop Sukumaran

Ashish More (from July)

Benny Kuruvilla

Chanida Bamford

Dorothy Guerrero

Herbert Docena

Jacques-chai Chomthongdi

Joseph Purugganan

Jenina Joy Chavez

Julie de los Reyes

Lou Torres

Mary Ann Manahan

Mary Lou Malig

Mayuree Ruechakiattikul

Meena Menon

Minu Jose (from August)

Neelam Dhanawade (until June)

Nicola Bullard

Nilesh More (from April)

Praphai Jundee

Sajin Prachason

Shalmali Guttal

Sonila Shetty

Soontaree Nakaviroj

Varsha Berry

Walden Bello

Yaowalak Seetha (temporary 4 January -
19 May)

INTERNS

India

Kalyani Unkule (15 May-15 June): prepared
database of IFI projects in the Agriculture
sector in India

Sampriti Baruah (July 2006 to March 2007):
mapped of different kinds of Contract Farming
prevalent in India and a specific case study of
Jatropha plantation.

Animesh Narain (July 2006 to March 2007):
worked on various Peace and Security related
issues, research for paper on Shanghai
Cooperation Organisation (forthcoming).

Susana Barria (Sept 2006 -): working on trade
related issues, wrote paper on ALBA and is
currently working on SAFTA issues.

Philippines

Ina Laya Gacad

Kenneth Cardenas

Mae Ann Saguno

Maria Cristina Madarieta

Raffy Simbol

Thailand

Nyan Min Htut (16 January - 15 June):
researcher for a project on Burma's economic
integration in Asia

Funders, board members and staff 2006

CORE FUNDERS 2006

11.11.11 Belgium

ActionAid International Asia

Christian Aid, UK

CORDAID, the Netherlands

Development and Peace, Canada

HIVOS, the Netherlands

Inter Pares, Canada

Oxfam Australia

Oxfam GB, East Asia Regional Management
Centre, Thailand

Oxfam HK, Hong Kong

Oxfam NOVIB, the Netherlands

Trocaire, Ireland

We would like to acknowledge the generous support of the following organisations/individual for the following conferences and specific projects:

11.11.11- Belgium

Regional Trade Strategy Meeting Bangkok and Asian
Delegates to Geneva

ActionAid Asia Regional

World Bank/IMF Annual meeting Singapore and
International Course on globalisation Bangkok

Christian Aid

Regional Trade Strategy Meeting Bangkok and World
Bank/IMF Annual meeting Singapore

Karibu, Norway

Conferences on International Network for Foreign
Military Bases

Development and Peace, Canada

Conferences on International Network for Foreign
Military Bases

Oxfam NOVIB, the Netherlands

Conferences on International Network for Foreign
Military Bases

In addition, the following organisations supported staff
or delegate's travel costs for various event.

ActionAid-UK, AQF-Norway, Babel, CLASCO, Dag
Hammarhjold Foundation, FEDAEPs-Brazil, FEMNET,
Food and Water Watch, Forum Social Mondial,
Greenpeace International, ISS, Jubilee South, Mani
Tese, Norway Social Forum, Pacific Institute, RBF, SID,
TNI and University of Kwazulu-Natal

Focus on the Global South *

Comparison of Budget, Income and Expenditure

As at December 31, 2006

Amount in Usd.

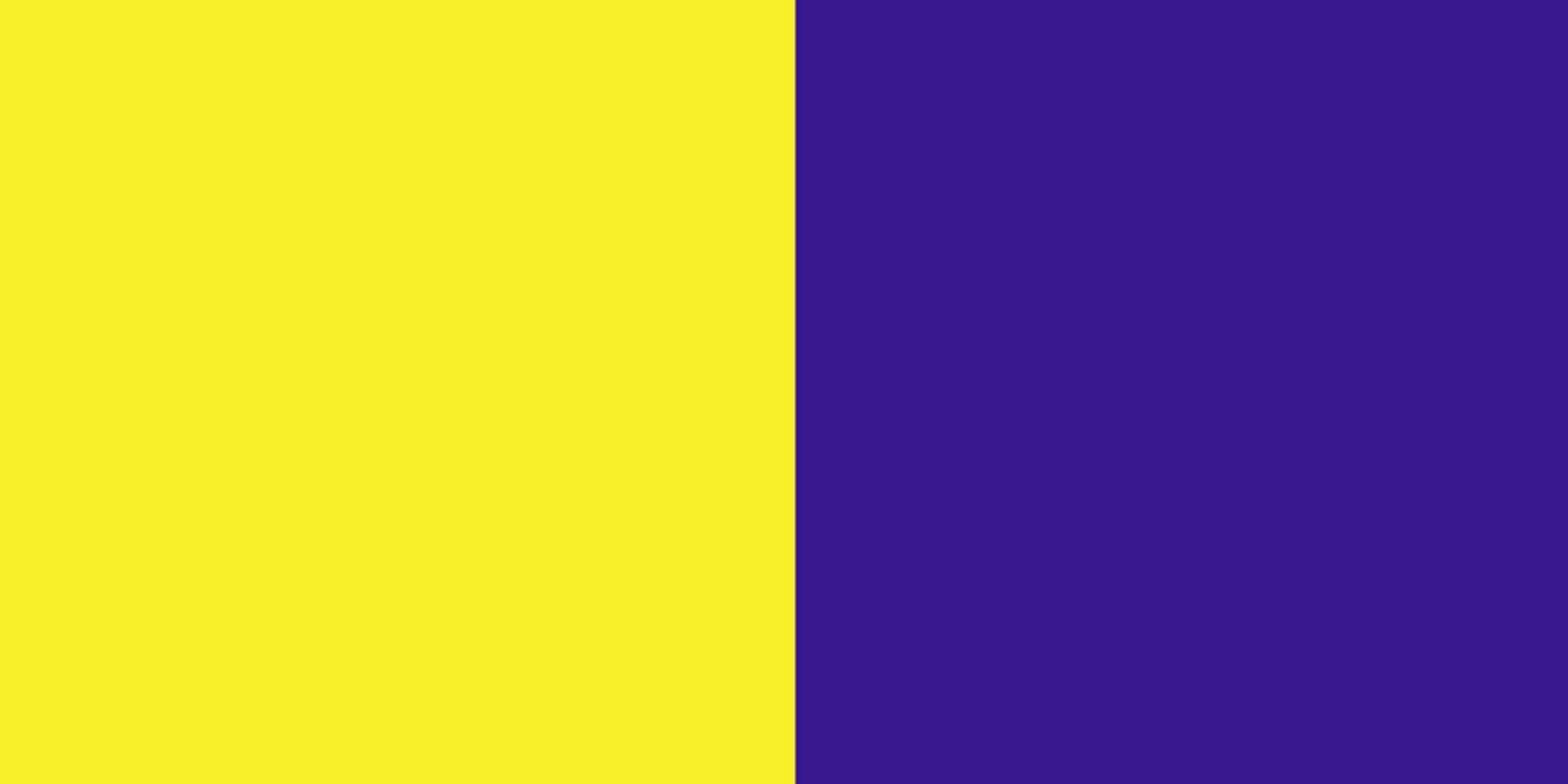
	Budget	Income	Act.Expense	Variance Budget-Act.Exp.	Variance Income-Act.Exp.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)-(3)	(2)-(3)
Alternatives Program	144,310.00	107,718.97	110,932.43	55,377.57	- 3,213.46
Defending & Reclaiming the Commons program	161,720.00	116,647.37	123,882.35	37,837.65	- 7,214.98
Peace & People's Security Campaign	181,010.00	122,106.39	126,520.22	54,489.78	- 4,413.83
Trade Campaign	306,160.00	229,860.17	238,266.85	67,893.15	- 8,406.68
China Program	160,500.00	86,353.36	86,353.36	74,146.64	- 271.98
Conference:					
International network against foreign military bases(No-Base Network)		34,199.74	34,105.17	- 34,105.17	- 94.57
Counter-Summits in Geneva		6,083.58	10,146.85	- 10,146.85	- 4,063.27
Regional Trade Strategy Meeting		4,516.75	8,842.89	- 8,842.89	- 4,326.14
Summer Course on Civil Society		43,566.38	42,280.57	- 42,280.57	- 1,285.81
Special Project in Php.(DRTS)		24,922.27	24,161.50	- 24,161.50	760.77
Special Project in Php.(Asean Summit,Cebu)		7,900.00	8,660.78	- 8,660.78	- 760.78
Special Project in Php.(SNR Campaign)		3,462.89	3,476.04	- 3,476.04	- 13.15
Professional fee		3,088.87			3,088.87
Bank Interest income		11,631.86			11,631.86
Other income		1,101.72			1,101.72
Gain or Loss on Exchange		- 16,548.45			16,548.45
TOTAL	975,700.00	786,359.89	817,629.01	158,070.99	- 31,269.12

Note

1 Usd. = 39.00 Bht., 50.00 Peso, 43.00 Inr.

1 Euro = 1.20 Usd.

*Include Philippines funds & Expenditure direct through their country





FOCUS *on the Global South*

Focus on the Global South (Bangkok)
c/o CUSRI, Chulalongkorn University
Bangkok 10330 Thailand
Tel: +662 218 7363/7364/7365
Fax: +662 255 9976
Web Page <http://www.focusweb.org>

Focus on the Global South (Mumbai)
A-201, Kailash Apartments
Juhu Church Road, Juhu
Mumbai 400 049 India
Tel: +91 22 55 82 11 41/51
Fax: +91 22 26 25 43 47

Focus on the Global South (Manila)
19 Maginhawa Street
UP Village, Diliman
Quezon City, Philippines
Tel: +632 433 1676
Fax: +632 433 0899

