

FOCUS  
ON THE  
GLOBAL  
SOUTH



# ANNUAL REPORT

2023



**Cover Photo:** SONA mobilization along the Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City, Philippines. 24 March 2023. Photo by Galileo de Guzman Castillo, Focus on the Global South.

## MESSAGE FROM FOCUS ON THE GLOBAL SOUTH

*The year 2023 was a period of intense global upheaval, marked by the enduring impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, escalating climate emergencies, worsening inequality and hunger, a further erosion of democratic spaces, the deepening crisis in Gaza amid broader geopolitical tensions, and the continuation of war in various regions. These developments underscore the risks of new forms of imperial domination, corporate-led globalization, the persistence of neoliberal policies, with the rise and persistence of right-wing conservative forces, fundamentalism, and discriminations that prop up systems of oppression. The result remains the failure of mainstream solutions to address the foundational issues of an unjust, unequal, and unsustainable global system.*

*Our work has highlighted the relentless advance of neoliberal agendas that prioritize corporate interests over public welfare, eroding social services and public support systems. The consequences of such policies were starkly evident in international fora like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conferences, where the interests of the global North continued to overshadow the urgent needs of the global South. Moreover, the year brought into sharper focus the dire situations in conflict zones, where our advocacy for peace and justice has intensified against the backdrop of ongoing violence and human rights violations.*

*Despite these formidable challenges, Focus on the Global South's commitment to fostering peoples' power and advocating for systemic change remains unwavering. We persist in our collaborative efforts with progressive social movements, civil society groups, and communities to advocate for a world that respects, upholds, and prioritizes justice, equality, democracy, and sustainability. Our commitment to combating historical distortions, upholding human rights, and promoting environmental integrity continues to guide our actions.*

*In 2024, amidst the shadows of war and conflict, we are more determined than ever to strengthen our solidarity with those affected by violence and oppression. Our resolve to challenge the structures perpetuating inequality and environmental degradation is as strong as our commitment to peaceful resolution and the dignity of all.*

**IN SOLIDARITY,  
FOCUS ON THE GLOBAL SOUTH**

# A YEAR OF INTENSE GLOBAL UPHEAVAL

**Geopolitics and geoeconomics** became the driving force for global developments, with global, regional, and country-level impacts of geopolitics, across the Russia-Ukraine-NATO dynamics to US-China tensions, reflected in the ongoing food, energy, and macro-economic crises. Global fault lines intensified as the genocide catastrophe in Gaza unfolded.

Trade wars, militarization, controls on technology, tensions in the South China Sea / West Philippine Sea with diplomatic and military implications for South East Asian countries, provocations in the Taiwan Straits, divisions in states' positions over Ukraine and now Gaza and Palestine, migration and the right-wing push back from the Global North have been some of the fallouts of geopolitical/economic factors for the Global South and in the Asia-Pacific region.




Global Campaign to Reclaim Peoples Sovereignty, Dismantle Corporate Power, and Stop Impunity (Global Campaign) in Geneva, November 2023. Photo by Global Campaign.

There was a compounding of **vulnerabilities in the Global South**, with countries and populations now more than ever being further **marginalized by the capitalist and extractivist interests** of the wealthy. At the country level, this was reflected, among other trends, in the depredations of the public economy, gutting of social systems, and corporate takeover of public services (including through public-private partnerships). Governments subsidized businesses at the cost of social security and publicly financed support and protections to communities and small-scale food providers—including farmers, peasants, fisherfolk, forest dwellers, as well as rural women, Indigenous peoples, pastoralists, and other communities that contribute to and play an important role in food provision. Apart from being robbed of much-needed subsidies and social protections, the self-determination of small-scale food providers was undermined by increasing horizontal and vertical corporate concentration across the food system. This monopolistic practice strengthened corporations' bargaining power, allowed them to control decision-making, and further empowered them to extract rents from small-scale providers.

The **deepening North-South divide** rooted in unequal trade and levels of development, as well as the reversing of financial flows through the current development and climate financing models, was reflected in yet another debt crisis. The lost decade of the 1980s, and its recurrence following the financial crises in 1997 and 2009 are being repeated, furthering poverty and inequalities in the South. However, this debt does not only include multilateral or bilateral debt but also indebtedness to private sector financial actors.

**International and national financial systems were further skewed** by the protections extended to finance capital and transnational corporations. As things stand, capital from the developing and less developed countries is going back to the North, as interest payments are skyrocketing with Pakistan and Sri Lanka two obvious cases in the region. Despite the magnitude of the crisis, there have been no real solutions proposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the global financial elite as they engage in blame-shifting.

The **climate crisis** continued to worsen with 2023 being the hottest year on record so far. Despite the rise in rhetoric in the last quarter, there was little going beyond empty promises. Climate 'fixes', 'green-economy', 'blue-economy' and various 'techno-' solutions are still advancing at the cost of real and just solutions for addressing the vulnerabilities of communities.



With the persistence of **corporate concentration and growing financialization**, we continued to raise alarm over the expansion of corporate influence in international, regional, and national systems of governance, and challenges to public interest-oriented governance systems. There continues to be very little movement in terms of taxation as states are not willing to touch those who have control over big tech, energy, and financial sectors.

The **crisis of capitalism and its nexus with authoritarianism** became an alarmingly rising trend. Developed and leading developing countries increasingly adopted state-led capitalism and related approaches. Recent US legislation upheld the pattern of subsidizing private firms, Wall Street, and big tech. Thus we saw convergence in both the US and China towards the state-led capitalist model. Authoritarian governments in turn demonstrate how to use the state not only to police people but to strengthen the capitalist mode of production.

Despite numerous challenges, there has been momentum and movement in terms of peoples' solidarities – as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic – upholding spaces for alternative livelihoods, mutual support, and mutual aid initiatives that go beyond simplistic notions of relief and assistance (e.g. solidarity kitchens, community pantries, etc.) and community-led solutions – such as stewardship of the commons, agroecology initiatives and transformative territorial markets, feminist economies of life and care. The youth from different sectors and communities have organized themselves and have been engaged in reclaiming their stake in society and their futures. **Communities and peoples' have continued striving for their rights and demanding/ upholding intersectional and intergenerational justice**, including through people-to-people exchanges, collaborative spaces, collective actions across different areas of convergence, and with a spirit of inquiry and critical thinking, leading to awareness and action on the ground.



Global Thematic Social Forum (TSF) on Mining and the Extractive Economy, Semarang, 17-20 October 2023. Photo by Galileo de Guzman Castillo, Focus on the Global South.

The Village Idiots performing at "Sama-Sama: Ating Kanta, Ating Pakikibaka, Our Songs, Our Struggles" in Manila, 20 June 2023. Photo by AMP3



Walden Bello was awarded Amnesty International Philippines' "Most Distinguished Defender of Human Rights", 10 June 2023.

Women workers in the Philippines joining Pride Month celebrations. Amplifying calls for legislated wage increase and the passage of law on SOGIEC equality. June 2023. Photo by Partido Manggagawa.



Conference on Agriculture, Land & Forests: Perspectives on the Crisis and Policy Alternatives in New Delhi, 18-19 February 2023. Photo by Focus on the Global South.

"Food Sovereignty: Cooling a Warming World - A Photo Story from Cambodia" was exhibited at the MAEW 2023.

# OUR WORK IN 2023

Focus on the Global South (Focus), with our partners and allies, continued our work towards building alternatives for just social, economic, environmental, and political change while responding to post-pandemic shifts and critical developments through the past year.

As always, our work has been multi-level, multi-constituency and multi-sectoral. We have continued to monitor, undertake research, and provide critical analyses; organized convenings and mobilizations; undertaken popular awareness and education activities; provided support towards amplifying the voices and perspectives of grassroots people and social movements, and facilitating opportunities for their representation and participation in critical governance spaces; and participated in policy platforms, spaces and processes at national, regional and international levels.

Some highlights of our work through the past year (presented thematically), include:

## POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEVELOPMENT

As part of our efforts in **advancing alternative paradigms**, our organization endorsed the "Manifesto for an Ecosocial Energy Transition from the Peoples of the South," aiming to unify efforts for global transformation and develop collective solutions. We engaged in the 2nd Global Thematic Social Forum on Mining and the Extractive Economy, and co-organized a workshop on Global Trade, Supply Chains, and Transition Minerals, gaining insights into

regional challenges and fostering dialogue with partners. Our participation in the G20 counter-mobilization in India led to the endorsement of a declaration advocating for prioritizing people and nature at the We20 Peoples' Summit. Despite disruptions, the summit successfully united over 70 organizations online. In Cambodia, we conducted workshops focusing on peace, equitable society, and environmental justice, addressing human rights crises and advocating for socioeconomic, ecological, and gender justice. Additionally, a conference in Cambodia delved into the economic and geopolitical challenges facing Southeast Asia, promoting discussions on alternative economic models and community-led responses, with notable contributions from activists and academics.

We undertook research and provided analyses **exposing debt, demystifying finance**, and also shared our **perspectives on global imperialism**. Walden Bello, co-founder and co-chair of Focus, published an article advocating for a bold approach to the developing country debt crisis, emphasizing the need for democratic involvement and acknowledgment of the ecological debts of the global north. His work on "Understanding the Global Economy: Finance and Financialization," helped clarify and challenge perceptions of the global financial system, highlighting issues from financial crises to the roles of major institutions. Additionally, our board member Boaventura Monjane's analysis spotlighted Africa's fight against global imperialist forces, advocating for a Pan-Africanist movement with a strong feminist ethos, aimed at fostering unity, self-determination, and sustainable prosperity for



Shalmali Guttal as one of the panelists at a session organised during the 51st meeting of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) held in Rome, 24-27 October 2023. Photo by CSM4CFS.

Africa.

We also continued to **advance demands for upholding human rights by big business**. We made submissions to support the legally binding treaty to advance accountability of transnational corporations and enterprises, at the Business and Human Rights Resource Center Roundtable in July. As part of the Global Campaign to Reclaim Peoples Sovereignty, Dismantle Corporate Power, and Stop Impunity, we expressed concerns regarding the updated draft treaty by the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group (OEIGWG) and urged for inclusive international consultations involving civil society before the 9th session of the OEIGWG. Our active participation in the process, represented by Joseph Purugganan, highlighted the collective civil society effort to influence corporate conduct regarding human rights.

For our work on the **exposition of the**

**corporate capture of food systems**, Shalmali Guttal contributed to a briefing by IPES-Food, emphasizing the extensive control corporations wield over food governance and advocating for a decision-making process that prioritizes community needs and addresses the food, hunger, and climate crises. We were involved in combating corporate influence through our participation in the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism (CSIPM) at the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the Peoples' Working Group on Multistakeholderism (PWGM). At the UN Food Systems Summit's Stocktaking Conference in Rome, Shalmali Guttal presented a report critiquing the summit's processes and highlighted the threats to food sovereignty and FAO's democratic governance. Our involvement continued at the 51st meeting of the CFS and related forums, with discussions on gender, food governance, and corporate influence, further establishing our organization's role in advocating for equitable





Joseph Purugganan delivered the intervention at the IPEF Fifth Negotiating Round: Bangkok In-Person Stakeholder Listening Session, 14 September 2023. Photo by Galileo de Guzman Castillo, Focus on the Global South



Broad coalition of agriculture stakeholders and trade justice advocates held a press conference to urge the Senate to reject RCEP in Quezon City, 1 February 2023. Photo by Joseph Purugganan, Focus on the Global South.

and sustainable food system governance.

**Monitoring, analyses, and campaigns on trade and investment agreements as well as economic policies** remained a cornerstone of Focus efforts on the political economy of development. A central aspect of our work involved engagement with the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), including a negotiation round in Thailand, and collaborative efforts with local and international partners to discuss its implications on gender equality, agriculture, environmental sustainability, digitalization, and labor rights. Our advocacy extended to challenging the transparency of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations in India and exploring the potential of agroecology to address the struggles faced by Indian farmers.

We continued our strategic dialogues on the importance of a new democratic multilateralism

and the potential of south-south cooperation, bringing together experts to analyze global dynamics and the role of alliances like the BRICS. In the Philippines, our collaboration with Trade Justice Pilipinas aimed to contest the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), advocating for agricultural stakeholders' rights and proposing measures for the agreement's effective implementation despite legislative challenges.

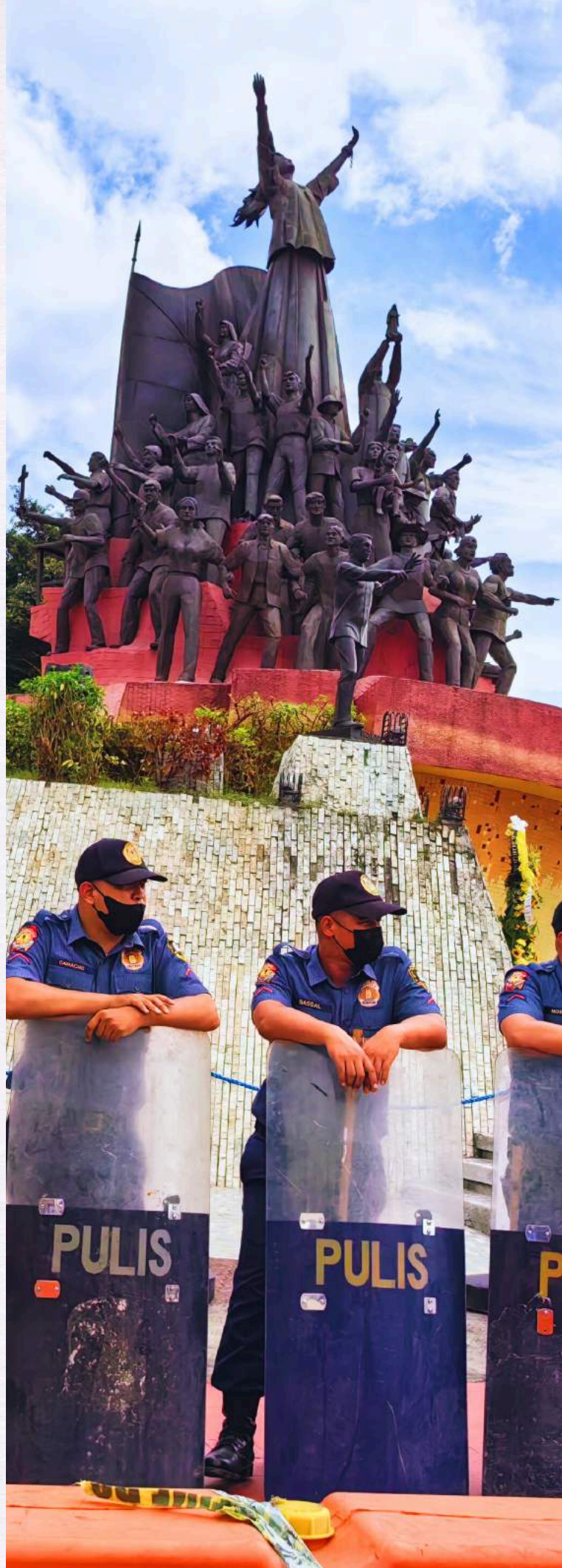
Our India Office hosted discussions on the digitalization of agriculture and produced publications in Hindi on agriculture policies, WTO agreements, and the socio-economic implications of fisheries subsidies and climate change on small-scale fishing communities. Additionally, we highlighted the financial landscape of India through a comprehensive report, offering insights into the nation's economic challenges and opportunities.

## POWER AND DEMOCRACY

Throughout the year, we continued our effort in **upholding demands for justice on different fronts**. We faced the ongoing challenge of enforced disappearances, notably marking the eleventh anniversary of Lao civil society leader Sombath Somphone's disappearance, uniting with over 75 organizations in demanding transparency and accountability from the Lao government. We raised awareness for enforced disappearances through social media campaigns and shared narratives from affected families and allies. Additionally, we participated in the Asia-Pacific Regional Dialogue for Human Rights, emphasizing regional human rights concerns and advocating for stronger regional mechanisms.

In Thailand, we supported civil rights activists in their protests for political freedoms, leading to the release of political detainees. We condemned the violent attacks against Lao bloggers and human rights defenders, demanding thorough investigations and accountability. We also supported legal and advocacy efforts in Cambodia, including for the Lor Peang community who faced threats and harassment.

In the Philippines, we supported land rights activism, notably aiding Sumalo farmers in Bataan in their struggle against criminalization, and expanded support networks including legal and human rights groups. We also continued to aid advocacy for Indigenous peoples' rights in the Philippines and we stood with Indigenous Peoples against the Anti-Terror Law, drawing attention to human rights abuses and supporting campaigns against unjust policies. We also supported the Movement for Agrarian Reform and Social Justice (KATARUNGAN) in filing a UN complaint regarding Filipino peasants' persecution. During the European Commission President's visit to the Philippines, we published an open letter criticizing the pro-corporate development agenda and advocating for inclusive social justice.



37th anniversary of the People Power Revolution in the Philippines, 25 February 2023. Photo by Galileo de Guzman Castillo, Focus on the Global South.

In June, Walden Bello received the Amnesty International Philippines' award as the Most Distinguished Defender of Human Rights.

Focus also shared **political analyses and commentaries on elections and the political dynasties**, notably in Thailand, the Philippines, and Cambodia. Kheetanat Wannaboworn and Walden Bello discussed Thailand's post-election landscape, capturing the anti-military bloc's challenges and people's movement expectations. Bianca Martinez and Raphael Baladad explored the dynamics in the Philippines, highlighting the interplay of the Marcos and Duterte dynasties. Additionally, a report by the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights delved into Cambodia's political dynamics.

We kept an **eye on geopolitics**, where Walden Bello analyzed semi-sovereignty challenges, highlighting how geopolitical tensions affect Japan and the Philippines. He delved into the complexities of the Ukraine war, US-China relations, and Chilean historical political shifts and in an interview with AlJazeera, emphasized the G77 nations' principles, underscoring non-alignment and the call for respect and economic development, particularly referencing the Ukraine-Russia conflict's impact on grain supplies. Walden Bello also critiqued Henry Kissinger's legacy and the rise of global fascism, providing insights into his anti-war stance and analyzing the conditions

nurturing fascism to strategize against its resurgence.

We increased our efforts in **building and reinforcing solidarities through culture and youth engagements**. The concert "Sama-Sama: Ating Kanta, Ating Pakikibaka, Our Songs, Our Struggles" in Manila showcased 'artivism' with eighteen artists from eight countries, emphasizing the power of arts in social advocacy. We also facilitated workshops in the Philippines with Dakila and Active Vista on Sicogon Island, enhancing youth skills in creative storytelling and strategic communication for land rights campaigns.

Our collaboration with Art4CDM included support for developing a comic strip narrating the perseverance of Myanmar civil servants in the Civil Disobedience Movement post-military coup, illustrating the persistent struggle against dictatorship. We also spotlighted the resilience and aspirations of Myanmar's youth in Thailand through discussions with BEAM Education Foundation in Chiang Mai, exploring migration, identity, and community engagement, culminating in a graphic series on International Migrants Day to trace youth migration trends between Myanmar and Thailand.

Focus has been actively **responding to the Gaza crisis**, advocating for peace and justice. We compiled statements and resources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the



Philippine groups form No to War network, call for permanent ceasefire and an end to genocide in Gaza. Quezon City, Philippines. 28 November 2023. Photo by Del Bañares, SENTRO.



occupation and violence in Palestine, contributing to a critical discourse through our publication Focus Dispatch and other media initiatives. In solidarity with Gaza, we participated in the Asia Europe People's Forum webinar, exploring the legal and human aspects of Israel's actions and the resistance of the Palestinian people. Regionally, the NO TO WAR network in the Philippines called for a ceasefire and the cessation of genocide, supported by statements from local allies advocating for peace and justice.

## PEOPLE'S ALTERNATIVES

As part of our work on **supporting peoples' solidarities and exchanges beyond boundaries and sectors**, we held numerous discussions on food sovereignty, agriculture, and land rights. The Regional Meeting on Food Sovereignty in Thailand, co-organized with local networks, catalyzed dialogues on the challenges for small-scale food providers. This event led to an analytical report and video on food sovereignty, which also emphasized climate resilience.

We celebrated the International Day of Peasants Struggles through our work with the IPC Working Group on Land, Water, Forests, and Territory on "The Land Struggles Series," exploring rights to land, fisheries, and forests. We also participated in the Mekong-ASEAN Environmental Week, as well as the Mekong Young Farmers Exchange in Thailand, which provided platforms for discussing rights, environmental justice, and agroecology, with Focus aiding in organizing and sharing insights.

In India, national conferences on agriculture, land, and forests co-organized with local alliances provided forums for policy discourse and community resilience, especially concerning fisheries and climate change. Seed Festivals in Cambodia showcased agroecology's potential, promoting farmer-led knowledge exchange. Focus also supported



Benny Kuruvilla representing Focus at the La Via Campesina 8th Congress on 4 December 2023 in Colombia. Photo by La Via Campesina.

Thailand's agroecology workshops, enhancing stakeholder networks in sustainable agriculture.

Policy advocacy was a key focus, particularly in Cambodia's Farmer's Policy Development Process and the Philippines' National Conference on Agrarian Reform, where food sovereignty and land rights were central themes. Focus also engaged in legislative advocacy, addressing agrarian reform and land-grabbing risks in the Philippines.

Internationally, Focus participated in La Via Campesina's 8th Congress in Colombia, reaffirming our commitment to global solidarity and food sovereignty, and emphasizing our role in fostering equitable and sustainable policy frameworks worldwide.

We have also been committed to **amplifying voices and highlighting peoples' struggles for lands and livelihoods**. The Nyeleni Newsletters and a joint letter to the UNFCCC showcased the strength of people's movements in addressing global crises. In Cambodia, we shared personal stories from Tamol Leu villagers, emphasizing their steadfast fight against land grabbing. Our India office enriched the dialogue on sustainable farming through a video series on agroecology and criticized the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies for its bias against developing nations.

In the Philippines, Focus collaborated with the

Save Agrarian Reform Alliance to critique the agrarian emancipation law and participated in mobilizations to demand people-centric solutions to the food and inflation crisis. Articles and reports from Cambodia and South Asia provided insights into the adverse effects of deforestation and the pandemic on food systems, while a photo story offered perspectives on agriculture and climate change.

In partnership with the Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, Focus launched a research project and public forum on Thailand's development from the people's perspective, offering historical insights into social movements. In Cambodia, a community study trip for social work students, organized with SACD and the Royal University of Phnom Penh, facilitated immersive learning about community activism and social responsibilities, particularly in natural resource management and village livelihoods.

## GENDER JUSTICE

In 2023, Focus actively **foregrounded and mainstreamed feminist perspectives across its work**. Highlighting the intersectionality of hunger, gender-based violence, and discrimination, we participated in UN negotiations for gender equality in food security, translating key statements into local

languages to enhance local understanding. Our advocacy extended to supporting the LGBTQIA+ community during Pride Month, emphasizing the need for inclusivity and equality in Asia.

We celebrated the International Day of Rural Women with a campaign that amplified the voices of rural women allies, acknowledging their critical role in food systems. In Cambodia, we co-organized forums to address violence against women and facilitated dialogues on feminist concepts, providing spaces for women from diverse backgrounds to share experiences and discuss socio-economic and political issues facing women in Cambodia.

A video inquiry into feminist perspectives showcased interviews with various Cambodian women, discussing feminism, socioeconomic disparity, and environmental activism. Additionally, dialogues on feminism and climate justice were held, enhancing understanding of local and regional feminist activism.

On International Women's Day, we provided a spotlight on women's issues and land rights, sharing testimonies of Cambodian women's struggles and achievements. In the Philippines, we supported women farmers facing criminal

charges, organizing protests for justice and linking their cause to broader international advocacy, culminating in the dismissal of charges and an investigative task force establishment. Through these actions, Focus underscored the importance of feminist perspectives in addressing global challenges and advocating for women's rights and empowerment.

## CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

In response to COP 28 in Dubai, Focus together with our allies, critiqued carbon markets and offsets, arguing these strategies often harm local communities and distort climate justice goals. The "Stop Carbon Offsetting Now!" statement was disseminated in various Asian languages to broaden its impact. During the Mekong-ASEAN Environmental Week (MAEW) in September 2023, Focus contributed to a panel on climate resilience, highlighting grassroots actions and perspectives from diverse stakeholders, including peasants, agroecology practitioners, and anti-coal activists, thereby enriching the dialogue on sustainable and equitable climate solutions.



International Women's Day celebration by the Lorpeang and Pich Chengva communities in Kampong Chhnang, Cambodia. 8 March 2023. Photo by Ridan Sun, Focus on the Global South.

# CHARTING A COURSE FOR 2024

Focus on the Global South will continue to monitor developments on various fronts, provide cutting-edge analyses and advocate for rights and justice in these volatile times. Our efforts will further integrate and amplify feminist perspectives, recognizing their critical importance in shaping equitable and sustainable policies. We continue to prioritize our engagement with grassroots movements and local communities, ensuring their voices and experiences remain at the forefront of our campaigns and research; and build on networks, partnerships and collaborations, from the international to the local, to advance approaches challenging unjust power structures and solutions that genuinely address needs of the most vulnerable population.



*Regional Meeting on Food Sovereignty, held in Surin Province, Thailand, from March 24 to 30, 2023.  
Photo by Focus on the Global South.*

# KEY NUMBERS

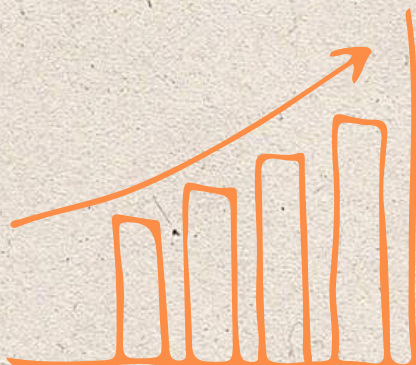
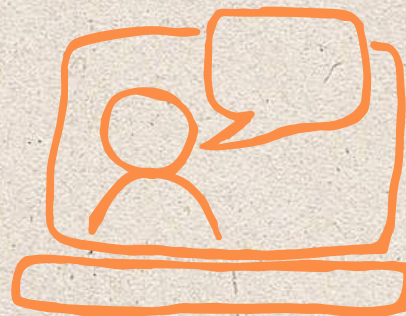
**110**  
**PUBLISHED**  
**CONTENT**



**72**  
**MEDIA**  
**FEATURES**



**13**  
**WEBINARS**  
**ORGANIZED**



**120K+** WEBSITE VISITS  
**33K+** FACEBOOK REACH  
**5,2K+** INSTAGRAM REACH  
**114K+** X/TWITTER IMPRESSIONS





# PUBLISHED CONTENT

## PUBLICATIONS & NEWSLETTERS

- [FOCUS Dispatch January 2023 — Navigating the Pandemic Aftermath and Multiple Crises: Reflecting on 2022 and Charting a Course for 2023](#)
- [\[HINDI\] Wind down the WTO Agreement on Agriculture In Defence of Food Sovereignty](#)
- [\[HINDI\] Agrarian Crisis: Women's Role in Revolutionary Transformation](#)
- [FOCUS Dispatch February 2023 — Movements Unite: Updates from the Frontlines of Resistance](#)
- [Nyélení Newsletter no 51: Grassroots solutions to the global food crisis](#)
- [FOCUS Dispatch March 2023 — Celebrating the Rights of Women and Girls](#)
- [Fisheries, the Climate Crisis and the Indian state's response](#)
- [FOCUS Dispatch April 2023 — Celebrating International Day of Peasants Struggles](#)
- [Recovery and Road Ahead Post COVID19 and Agriculture in South Asia](#)
- [FOCUS Dispatch May 2023 — Resilience and Resistance: Defending Rights and Sovereignty in a World of Crises](#)
- [Nyélení Newsletter no 52: Nyélení process: Recognizing the power of people's movements](#)
- [Agroecology — Possibility and Challenges in India](#)
- [FOCUS Dispatch June 2023 — Celebrating Pride and Resilience: Uniting Struggles, Inspiring Change](#)
- [FOCUS Dispatch July 2023 — Food Systems, Indigenous Rights, and Political Shifts](#)
- [FOCUS Dispatch August 2023 — Navigating Financial Complexity & Socio-Political Landscapes](#)
- [Nyélení Newsletter no 53: Emerging diseases and factory farming](#)
- [FOCUS Dispatch September 2023 — Economic Frameworks, Environmental Actions, and Political Shifts in the Region](#)
- [Towards Democratic Food Systems In Asia: Forging A Collective Path](#)
- [Conference on Agriculture, Land and Forests: Perspective on the Crisis and Policy Alternatives](#)
- [FOCUS Dispatch October 2023 — Commemorating Rural Women and Food Sovereignty](#)
- [FOCUS Dispatch — End the Siege of Gaza; Stop the Killing and Forced Displacement; Unconditional Ceasefire Now!](#)
- [FOCUS Dispatch November 2023 — A Month of Resilience and Solidarity](#)
- [Nyélení Newsletter no 54: How multilateral and other international platforms affect food sovereignty](#)
- [FOCUS Dispatch December 2023 — "2023 Wrapped: Time For Accountability"](#)

## ARTICLES

- [Joint Statement of Agri stakeholders and Trade Justice Advocates: NO TO RCEP! DON'T MAKE PHL AN "UKAY-UKAY" REPUBLIC!](#)
- [MEDIA ADVISORY: FARMERS DECRY RUSH TO RATIFY RCEP; VOW TO CONTINUE FIGHT AGAINST LIBERALIZATION POLICIES THAT HAVE DECIMATED PHILIPPINE AGRICULTURE](#)
- [TRADE JUSTICE PILIPINAS Statement: The struggle against trade liberalization continues](#)
- [Trade Justice Pilipinas: We are locked-in to obligations under RCEP. While withdrawal is possible, not so easily done!](#)
- [Challenges and Prospects for Social Justice within Government's economic agenda](#)
- [The Political Economy of a Predatory State Revisited: The Marcos-World Bank Partnership](#)
- [The UN Committee on World Food Security must acknowledge the intersectionality of hunger, sexual and gender-based violence, and discrimination](#)
- [Unjustly accused women farmers surrender to DOJ to expose injustices to land rights defenders](#)
- [Kailangan kilalanin ng UN Committee on World Food Security ang intersectionality ng kagutuman, karahasang sekswal at base sa kasarian, at diskriminasyon](#)
- [The Perils of Semi-Sovereignty: Japan and the Philippines in the Grip of Geopolitical Rivalry](#)
- [Why is the War in Ukraine So intractable? A Perspective from the Global South](#)
- [Empowering Women in Rural Cambodia: Highlights from the International Women's Day Celebration](#)
- [Voices from the International Women's Day Celebration in Cambodia](#)
- [Needed: A Bold Program to Address the Crisis of the Severely Indebted Developing Countries](#)
- [Land Grabs and Injustice: The Struggles of Families in Tamol Leu Community](#)
- [Peasant Agroecology Workshop: Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture in the North and Northeastern Thailand](#)
- [Cambodia. Rubber Plantations, Protected Areas, REDD+ and Other Threats: A Dramatic Loss for Forest Dwellers](#)
- [FIND AND PUNISH ANOUSA'S ATTACKERS; END VIOLENCE AND IMPUNITY!](#)
- [CRIMINALIZATION AGAINST FILIPINO PEASANTS REACHES THE UN](#)
- [Social movements, Indigenous Peoples, and civil society organizations continue to fight against the corporate capture of global food governance](#)
- [From Partnership to Rivalry: China and the USA in the Early Twenty-First Century](#)
- [Thailand/Laos: Investigate the Killing of Lao Refugee and Put an End to Transnational Repression of Human Rights Defenders](#)
- [CSO Letter to the Commerce Minister on the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework \(IPEF\) and India joining the trade pillar](#)
- [Time to seek justice, not hand out the Nobel Prize, for economic crimes](#)
- [Sama-Sama: A Celebration of People's Music from Asia](#)
- [Standing Up for Justice](#)
- [Pride 2023: Celebrations and Protests in the Philippines](#)
- [Thailand on the Brink of Change](#)
- [1SAMBUBUNGAN Statement on the Designation of IPs as Terrorists](#)

- [70 families forced out of evacuation site amid agrarian dispute in Sumalo](#)
- [Social Movements and Indigenous Peoples Oppose the UN Food Systems Summit and Call for True Food Systems Change](#)
- [Advancing accountability and justice through the legally binding instrument \(LBI\)](#)
- [43 signatories have called on the Indian Government to not formally accept the June 2022 WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies](#)
- [Civil Society under the Marcos-Duterte Administration](#)
- [Emancipating Farmers, or Land Owners? The New Agrarian Emancipation Act needs a revalidation of ownership in agrarian lands](#)
- [2023 Civil Society Mobilizations for the State of the Nation Address \(SONA\)](#)
- [Look behind the Veil of Normalization : An Open letter to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen from Trade Justice Pilipinas](#)
- [Understanding the Global Economy: Finance and Financialization](#)
- [Learning from Herstories and Histories; Shaping Futures](#)
- [People and Nature over Profits for a Just, Inclusive, Transparent and Equitable Future](#)
- [“Back from the Future” Coalition Set to Govern Thailand](#)
- [Imperialism as Usual: Current Developments in Africa and the Urgency of Building a People-led Pan-African Agenda](#)
- [RIGHTS FOR THE PEOPLE, RULES FOR TNCs! – FIRST IMPRESSIONS ON THE UPDATED DRAFT TREATY ON TNCs AND HUMAN RIGHTS](#)
- [CSR is not enough, we need legally binding mechanisms on corporate accountability](#)
- [Indo-Pacific Economic Framework \(IPEF\) Under Scrutiny: Civil Society Raise Alarms on its Potential Consequences](#)
- [IPEF and the battle for critical minerals: Implications on environment and human rights](#)
- [Establishment Wins, People Lose in Thai Political Compromise](#)
- [SUPPORT AND DEFEND PEOPLE-CENTERED SOLUTIONS TO THE FOOD CRISIS!](#)
- [People-centered solutions, not importation, needed to address food crisis groups say](#)
- [HISTORICAL NEGOTIATIONS IN THE UN UNVEIL LINKAGES BETWEEN TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATE IMPUNITY AND IMPERIALISM](#)
- [The Marcos-Duterte Dynastic Regime in the Philippines: How Long Will It Last?](#)
- [States from the global south and civil society defend process to hold TNCs accountable for human rights violations amid attempt to re-open the debate on the mandate](#)
- [Imagine you're a Palestinian youth](#)
- [October 2023 Round-up of Participations](#)
- [CELEBRATE THE FREEDOM OF LEILA DE LIMA, SEND RODRIGO DUTERTE TO THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT](#)
- [End the Siege of Gaza; Stop the Killing and Forced Displacement; Unconditional Ceasefire Now!](#)
- [Artful Defiance: Myanmar's Creative Resistance](#)
- [PHILIPPINE GROUPS FORM ANTI-WAR NETWORK — Call for Permanent Ceasefire, End to Genocide in Gaza](#)
- [Stop carbon offsetting now!](#)
- [Hentikan Carbon Offset Sekarang!](#)
- [Itigil ang Carbon Offsetting! Ngayon na!](#)
- [कार्बन ऑफसेटिंग अभी रोको!](#)

- ยุติการขูดเซยคาร์บอนเดี่ยวนี!
- Struggles and Alliances Towards Food Sovereignty / Nyéléni Process 2025
- Message from Aunt Noi, wife of Surachai Sae-dan on the anniversary of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
- Laos: 11 years of government inaction on Sombath Somphone's enforced disappearance
- Solidarity Messages on the 11th year of the enforced disappearance of Sombath Somphone and other cases of enforced disappearance

## MULTIMEDIA

- Infographics on Fisheries
- Ode to EDSA
- Conference on Agriculture, Land & Forests: Perspectives on the Crisis and Policy Alternatives
- Policy and Livelihood Challenges for India's Fishing Communities: Fisheries, the Climate Crisis and the Indian state's response
- Online Dialogue Series – Agroecology: Possibilities and Challenges in India
- Infographics: Decoding Global Finance
- Food Sovereignty: Cooling a Warming World – A Photo Story from Cambodia
- G77 summit: Nations hope to establish new economic world order
- Food Sovereignty: The Struggle Towards Democratic Food Systems
- End the Siege of Gaza; Stop the Killing and Forced Displacement; Unconditional Ceasefire Now!
- #FreePalestine 🇵🇸: Fairodz Maneged from the Anak Mindanao (AMIN) Youth
- #FreePalestine 🇵🇸: Wilson Fortaleza from Partido Manggagawa (Labor Party)
- on #EnforcedDisappearance — Message from Shui Meng, Wife of disappeared Lao civil society leader Sombath Somphone
- on #EnforcedDisappearance — Message from Angkhana Neelaphajit, Wife of disappeared Thai human rights lawyer Somchai Neelaphajit
- on #EnforcedDisappearance — Message from Jhay de Jesus, In Defense of Human Rights and Dignity Movement (iDEFEND)
- on #EnforcedDisappearance — Message from Joey Faustino, The Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD)
- on #EnforcedDisappearance — Message from Aunt Noi, Wife of disappeared activist and political exile Surachai Danwattananusorn
- on #EnforcedDisappearance — Message from Kanya Teerawut, Mother of disappeared Thai political exile Siam Teerawut
- on #EnforcedDisappearance — Message from Focus on the Global South



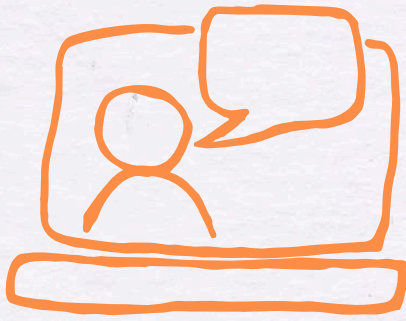
# MEDIA FEATURES

- [Agriculture lobby expects limited downside to RCEP signing delay](#) **Business World**
- [RCEP seen to hurt Filipino farmers: Agri groups | ANC](#) **ABS-CBN News Channel**
- [Agri coalition seeks 'ironclad' commitments](#) **Manila Bulletin**
- [Withdrawal from RCEP: Possible but not easily done](#) **Inquirer**
- [8 women farmers facing syndicated estafa case seek DOJ's help](#) **GMA News**
- [Philippines unlikely to expand trade away from 'factory of the world'](#) **Business World**
- [EU, Marcos face own crossroads in trade perks renewal as PH impunity persists](#) **Rappler**
- [The American Repossession of the Philippines](#) **The Nation (US)**
- [\[OPINION\] Why is the war in Ukraine so intractable?](#) **Rappler**
- [URGENT: A BOLD, JUST, AND EFFECTIVE PROGRAM TO ADDRESS THE DEVELOPING COUNTRY DEBT CRISIS](#) **Foreign Policy in Focus**
- [A Bold, Just and Effective Program to Address the Developing Country Debt Crisis](#) **Counter Punch**
- [Laos: Activist shooting shows risks to government critics](#) **Deutsche Welle (DW)**
- [Criminalization against Filipino Peasants reaches the UN](#) **GNRTF**
- [In aftermath of Thai elections, question of government formation remains](#) **People's Dispatch**
- [Myanmar and South China Sea crises test ASEAN's mettle](#) **Responsible Statecraft**
- [Farmers outfit, civil society caution government against joining IPEF trade pillar](#) **The Economic Times**
- [NGOs urge govt not to join trade pillar of Indo-Pacific Economic Framework](#) **Business Standard**
- [Civil society groups, NGOs urge govt not to join trade pillar of Indo-Pacific Economic Framework](#) **News Drum**
- [Civil Society Groups, NGOs Urge Govt Not To Join Trade Pillar Of Indo-Pacific Economic Framework](#) **Outlook India**
- [A Timely Warning on Avoiding the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework that Deserves Wide Attention](#) **Countercurrents**
- [\[OPINION\] Time to seek justice, not hand out the Nobel Prize, for economic crimes](#) **Rappler**
- [Time to seek justice, not hand out Nobel Prizes, for economic crimes](#) **Foreign Policy in Focus**
- [Time to seek justice, not hand out Nobel Prizes, for economic crimes](#) **Counter Punch**
- [Asian Music for Peoples' Peace and Progress launches 1st assembly in PH](#) **ABS-CBN**
- [Time to seek justice, not hand out Nobel Prizes, for economic crimes](#) **Inquirer**

- [Civil Society Leaders Demand Transparency in FTA Negotiations](#) **Counter Currents**
- [Over 130 Civil Activists Demand Transparency in Ongoing FTA Negotiations](#) **NewsClick**
- [\[ANALYSIS\] Thailand on the brink of change](#) **Rappler**
- [THAILAND ON THE BRINK OF CHANGE](#) **Foreign Policy in Focus**
- [D-Day for Pita, but change inevitable](#) **Bangkok Post**
- [Will Thailand move forward?](#) **Responsible Statecraft**
- [Marcos signals more liberal economic measures](#) **Business World**
- [UN Food Security System Summit challenged by social movements](#) **News Ghana**
- [Social Movements, Indigenous Peoples Denounce UN Food Systems Summit](#) **News Ghana**
- [Social movements, indigenous people oppose UN Food Systems Summit](#) **The Times of India**
- [Global Food Justice Movement Warns Against Corporate Takeover of UN Food Summit](#) **Common Dreams**
- [Kritik im Vorfeld des UN-Ernährungsgipfels in Rom](#) **Tagesspiegel Background**
- [UN should be learning from sustainable food producers – not hosting Big Ag](#) **Open Democracy**
- [UN should learn from sustainable food producers](#) **New Age**
- [Fishers organisations ask govt not to ratify 'unequal' WTO pact on fisheries subsidies](#) **The Hindu Business Line**
- [Civil society, trade experts urge India not to ratify WTO's agreement on fisheries subsidies](#) **The Economic Times**
- [Civil society, trade experts urge India not to ratify WTO's agreement on fisheries subsidies](#) **News Drum**
- [Civil society, trade experts urge India not to ratify WTO's agreement on fisheries subsidies](#) **Press Trust of India**
- [Civil Society, Trade Experts Urge India Not to Ratify WTO's Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies](#) **Latestly**
- [Fishers urge govt to reject unfair WTO fisheries pact](#) **EZNews**
- [UN should be learning from sustainable food producers – not hosting Big Agro](#) **resilience.org**
- [Let Them Eat Bugs: Challenging the WEF's Corporate-Driven Food Reset](#) **Dissident Voice**
- [Delhi Police Arrive at Venue Hosting Event Critical of G20 Summit, Stop People From Entering](#) **The WIRE**
- [Delhi police's heavy hand at 'We20: Peoples' Summit' highlights Modi government's fear of dissent](#) **The Hindu**
- [\[ANALYSIS\] Anger brews in Thailand as establishment unites to foil change](#) **Rappler**
- [Fast Backward Alliance' set to govern](#) **Bangkok Post**
- [Oppenheimer](#) **Meer**
- [ANGER BREWS IN THAILAND AS ESTABLISHMENT UNITES TO FOIL CHANGE](#) **Foreign Policy in Focus**
- [AFRICA AT THE CROSSROADS](#) **Foreign Policy in Focus**
- [REMEMBERING SALVADOR ALLENDE AND THE CHILEAN COUNTERREVOLUTION](#) **Foreign Policy in Focus**
- [Digital rights and IPEF: How the US trade agreement impacts technology, trade, and human rights in the Asia-Pacific](#) **EngageMedia**
- [G77 summit: Nations hope to establish new economic world order](#) **Al Jazeera**

- [Hybrid seeds are becoming increasingly popular in India. But that is not good news; here is why.](#) **DowntoEarth**
- [REVISITING AN INTERVIEW WITH A LEADER OF HAMAS](#) **Foreign Policy in Focus**
- [\[OPINION\] Imagine you're a Palestinian youth](#) **Rappler**
- [Hybrid Seeds: A boon or a bane?](#) **Imphal Free Press**
- [\[OPINION\] From Osama to Gaza: The unraveling of the US position in the Middle East](#) **Rappler**
- [FROM BIN LADEN TO GAZA](#) **Foreign Policy in Focus**
- [From Bin Laden to Gaza](#) **CounterPunch**
- [Economists Term CMIE Employment Rate Increase Claim 'Sham'](#) **NewsClick**
- [Economists slam govt claims of rapid economic growth as a sham](#) **The Federal**
- [Claims of employment rate increase a sham: Economists](#) **SabrangIndia**
- [And Here's to You, Henry Kissinger...](#) **Foreign Policy in Focus**
- [Climate Coalition Says 'Stop Carbon Offsetting Now!'](#) **Common Dreams**
- [Fascism 101 for Geopolitics Today](#) **Foreign Policy in Focus**
- [Fascism 101, or why we now need to spell out the 'F' word](#) **Rappler**
- [La Via Campesina Allies on the Struggle for Food Sovereignty.](#) **La Via Campesina**





# EVENTS

- Conference on Agriculture, Land & Forests: Perspectives on the crisis and policy alternatives; [Facebook LIVE](#)
- Trade Justice Pilipinas Press Conference on RCEP; [YouTube](#)
- State of Food Sovereignty in The Global South | 2023 Public Discussion; [Facebook LIVE](#)
- Agroecology Concepts and Sustainable Practices in the Northern and Northeastern Regions of Thailand; [Facebook LIVE](#)
- Our rights, struggles and UN Human Rights Conventions; [Facebook LIVE](#)
- Learning from Histories and Herstories; [Facebook LIVE](#)
- Hope and Fear in International and Transnational Perspective; [Facebook LIVE](#)
- Beyond boundaries: The corporations and states VS people and environment; [YouTube](#)
- Youth Panel: Campaign Experience Across the Region; [Facebook LIVE](#)
- Fresh from the field: Change, suffering, hope and the future In the Eyes of Mekong Peoples; [Facebook LIVE](#)
- Community's Climate Resilience: People's Voices and Actions; [Facebook LIVE](#)
- Framing the Israel-Palestine War, International Law and People's Resistance; [Facebook LIVE](#)
- [ENG] Youth's Identity Development and Agency in Regional Migration; [Facebook LIVE](#)



Walden Bello, Silvia Ribeiro, Peter Rosset and Boaventura Monjane at the Learning from Herstories and Histories; Shaping Futures discussion in Bangkok, 4 August 2023. Photo by Shalmali Guttal.





Various activities organised during the Regional Meeting on Food Sovereignty which was held in Surin Province, Thailand, from March 24 to 30, 2023. The Meeting provided a pivotal convening space for representatives from diverse movements and organisations to explore, share knowledge and experiences, and delve into crucial conversations on the complex concept of food sovereignty. Photos by Focus on the Global South.

# ABOUT FOCUS ON THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Focus on the Global South (FOCUS) is an activist think tank based in Asia providing analysis and building alternatives for just social, economic and political change. Our Work is organized around the themes of:

- Political Economy of Development
- Power and Democracy
- Peoples' Alternatives
- Gender Justice and
- Climate Justice

Our Strategies encompass research and analysis; convening and consultations; popular education and outreach; campaigns and advocacy; and grassroots support/ accompaniment.

Focus was established in 1995 to challenge neoliberalism and corporate-driven globalization as well as U.S. hegemony in the global system. We consciously work in solidarity with the Global South - the great majority of humanity that is marginalized and dispossessed by globalization - believing that progressive social change and Global South solidarity are imperative if the needs and aspirations of oppressed peoples, particularly in Asia, Latin America and Africa, are to be met. Focus believes that progressive social change requires shifting the balance of forces between those with power and those without, the expansion of genuinely popular democratic spaces, and the deepening of people's participation. A critical aspect of transforming elite power and building alternatives is putting into place structures of knowledge creation, participation, representation, accountability and justice based on popular democracy, human rights, equality and dignity, that prevent future capture and/or abuse of governance systems and structures.

Focus combines policy research, advocacy, activism and grassroots capacity building in order to generate critical analysis and encourage debates on national and international policies; seeks to strengthen and re-energize progressive civil society and social/peoples' movements at local, national and regional levels, and amplify peoples' voice and participation in building alternatives to the dominant destructive, extractivist and elite development and governance models. Important here is ensuring that those who have been systematically excluded from these processes and structures, especially women, the poor, peasants, workers and indigenous peoples, are empowered to advocate for and realize their rights, and bring their perspectives to building alternative development, societies and governance.

Our work covers the Mekong region, the Philippines and India, and links with activities at the regional and international level. We engage at different levels and with different constituencies, including social movements, grassroots organizations, youth/student groups, CSOs, NGOs, media, academia, and parliamentarians/ policy makers, with particular efforts to build networks between organizations of women, peasants, indigenous and marginalized peoples who often get left out by international civil society advocacy efforts, and work with partners to increase their direct participation in international mobilizations. ■

53

KODAK PORTRA 400



# FOCUS ON THE GLOBAL SOUTH

is an activist think tank based in Asia providing analysis and building alternatives for just social, economic, and political change.

## WEBSITE

[www.focusweb.org](http://www.focusweb.org)

## FACEBOOK

[/focusontheglobalsouth](https://www.facebook.com/focusontheglobalsouth)

## X/TWITTER

[/focussouth](https://twitter.com/focussouth)

## E-MAIL

[info@focusweb.org](mailto:info@focusweb.org)

## INSTAGRAM

[/focussouth](https://www.instagram.com/focussouth)