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World Social Forum/Senegal

Assembly of Social Movements meets in Dakar

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The third Seminar of the Assembly of the Social Movements took place from 5-7 November in Dakar, as part of the preparation of the World Social Forum scheduled for February 2011. The Assembly adopted the following declaration:

The global crises of the capitalist system (economic, financial, environmental, ecological, energy, social, migratory, cultural) has had particularly dramatic social impacts, and has increased the pauperization of the vulnerable by increasingly excluding people from access to land, water, food, housing, employment, health, education and energy...

, This social war against the vast majority of the population is made possible only because of the historically high rate of unemployment and by the fact that the "progressive" governments support of neo-liberalism and their defense of major capitalist interests. The situation of out and out war, of militarization, of the criminalization of the social movements are all tools in this offensive.

The fragile and contradictory return to an "economic revival" has not translated into stable job creation. Quite the contrary.

Taking a longer view, the systemic crisis has impacts on the environment and the climate. The so-called "natural catastrophes" are particularly affecting the least protected peoples, as recently demonstrated by the floods in Africa and Asia, the earthquakes in Haiti, Chile and Indonesia....

The African continent that is hosting this Seminar of the Assembly of the Social Movements has also felt the these impacts to a high degree: the exclusion of people from access to the natural riches of the continent, in terms of mining, agriculture and fisheries, land-grabbing by transnational companies and States to produce agrifuel or food that is exported, the accumulation of waste, fewer remittances sent home by migrant workers who are the first victims of the crises in the countries where they live. Youth is excluded from any hope of a better life by the fact that young people find it impossible to find stable jobs; this itself is a factor that aggravates emigration.

The sovereignty of African States is threatened by the transnational companies and the International Financial Institutions and the countries of the North. This translates on a daily basis into violence, with women as the main victims, and leading to forced migration of people fleeing the crisis etc.

Although this situation weighs heavily on the ability of people to resist, is also an enormous challenge for the social movements. With the divisions and isolation of the struggles, there are also huge grass-roots assemblies taking place. They are united and leading struggles that have led to victories in the Niger in 2005, in Bolivia with the water war, in India against the privatization of rivers...

The Assembly of social movements, which is conceived as a space for struggles, is therefore facing a dual challenge : building linked-up grass-roots struggles, patiently rooted in the communities, towns and rural areas, refugee camps, slums...and the perspectives for radical change that will prove that the capitalist productivist, patriarchal system can be overcome by humanity.

We need to achieve a different way of sharing wealth that serves all people here and now, and builds a just world, without war or discrimination.

Decisions

We the social movements gathered for the third world social movements assembly:

1) Reaffirm that the process of the Assembly of social movements (ASM) is a space for convergence and structuring of the social struggles. In the ASM we act in order to give visibility to the struggles, to coordinate and strengthen them.

2) Create a facilitation group of the Assembly of social movements for WSF Dakar 2011 composed of Senegalese, African and international organisations. This group has for primary task to prepare the Assembly for the WSF in Dakar. It is an open group, to be part of it you have to get in touch with Vanessa Jarlot from Attac/CADTM Togo: vanessa.jarlot@cadtm.org

3) We will begin today to mobilise massively in order to assure a popular success to the Assembly of Social Movements (and so to the WSF)

4) We will call at the International council of the WSF in November 2010 to confirm July 2010 "consensus". As a result, ASM will have a space and will take place after thematical Assemblies. We will also try to facilitate the meetings of Social Movements prior and during WSF.

5) We will organise the ASM at the WSF Dakar inside the place which will be determined for the WSF. Nevertheless, we will organise as ASM one or several "external" activities prior or during the WSF to show in concrete terms our solidarity with the Social struggles.

– To answer the demand of various Social Movements a dialog was opened regarding Social Movements Assembly. The importance and the legitimacy was put forward as well as its presence from the beginning of WSF process. The Assembly will take place probably on the 5th day of the Forum after the other Assemblies on various issues and an effort will be done to avoid this Assembly to be confused with the Assembly of Assemblies, with the process' global convergence and to confirm this Assembly does not represent WSF.