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Climate change

COP22 in Marrakech, Morocco: What strategy for the social movements facing climate change?

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Morocco is preparing to host the Conference of the Parties (COP22) on climate change in Marrakech between 7th and 18th November 2016. This conference is taking place in the context of a worsening ecological crisis, in itself a dimension of the crisis of civilisation that the capitalist system is going through. This year's COP also comes at a time where previous conferences have failed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as to impose binding measures on industrial superpowers, which continue to abide by the needs of multinationals that make profits from the extraction of coal, gas, oil, minerals and various sources of energy as well as from industrial agriculture and natural resources present in the soil, sea and atmosphere.

The powerful in this world propose solutions based on "green" investments that worsen the devastating effects of a productivist and consumerist logic, a logic that allows for the enrichment of a dominant minority at the expense of the majority of people on the planet, including current and future generations.

In Morocco, the policies imposed by international financial and commercial institutions have the same objectives: foreign and local capitalists grabbing our country's rich resources to the detriment of popular and impoverished classes in urban and rural areas. Decision-makers try to evade their responsibility in pursuing policies that destroy human beings and their environment. Instead, they talk about climate change and launch "green development" projects that generate new fields for private capital, backed up by public investments that exacerbate public debt and cause austerity. Worse still, this is done in the absence of any economic, social and environmental feasibility studies.

By hosting the COP22, these politicians are also seeking to sustain their "green" investments by emphasising the political stability of the country. For their part, international institutions and major powers try to present Morocco as an "exception" in the region in order to maintain their neo-colonial policies.

In order to give credence to their policies, these decision-makers strive to contain civil society organisations by creating a "civil society pole" inside the supervisory national committee of COP22, designated by the King in February 2016. This pole has charted a roadmap in preparation for the COP22 that includes activities in 12 regions in Morocco, involving civil society, different state organs as well as the private sector. It has also embarked on a tour of the African continent to raise awareness of non-governmental organisations, networks and alliances in 12 African countries about the stakes of COP22 and Morocco's role.

Among the participants in this official dynamic is the Moroccan Coalition for Climate Justice (CMJC in French). It has adhered to the roadmap and has also scheduled gatherings called "Pre-COP22" in several regions of Morocco, designed in the image of the COP: knowledge popularising to offering expertise, display of climate initiatives advanced by governmental institutions as well as the private sector, consultation between different "partners", etc. All of this has been done in the absence of any critique of or independence from the state and its associates. Moreover, this CMJC also contributes to the civil society mobilisations outside Morocco such as the organising of the Maghrebi Forum for Social and Climate Justice in May 2016 in Hammamet, Tunisia. And here we are now seeing all these preparations culminating in an international meeting called by the coalition on 23rd, 24th and 25th September in Marrakech.

The official (institutional) civil society and the Moroccan Coalition for Climate Justice therefore contribute to ensuring a festive atmosphere during COP22, an atmosphere that will sanction the facilitation of "green projects" and the search for funds at the expense of a real debate around climate justice associated to the larger debate around

political, economic and social choices that perpetuate inequality.

We, at ATTAC CADTM Morocco, consider that the question of climate change is not an exclusively expert issue or a matter limited to negotiations between governments. For us, climate change is at the heart of the daily lived reality of citizens who demand a rupture with the liberal policies that are causing the deterioration of our social and environmental conditions. They also demand their inclusion and participation through a real democracy in decision-making around the solutions that ought to be based on social justice and equality in the distribution of wealth. This will necessitate leading struggles that would bring together popular classes that are victims of social injustice.

Moreover, ATTAC CADTM Morocco finds the cooptation of the Coalition for Climate Justice by the Moroccan state in order to serve the latter's agenda unacceptable. This is our central disagreement with the steering committee's dominant approach inside the CMJC and is the primary reason for our withdrawal from this coalition after having participated as a member since its creation in early 2016. In addition to this, we had serious concerns about the lack of democracy and transparency in the way decisions were being taken.

In parallel to this semi-official dynamic led by the Moroccan Coalition for Climate Justice, ATTAC Morocco has been engaged with several associations, human rights organisations and trade unions within the Democratic Network to Accompany the COP22 (Réseau Démocratique pour Accompagner la COP22, REDACOP22). This network aims to build a democratic environmental movement that is independent from those who wield political and economic power in our country as well as from international lenders and donors. Our plans to achieve this are based on the mobilisations of the real victims of environmental damage and degradation: the working class, poor peasants, small-scale fishermen, people living in oases, indigenous populations, etc. REDACOP22 is currently making progress in setting up local sections relying on experiences of peoples' environmental struggles. It is within this strategic framework that we are working hard to mobilise around COP22, in order to highlight forms of resistance aimed at achieving social and environmental justice.

ATTAC CADTM Morocco will organise an international conference on climate justice on the 4th and 5th of November in Safi, one of the worst-affected cities in Morocco, from an environmental and social perspective. And on the 6th November, we are participating in another international meeting in Marrakech organised by REDACOP22.

ATTAC CADTM Morocco remains open to all initiatives and forms of mobilisations around a genuine climate justice for all the duration of COP22 in Marrakech. Our actions will focus on denouncing the deceptive official proposals and solutions that are market-based. The fact that the ecological crisis is one of the most dangerous aspects of the crisis of the capitalist system makes us committed to the development of radical alternatives.

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