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Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

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List of organisation in whose events at the WSF 2004 VK *biradari* (associates) participated actively/collaborated

Editors:

Suresh Nautiyal: s_nautiyal@vsnl.net

Ritu Priya: ritupriya@vsnl.com

Marko Ulvila: marko.ulvila@kaapeli.fi

Editorial

Saluting the WSF Process!

Like the previous WSF meets, the Mumbai WSF 2004 came out as a symbol of unity and democratic space for diverse peoples to assert their rights for peace and for a world free of violence, bigotry and hatred. It also focused on the ills of imperialist globalisation as well as on issues of religious and sectarian violence, casteism and patriarchy. It made space for all sections of society to come together and articulate their struggles and visions, individually and collectively, against the threat of neoliberal, capitalist globalisation on one hand and uphold the secular, plural and gender sensitive framework on the other. Besides bringing together various mass organisations, new social movements and NGOs from across the globe on one platform, the WSF process was also deepened at the grassroots by initiating social forums in states, districts and towns of India. It advanced the debate on concerns Indian and yet simultaneously maintain a global perspective.

It was a forum for coming together at a single place with all humility and self-confidence, a place where participants assembled with their deep-rooted belief that there was an ample possibility of frankly talking to each other on the issues of common concern despite differences on ideological, political and other levels. Poverty, starvation, health and illiteracy related issues were also common issues that attracted attention unequivocally. This they did without having to forget the ideologies, programmes, agenda or distinctiveness of their own organisations.

It amply demonstrated that WSF was a process, an open forum for open ideas on collectively agreed issues. One common denominator was opposition to neo-imperialism and one-way globalisation propounded by the multilateral agencies and multinational companies under the patronage of institutions such as World Bank and World Trade Organisation. It proved to be self-explanatory that WSF was neither an organisation nor a front, just an open space for all of them who believed in another world, those who stood for a radical change, those who were

open to talk to others despite differences, and those who had the desire to listen to others' viewpoints.

The basic spirit of it lay in its uniqueness of being a forum where all participatory organisations had the freedom to play supportive, supplementary or complementary roles without challenging each other or indulging in competition with other organisations — a collective thinking, however, obligatory towards working for a common goal.

In a nutshell, WSF 2004 Mumbai showed that the 'open-space' process generates dynamics that allow us to further democratise ourselves and justifiably announce that another world is possible.

WSF impressions/Reflections

WSF Serving the Global Democracy

By Thomas Wallgren*

According to Gandhi, civilisation is not an incurable disease. Another memorable statement comes from the Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor, who once wrote: "unique combination of greatness and danger ... characterises the modern age." And already 150 years ago Marx spoke about the enormous civilisational power of capitalism, a power that Marx wanted to unleash in socialism. These pronouncements seem to me to capture the deep ambivalence with which peoples all over the world look at the newest phase of modern development, often called neoliberal or corporate driven globalisation.

Many of us share a sense that in the midst of the mad exploitation and naked imperial aggression promises of democracy, welfare and liberation are also at play. American army bombs and the economic imperialism of the old and new colonial powers destroy lives and livelihoods globally at a frightening scale. But at the same time, the American dream, which is one dream of affluence and freedom, captures peoples' hearts globally. How else can we explain the tone and emphasis of Brazilian president Lula's speech as the guest of honour at the Indian Republic Day, a few days after the World Social Forum in Mumbai closed? At the end of the day, comrade Lula, too, brought it forth as a key strength of the South in the new century that it would get the better of the North in the global competition for investment.

Lula's speech frightened and depressed me. I belong to those who see the power of the American, or the modern Western, dream as a lethal threat to all life on the planet. Now, as always, it seems to me true that the world has enough for all people's needs but not for our greed. The Western dream fosters greed. It is a consumerist dream that is impossible to realise globally, universally and sustainably. The aspiration for all to become rich is leading the planet to tragedy.

At the same time, I am happy and enthusiastic that Brazil has a leader like Lula, who legitimately and forcefully, although within the real political limits defined by the balance of power in the world, represents, speaks out and fights as president of a strong and proud country for global equity and the rights of not only his people but of all oppressed people. So, I am not criticising those who work for development, growth and affluence in the South. How could I, possibly, with what right and for what purpose? Already in my home country and region, in Finland and Western Europe, it is difficult enough to carve out a place in our day-to-day economics and politics for concrete measures that would change the direction of our own development.

In fact, we are on the losing side. EU and US are at present not redirecting their main energies towards global justice. On the contrary, they are building a twin fortress that seeks to keep poor people, terrorism and wars out and prosperity and security within them. But this does not happen without right. Most democratically elected politicians in the North and, perhaps even in the South, have a clear democratic mandate for their selfish, aggressive and ultimately suicidal policies. This is because not only they themselves, but most of their voters, most of us are completely at a loss. We know too little about how to combine justice and legitimate concerns about well being. This is where the need for global democratisation, and WSF, come into the grand drama I am addressing.

The need for global democracy is often seen as a need for more democracy in global, transnational and international relations, in the economy and in other spheres. This is correct, as far as it goes. But we must recognise the limits of any governance and institution centred perspective on global democracy. The deepest need for democratisation may be the democratisation of the communication and the accountability structures through which those cultural dreams are formed that define the agenda and purpose of all political, economic and military activity.

As long as people with great privilege live isolated from real and continuing encounter and dialogue with the underprivileged their politics will remain, at best, patronising with respect to the plight of the world's majority.

One concrete example is the Socialist International. Composed of the Socialist parties from a large number of countries and on all continents, and dominated by well-intended European internationalists, the SI has great difficulty in defining a policy which would be thoroughly and realistically responsive to the needs of the poorest of the poor in all countries. The fundamental reorientation that is required will take time. Change can only come about, I believe, if the Socialists, including the Socialists in the leading, most powerful countries create mechanisms by which their policies can be negotiated and reformed in close contact with Southern partners and movements that give voice to those who are on the losing side in present globalisation. The contact has to be sustained enough to create a mutual influence on both the daily work on concrete details of real politics as well as on long-term values, visions and dreams.

In Mumbai, I was happy to see that the 2004 issue of the World Social Forum was used by the Socialist International – and I hope and believe – by other comparable political movements, to take some first steps in such a process. Senior leaders of Socialist parties from especially some EU-countries flew in to Mumbai with an idea to winning over comrades from South Asian countries and other Southern movements and parties to their politics of realistic reform of present instruments for globalisation, such as WTO. Within a few days, and thanks to their own open-mindedness, the beneficial format of WSF, the incisive presence of Southern comrades and other factors their frame of mind started to change – or so it seemed to me. The change was in the direction of seeking to base the global cooperation in SI on the challenging and difficult terrain of mutual respect for difference in experience, accountability and concern and for the divergence in short-term political recipes that grow from such differences despite shared values and aspirations.

I was especially heartened to hear ex-Prime Minister of Denmark, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, say in a debate co-organised by SI, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and others, that Socialists in Europe lost a historical opportunity to change the direction of globalisation politics when they recently were in power in most EU-countries, while there was also a Democrat president in the White House. We failed, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen said, because we were not prepared.

I agree with the Danish former PM in this submission and also in his conviction that the intensification of fair global dialogue between movements, parties and others seeking justice for all is a vital force in the necessary democratisation of global political communication. It is one of the many beauties of the WSF experiment that it can play a constructive role in that process.

** Thomas Wallgren (PhD, senior fellow, Academy of Finland) is co-chair, Democracy forum Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, Finland.*

In the true spirit of democracy **by Sumit Chakravartty***

(Published in *Mainstream*, 6 March 2004, issue.)

Twelve years ago in February 1992 one was present at the World Economic Forum, the annual gathering of businesspersons and leaders of the corporate sector from across the globe, at the picturesque Swiss resort of Davos. That was when P.V. Narasimha Rao spoke there for the first time as the Prime Minister of India trying to 'market' India before the international business community. One had the opportunity of a chance encounter there with a well-known media personality who used to present on BBC in those days insightful analyses of the happenings in erstwhile Yugoslavia that

resulted in its break-up. While narrating those happenings the British journalist made an observation that was highly thought-provoking: while the collapse of the totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe since 1989 leading to the unravelling of the Soviet Union at the fag end of 1991 were momentous developments registering the breathtaking extension of the frontiers of democracy, these welcome events were, nevertheless, marked by the ascendancy of the far Right and as a result the democratic upsurge in Eastern Europe underwent some sort of distortion that was also reflected in the tragic bloodbath accompanying Yugoslavia's dismemberment. Implicit in this observation was the fact that democracy itself was being constricted by this phenomenon. This became more than apparent by the market fundamentalism of the Washington Consensus and the way in which the Fund-Bank ideologues imposed their hairbrained prescriptions on the developing world without any consideration of the human factor.

One was reminded of that conversation twelve years later as one walked endlessly through the sprawling Nesco Grounds complex in Goregaon in the Mumbai suburbs where a remarkable event took place for six days in the second half of January (from 16 to 21 of that month)—the Fourth World Social Forum, and the first to take place anywhere outside its place of birth, that is, Porto Alegre (Brazil) in 2001. It was a festival of diversity, and thus genuine democracy in action—a world assembly that brought into focus the very same human factor one had dearly missed at WEF in Davos—and it was from that crucible of democratic debate that one was able to comprehend the essence of the moving slogan of the Zapatistas: "Another World Is Possible!"

It meant a world that is different from the straitjacket of the 'globalised world' based on the power of global capital, a world where the voice of the poor, the weak, the meek, the marginalised and the dispossessed would be heard with respect, where war, exploitation and oppression would be banished for ever. This was echoed best by Pakistan's courageous human rights activist and renowned lawyer Asma Jehangir who, while assailing the US war in Iraq in unequivocal terms, declared at the public rally on the concluding day (January 21):

We want accountability... We want the US to have a pact with the world that they will not go to war against any people unilaterally.

And she also proclaimed amidst thunderous applause: "We want full-stomach globalisation." This was the voice of the masses—the common people of every continent.

Our former President K.R. Narayanan too was present at that function despite his indifferent health. He spoke next, delivering the keynote speech, and brought out this very fact in bold relief. "This movement," he elucidated, "is one of the most significant in history. To fight globalisation, you need to fight the way Mahatma Gandhi fought with the strength of the masses. He was the first to show the way to non-violence and this has also been the method of this new movement. People's power is a new factor in international politics."

One was instantly reminded of Indira Gandhi's words at the Seventh NAM Summit in New Delhi in March 1983. She had described the non-aligned movement as "history's biggest peace movement". Here too was a manifestation of the same feature, this was an equally massive peoples' agitation for peace, democracy, socio-economic progress based on equity and justice.

In his special message to WSF, videoed at the public rally in central Mumbai's sprawling Azad Maidan, former South African President Nelson Mandela brought into focus the quintessence of the slogan "Another World Is Possible!" by pointing out: We owe future generations a better world in which every individual is respected. This world will soon become a reality.

One of the most notable personalities at the Mumbai WSF was Ramsey Clark, the former US Attorney-General, whose outspoken indictment of the lawless US bombing of Iraq during Gulf War I in 1991, embodied in his report to the then UN Secretary-General, has now become a legend. In that report he had written: *"The use of highly sophisticated military technology with mass destructive capacity by rich nations against an essentially defenceless civilian population of a poor country is one of the great tragedies of our time. The United States' annual military expenditures alone are four times the gross national product of Iraq. The scourge of war will never end if the United Nations tolerates this assault on life. The United Nations must not be an accessory to war crimes"*.

At Mumbai he said people still did not know that 1.5 million had died after Gulf War. I and the economic sanctions that followed.

Over half a million fatalities were children under five. Pregnant women and the elderly were also amongst them. This is a segment of society that every decent civilisation seeks to protect. In addition, there are the living, those with stunted growth.

Clark also expressed disappointment with the role of the mainstream US media which, regrettably, instead of highlighting the massive mobilisations against the Iraq war fed the public with the lies dished out by the Administration.

Our exclusion from the mass media made it extremely difficult to reach beyond the people who saw the large (anti-war) demonstrations. Even the Internet, despite its reach, cannot have the same effect as one-and-a-half minute on prime time.

In a flash this revealed the power and effect of the high technology associated with the electronic media the US

authorities were able to exploit for their own benefit.

The issue of globalisation naturally dominated the discussions in several halls. One of the architects of present-day globalisation, renowned economist and Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz, is a changed man today. And thus he was unambiguous in his opposition to globalisation as it is being practised in the present environment. It has engendered greater insecurity for the aged and the poor in particular, he opined, while also pointing to enhanced unemployment—and hence mounting violence—in its train. He did not mince words in assailing market fundamentalism that was causing disaster in the Third World.

But in the true spirit of democracy there were divergences on this subject as well. Stiglitz called for reforming the current system of globalisation to make it more humane while others, like Walden Bello (the Philippines), Samir Amin (Egyptian living in Senegal), George Monbiot (Britain) felt that the World Bank and IMF -- that had meticulously worked out the structure of globalisation in the interest of the developed world in general and the US in particular -- were beyond reform and needed to be dismantled. And yet the consensus too was obvious: the present inequitable system could not continue.

The debate on Palestine reflected a novel feature -- the manner in which Israelis joined the Palestinians in not just sympathising with the latter in their plight, but also conveying their solidarity with the Palestinian populace at large even while sharply criticising the misguided terrorists. It was refreshing to find some young members of the Jewish community in the US taking a similar position thus projecting the contours of a new world struggle for justice breaking the traditional walls of misunderstanding, misperception, mistrust and suspicion erected by vested interests of different hues.

This was exemplified in the discussion—"Moving Towards Peace in Kashmir"—on January 20. Yasin Malik, the JKLF leader, poignantly presented the heroic struggle of the Kashmiri public for their self-identity and self-dignity and also spoke on the need to make common cause with the Kashmiri Pandits. As Beena Sarwar, the young Pakistani journalist present at the session, notes in her column, "Our emotional bonds are very strong," says Malik, whose role in the struggle for Kashmir's freedom has led to several incarcerations in interrogation centres and prisons. During one such time, he was hospitalised while on hunger strike, and his drip began to bleed. The nurse, a Kashmiri Hindu Pandit who lived in a migrant camp, prayed and wept for him "like a mother".

"She had been forced to become a refugee. And yet she wept for me. It is people with vested interests who are doing business in the name of religion and spreading hatred. But they will not succeed," vows Malik in his quiet way. The pain of those who have been forced to leave their land burst out in the occasional slogan during Malik's talk. "Kashmir belongs to India," shouts one man, quietened by the organisers. Malik does not rise to the bait. He continues patiently trying to explain his position, competing with the din outside the tent, where procession after procession thunders by, banging drums, dancing, and shouting the WSF slogan: "Another World Iiiiiiiiis... Possible!" Like many other Kashmiris, Malik would like to see the Pandits return. Also like many others, he believes that their departure was a political ploy by the government, engineered in order to defame the uprising. "Even now, more than 10,000 Kashmiri Pandits live in the Valley. Those who left, they are our mothers, sisters, brothers, we want them to come back," says Malik. "This is their land. They have as

much right to live here, they are the sons of the soil. Let them come back and let us work together to restore our culture."

Likewise striking was the unconventional view of Pervez Hoodbhoy, Professor at Qaid-e-Azam University, who has been boldly expressing himself on several sensitive issues like Kashmir for quite sometime on the pages of different Pakistani publications. He candidly explained that if a military solution to the Kashmir problem was ruled out, if Pakistan could not compel India to accept plebiscite and if India could not continue with the status quo, then even if I do not like it we may have to settle for a solution on the Line of Control.

"It pains me to say that Kashmir has to be divided. But can we afford another war? Let us have a soft border. Let us learn to live as people. The only way is for us to recognise our humanity."

Another Pakistani delegate, one of the foremost trade unionists in his country, Karamat Ali, Director of the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER), perhaps the largest NGO in Pakistan, also spoke in an unconventional way. Urging Pakistanis, Indians and Kashmiris to move beyond notions of nation-state and look to a future as South Asians, he blasted the idea of self-determination for Kashmiris as such a move for independence and self-determination for Baluchis in August 1947 had been rejected by the Indian leaders including Maulana Azad. He further underlined:

"Both the concepts of nation and religion are dangerous. They have brought us nothing but destruction. We have to reject them and come out of the straitjacket."

The Indian participants, apart from representatives of Kashmiri Pandits (who were passionate but did not betray any trace of bitterness against anyone), included Ved Bhasin, Balraj Puri, Gautam Navlakha. They presented their own views on various aspects of the Kashmir problem from the standpoint of the Indian and Kashmiri civil society without in any way endorsing the Indian authorities' one-sided approach to the dispute. Indeed the democratic debate, replete with dissent and divergence, offered a wealth of ideas and food for thought.

The Mumbai WSF has been characterised by many as more representative and diverse in both participation and content than the previous ones held at Porto Alegre. What was specially significant in Mumbai was the Dalit participation. As Silumko Nandwangu, General Secretary of the South African Metalworkers Union, noted, Porto Alegre was more academic, but Mumbai is a sheer carnival of the unlettered and the dispossessed.

The foreign delegates were particularly impressed by the spontaneous song and dance that marked the Forum's activities—all by the deprived and the downtrodden sections.

Speaking of Dalit participation, German delegates pointed to some of the new focal points addressed included "the caste system", "(religious) fundamentalism", and "patriarchy", issues that had until then attracted little attention. In the eyes of progressive social movements in South Asia, this thematic broadening of the scope of the World Social Forum has meant a real step forward.

For instance, some members of the Dalit movement (earlier referred to as the "untouchables") have long struggled to place the effects of the caste system on the international agenda. The fact that, after their success at the UN Conference in Durban on Racism and Discrimination, they have managed to place the issue on the agenda of another major world forum is certain to strengthen their hand. But other issues also pushed for consideration: child and forced labour, dowry-related murders and homosexual rights, the informal sector and precarious employment. It is not likely that these issues will be able to hold their own in the long term at World Social Forums in other regions of the world. Still, the quite general concept of human rights appears to be taking on shape as a new point of reference that could develop into a further focal point of the Forum.

[A Forum of Contradictions" by Jürgen Stetten and Jochen Steinhilber in *Mainstream*, February 14, 2004]The World Dignity Forum, initiated by Dalit and non-Dalit groups, was a special feature of the Mumbai WSF. [A report on it has appeared in *Mainstream* (February 14, 2004): "Agenda of the Marginalised at WSF 2004" by Ashok Bharti and Mukul Sharma.] The speakers at this World Dignity Forum on January 19 were eminent figures in this area of activity. They were Karamat Ali (from Pakistan, Director of PILER); Wolfgang Sachs, Senior Fellow at the Wuppertal Institute for Climate,

Environment and Energy, Germany; Rada Ivekovic, from former Yugoslavia, currently teaching Women and Nationhood at University Jean Monnet, France; Eugenio Poma, from Bolivia, involved in the indigenous people's struggle for landrights, Programme Executive, Indigenous People's Issues, World Council of Churches; Chandra Muzaffar, President of the International Movement for a Just World, Malaysia; Ilan Halevi, Assistant Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Palestinian Government; A. Padmanabhan, retired IAS officer who served in Tamil Nadu and at the Centre, former Governor, Mizoram; Ashok Bharti and Mukul Sharma.

The day the World Dignity Forum took place one witnessed a group of militant Dalits demonstrating before the Media Centre of the Forum. One of them declared that if the WSF fails to take up our cause in right earnest and help us change our condition we will organise a World Dalit Social Forum!

In the wake of the India-Pakistan thaw the Pakistani participation at the Forum was indeed noteworthy. Hundreds of them came and spontaneously joined in the activities. Many more wanted to come but could not get visas on time.

The issue of majoritarian offensive in different countries including India occupied a prominent place at the Mumbai WSF. Iranian Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi was visibly moved beyond words when she met the victims of the carnage that rocked Gujarat two years ago. At a seminar on the subject several Indian speakers analysed the Hindutva forces' offensive on minorities with one of them even urging the protagonists of the anti-globalisation movement to join hands with those in favour of globalisation to fight the regressive forces upholding the banner of majoritarian onslaught against the minorities.

One positive development at the Mumbai WSF was the interaction between representatives of the Left political parties and the NGOs working at the grass-roots like the Narmada Bachao Andolan or the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) spearheading the Right to Information movement in Rajasthan. These NGOs have doubtless a much wider and constructive agenda beyond electoral politics, an agenda which the Left parties must adopt but have not due to various erroneous reasons. Some of the Left groups had initially sought to hegemonise the WSF; but having failed in that attempt (they were literally swamped by the NGOs) they decided to adopt a more democratic approach without, however, totally giving up their hegemonic outlook. But hopefully this interaction helped both sides. The NGOs are doing good constructive work at the grassroots but they need to realise that their sectoral efforts cannot bear real fruit on the national plane unless the political parties, especially of the Left, take those up in all seriousness with the objective of building genuine people's movements. Would the interaction initiated at Mumbai be carried forward in the coming days? Only time would tell.

In this connection one must confess that the withdrawal from the Forum of a section of friends who could have been part of WSF and their holding a separate Mumbai Resistance (to globalisation) exposed once again the disunity in the ranks of the Left (as the organisers of the MR were those who can be identified as belonging to the far Left). The arguments of the MR against some of the NGOs in the Forum cannot be summarily rejected as they pertain to funding in particular; and yet the organisers of the MR were not barred from coming and voicing their apprehensions on that count from the WSF platform. That they chose to go out is a different matter. However, both the WSF and MR had a common target: imperialist globalisation that intensifies the Western exploitation of the developing states.

Was there any outcome of WSF 2004? Chico Whitaker from Brazil, a member of the Organising Committee, had this to convey:

The WSF is not a movement. It is an incubator giving birth to new initiatives for change in the world. The outcome is not one but hundreds of outcomes as each of the groups here has been able to plan out new actions and initiatives.

And as was editorially observed in *The Hindu*, "In a world where global capital exercises such a dominant role in national economies and societies, there are few opportunities available to debate alternatives or air dissent. That the forum is internationally perceived to provide a major opportunity to do this year after year, drawing in new participants, is heartening from a democratic standpoint."

Postscript:

- *The South Koreans were most active in many ways at the WSF.*

They brought out processions, like other delegations, and sometimes one could hear the strains of the Internationale in those demonstrations. What is more, they put up posters in different Indian languages—not just in Hindi and Urdu, but also in Tamil and Bengali—highlighting their major demands.

- *At the public rally one found a short-statured bald-headed middle-aged European gentleman carrying a flag bearing the word "Non-Violenzia". On inquiry one learnt he was an Italian from Naples, carrying the message of non-violence in Gandhi's India.*

- *With all groups propagating their opinions the Communists too decided to express themselves most explicitly. The CPI put up a large banner at the entrance to the Forum complex; it read: "Let Us Join Hands to Build a Communist World." The world remains static for these persons who continue to nurture the same dreams they peddled in the forties, fifties and sixties (without realising that in today's context any such project must be intimately linked to democracy which the erstwhile communist states had sought to smother and were therefore swept away by the public urge for change).*

** Sumit Chakravarty edits Mainstream magazine.*

Making WSF and Resistance one united voice!

By Suresh Nautiyal*

To me the WSF-2004 was about attaining knowledge through direct interactions with diverse individuals and groups from across the world. It was about gaining from other's grassroots experiences and receiving from those who have been trying their best to make the world better over the years. It was about knowing those closely who have been marginalised and unheard since times immemorial.

WSF was a unique experience. An experience enriched by so many things, shades, colours, impressions. On a broader level, it was an effort to bring the whole world together in a small place where activists and people from diverse backgrounds and cultures from across the deep oceans and continents sat together, smelled each other's body fragrances for hours while exchanging their views on infinite issues. It also functioned as a laboratory for those who came equipped to carry out new social experiments and explore the untapped areas. Such an instinct was at its best.

After ASF-2003 in Hyderabad, it was an extraordinary experience. For the first time, it was an opportunity to come across so many issues at one small place, though impossible to be part of them all. It was interesting and inspiring to see several thousand people discussing issues based mainly on the themes of one-way or imperialist globalisation and its negative impact on the whole world economy and peoples.

It was quite reassuring and hopeful that there were millions of people on the earth who had the will to oppose the US dictated policies that were being implemented by the pseudo global agencies like WTO, IMF, and WB. It was indeed heartening to see that there were people and their organisations determined to throw these agencies in the Red Sea because they in the name of helping the poor countries, actually oppressively exploited their resources, human power and what not. Every workshop or seminar explicitly tried to explain that time was ripe for these anti-people agencies to take permanent refuge in oblivion.

One of the most important thing that caught fancy of the participants was the mind-boggling manifestation of the indigenous or adivasi people. The oppressed and backward classes equally invented the shapes of their frank and honest discussions, in fact, expressions. Such sections from across the world were trying to not only draw attention of the enlightened but also make their viewpoints before the sane participants. Their presence from Africa and several other such parts of the world also gave an opportunity to rethink about the WSF process and recast its strategies by making them more inclusive and representative.

It gave the hope that changing the world for better was really possible. The commitment shown by the leading world lights as well as the unsung people singularly strengthened the resolve that world was in a changing mode, albeit slow.

Immigrants and refugees also made it feel that they too existed and they too had dreams. Kashmiri migrants made their presence felt like the ones advocating absolute political autonomy for Kashmir. Women expressly told the people that violence against them was not tolerable under any pretext.

Several important events with global meanings also took place. Among them included Indo-European green dialogue and the discussion on the Helsinki Process. Discussion on global environmental citizens manifestos, besides stalls like *Harit Chaupal* – Green Corner – where conversation on contemporary environmental issues took place in informal ways and which also functioned as a meeting points. To be specific, *Harit Chaupal* was conceptualised and organised by our loose network called Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (meaning the whole world is one family). South Asian as well as European organisations like People in European Parliament, Global Greens, Friends of the Earth Finland, Centre for Equity Studies, CSDS, Lokayan, South Asian Dialogues on Ecological Democracy, Coalition for Environment and Development Finland, Himalayan Peoples Forum, Uttarakhand Chaupal, SIDH, Rajendra Prasad Academy, Swasthya Panchayat, Siemenpuu Foundation Finland, South Asia Study Centre, etc. took part in the endeavour.

The ideas like that of Gandhi on the values of life and approaches of the greens, and the Indian movements quietly sparked off campaigns on issues such as large dams and WTO. The idea of the dialogues and the informal discussions was to revitalise the interaction between the Indian and European activists – or rather Asian and the rest of the world.

Dialogues on environmental citizens' manifestos and Global Greens, etc., discussed global greens charter, Jo'burg memo and ecological democracy discussion paper of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, prepared by Risto Isomaki. The first Global Greens meeting was held in Canberra, Australia. But it was disappointing that the ecologists and environmentalists hardly found time for detailed discussions on several environmental questions that were like pain in the neck. However, million rupee question remained as to what we have been doing for conserving our forests and wildlife while safeguarding the livelihoods of forest dwellers or the adivasis.

The workshops on the ecological issues also discussed the question of riverlinking of rivers in India, genetically modified crops, foods and organisms: their pros and cons, pesticides in soft-drinks, food and water: what is real and what is safe, CNG buses, battery vans: what next, pollution in urban areas: moving towards a garbage culture, linking rivers: dividing countries, dams and displacement: development for whom, lifestyles, development models and the environment, the North-South debate: 'high waste societies'(HWS) versus 'low waste societies'(LWS)– the ethics of consumerism. And so on, so forth.

The slogan "another world is possible" sounds romantic as well. It sounds like a lover promising to bring down the moon for his beloved. But the after thought makes some sense and it starts percolating the real sense and reaffirming the faith that another world is really possible if we honestly wish to make one. In fact, the whole slogan and the idea derives from its own spirit. Even for the pessimists, we can say that if we can make the world worse why cannot we make it better?

For sure, indications are quite positive. This is why many green activists, scholars, workers and leaders of the global civil society made it to the destination called Mumbai.

The accusation that the forces of globalisation have themselves invented the WSF process to dissipate the people's resentment against them does not hold water. But of course doubts have to be dispelled and this work cannot be done without talking to the Resistance forces. The doubts undoubtedly need to be removed by making honest explanations. Similarly, the Resistance process should recognise the fact that the WSF process was the only 'organised' process against the forces and process of globalisation and therefore, the responsibility to further strengthen it also fell on them.

It is simply impossible to make another world possible without participation of the dissent voices. Therefore, there has to be a healthy, consistent, pursuant and positive dialogue among the WSF process and the Resistance groups to evolve a common strategy/agenda to oppose imperialist

globalisation. And by putting in elements of clarity and transparency, doubts in the mind of common people would automatically be removed for the benefit of the process.

It is also felt that it is important to hold future WSF events collectively with the Resistance groups maybe on the commonly agreed minimum programme of opposing globalisation, the multilateral UN or non-UN agencies that are responsible for forcing or imposing globalisation and by opposing the nations that have made the multilateral agencies as mere puppets in their hands. Also, it would be much better if we ensure that the future WSF events are organised in the remotest area of the least developed countries so that atleast some people immediately get benefits of the global fight against globalisation and indiscriminate marketisation.

It has to be recognised in the right perspective as to why people the world over are eager to change the world? Is it not evident that they want to change the world in the shape they want to see it? Undoubtedly, meaningful resistance has been fermenting and pressure building against the process of one-way globalisation. And WSF is increasingly growing as one united voice against the agencies like IMF, WTO, and WB.

The WSF process needs some concrete action programme as well. Mere rhetoric does not serve any purpose. Neither, slogans without action have any meaningful purpose. Eminent Indian Socialist leader Kishen Pattnayak's observation that the WSF's failure is in it not being able to chalk out a united and common strategy to oppose economic process inclined towards globalisation does hold some water.

Renowned Hindi litterateur and activist Namwar Singh rightly said in the Delhi Social Forum meeting last year, prior to the WSF, that transparency was to be brought in to make the whole WSF process reliably acceptable to the masses. He clearly said that he was neither opposed to WSF process nor critical about it but there was an urgent need to make the voice unison and loud enough to stimulate and inspire those nurturing the feelings against the globalisation process. Also, the WSF process must go beyond the Latin American countries, India, and the Nordic world. In nutshell, there has to be realistic alternative roadmap to another world.

With the WSF-4 fatigue over, it is now time to evaluate the whole process in view of the criticism it has invariably invited from those inspired by the WTO policies or the powers behind the so-called vanguard of global trade. It would be unfair to jump to the conclusion without taking into serious consideration the questions raised in the Mumbai Resistance meet held simultaneously across the road in Goregaon itself.

It is more or less clear that both the WSF and the Resistance programmes were organised with the help, if not liberal, of the foreign agencies with or without the consent of their governments. If this has happened, why the fuss about the sources of funds? But yes, questions need to be asked consistently so that no bad money from unscrupulous sources flows into the process of the WSF and the Resistance Movement. It was the pressure from the Resistance forces, to my belief, that the WSF India organising committee took a decision not to accept funds or assistance in any form from the agencies like Ford Foundation. Such a watchdog role would only be appreciated.

In nutshell, it is high time to make the WSF process and the Resistance Movement one united voice if the civilised world really wants to put an end to the one-way imperialist globalisation.

Before we resume to persuade our respective governments to come out of the WTO web, we must identify those issues on which we have different opinion or which we see through distinct eyes. A broadly politically correct global alliance on political lines is the need of the hour. This means that the WSF forces and the forces of Resistance Movement should sit together and agree on a common minimum programme as soon as possible and form a larger process in the near future at the global level. We must not forget that the political ego can only strengthen the forces of one-way globalisation. The message is clearly written on the wall that if we miss this historical moment, we miss the bus forever. So, let the diverse voices explore collectively in a shared environment.

** Suresh Nautiyal is a journalist, poet and activist associated with Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam-India and Himalayan Peoples Forum. He also edits a Hindi fortnightly, Uttarakhand Prabhat.*

Evidences of "another world is possible" found at WSF

By Khurshid Imam*

Some of the developed nations are trying to find evidences and possibilities of life on the red planet Mars. Scientists work day and night and invest billions of dollars. And those intense moments are before everyone's eyes when the mission lands on Mars but does not rollout. A hopeful day turns gloomy.

Almost at the same period of time in the year 2004 in Nesco grounds of Goregaon in Mumbai, people from all walks of life, without sex or gender bias, gathered from all over the world to explore the possibility of another world where one and all can live with peace, equality, justice and opportunity. Scientists, journalists, authors, academicians, students, leaders, activists, institutions, organisations, privileged as well as deprived, people of all age, colour, religion and culture put their heads together to re-affirm their belief "another world is possible". The first ever gathering of World Social Forum outside Brazil, the fourth in its series, turned the gloomy face of a many marginalised people and communities hopeful.

This is what I would call the grand success of WSF to give a hope to struggling peoples to sustain their struggle, to give a voice to many a voiceless, to bring fore the suppressed and marginalised and provide a platform that would act as the first cell for the later evolution of life on this earth. Of course many were waiting for a Declaration at the end of six days of hectic deliberations and interactions but nothing of that kind came up. No one came on the dais and shouted "Eureka" or self righteousness rather the organisers were seen sitting together, scratching their heads, introspecting, pointing out the mistakes and shortcomings, and encouraging each other by highlighting the achievements. This exercise of the organisers speaks itself about the seriousness and dedication of the people that we rest not until the goal is achieved. This is just another evidence of "another world is possible" seen at WSF.

Of course six days proved too little for the vast and varied nature of issues that WSF had to take up in Mumbai. I am not sure of any other gathering in the world that might have touched upon so many aspects concerning human beings. In this way, it was unique and the only forum of its kind. Issues from local to global and personal to universal nature were raised and debated in different ways during WSF. Street plays, folklores, songs, music, placards, posters, pamphlets, debates, discussions, workshops, movies etc., were all put together to use to communicate the message that had brought each one from different parts of the world covering long distances. These channels of people to people communication were very powerful and effective. Most of the time they were unedited and hence original and natural. Symbolically, it was something like the *namak andolan* (salt movement) of Mahatma Gandhi, something we possess, something our own aid we would use it the way we like. This feeling of self-respect is a slap on the face of those who kneel down before the so-called world organisations and institutions called WTO, IMF and World Bank.

Numerous issues were taken up and would be beyond the scope of this report to enumerate them. Women's issue, children, education, violence within the boundary of the house and outside, workers labour unions, minority issues, adivasis, tribals, aboriginals, bonded labourers, trafficking, media, water, land rights, displaced people, political prisoners, border conflicts, and policies like liberalisation and globalisation were taken up at WSF.

Activists and intelligentsia exchanged their views and experiences and tried to frame out their further course of action. The occasion also brought together different people and organisations working on different themes of the same subject for example those working on women trafficking could learn from those working on women/girl education or those struggling for empowering women or educating them to become informed citizens. All these exercises worked so smoothly, each with a clear understanding that the other work was complementary and inclusive, underlining the fact that that "another world is possible".

* Khurshid Imam is a linguist and an expert on West Asian (Middle East) Affairs.

Introspecting the WSF-2004 preparatory process and suggestions for media involvement

By Vijay Pratap

(The following is an edited version of a letter written by Vijay Pratap, an IOC member, rotating IC member representing NIGD and senior Delhi-based activist, in October 2003, to Roberto Savio, Chairman of the Inter Press Service.

His belief is that *"the WSF-2004 was an unqualified success. Yet its social and political impact could have been manifold."*)

I am almost getting depressed and disoriented at the limitations of myself and the likes of me. The reason why I am able to retain some degree of equanimity is that I had anticipated these shortcomings.

Personally, I was first exposed to the idea of WSF and its 'open space' initiative at a global level when I met Candido (Director IBASE, a member of the Brazilian Organising committee) in June 2001 at an NIGD organised international event at Helsinki. Bringing WSF to India was first proposed there. While I fully endorsed the conception of WSF and its utmost relevance for building 'Another World', given the overwhelming pressures of identity fundamentalism of various kinds I didn't have the enthusiasm to go deep into the issue of holding or not holding it in India. I also thought that the vernacular India was not equipped and ready to hold such an international event in the coming years.

However, my Indian colleague at the NIGD conference, Ashok Rao (a leading campaigner against the sale of Indian public sector undertakings) and Finnish friends in Kepa, Friends of the Earth, NIGD, CED and VK-Finland were very enthusiastic about the idea. Back in India, Ashok Rao persuaded V.P. Singh (former Indian Prime Minister), Surendra Mohan (leading Socialist ideologue), and S.P. Shukla (a leading campaigner on WTO issues) about the vital importance of organising the global event in India. Three of our other star campaigners – Medha Patkar, Aruna Roy and Vandana Shiva – were already sold to the idea. Prabhash Joshi (a leading media person and campaigner on globalisation and identity issues), M.P. Parmeswaran (a Marxist-ecologist or Gandhian-socialist and a doyen of the People's Science Movement) were also of the view that holding WSF in India would immensely help the movement for deepening democracy in India and globally. I went along with the 'collective will' of all such illustrious workers/leaders of the movement sector.

Paradoxically, the way things evolved, I was asked to organise a meeting in Delhi (which took place on 9-10 Jan 2002) where it was decided to endorse the idea and place the proposal before the International Organising Committee at Brazil, WSF-2002. Jai Sen and myself did so as co-convenor and convener of the ad hoc working committee of WSF-India. (It was decided at the meeting to work towards the India level Social Forum to be held towards end of 2002 or early in 2003 and WSF in 2004. The South Asian or Asian level event was to be organised in Kathmandu in late 2002. It never happened because of the political situation there, which made it difficult for the local organisers.)

At Porto Alegre I addressed a press conference organised by the International Secretariat of WSF on 5 February 2002 to make public the offer of the Indian movement sector to hold WSF-2004 in India.

Since then, we all worked to the best of our abilities for organising the Indian Social Forum in late 2002. Half-way through we were informed by our Nepali colleagues that they were not in a position to hold the Asian Social Forum due to the unprecedented political situation in their country. So the Indian Social Forum was metamorphosed into the Asian Social Forum, with invitation for a pan-Asian participation.

After the ASF too, I consistently took the position that we were not ready to undertake WSF. (After ASF in Hyderabad ended on 7 January 2003, I had expressed the same views at an informal reflection session on 8 January 2003 in the presence of two International Organising Committee members, and at official evaluation meetings held on 15 January 2003 in Hyderabad and in late February in Delhi.)

But considering the fact that a large number of those involved in organising ASF thought it appropriate to hold it in India, I decided to hold my reservations in abeyance once again. I devoted myself fully to the mobilisation of the vernacular, along with many others.

Many a colleague, like A.D. Golandaz and Subhash Lomte (facilitators of the Mobilisation Committee of IOC), Ghanshyam (Jharkhand), Prabhat and Arvind Sinha and many others from Bihar, Ilina Sen (Chhattisgarh), Uma Shankari and G. Narendranath (Andhra Pradesh), Sanjay M.G., Subhash Ware and Mukta Shrivastava (Maharashtra), Atal B. Sharma (Maharashtra/ Gujarat), Amarjyoti Nayak, Mahadev Vidrohi, Sonal, Prasad Chako and Father Moses (Gujarat) among others, are working hard to make the vernacular world visible in WSF. The Kerala process, thanks to the leadership of persons like M.P. Parmeswaran, K.S. Bhaskaran and others, does not really suffer from this divide between India and Bharat.

A section of the present IOC leadership tends to ignore / have contempt for/ even ridicule the vernacular oriented activists. Of the many facilitators of the different functional groups at least some have shared their strong feeling of being ignored by the dominant sections in IOC. Despite being from different ideological streams, those who have shared their discomfiture have one thing in common; they belong to the vernacular India and are keen to have such groups onboard WSF. Many IOC members, some from larger strategic organisations as well as those involved in state-processes, have shared similar feelings.

The groups with Marxist-Leninist orientation, who have a forum called the All India People's Resistance Forum, are actively opposing WSF, along with some Trotskyites and many 'independent' non-Marxist radicals. They are organising parallel events in the name of Mumbai Resistance. They are not confining only to their stream but are probably approaching all the non-RSS and non-Congress ideological streams.

A sizeable opinion in the Sarv Seva Sangh. (the apex federation of Gandhi-inspired constructive work organisations/activists) is deeply skeptical about WSF. The Sarv Seva Sangh is so far not joining either of the organised parallel events of Mumbai Resistance or WSF, as they have close allies in both the streams.

JP Movement (Total Revolution) activists and organisations that came into being during 1974-77 (an important watershed in Indian history), independent intellectuals with dissenting imagination, and many an important democratic socialist network are not on board yet.

Non-Marxist radical professionals in health, IT, media, and university system have not been adequately approached.

The India Organising Committee is dominated by those who have access to financial resources through their NGOs or through big, established networks or trade unions of the organised sector (which is only 10 percent of the Indian workforce) or personal funds. Groups not using email (an overwhelming majority in the country) are not fully on board. Majority of the leaders in IOC appear to me to be in a self-congratulatory mood. In a country with half the population illiterate and poor, one-third below poverty line, and only 4-5 percent English-knowing, they appear to be mightily satisfied with this situation where the 'competent', 'professional minded', those well-versed with modern gadgetry of mobile phones and computers and able to use English as their first language, are leading the WSF event organising process. People's Science Movement networks close to the Marxists and some small groups and individuals of the Democratic Socialist stream are attempting to mobilise 'the vernacular' to some extent through their independent initiative. But to make the process inclusive much more needs to be done.

I am sharing this with the larger community of workers who are part of the WSF process with a view to intervene for self-correction. These thoughts are not to undermine or under value the contributions that the present team has been making. This is to bring the leaders and workers among the unheard, invisible and diverse kinds of marginal communities with their respective linguistic, cultural and financial resources onto the organising of WSF-2004. All of us who are better placed have to gear ourselves to this task. The funding earmarked for the mobilisation committee has not materialised for

the simple reason that both its leaders belong to the vernacular and have a constructive/co-operative bent of mind and not the killer-instinct found in abundance in our public life today.

Given the richness and vitality of our movement sector, even with zero representation of vernacular India in IOC, the event will of course pass as a grand success because our northern counterparts do not always know the deep cleavage between urban/elite and rural/ vernacular, what we call the divide between India and Bharat.

Suggestions for IPS and donor friends

Donor agencies will do a big service if they are able to mobilise such vernacular, rooted and authentic counterparts from all continents and link them with the Indian ones. In case of IPS, it will be worthwhile that an apex Indian body of socially responsive journalists, committed to providing visibility and space in the alternative and mainstream media is constituted. I appeal to the IPS leadership to do its best to mobilise funds for an adequate number of Hindi and other non-English, Indian and non-Indian, journalists whose expenses could be borne by IPS. I will be most happy to help mobilise such journalists within India. I have sounded Sumit Chakravartty (secretary of Editor's Guild of India) and leading retired editors-turned- activists such as Kuldip Nayar, B.G. Verghese, Prabhash Joshi and Lalit Surjan. The director of Press Institute of India, Ajit Bhattacharjea brings out a journal devoted to movements called 'Grassroots'. His institution, journal and his vast contacts and experience can be of immense help. Namvar Singh, (leading litterateur who is adviser to a leading Indian media house) and M.P. Veerandra Kumar (owner of a newspaper and chairperson of Press Trust of India) should be part of our effort.

Among the present generation of editors N. Ram (The Hindu) Nikhil Wagle (Mahanagar, Mumbai), Hemant (Patna), Devendra Sharma (Delhi), Harivansha (Ranchi), Om Thanvi (editor, Jansatta, Hindi daily of the Indian Express group), Santosh Bharatiya (T.V.), Vinod Dua (T.V.), Bharat Dogra (Editor, feature service from struggle and fields), Manimala (editor, Books for Change_Hindi), Rajni Bakshi (former editor, Lokayan), Sujata Madhok (formerly with Women's Feature Service), Neerja Chaudhary (former political editor, Indian Express), Kalpana Sharma (feature editor, The Hindu), Kiran Shaheen (journalist turned NGO activist), Seema Mustafa (political editor, Asian Age) and so many others can also be brought on board. I have spoken to almost all of them. But the clinching issue is one fulcrum person who will be responsible for the overall coordination with and amongst all these media doyens. Secondly, some financial resources are also needed.

I do not know what concrete follow-up IPS can do before the European Social Forum. Many more journalists from India and neighbouring countries can be inducted if and when we have some concrete planning. India has some young, leading social scientists like Mahesh Rangarajan and Yogendra Yadav who are playing a significant role in the media on the debates for deepening democracy in India. Obviously, these names are only illustrative.

If some concrete institutionalisation has to take place, then somebody like Rammanohar Reddy, (The Hindu, a leading English daily) and Ramsharan Joshi (director, Makhanlal University of Journalism, in Hindi), Suresh Nautiyal (communication convener, WSF-Delhi), Sujata Madhok, Rajni Bakshi and Mukul Sharma (HBF-India director, writer and journalist) can be a fulcrum team. I hope that given my present state, I am able to resist the temptation of meeting you at the European Social Forum and am able to work for mobilisation in South Asia only. I await your suggestions for the work on as comprehensive a documentation of the WSF process as possible.

WSF Reports/Papers

The WSF assessment: Process needs to be more focused, transparent

By Suresh Nautiyal

On 22nd of January 2004, organisations associated directly or indirectly with the Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam parivar/family organised a meeting at the Keshav Gore Memorial Trust Hall in Goregaon,

Mumbai, to make an evaluation of the WSF-2004 meet that took place at Nesco Grounds during January 16-21. The evaluation meeting was presided over jointly by Subhash Lomte, a farmers' leader from the host state, Maharashtra and Leena Rikkila of NIGD, Finland. Vagish K Jha of VK India moderated the meeting.

At the very beginning, Dhirubhai Sheth of the CSDS, Delhi, pointed out in his key address that every demonstration that took place in the WSF meet was a critical projection and every small event had a focus, a message. He refrained from describing the event as just a mela or carnival. He said that the event had a degree of ideological commitments, and a process (than WSF) of solidarity making. He added that so far a more pragmatic process has not yet emerged.

Jarna Pasanen (VK Finland, Coalition for Environment and Development, Finland) was all praise for the event at such a large scale. She said it was surprising to see everything going smoothly during the WSF process. Describing the event as magnificent, Jarna added that even small discussions were quite fruitful. She praised the Indian organisers for doing their job successfully. Marko Ulvila (Coalition for Environment and Development, VK Finland) also termed the event as successful and pointed out that there were several dimensions like open space and opportunities to come together, though sectional competition was felt during the event. He pointed out that the smaller groups getting united was uniquely successful.

Kari Bottas of the Siemenpuu Foundation Finland said that it was interesting to see large number of people in their cultural diversities in a comparatively small area. He expected the donor agencies to have critical discussions on the issues that have emerged from the process. Describing the WSF as a great experience Ville-Veiko Hirvela (Democracy Forum Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam Finland) regretted that the WSF has no democratic structure. Besides, he emphasised that these should have been stronger connection between the WSF and poor people in the streets of Mumbai. He said it was important to strengthen the anti-globalisation movement and look for appropriate ways out.

A Canadian delegate said that it was good that several organisations and groups were well represented in WSF, but suggested that holding of WSF in every two to three years' span would be much more fruitful. He pointed out that greater emphasis should be on national or regional social forums. A participant from England was very critical of the "domination of NGOs in the whole WSF process and condemned the hypocrisy that dogged the process." He complained that the people were superficially concerned about the indigenous people, who were nowhere to be seen. He warned that such contradictions would not take the WSF process very far from Mumbai.

Bhuvan Pathak, a social activist from Uttarakhand or Central Indian Himalaya, was quite critical of the process and wanted to know how many of the participants really knew about the process. He went to the extent of saying that people even did not know why they were opposed to the globalisation process. Also, he added that there was a veil of confusion and things were required to be more transparent. Lamenting on the huge wastage of papers in the shape of pamphlets, posters, etc., he wondered if such wastage really served any purpose. Pathak said it would be more fruitful if we made the things simpler and clearer.

Rabi Shankar of Samajwadi Jan Parishad, Orissa, India, regretted that people living in the mining zones were neglected during the event and perspectives propounded/ explained during the meetings were not clear. He called for an aggressive fight against bauxite mining in his state or elsewhere. Referring to the rape incident that took place in a Mumbai hotel when the WSF event was on, he regretted that "such people were also there to make another world possible." Rabishankar regretted that the rape incident also diverted media's attention and thus served the purpose of the vested interests.

Balakrishna Rao from Andhra Pradesh in India said most of the participants took part in the WSF process to listen to others and their viewpoints. According to him, the big representation of the farmers from several countries was an indication in itself that they have started believing that there were people who took them seriously and listened to their grievances. He pointed out that it was necessary to look beyond criticism of the governments and everybody should take the responsibility to

find solutions. He regretted that money lending to the farmers was a burning issue but was not taken up in the WSF meetings in the right perspective.

A Finnish delegate lamented that the event did not come up to the visualisation and the expectation proved to be totally wrong. The delegate described the whole event as a huge fair though said that there was so much to take back to Finland. "The quality of discussions in the programmes was lower than the expectations," the Finnish participant declared.

A delegate from Africa said it was a great way in the learning for him but was disappointed that his continent was not felt in a big way. He urged that in the future WSF events; Africa should be roped in a proper way so that the process was made a global movement in the real sense. He drew attention towards a big gap between the real people and those who shed tears in their names. He also complained about the missing link between the common people and those participated on their behalf. He made it clear that establishing that link was vital.

Tuuli Hirvilammi of Finland emphasised the need for more focus on campaigns. She advocated holding the future social forums in rural areas. Marko Kangas of her country expressed satisfaction and added that he spent a good week in Mumbai. The most interesting thing he found during the event was the diversity of people. He said it was also interesting to see that so much time was devoted to democracy dialogues, though only a few workshops were democratic in nature. He suggested that the format of the meetings should have been more dialogue oriented rather than speech oriented.

Ramanika Gupta of the Ramanika Gupta Foundation, India, appealed that democracy to the indigenous or adivasi people was not reaching the way it should have been. She said it was very important to take the fruits of democracy to the indigenous/ adivasis people. According to her, efforts should be strengthened to make the dalit and adivadi dreams a reality.

Khurshid Imam of VK India was all praise for the event irrespective of organisational problems, which were bound to be there. He said linking people to the issues was important. On the other hand, Kishan Kaljaye of VK India itself pointed out that sincerity was compromised as several panelists in different workshops did not bother to turn up and the audience had to wait for them endlessly, quite painfully. Such an attitude showed how non-seriously they took the whole WSF process.

Without mentioning the Resistance Forces, Kundal Singh Chauhan of the South Asia Study Centre (SASC) said that it was necessary to listen to the voices of dissent as they too were fighting for the same cause. He favoured a common strategy of the advocates of the WSF process and the proponents of the Resistance Movement to take on the bull of globalisation more effectively.

Vagish K Jha, who also moderated the assessment meeting, pointed out very candidly that the right place for ideology of struggles was field and not the boardroom. In view of this, he favoured the next WSF in some rural setting where some structures would be raised permanently for the benefit of the poor. He added that the programmes should be organised thematically and segmentation of issues drew equal importance.

Leena Rikkila of NIGD, who co-chaired the session, agreed that the programmes should have been thematic, however she advocated that the process was very young and still in a learning stage. She said despite some shortcomings like dust and mud, etc., the event was a great success.

Anastasia Laitila of the Friends of the Earth-Finland and Kepa Finland endorsed the idea of holding of regional social forums as such global events were only leading to wastage of money in a big way. She pointed out that it was better to work among the poor than hold such big meetings. Maria Swanstrom of Finland also supported Anastasia's observation in a way and added that it would be better if such events were not held every year.

Kai Vaara, a board member of the Siemenpuu Foundation Finland, praised the richness of India's diversity that was replete in the Nesco grounds' streets. He pointed out that things could have been done in a better manner provided there was better coordination. He, regretted that there were lots of programme on the same themes or subjects and it was really difficult to be present in all of them.

Atal Bihari Sharma was quite critical of the way the WSF was organised. He pointed out that there was lack of seriousness and real Indians were missing from IOC. He added that if the things moved the

way they were doing, future of the WSF process was not very optimistic. He complained that in reality the WSF process was not an open space as some of the organisations were not allowed to participate in the events. He complained that nobody even thought of inviting the Dalai Lama. He accused that the IOC members had nothing to do with the real issues. Sharma lamented that water was one of the key issues on the WSF agenda; still it was being sold at high price during the event.

Fully supporting Atal Bihari Sharma, Suresh Nautiyal, coordinator of the South Asian Dialogues on Ecological Democracy/CSDS, pointed out that he had some reservation about the WSF process as making another world possible was unlikely without the participation of the dissent voices. He favoured a direct dialogue with the Resistance groups to evolve a common strategy to oppose globalisation. He also demanded more transparency in the whole functioning of the WSF process. He said that doubts in the mind of common people were to be removed for the benefit of the process. Nautiyal stressed that it was important to hold future WSF events collectively with the Resistance groups maybe on the commonly agreed programme. He also called for cohesiveness with the two streams that were both opposed to the WTO and the globalisation process in the world.

Sudhir Chandra raised several questions that have dogged the WSF process. He said there was no room to accept the hypocrisy by saying that they were not aware of the contradictions. He also expressed his doubts on the question of funding of the process in India or elsewhere.

Rajendra Dhasmana, president of the Uttarakhand PUCL, expressed concern over the role of media, which showed no respect for the events. He pointed out that many of the events did not reflect the WSF ideology. He also complained about the poor acoustic quality in the big halls where conferences were organised. He added that nothing was done to take care of dust, mud, etc. Besides, he accused that media was being pro-globalisation said that expecting anything from media was unrealistic. "The metropolitan citizens remained indifferent to the whole event as they did not consider it important" he added.

Ravindra Singh Basera from Uttarakhand or Uttaranchal state in India supported that there was hardly democracy to be seen in the workshops, etc. he lamented that the alternative view was not promoted during the event. The questions regarding the accountability of the NGOs was not answered.

Gauri Shankar of VK India said that he was puzzled to find that how those products were allowed to be sold in the event which were supposed to be boycotted. He also criticised the role of police, which was brutal in his opinion.

Subhash Lomte, an IOC member, tried to answer many of the questions raised in the meeting. He said that it was wrong to suggest that the WSF had no ideological clarity. He expressed due respect to the ideology of the Resistance Forces (Mumbai Resistance) though made it clear that their ideology was different from that of WSF. He asserted that WSF was unique in the sense that it was not giving directions to anyone being an open space. Also, it allowed everybody to get back to his or her respective country and act accordingly. He was categorical in saying that the WSF process was about ideology and about inclusion. It provided a place where several identical ideologies gathered and became part of the process. Without naming Atal Bihari Sharma and others, he answered the questions raised by them adding that Thomas Kocherry's organisation was not included in the WSF process as he had reservations about organising the WSF in India. However, Lomte pointed out that it was not the right place to discuss such issues.

Conclusion:

In nutshell, the participants were enthusiastic about the WSF process and hoped that the movement would grow positively in the near future. They felt that sooner than later the WSF process would get very strong and become a global movement in the real sense by incorporating those countries and regions not represented right now. They hoped that more and more participation would become a reality from African countries as well. It was also recognised that foreign delegates' participation was not very high due to long distances and logistic problems. In view of this, it was suggested to hold region or country wise social forums more frequently. It emerged from the meeting that there was no need of holding the WSF every year. It was also pointed out that adequate attention should be paid to make the process a mass movement than put energies into holding of meetings and workshops at a

large scale. A few of them also expressed doubts about the source of funding, questioned why the process was not structured and why democracy did not rule in the programmes, etc.

World Dignity Forum: Agenda of the marginalised at WSF 2004

Ashok Bharti* and Mukul Sharma*

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The most outstanding feature of the recently concluded World Social Forum in Mumbai was the massive participation of Dalits. Normally invisible and absent in our discourse and psyche, the most marginalised section of Indian populace, the Dalits, came, danced, rallied and soon filled the World Social Forum with their overwhelming presence and energy. For those who have been to earlier World Social Forums at Porto Alegre in Brazil, the presence of the Indian marginalised at the World Social Forum was contrary to the presence of the Brazilian marginalised—the Blacks and partly Blacks comprising about 44 per cent of the total Brazilian population—at the Brazilian World Social Forum.

The overwhelming presence of Dalits and marginalised of India has posed serious questions not only before the advocates of the new world order based on the market economy but also before the International Organising Committee of the World Social Forum, where Dalits and Blacks are hardly represented.

More than their physical presence, Dalits left two messages that would continue to echo in the future World Social Forums. The first message, that neo-liberal globalisation worsens the conditions of the Dalits, is obvious and corresponds with the overall theme of the World Social Forum. But by declaring the inviolability and non-negotiability of human dignity as their second message, they discovered the missing link in the struggle against globalisation in the World Social Forum.

The Dalits and the indigenous people of India in association with the other marginalised of the world, made clear that they disagree with the existing proposition that DIGNITY was second only to the right of existence. Instead they asked the World how one could exist without Dignity. To assert, establish and achieve equal dignity of all, the Dalits and all those that consider dignity as the paramount goal of human civilisation, made a worldwide beginning in the form of the World Dignity Forum at the Mumbai World Social Forum.

Initiated by Dalit and non-Dalit groups and organisations, the World Dignity Forum, as reported in the foreign media, was one of the most crowded events. Focusing on how human beings have denied dignity to billions of their fellow citizens in the name of caste, class, race, gender, disability, religion, faith or ideologies, the Forum even highlighted the danger to the dignity of nations by 'well conceived and organised attacks on different countries of the world such as Kuwait, Afghanistan or Iraq'.

"With the World Dignity Forum in Mumbai, World Social Forum would not remain a parallel replica of the World Economic Forum, which remains primarily concerned with the efficiency of market and economy, but would form a New World, which is free from discrimination, exploitation, inequality and atrocity and oppression of any kind and another World championed by the World Social Forum would be a Dignified World," asserted one of the coordinators of the World Dignity Forum in his introduction to the World Dignity Forum.

Associating the WDF with the main theme of the World Social Forum, the speakers and participants put Globalisation on trial, but linked its impact on the most marginalised of the world. Speakers reiterated that neo-liberal policies were reducing workers linked benefits and turning the Welfare State into a state that runs away from the welfare of the people. And by doing so, it threatens the dignity of working classes and their right to dignified existence. One of the issues analysed was that of migration, which neo-liberalism has enforced on thousands of people and poses a serious threat to the livelihoods and resource base of peoples across the world.

The World Dignity Forum discussed the critical relationship between caste, class and race oppression. "Distortions of the term have been central in structuring patterns of domination and subordination all over the world," states the Forum's synthesis document. "At the same time, the oppressed are increasingly articulating their distinct, different and multiple identities and negotiating for their own space in the public sphere." Spelling out their agenda in absolutely clear terms, one of the speakers at the WDF asserted: "Pious resolutions and half-hearted ameliorative measures will not be enough or acceptable to us. We will now have to explore new linkages to attain our social, economic and political goals."

Narrating his personal experiences, a leading social activist from Pakistan said that even though Islam is not supposed to discriminate between its followers this does not work in Pakistan as far as the Dalits are concerned. "Though the people of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh felt proud of their ancient civilisation, it had also left the curse of casteism. Even political parties, including the Communist Parties, are not free from caste-based discrimination," he asserted.

The Forum underlined the relationship of gender *vis-à-vis* dignity, and the need to ensure women's dignity, in the face of patriarchal power that has appropriated "control over women's labour, body and sexuality, under the garb of a discourse of dignity and honour". "No nation, state or political institution can be established, constructed or defined without redefinition and reconfiguration of the gender relationship in its political dimension. This is an occasion to act, and one of the crucial spots where to start," underlined a lady speaker from Yugoslavia.

Explaining the threat to the dignity of minorities, the learned speaker from Malaysia said that religious exclusivism and extremism was undoubtedly one of the primary forces behind the diminution of the dignity of the minority, but it was not the sole factor. "The fact that we are all minorities in the global sense should persuade us to treat 'the religious other' with respect," he announced. "A common humanity before which minority-majority differences pale into insignificance. A common humanity that brings forth the essence of our dignity. Indeed, it is only a willingness to act with sincerity on the basis of our common humanity that will guarantee everyone's dignity—the dignity of the minority as well as the majority," asserted the speaker. With respect to the fundamentalist forces, they threaten to "rupture the fabric of society" and undermine legal democratic norms, and they exercise violence against religious minorities, which is an assault on their dignity, it was denounced.

In the struggle for dignity, "employment, education, health, freedom from hunger, guaranteed livelihood, social security and related economic and social rights are crucial in ensuring a dignified existence to all human beings," it was affirmed. In this sense, it is necessary to forge alliances among likeminded individuals and groups at the global level. "A perspective from the subalterns and the marginal, and the recovery of a democratic state is crucial for ensuring minimum conditions for dignity. Dignity means freedom to live in peace, health and hope."

The presentations at the World Dignity Forum were interspersed with artistic presentations by the cultural movement groups asserting dignity of human being in the form of music, dance, theatrical plays and songs of dignity and people's assertion.

Endnotes:

1. Françoise Chipaux, "Dalits, femmes et exclus de la société indienne se retrouvent à Bombay", *Le Monde*, January 17, 2004.

2. World Social Forum has hardly been reported in the Indian media. Kindly see report by Veronica Leon B., "WSF 2004: World Dignity Forum" at alainet.org/active/show_text.php3?key=5381

* Ashok Bharti is convener of NACDOR, India.

* Mukul Sharma is a senior journalist and director of HBF India.
Helsinki Process

Democratising globally: civil society engaging with State actors

By Sini Kuvaja*

The dialogue — organised by Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, Service Centre for Development Cooperation (KEPA) and Tanzania Association of NGOs (TANGO) — took place on Sunday 18 January 2004 at Holiday Inn, Juhu Beach, Mumbai. Introductory civil society accounts from Tanzania, Finland and India

were presented by Mary Mwingira (Tanzania), Heidi Hautala (Finland) and Harsh Mander (India). Presentations of the Helsinki Process were accomplished by Erkki Tuomioja (minister for foreign affairs, Finland) and Abdulkadir Shareef (deputy minister for foreign affairs and international cooperation, Tanzania). Presentations on democracy and globalisation were made by Digvijay Singh (minister of state for foreign affairs, India) and Juan Somavia (director-general, International Labour Organisation). Comments and discussion session was chaired by Marie Shaba of Tanzania and Digvijay Singh (former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh) of India. Presentations on democracy and globalisation was made by Subhash Lomte (National Campaign Committee for Rural Workers, India) social thinker Kishen Pattnayak (Samajwadi Jan Parishad, India), Thomas Wallgren (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, Finland), and professor CSL Chachage of the University of Dar es Salam, Tanzania.

Summary of the presentations and interventions

Civil society accounts from Tanzania, Finland and India

Mary Mwingira, the head of Tanzanian umbrella NGO Tango, described that there was lot of coalition building happening within the civil society in Tanzania. The cooperation between trade unions, chambers of commerce and NGOs was strengthening the civil society. There was a great need in Tanzania for proactive search of information in order to distribute it to the poor. The trade agreements needed to be demystified to enable people to link the prize of maize with WTO and hold government responsible for its actions. The Tanzanian civil society feared it might be challenged by legislation. Mwingira's message to state actors was: "Civil society is here to stay, it has existed even before colonialism, played an important role in fighting for independence, brought a lot of changes and it has to be taken seriously by state actors."

The chair of Kepa board Heidi Hautala from Finland described the change that has happened in civil society groups during last few years. The civil society groups have come strongly together in one discussion: northern countries could not export development but needed to support southern partners. Governments were now listening to civil society groups. When WTO was founded in 1995 hardly any governments and only few civil society groups were aware there would be adverse effects. Now, the civil society groups were alert that including services and investments under WTO was going to create problems. Some civil society groups saw the need of a world parliament, others found it far reaching but all agreed that full transparency was needed in international organisations including World Bank, WTO and IMF. Civil society wanted to be part of the process of reforming the institutions but nobody wants to have a formal hearing but to have genuine influence in the process. Many thought that strong action was needed to support securing UN framework.

Harsh Mander from India, representing Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, saw social justice and equality as highest aspirations and assured civil society organisations could achieve these goals – but not alone: strong state was needed. No civil society action should weaken the state in securing justice for its citizens. On the other hand, states on their own would never act in a sustainable way unless held into account by people and their organizations. Civil society needed to be strong in ensuring the state didn't come oppressive. NGOs should not be subcontractors of state but follow Gandhi's principle: "We must cooperate when we can but resist when we must". Mander offered three steps for civil society organisations: 1) Help organise people who suffer 2) Fight unjust laws and policies and 3) Make government transparent and accountable. He also identified several challenges for the civil society organisations. One of these crises was the question of legitimacy: when people volunteered for work they were neither elected nor selected. Questions concerning funding, efficiency and lack of transparency were also addressed.

Presentations of the Helsinki Process

Finnish minister for foreign affairs, Erkki Tuomioja, explained the history and role of the Helsinki Process and stated the wish to work as openly as possible involving all who worked with globalisation issues. He pointed out that the question was not about being 'for' or 'against' globalisation but the real challenge was how the positive effects of globalisation could be distributed more equally both within the countries and among so many other countries. Although he recognised the need to reform WTO, he also reminded that states still had possibilities to counteract the negative effects of globalisation.

The Helsinki Process event was organised as a sort of side event for the World Social Forum in Mumbai because governments were not allowed to take part in the WSF. Tuomioja found it important for the States to have dialogue with civil societies and to build bridges even with the Davos Economic Forum and the WSF. The forums deal with same issues although they offered different solutions. "If these can be brought together, we can establish better global governance", Tuomioja concluded.

Abdulkadir Shareef, Tanzanian deputy minister for foreign affairs and international cooperation, saw for the role of Helsinki Process to reverse the imbalances between rich Northern countries and the growing number of people sinking into poverty in the South. Shareef accused WTO and other international institutions of being 'supposedly democratic' but in practice lacking transparency and democracy leading to the situation where the South remained a restricted player. He expected Helsinki Process to have also equality in the process itself. The fact many people remembered from the day was Shareef's words about all the debts of all African countries being less than the annual budget of the fire brigade of NY state. "How can this money cause havoc," Shareef wondered. In addition to the debt relief he saw it important to invest in education, in modernising agriculture and in fighting diseases like HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

Presentations on democracy and globalisation (Morning session)

Digvijay Singh, minister of state for foreign affairs, India, praised the fall of WTO negotiations in Cancun for showing how civil society and states could co-operate to refuse the disadvantages of globalisation. He criticised WTO for not reflecting the democratic principle and said developing countries were unrepresented in international institutions. Singh observed that more links were needed between civil society organisations, State and market groups.

Juan Somavia, director-general of ILO, offered the full support of ILO to the Helsinki Process which he called a major initiative that world really needed. Somavia's solution to poverty was employment: ILO has taken up fight for decent work as the way of re-thinking the global agenda. Somavia praised World Social Forum for showing the combined strength of all agendas: gender, indigenous peoples, etc. He saw these social movements as keys to change attributes, legislation and action. One good example of this has been the women's movement. Somavia thanked Finland for being active in both in the Helsinki Process and in the ILO Commission of Social Dimension of Globalisation (president Tarja Halonen is the co-chair of the commission).

"We need leaders of the North to speak out: this is not the right way for things to go. Finland wants to speak in a common interest and accept changes which are always not good for the developed world", Somavia pointed out.

Comments (morning session)

Tony Avirgan from Rural Policy Network offered his solution to the problem of legitimacy in civil society organisations the unions where leaders are selected. He criticised many States, Tanzania included, for currently discouraging the unions.

Prof. Arun Kumar from JNU called for the Gandhian principle "last man comes first" and movements based on this principle.

H.M.Desarda stated that over consumption was much bigger problem than over population and that limits to growth were needed.

President of the World Citizens Foundation, Troy Davis, said that he has been disappointed with the Helsinki Process because it was not looking for solutions. "We need to re-engineer the global system, we need a fundamental principle, a global social contract", Davis said. He spoke for constitution for the world based on equality of human beings. This constitution should be planned through a participatory process, even though it was difficult and would probably take ten years.

Presentations on democracy and globalisation (Afternoon session)

Subhash Lomte from National Campaign Committee for Rural Workers in India described that the rural sector of India was terribly neglected both by government and by labour unions which were restrictively interested in the organised sector of the country. Meanwhile half the people were denied help, services, drinking water, employment and social security.

Kishen Pattnayak, Indian Socialist thinker and former member of parliament, said that civil society could not negotiate with the present market. He reminded that there was no continuous global civil society functions. Globalisation integrated poor countries with the most powerful economies in the world and thus disintegrated societies. Pattnayak called for a barrier that should be brought in to separate the economies of developing countries from the powerful economies.

Thomas Wallgren from Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam Finland agreed with Pattnayak's idea about separating the economies. He saw both the World Social Forum and the Helsinki process as tools for negotiating the future. However the processes must not fall into the trap of thinking that it was enough to speak of global governance. Instead we needed radical democratisation. "We need to create and recreate global institutions nurtured below by strong democracies," Wallgren said. He added that the Helsinki process should have a role in reforming EU policies.

Discussion (afternoon session)

Fred Chambanenge from Green Living Movement Zambia and Ville Luukkanen from Kepa Finland brought together a statement for the Helsinki-process:

- * the debt cancellation process needs to be strengthened and moved from creditors to independent actors
- * the subsidies for farmers in the north must be reconsidered

Satu Hassi representing Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and the Green Parliamentary Group in Finland said that more countries especially from the North needed to join in the Helsinki Process. Hassi stated that contracts between states and governments were too often formal negotiations and more brainstorming between states was needed.

Tony Avirgan commented that since the WTO rules were based on economic system why could not we agree to have rules based on political system. In Avirgan's point of view, we still think like subjects to a king and not like citizens, and presidents also behave like kings. He described this situation as feudalism instead of democracy.

Nitin Desai representing Helsinki Process track 1 (problem solving methods) observed the process in itself was as important as the results: it is a genuine dialogue where people with different points of views must be involved and you must be able to listen and change your views.

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz representing Helsinki Process track 1 said that there was need to deal in a sustainable way with the debt problem and racism. Awareness raising was the basic process for empowering communities and basic organisations and also local governments needed to be strengthened, Tauli-Corpuz concluded.

Heidi Hautala, also a member of Helsinki Process track 1, reminded the listeners of the ecological issues. "Ecological justice can't be left out of social justice and we need to be careful that solutions won't create more problems," Hautala asserted.

Erkki Tuomioja responded to a demand from the audience for policy proposals that he would not be satisfied with analyses only but expected policy proposals from the Helsinki Process.

** Sini Kuvaja is from Kepa, Finland (the report has been taken from Kepa website).*

On the double meaning of 'information' and the work of knowledge

(Paper presented at the workshop "Dialogues on Knowledge in Society" held on 17th & 19th January 2004 as part of the World Social Forum at Mumbai.)

By Avinash Jha*

Past few decades have seen the emergence of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the scale and nature of changes it has brought about has been described as 'information

revolution'. At the most basic level, this technological development consists of the capacity of transforming texts, sounds and images into sets of ordered signals that can be recognized by computers and which can be transmitted over long distances and recombined again to reproduce original texts, sounds and images. This technology also facilitates easier manipulation and duplication of texts, sounds and images.

In late sixties and seventies, some theorists noted the changing occupational structure of advanced industrial society. More and more people were using their brains rather than muscles in their work. The economic changes of the time required a workforce with a larger component of people with linguistic, mathematical and technical competence as compared to the era of assembly lines. Some theorists saw these changes as harbingers of an 'information society' which will be more open, democratic, inclusive and less dependent on the drudgery of mindless repetitive work.

Then came globalization, with flourishing financial markets and reorganization of the global economy. Cheap PCs became widely available. Internet developed as an unprecedented communication and information network. From being a preserve of academic institutions, activist sub-cultures and the like, Internet moved to become a means of commercial, media, and political activities. Organisations and institutions of all kinds reorganized their word processing, information management, and communication activities based on this new infrastructure, which had the added dimension of offering instant connectivity in global terms. These developments taken together heralded what was dubbed the 'Information Age' and the theory of 'information society' came of age in the form of a theory of 'network society'.

All these changes have finally led to the discourse of a knowledge-based society. Industrial society is seen to be undergoing a fundamental change resulting in the formation of knowledge society. The idea of 'information society' or 'knowledge society' often takes advantage of an implicit normative ideal of what may be termed as 'well-informed society' or 'knowledgeable society'.

While this serves as a convenient ideology for those riding on the waves of current changes, serious questions have been raised on the implications of these changes for world society and its future. Sunil Sahasrabudhey in his note on "Dialogues on knowledge in society" sees a shift in the ground of knowledge associated with the increasing use of ICTs. The central position of science as the source of authoritative knowledge is being ceded and the emerging knowledge society is seen as bringing about a new regime of knowledge with ambiguous consequences for re-emergence of what is called 'lok-vidya'. In this context, this seminar is a welcome move to begin examining the questions associated with knowledge in society.

In this note, I examine the two meanings of 'information'- one from the social context and another from the technological context – and try to show that a play on the ambiguity in the meanings of 'information' allows the building of an ideology of 'information society' or 'knowledge society' that seeks to draw our assent and to tie our hopes to the current global developments. Flowing from these two strands of 'information' we encounter two different spheres for our reflections on knowledge in society – one closely associated with the development of ICTs and the other associated with broader changes in the field of knowledge and society. It is the latter, in my analysis, which holds greater importance for the future of lok vidya.

ICTs as infrastructure of global integrations

Globalisation is marked not only by integration of national economies to the global economic structures dominated by advanced industrial nations, but also by integration of different domains of society – business, government, NGOs (altruistic, voluntary initiatives), politics, media, knowledge (science, academy, information, policy). There is also an integration of this integrated elite at the global level. *ICTs provide a common infrastructure for these integrations.* If you do not use ICT, you may be left out of this globally developing network society, which exists as part of the world society. The world society is marked by national boundaries. You risk a fortune or even your life if you want to transgress these boundaries. Not so for those who are part of the global network society. They, and their fortunes, move with ease across borders. If we look at the multi-tiered UN structure, the world society begins to reveal itself as a system of global apartheid. The world society with its inter-state and inter-national structures is absolutely essential for the current global structures to play on. It the

world were truly globalized, balance of payments and national debts would not exist as meaningful categories. In fact, the most global of all global entities, which is the currency markets, wouldn't know how to exist but for the existence of multiple national economies. Moreover, the national governments have the task of managing the national societies.

If netizens and citizens are defined solely in terms of access to internet, it is not a very meaningful distinction. Is the army of call center workers part of the netizen world or not? Railway reservation clerks, occasional surfers etc. can hardly be called netizens. What matters is whether you are a part of the global network society.

Knowledge-institutions are finding their place in the network society. They are breaking stronger bonds – in some cases from governments – and establishing new ones to function in the larger network of business, NGOs, etc. In this task, it is essential for them to adopt the infrastructure of ICT and be networked in order to stay in circulation.

Paradoxes of knowledge-society

Creation of a knowledge-based society, learning society, information society (these are concepts from the same family) mainly by means of new ICTs forms an important part of national and global development goals. This has two components:

- the goal of adapting national economies to global dynamics of business
- a developmental or transformative goal of moving towards a better informed or more knowledgeable society.

World Bank has redefined itself as a knowledge bank. A few years ago the World Bank organized a Global Knowledge Conference in order to contribute to the task of building Global Knowledge Society. As a prelude to the conference, they had set up an electronic mailing list with more than a thousand participants contributing to a discussion on the theme of building knowledge societies. Most of the contributions described efforts to use new information and communication technologies (ICTs) in remote rural areas or among the poorer sections of urban populations – these efforts normally fall under the description 'ICT for Development'. When someone raised a question regarding the lack of any discussion on knowledge as such, a few interesting contributions came in response. Soon afterwards the discussion was back on the track of 'ICT for Development' thereby showing that adopting newer technology does not necessarily result in new knowledge practices.

The question is not about the need or use of ICTs in development efforts. What was in question was the assumption that a society using more of ICT is by definition a better informed society. The U.S. is the society with highest spread and concentration of ICTs. Has it become a well-informed or knowledgeable society? Ignorance of American citizens about the rest of the world is evidenced in a variety of anecdotes and the nature of news media. The U.S. is a society in crisis in terms of crime, schooling, relationships. It is the greatest source of instruments and innovations in violence. Even in scientific literacy, the U.S. citizens fare poorly, as several studies have shown. Here, we begin to glimpse the paradox in the conception of 'information society' or 'knowledge society'.

The paradox can become even more glaring. E-learning is being promoted with great vigour and is considered a measure of development. The flesh-and-body teachers are being retrenched. No, it is not the same old story of technology taking away jobs. Society is undergoing a major reorganization. The Welfare state and social democratic ideals are supposed to obstruct the new dynamic of global circulation of capital, technology, people. But in promoting e-learning we are ignoring the knowledge gained over decades (may be centuries!) regarding the importance of teacher-student interaction in learning.

Great amounts of information are now flowing through networks at high speed. Then why is the knowledge, which has already been accumulated, being ignored? Is all the knowledge gained through research and experience being made use of to avoid the social and environmental catastrophes staring us in our face? How should this knowledge be organized and communicated? These are some of the questions that arise.

Two meanings of 'information'

How did the assumption that societies using more of ICTs are well-informed societies find a ground to grow? In some way or the other, all theories of information society, knowledge society, information revolution, information age incorporate this assumption which lends force to these theories by adding a transformative content to them.

There are two meanings of information:

One is the everyday meaning of information as a bit of knowledge. Right kind of information can enhance our understanding and bring clarity to our course of action. This is the meaning implied when we talk of an 'informed society' or having better information. This meaning has evolved since the advent of modern states in Europe. Information of this kind finds its meaning in the context of knowledge.

The other meaning of information is the one associated with technology and can be traced to the information theory propounded by Shannon and Weaver in late forties and fifties. Without going into precise definitions, we can say that information here means the ordered procession of signals in a transmission network. The information in this context is not meaningful information, and has been understood as syntactic rather than semantic. Information of this kind finds its meaning in the technological context of translation, transmission, and reproduction of signals.

The two meanings will surely be intertwined if we explore the history of ideas. In fact, the category of 'information' plays important role not only in theories of information society, but in various fields like biology, linguistics, library science, education, and even physics.

I am proposing that a slippage from one meaning of information to the other makes possible the theories of information and knowledge societies. This slippage may be pervasive even in other fields of enquiry enumerated earlier.

Proliferation of representations

The latter, technological, meaning of information refers to the reducibility of all media of symbolic communication to 'ordered procession of signals' and their reproducibility. While text, sound, image can be thus broken down and reassembled; smell, touch, and taste among the senses are not reducible thus.

This leads first of all to a cultural environment dominated by text, sound and image. I speculate that effortless circulation of disembodied text, sound and image leads to a 'world of representation, structure and meaning', which can be read in many, even playful, ways. While the technology does an accurate job of reproducing the symbolic media according to physical parameters, meanings of messages thus transmitted is open to interpretation. Junk cars used by the poor people in Hollywood movies may evoke visions of prosperity in an Indian audience.

Is the world of things and forces being replaced by a world of representation, structure and meaning? Is imagination making a comeback? I doubt. Social knowledge has been relativised, natural knowledge remains separate and under the absolute authority of science. The division between cultural studies and natural sciences remains. This division is even reinforced by ICTs. We can work with the meaningful symbols without ever knowing about how computers work. Software constitutes the interface between the humans and the hardware. Open source programming, by insisting on blurring the distinction between users and producers of software knowledge, is a development that has to be examined in this context.

Virtual reality offers a space of play, creativity and easy manipulation and duplication of symbols and images. And dissent. At a deeper level, it attracts us by the possibility of choosing a reality to live in, at least seemingly so. After science was disciplined and institutionalized in the 19th century, scientists could play around with ideas and pursue 'knowledge for its own sake', while all knowledge they created was routinely used by the society or corporate body supporting research. Similarly, it seems to me, virtual reality offers a much larger space for much larger number of people to explore a world of meaning, structure and representation. Of course, it is only a secondary function of ICTs, primary one being to function as the infrastructure of network society.

Organisation of meaningful information

For ICT to function as infrastructure or as a technology of information, it has to be embedded in information systems. Meaningful information has to be organized through information systems; mere technology is not enough. Now we are talking of information in the social context as a bit of knowledge. Information systems are ways of organizing, classifying and accessing information. The design of information systems depends on many factors but above all on the purpose and the potential users of that system. Any organization of information will reveal certain things and conceal other things, purposely or unwittingly. A company or a government department might organize information in such a way that one set of information is kept separate from another set to conceal the interconnections. An academic library will organize information according to academic disciplines, which will make it difficult for somebody to access or browse all information on topic that cuts across disciplines.

There is a tendency in the field of information organization that the complex text searches made possible by computers has made information systems redundant. This, to my mind, is not tenable. An information system, then, has to be placed within an institution. Institutions have their own purposes, visions, cultures and objectives. An excellent information system in a closed institution is not useful to outsiders. To access information in government institutions you may need a right to information act. An academic institution may not be conducive for a non-academic person to access even in the absence of legal barriers.

Finally there is a social dynamics of information. Different kinds of information circulate among different sets of people mediated by a number of institutions using diverse sets of technologies. We can notice a broad social division of information into technical and non-technical, which flow through different circuits. Movements like the Narmada Bachao Andolan had to struggle to break this separation of information in two spheres. Information technologies, information systems, institutions working within broader social structures of knowledge and information circulation determine how particular sets of information circulate.

Body of knowledge

Mere circulation of information is not enough. Information becomes meaningful only when assimilated into a body of knowledge. We have been talking about information in its social meaning as a bit of knowledge. But this definition does not bring out the specific character of information apart from being a bit of knowledge. We can start with a working definition:

Information as a bit of knowledge separated from the knower that circulates and for this necessarily requires a medium or a carrier. Data as a bit of knowledge admitted as such but sitting somewhere. So information detaches itself from a body of knowledge, circulates, and then again, is assimilated into a body of knowledge.

A body of knowledge can be the accumulated experience and knowledge of a person, an academic discipline, knowledge of a community, knowledge of an organisation. A body of knowledge can grow or be modified when new information is assimilated.

A body of knowledge grows also through experience. A body of knowledge will have informational content and experiential content, though the proportion of the two may vary a lot. To take examples, let us take physics, pottery, and open source programming. In the high level of informational content, physics and open source programming are similar. If we take growth of knowledge, pottery and open source programming are similar in that their knowledge grows more through addition of new practitioners. Marxism or feminism can also be seen as bodies of knowledge. We can use this category for any social body of knowledge persisting through time in contrast to events of knowledge, which are episodic and localized. These events of knowledge are either perception or inference. Truly speaking, these latter are knowledge in real sense, since a body of knowledge is nothing, unless it is brought to bear upon reality in a specific instance.

The post-industrial regime of knowledge

It seems extremely difficult to assess whether the authority of science is diminishing in the wake of the emergence of knowledge societies, especially because challenges to science have come from many

directions. There has definitely been an increasing incoherence in the enterprise of science when conceived as a whole. Various disciplines of science, the sciences, however, continue undeterred by the slowly crumbling structures of scientific legitimacy and superiority.

The question before us is whether in this 'information age', when the industrial society is reinventing itself as reflected in globalisation and pervasive use of ICTs, the place of science within knowledge and the place of knowledge within society has also changed.

We must note at the beginning that the two emerging fields of information technology and biotechnology are based on modern physics and biology. The major change now is that the field of software has emerged as a vast and rewarding field of research and creativity, attracting talent from scientific fields as well. The more software is needed the more ICTs are implemented. When the infrastructure of business, state, science is being shifted to ICTs, naturally there is an explosion of software opportunities. On a given hardware platform a plethora of software opportunities are available. Within scientific research itself, role of simulation and computation has increased resulting in (or following from) increasing use of computers.

It is true that there is greater acceptance of knowledge produced by different methods and at a variety of sites. Within the system of scientific ideas itself, we notice a distinction between the context of discovery and the context of justification emerging in the first half of the twentieth century. As the idea of a common scientific method found it difficult to deal with the diverse and heuristic ways of reaching knowledge even within the sciences, this distinction between discovery and justification arose. It was claimed that scientificity of any knowledge lies in the method of its justification and not in how it has been discovered.

Whatever be the reasons, it seems clear that there is a growing recognition now that knowledge is produced at many sites. But this knowledge is then taken and processed at technical sites like research institutes and it acquires legitimacy only thereafter. Once it has been processed, in a simplified form it can be communicated to a broad section of people and organizations. This seems clear in the field of 'development knowledge', which covers the important area of 'traditional knowledge'. As such, this knowledge does not still have any authority. It has to be documented, and made a part of a different body of knowledge and then if it is not found to be in contradiction with scientific knowledge, it acquires legitimacy.

The society has moved from the conception where science was publicly produced authoritative knowledge available in the public sphere and business used technology to produce goods for consumption. Now knowledge itself has become a part of business.

Knowledge-based economy is what is often meant by knowledge-based society. How does this affect the sphere of knowledge? There is a tendency now that all knowledge should lead to or contribute to the development of certain products: goods, services, or more knowledge. If we talk in an old language, the current regime of knowledge privileges knowledge with a high exchange value.

To facilitate exchange, knowledge should have appropriate structure and communication infrastructure. The question we wish to pose is: whether we trace 'organisability' required today from knowledge to pervasive use of ICTs or to privileging of 'exchange value'.

Work of knowledge

There is so much knowledge in the world but how does this knowledge get organized at various levels: and then become a part of life. In societies dominated by knowledge-based economy, knowledge with high exchange value will float to the top. Moreover, the work of knowledge has two aspects: the work of knowledge that we do and the work that knowledge does on us. In contemporary times when we engage in knowledge work with the exchange value of knowledge uppermost in our minds, the knowledge we deal with is not allowed to work in us. We maintain a distance from that knowledge. The knowledge does not transform us, or our perceptions.

Whatever the future may be like, we can be pretty sure that the society will be complex enough to have a large number of people who do work of knowledge.

Science, research, teaching, literature etc. are all knowledge-work. This notion of knowledge-work is different from the one which goes with the conception of information society or knowledge-based

society. From our perspective, that is merely brain-work or mental-labour. We do not look at society as divided between brawn workers and brain workers, or between physical labourers and mental labourers. Knowledge work is a domain of work, as agricultural work, industrial work, health care work, etc. Agricultural work, for example, involves a lot of knowledge and requires brains too.

Vidya lok can be a name for the world of knowledge work, norms and institutions of such work. The normative structure governing knowledge has to be evolved through practice. Philosophy can contribute to this. Source of all knowledge is perception (pratyaksa) or inference (anumana). Vidya lok has one specific character. As an individual we may be interested in understanding something; as a researcher we seek to produce some knowledge which is considered to be valid by other researchers. In the latter case, we are engaged in parathanumana, i.e., inference for others. What is admissible and valid for the research community is governed by logic and/or certain prevailing norms. So in vidya lok knowledge becomes an interest beyond the context of its application.

We have to analyse the sphere of knowledge work as it exists and evolve alternative norms, philosophies, methodologies, institutions. This will be characterized by:

- different relation with past knowledge
- different relation with one's own knowledge
- different relation with other's knowledge
- different organization of knowledge
- different conception of growth of knowledge, etc.

Lok vidya is the ground from which different specialized streams of knowledge-quest grow like trees. These trees shed their leaves periodically which go on to enrich the ground in the process of decomposition. They do so by becoming a part of our perceptions and therefore of our lives. But all trees have limited lives.

To recapitulate:

I suggest that we need to be skeptical of the notion of a knowledge-based society emerging on the back of ICTs. This notion derives its transformational character from blurring of the social and technological meaning of information.

We need to examine the changes in the sphere of knowledge from a broader perspective.

The conception of a body of knowledge offers us a broad category to which we can easily relate to and at the same time it is general enough to accommodate the whole range of social knowledge. It also allows us to properly place the category of 'information', which is an important emerging category not only in the broader social context but also within various research traditions.

Apart from lok vidya, people's knowledge, we need to look at the sphere of knowledge work, vidya lok.

** Avinash Jha is associated with Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, India. Email: avinash@cstdsdelhi.org*

Media, globalisation and culture

By Kishan Kaljayee*

Among the various important, delicate and sensitive issues discussed at WSF Mumbai 2004 was about media, globalisation and culture in a workshop on "The Role of Media in the Era of Globalisation", organised by the Himalayan Peoples Forum and supported by VK-India, South Asia Study Centre and others. The session, though initially planned as a panel discussion turned into a lively discussion by media experts and those associated and affiliated with media. Serious inputs during the discussions were made by media experts, senior journalists, editors, social activists and concerned citizens of the world. Just to name a few of the participants Rajendra Dhasmana, Prof. Biswajit Das, Suresh Nautiyal, Rajesh Jha, Kishan Kaljayee and other American and European participants.

The discussion took-off with a comprehensive note by Rajesh Jha, a media expert. In the opening note, he pointed out that the role of media in the process of globalisation was double-edged. Media found its place as an overall process of globalisation where rapid changes and transfer have taken place in the information and communication technologies; while at the same time media was unfortunately also the backbone of the globalisation process itself. He regretted that the process of globalisation was premised on the almost seamless flow of international capital in the search for quick profit through the network of communication.

"Media, in fact is both facilitator of the globalisation process as well as its outcome and expression. It is well understood that media plays a crucial role in preparing the society for accepting the globalising forces by creating an ideological environment. The role of media in creating a particular mindset is very crucial for the success of the project of globalisation. Thus, for creating a particular culture that caters to the market need, control and ownership of media becomes very important," he added.

He said that the process of globalisation has facilitated the travel of technology worldwide and has also facilitated global media. The event of 9/11 was seen live throughout the world. The global media that we have today was an outcome of globalisation. Internet was a wonderful setup that linked the world. Internet was a bi-product of the local needs of the defence department of US to maintain the channel of communication among its units, in case nuclear war happened and from there on it moved to almost all spheres of life. It was not a well thought strategic outcome of the US defence department to have a system that was quite democratic.

He sketched out the modus operandi of the forces of globalisation. These forces seized power by the use of force but stayed in power by changing the mindset and culture of the people. "Here comes in the role of media, concerns and protests have been coming from different quarters of the world against the growing concentration and monopolisation of media into the hands of a few media houses and corporate bodies," he added.

Suresh Nautiyal, Delhi-based senior journalist and activist, lamented how a select few (embedded journalists) were given access to one-sided reports during the aggression on Iraq and how such 'coloured' news reports were disseminated throughout the world and picked up by the media globally. There was no flow of news reports from the Iraqi side.

He added that such one-sided media activities were damaging the very essence of press freedom. "Also, concentration of power in the hands of a few media houses and their monopoly in the media bazaar was not a good sign for healthy democracy because they neither represent diversity of opinions nor reflect the voices of the marginalised" Nautiyal said. He expressed his concern that the space reserved traditionally for the alternative media in India was also shrinking fast as commercial media houses were aggressively encroaching their space. This also threatened the cultural and social diversity and plurality that were the cornerstones of democratic society in the country.

Rajendra Dhasmana, a senior activist with vast editorial experience, said that the 'mass' of the mass media was at the receiving end for brutality and vulgarity were ruling the scene. The daridranarayan (poorest of the poor) of a democratic set up was an important entity but the mainstream media did not provide any voice to the marginalised sections. The forces of social change and transformation were finding it hard to get space in the media.

Other participants in the discussion were also critical about larger sections of media, which were overtly becoming profit-oriented and ignoring its much-expected role as an institution — the institution that articulated people's voice. Its role of safeguarding and highlighting the interests and concerns of the weakest in society or acting as a watchdog. Instead, media was shunting the fund providers. Profit making set the goal and content of the media. The advertising and marketing wings of media were unpardonably dictating the editorial content too. There were few occasional episodic reporting particularly with 'human interest' and they were neither followed up properly nor put in the right perspective. Most of the time, the local news stories went unreported due to lack of footage (in case of TV) and when reported they lacked coherence, and vision. Even the most democratic Internet was threatened by the technology edge of the big firms.

Several participants said that the media also perpetuated cultural imperialism, built up stereotypes, imposed cultural value systems and defined moral and ethical lines. The stereotyping many a time put

the local and native society, culture and tradition in bad shape and ultimately forced them feel inferior. One of the speakers gave an example of the Hollywood cinema where Blacks were largely shown as violent people and in Bollywood cinema the Bhojpuri speaking persons projected as buffoons and uneducated.

In brief, it was lamented that the media was heavily influenced, by the forces of imperialist globalisation and was contributing, wittingly or unwittingly in creating a hierarchy of cultural supremacy.

**Kishan Kaljaye, associated with Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam-India, edits an occasional Hindi literary journal, Samved.*

Rescue agriculture: Save humanity

(Seminar on Survival of the peasants globally)

By Rakesh Manchanda*

A hope for change has always been the most sustainable source to survival for all. On 20th January 2004, a colourful gathering in World Social Forum was found busy and alive with hope. The need of the day was to identify shareable structures including agricultural life and tools for change(?) towards the possibility of another world. A galaxy of individuals and several grassroot Indian organisations like National Campaign Committee for Rural Workers, Kisan Sangarsh Samiti, Centre For Indian Trade Unions, All India Agricultural Workers Union, Bhumi Sena, Action Aid, Echo Trust, Shetkari Sangharsh Samiti, AIDWA, Students Federation Of India, RSD Pune, South Asian Fraternity, Latur District Natural Farming Board India, VRDP Tamil Nadu, Jana Vigyana Vedika, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and many more graced the occasion. The South Asian Dialogues on Ecological Democracy, CSGCDD, and Committee for Cultural Choices and Global Futures organised the workshop.

The mood was upbeat right from the start. A revolutionary folklore generated by the peasants from South India charged the adrenaline levels of hundreds of participants. There were poor and small landless peasants, agriculture workers, artisans, activists and journalists, agriculture experts from India and abroad and mass leaders. They poured in as inquiring individuals and in caravans. All were eager to understand the capitalists' parameters of valuation of their craft and valuation of the nature's contribution. They came along with their experiences and dreams. Their humble contributions as food producers in the biased wheel of consumption. As helpless consumers; witnessing newer techniques of capitalist's deception driven by speed and surplus. Landless were seen making room shoulder to shoulder. To accommodate the new disappearing tribe of 'permanent workers'. They assembled to combat uneven distribution. To understand existence from self to society.

In the words of the moderator and anchor, G. Narendranath, the platform was ready to sort out ways on how to combat globalisation. He invited process and talks to carry forward message and struggle from the local to global. Comrade Suneet Chopra, joint secretary of All India Agricultural Worker Union (AIAWU), set the ball rolling by sketching three focal points on what Karl Marx noted one hundred and fifty years ago. According to him, these were three hurdles in today's people's agricultural way of life.

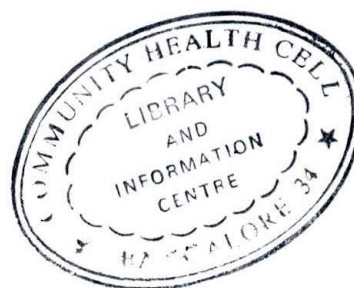
Dispossession of the small producer, pushing him into the reserve army of the unemployed.

Use of machine to substitute for labour rather than a machine sharing a labour's burden.

The division of town and country for profit instead of developing them together for overall progress.

Instead of occupying lands unlike feudal lords, capitalists choose to shift their focus on selected profitable agricultural sector, dumping the losses for majority. This position by the ruling capitalist class, according to comrade Suneet, was not an economic necessity but a self-survival tactics. In such a situation, the survival of capitalist class would become a threat to the society, he clarified.

Suneet Chopra and later Prof. K. R. Chaudhary from Andhra Pradesh, an eminent economist followed by Vijay Javandhiah spoke on unequal subsidies, unequal trade, patents and biotechnology, which were not essential for peasants but essential to make big profits. Some of these techniques have proved to be dangerous for the very survival of agriculture. Genetically engineered potatoes used for Uncle Chips damage kidneys of the tested field rats. But Uncle Chips did sell to make profits. All these



speakers, communicated to the diverse participants adopting reverse social engineering technique. Their inquiries followed by placement of self-generated questions and clarifications kept the audience engaged.

Here is an interesting slice that exposes capitalist character: How much 100g pack of corn flakes costs Rs.15/- and we are forced to sell wheat at Rs. 4.30/kg without any subsidy. How and why Indian Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, exports wheat for America meant to American Pigs at Rs. 4.30/kg and to us the same wheat is available only at Rs. 6.90/kg. What do the capitalist do with the vast army of unemployed? How does this system handle this situation. By dividing and pitting them against each other as happened in Gujarat? This capitalist tactics was further exposed by statistical presentation in Hindi by Vijay Javandhiah.

Another blunt and demystifying query clarified was to why a capitalist would never invest in agricultural land. Then what does he do?

Hilkka Pietila of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam Finland was equipped with several plans of parallel social engineering for survival of agriculture. Her agricultural paradigm involved recognition and protection of nature-human relationship. Her down to earth holistic view was that food was a necessity. So unlike commodities, food products and necessities have to be handled in trade in different way. Based on her rich experiences in Finland, she described how agriculture problem was distinct in different countries.

She stated that government representatives and capitalist representatives have too much power in WTO. They only had business thinking. They neither cared about hunger of the people nor about the laws of nature. So that was why there has been a long discussion in people's movement for several years to take agriculture out of this WTO.

Several speakers concluded that WTO was not any scientific organisation but an organisation to make money. WTO laws were unequal laws, incorrect laws. They were laws to doom ruin and not for human development. Olivier de Marcellus from Switzerland went a step further by expressing a complete loss in trust on UN and its biased actions. He cautioned about the pace of the imbalanced exploitation would lead the capitalist system to a crash. An activist farmer from Pakistan described the famous Okara movement and struggle. He explained how Pakistan military set up has failed and asked that all of us should write to Musharraf and demand that farmers be allowed to remain in control of their land and the army should not be there.

It was also prominently argued that agriculture never required such huge amount of chemical fertilisers. But for profits, farmers were systematically trapped to purchase such chemicals. Sandipan Badgire, an Indian organic farmer, informed as how the emerging irreversible effects of chemical farming were forcing farmers to reach his organisation for guidance and support. He explained in detail the need to re-adopt natural organic farming. His vision was further strengthened by Baljagtap from Maharashtra and Rakesh Manchanda of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam India. They also talked about the positives and negatives of newer genetic techniques countering the ecological imbalance. Manchanda focused upon the need to understand all this process in a single canvas of human interventions; for a proper and effective line of action. He also highlighted the importance of communication and its unlimited production with surplus in mind-management as the survival tool of majority.

The Indians were quick to understand and realise the complex matrix of Capitalist-Imperialist system. Had it been very easy, if they had to only stand together and fight against imperialism? A need to uproot capitalists in different countries was also felt. Local struggles appeared as the visible key to success. A need to build an international unity of farmers' organisations independent of the UN set up was observed.

Subhash Lomte, a farmers' leader from Maharashtra, India, gave the concluding remarks on unity against globalisation. In the end the writing on the wall was clear: *The peasants and industrial workers of the world must unite and fight for their survival and dignity. To rescue agriculture and humanity.*

**Rakesh Manchanda is a communicator and associated with Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam-India.*

The quest for participatory democracy

By Dr. Kishor Dere*

A workshop "The Quest for Participatory Democracy" was organised by Rajendra Prasad Academy, Institute for Democracy and Sustainable Development, JP Foundation for Asian Democracies on 20 January 2004 at WSF. Several delegates from Brazil, Germany, India, Nepal, Pakistan and UK agreed that the prevailing form of representative democracy required to be made more participatory. Prof. Anil Mishra of Rajendra Prasad Academy, New Delhi, India, said that democracy as a process has been going on for eight centuries. And though the twentieth century has witnessed triumph of democracy, it has been facing very serious challenges for the last two decades. Prof. Ramesh Dikshit of Lucknow University, India, agreed with Mishra observing that the obscurantist and self-righteous groups in society were whipping up mass frenzy and posing a grave threat to individual freedom.

Prof. Anand Kumar of Jawaharlal Nehru university, India, regretted that the election-oriented, competitive democracy was promoting politicians at the cost of statesmen/women. It has also reduced the citizens' participation to mere voting process. So, democracy seemed to have become synonymous with "psephocracy". He remarked that ruling elites have joined hands with rich and powerful to perpetuate themselves in the corridors of power.

Prof. Ankush Sawant, a retired professor of political science, lamented the ever-increasing burden on public treasury of protecting providing security to various political leaders who claimed to be enjoying support of masses. He even went to the extent of suggesting abolition of such expensive provisions for politicians, especially when hundreds of millions of people could barely manage to survive. A woman delegate from Brazil favoured making participatory democracy a global process. Another woman from Pakistan pointed out that women continued to face discrimination in the political system of her country.

Roman Huber, a German delegate, too agreed that representative democracy has got certain inherent weaknesses but he cautioned that it would be unwise to abolish elections, political parties, legislatures and other institutions. Yuri Prasad, a London-based journalist, said that mass struggles were needed to be launched to realise the goal of participatory democracy. He opined that democracy was never handed down by anybody including the benevolent benefactors. People must fight for their rights and ensure that political decision-making did not remain isolated from the social and economic systems.

Prof. D.L. Sheth of CSDS Delhi, who chaired the session, reminded the critics of representative democracy that they should not throw the baby along with bath water. According to Sheth, participatory democracy should be viewed as a process and goal to be attained by awakening of society, masses and classes. Sheth argued that political theory needed to update the notion of political participation in democracy. Voting, lobbying the rulers, writing to decision-makers were not the only means to participate in a democracy. Teachings of the statesmen like Mahatma Gandhi, Jay Prakash Narayan, and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia were the crucial sources which provided means for transforming representative democracy into a participatory democracy. Anand Kumar, Anil Mishra, Ankush Sawant too concurred with Sheth on this issue.

** Dr. kishor Dere is associated with Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam-India.*

Dialogue on participatory democracy and civil society movements

By Khurshid Imam

Parallel to the cultural shows and amidst colourful dresses, drumbeats and slogans; sessions of intensive discussions on subjects specific and general took place with much concern. One such intensive discussion was the "Dialogue on Participatory Democracy and Civil Society Movements"

organised by the Civil Society, Globalisation and Comprehensive Democracy Dialogues (CSGCD), Books for Change- Hindi and Third World Forum during the World Social Forum, Mumbai on 20 January 2004.

Thomas Wallgren– who teaches philosophy at the University of Helsinki, Finland, and is a founding member of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam Finland – made the opening presentation. He propounded his ideas about participatory democracy in the background of his assessment of the current global situation. He felt that there was an intense and increasing desire and urge by individuals to make their experiences felt by the society. More citizens than ever before were coming to the fore in public and social arena. At the same time, there was increasing infringement of global economy and policy on our life. The present political system, according to him, has a greater urge for power too. "This is creating a big gap and friction between the two opposite pulls," Wallgren pointed out.

The discussion underlined two major obstacles in achieving a global participatory democracy. One, the practical obstacle with regards to creating an informed and conscious civil society was lack of infrastructure, and hands and finance were also coming in a big way as an obstacle. It was also underlined that breaking up of the cultural and language barrier for an effective communication remained a massive task that would be fulfilled over a longer period through continuous effort.

The second obstacle was more of a theoretical nature where a comprehensive definition of participatory democracy needed to be arrived at on the basis of a global analysis of contemporary political situation. This theoretical framework, the participant observed, should be aimed at contributing to democracy at all levels from family to village to global levels.

The participant also pointed out that the participatory democracy, based on Gandhian socialist interpretation, needed more localisation and people should be better informed for more local reliance. This would broaden the present limited conception of participatory democracy of electoral participation to a much wider understanding of the concept.

Issues of education and its role in the society also came up during the discussion. Some of the participants were very critical of the present education system particularly with regards to women. They felt that the system was not at all empowering them and the whole education curriculum required re-evaluation. They were of the opinion that education's role should not be restricted to creating a literate or economically productive society but it has the responsibility of empowering the society. The most visible part in the discussion was the concern the participants showed for society and an unsaid pledge to make it better. Members of the organisations like Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam India, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam Finland, Siemenpuu Foundation Finland, Sudan Council of Churches, DRD of France, CARE India, Life Right Movement Tamil Nadu (India), IDEA Bihar (India), South Asian Fraternity India, etc, took active part in the discussion.

United grassroots resistance in the US to Israel occupation

By Khurshid Imam

The institute for Southern Studies conducted a workshop on 20 January 2004 on "Solidarity with Palestine: United grassroots resistance in the US to Israeli occupation". Young Americans Jews, Arabs and Christians – who shared their tools for reading to the people and making them popular educators – conducted the workshop. It passed through different phases. At times the workshop was serious, concerned and emotional with tears. Americans and Europeans attended it like the Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians, Lebanese, Egyptians and many others including the Jews, Christians and Muslims.

The workshop started with brief introduction where apart from introducing oneself one had to say how would he or she connect to the Israeli-Palestinians conflict. The main reasons that brought most of the participants were either humanistic reasons or they were Jewish or Arabs. Many Americans felt concerned as taxpayers and questioned where did their money actually go.

The workshop felt that justice could not be done until three angles to the Palestinian problem were properly dealt with. The participants felt that one of the foremost problems was the 'apartheid within Israel' where more than one million Palestinians were facing discriminating laws. Many Palestinian villages neither figured on the Israeli map nor they were allowed to expand.

The second issue that the participants desired to be solved was the occupation of the Palestine territories by Israel since 1967. They said that more than 3.5 million Palestinians were forced to live with no humanitarian or civil rights. Blockades and restrictions were imposed and even the basic facilities denied. They complained that the 'apartheid' walls were being raised under the pretext of security.

The participants were of the view that the third issue that required to be addressed was the problem of the Palestinian refugees. There were more than six million Palestinian refugees – the largest refugee population in the world. These Palestinians were scattered all over America, Europe and the Arab world.

The American participants were especially concerned about the way the US government disregarded the taxpayers. They regretted that their government was campaigning for divestment in all those companies that helped the Palestinians build their houses. They told that they have also prepared a list of such companies that directly or indirectly contributed to the inhuman situation in Palestine. It was really a moment of happiness to the Palestinians and the organisers as the participants expressed their solidarity with the Palestine cause.

Knowledge in society

Avinash Jha

A workshop on questions concerning 'knowledge in society' was held at the WSF-Mumbai in January 2004. Given the general and philosophical nature of the 'dialogue' one might have wondered whether it would attract enough participants. Such apprehensions turned out to be unfounded as 200 people attended the workshop over two sessions on two different days. The organisers of course had no doubt that the topic was relevant and crucial for any politics for a different future.

The dialogue was intended as *"an exploration of the place of knowledge, its role, function, content, organisation, methods of production and communication etc. and its relationship with everything that there is both in the world of thought and in the material world."*

What makes this urgent is the pervasive expansion of new information technology and the coming of so-called post industrial society. In a note that formed the point of departure for this workshop, Sunil Sahasrabudhey proposed that a major historical transition was taking place now. It was no longer the content but the 'organisability' of knowledge by means of information technology that formed the basis of accepting certain kinds of knowledge and rejecting other kinds. Even science was ceding its authoritative grip on society and yielding to the shift that was taking place from content to organisation and production to communication.

What would happen to people's knowledge or 'lokavidya' as a result of this transformation? While it might open some avenues, which were previously blocked by the pervasive authority of science, it might be 'organised' in such a way as to tear it away from its context and suck out its vitality. "Lokavidya means those methods (philosophy etc.) of organisation and communication of vidya which place vidya in the midst of the people.

Being in the midst of the people means (a) the strings of control should be among the people that is in their social organisations, (b) the values of the other domain should actually be the guiding principles, (c) it must measure up to the criteria of ordinary life and (d) ensuring its role in the processes of construction and reconstruction of truth." How can these methods of organisation be distinguished from the one prompted by the post-industrial regime of information technology? Is people's knowledge the chief object of exploitation in the era of 'knowledge society'? After having lost the spaces for political assertion, are the peasants, artisans, and women going to lose their

knowledge now? Or can the situation be turned around and people's knowledge which has been serving as their survival strategies for long can become the source of their strength and the basis of a Politics of Challenge? These were the questions posed by the workshop.

Several papers were presented. (Papers can be accessed at www.indigen.org.in.) Many others made long interventions. It was obvious that we do not yet have the language to talk about these issues with a great deal of coherence. People were interested and tried to articulate their discomfort with the state of knowledge. While some advocated more and better use of information technology others raised questions about the very use of technology. Often the discussion veered round to the question of technology – whether the same technology could be used in different ways. Many people were concerned with the question of science. Some saw science as the epitome of violence. The organisers as well as the participants concurred that the knowledge issued should be taken up on all political platforms and in different languages. Several suggestions were made regarding how to go about it.

What the workshop underlined was the necessity for taking up this dialogue on knowledge in society. There is a pervasive sense that despite a huge knowledge industry churning out publications by millions and multiple forms of media, we remain in the dark. The knowledge, which people use to survive, is threatened. But the questions regarding knowledge are considered esoteric and most dissenting political formations also relegate it to background. Philosophy is not a luxury to be indulged in spare time and questions of knowledge are among the central political questions of our time. The 'dialogue' at WSF Mumbai could lead to building up of efforts to put the knowledge issue on the political agenda directly and squarely.

Celebrating diversity: Another world is possible

By FCD

Forum for Celebrating Diversity, a Delhi-based group of Christian agencies involved in the process of WSF, organised a joint plenary on the theme "*Celebrating Diversity-Another World is possible.*" during the WSF 2004 at Mumbai. The objective was to present Christian perspective on emerging global debates during WSF 2004 that would promote the discussion of new world order marked by justice, peace and prosperity.

The discussion was conducted on January 20, 2004 in Hall A-4. More than 750 people attended it. A signature campaign was organised to get the ideas of the people on how to celebrate diversity and this paved the way for panel discussion.

The panel started with a welcome note by Bulu Sareen, secretary of public affairs and social issues, YWCA of India. She introduced the panelists to the audience. C B Samuel, chairman of *Prabhav* who moderated the panel explained the background of the forum and its foundation and invited the speakers and respondents to share their views on celebrating diversity from various perspectives. The speakers were drawn from different fields.

Prof. T K Oommen, former Prof. Of Sociology, JNU and chair, Schumacher Centre and President of Forum for India and European Union spoke on sustainable and democratic development from the economic perspective. He spoke about the economic dimension of diversity in relation to equality. He said that with the onset of globalisation the State was being rendered irrelevant in the context of economy and the market was privileged as the agency, which controlled economy. The civil society was not in a position to intervene effectively despite accelerating disparity, increasing exclusion and new forms of discrimination, all of which endangered economic diversity globally and nationally. Prof. Oommen talked about reducing the gulf between small and big. He said that the notion "Small is beautiful" should be endorsed if diversity was to be celebrated in the economic context. According to Prof. Oommen, mixed economy was a prerequisite to bring in economic diversity.

Rev. Dr. Dominic Emmanuel, director, Communication Information Bureau, Delhi Catholic Arch Diocese, talked about religion, culture and identities from the socio-cultural dimension. He spoke about religion being an organised set of beliefs, expressed through rituals and myths for ones relationship with a supernatural power. He also said that the main identifier of a person after one's

gender was his or her religion. He defined culture as sum total of customs and practices of a certain people, which become conspicuous during important activities of life such as initiation rites, rites of marriage, male-female interaction or behaviour, burial rites etc.

On Identity, Rev. Emmanuel shared many definitions by many personalities and then went on to locate some problems that arise out of globalization affecting religion, culture and identities. He also shared some possible causes of identity problem. He attributed some of the causes to media, colonization, peoples choices etc. In conclusion he urged the people to explore the possibilities of a multi religious identity not just for India but in this globalised world for all citizens and pave the way for another world-a world away from globalization and injustice.

Mr. Martin Macwan, a human Rights activist and Director of Navsrajan, Gujarat shared his views on Exclusion, discrimination, Dignity, Rights and equality from the socio political dimension. He talked about resolving conflict in the context of caste exclusion and discrimination. He mentioned that diversity manifested through caste, religious, regional or linguistic identity is both a source of homogeneity as well as conflicts. In Indian context, he felt the key conflict areas relate to the question of caste system and communalism. Without effective and concrete program of social and economic transformation aiming at redistribution of natural assets and resources, the question of caste discrimination cannot be resolved.

Mrs. Suzie Mathai, Ex-National President of YWCA of India, Mumbai, Sr.Gladys D'Souza RSCJ Director, Society for Education to Reality and Dr. Jyotsna Chatterjee, Director,WCSRC-Joint Womens Programme. Three lady respondents responded to these papers followed by a time of open discussion after each speakers presentation. Mr. C B Samuel concluded the whole session while Mr. Rabindran D. Shelley of World Relief gave the vote of thanks.

WSF Related

Arundhati* Roy's speech at the opening of the Mumbai WSF on 16 January 2004

Last January thousands of us from across the world gathered in Porto Alegre in Brazil and declared — reiterated — that "Another World Is Possible." A few thousand miles north, in Washington, George Bush and his aides were thinking the same thing. Our project was the World Social Forum. Theirs — to further what many call the Project for the New American Century.

In the great cities of Europe and America, where a few years ago these things would only have been whispered, now people are openly talking about the good side of imperialism and the need for a strong empire to police an unruly world. The new missionaries want order at the cost of justice. Discipline at the cost of dignity. And ascendancy at any price. Occasionally some of us are invited to "debate" the issue on "neutral" platforms provided by the corporate media. Debating imperialism is a bit like debating the pros and cons of rape. What can we say? That we really miss it?

In any case, New Imperialism is already upon us. It's a remodeled, streamlined version of what we once knew. For the first time in history, a single empire with an arsenal of weapons that could obliterate the world in an afternoon has complete, unipolar, economic and military hegemony. It uses different weapons to break open different markets. There isn't a country on God's earth that is not caught in the cross-hairs of the American cruise missile and the IMF checkbook. Argentina's the model if you want to be the poster boy of neoliberal capitalism, Iraq if you're the black sheep.

Poor countries that are geopolitically of strategic value to Empire, or have a "market" of any size, or infrastructure that can be privatized, or, God forbid, natural resources of value — oil, gold, diamonds,

cobalt, coal — must do as they're told or become military targets. Those with the greatest reserves of natural wealth are most at risk. Unless they surrender their resources willingly to the corporate machine, civil unrest will be fomented or war will be waged. In this new age of empire, when nothing is as it appears to be, executives of concerned companies are allowed to influence foreign policy decisions. The Center for Public Integrity in Washington found that nine out of the thirty members of the Bush Administration's Defense Policy Board were connected to companies that were awarded military contracts for \$76 billion between 2001 and 2002. George Shultz, former Secretary of State, was chairman of the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq. He is also on the board of directors of the Bechtel Group. When asked about a conflict of interest in the case of war in Iraq he said, "I don't know that Bechtel would particularly benefit from it. But if there's work to be done, Bechtel is the type of company that could do it. But nobody looks at it as something you benefit from." After the war, Bechtel signed a \$680 million contract for reconstruction.

This brutal blueprint has been used over and over again across Latin America, Africa, and Central and Southeast Asia. It has cost millions of lives. It goes without saying that every war Empire wages becomes a Just War. This, in large part, is due to the role of the corporate media. It's important to understand that the corporate media don't just support the neoliberal project. They are the neoliberal project. This is not a moral position they have chosen to take, it's structural. It's intrinsic to the economics of how the mass media work.

Most nations have adequately hideous family secrets. So it isn't often necessary for the media to lie. It's all in the editing — what's emphasized and what's ignored. Say, for example, India was chosen as the target for a righteous war. The fact that about 80,000 people have been killed in Kashmir since 1989, most of them Muslim, most of them by Indian security forces (making the average death toll about 6,000 a year); the fact that in February and March of 2002, more than 2,000 Muslims were murdered on the streets of Gujarat, that women were gang-raped and children were burned alive and 150,000 driven from their homes while the police and administration watched and sometimes actively participated; the fact that no one has been punished for these crimes and the government that oversaw them was re-elected...all of this would make perfect headlines in international newspapers in the run-up to war.

Next we know, our cities will be leveled by cruise missiles, our villages fenced in with razor wire, US soldiers will patrol our streets, and Narendra Modi, Pravin Togadia or any of our popular bigots will, like Saddam Hussein, be in US custody having their hair checked for lice and the fillings in their teeth examined on prime-time TV.

But as long as our "markets" are open, as long as corporations like Enron, Bechtel, Halliburton and Arthur Andersen are given a free hand to take over our infrastructure and take away our jobs, our "democratically elected" leaders can fearlessly blur the lines between democracy, majoritarianism and fascism.

Our government's craven willingness to abandon India's proud tradition of being non-aligned, its rush to fight its way to the head of the queue of the Completely Aligned (the fashionable phrase is "natural ally" — India, Israel and the United States are "natural allies"), has given it the leg room to turn into a repressive regime without compromising its legitimacy.

A government's victims are not only those it kills and imprisons. Those who are displaced and dispossessed and sentenced to a lifetime of starvation and deprivation must count among them too. Millions of people have been dispossessed by "development" projects. In the past fifty-five years, big dams alone have displaced between 33 million and 55 million in India. They have no recourse to justice.

In the past two years there has been a series of incidents in which police have opened fire on peaceful protesters, most of them Adivasi and Dalit. When it comes to the poor, and in particular Dalit and Adivasi communities, they get killed for encroaching on forest land, and killed when they're trying to protect forest land from encroachments — by dams, mines, steel plants and other "development" projects. In almost every instance in which the police opened fire, the government's strategy has been to say the firing was provoked by an act of violence. Those who have been fired upon are immediately called militants.

Across the country, thousands of innocent people, including minors, have been arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and are being held in jail indefinitely and without trial. In the era of the War against Terror, poverty is being slyly conflated with terrorism. In the era of corporate globalization, poverty is a crime. Protesting against further impoverishment is terrorism. And now our Supreme Court says that going on strike is a crime. Criticizing the court is a crime too, of course. They're sealing the exits.

Like Old Imperialism, New Imperialism relies for its success on a network of agents — corrupt local elites who service Empire. We all know the sordid story of Enron in India. The then-Maharashtra government signed a power purchase agreement that gave Enron profits that amounted to 60 percent of India's entire rural development budget. A single American company was guaranteed a profit equivalent to funds for infrastructural development for about 500 million people!

Unlike in the old days, the New Imperialist doesn't need to trudge around the tropics risking malaria or diarrhea or early death. New Imperialism can be conducted on e-mail. The vulgar, hands-on racism of Old Imperialism is outdated. The cornerstone of New Imperialism is New Racism.

The best allegory for New Racism is the tradition of "turkey pardoning" in the United States. Every year since 1947, the National Turkey Federation has presented the US President with a turkey for Thanksgiving. Every year, in a show of ceremonial magnanimity, the President spares that particular bird (and eats another one). After receiving the presidential pardon, the Chosen One is sent to Frying Pan Park in Virginia to live out its natural life. The rest of the 50 million turkeys raised for Thanksgiving are slaughtered and eaten on Thanksgiving Day. ConAgra Foods, the company that has won the Presidential Turkey contract, says it trains the lucky birds to be sociable, to interact with dignitaries, school children and the press. (Soon they'll even speak English!)

That's how New Racism in the corporate era works. A few carefully bred turkeys — the local elites of various countries, a community of wealthy immigrants, investment bankers, the occasional Colin Powell or Condoleezza Rice, some singers, some writers (like myself) — are given absolution and a pass to Frying Pan Park. The remaining millions lose their jobs, are evicted from their homes, have their water and electricity connections cut, and die of AIDS. Basically they're for the pot. But the Fortunate Fowls in Frying Pan Park are doing fine. Some of them even work for the IMF and the WTO — so who can accuse those organizations of being antiturkey? Some serve as board members on the Turkey Choosing Committee — so who can say that turkeys are against Thanksgiving? They participate in it! Who can say the poor are anti-corporate globalization? There's a stampede to get into Frying Pan Park. So what if most perish on the way?

As part of the project of New Racism we also have New Genocide. New Genocide in this new era of economic interdependence can be facilitated by economic sanctions. New Genocide means creating conditions that lead to mass death without actually going out and killing people. Denis Halliday, who was the UN humanitarian coordinator in Iraq between 1997 and 1998 (after which he resigned in disgust), used the term genocide to describe the sanctions in Iraq. In Iraq the sanctions outdid Saddam Hussein's best efforts by claiming more than half a million children's lives. In the new era, apartheid as formal policy is antiquated and unnecessary. International instruments of trade and finance oversee a complex system of multilateral trade laws and financial agreements that keep the poor in their bantustans anyway. Its whole purpose is to institutionalize inequity. Why else would it be that the US taxes a garment made by a Bangladeshi manufacturer twenty times more than a garment made in Britain? Why else would it be that countries that grow cocoa beans, like the Ivory Coast and Ghana, are taxed out of the market if they try to turn it into chocolate? Why else would it be that countries that grow 90 percent of the world's cocoa beans produce only 5 percent of the world's chocolate? Why else would it be that rich countries that spend over a billion dollars a day on subsidies to farmers demand that poor countries like India withdraw all agricultural subsidies, including subsidized electricity? Why else would it be that after having been plundered by colonizing regimes for more than half a century, former colonies are steeped in debt to those same regimes and repay them some \$382 billion a year?

For all these reasons, the derailing of trade agreements at Cancún was crucial for us. Though our governments try to take the credit, we know that it was the result of years of struggle by many

millions of people in many, many countries. What Cancún taught us is that in order to inflict real damage and force radical change, it is vital for local resistance movements to make international alliances. From Cancún we learned the importance of globalising resistance.

No individual nation can stand up to the project of corporate globalization on its own. Time and again we have seen that when it comes to the neoliberal project, the heroes of our times are suddenly diminished. Extraordinary, charismatic men, giants in the opposition, when they seize power and become heads of state, are rendered powerless on the global stage. I'm thinking here of President Lula of Brazil. Lula was the hero of the World Social Forum last year. This year he's busy implementing IMF guidelines, reducing pension benefits and purging radicals from the Workers' Party. I'm thinking also of the former president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela. Within two years of taking office in 1994, his government genuflected with hardly a caveat to the Market God. It instituted a massive program of privatization and structural adjustment that has left millions of people homeless, jobless and without water and electricity.

Why does this happen? There's little point in beating our breasts and feeling betrayed. Lula and Mandela are, by any reckoning, magnificent men. But the moment they cross the floor from the opposition into government they become hostage to a spectrum of threats — most malevolent among them the threat of capital flight, which can destroy any government overnight. To imagine that a leader's personal charisma and a c.v. of struggle will dent the corporate cartel is to have no understanding of how capitalism works or, for that matter, how power works. Radical change cannot be negotiated by governments, it can only be enforced by people.

At the World Social Forum some of the best minds in the world come together to exchange ideas about what is happening around us. These conversations refine our vision of the kind of world we're fighting for. It is a vital process that must not be undermined. However, if all our energies are diverted into this process at the cost of real political action, then the WSF, which has played such a crucial role in the movement for global justice, runs the risk of becoming an asset to our enemies. What we need to discuss urgently is strategies of resistance. We need to aim at real targets, wage real battles and inflict real damage. Gandhi's salt march was not just political theater. When, in a simple act of defiance, thousands of Indians marched to the sea and made their own salt, they broke the salt tax laws. It was a direct strike at the economic underpinning of the British Empire. It was real. While our movement has won some important victories, we must not allow nonviolent resistance to atrophy into ineffectual, feel-good, political theater. It is a very precious weapon that must be constantly honed and re-imagined. It cannot be allowed to become a mere spectacle, a photo opportunity for the media.

It was wonderful that on February 15 last year, in a spectacular display of public morality, 10 million people on five continents marched against the war on Iraq. It was wonderful, but it was not enough. February 15 was a weekend. Nobody had to so much as miss a day of work. Holiday protests don't stop wars. George Bush knows that. The confidence with which he disregarded overwhelming public opinion should be a lesson to us all. Bush believes that Iraq can be occupied and colonized as Afghanistan has been, as Tibet has been, as Chechnya is being, as East Timor once was and Palestine still is. He thinks that all he has to do is hunker down and wait until a crisis-driven media, having picked this crisis to the bone, drops it and moves on. Soon the carcass will slip off the bestseller charts, and all of us outraged folks will lose interest. Or so he hopes.

This movement of ours needs a major, global victory. It's not good enough to be right. Sometimes, if only in order to test our resolve, it's important to win something. In order to win something, we need to agree on something. That something does not need to be an overarching preordained ideology into which we force-fit our delightfully factious, argumentative selves. It does not need to be an unquestioning allegiance to one or another form of resistance to the exclusion of everything else. It could be a minimum agenda.

If all of us are indeed against imperialism and against the project of neoliberalism, then let's turn our gaze on Iraq. Iraq is the inevitable culmination of both. Plenty of antiwar activists have retreated in confusion since the capture of Saddam Hussein. Isn't the world better off without Saddam Hussein? they ask timidly.

Let's look this thing in the eye once and for all. To applaud the US Army's capture of Saddam Hussein, and therefore in retrospect justify its invasion and occupation of Iraq, is like deifying Jack the Ripper for disemboweling the Boston Strangler. And that after a quarter-century partnership in which the Ripping and Strangling was a joint enterprise. It's an in-house quarrel. They're business partners who fell out over a dirty deal. Jack's the CEO.

So if we are against imperialism, shall we agree that we are against the US occupation and that we believe the United States must withdraw from Iraq and pay reparations to the Iraqi people for the damage that the war has inflicted?

How do we begin to mount our resistance? Let's start with something really small. The issue is not about supporting the resistance in Iraq against the occupation or discussing who exactly constitutes the resistance. (Are they old killer Baathists, are they Islamic fundamentalists?)

We have to become the global resistance to the occupation. Our resistance has to begin with a refusal to accept the legitimacy of the US occupation of Iraq. It means acting to make it materially impossible for Empire to achieve its aims. It means soldiers should refuse to fight, reservists should refuse to serve, workers should refuse to load ships and aircraft with weapons. It certainly means that in countries like India and Pakistan we must block the US government's plans to have Indian and Pakistani soldiers sent to Iraq to clean up after them.

I suggest we choose by some means two of the major corporations that are profiting from the destruction of Iraq. We could then list every project they are involved in. We could locate their offices in every city and every country across the world. We could go after them. We could shut them down. It's a question of bringing our collective wisdom and experience of past struggles to bear on a single target. It's a question of the desire to win.

The Project for the New American Century seeks to perpetuate inequity and establish American hegemony at any price, even if it's apocalyptic. The World Social Forum demands justice and survival. For these reasons, we must consider ourselves at war.

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Making history: The future of the World Social Forum

By Kamal Mitra Chenoy*

The World Social Forum in Mumbai was democracy in action in search of a fairer, people-centred world, says one of its Indian organisers. But to advance its global ambitions, must it look beyond Brazil as the site of future forums?

The fourth World Social Forum, and the first held outside Brazil, concluded in Mumbai on 21 January after six days of intensive discussion, rallies and cultural events. What did this event really mean? Why did they participate – more than 100,000 people, including both the 15,000 from over 130 countries outside India itself, and the overwhelming numbers of urban and rural poor, Dalits, tribals and women?

They came, most evidently, to protest against the failure of neo-liberal globalisation to provide equitable and sustainable development, and to debate alternatives. The forum – in the 1,200-plus public meetings, seminars and workshops organised by movements from India and abroad – had, as its overarching themes, discussion of the forces that disfigure humanity: patriarchy, racism, casteism, religious sectarianism, and militarism.

These discussions voiced a rich variety of views from the environmental, women's, tribal, indigenous peoples', workers', peasants' and other movements, and diverse intellectual and political tendencies.

Such a plurality is built into the forum and its Charter, in the form of the concept of an 'open space' that encourages contending opinions to debate and exchange experiences. This space includes those figures (like Joseph Stiglitz and Mary Robinson) who want a reformed liberal model to replace the neo-

liberal 'Washington consensus' that dominates the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and OECD; and more radical critics who seek anti-capitalist alternatives (like Immanuel Wallerstein, Samir Amin and Walden Bello).

The very fact that such diverse voices as Jean Dreze, Juan Somavia, Prabhat Patnaik, Medha Patkar, and Jose Bove could explore differing visions of the future in a shared environment is indication of the democratic character of the space the WSF created in Mumbai.

Containing multitudes

Some of the WSF's critics have variously charged the forum with being a foreign-funded talk-shop or nothing more than a carnival. The cacophony of views expressed at WSF, activists in the Mumbai Resistance event claim, disables the unity of the opposition that is needed to US attempts to secure its global hegemony. The best refutation of such views is the experience of WSF participants themselves. The overwhelming majority of Indians who attended came at their own cost, which included lost income from the workdays they missed, and involving little or no subsidy from the organisations they represented. The same is true for most middle-class activists, both from India and abroad.

The Mumbai WSF, in contrast to the Brazilian committee, which had arranged earlier forums, decided not to accept funding from agencies like the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and Britain's department of international development. So the Indian media image of elite, foreign-funded intellectuals dominating the 'rented' crowds in Mumbai is a canard; as is the comment that most participants were not intellectually engaged and had come only for a latter-day Woodstock-type carnival.

Indeed, the range of views and discussions at the WSF reflects the serious thinking among those present in search of fresh, sustainable, people-centred models of globalisation. But when all regional, national and even local particularities are taken into account, it has become clear that there can be no single "alternative" model. Any innovative socio-economic approach in western Germany would differ from that in the country's eastern region, as both would from experiments in different parts of Africa, Asia and the Americas.

Yet it is precisely the combination of shared concern and frank discussion of these complexities by major intellectuals, leaders of mass movements and activists – in audiences large and small, from 50 to 50,000 – that makes the World Social Forum unique. This is the WSF's strength and the reason why it will endure: a commitment to democratic debate founded on diversity and openness, and a recognition of the responsibility of intellectuals to question received wisdom from whatever source.

The sheer scale and variety of the gathering is itself an achievement. It is unfortunate, then, that sections of the media highlighted a case of alleged rape of one South African delegate by another (a charge since withdrawn) in a five-star hotel several miles away from the WSF itself. It is a cardinal principle of the WSF's organisers to condemn all violence against and harassment of women – experiences given all-too-rare attention by the media in India, including in Mumbai.

Again, the intrinsic character of the forum itself presents an answer to such inequality of treatment. This enormous popular gathering – even larger and more diverse than its predecessor in Porto Alegre – featured extensive discussions by feminist organisations, and noted intellectuals like Nawal al-Saadawai and the 2003 Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi. These discussions included criticisms of the aggressively patriarchal attitudes that lead to and legitimise crimes against women; and creative feminist analyses of dominant, neo-realist, state-centric concepts of 'national security'.

The world entire

The main practical lesson of the Mumbai WSF is the need to provide more time for informal discussion and exchange of experiences. The wish of the organisers to give all movements the space they desired meant that formal discussions stretched from 9am to 8pm. This did not leave enough time for more relaxed dialogue. A shortage of funds also left many good and diverse discussions unrecorded even in summary form – a major drawback which deprived the forum of what would have been an invaluable record of a historic event.

Despite these limitations, the WSF's international council believes that the Mumbai event was a milestone of social organisation in India itself, and across Asia as a whole. In both nation and

continent, the Mumbai forum marks the broadening of alliances against the world's dominant economic model and the politics of communalism and bigotry.

It is likely that, after 2006, such massive annual mobilisations will be held only every two years, with continental and regional forums in the intervening year. There is also a sense that the forum must move beyond its Brazilian base as much as possible; the hosting of the event in different continents and countries in principle would expand and strengthen the global reach of alternatives to neo-liberalism.

** Kamal Mitra Chenoy, an IOC member, teaches at the JNU, Delhi, India.*

Report on World Social Forum 2004, Mumbai

Democracy of global life

By Ville-Veikko Hirvela

Constitution of justice as universal equality of leading our life

Constitution of justice founds stability of legal order under which the governing elite cannot change laws continuously and arbitrarily according to their whims.

Constitutive competence founds the power of law as the realization of fundamental rights of people and belongs to people in democracy as their power to initiate the direction of legislation by electing the highest authorities, who enact legislation. As constitutive permanency in powers of law and governance is thus to be designed to advance people's fundamental rights, therefore, however:

"There is no such thing as a permanent constitution" as justice consists of that what advances fundamental rights as well as of the living divide of the legislative, executive and judiciary powers from each other to prevent tyranny.

Adequate frequency of constitutional checks and people's participation into the constitutional processes are needed to establish and maintain right balance of equality of power under the varying cultural conditions and historical changes. (Deputy foreign minister of Tanzania, Mr. Abdul A'Shareef in a WSF seminar "Democracy and Constitutions- a North-South Dialogue", organized by Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.)

Rights of people to advance the justice in which they live, is thus the source of the power of law and the power given for the decision-makers to direct and initiate legislation as determined by the people.

As the legal power of specific law ends when all people stop following that law, the way how people live in justice by not following unjust laws, continuously re-constitutes the legitimacy of the legal order of people's life. Our equality in leading our life is resisting the use of power in a way, which is also constitutive for justice.

"The real meaning of the statement that we are a law-abiding nation is that we are passive resisters" who "do not submit to the laws" that are unjust. To live in justice is higher constitution for legitimacy than orders of courts, lawyers or other worldly rulers. People of ancient rural India "held sovereigns of the earth to be inferior to the Rishis and... with a constitution like this", this justice, which people lived is a good example to be followed. (Gandhi, Hind Swaraj, Ahmedabad 2001, p. 54 and 69-70).

The task is thus not only to consider that the other world is possible, but to live already in a different world by constitution of justice where the life of people is freed from being enslaved by structures of western nation states. (As a WSF seminar on Gandhi's Hind Swaraj reminded.)

The power of law continues thus to be constantly re-constituted by such order of life, which people follow as justice in their life. Above the changing prevailing governing powers, people's rights to advance justice by cancelling the previous legal order, has always constituted the basis for the authority of the more actual legal order to prevail. (Results of peoples' freedom struggle in many earlier colonies or results of the French revolution may be now respected as more democratic and free than feudal discrimination or slavery of colonization.)

Living constitution of justice must thus advance common respect for equality, liberty and fraternity and effectively inform the people what it requires from them, as pointed out by High Court senior advocate Mr. Vijay Pradhan. Constitution should keep people free and able to control by their votes all law and governance so that equal rights to decent life can not be deprived from them. Constitution has to provide mechanism to recognize (identify) and prevent all what may deprive affected people of equal means of decent life.

"A common man and the people must be made the masters of their own destiny" through "welfare of the people for the people by the people". People's right to local governance should be given constitutional status for consideration of "every village as independent republic". Instead of a unipolar global world, world needs such autonomy of regional governance which ensures peacefully legitimate self-determination (former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Mr Digvijay Singh in a WSF seminar on democracy and constitutions).

Such regional governance of the global matters like the draft EU constitution would, however, quite oppositely expand competence of limitless growth of trade and military and subordinate fundamental rights of world's people under the regional interests of commercial and material power. (Even though Gandhi reminded that money should not be treated like a God and "those who have to obey commands do not want guns; and these are in a majority throughout the world"; Hind Swaraj, p. 35-36 and 72).

Constitutive competence of fundamental rights and democracy would increasingly disappear from Europe by its present draft constitution, which sets no competence for people to elect the authorities who initiate legislation and its direction. (The initiative and direction of the legislation in the EU is undemocratically a monopoly of commissioners predetermined by commercial tasks beyond the reach of our votes.)

EU also defines itself not primarily as a community of citizens, and is not democratic as an organization. It is rather such a community of member states where rights do not really belong primarily to the citizens of Europe but to the states and supranational institutions. (As noted by foreign minister of Finland, Mr. Erkki Tuomioja in a WSF seminar on democracy and constitutions.)

The draft EU constitution sets "respect for democracy... and... human rights" only as empty "values" without any competence for realizing them. They are totally "depending on the extent to which the relevant competences are conferred" primarily as commercial powers (articles I-2, I-3.1, I-3.5, I-12 and II-51). As the draft EU Constitution does not provide any added competence to implement or realize fundamental rights nor to initiate their development by its governance or legislation, it does not function as constitution of justice, but rather like a trade-based treaty between states. The Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) constitutes instead democratic legal order much more concretely on the basis of fundamental rights as a structure of participation of people/peoples in the use of power and governance.

In the draft EU constitution no competence is conferred especially for realizing democracy as the main structure of the power or the will of the people as the major source of competence of governance and legislation. Democracy is here not ensured by the procedures of division and alternation of powers by formally elected 'pluralistic' 'multi-party' representation (which are also by no means ensured to be universally equal for all in themselves).

The flood of decisions, which are continuously made according to the formal modern procedures in the Europe, affects also in the most crucial and undemocratic way the life of the majority in the South. But the decisions of world's majority in the South can not much affect those people in the North, who make decisions, which affect the life of this world's majority.

In the modernity, the decisions, which the global majority can make, are thus not allowed to affect much the life of the Europeans, but the decisions of the Europeans are empowered to affect directly the life and possibilities of the majority of humankind. The ways in which the decisions of the people in the North affect the South (even more than their own life in North) are often not even reflected in these decisions.

It is naïve and illogical to call officially 'democratic' these decisions of industrialized states or other entities of the North, which affect the life of the people in the South without their possibility to have effect to these decisions.

Such everyday decisions of the North can not become 'democratic' by their compliance to formal procedures of division and alternation of nation-state-powers or formally 'pluralistic' election of 'multi-party' representation in the North.

That how the 'marginalized majority' of the world is "left out from the political decision-making", grows day by day hand in hand with "representative democracy... pluralism, alternation of power, division of the state powers,... elections of authorities and recognition of the right of minorities". This is a most crucial burning question for the legitimacy of democracy in today's world.

"Democracy has spread further in the world than ever before, but at the same time we can also observe growing discontent towards formal democracy. Millions of people are feeling being left out from the political decision-making" as was noted by foreign minister of Finland, Mr Erkki Tuomioja (Mumbai side-event seminar "Democratising Globally - Civil Society Engaging with State Actors", 18 January 2004).

Why has 'modern democracy' thus produced globally more unequal life than other cultures ?

Why are the chances to lead one's life more globally unequal in modern world even though it concentrates and consumes globally more energy (than others) for formally 'spreading democracy' around the world?

Global equality in leading the life is criterion of democracy of global life. It is equality to live and to lead the life, which is globally democratic according to that how equal are the rights of all to guide and control the means of life. There should be political channels, which are open to serve all citizens independently from ethnical or religious partiality or discrimination as was pointed by deputy foreign minister of Tanzania, Abdul A'Shareef. (WSF-seminar on democracy and constitutions.) But multi-party nation-states are not any guarantee of equality or democratic constitution of justice in the world.

The way political parties are organized is often not in harmony with the equal rights of various cultures in that how people and their rights can become represented. (For example the organizatory patronage in parties often "undermines the independence of the legislature" and its democratic nature. "People do not own the parties", which are often "financed by individuals who use them as personal tools to power" as "the financiers determine the party leader" so that "one can easily 'pocket' the legislature". Human rights can also be constituted only as universal, inherently equal for all and thus not subjected to majority vote. (Constitutional development in East Africa for year 2000, pages 19-20 and 64))

Changes needed to create more democratic community for leading the global life.

Law and governance has also crucially shifted in the world to a global level, with no impartiality or alternation of powers with equal representation of the affected, no binding constitutional or democratic basis in the flow of global decisions, which affect people and no democratic division of powers.

For example in the WTO also the determining powers for legislation and juridics are concentrated into the hands of few trade bureaucrats, who are even allowed to have personal commercial interest in their decisions by which they are empowered to judge and determine the laws of countries.

The actual content of all what 150 countries have agreed is finally decided by few WTO bureaucrats (of a panel or appellate body), even if more than 99% of the countries do not consider having agreed any such changes of laws, which are determined by those bureaucrats.

All democratic legislation by elected parliamentarians can be decided to become changed or punished according to the will of few trade bureaucrats, whom people cannot vote. All implementation of rights or justice is determined by the commercial powers of the parties (such as by powers to set trade sanctions) in the WTO.

What is and should be thus the relation of the decisions of global entities to the constitutional and democratic foundations of the legal order in this world situation (?), was asked also by Finnish

parliamentarian Heidi Hautala. (In her welcoming words of the seminar "Democracy and Constitutions-a North-South Dialogue" in WSF 2004 in Mumbai).

"The system of global governance in place is highly unequal, undemocratic and exclusive". "The world institutions like World Trading Organization (WTO),... has been selective on rules of the games" so that "the North has more voice in them" and "the enforcement of the rules..., lacks transparency and democracy". "The power of the poor countries to influence the decision making of these institutions has remained weak". (Abdulkader A. Shareef, deputy foreign minister of Tanzania in Mumbai seminar on "Helsinki Process on Globalisation and Democracy", organized by KEPA, TANGO and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, 18.1. 2004).

"The practice of democracy needs to be politically inclusive and to provide a constitutional channel through which people are empowered to have a voice on policies affecting their rights". Decisions should be equally "democratic, reflecting aspiration of each citizen of the world". (Digvijay Singh, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of India in Mumbai seminar on Helsinki Process, which aims to create "new strategies of democratic international governance" to ensure "human security and human rights" by the "development of the international regulatory framework" as was confirmed by Helsinki Process January 30, 2004.)

People should have globally democratic and equal rights to participate and affect those decisions and policies, which affect their life in the current world. But the very opposite of this fundamental condition of democracy is spread by the prevailing modern global western world :

Global governing structures of IMF, WB and WTO do not "reflect the democratic principles", but "developing countries, representing 85% of world population, remain underrepresented in decision making structures of these institutions, which are concentrated in the hands of the major industrial powers". "Reform, restructuring and democratization of these institutions are the need of the hour" for transparent and "equitable world order". (Digvijay Singh, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of India in Mumbai seminar on Helsinki Process 18.1.2004)

The historical task of the constitution of justice gets destroyed if competence to realize fundamental rights is undermined by commercial powers -- and if people's power to determine the initiative and direction of laws by their votes is lost.

The draft EU constitution would act also in this respect like an anti-constitutional step back into the middle ages, where peoples are not able to determine and stabilize the competence of legislation by the power of their votes.

Since Europe lost its colonies from its direct political control, it has set more of its powers to strengthen its commercial presence and expansion, because the colonial centuries left the structures of world trade under the control of the northern transnational capital without democratic legitimacy.

As to constitute justice -- as independence of people's equal legal rights from commercial positions and interests -- restricts the commercial powers to serve people's basic rights, the EU aims instead to maintain its colonial inheritance of power by commercializing the constitution of justice in the world.

EU has drafted a new model for 'constitution', which provides no legal competence for the realization of the fundamental rights but subordinates them under the powers of commercial competence. Draft EU constitution would thus launch a clear commercialization of constitutional legal order so that :

"The progressive abolition of restrictions on international trade and on foreign direct investment" (III-216) would get competence to "affect common rules" of other sectors of law - such as public health, education or social security - or even to "alter their scope" - (I-12:2) for the purposes of commercial interests.

This would be the first constitution in the world, where all rights and powers of implementation of justice become explicitly submitted under (and derived or dependent from) commercial powers to trade away fundamental rights and environmental laws in the name of the right of investor. Europe aims to submit globally all decisions to the commercial powers to commercialize justice and to preserve European control over the South after the formal independence of the decolonization.

If such EU-model of "constitution" becomes globalized, the whole constitutional principle of such democracy and justice in the world, which is independent from money and commercial powers, will collapse.

As the draft EU constitution begins by claiming that "Europe is a continent that has brought forth civilization" into the world by "equality..., freedom, respect for reason", are not this 'civilization's constitutive foundations of modern democracy rather founded on centuries of colonization with ultramarine slavery ?

"Europe has given destruction, bondage, poverty to the rest of the world". The civilization of India for example had flourished for two millenniums before the European colonial rule occupied it by oppressive military. And people's independence process was represented by constitutional assembly, which established democratic Indian self-rule. (As was reminded by Justice Rajendra Sachar in WSF-seminar "Democracy and Constitutions- a North-South Dialogue")

Why has the spread of so-called modern democracy in the world been accompanied by the spread of universal inequality in the world? Globalized structure of modern nation state is in many ways a structure for purposes of European inheritance and is thus not culturally impartial.

Can thus also the prevailing structures of modern 'democracy', which have developed under the heritage of colonialism, be serving European intentions, nation-structures and governance? In a sense "in Africa,... the state have always been fighting against the people". The 'liberalization' of global slave trade has begun the global governance and the spread of western structures of community and governance as 'democracy' (professor Sati from Tanzania in Mumbai seminar on Helsinki Process, 18.1.2004).

As draft EU constitution would act by its effects as transnational decision-making, which constitutes the heritage of colonial powers into one unity, it cannot be legitimate constitution for the old colonial powers without dialogue with the South. This signifies the need to develop international democratic powers to consider the voices and concerns of the poor majority of the South on the effects of the global trade policy (Thomas Wallgren in Mumbai 2004). How could modern democracy and its constitutive foundations be repaired as products and reflections of the centuries of colonization and ultramarine slavery ?

As far as these problems are not solved, there is serious global problem in formal criteria of democracy such as "representative democracy... pluralism, alternation of power, division of the state powers,... elections of authorities and recognition of the right of minorities".

Much more important for a legitimate constitution of democracy in the world than a heritage of nation state with division and alternation of nation-state-powers by formally elected 'pluralistic' 'multi-party' representation is thus that :

The constitution of justice must realize equally for all those connections and structures of significance which constitute them as people with certain common understanding for identifying things for decisions according to their equal rights.

Democratic constitution of justice is thus conditioned by people's culture of their self-determining power to found the legal order as justice of what they live in their life and dignity arising from the ethical identity of people.

"Constitution of the world... based on equal dignity of all human beings" and "participatory process to create" this ("European constitution is not done in a participatory manner"; Troy Davis in Mumbai seminar on Helsinki Process.) But there is lacking also a common language and equal resources and facilities of participation as this cannot be based on privileged position of European heritage. Western procedures and written literal rules – as translatable to the European intentions and grammar - and materialized power of their enforcement, are not competent to constitute what are fundamental rights, equality or their realization as the order of justice and its rule on world's life.

Can 'communication' form an equal community of common understanding, intentions and positions for decisions among those whose language and intentions are not effectively translatable or communicative for the western structures of semantics and grammar ? It is not equal, just or

democratic if laws or decisions affect people's lives without their equal possibilities to effect, according to their own intentions, to these powers of law and decision.

It is undemocratic, if the decisions of those, who can more 'effectively communicate' within given modern nation-state structures of community and its decision making, are allowed to affect the life of other peoples, who are not provided equal means of effective communication in formation of those decisions.

The majority of the world living in the southern part of the globe is practicing more democratic life in this respect than the people in Europe, as the Southern majority makes much less decisions, which affect crucially the life of others who cannot effect to these decisions. And what constitutes the African Union is also in this respect more democratic than what constitutes the EU.

People's equal participation by their own intentions, language and structures of sense to the decisions, which affect them is precondition of democracy to allow people to affect the decisions of power structures according to that how their basic rights will be affected by these structures.

All cultures of the world can not be equally 'represented' by power, governance or by decision making and modern structures of 'communication' might be not culturally wide enough as a form of the exchange of the intentions between cultures.

Equality in leading the life requires prioritization of people as community who have such common understanding that they can commonly identify matters to become commonly decided. In democracy the will of common intentions of such community of people shall decide the value of matters and not the other way round.

"The major problem with the present model of globalization is that it has forgotten the people. It has been built more on economic rights than human rights". "Society is about how we organize life together" and realize "the fundamental rights that are seen in all our constitutions". (Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Juan Somavia in Mumbai seminar on Helsinki Process on 18.1. 2004)

Global Society of Civil Life as Condition of International Democracy

Democracy demands "that people can influence those changes that are taking place in their immediate sphere of life" by their sense of that life with "the right of different communities to preserve their identity and ways of life". "The expansion of the market economy inevitably threatens the preservation of social, cultural and economic values of many societies, especially those of indigenous people".

"Democracy cannot work efficiently, if decision-making is taken further and further away without giving people chance to influence their own lives". Life of people has fundamental right to "democratic access to resources: education, technology, natural resources, land and water. If market forces are left uncontrolled the livelihoods of many are endangered. Increasing monetisation and transforming of natural resources into commodities is threatening the environment. People should be empowered to guide their own lives". (Finnish foreign minister, Mr. Erkki Tuomioja in Mumbai seminar on Helsinki Process on 18.1. 2004)

Democracy requires proximity and community of identification and treatment of things and issues to become decided so that the universal needs can be realized equally freely for all people to lead the life according to their intentions and understanding of that what advances life.

"Preserving space for the local spheres" (Tuomioja) of majority's own, less commercial modes of life, requires in the major part of the world, the restoration of those majority's own, more indigenously inherited means of life, which have been deprived from them by result of the globalized force of colonial occupation.

Most decisive in governance of every land has to be the significance of the free intentions of land's life and people who live the land. Land belongs for "full liberation of all living beings" (Indigenous speaker in WSF-debate on survival of the indigenous people, 20.1.2004, Mumbai).

How such significance of what is 'to live' in this land, is allowed to lead the life of the land freely by intentions of land's life (as far as these do not remove equal rights of others), has to be decisive for the justice of life on any land.

As "the continuum of freedom for all life on earth", "Earth Democracy is the democracy of all life", "Earth Family", 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', to "protect life... basic needs and economic security to all" by "birthrights given by the fact of existence on earth" and "best protected through community rights and commons". (Vandana Shiva; "Earth Democracy, Living Democracy", 2002).

World needs a social forum in a spirit of universal brotherhood, such as idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, equal common self-rule of all through local autonomy where "poor, not the powerful can make a strategy how their interests can be taken into account" in everyday life of the poor. But to realize this aim, it is not coherent to think like Mr. Digvijay Singh, that "privatization invention must come in because it has been happening for a long time all over the world". Or that "globalization has been there from centuries" as "a push towards developmental actualization". (Mr. Digvijay Singh, Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh in WSF 2004.) It is very problematic, if one thinks to reach such brotherhood by compulsory acquisition of land by force for big liberalized commercial industries, and away from the poor people, for whom the land where they live is their basic means of subsistence to survive. Narmada activists were therefore demonstrating in WSF against such policies of Mr. Digvijay Singh.

The locality of land's own senses and means of its life's renewable subsistence is decisive in more equal, more adequate and more sustainably economic way (than short-term commercial growth) for land's life and for leading the life in a land as sovereign, permanent and non-exchangeable life of the land. As this locality, what land's life is by its vernacular significance, is decisive in what land's life is for the majority, why is it excluded from being decisive (for that how the life of land is led) by making literal globalizable significance to be the decisive significance in laws and in all management of life ?

People's equal participation to the decisions, which affect them is precondition of democracy and requires community of people who have such common understanding that they can commonly identify matters to become perceived and decided.

Fundamental unit and integrity of democracy requires thus locality of people, who have common identity of language, communication, sense and treatment of matters to get them commonly identifiable and designed for common dialogue and decisions.

As less commercial and less literal senses and means of life, which are most decisive for the life of the majority, are excluded from that how things are decided, the structures of the prevailing formal 'modern democracy' in decision-making are unequal and undemocratic.

Those forms of community, communication, matters and decision-making, which are most adequate to reflect 'the will of the people' are different in different lands and depend on that mode of relations between people, which is called the civil society. (Life of lands can be led equally as far as that what is decisive for what happens to the land in its life, is based on senses and significance of each land's own intentions of its life).

Civil society is thus not merely some stakeholder or power-user in democracy, but rather

it has a much more crucial role in constituting democracy than any power: Only this kind of society, civil society, which is able to treat common matters by equally free communicative means, can be democratically governed.

In democracy people should be able to guide the decisions on their life equally by their own forms of community, language, understanding, treatment of matters, communication etc. – and not by any such forms which have been forced on them by material power (colonialism, forced commercialization, etc.)

"People being allowed to go free to use... land and other resources all over the world" to live (Head of the University of Bhopal in Helsinki Process Mumbai seminar) shall be decisive for lands' life by free intentions to live of those, who live the life of the land.

World's majority has indigenously inherited more free and universal access to these resources, less restricted by consumerist commercial property relations (and huge bureaucracy, which maintains commerce).

Global civil life is based on such less commercially 'proper' livelihoods as equal rights to live and lead the life by all diversity of less literal sense and significance which sustains life. It shall not be subordinated by official material powers to become 'proper' as globalizably exchangeable or translatable literal senses of life.

"So... to make the emergence of global civil society feasible" in poor countries, we "have to bring a barrier by which the economies are... separated from the powerful economies" of the rich countries. So that peoples' power over the means of subsistence of their own life is restored for them. Globally the "society disintegrates... as soon as the poor economies are integrated with the powerful economies" by their globalization. (Kishen Pattnayak in Mumbai seminar on Helsinki Process on 18.1. 2004).

Global civil society as equal rights to live and lead civil life freely by all diversity of sense and significance which sustains life, shall not be subordinated under the material powers to become made 'proper' as globalizably exchangeable or translatable (literal) significance.

As far as people, who are affected by the decisions do not have common identification and language for things to become decided, - nor common understanding (or means) of treatment of matters -, there is no society of global civil life and no democratic global decisions.

"The aim of the Helsinki Process is to increase democracy and equality in international relations" and "to foster the involvement of Southern perspectives and civil society in forming global policies" "to produce... innovative proposals for solutions to the key problems of globalisation and its effective, democratic governance". (Finnish foreign minister Erkki Tuomioja in Mumbai seminar on Helsinki Process on 18.1. 2004).

"South hopes that the Helsinki process will be really inclusive; ensuring adequate opportunities for participation and paying special attention to those often marginalized from global political processes; prioritizing the issues of concern for the most vulnerable in the world". And "facilitating an unprejudiced dialogue" (Tanzanian deputy foreign minister Abdulkader A. Shareef in Mumbai seminar on Helsinki Process on 18.1. 2004)

"The practice of the democracy needs to be politically inclusive and provide constitutional channel through which people are empowered to have a voice on policies affecting their rights" and which ensures "that the weakest have a voice". In required "equitable world order", decisions should be "democratic, reflecting aspiration of each citizen of the world" equally. (Digvijay Singh, Foreign Minister of India in Mumbai seminar on Helsinki Process on 18.1. 2004)

This requires creation of channels for adequately resourced "participation of marginalized groups in decision-making on global development" including "southern civil society (equal spaces for the marginalized majority)", "indigenous peoples (peoples without state)" or "people without representation/ employment" or without "equal participation". (The Finnish and Tanzanian Secretariats of the Helsinki Process in Mumbai seminar on Helsinki Process on 18.1. 2004.)

People's equal possibilities to participate and to effect to the decisions, which affect them is precondition of democracy and requires community of people who have such common understanding that they can commonly identify matters to become decided.

Community of justice is conditioned by people's culture of their ethical self-rule in founding a unity of commonly recognizable legitimacy in their common life and dignified identity as people. But European 'civilization' consists of 'civis' as judging of subjects on public civil life matters to make intentions 'proper' as literally demonstrable in common. The universal as literal, globalizable civilized logical significance means, that what is perceptible for majority's less literate intentions, is disqualified from what is decisive as recognizable 'proper' sense.

One's degree of literacy and education of western 'modern civilization' are powered to found discriminative inequality of people's rights to food, income, dignity, health, safety, law, governance, etc., which are determined by the literacy rate of an area or nation where they happen to get born.

The way how the power of "modern unification" "has forcibly linked the world together" (by "grid of natural resources... as reconstituted in terms of universal"), has thus not advanced global community of civil life in identification and treatment of things to become understandable and decidable in common and equal way. Most of world's countless less literate and less commercially 'proper' cultures and people are conquered under the modern universal on literal translatable understandability (in which "segmentation and re-linking for everyone on everything can be made potentially accessible for all"), as follows :

"Most of those who could understand an unwritten language, could not read, and those, who could read it could not understand it properly" (as being educated to readability of other languages). (Suresh Sharma in WSF-seminar "Gandhi in Our Times" in 18.1. 2004).

There is thus no universality of access into what is right or proper literal sense as decisive common significance (in what is intended). 'Western universality' of right as proper for senses which sense it according to that, how literal the significance of intentions is, dis-criminates all sensed into 'real' literal ('civilized') intentions of 'things' from what is interrogated to be sentenced. (To pay or indemnify from all what is used for intentions with less literal significance).

"Is it not a painful thing that, if I want to go to the court of justice, I must employ the English language as a medium... and that someone else should translate to me from my own language? Is this not absolutely absurd ? Is it not a sign of slavery?" "Knowledge of letters" of latin alfabet is a thing by which "more harm has been done... than good". "By receiving English education we have enslaved the nation". (Gandhi, "Hind Swaraj", Ahmedabad 2001, pages 76 and 78-79).

The official literal significance of intentions is decisive as the power of western modern control compliant to the colonial heritage, which constitutes this global power to subject intentions for nation - state as illusion of universal - as right of intentions :

Modern law or decision requires a common subject or intention subjected to collect common predication onto itself to get determined on a judgement as realization of law and as sentence (compliant to western grammar); as the basis for literal significance of intentions of official language and law of any nation. Intentions are 'subjected' by 'predication' to become 'sentenced' into what is 'proper' for western senses.

Intentions are sentenced to give up their non-literal sense and to become transferred into 'right' sense as what is perceivably proper for western literal, 'civilized' and more scientific senses. (That, how literal significance the intentions get by interrogation of being in question - or in-quisitioned - for becoming judged, becomes sentenced into what is right as proper for being consumable by literal senses.)

To throw away the English, but to keep their structure of law and governance means "English rule without the Englishman". In ancient rural India, however, "kings and their swords were inferior to the swords of ethics" and "courts, lawyers and doctors... were all within bounds". "The ordinary rule was to avoid courts... And where this cursed modern civilization has not reached, India remains as it was before". "The real meaning of the statement that we are a law-abiding nation is that we are passive resisters" who "do not submit to the laws" that are unjust. (Gandhi, Hind Swaraj pages 26, 53-54 and 69-70).

In Indian heritage "identity of tribe was an identity rooted in resistance" and "linked to homeland" whose "communities have rights over all resources" (speakers in a WSF-debates on indigenous identity and survival on 20.1.2004, Mumbai). Communities have created common justice on common use of resources in accordance to such local senses, which are adjusted for the specific conditions of what is right sense to live in the land they live.

* Ville-Veikko is a Finnish activist and board-member of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam Finland



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Declarations/Manifestos

Final Declaration of the 4th World Parliamentary Forum

(Mumbai, India, January 19, 2004)

1. During the past three years, the regular meetings of the World Parliamentary Forum (WPF) took place in Porto Alegre, Brazil. This January 2004, together with the World Social Forum (WSF), for the first time it meets in Asia, in Mumbai, India, and at a time of a deepening international crisis. The Fourth World Parliamentary Forum takes here a special importance.

2. In the context of the globalisation, the powers of Parliamentarians and Legislators to call executive governments to account and to legislate freely have been deliberately undermined. We reassert our legitimate authority to hold accountable national and global authorities. We will work to reverse this erosion of our sovereign law making powers.

3. Four years after the Seattle fiasco, the collapse of the fifth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Cancun has shown that the present trade system is not only in a legitimacy crisis, but that it is breaking apart. Since the gap between the rich and the poor is widening dramatically under the current trade system and the WTO rule, the myth that unfettered free trade is the key to global prosperity is utterly discredited. It is high time now to re-shape international trade rules and promote fair, equitable and sustainable trade, which is beneficial to all nations and all people, so that it serve, rather than obstruct, the cause of social and sustainable development. The emergence of new international alliances such as the G20 and the G90 indicate that the need for change is now felt more broadly than ever.

* We disapprove the invitation made by the Swiss to host a mini-ministerial of the WTO alongside the Davos World Economic Forum of January 2004.

* We, the participants of the WPF, are deeply committed to the idea that another economic and trade paradigm, which benefits the majority of the populations all over the world, is possible and necessary. We call Parliamentarians and Legislators to initiate and support a broad debate in the respective Parliaments on self-reliant development, the remaking of the global trade system, respecting and including views and demands of the social movements and civil society in general and giving the UN the democratic control of the multilateral financial and economic institutions.

4. The existing and projected free trade areas between very unequal economies such as the FTAA has not produced a fair redistribution of wealth, more and better jobs, increase of salaries and sustainable social and environmental development. On the contrary, together with irresponsible government policy making, they have led to a concentration of production structures in the hands of multinational companies, violation of human and workers' rights, tax deficit and privatisation of common goods such as water and energy.

* Lifting all trade barriers, eroding trade preferences between unequal partners does not automatically lead to more welfare for the whole of the populations. Focus must be given to the diversification of economy, strengthening of ecologically sound infrastructures, and to education, health, transport system without which the country cannot take benefits from international trade openings.

* Each country must have the right to develop its own economic and political potential. We are in favour of a priority for regional integration based on popular consultation and consensus, democratic decision-making and control, respect for human and social rights as defined by international pacts and covenants, sustainable development and cultural diversity.

* We, as Parliamentarians and Legislators, are determined to take up these demands and translate them into legislative proposals for a peaceful regional integration with respect for social rights, rural development, protection and diversification of local economies, food sovereignty and cultural diversity.

We shall, as well, demand the implementation of a world taxation system (like a "Tobin Tax" on international financial transactions, and on corporate benefits...) that will contribute to finance third world countries' development.

5. The GATS negotiations inside the WTO present a threat to public services in many countries. Requests, mainly coming from the major industrialised countries, to open up markets for the commercialisation of education, public health, culture and access to water and energy, reflect strong economic interests of corporations. Privatisation and lack of regulation leads to private monopoly and does not serve the interests of the poor, but undermine them even more of their basic needs. Primary education itself, so essential for social and gender equality, is threatened by present policies.

* We shall take initiatives in our respective Parliaments and Legislative Assemblies to demand from our governments to review and reverse the GATS negotiations, so that provisions maybe introduced to protect public services and guaranty the right of public authorities to regulate. We support the initiatives of city councils and local self-government throughout the world to declare themselves GATS free.

6. The issue of water is presently taking a special importance on the international scene. It is thus necessary to clearly state that access to water is a fundamental right, which cannot be touched for profit making reasons. Water is not a commodity. It is an essential and unsubstituable natural element for food production, daily life needs and many other activities.

* As has been underlined in Rome Declaration of December 2003, it is urgent to formally recognise water as a common, public good, according to the non-market-economy, and to exclude it from the category of "market goods and services".

* Poverty and lack of access to water resources are the cause of millions of death in developing countries. Today, while 70 % of the water is used, in the world, for agricultural production, so many people still have no access to safe drinking water. Health is a major issue but neo-liberal economic globalisation and structural adjustment plans increase sanitary emergencies and decrease access to drugs and primary health care, as they lead to the dismantling of public health structures. Moreover, access to drugs is limited by high prices and patent rights of pharmaceutical companies.

We, as Parliamentarians and Legislators, will support the international campaigns launched by social movements and civil society organisations to protect the right of access of all to water, and for the recognition of health as a fundamental human right.

7. We shall fight in our respective Parliaments and legislative bodies for land reforms and for land to be given to the tillers in whichever country this task remains incomplete.

8. External debt under the regime of the IMF and the World Bank has been an efficient tool to prevent any local social economic development. While former Secretary of State James Baker insisted at the end of the 1980s that Argentina had to pay its debt contracted under a dictatorship, he is now asking the Club of Paris to cancel the debt of Iraq... because it was contracted under a dictatorship. Not only is the double standard unacceptable, it also shows that the system of the debt is a key for economic and political dominance. The "odious debt" question (legacy of apartheid and dictatorial regimes) is but the tip of the iceberg of the whole issue.

* We, as Parliamentarians and Legislators, commit ourselves to the cancellation of foreign debt of developing countries, striving at the same time for the establishment of "fair and transparent arbitration processes" (FTAP), which enable the concerned citizens to participate in the allocation of funds free from the debt circuit.

9. The war led by the Bush administration in Iraq has represented one of the most ominous developments in the international political situation, last year. It shows the full implications of the Bush doctrine of "pre-emptive war", of United States unilateralism. It has worsened the dynamics of war threatening today's world, creating new obstacles to reaching necessary political settlements in many

regions, like in the case of Palestine and Israel, of Mindanao in the Philippines or of the Korean peninsula. A new impulse has been given to arm race and nuclear proliferation. It is evident that we did not support the Saddam Hussein regime; we support democracy everywhere. We strongly oppose the unilateralist military and political intervention of the US in Iraq and other countries. We reject the attempts of the US to undermine legitimate international political processes, specifically the United Nations.

* In the name of antiterrorism, basic Human Rights are denied, and populations like migrants and asylum seekers find themselves in a more vulnerable situation than ever before. The US government is freeing itself from international laws and conventions, as is especially shown in the scandalous development of Guantanamo. Many of the violent conflicts in Africa are to a large extent due to the role of few Western Multinational Corporations eager to confiscate the resources of this continent.

* There have been attempts by the business sector to establish codes of conduct that address social, environmental and human rights issues. These issues (UN "Global Compact", International Business Council for Sustainable Development) have been used for "greenwashing". "Corporate social responsibility" therefore urgently needs independent monitoring and shall not weaken national legislations.

* Anti-drug anti-terrorist legislations are too often used against social movements, as dramatically shown in the case of Bolivia and Colombia. In Colombia, up to three millions peasants have been displaced in favour of corporations, trade-unionists are being assassinated, Indian communities are exterminated, there is impunity for human rights violations while the US intervention and extension of the war threaten civil society and neighbouring countries like Ecuador, Venezuela and Brazil.

* One major international duty for Parliamentarians and Legislators is today to fight the Bush doctrine of "pre-emptive war", to extend solidarity with peoples in zones of conflicts, to defend Human Rights, to defend the Right of the peoples to decide their own future through peaceful and democratic means and put an end to arms race, including a universal ban on nuclear weapons. We, Parliamentarians and Legislators, have the duty to act as peacemakers and to look for the end of violence. We commit ourselves to strive for a new world order based on respect of the UN Charter principles and international conventions. We support a reform of the UN system, to begin with a restructuring and enlargement of the UN Security Council in order to increase the representation of developing countries and reinforce the legitimacy and effectiveness of the UN system.

10. We, as Parliamentarians and Legislators, commit ourselves to strive for a worldwide ratification campaign of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Statute and urge national Parliamentarians not to sign Bilateral Immunity Agreements (BIAs) with the US despite the loss of US aid.

11. The combined impact of the implementation worldwide of neo-liberal economic policies and of the dynamics of war is very deep. There is a constant erosion of democratic rule and social rights, with processes of remilitarisation in a number of countries. It favours the rise of religious fundamentalisms and sectarianisms, as well as the danger of terrorism, which seeks to disrupt the unity of people. It contributes to multiply obstacles to the assertion of gender equality and of minorities' rights. We oppose all dictatorships.

* We, Parliamentarians and Legislators, recognise the specific importance, such a context, of the present rise of the movements against corporate and military globalisation, of the workers struggles to defend social rights and public services, of the worldwide anti-war mobilisations and, within them, of the social forum processes. New solidarities are being tied, international convergences for common actions are being built, alternatives to the dominant economic and military world order are here being collectivised.

12. In South Asia especially, where the Fourth WPF meets, we, Parliamentarians and Legislators, recognise the paramount importance of forging and broadening the unity of the people against the current corporate project of globalisation spearheaded by the IMF-WB-WTO triumvirate. In order to achieve this project, such forces, in obnoxious attempts, play up differences based on ethnicity, race, religion and historical feudal legacies like the caste. Therefore:

* We recognise the strivings of the people in South Asia to end regional conflicts and establish peace through a process of constructive dialogue to resolve disputes and strengthen regional cooperation.

* We recognise the increasing assertion of the women's movement in opposing gender discrimination and in establishing gender justice, which, again, faces challenges not just from neo-liberal economic policies but also from forces of fundamentalism and revivalism.

* We extend support to the assertion of hitherto disposed and socially oppressed groups to achieve social justice.

* We note and extend our support to the concerns of ethnic and religious minorities for a just and equal social order, which will enable their participation as partners and not adversaries.

* In this, we recognise the need for opposition to not just the governments but also forces of fundamentalism, obscurantism and sectarianism, which disrupt the unity of the people. We condemn all forms of terrorism, including individual and state terrorism.

* The respect of cultural identities (including the right to speak one's own language) is an integral part of human sustainable development. We, Parliamentarians and Legislators from all countries, engage to protect the world against a single and homogeneous culture and prevent xenophobia. WF shall mobilise against discriminations of all kinds

* Be it racial, gender, religious, caste, economical, political, social or territorial. Every citizen of the world must be treated with dignity.

13. The World Parliamentary Forum and the International Parliamentary Network (IPN), constituted after the First WPF of Porto Alegre, in 2001, has already initiated several campaigns on issues like the taxation of financial transactions, the GATS and the defence of public services, on sustainable development at the occasion of the Johannesburg Conference (Rio + 10) and on the WTO at the occasion of the Cancun conference. These campaigns remain. For 2004, it will mobilise in particular on the following issues:

14. March 20 will be an international day of mobilisation against war and the Bush doctrine. It is an essential occasion to fight for a world of peace, to extend our solidarity toward peoples in struggle (like in Palestine) and to address the political issue of zones of conflicts (as Iraq, Palestine-Israel, Pakistan-India, Mindanao and the Korean peninsula), and to integrate better the demand for a universal, general ban on nuclear weapons in the overall peace movement.

15. The issue of social and environmental development will be concretely raised at the occasion of the June 2004 UNCTAD meeting in Sao Paulo, and at when attempt to revive the WTO rule will be made. We shall follow closely any future negotiations concerning the WTO to express the need for a fair trade for all people.

16. We express firmly our support to the social transformation process in Venezuela and reject any kind of foreign intervention.

17. The first meeting of the Latin American Branch of the International Parliamentary Network in Caracas, in November 2003, has adopted a clear statement against the present FTAA negotiations, which took place without any participation of Parliaments of the concerned countries, which violated Constitutions and exclude the sovereign participation of the people. We fully support this assessment and call for a stop of the negotiations. We share the demand of the Latin American branch to bring cases of violations of human rights of migrants before the international bodies and to start to work in order to ensure the free movements of persons all over the continent.

* We support legislative initiatives to recognise all human, social, civic and labour rights of immigrant workers, especially in the USA and the European Union (EU).

* Since decades, Colombia is a country with a worldwide negative record of human rights violations.

* Since the beginning of the presidential term of Alvaro Uribe Velez, the situation has even worsened. We urge the government to immediately implement the recommendation of the United Nations, and particularly dismantle paramilitary groups, return to the constitutional democratic rights revoking the presidential decrees, unconditionally protect social activists, human rights defenders and Parliamentarians of the political opposition, at present under constant death threat. We also urge the Colombian government to negotiate a humanitarian agreement in order to effectively protect the civil

population from war violence and to reinitiate peace negotiations. This agreement would be the first step for the release of Ingrid Betancourt, presidential candidate kidnapped almost two years ago, and all the other victims of kidnappings in the country.

18. The European Parliamentary Forum met for the first time in November 2003, at the occasion of the Second European Social Forum. The European pole of the IPN will support the trade union days of mobilisation, April 2 and 3, and the day of action for a social Europe of Mai 9, called by the coordination of social movements.

19. The WPF welcomes the proposal of creating a South Asian Parliamentary Forum to carry forward the Parliamentary movement for the ideals laid down in the final declaration adopted at WPF 2004, in the region.

20. The WPF and the IPN will mobilise itself in defence of Parliamentarians facing repression and death threats because of their progressive engagements.

21. The WPF and the IPN will defend as well progressive social movements and civil society organisations, and their members, facing repression. We shall campaign for the abolition of death penalty everywhere.

22. The WPF, the IPN and its members will continue to support the world social forum process and the campaigns of social and citizen movements. They will strengthen their links with them, and pursue a dialog on the elaboration of alternatives to the present world order. We shall work closely with the next WSF organisers in order to have a more active interaction with social movements.

23. The Fifth regular meeting of the WPF will be held at the occasion of the next World Social Forum (January 2005, in Porto Alegre).

Towards a farmers' manifesto

(G Narendranath, an agricultural activist from Andhra Pradesh, India, prepared this manifesto in March 2004 for further deliberations)

- * Government should announce remunerative prices for all crops before the kharif season every year and intervene in the market effectively to stabilize the prices.
- * Regulation of production by farmers through farmers' clubs federated from village level up to state and national level.
- * WTO should be out of agriculture, quota restrictions on imports and tariffs to protect Indian farmers.
- * Land First: All cultivators should be assured of at least one acre cultivable land.
- * Water: All farms to be assured of irrigation for at least half an acre or one third of a farmers' plot and government to collect reasonable cess for supply of water.
- * Maximise use of surface water and minimize use of ground water.
- * Restore traditional water harvesting systems, implement rainwater harvesting and watershed development programmes sincerely and effectively.
- * All pending surface irrigation projects should be redesigned, if necessary, to cause least ecological imbalance and human displacement. They should be completed within ten years along with complete rehabilitation of displaced /affected persons in command areas of the projects before the commencement of the projects.
- * Credit: All loans, private and public for which interest and loan paid amount to twice the initial loan taken should be considered repaid and the debtors freed of all obligations to the creditors. An act to this effect should be passed by parliament. Loans to agriculture should at least be proportionate to deposits from rural areas and at 4 % interest.
- * Insurance claims should be considered individually for agriculture sector as well and settled within three months.
- * Cooperative movement should be strengthened by streamlining co-operatives and making them accountable and democratic. Privatisation at throw away prices is not the answer.

- * All encouragement should be given to organic/natural farming with attractive incentives. Successful organic farming practices should be well publicized and usage of chemical fertilizers should be discouraged.
- * Oppose patenting of life forms. Government to strengthen its own research bodies to provide farmers with good quality seeds at reasonable prices and preserve all traditional seed varieties for research, practice and propagation. Farmers should be free to exchange seeds.
- * Restoration of forests is of utmost urgency with around 8.5 crore acres of forest in need of urgent restoration to prevent soil erosion, boost water table and restore ecological balance. Local communities should be handed over degraded forests for management and restoration with right to the fruits of the preserved forests under guidance (not domination) of the forest department.
- * All those in need of employment could be employed in forest restoration, tank and supply channel restoration, watershed development, rainwater harvesting, construction works such as roads and buildings minimizing use of heavy machinery such as earth movers.
- * Industrial training institutes of excellence, covering a wide range of skills should be opened in every block/tehsil imparting training in youth from food processing and artisan skills to computer and TV manufacture.
- * Agricultural Welfare Act should be implemented to assure all rural poor above 60 years of age a pension of Rs.500 per month and free and full medical care.
- * All lands should be surveyed and every farmer should be given a pass book and title deed for his/her land along with a sketch of the plot.
- * Promote preservation of indigenous breeds of cattle and cattle wealth, a rich source of farm yard manure, ban export of meat and regulate slaughter of cattle. Promote indigenous veterinary practices for cheap and healthy preservation of cattle.
- * Rearing of goats should not be banned as they have a right to existence and are hardy animals supporting many poor families in dry regions.
- * Poultry rearing must be more humane.
- * Fish and prawn cultivation should give first priority to local consumption. Should be regulated to prevent pollution and prevent conversion of paddy growing areas to fish ponds.
- * Effective steps should be taken to prevent corporate sector from taking control over agriculture displacing small farmers.
- * Common property resources in rural areas should be under the control of the panchayats and accessible to all residents on equal footing.
- * Conversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes should be strictly monitored.
- * All powers to the panchayats and gram sabhas. Complete decentralization of administration and economic power, should be implemented fully.
- * To check corruption transparency and accountability should be ensured in all rungs of administration. All information required by public should be made available photocopying costs within reasonable time.

Declaration of the anti-nuclear alliance **(January 20, 2004, WSF, Mumbai, India.)**

This statement represents an agreement among the organisations listed below that came together at the "*No More Uranium No More Hibakusha*" workshop organised at the World Social Forum by the Jarkandhi Organisation Against Radiation (JOAR) and the People's Movement against Uranium Mining in Domiasiat and Lambapoor, India. The WSF provided the space and opportunity for us to exchange information and achieve the following agreements:

- 1) We recognise the devastation and suffering caused by the entire uranium cycle. From the mining on the lands of indigenous peoples in Australia, Canada, India, Namibia, South Africa, and the United States to refining and processing to testing of weapons to the use in weapons and reactors to disposal of waste, uranium is the cause of cancer, congenital defects, infertility and other health problems, displacement of populations and other social problems, contamination of soil and water and other environmental problems. All of these problems are theoretical problems for the rich nations of the West, but they represent illness, pain, and death to the local communities involved.

- 2) The presentations at the workshop made it all too clear that the most powerful strata of the international community are acting with inexcusable disregard for the poorest and weakest local communities, taking advantage of their ignorance and poverty to inflict terrible suffering for profit and control.
- 3) We recognise from the examples of Italy and Germany that the nuclear industry can be stopped.
- 4) Therefore, we demand:
 - a) An end to all uranium mining, refining and use until such day as the indigenous peoples who are the custodians of the land on which it is found give unanimous, unforced, enthusiastic permission.
 - b) A rapid shift away from nuclear power to the use of wind, solar, and other alternative energy sources those are cheaper, cleaner, safer, more decentralised, and more democratic.
 - c) We demand that the UN begin working with genuine intensity to protect all people from radiation by investigating scientifically the damage that has been done, holding those who have done the damage responsible for reparation and compensation, and banning all activity that leads to further damage.
 - d) We demand that the inalienable rights to intellectual and cultural heritage of all indigenous peoples be recognised and respected, and that the indigenous peoples from whose land the uranium comes have full control over all such activities on their land.
 - e) We demand that all governments take immediate steps to stop energy companies, laboratories, and other users from dumping dangerous radioactive uranium tailings on ancestral lands and anywhere that could lead to the displacement or destruction of any population. We specifically demand that governments stop all mining and waste disposal until such time as safe plans approved by the affected indigenous populations can be devised.
 - f) We demand that all information related to the mining, refining, and use of uranium be open to the public, and we reject all claims to secrecy based on national security.

In pursuit of these demands, we intend to utilise any and all methods of non-violent protest and conflict as demonstrated most recently by the people of Scanzano, Italy.

In witness to this agreement, we affix our signatures below.

January 20, 2004, World Social Forum, Mumbai, India.

Partial list of organisations:

No Nuke Matera – Italy
 Jharkhandi Organisation Against Radiation – India
 JanaVigyana Vedika – India
 Khasi Students' Union – India
 Council Against A and H Bombs – Japan
 World Conference of Mayors for Peace – Japan
 Nuclear Energy Cost the Earth Campaign - South Africa
 Global Peacemakers Association – USA
 Earthlife Africa - South Africa
 Hidankyo – Japan
 Pudami – India
 MiningWatch – Canada
 World Peace Council, Athens-Greece
 US Peace Council, New Haven, Connecticut, USA
 Nomadic people of Balochistan-Pakistan
 Anumukti- India Contact information

Secretariat: World Conference of Mayors for Peace – Japan

Email: leeps@mindspring.com, kritikashri@hotmail.com

Initiative

Tribal and Indigenous People

(South Asian Dialogues on Ecological Democracy,
Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam meeting
on March 1-2, 2004 in New Delhi, India)

Background:

The meeting was convened as a precursor to the proposed round-table with various civil society groups, NGOs and individuals working on Tribal and indigenous issues. After the Johannesburg deliberations and WSF, Mumbai, the meeting intended to discuss a number of crucial issues relating to the indigenous people and Adivasis. It planned to discuss the 'Draft National Policy on Tribal' of the govt. of India, which has come out recently. The year 2004 is the concluding year of the UN International Decade of the World's Indigenous People which aims at strengthening solutions for environmental and human rights problems faced by indigenous people. In this connection UN has sought to involve the indigenous people, govts. and NGOs in getting information and feedback on these issues. The meeting was planned to produce a report in relation to the end of the first UN's *International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004)* by forging solidarity to oppose the on-going processes that violate Adivasi rights in India and internationally.

The meeting was organised with a view to sharing 'experience, ideas and information on the problems, which indigenous peoples face, especially in relation to the prevailing conditions of globalization, powers of TNCs and commercial take-over of indigenous lands, resources and identities.' The meeting also sought to put together and collate the documents generated during more than 70 seminars, workshops, panel debates and discussions conducted during the WSF-2004 at Mumbai on indigenous rights, land and resources and identity of Adivasis. It was expected that the meeting, which is a precursor for the next round table later, will throw up ideas that can be used to confront the policies of the government, TNCs, World Bank and WTO that go against the interest of the indigenous people.

The meeting, which was envisaged as a kind of backgrounder and informal brain-storming session for the next round table, was expected to generate ideas to focus on the tribal issues with activists, NGOs, intellectuals etc. later this month. It was intended to be a close, informal gathering of the people to share their experiences and ideas in the field of Tribal and indigenous people. It was attended by a number of grass-roots activists, prominent academics and individuals working on Tribal issues.

Summary of Deliberations:

1st March, 2004

Starting the proceedings, Vagish Jha welcomed the participants and outlined the objective of the meeting. He requested the speakers to focus their attention on the draft Tribal Policy brought out by the government recently.

Eminent anthropologist Prof. B.K. Roy Berman kicked off the discussion by terming the Draft Tribal Policy as flawed, both conceptually and factually. At a juncture when a full fledged official Commission is preparing to submit its report, he said, coming out with such an insipid and half baked document looks more like an election manifesto rather than a serious exercise. He lamented the callous governmental approach and cited the failure of the government in managing the forest resources as an example. Prof. Berman pointed out that the forests managed by government are degraded while those under the community management are doing fine. It certainly points out the direction in which we should work for the preservation of forest and the tribal life which is intimately linked to the survival of the forests.

Responding to the draft Tribal Policy, Mr. Prakash Louis, Director, Indian Social Institute and an eminent activist-scholar pointed out that the draft policy has completely ignored the committees and recommendations of the past. He said that in the discussions tribal, indigenous and Adivasi are used interchangeably but the government is deliberately avoiding the word 'indigenous' as it may have

wider-political ramifications in future. He spoke about the struggles being waged by the indigenous people in Orissa, Kerala, Jharkhand etc. against government policies detrimental to the interests of tribal. In this connection he spoke in detail about the struggle of indigenous people in Nagarnar (Chhattisgarh) against the mining of Iron-ore, Buthanga (Kerala) for land-right and Netarhat (Jharkhand) against the firing range.

Prakash Louis pointed out that the draft policy treats Adivasis as a homogenous group in India. The draft also overturns an earlier judgement of the courts called 'Samata Judgement' which accepted tribal's inalienable right to land. In fact 75% of the displaced tribal have not got any compensation till date. This reflects the duplicity of the government. Also, the document is silent about the mechanism to restore land to the tribal and extending scheduled areas to non-scheduled areas. He lamented the fact that draconian laws such as Armed Forces Special Act in the North East continue to exist. The process of internal colonisation of the tribal society has been going on for long in India and it has taken its toll on them. He felt that the talk of bringing the tribal into mainstream has only resulted in the tribal society adopting dowry-system, emergence of 'creamy layer' within them and a section of the tribal-youth being criminalized. Criticising the suggestion of setting up of 'Tribal Advisory Council', which is totally ineffective and powerless, he suggested that empowering the Gram-Sabhas is the only way Tribal can survive.

Intervening in the debate Mr. Roy Berman informed that the government has set up a commission under Article 339-1 on tribal affairs. The commission has recently come out with a questionnaire, which is flawed because a number of its questions are irrelevant and majority of the questions is addressed to the techno-bureaucracy. He said that it was wrong to talk of 'the mainstream' as India was a 'confluence of mainstreams'. Talking about the constitutional provision, Prof. Roy Berman pointed out that 5th schedule was paternalistic while the 6th schedule granted autonomy to the tribal. He felt that the 5th schedule should be replaced by the 6th schedule in all Tribal dominated areas. He expressed concern over the declining population of the tribal and said that the success of globalisation was premised on the internal-colonisation of the tribal. However, for the survival of mankind the ethos of tribal life could provide the alternative.

Presenting his paper alternative-life and indigenous people's right Ville Veiko Hirvala, the intellectual-activist from Friends of the Earth, Finland pointed out the dominant and destructive influence of the western concepts of democracy and nature which legitimises the destruction of both indigenous people and nature. The western notion of democracy also promotes unequal opportunity to decide. He stressed the need to understand and conceptualise nature from the indigenous perspective. He was critical of the western democracy for its failure to protect the rights of all lives. His paper '*Indigenous Means of Subsistence as the Origin of Human Rights to Land, Identity and Natural Resources*' was distributed in the meeting for further discussion and comments.

Prof. Roy Berman pointed out that in the west too there has been various strands of thought and suggested that it is better to look at the two orientations namely 'Power Orientation' and 'Value-Orientation', which cuts across the geographical boundaries of east and west. In fact many of the values have got a common universal legacy, said Prof. Berman.

Activist and writer Narendra pointed out that in the Adivasi world-view there is no concept of 'waste' and 'utility'. In fact the concepts like sustainability cannot capture the Adivasi world-view towards nature. The tribal looks at nature not as resource but in a much more reverential manner. Narendra also agreed that this world view of the Adivasis was earlier shared by many other communities and it's under the impact of modernity that we see this difference in the worldviews of the modern and indigenous.

Young grassroots activist from Uttarakhand Mr. Bhuvan Pathak expressed his dilemma on the issue of development, which he said, is now being demanded even by the Adivasis. He felt that the question of development vis-à-vis Adivasi life should be given prominent attention. He wondered if people like himself are really not denying the fruits of development to Adivasis by extolling their 'values of life'

Thinker-activist Arun Kumar 'Panibaba' sought to resolve the contradiction between 'development' and 'tribal way of life'. He felt that it is wrong to impose our notions of history and evolution on the tribal

since they consider themselves to be sons of God. Kai Vaara from Siemempuu Foundation, Finland, felt that tribal have something unique to offer us and the question is what we can learn from them for a sustainable life?

Responding to some of the points raised during the discussion Ville clarified that 'Western' related more to world-view and ideas than to geography. He elaborated upon the intricate relationship between language and development. Language being an unconscious structure of mind, the Western concept of nature in the English language is unable to capture the reality of experience in which tribal lives. He agreed with Kai that interest in the indigenous people is for our survival and the Western world-view has hardly anything to offer for a sustainable life. He accepted that the indigenous people should not be denied the fruit of development but unfortunately the very process of development is premised on exclusion, unequal access and denial of the choice of being what they are.

Vagish K Jha intervened by sharing his experiences during his research on Oral Folk Cultures. He said that in the indigenous tradition, which is predominantly oral, the animate-inanimate, natural-supernatural, social-divine are fused together in a seamless fashion. The tribal world is unique and universal at the same time and there is no contradiction in it. In fact we should aim to facilitate the dialogue which promotes the interaction between the uniqueness and universal elements.

The post-lunch session began with a presentation by Arun Vinayak who has been working with tribal in Jharkhand. He pointed out that 'tribal' was derogatory and we should instead use the term indigenous. He pointed out at the acts of aggression against the indigenous people at both the levels-internal and external. He gave the examples of the link High-Way project, Netarhat firing range and Damodar Valley Corporations which have displaced a large member of tribal. To improve the condition of Adivasis, he demanded that the control of natural resources should be with the people in the villages. The reality of the situation is that it's the bureaucracy, which wields the real power. The tribal leadership is passing through a phase of vacuum. Mr. Vinayak said that the spread of Naxalite movement in the tribal areas is an expression of people's anger. It is an act of resistance against the attempts to crush the Adivasi culture. He agreed that communitarian lifestyle of the tribal can be an effective anti-dote to globalisation. He highlighted the democratic ethos of the tribal society, which is reflected in consensus based decisions and the right to recall as basic elements of tribal community life.

Representative of the Siemempuu Foundation of Finland Mr. Kai Vaara who had come to India to interact with NGOs working with indigenous people, women, land rights, alternative agriculture and lifestyle, environment etc also made a presentation on the occasion. He spoke about his experience in the course of his wide-ranging and extensive interaction with a number of NGO groups and activists. He informed that his organisation is aiming to develop networking among tribal-groups and organisations, which they are funding. During his interactions with tribal groups and NGOs, a core-group has been formed which has a number of active grass-roots workers and organisations in it. These groups have been working on issues like status of women, alternative and ecological agriculture, afforestation, Dalit and tribal issues etc. He felt that bringing together the NGOs would help in mobilisation against globalisation. He expressed his happiness on the work being done by many of the NGOs in the south although he came across instances of internal differences too among the NGOs.

Kai said that in the West there was a strong movement for alternative and sustainable lifestyle and he was looking at connections with such groups in South too. He informed that he had a meeting with a number of women's group and shared experiences about sustainable life style. Talking about higher education he talked about the possibility of evolving a structure so that learning from traditional cultures and heritage can be made available. A similar effort is on in Canada where the traditional knowledge is imparted through teachers drawn from such societies who are without any formal academic qualification. Speaking of Finnish society, he said that the problems of adjustment with modern life are reflected in high suicide rates. He felt that there is a great possibility of learning from the experience of the indigenous people who have sustained their way of life for thousands of years.

Now it was the turn of Bhuvan Pathak, grassroot activist working in the Kausani valley of the Uttarakhand in Central Himalayas to share his experiences and views. He felt that the basic difference between tribal and non-tribal is the way they negotiate with nature and the world in their daily business of life. The tribal looks at himself as part of nature but the modern man envisages his

relation with nature as adversary or at best as consumer of resources. Tracing the historical legacy of Uttarakhand, Bhuvan said that the process of assimilation of Uttarakhand started in 1815 when it was brought under the British control. Gradually it got integrated with the political, economic and educational mainstream. Another watershed is 1952 when the demand for a separate state of Uttarakhand was first echoed. The Indo-China war of 1962 caused a major disruption in the economic life of Uttarakhand, which had a vibrant trade with China. This marked the beginning of large-scale migration in search of jobs and opportunities.

But all through the period, the theme of backwardness has pervaded the ideological, political and even the literary discourse of the state of Uttarakhand. After the onset of green-revolution in the decade of 60s-70s, the traditional knowledge about agriculture practiced in Uttarakhand started getting eroded. Now once again there is a talk of bio-manuring etc. He lamented that the indigenous people are guinea pigs for so many social experiments without having any say about their own-lives. He criticised even the NGOs for distorting the relationship between nature and society by treating nature as mere resource. He also drew attention to the fact that the negative consequences of environmental degradation are obvious even in upper reaches of Himalayas. It is amazing, he said, that the forests which have been 'offered to Goddesses' by communities are the most dense and thriving. Can we learn some lessons?

2nd March 2004

The second-day's proceedings were started with a presentation by Harsh Mander, a civil-servant turned activist-academic. He outlined the acute sense of alienation and dispossession among the tribal except at places where they have been assimilated through conversion etc. He said that while thinking about Adivasis, the central dilemma remains- assimilation or isolation? The Nehruvian vision of the golden mean between the two did not go too far because it had no clear mechanism to achieve that. In fact, later on the state has sought to colonise them through acts such as Land Acquisition Act and Forest Act. It is a matter of serious concern, he said, that while earlier, the acquisition of tribal land was not allowed for private parties but now the government is itself facilitating the transfer of tribal land to private sector.

Elaborating the various administrative and legislative measures for the indigenous people, Harsh said that there have been some positive steps in the past such as the legal provisions to protect the tribal right to land and positive discrimination in favour of the Adivasis. One such provision is 170(B), which seeks to protect the tribal right to land by shifting the burden of proof on the non-tribal.

However, the political-administrative will to implement it is lacking since most of the leaders have benefited from grabbing tribal land. Same is the story with the Tribal Sub Plan which sets aside 23% of the budget for tribal. This again is 'adjusted' and spent under heads which benefits only the bureaucrats and political leaders. However the laws relating to joint forest management, manufacturing the traditional liquor and PESA are progressive steps towards safeguarding the interest of the Adivasis. In case of PESA though, it has suffered from a 'minimalistic interpretation which deprives the tribal of many of the advantages granted under PESA.

Going on to the political question, Harsh expressed his anguish at the communalisation of tribal in Gujarat, Jhabua and many other tribal dominant places. RSS has been actively engaged in mobilizing tribal on communal-riots. The RSS has been recruiting tribal as 'soldiers of hate' in its campaign of communalising the tribal society. He wondered if it could be understood properly as an expression of identity crisis of Adivasis?

Commenting upon Harsh's presentation Arun Vinayak said that in Jharkhand, they have been successful fighting the RSS efforts to communalise the tribal. He criticized the Nehruvian approach to tribal development. Citing the example of Damodar Valley corporation (DVC) he said that it led to displacement of the Adivasis without any benefits accruing to them. The provisions of PESA are being subverted by the state governments who pass laws to bypass it. He exhorted that it is only through fight and struggle that Tribals can get the laws implemented

Ville-Veiko said that the modern law and juridical structure itself has a colonial legacy and premised on force. In fact the dispossession of the indigenous people forces them to turn communal and racist as happened in South Africa. He talked of the inadequacy of the legal system to capture the tribal right.

Vijay Pratap requested the speakers to focus first on tribal way of life and the universal conflict inherent in the process of assimilation vs isolation

Dr. Vishnu Mahapatra, associated with Ford Foundation, felt that such meetings are still in the philanthropic mode as Adivasis themselves are not present here. In fact, comparing with the Dalits/scheduled caste, who have been engaging with the political system, he said that the Adivasis have kept aloof. It is also true that, strangely enough, the upper castes and Adivasis find themselves closer to each other in terms of ritual and treat the scheduled caste people as inferior. He observed that there seems to be an incentive in making new laws and setting up institutions but no incentive in implementation of law or letting institutions be effective and functional. He found PESA capable of extending the frontiers of tribal right further. He shared his dilemma as to whether tribal should only confine themselves to their institutions and practices, which may be sometimes oppressive and exploitative.

Noted environmental activist Dunu Roy said that the conflict between assimilation and isolation is an old and historical one and can be seen in the example of Eklavya. The tribal ethos is essentially based on equity and sustainability with a communitarian ethic. He criticised the government for setting up different standards for different social groups. For example while farmers are expected to work for profit and surplus, the expectation from tribal is to promote sustainability

Academic and author Suresh Sharma pointed out that in the globalised world 'mainstream' has many levels which are closely linked to each other. He said that modernity does not give the option of being left alone and it's unrealistic to look for a policy that will let Adivasis remain outside the pale of modernity. It would be better to give them a choice with a sense of continuity, which may be different from the past. He said that the market is acting to work as a universal grid that links the natural resources globally. Speaking of the identity crisis, he said that conversions could be seen as an urge to negotiate better deal with the world by linking up to larger and more powerful units. It also reflects the acceptance on the part of Adivasis of the impossibility to be left alone. In fact in the modern world, it is the individual choice rather than the collective identity, which is the core of the terms of exchange between the individual and the world.

Vagish Jha said that the tribal world-view is fluid and inclusive and it has the capacity to incorporate many of the elements of the mainstream too. Commenting on the communalisation of tribal, he felt that the secular and modern people are unable to deal with anything that is even distantly religious. He felt that there might be a possibility to take into our fold the huge number of non-communal, religious organisations, individuals who, he felt, will prove effective in countering the communalisation of society at large and tribal in particular. Faced to choose between American consumerist individualism and backward looking reactionary collectivism based on hate the latter is almost a natural choice for a society confronting existential crisis. He felt that the growth of fanatic communalism should be seen as the crisis of modern ideology - an ideology that can promise a collective liberation.

The reason why tribal are getting into the fold of religious-communal people is that in the absence of any liberating ideology like socialism, religion provides the 'hope' of collective liberation. Any effective alliance to counter the communal / fascist onslaught has to discover the radical potential of tradition. But modern intellectual tradition is inherently suspicious and at best would like to acknowledge the instrumental worth of indigenous wisdom. But to work with them, we've to belong to them, he asserted.

Ville said that modernity has strong institutions and processes to co-opt the tribal into the fold of modernity. The juridical process is also biased against the tribal. The tyranny of modernity works to exclude the possibility of equal participation.

Vijay Pratap sought to clarify that the debate is not between Adivasi and modern but between communitarian-participatory and exclusivist ideologies and worldviews. He said that in the past India has existed not as a big country but as a conglomerate of units-Janpadas which had distinct cultures, institutions and were participatory in nature. He wondered why tribal languages can not be used in schools at primary and secondary levels.

B.K. Roy Berman again pointed out that the tribal worldview is inclusive with community orientation and its self perception is that of rootedness. In fact for the Adivasi society isolation and contact has been going on for thousand of years but isolation in the modern sense is a new phenomenon. He felt that today the indigenous world-view is vital for saving the world.

Intervening in the debate Harsh Mander said that in his view heightened religiosity does have a dangerous implication for communalisation of the tribal society. He gave the example of 'Gayatri Parivar' which was active in tribal areas. It itself it was not communal, but currently many of its preachers were active in helping the RSS communalise the tribal. The Adivasis today face a real threat of extinction in India similar to what happened in the US with indigenous Red Indians. However, even the traditional system of 'self-governance' or tribal-laws may themselves have problems.

The afternoon session started with a presentation by Mr. Devinder Sharma, a renowned food right expert-activist and author. Mr. Sharma spoke at length about the huge subsidies provided to agriculture in US and Europe. In fact the WTO was acting on the behest of US to force-open the agriculture market of India and other third world countries to avert the crisis looming over the US economy. In fact the control of the food market gives immense power and leverage as has been borne out abundantly in India just before the green-revolution in India. The \$360 billion subsidy that US provides to its agriculture will hardly be impacted under the WTO provision of cutting down subsidies by 21% in the next 6 year. He also deplored the multi-functionality clause under which US and Europe want to protect their subsidies. He criticised the western NGOs, also who want export-subsidy to go but are silent about agricultural subsidy in US and Europe. He demanded that India should ask for complete phasing out of subsidies in US and Europe Before it opens up the agriculture under WTO obligation.

Talking of the recent thrust to documentation of traditional knowledge, Devinder Sharma cautioned that we should learn from the earlier experience with regard to Germ-plasm of plants which were stored in US and now come under patent. He feared that the same experience may be repeated in case of traditional knowledge too. He advocated that to beat the patent regime there should be a concerted effort to patent the traditional knowledge before it gets patented in the US. The patenting of gene by the companies in US and Europe is seriously affecting research in India. He felt that patenting is creating a kind of scientific apartheid in the world. He also drew attention to the huge urban migration in India and China caused by the decline of agriculture in these countries.

In his opinion, quite often, the politicians are not properly briefed and informed by their officials and the intelligentsia about many of the issue. He spoke of his experience with the WTO provision about agriculture and the impact of well-informed briefing of the political class.

The current shift in WTO from agriculture to investment is a clever shift to divert the attention of people. He reminded people that the entire debate about raising agricultural productivity was misplaced. In India for instance with the current technology and seed, production can go up many fold. Even this level of production is enough to feed the current population if there is proper management of the food grain in the country. He informed that it was not surprising that in India, Kalahandi from where a number of hunger deaths were reported, is a food surplus area.

He criticised the Genetically Modified (GM) crops and said that GM Crops don't increase productivity but at best reduce 'crop-loss'. If the total food-grain available in the world is distributed evenly, Mr. Sharma pointed out, there would be surplus for 840 million people after satisfying the needs of everyone.

Agreeing with Devinder Sharma, Vile said that documentation of traditional knowledge may lead to commercialisation. However, he said that even without subsidies to US and European farmers, things may not be better for India. He felt that there is a need to look at the entire gamut of WTO provisions and its impact on developing countries. Bhuvan Pathak commented that unless we get into the philosophical underpinnings of modern agriculture and in fact the relationship with nature and environment, our agriculture and rural population will continue to suffer. It is not justified to book at the traditional agriculture as 'backward'.

Devinder Sharma responded by saying that it was the political will of the government that made Green Revolution possible. The Green Revolution did serve its purpose but we should have tried to learn from our experience about salinity, land-degradation etc. which has become a major problem today.

In his concluding remarks, Roy Burman summed up the proceedings spread over two days. He said that world could learn a lot from Adivasi life. Talking about forest-management he reiterated that community managed forests and national resources are much better preserved compared to those which are under government management. At the international level, he said that the ILO convention 107 of 1959 is flawed since it looks at indigenous people as living on a lower level of existence and expects them to catch up with modern world. But ILO-convention 169 of 1989 has many positive things despite its Euro-centric bias. He appealed that countries like India should ratify it provisionally. He also criticised US and Europe for duplicity in their approach towards Adivasis.

The meeting ended with a Vote of thanks by Ville Vieko Hirvela and Suresh Nautiyal. They expressed the hope that it will provide good background for the proposed meeting on indigenous people and tribal issues later this month.

Some valuable WSF 2004 quotations

They came ... they shared ... they conquered...

" We owe future generations a better world in which every individual is respected. This world will soon become a reality."

— Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa
in his special message to WSF Mumbai.

"The range of views and discussions at the WSF reflects the serious thinking among those present in search of fresh, sustainable, people-centred models of globalisation. But when all regional, national and even local particularities are taken into account, it has become clear that there can be no single 'alternative' model."

— Kamal Mitra Chenoy, a WSF IOC Member

"This moment (WSF) is one of the most significant in history. To fight globalisation, you need to fight the way Mahatma Gandhi fought with the strength of the masses."

— K R. Narayanan, former President of India
at the public rally on the concluding day
(21 January 2004) of the WSF Mumbai

" My interest in Gandhi has two roots. One as an activist identifying global solidarity and environment; other is my perplexity that brings up Gandhian thoughts with a commitment to reason and a commitment to choose."

— Thomas Wallgren, senior fellow,
Academy of Finland, in a WSF
Mumbai seminar, Gandhi in Our Times.

" Market as an institution with an objective source to produce a 'Darwinian' struggle between different production units without a reserve army of labourers 'outside' is in fact unthinkable. Therefore, a market in that sense cannot exist in a Socialist society."

— Prof. Prabhat Patnaik, an eminent
Indian economist in a WSF Mumbai seminar.

" WSF is a meeting point, a forum for coming together at a single place with all humility and self-confidence, a place where we can assemble with our deep-rooted belief that there is an ample possibility of frankly talking to each other on the issues of common concern despite differences on ideological, political and other levels. Poverty, starvation, health and illiteracy related issues are our common concerns that attract attention unequivocally. This does not mean that we tend to forget the ideologies, programmes, agenda or distinctiveness of our own organisations if we strive together to achieve the collectively agreed goals. Those organisations that have this level of self-confidence and self-esteem are welcome in the WSF process."

— Vijay Pratap, WSF IOC member and a senior Indian activist.

"We call for unity with all peasants on 17th April, International Day of peasants struggles."

-- From WSF 2004 call of the social movements and mass organisations

" There should be less concentration on a single annual event collecting over a hundred persons from all parts of the world to a single place for a few days. The same resources should be used to support about a hundred smaller meetings on various aspects of an alternative world."

— Prominent Indian writer and activist, Bharat Dogra, in an article on WSF

We reject the imposition of regional and bilateral free-trade agreements such as FTAA, NAFTA, CAFTA, AGOA, NEPAD, Euro-Med, AFTA and ASEAN.

-- From WSF 2004 call of the social movements and mass organisations

" We owe future generations a better world in which every individual is respected. This world will soon become a reality."

— Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa.

"WTO should be out of agriculture, quota restrictions on imports and tariffs to protect Indian farmers."

-- From Farmers' Manifesto prepared by G.Narendranath

Compiled by: Suresh Nautiyal and Rakesh Manchanda

VK BIRADARI

List of organisations in whose events VK *biradari* (associates) participated actively/collaborated

- . 50 Years Is Enough Network
- . Abhiyan
- . action Aid
- . Agramee
- . Alliance 21
- . Apne Aap
- . Books for Change-Hindi
- . Center for the Study of Developing Societies

- Centre for Public Affairs
- Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health
- Coalition for Environment and Development (CED) Finland
- DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving
- Federation of Young European Greens
- FoE Malaysia (Sahabat Alam Malaysia)
- For Mother Earth
- Forum for Biotechnology and Food Security
- Free Software Foundation of India
- Friends of the Earth Finland
- GASPP
- Gharelu Kamgaar Panchayat
- Global Greens
- Global Resistance
- Globalisation and Comprehensive Democracy Dialogues
- Grassroots Global Justice
- Heinrich Boll Foundation
- Himalayan Peoples Forum
- Hipatia
- IBASE
- Indigenous Environmental Network
- Institute for Southern Studies
- Instituto Paulo Freire
- Janata Weekly
- Jobs With Justice
- JP Foundation for Asian Democracies
- Jubilee USA
- Keshav Gore Smarak Trust
- Lok Shakti Abhiyan
- Lokayan
- Lokniti
- National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM)
- National Campaign Committee For Central Legislation On Construction Workers
- National Campaign Committee For Rural Workers
- National Campaign Committee for Unorganized Sector Workers
- National Conference of Dalit Organisations (NACDOR)
- National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
- Naya Sangharsh
- Network Institute for Global Democratization (NIGD)
- New Trade Union Initiative
- Nirmala Niketan Domestic Workers Forum
- North American Alliance for Fair Employment (NAFFE)
- Other Indian Press
- Paulo Freire Institute
- Ped Panchayat
- Promoter Networks of Solidarity-based and People's Economy
- Rajendra Prasad Academy at the Institute for Democracy and Sustainable Development
- Ramanika Foundation
- Rashtra Seva Dal
- Service Centre for Development Cooperation (Kepa) Finland
- Shoshit Jan Andolan
- Siemenpuu Foundation Finland
- Socialist Front
- Socialist International
- South Asia Study Centre
- South Asian Dialogues on Ecological Democracy
- Swadeshi Trust
- Swasthya Panchayat
- The Ecological Foundation
- Third World Network
- Uttarakhand Chaupal
- Vitae Civilis
- Washington Alliance of Technology Workers (Wash Tech)
- Women of Color Against Violence
- Women Struggle Committee
- Yusuf Meherally Centre

Some of the Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam publications/books available

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: An Alliance for Comprehensive Democracy

By Vijay Pratap, Ritu Priya and Thomas Wallgren

Politics, Morality, Identity an Intimate Quest

By Vijay Pratap

The Book of Trees

By Risto Isomaki and Maneka Gandhi

GM Food and Hunger: A View from the South

by Devinder Sharma

Towards a Global Manifesto of Ecological Democracy (A Discussion Paper)

By Risto Isomaki

Tribal Policy: Pulling Back from the Brink?

By Harsh Mander

Between Exaggeration and Denial

(Minimising Suffering from HIV Infection and AIDS in India)

By Ritu Priya

Health Care under Neo-colonisation

By Dr. C. Sathyamala

Charter of the Global Greens (Canberra 2001)

Agriculture, Human Economy and Welfare Society

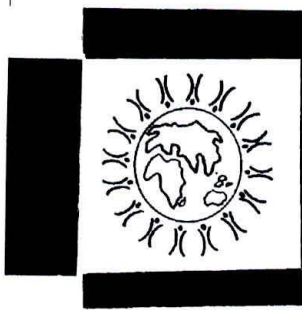
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If you would like to contribute, comment, or do not wish to receive this newsletter, send e-mail to:

vasudhaivakutumbakam@vsnl.net

website url: <http://www.demokratiatorumi.fi/wsf.html>

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The World Social Forum

The World Social Forum is an open meeting place where groups and movements of civil society opposed to neo-liberalism and a world dominated by capital or by any form of imperialism, but engaged in building a planetary society centred on the human person, come together to pursue their thinking, to debate ideas democratically, for formulate proposals, share their experiences freely and network for effective action (*see the Charter of principles*). The WSF proposed to debate alternative means to building a globalization in solidarity, which respects universal human rights and those of all men and women of all nations and the environment, and is grounded in democratic international systems and institutions at the service of social justice, equality and the sovereignty of peoples.

The two first editions of the World Social Forum were held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, on the same dates as the World Economic Forum was meeting in Davos. By proposing to strengthen an international coalition of the widest range of social movements and organizations, on the principle of respect for differences, autonomy of ideas and forms of endeavour, the WSF ceased to be a single locus of convergence for the struggle against neo-liberal globalization and sought to become a world process.

In pursuit of these aims, in addition to the annual World Social Forum meeting in Porto Alegre, Regional and Thematic Social Forums are organising. These events are designed to explore specific issues considered priorities in the present world situation by the WSF International Council – the WSF policy decision-making body. All the Forums must always adhere to the WSF Charter of Principles.

Background

The World Social Forum was conceived as an international forum built around the slogan "Another World Is Possible" to contest the formulations offered by neo-liberal economic policies and

capitalist—led globalisation. It seeks to provide a space for discussing alternatives, for exchanging experiences and for strengthening alliances between social movements, unions of working people and NGOs, as well as an opportunity for cross-sectoral dialogue. The first three WSFs were held in January/ February 2001- 2003, in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil and were timed to coincide with the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. The richness of Brazilian grassroots organisations represented a source of inspiration for the development of the World Social Forum. Over the last three years, WSF has emerged as a counterweight to the worldview of the World Economic Forum. The WSF has become a symbol of the gathering strength of forces fighting against globalisation and war. WSF 2003, with over 100,000 participants became a rallying point for the protest against the war in Iraq.

The first WSF in 2001 saw the participation of about 20,000 people (of which 4,702 were registered delegates) representing over 500 national and international organisations from more than 100 countries. The success and enthusiasm generated by WSF 2001 contributed to making the WSF an annual event. The second WSF held in January and February 2002 was an even larger event. It saw the participation of around 12,000 registered delegates and a total of some 55,000 people from 123 countries. WSF 2003 saw the participation of more than 27,000 delegates and a total of some 100,000 people from more than 130 countries.

In addition to WSF, there have been regional and thematic forums during 2002-2003. Following WSF 2001 the International Council (IC) Forum was formed so as to enhance and expand the diversity of the WSF process. The IC is a group of international networks from different regions of the world. It is constituted by several organizations working on issues including economic justice, human rights, environmental issues, labour, youth and women's rights. The IC contributes to the WSF methodology, outreach, communication strategies as well as the local and regional organising process.

Regional and Thematic Social Forums

The Regional Social Forums are part of a process of construction and universalisation of the World Social Forum. Like the WSF, the Regional Forums create open spaces for dialoguing. These democratic debates include the formulation of proposals and a free sharing of experiences of entities and movements of the civil society that oppose themselves to the neo-liberal globalization.

They are termed "**regional**" as they happen in a macro-regional sphere. They follow a methodology and political criteria stipulated by the WSF's Letter of Principles, whose purpose (as well as that of the Regional Forums), is to approximate itself to the reality of the social movements and entities in the diverse regions of the world. During the period of the WSF 2003, the European, Asian, and Pan-Amazonian Social Forums shall be taking place simultaneously.

The Thematic Social Forums objectify to attend to demands of more thorough investigations of debates to specific issues, considered priorities in the global conjuncture by the International Council of WSF. For the year of 2002, we plan to accomplish a Thematic Social Forum in Argentina, which shall discuss the effects of neo-liberal politics on developing countries.

World Social Forum Charter of Principles

The committee of Brazilian organisations that conceived of, and organised, the first World Social Forum, held in Porto Alegre from January 25th to 30th, 2001, after evaluating the results of that Forum and the expectations it raised, consider it necessary and legitimate to draw up a Charter of Principles to guide the continued pursuit of that initiative. While the principles contained in this Charter - to be respected by all those who wish to take part in the process and to organise new editions of the World Social Forum - are a consolidation of the decisions that presided over the holding of the Porto Alegre Forum and ensured its success, they extend the reach of those decisions and define orientations that flow from their logic.

1. The World Social Forum is an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a planetary society directed towards fruitful relationships among Humankind and between it and the Earth.

2. The World Social Forum at Porto Alegre was an event localised in time and place. From now on, in the certainty proclaimed at Porto Alegre that "another world is possible", it becomes a permanent process of seeking and building alternatives, which cannot be reduced to the events supporting
3. The World Social Forum is a world process. All the meetings that are held as part of this process have an international dimension.
4. The alternatives proposed at the World Social Forum stand in opposition to a process of globalisation commanded by the large multinational corporations and by the governments and international institutions at the service of those corporations' interests, with the complicity of national governments. They are designed to ensure that globalisation in solidarity will prevail as a new stage in world history. This will respect universal human rights, and those of all citizens — men and women — of all nations and the environment and will rest on democratic international systems and institutions at the service of social justice, equality and the sovereignty of peoples.
5. The World Social Forum brings together and interlinks only organisations and movements of civil society from all the countries in the world, but intends neither to be a body representing world civil society.
6. The meetings of the World Social Forum do not deliberate on behalf of the World Social Forum as a body. No one, therefore, will be authorised, on behalf of any of the editions of the Forum, to express positions claiming to be those of all its participants. The participants in the Forum shall not be called on to take decisions as a body, whether by vote or acclamation, on declarations or proposals for action that would commit all, or the majority, of them and that propose to be taken as establishing positions of the Forum as a body. It thus does not constitute a locus of power to be disputed by the participants in its meetings, nor does it intend to constitute the only option for interrelation and action by the organisations and movements that participate in it.
7. Nonetheless, organisations or groups of organisations that participate in the Forums meetings must be assured the right, during such meetings, to deliberate on declarations or actions they may decide on, whether singly or in coordination with other participants. The World Social Forum undertakes to circulate such decisions widely by the means at its disposal, without directing, hierarchising, censoring or restricting them, but as deliberations of the organisations or groups of organisations that made the decisions.
8. The World Social Forum is a plural, diversified, non-confessional, non-governmental and non-party context that, in a decentralised fashion, interrelates organisations and movements engaged in concrete action at levels from the local to the international to build another world.
9. The World Social Forum will always be a forum open to pluralism and to the diversity of activities and ways of engaging of the organisations and movements that decide to participate in it, as well as the diversity of genders, ethnicities, cultures, generations and physical capacities, providing they abide by this *Charter of Principles*. Neither party representations nor military organisations shall participate in the Forum. Government leaders and members of legislatures who accept the commitments of this Charter may be invited to participate in a personal capacity.
10. The World Social Forum is opposed to all totalitarian and reductionist views of economy, development and history and to the use of violence as a means of social control by the State. It upholds respect for Human Rights, the practices of real democracy, participatory democracy, peaceful relations, in equality and solidarity, among people, ethnicities, genders and peoples, and condemns all forms of domination and all subjection of one person by another.
11. As a forum for debate, the World Social Forum is a movement of ideas that prompts reflection, and the transparent circulation of the results of that reflection, on the mechanisms and instruments of domination by capital, on means and actions to resist and overcome that domination, and on the alternatives proposed to solve the problems of exclusion and social inequality that the process of capitalist globalisation with its racist, sexist and environmentally destructive dimensions is creating internationally and within countries.
12. As a framework for the exchange of experiences, the World Social Forum encourages understanding and mutual recognition among its participant organisations and movements, and places special value on the exchange among them, particularly on all that society is building to

centre economic activity and political action on meeting the needs of people and respecting nature, in the present and for future generations.

13. As a context for interrelations, the World Social Forum seeks to strengthen and create new national and international links among organisations and movements of society, that — in both public and private life — will increase the capacity for non-violent social resistance to the process of dehumanisation the world is undergoing and to the violence used by the State, and reinforce the humanising measures being taken by the action of these movements and organisations.

14. The World Social Forum is a process that encourages its participant organisations and movements to situate their actions, from the local level to the national level and seeking active participation in international contexts, as issues of planetary citizenship, and to introduce onto the global agenda the change-inducing practices that they are experimenting in building a new world in solidarity.

Approved and adopted in São Paulo, on April 9, 2001, by the organisations that make up the World Social Forum Organising Committee, approved with modifications by the World Social Forum International Council on June 10, 2001.

Rules for the operation of the WSF International Council

International Council (IC) of the WSF adopts, from its meeting of June, 2003 in Miami forward, a realistic set of procedures for its work, which seeks to assure that all of its members can continue working together.

1. The WSF process expansion at the world level has advanced greatly in the past year, opening new opportunities and creating new challenges, which require changes in the linkages and planning of activities in the WSF process. Given this new framework, it is necessary to guarantee that the IC operates well so that it can fulfill its responsibility in this process as an open space.

2. In order to carry out its tasks in a more efficient way, as set out in the guidelines adopted in the Porto Alegre IC meeting, held on January 21-22, 2003, the IC will work organised in the following six Commissions:

a) **STRATEGIES:** In-depth analysis of the strategies, initiatives and actions used by agents of neoliberalism at the same time analysing the initiatives of the opponents of neoliberal domination (i.e. the anti or alternative globalisation movement), to facilitate the debate of strategies of resistance and the construction of "another possible world."

b) **CONTENT:** Collection of materials (report backs and information from various forums), analysis and organisation by theme and dissemination to WSF participants (via internet, email, publications, and organisation of seminars) of the analysis, alternative proposals and initiatives for a better world and strategies of resistance to neoliberalism that have come out of forums (geographic – global, regional, local – and thematic) that have already taken place. At the same time, increase collaboration and relationships between participants and initiatives in the WSF process around those proposals, enabling an evaluation of appropriateness of new thematic forums to delve more deeply into specific questions/issues.

c) **METHODOLOGY:** Organisation and consolidation of a methodology for the forums, based in the Charter of Principles, which uses the experience of the forums that have already occurred as a starting point, assures the open character of the WSF and respects plurality and diversity as the principal strength of the process.

d) **EXPANSION:** Support the development of regional, national and local forums based on this methodology, as well as geographic expansion focusing on world regions where civil society is still not familiar enough with the WSF to take the initiative of organising forums or participating in the forums in their region. Additionally, this will help to insure that this expansion is reflected in the composition of IC.

e) **COMMUNICATION:** Creation of communication system for information/dissemination about the WSF process both in terms of communication to actors outside of the IC as well as within the IC itself, identifying ways for the IC and its Commissions to develop an effective long distance work.

f) FINANCES: Creation of a solidarity based international system for funding of the WSF process activities.

3. To implement these tasks, IC members present at its Miami meeting divided into the six Commissions listed above, with each Commission in charge of its respective function.

4. Each Commission will establish its own work methodology regarding decisions on how to develop its activities and work calendar/timeline. The Commissions will present a first report back on their activities during the next IC meeting. These reports should also be distributed to all IC members before the meeting itself. The IC monitors and evaluates the activities of the Commissions.

5. During the IC meeting to be held in June 2004, the Commissions will present to all IC members for debate their work to date. Presentation materials should be distributed to IC members before the June 2004 meeting. The discussions coming out of this IC meeting will help with the continuity of the Commissions, clarifying specific themes, potentially creating new Commissions if necessary and defining other issues for the WSF 2005.

6. The Commissions will include among its priorities to follow and support the WSF 2004 in Mumbai.

7. The acceptance of new members into the IC will be contingent on:

- a) Agreement with the WSF Charter of Principles and apply it to day-to-day operations.
- b) The need for increased balance regarding gender, race, age, and geography (i.e. the participation in the IC of organisations from all continents and regions) as well as the need to diversify the IC in terms of both the type of organisation as well as the focus and scope of the work of groups participating in the IC.
- c) Active participation and contribution of the organisation in one or more of the IC Commissions and/or in the organising committees of the regional or thematic social forums.
- d) Organising committees of global, regional or thematic forums, recognised by the IC as part of the international WSF process, may participate in the IC through one delegate and one alternate during the 12 months prior to and subsequent to the event they are organising.

8. The procedure regarding new membership in the IC will be:

- a) Applications must be presented in writing to the WSF Secretariat, with the endorsement of at least two IC members. The WSF Secretariat will inform all IC members about applications at least one month before the IC meeting;
- b) Candidates must have existed, in principle, at least for two years;
- c) Candidates must present in writing a document stating their agreement with the WSF Charter of Principles;
- d) Assessment of the active involvement and contribution of the organisation in at least one or more of IC Commissions, or in organising committees of the regional or thematic social forums;
- e) Applications must be approved by the IC on the basis of an evaluation by a working group designated by the IC in its previous meeting;
- f) Organisations that have already requested membership to the IC will be evaluated according to the same criteria.

9. An organisation can apply to be a collaborative member of an IC Commission. Application to be collaborative organisation will be presented to and decided by the Commission in which the applicant is seeking to participate. Being a collaborative organisation in an IC Commission does not automatically imply IC membership.

10. Applications to participate as observers in the IC meetings will be assessed by the same working group that evaluates membership applications.

11. Regarding the relationship between the IC and WSF Secretariat, the first principle is that the IC will take political decisions about the WSF process during its meetings.

12. The WSF Secretariat is a technical body to facilitate the WSF process, formed by the Brazilian Organising Committee together with the Organising Committee of the place where the WSF is held. They will decide together the division of functions and tasks amongst them. By the time this

document is revised, in June 2004, the IC will also discuss the continuation of the process of internationalising the WSF Secretariat.

13. The WSF Secretariat functions, as agreed to in the January, 2003 Porto Alegre IC meeting, are:

- a) To stimulate and support the Regional and Thematic Forums;
- b) To facilitate the organisation of the IC meetings;
- c) To ensure the IC communication process;
- d) To ensure the organisation of the historical record of the WSF process;
- e) To support the fundraising efforts for the WSF process.

14. From now, the facilitation of IC Commission meetings must be incorporated also as a function of the WSF Secretariat, which must work closely with the IC Commissions, supporting their work and receiving from them their contributions to the WSF process and to the organisation of the Forums and IC meetings.

15. The WSF Secretariat will present in each IC meeting a report on its activities, as well as a financial report after every WSF. Both reports must be sent to all IC members at least 15 days before the IC meeting.

16. The WSF newsletter will regularly inform IC members about the activities of the WSF process.

17. Free communication between and among IC members is guaranteed. To promote this communication, a permanently updated list of all IC members contact information should be available to all IC members. The WSF Secretariat will also ensure that a closed Internet discussion listserve is maintained in good working order for use by all IC members through which the maximum level of transparency will be sought vis-à-vis information about activities developed in the WSF process.

18. In its June 2003 meeting in Miami, the IC began discussion of the proposal for internal rules prepared by the IC Internal Rules Working Group and decided to continue discussion on this proposal as well as the present rules through the IC Internet listserve. The IC will continue discussing this issue in its next meeting, in order to advance in the process of the organisation and clarification of how the IC functions. A special working group was formed in the Miami IC meeting to facilitate and organise this discussion.

19. All the points of this document will be subject to evaluation and modification in one year.

Note: other definitions adopted subsequently during the meeting, concerning the application of these rules:

20. The IC decided that, until its next meeting in Mumbai (January, 2004), the functions of the working group on evaluation of new memberships applications, mentioned in the item 8.e, and invitation of observers, item 10, will be carried out by the Expansion Commission [item 2.d].

21. The IC defined that the discussion on the internal rules (referred in the item 18) only will be taken over after the WSF in Mumbai. The new working group is formed by: CBJP Brasil (Chico), IPC (Savio), Red Global de Economia Solidaria (Carola), NIGD-IOC (Vijay) and CUT-Brasil (Gustavo).

22. The next IC meeting will take place in Mumbai, India. It will have two parts: one day before the WSF it will be a meeting for socialising information on the event among IC members; after the WSF closing, the IC will meet again to deal with the agenda of pending debates (WSF 2004 evaluation, report on the work of the IC commissions etc.) According to what was defined in the point 14, the WSF Secretariat will organise the agenda of the next IC meeting in dialogue with the Commissions.

WSF in India

In 2003 the IC of the WSF and the Brazil Organising Committee strongly felt that WSF needed to move beyond Brazil and Latin America to be more inclusive of peoples of Africa and Asia: the peoples facing the brunt of imperialist and neo liberal globalisation, and enjoined in strong popular struggle against it. Keeping this in mind, India was chosen as the host country for the WSF 2004 so as to bring in Asian and African concerns to greater prominence. With the success of the Asian

Social Forum in Hyderabad, India in January 2003, which saw the participation of over 20,000 delegates representing 840 organisations, tremendous enthusiasm has been generated within Asia about the WSF process.

In fact, hosting of the WSF global meet in Mumbai in January 2004 has been a great opportunity and challenge to people's movements and to all civil and political organisations across the world especially those of the peoples of Asia and Africa. It was for all those opposed to imperialist and neo-liberal globalisation, war and sectarian violence, and has a commitment to democratic values, plurality, dignity and peace.

WSF 2004 was also a symbol of unity and democratic space for people to assert their rights for peace and a world free of violence, bigotry and hatred. The WSF India process not only focused on imperialist globalisation but also on the issues of religious and sectarian violence, casteism and patriarchy. It made space for all sections of society to come together and articulate their struggles and visions, individually and collectively, against the threat of neo-liberal, capitalist globalisation on one hand and uphold the secular, plural and gender sensitive framework on the other. The event brought various mass organisations, new social movements and NGOs on one platform, for the first time in recent Indian history. The WSF process was also deepened at the grassroots by initiating social forums in states, districts and towns of India. The WSF 2004 advanced the debate on concerns Indian and yet simultaneously maintain an international perspective.

In India the WSF Charter has been extended to include social and political realities, as they exist in the country today. The process in India makes space available for all sections of society, but most importantly, it makes space for all those in society that remain less visible, marginalised, unrecognised, and oppressed. This entails the opening of a dialogue within and between the broad spectrum of political parties and groups, social movements and other organisations.

The WSF-India process aims to be widespread and inclusive by allowing for a space for workers, peasants, indigenous peoples, dalits, women, hawkers, all minorities, immigrants, students, academicians, artisans, the media as well as parliamentarians, sympathetic bureaucrats and other concerned sections from within and outside the state.

India General Council

The India General Council is the decision making body of the WSF India process. The membership to the IGC is open to all social movements and organisations that are committed to the WSF Charter of Principles. At the moment there are approximately 135 members in the IGC.

The India Working Committee is responsible for formulating policy guidelines that form the basis for the functioning of the WSF India process. The IWC currently consists of 67 organisations nominated from the IGC and is indicative of the diverse social, political and economic gamut. The IWC comprises of 14 national trade unions and workers' organisations, 8 national women's organisations, 6 national farmers' networks, and 4 national platforms each of dalits, adivasis, 4 student and youth bodies, as well as 27 social movements, other organisations and NGOs.

- * The India Organising Committee is the executive body of the WSF 2004 and is responsible for organising the event. The IOC consists of 45 individuals, each being a member of one of the eight working groups
- * The Mumbai Organising Committee consists of organizations based in Mumbai that are represented in each of the functional groups.

Venue and dates

India hosted the WSF 2004 from 16- 21 January 2004 in Mumbai. The choice of Mumbai as the venue for WSF 2004 was made following a lengthy dialogue between all groups involved in the WSF India process. Mumbai provided an ideal site to challenge the neo-liberal globalisation agenda, being perhaps the largest financial centre in the world outside the OECD, as well being the location of some of the most aggressive and violent acts of religious sectarianism that the sub-continent has witnessed. Mumbai, a large industrial centre, also witnessed the birth of the a militant trade union movement, vibrant dalit and women's movements, and has allowed the growth of alternatives to mainstream arts, performing arts and cinema.

Mobilisation for the forum

More than 100,000 people participated in the WSF 2004. Of these, more than 10,000 were from outside India. A range of accommodation facilities was made available and necessary links provided on website. An effort was also made to provide low-priced accommodation including campsites available. In keeping with the traditions established in Porto Alegre.

WSF India worked closely with the International Secretariat and International Council for international mobilisation. The India Organising Committee hosted a meeting of mass organisations and other movements from Asian countries in Mumbai in June 2003. Many ideas on expanding the decision making process to include issues of mobilisation and the sharing of responsibilities, were discussed.

Programme and methodology

The Opening and Closing plenary of WSF 2004 were the events on the initial and final days of the WSF. During the four intervening days there were plenary sessions, debates, dialogues, round table discussions, seminars and workshops, and panel discussions. The public meetings and testimonials were held every evening. Various cultural events, including the arts and the performing arts, and Youth Forum ran concurrently. The main focus, and thematic axes for WSF 2004 were — Imperialist Globalisation, Patriarchy, Casteism, Racism and Social Exclusions, Religious sectarianism, Identity Politics, Fundamentalism, Militarism and Peace.

Cultural events

A functional group on Culture is co-coordinating the various cultural events was organised on each day of the WSF. These events will be designed to capture the flavour of cultural responses to the onslaught of neo-liberal globalisation and the politics of exclusion and sectarian violence. They will include various expressions of art and various forms of performing arts. Groups from all over the World will be encouraged to participate.

Communications

A website and communication system was put in place to deal with correspondence, listserves, newsletters, registration, and campaign and publicity material. The Communication and Media Group managed media and press relations and worked with the International Secretariat for international communications and publicity.

Stalls

Stalls were made available for exhibitions or for sale of books, posters, souvenirs, food, music, etc.

The broad themes and sub-themes for WSF 2004

Militarism, War and Peace

- * US Militarist Agenda and Resistances
- * Against global and permanent war
- * Identities and Peoples Right to Determination
- * Growing militarisation of society; impact on women
- * Imperialist war and control of resources
- * Role of United Nations and war
- * Aggression on Iraq and consequences
- * Palestine: a continuing war

Building culture of peace

- * Genocides and crimes against humanity
- * Global disarmament and nuclear weapons
- * International law and war
- * Peace, well being and regional cooperation
- * Self determination and nationalities

- * State terrorism: Civil and Political Rights

Media, Information, Knowledge and Culture

- * Against merchandising information, culture and media
- * Media concentration and loss of pluralism
- * Media and the commodification of women
- * Sponsorship and Censorship
- * Alternate media
- * War and media – manipulation of images and “embedded” journalism
- * Art and social transformation
- * Culture of dissent
- * Role of culture: youth and the marginalised
- * Privatising science and knowledge
- * Community’s loss of knowledge through patenting
- * Genetic Engineering, Patenting life forms
- * Access to knowledge for the third world
- * Information Technology: Opportunities and Challenges
- * Media as an instrument of exclusion and a space for democratic struggle (social audit of old and new media, changing content and form, state-owned media vs. public broadcasting)

Democracy, Ecological and Economic Security

Debt, finance and trade

- * Critical examination of the IMF, WB, WTO – Institutions of Capitalist Globalisation
- * Scope of selective de-linking with respect to national development
- * Breaking the power of financial markets
- * Politics of Aid
- * Illegitimacy and Burden of Debt
- * Bilateral and regional trade, investment processes and its impacts
- * NAFTA and other bilateral treaties
- * Fair trade
- * Participatory economics
- * Solidarity Economics
- * Agreement in Agriculture (AOA) and Food Sovereignty

Land, Water and Food Sovereignty

- * Land and agriculture
- * Privatising basic services: energy, water, transport and telecommunications
- * Livelihoods and Natural resources – access, entitlements, etc.
- * Climate change – Kyoto Protocol
- * Bio-safety and GM foods
- * Governance, accountability and peoples resources
- * Dumping of hazardous wastes
- * Biodiversity
- * Peasantry and village economy under globalisation
- * Urban development and displacement of the poor
- * Feminisation of Poverty and immigration
- * Innovative models of sustainable livelihoods
- * Forests, Land, Air, Water: Democratic control of common goods
- * Regulation and de-regulation: removing democratic controls
- * Corporate Accountability

Labour and World of Work in Production and Social Reproduction

- * Creating and distributing wealth differently: monetary, budgetary and fiscal policies in favour of employment
- * Work and the logic of profit
- * Closing of industries, relocation of production and the trade union movement
- * Trade union movement and the informal and small scale sector
- * Migrant labour and protectionism
- * New technologies of product automation: impact on women and men workers

- * End of work and other theories
- * Abolishing the wage system: liberating workers or liberation from work
- * Valuation of social reproduction and housework
- * The trade union movement within the construction of the global social movement

Social sectors — food, health, education — and social security

- * Impact of service sector liberalisation/GATS
- * Entitlements, social security and the "safety net": ensuring universal access
- * Social Security, pensions and medical welfare
- * The marginalized and their access to social security and the safety net
- * Privatisation of and Merchandising health and education
- * Child Rights
- * Politics and agenda of population control and use of reproductive technologies
- * Food Security of communities and households and public distribution
- * Employment, Job Security, Pension Schemes, VRS
- * Reproduction, Health and Sexual Rights
- * Exclusions, Discrimination, Dignity, Rights and Equality

Nation, State, citizenship, law and justice

- * State, Civil Society and the disadvantaged (Dalits, indigenous peoples, religious/ethnic/linguistic minorities) Changing institutional and legal frameworks for labour and peasant rights in the context of globalisation
- * Loss of economic sovereignty under globalisation
- * Privatisation, Liberalisation and impact on the disadvantaged
- * Rise of the right, legitimisation of majoritarianism and intolerance of minorities
- * Race, migration and citizenship
- * Effect of globalisation on legal and institutional frameworks of decision making
- * Militarising the state and erosion of civil liberties/human rights
- * Disability and discrimination
- * Trafficking in women and children
- * Refugees, displaced persons, IDP, cross-border migration, racism and human rights
- * Alternative visions, practical experiments and struggles for inclusive, plural and radical democracy
- * Autonomy, separation, reconciliation

Caste, race and other forms of descent/work based exclusions

- * Caste, race and other work/descent based discrimination: exclusions in the market and in governance
- * Community/group specific (dalits, indigenous peoples, tribals and ethnic religious, national and other minorities): analyses of the new and emerging forms of exclusions
- * Gender related exclusions and 'double' exclusion of women from marginalised communities
- * Attack on affirmative action in education and work
- * New voices in social movements

Religion, culture and identities

- * Communalism — Religious sectarianism and exclusions — and religiosity
- * Globalisation, homogeneity and pluralism
- * Cultural imperialism and shaping subordinate identities
- * Globalisation and cultural resistance
- * Fundamentalism and Sexual Identities
- * Reinforcement of stereotypes

Patriarchy, Gender and Sexuality

- * Patriarchy and capitalism
- * Law and women: the global scenario
- * Personal, constitutional law and human rights
- * Women and men: from equality within the law to equality in reality
- * Against the sexual division of labour

- * Liberty of women within society
- * Forms of resurgent patriarchy
- * Right to sexual orientation: from claims for rights to the assertion identities.

IC Document on the Porto Alegre Meeting

(The International Council met on January 28 and 29 to decide future prospects for the World Social Forum)

The meeting emphasized the idea that the WSF is much more than an isolated event. Rather it is consolidating as an ongoing process and as a movement that is spreading worldwide and obtaining growing support on every continent. The composition of the International Council in itself shows that social forces from all over the planet are increasingly making an enduring commitment to the WSF.

The International Council believes that holding an annual centralized WSF event is crucial to assisting the wide range of forces that oppose neoliberal globalization to come together and organize. Furthermore, the event itself has a large and very public impact which is energizing the movement. Lastly, the International Council decided that as the WSF takes on a worldwide character and acquires more support, there must be more mobilization in the regions to encourage more participation from all the continents.

In view of this situation, the International Council took the following decisions?

- 1) Continental or regional World Social Forum events will be held in the second half of this year, in different parts of the world.
- 2) The III World Social Forum will once again be held in Porto Alegre and on the same dates as the World Economic Forum.
- 3) The International Council of the WSF will play a decisive role in preparing and organizing the work of the Regional and Continental Forums and the centralized World Social Forum. This will be the main theme of the Council meeting to be held from April 28 to 30, 2002.

English text by volunteer translator Thomas Nerney

IC Document on the Dakar Meeting (October 30, November 1, 2001)

The International Council of the World Social Forum, meeting in Dakar from October 30 to November 1, 2001, mobilized an important number of African organizations and social movements which are thus becoming ever more actively involved in international movements against neoliberal globalization. This mobilization will lead to the organization of the first Africa Social Forum, in Bamako in January 2002. The proposals that will emerge from this meeting, as well as from other preparatory meetings being held in different parts of the world, will contribute enormously to the success of the World Social Forum being organized in Porto Alegre from January 31 to February 5, 2002.

This report has three parts: a synthesis of discussions on the international situation; a listing of the main decisions taken; and, in annex, projects proposed by one or more organizational members of the council.

1. Synthesis Of Discussions On The International Situation

The following text does not attempt to be all-inclusive. It simply relays some of the major discussions, without necessarily mentioning all of the viewpoints expressed. It was reiterated that, as with the WSF itself, the International Council does not speak with a single voice. As the Charter of Principles adopted in San Paolo in June 2001 reminds us, the Forum constitutes a space for dialogue and ideas that respects the diversity of those that participate in it.

The first World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre, in January 2001, produced evidence of the blockages and ravages of neoliberal globalization. A space for developing and proposing alternatives on a planetary level, the WSF reinforced the desire for "another world" in many parts of the globe, as well as in Africa. It became a reference and pressure point for social struggles, and placed directors, media, governments and multilateral institutions in the service of finance

markets and transnational corporations on the defensive. Unable to disavow the disastrous results of their policies, these forces have been unable to react except by attempting to criminalize social movements that oppose neoliberal fundamentalism. Since September 11 they have gone a step farther by attempting to use to their profit the emotions brought on by the criminal attacks in New York and Washington, which all of the members of the World Social Forum have unanimously condemned.

In attempting to fight against a terrorism whose deep roots they refuse to analyze and which instrumentalizes poverty, the U.S. and British governments, supported by most European governments as well as by a coalition of diverse interests, are engaged in a war whose first victim is the Afghani people.

The events of September 11 provide a useful excuse to shift focus from popular demands and to impose those of neoliberal globalization. As such, while many international conferences were cancelled, that of the World Trade Organization, scheduled for November 9 to 13 in Qatar, is maintained in spite of its proximity to the area of conflict. By enrolling the WTO in this military coalition, the commodification of the world is accelerated, and new constraints are being imposed on countries in the South, notably in the areas of investment and intellectual property rights. At the same time, governments are taking steps to curtail liberties, while corporations, citing the consequences of September 11, lay off thousands of workers - even though the beginning of the U.S. recession, and its contagious effects on the rest of the world, began almost a year ago.

The dictates of the market and of neoliberal fundamentalism and fanaticism must be rejected as firmly as one rejects dictatorial or authoritarian regimes and religious fundamentalism and fanaticism. It is only by building a more just world, free from all forms of racism, based on solidarity, respectful of women's rights, more conscious of the environment, as well as by providing just solutions to ongoing struggles and especially that of Palestine, that the conditions which give rise to terrorism will be eradicated, and in which the impulse for war can be substituted by the impulse for peace. What should prevail is not commercial and financial imperatives or the rule of the strong, but the shared values of humanity, all rights for all human beings. If globalization it is, let it be that of human rights.

In this vein, it is noteworthy that specific demands made by organizations and social movements such as those represented on the Council - in particular the abolition of tax havens, the struggle against financial speculation, the abolition of the external debt of Southern countries, government regulation of the economy and the right to affordable medicines - are currently invoked and even partially implemented by what had been until just a few weeks ago their most dedicated enemies: the leaders of the United States! Even if only in light of specific circumstances and in support of large American corporations, the "beacon" of global neoliberalism publicly demonstrates the scandalous nature of the costs it intends to impose on the rest of the planet, through the intermediaries of the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO. It thereby provides involuntary legitimacy to specific demands which emerged at the first World Social Forum, and encourages their deeper exploration during the second World Social Forum being organized in Porto Alegre from January 31 to February 5, 2002.

The members of the International Council of the WSF, meeting in Dakar from October 30 to November 1, 2001, renew their call to all members of the social movement, to all trade unions, to elected leaders in different countries, as well as to all representatives of major philosophical and spiritual currents, to make of Porto Alegre a time to bring together of alternative proposals to neoliberalism, as well as a springboard for struggles and a symbol of hope for all of humanity.

Resolutions taken in the Porto Alegre Meeting (Brazil January 21st and 22nd 2003)

Orientations adopted by the International Council of the World Social Forum on its meeting on January 21st and 22nd 2003 in Porto Alegre.

The International Council of the World Social Forum adopts the following orientations to give continuity to the process of the World Social Forum after the 2003 edition of its main annual event in Porto Alegre:

1. to foster the continuity of the fundamental richness of the events in this process, which is its ample, open and plural character that works with the diversity of resistances, organisations and

proposals; to that end, ensure total respect to its Charter of Principles and take the WSF as an incremental process of collective learning and growth;

2. to deepen the process of experimentation of horizontal organisational practices and systems based on co-responsibility;

3. to stimulate the multiplication of regional, national and even local events, as well as theme events, that intercommunicate horizontally and that will not be articulated as preparatory for one another but as meetings with their own political value;

4. when holding the forums, to organise discussions and the search for alternatives giving equal weight to the activities scheduled by the organisers and to the seminars and workshops proposed and organised by the participants themselves, as well as to stimulate the international character of these forums;

5. to hold the 2004 global event of the World Social Forum process in India and the 2005 global event of the World Social Forum process in Porto Alegre;

6. to turn the date of the global event of the World Social Forum process independent of the date of the World Economic Forum in Davos but keeping it always in the same month of the year; to create a "Global Day for marching against Neo-liberalism and War and for Another Possible World" in one of the days in which the Davos' Forum is taking place;

7. to hold meetings of the Forum's International Council (IC) in June 2003, January 2004 and June 2004 for working sessions of a longer duration and organised in work groups and floor meetings. The IC's tasks are to evaluate, given a systematic analysis of the world situation — having a dialogue with the entities and organisations mobilised in the world against neo-liberalism, systemising the WSF process' memory and taking support from ad hoc workgroups — the continuity of the process, to ensure the respect for its Charter of Principles when holding Regional and Theme Forums, to identify themes for the IC's work, for the world events and for the theme Forums to be stimulated, as well as to identify regions of the world in which the process needs to expand, acting in alliance with movements and organisations from these regions;

8. enlarge the composition of the IC, integrating all the international and regional networks, movements and organisations that adhere to the Charter of Principles of the WSF and that ask for their integration, as well as representatives of the organising committees of the regional and theme forums;

9. to give continuity to the present functions of the IC's Secretariat, progressively internationalising it, with the following functions:

- to stimulate and support regional and theme forums;
- to facilitate the holding of IC and its workgroups meetings;
- to ensure the process of communication in the WSF;
- to ensure the systematisation of the WSF process' memory;
- to support fund raising efforts for the WSF process.

WSF 2004: Call of the social movements and mass organisations

(Mumbai, India, January 2004)

- We the social movements united in Assembly in the city of Mumbai, India, share the struggles of the people of India and all Asians. We reiterate our opposition to the neo-liberal system, which generates economic, social and environmental crises and produces war. Our mobilisation against war and deep social and economic injustices has served to reveal the true face of neo-liberalism.
- We are united here to organise the resistance against capitalism and to find alternatives. Our resistance began in Chiapas, Seattle and Genoa, and led to a massive world-wide mobilisation against the war in Iraq on 15th February 2003 which condemned the strategy of global, on-going war implemented by the United States government and its Allies. It is this resistance that led to the victory over the WTO in Cancun.

- The occupation of Iraq showed the whole world the existing links between militarism and the economic domination of the multinational corporations. Moreover, it also justified the reasons for our mobilisation.
- As social movements and mass organisations, we reaffirm our commitment to fight neo-liberal globalisation, imperialism, war, racism, the caste system, cultural imperialism, poverty, patriarchy, and all forms of discrimination - economic social, political, ethnic, gender, sexual – including that of sexual orientation and gender identity. We are also against all kinds of discrimination to persons with different capacities and fatal illnesses such as AIDS.
- We struggle for social justice, access to natural resources – land, water and seeds- human and citizens' rights, participative democracy, the rights of workers of both genders as guaranteed in international treaties, women's rights, and also the people's right to self-determination. We are partisans of peace, international cooperation and we promote sustainable societies that are able to guarantee access to public services and basic goods. At the same time, we reject social and patriarchal violence against women.
- We call for a mass mobilisation on 8th March, International Women's Day.
- We fight all forms of terrorism, including state terrorism. At the same time we are opposed to the use of terrorism, which criminalises popular movements and restricts civil activists. The so-called law against terrorism restricts civil rights and democratic freedom all over the world.
- We vindicate the struggle of peasants, workers, popular urban movements and all people under threat of losing their homes, jobs, land or their rights.
- We also vindicate the struggle to reverse privatisation in order to protect common, public goods, as is happening with pensions and Social Security in Europe. The victory of the massive mobilisation of the Bolivian people in defense of their natural resources, democracy and sovereignty testifies to the strength and potential of our movements. Simultaneously, peasants across the globe are struggling against multinationals and neo-liberal corporate agricultural policies, demanding sovereignty over food and democratic land reform.
- We call for unity with all peasants on 17th April, International Day of Peasants Struggles.
- We identify with the struggle of the mass movements and popular organisations in India, and together with them, we condemn the political and ideological forces, which promote violence, sectarianism, exclusion and nationalism based on religion and ethnicity. We condemn the threats, arrests, torture and assassinations of social activists who organised communities in order to struggle for global justice. We also denounce discrimination based on caste, class, religion, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity. We condemn the perpetuation of violence and oppression against women through cultural, religious and traditional discriminatory practices.
- We support the efforts of mass movements and popular organisations in India and Asia, which promote the struggle for justice, equality and human rights, especially that of the Dalits, Adivasis, and the most oppressed and repressed sectors of society. The neo-liberal policy of the Indian government aggravated the marginalisation and social oppression, which the Dalits have suffered historically.
- For all these reasons we support the struggle of all the marginalised throughout the world, and urge everyone worldwide to join the call of the Dalits for a day of mobilisation for social inclusion.
- As an escape from its crisis of legitimacy, global capitalism is using force and war in order to maintain an anti-popular order. We demand that the governments put a stop to militarism, war, and military spending, and demand the closure of US military bases because they are a risk and threat to humanity and life on earth. We have to follow the example of the people of Puerto Rico who forced the US to close its base in Vieques. The opposition to global warfare remains our main object of mobilisation around the world.
- We call on all citizens of the world to mobilise simultaneously on 20th March in an international day of protest against war and the occupation of Iraq imposed by the United States, Great Britain and the Allied Forces.
- In each country, the anti-war movements are developing their own consensus and tactics in order to guarantee as wide a participation and mobilisation as possible. We demand the immediate withdrawal of all occupying troops and support the right of the Iraqi to self-determination and sovereignty, as well as their right to reparation for all the damages caused by the embargo and war.
- The struggle against terrorism not only acts as a pretext for continuing the war and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, but it is also being used to threaten and attack the global community.

At the same time, the US is maintaining a criminal embargo against Cuba, and destabilising Venezuela.

- We call upon all people to give maximum support this year to the mobilisation for the Palestinian people, especially on 30th March, Palestinian Land Day, against the building of the wall of apartheid.
- We denounce imperialist forces that are generating religious, ethnic, racial and tribal conflicts in order to further their own interests, increasing the suffering of the people and multiplying the hate and violence between them. More than 80 per cent of the ongoing conflicts in the world are internal and especially affect African and Asian communities.
- We denounce the unsustainable situation of debt in poor countries of the world, and the coercive use by governments, multinational corporations and international financial institutions. We strongly demand the total and unconditional cancellation and rejection of the illegitimate debts of the Third World. As a preliminary condition for the satisfaction of the fundamental economic, social, cultural and political rights, we also demand the restitution of the longstanding plunder of the Third World. We especially support the struggle of the African peoples and their social movements.
- Once again we raise our voices against the G8 Summit and the meetings of the IMF and World Bank, who bear the greatest responsibility for the plunder of entire communities.
- We reject the imposition of regional and bilateral free-trade agreements such as FTAA, NAFTA, CAFTA, AGOA, NEPAD, Euro-Med, AFTA and ASEAN.
- We are millions of persons united in the struggle against our common enemy: the WTO. The indigenous people are struggling against patents on all kinds of life forms and the theft of biodiversity, water, land. We are united in fighting the privatisation of public services and common goods.
- We call upon everybody to mobilise for the right to water as a source of life that cannot be privatised. We are endeavouring to recover control over public, common goods and natural resources, previously privatised and given to transnational enterprises and the private sector.
- In the victory at Cancun, the death of Lee symbolised the suffering of millions of peasants and poor people all over the world that are excluded by the "free market". His immolation is a symbol for our struggle against the WTO. This proves our determination to oppose any attempt to revive the WTO.
- WTO out of agriculture, food, health, water, education, natural resources and common goods!
- With this determination in mind, we call upon all the social movement and mass organisations of the world to join the mobilisation in Hong Kong or in any other place where the WTO ministerial will be held. Let us join our efforts to struggle against privatisation, in defense of common goods, environment, agriculture, water, health, public services and education.
- In order to achieve our objectives, we reiterate our strong desire to reinforce the network of social movements and our capacity for struggle.

Proposals adopted at the WSF IC meeting (January 23, 2004 in Mumbai, India)

1. The six IC Commissions will keep working to develop their working plans, considering the following IC decisions.
2. The six Commissions will be maintained; at the same time, the IC encourages them to interlink and dialogue whenever necessary.
3. Like previous WSFs and according to the Charter of Principles, WSF 2005 will be a space open to activities self-organised by the participant organisations, according to priorities they themselves set – within the logistic limitations. It is strongly recommended that the closing date for event registration should be as early as possible.

However, in Porto Alegre 2005, our process is to take a new step towards a working methodology and WSF format that, before and during the WSF, encourage dialogue, identification of convergence in themes and strategies, interlinking and formulation of action plans, while respecting diversity and the multiplicity of aims and strategies, divergences, pluralism, diversity of opinions and all values enshrined in our Charter of Principles.

All IC members' proposals in this regard should be sent to the Methodology and Thematic and Content Commissions as input to their work.

This is the general direction in which the Methodology and Thematic and Content Commissions should head when developing their proposals, for the next IC meeting, on how to move the process forward and what format the WSF should have in Porto Alegre.

4. For the next IC meeting, the Finance Commission is to produce a document that moves ahead in establishing our fund raising criteria.

The IC is also responsible for the deficit regarding organisation of WSF 2004, in India; proposals on how to cover it will be discussed by the Finance Commission and with the Secretariat (Brazil and India) on the basis of a detailed report on expenditure at Mumbai.

The Finance Commission is also to discuss a strategy for financing the process in the long term.

6. The IC approves the setting up of a Solidarity Fund to enable delegations of excluded groups and individuals in general with low income, fighting patriarchy and other forms of oppression, to take part both in the IC and in WSF events. The format, rules and form of administration of this Fund are to be defined at the next meeting, on the basis of a draft by the Expansion Commission in collaboration with the Finance Commission.

7. The Expansion Commission is also to:

7.1. submit to the IC broader / more detailed draft criteria for the admission of new members (*expansion through the IC*).

7.2. forward to the IC discussion list, before the end of February, all documentation relating to membership applications (received between Barcelona and Miami) to be considered at the next IC meeting.

7.3. to develop a policy on expanding the WSF as a process and through its events.

7.4. in collaboration with the Methodology Commission, to develop a proposal for interlinking the Thematic, Regional and World Social Forums.

8. The Strategy Commission is to present a working plan to the IC at its next meeting. At the next IC meeting, one of the sessions will be devoted to debating strategy; the agenda and methodology are to be decided by the Strategy Commission.

9. The Communication Commission is to present a plan for the next IC meeting following the arrangement systematised in Mumbai.

10. IC confirms that next WSF will be held in Porto Alegre in 2005 on the same dates as the World Economic Forum at Davos.

11. The next IC meeting will focus on dealing with the themes mentioned above. It will be strictly a working meeting. On these criteria and in order to reduce costs, it will be held in Italy, from April 5 to 7, 2004.

To surmount the problem that this venue is a disadvantage to the South in terms of travel costs, the possibility will be considered of calculating expenses on the basis that the sum of the travel costs of all confirmed participants will be divided by the total number of participants, each of whom will then pay this average value. It means that European delegates, besides paying their own fares would contribute an extra amount and delegates from the South will receive a reimbursement of part of their travel costs (whether or not this methodology is viable depends on each organisation's administrative requirements) ...

12. The IC meeting held a preliminary discussion on the frequency, rotating hosting and venue for the WSF after Porto Alegre 2005. The Methodology and Expansion Commissions are to present documents on these subjects for discussion at the next IC meeting.

13. On the accusation of rape in the South Africa delegation during WSF in Mumbai:

13.1. Women's organisations are to draft a note to be posted on the WSF site;

- 13.2. World March of Women is to write a policy proposal on how to prevent and deal with cases of violence against women in WSF events or processes, which will be discussed by women's organisations and then will be a subject for discussion at the next IC meeting.
14. IC will guarantee support for the Intercontinental Youth Camp and work to really integrate the Camp into the WSF 2005 process and event. The WSF Secretariat will discuss a plan to put this proposal into practice with the camp organising commission.
15. Considering the closing ceremonies of the last WSFs, the IC will evaluate them carefully (their function, format and goals).