

Declaration of the Border Social Forum

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We the women, men, youth, Indigenous Peoples and Nations, social organizations, unions, farmers, promoters of human rights and defenders of environmental justice in the border states of Mexico and the United States, and many more, have gathered in this border space to assert our will to do away with borders.

We are part of the formidable force of struggle and hope that came about throughout the world with the initial World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2001. The World Social Forum is part of a social movement against the neo liberal agenda, the modern form of colonialism and imperialism. We are citizens of the planet and as such we are the bearers of a set of economic, social, political, cultural and environmental rights, which all in authority must uphold equally for all people regardless of our age, gender, social class, ethnicity or migratory status.

Here, from this place of gathering we would like first and foremost to call public attention to a series of offenses, abuses and threats:

- We denounce the femicide and daily violence against women throughout this region as a manifestation of a sexist and exploiting culture brought about by those who command the model of industrialization, the brutal urban development and the depredation that has been imposed on this border.
- We denounce the construction of the Wall of Death by the war mongering and authoritarian government of George W. Bush. Walls are symbols of supremacy by the dominant powers: they are projects to divide and isolate exploited peoples from resources necessary for their survival, and to expel them from their lands using methods characteristic of the most primitive form of capitalism.
- We denounce the classist and racist character of the delayed, timid, limited and petty reaction by the authorities of both Mexico and the United States, respectively, in dealing with the families and individuals devastated by Hurricane Katrina in the New Orleans region of Louisiana and the victims of the flooding last summer in the region of Ciudad Juárez in Chihuahua.
- We denounce the actions of multinational agribusiness corporations and those governments that support them, and of the multilateral organizations such as the World Trade Organization, and we denounce the free trade agreements that attempt to do away with the food sovereignty of nations and peoples.
- We denounce the militarization of the US-Mexico border as an authoritarian and racist act that criminalizes migrants and forces them to risk their lives to enter the US, and which provokes divisions and violence between US citizens and immigrants.
- We denounce the multiple forms of exploitation to which thousands are subjected by the companies, the authorities and the anti-democratic unions that do not defend the rights of these workers.

- We denounce the destruction of nature, the desertification, the depletion of the water reserves, the forests, the land, and biodiversity due to the predatory and patriarchal acts of the capitalist system.
- We denounce the North American Alliance for Security and Prosperity and the Panama Puebla Plan as the most recent mechanisms put in place to consolidate the neoliberal project in North America. We shall continue to oppose these with all the strength of the united people.

The proposals and immediate commitments that we as the Border Social Forum are prepared and obliged to carry out in order to build a better world are:

- 1) We shall include the topic of women as transversal in each and every one of the topics of global struggle. We will articulate this within all of our struggles for justice against the unjust, patriarchal capitalist model. It is imperative that gender define itself as an expression of sexuality and that the rights to self definition and free exercise of individual sexuality be respected. We shall work so that sufficient and adequate information on sexual and reproductive rights be known to all.
- 2) We will support the campaign against the multinational corporation Kimberly Clark and its partner [Rep. F. James] Sensenbrenner, the main promoter of the anti-immigrant legislation in Washington.
- 3) We will put in action all measures necessary to ensure that women of all ages be given a guarantee to live a life free of violence.
- 4) We declare that water is a human right and we commit to fight in order to prevent its privatization.
- 5) We will fight to legislate in favor of Citizen Observer commissions as mechanisms of vigilance and a guarantee for justice, and for all other mechanisms that promote citizen participation in decision making processes.
- 6) We reject the militarization of the border, a form of low intensity warfare characterized by vigilante actions, raids at immigrant detention centers, and the use of modern technology on the border. We also reject repressive laws such as 4437 that seek to criminalize immigrants.
- 7) We are committed to lobby for comprehensive immigration reform laws that legislate full rights for all immigrants, including social services and amnesty.
- 8) We are committed to organize a great mobilization and national strike of more than one day for the First of May 2007.
- 9) We commit to fight to divulge information about and demand the immediate release of the five Cuban comrades, unjustly imprisoned in different prisons in the United States.
- 10) We support the efforts of the youth at the Border Social Forum to achieve their own forms of expression such as their web page, and we commit to be at their service in their education initiatives and the forms of organization that they undertake.
- 11) We will organize an International Action Week from the 9-12 of November, to include acts of solidarity with the peoples of Mexico and Palestine, along with educational activities relating to their common struggles. Such acts will be in protest of the conference of Military Contractors, the negotiators of death, to be held on the 13th and 14th November. We also propose the establishment of an international day of action to combat the Wall of Death on December 28.

12) We commit ourselves to work so that civil society undertakes the struggle for food sovereignty as proposed by Via Campesina, as the foundation of sovereignty and national liberties, along with a dignified life for farm worker families. We demand that the World Trade Organization and the Free Trade Agreements be done away with. We shall take part in the struggle of the Mexican farm workers so that agricultural sections of the North American Free Trade Agreement planned to take effect in 2008 be revised so that the elimination of tariffs by Mexico on imported agricultural products not take effect. We demand a halt to the use of proprietary hybrid seed, and the patenting of seed stock by multinational corporations, since such practices endanger not only our sovereignty but also our health and the heritage of our natural resources.

13) We demand that the governments of Mexico and the United States provide just compensation to all those who participated in the Guest Worker (Bracero) Program, with understanding and a broad sense of equality, and without bureaucratic red tape, in recognition of the tremendous contribution that they have made to the economies of both nations.

14) We express our broad solidarity with the people of Oaxaca, organised though APPO, in support of all their demands and we announce that we will be monitor the situation there so that further actions of aggression against them not take place.

15) We will forward the struggle for healthcare as a right for all and will participate in the First National Congress to be celebrated from November 9-11 in Mexico City.

16) We express our fullest solidarity to those families and workers of mine Unidad 8 of Pasta de Conchos, Coahuila where 35 mine workers were buried in February of 2006, of which only one has since been recovered. We join our voices with the demands put forth to the authorities, the Industrial Mining Company of Mexico and the National Union of Mine and Metallurgical Workers so that the workers' rights be taken into account and that they be answered to in full.

17) We commit ourselves to fight with the Indian Nations of the region to prevent discrimination and to confront racism, colonialism and the disrespect shown to their societies. We shall fight with them to recuperate their sovereignty, so as to reestablish their economies as alternatives to capitalism, to recuperate their identity and to reestablish their communities.

18) We call upon the organization of a group of International Observers to be present during the land negotiation sessions of the Juárez settlement Granjas Lomas de Poleo so as to better guarantee the protection and security of the settlement.

19) We will work so that all popular cultural forms of expression continue to be included in social fora, so that social struggles take on a universal sentiment of understanding and awareness.

20) We will organize the Second Border Forum on the southern Mexico/Central American border.

21) We will mobilize for International Migrant Day on December 18th.

22) We will organize the third annual Border Peoples Alternative Summit in response to the Border Governors Conference in Nogales, Sonora during the summer of 2007.

23) We will carry the resolved principals and conclusions of each work area of the Border Social Forum to the U.S. Social Forum, the World Social Forum and eventually to the Mexico Social Forum.

Through such commitments, by this path of collective action by the protagonists gathered here, we today close this Border Social Forum. At the same time we open new pathways towards participation, communication, mobilization and struggle. We will converge through action with the

movements of all of the regional, national and continental fora that together make up this marvellous human reality – rich, diverse, creative and plural – that is the World Social Forum. With everything that we do, with all that we bring to bear, with all that we dream, we will assuredly build a better world for all human beings, and all living things, one without borders.

Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico

October 15, 2006

Comité Organizador y Asamblea

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