

Declaration in Cancún: No agreement is better than a bad agreement: - The people hold thousands of solutions in their hands

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No agreement is better than a bad agreement:

The people hold thousands of solutions in their hands

Global Forum for Life, Environmental and Social Justice (December 4-10, 2010)

Members of La Vía Campesina from more than thirty countries from all over the world united our thousands of struggles in Cancun to demand environmental and social justice, and respect for Mother Earth at the UN Conference on Climate Change (COP 16). We joined together to denounce the attempts of governments, mainly from the North, to commercialize the essential elements of life in benefit of transnational corporations and to publicize the thousands of grassroots solutions to cool the planet and stop the environmental devastation that seriously threatens humanity today.

Working mostly out of our base at the Alternative Global Forum for Life, Environmental and Social Justice, we held workshops, assemblies, and meetings with allies. On December 7 we staged a global action that we called “Thousands of Cancuns”. The events this day had an impact across the planet and even into the halls of the Moon Palace where delegates to the COP 16 meet. Actions included a march of thousands of members of La Via Campesina accompanied by indigenous Mayans from the Mexican peninsula of Yucatan and our allies from national and international organizations.

Mobilization to Cancun began November 28 with three caravans that left from San Luis Potosi, Guadalajara and Acapulco and traveled through places that exemplify environmental destruction, as well as local resistance of affected communities. The organization of the caravans was carried out along with the National Assembly of Environmentally Affected Peoples, the Movement for National Liberation, the Mexican Electricians Union (SME) and the hundreds of villages and people who opened their doors with generosity and solidarity. On November 30 the caravans arrived in Mexico City, where we held an International Forum and march accompanied by thousands of people and hundreds of organizations that also struggle for environmental and social justice.

On our journey to Cancun, other caravans—one from Chiapas, one from Oaxaca and one from Guatemala—joined us after many hours of traveling. We met up in Merida to hold a ceremony at Chichen Itza and finally arrived in Cancun on December 3 to set up our camp for Life and Environmental and Social Justice. The next day, Dec. 4, we inaugurated our Forum and began activities in Cancun.

Why did we go to Cancun?

Current models of consumption, production and trade have caused massive environmental destruction. Indigenous peoples and peasant farmers, men and women, are the main victims. So our

mobilization to Cancun, and in Cancun, sought to tell the world that we need a change in economic and development paradigms.

We must go beyond the anthropocentric model. We must rebuild the cosmovision of our peoples, based on a holistic view of the relationship between the cosmos, Mother Earth, the air, the water and all living beings. Human beings do not own nature, but rather form part of all that lives.

Given the urgency to reconceive the system, the climate and the earth, we denounce:

1. That governments remain indifferent to global warming and instead of debating the policy changes necessary for cooling the planet, they are debating speculative financial schemes, new “green” economies and the privatization of the commons.
2. False and dangerous solutions that the neoliberal system implements like the REDD+ initiative (Reduction of Emissions for Deforestation and Forest Degradation), the CDM (Clean Development Mechanisms), and geoengineering. These promote the commercialization of natural resources, and the purchase of permits to pollute, or “carbon credits”, with the promise of not cutting down forests and plantations of the South.
3. The imposition of industrial agriculture through the implementation of genetically modified products and landgrabs that go against food sovereignty.
4. Nuclear energy, which is very dangerous and in no way a real solution.
5. The efforts of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization to facilitate the entry of huge transnational corporations in our countries.
6. The impacts of Free Trade Agreements with the United States and the European Union— trade and investment treaties that open the doors of our countries to transnational companies to take control of our natural resources.
7. The exclusion of peasant and indigenous peoples in discussions on key issues that affect human life and the Mother Earth.
8. The expulsion of members of our organizations from the official talks of the COP 16 due to their opposition to government proposals that promote a system of depredation that threatens to exterminate the Mother Earth and humanity.

We do not agree with the simple idea of “mitigating” or “adapting” to climate change. We need social, ecological and climate justice, so we demand:

1. Incorporation of the principles of the Cochabamba Accords of April 22, 2010 as a process that leads to real reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases and achieves social and environmental justice.
2. Food sovereignty based on sustainable and agroecological peasant agriculture, given that the food crisis and the climate crisis are the same and both are consequences of the capitalist system.
3. Changes in life-styles and destructive relations with the environment.

La Vía Campesina, as an organization that represents millions and millions of small farmer families in the world, is concerned about the need to recover climatic equilibrium. Therefore we call for:

1. Assuming collective responsibility for Mother Earth, changing patterns of development and economic structures, and breaking down the power of transnational companies
2. Recognizing governments like Bolivia, Tuvalu and others that have had the courage to resist the imposition of governments of the North and transnational corporations. We call on other governments to join the people's resistance against climate crisis.
3. Reaching binding agreements that force all those who pollute the environment to be accountable for the disasters they cause and the crimes they have committed against mother nature. Likewise, require a reduction of carbon gases at the source—polluters should stop polluting.
4. Alert the social movements of the world about what is happening on the planet to defend life and Mother Earth, because we are defining the model for future generations.
5. Grassroots action and mobilization of urban and peasant farm organizations, innovation and the recuperation of ancestral ways of life to save our Mother Earth from attacks by big capital and bad governments. This is our historic responsibility.
6. Policies to protect biodiversity, food sovereignty, water management and administration based on experience and the full participation of the communities themselves.
7. A worldwide consultation with people to decide the policies and global actions needed to defend against climate crisis.

Today, right now, we call on humanity to act immediately to rebuild the life of all of nature, applying the concept of "life in balance."

This is why, from the four corners of the planet, we stand up to say:

No more harm to our Mother Earth! No more destruction of the planet! No more evictions from our territories! No more murder of the sons and daughters of the Mother Earth! No more criminalization of our struggles!

No to the Copenhagen agreement. Yes to the principles of Cochabamba.

¡REDD NO! ¡Cochabamba SI!

The earth is not for sale, it must be recovered and defended!

GLOBALIZE THE STRUGGLE, GLOBALIZE HOPE

Delegation of Vía Campesina a Cancún, Dec. 9, 2010
