

A deepening systemic crisis and rising social response

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In the third quarter of 2012, several climate records were broken, in the US, India, the Arctic and many other parts of the world. The economic crisis has gotten worse in Europe and has begun to knock on the doors of the emerging economies. A global food crisis is on its way because of the droughts, the floods, the diversion of crops to biofuels, and the speculation on food commodities in the financial markets.

The difference though with the previous crisis is that this time the capitalist system has touched the boundaries of the planet Earth and the financial speculation has spiraled out of control as it has overtaken the real economy and become the main driver of profit.

To make matters worse, the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO are only compounding the problems. The international financial institutions are repeating old mistakes of austerity plans for the people and bailouts for the banks. The United Nations is not addressing the environmental crisis. The UN Earth Summit or Rio+20 and the latest climate negotiations of the UNFCCC in Bangkok did not produce anything relevant except proposals for new market mechanisms in relation to the environment under the name of “green economy” and “REDD.” And this is no accident; the stalemate in the climate negotiations is the result of the complicity of the elites in developed and emerging countries that are prioritizing the profits of their corporations over the future of humanity and Mother Earth.

We are at the beginning of a chaotic historical period, with events likely to move quickly and unpredictably. This is a critical time for progressive movements to forge systemic change from below.

The social response is escalating—from Chile to India, from Occupy Wall Street to indignados in Europe, from the unemployed youth to the elders without social security. Everywhere, the affected are standing up, going to the streets and raising their voices.

It is within this context that social movements in Asia, led by La Via Campesina, gathered on the 31st of August in Bangkok with activists of traditional movements and new movements of different parts of the world to discuss how to strengthen the solidarity and link social and environmental struggles at a global level, especially in relation to climate change.

Climate change may not be the priority issue of all social movements but as climate and environmental issues impact on their daily lives—as food becomes scarce or food prices become too high for people to afford, or access to water, energy and health services become limited, these are issues mobilizing the people. In this regard, it's necessary to make the links between the climate crisis, the food crisis and the financial speculation highlighting the connections with current campaigns in relation to agro-fuels, GMOs, speculation on food derivatives, water, land grabbing, health, human rights, free trade agreements, the impunity of transnational corporations, and alternatives like food sovereignty, rights of nature, financial transaction taxes and others. Our struggles are inextricably linked to each other and as we link our fights, our impact shall be

stronger. As a result of these movements' dialogue in Bangkok, a statement of solidarity with Occupy Wall Street on the occasion of their first anniversary was sent out under the title "Stop financial speculation on food and climate," and Occupy Wall Street developed an action for the 17th of September under the slogan: "When it comes to the environmental crisis all roads lead to Wall Street."

Internally, Focus on the Global South, in this third quarter, finalized its process of transition and redefinition of its new program, "Whose New Asia?," and adopted the decision to change from its previous news letter *FOCUS ON TRADE* to a more all encompassing one called *FOCUS ON THE GLOBAL SOUTH* that will come to your mailbox every three months.

Turbulent times are ahead but we are excited and hopeful for the staggering potential of the power of social movements from all over the world for changing the system and reclaiming our future.

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P.S.

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