

# Call to Asia Social Movements Assembly in Manila

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## **Building solidarity and strengthening our struggles to address the economic and climate crisis in the fight to change the system**

Last September 17, 2012, in an inspiring expression of solidarity from the South to the North, more than 35 social movements and civil society organizations from Asia together with regional networks, international organizations and social movements, sent a letter to our brothers and sisters in Occupy Wall Street on the occasion of the first anniversary of their struggle.

This was a direct result of the social movements meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand last August 31. Called by La Via Campesina together with several social movements from around Asia, the open meeting which was attended by over 60 representatives of social movements and civil society organizations, aimed to collectively assess, analyze and strategize on how to regain our momentum in the fight against climate change, build solidarity and connect our struggles to change the system. The open meeting was very successful in achieving its stated objectives and agreed to hold a follow up assembly in Manila, Philippines during the World Social Forum on Migrations.

## **Confronting the reconfiguration of capitalism that deepens the environmental and economic crisis**

For us in Asia, we are no strangers to the financial and economic crises plaguing the world now. The Asian financial crisis of the late 90's witnessed the crash of several Asian economies and their currencies with the Indonesian rupiah losing as much as 80 percent of its value. Today, as the financial and economic crises hit the centers of capitalism in the US and EU, the reverberations can be felt across the world, including Asia. In this highly globalized neoliberal capitalist system, there will be no escape from the crisis.

Given the lessons though of the Asian financial crisis and the somber assessment of the 2008 global financial crisis, it is clear that bankers and financial speculators that have run amuck and the governments who allowed them to do so, are to blame. Yet, despite all the evidence, banks and financial institutions were bailed out and people made to pay. Finance capital has been allowed to grow instead of being disciplined. The numbers do not lie. In 2011 alone, the speculative economy reached a staggering 1,500 trillion US dollars leaving behind the real economy value of 64 trillion US dollars.

But it does not stop there. Capitalists, under the new Green Economy, will be able to put a price on nature and its functions and bring these into the market. Following the example of carbon markets where polluters can trade their polluting rights, under the green economy, parts of nature and biodiversity will be priced, exploited, traded and offset.

This concept of endless growth, on a planet that has clearly reached its limits, can no longer continue. Already, we feel the impacts of climate change with extreme weather events. Droughts, floods, heat, cold - all in extremes - have wreaked havoc on crops, food and water supplies,

livelihoods, exacerbating hunger and generating a new set of climate migrants.

The world is standing at a precipice. It is clear that if we are to have real change then we will need to take action.

In this context, at our last meeting in Bangkok on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2012, we came to the understanding that in order to address this new offensive from capital it is necessary to link the social and environmental struggles at local, regional and global levels – to connect the urgent demands of the people for food, water, health, energy, employment, rights and access with the struggles against climate change, financial speculation, land grabbing, neoliberal free trade and investment agreements, impunity of transnational corporations, criminalization of migrants and refugees, austerity measures and social security cuts.

We need to develop and strengthen the connections between the different alternatives that are being promoted by social movements like food sovereignty, energy democracy, human security, rights of nature, deglobalization, defense of the commons and several others to overcome the capitalist system.

We call on all social movements, people's organizations, civil society and activists to come to Manila during the World Social Forum on Migrations and to join us in a discussion from 9am-6pm on November 28, 2012, about our proposals and strategies to build solidarity and strengthen our struggles and discuss our alternatives to address the economic and climate crisis in the fight to change the system.

Below is a proposed agenda:

- 1) Perspective setting: Global crises and the need for alternatives
- 2) Discussion on elements of alternatives to the system – Economic Justice, Political Sovereignty, Environmental and Climate Justice, and Social Justice
- 3) Building solidarity: discussion on supporting and linking struggles
- 4) Next steps

We hope that this will be a step forward in our struggle to reclaim our future.

#### *ENDORSERS:*

Alliance of Progressive Labor, Philippines  
All Nepal's Peasants' Federation  
AKAR (Alliance for People's Sovereignty)  
Aniban ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (AMA)  
Anti Debt Coalition (KAU)  
Associated Labor Unions (ALU-TUCP)  
Assembly of the Poor, Thailand  
Asia-Pacific Network on Food Sovereignty (APNFS)  
ATTAC Japan  
Bangladesh Kishani Sabha  
Bangladesh Krishok Federation  
Bhartiya Kisan Union, BKU, India  
Building and Woodworkers' International (BWI)  
Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP)

Confederation of Labor and Allied Social Services (CLASS-TUCP)  
Coalition Against Trafficking in Women – Asia Pacific  
Confederation of Independent Unions in the Public Sector (CIU)  
DELAPAN  
EU-ASEAN FTA Peoples’ Campaign Network  
Federation of Filipino Workers (FFW)  
Focus on the Global South  
Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC)  
Global Network – Asia Pacific  
Indonesian Association for Political Economy (AEPI)  
International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN)  
Jubilee South-Asia Pacific Movement on Debt and Development  
Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha, India  
KIARA (The Peoples’ Coalition for Fisheries Justice) -Indonesia  
Kilusang Maralita sa Kanayunan (KILOS KA)  
La Via Campesina  
Lembaga Pengembangan Pendidikan dan Komunikasi Popular (Organization for Education Development and Popular Communication)  
Makabayan  
Mindanao Peoples’ Peace Movement (MPPM)  
Migrant Forum in Asia  
MONLAR, Sri Lanka  
NAGKAISA  
National Confederation of Transportworkers’ Union (NCTU)  
National Union of Workers’ in Hotel Restaurant and Allied Industries (NUWHRAIN)  
NOUMINREN, Japan  
Partido ng Manggagawa (PM)  
Philippine Independent Public Sector Employees Association (PIPSEA)  
Pinag-isang Tinig at Lakas ng Anakpawis (PIGLAS)  
Public Services Labor Independent Confederation (PSLINK)  
Pusat Kajian dan Solidaritas Timur Tengah (Center for Study and Solidarity for the Middle East Sentro  
Serikat Petani Indonesia (Indonesian Peasant Union)  
Serikat Becak Merdeka (SBM, Independent Pedicab Organization)  
Serikat Rakyat Pekerja (SRP, Working People’s Union)  
Serikat Pekerja Mandiri (SPM, Independent Labour Union)  
Sintesa Foundation, Indonesia  
Solidarity Workshop, Bangladesh  
South Indian Coordination Committee of Farmers Movements (SICCFM)  
Transnational Institute  
Transnational Migrant Platform  
Workers’ Solidarity Network (WSN)  
World March of Women – Pilipinas  
Yayasan Alam Tani

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**P.S.**

\* Please send us an email if you would like to attend this assembly: Josua Mata of Alliance of Progressive Labor [josua.apl.org.ph](mailto:josua.apl.org.ph) and Mary Lou Malig of La Via Campesina [marylouisemalig@gmail.com](mailto:marylouisemalig@gmail.com)

\* The World Social Forum on Migrations is happening in Manila from November 26-30. To participate in those activities, please register at <http://www.wsfm2012.org>

\* There will be a Forum on Fighting Corporate Power on November 24, those who are interested in attending this forum, please contact Josua Mata of the Alliance of Progressive Labor at [josua.apl.org.ph](mailto:josua.apl.org.ph)

\* For a summary report of the discussions in Bangkok, please contact Mary Lou Malig of La Via Campesina at [marylouisemalig@gmail.com](mailto:marylouisemalig@gmail.com)