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CAMPAIGN FOR PEOPLE'S GOALS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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of the International Development Agenda
and why the SDGs cannot stop it

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Corporate capture
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Campaign for People's Goals for Sustainable Development
2015

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FOREWORD

Member States of the United Nations (UN) have set 2015 as the year when they chart a new course for humanity – a path toward “sustainable development”. After nearly three years of consultations and intergovernmental negotiations, the document entitled “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” was finally agreed by Member States’ consensus on 2 August. This will be formally adopted by Heads of State and Governments at the United Nations Summit for the Post-2015 Development Agenda scheduled for September 25-27, 2015.

Governments and UN officials are not short in hyperbole when they describe the significance of this declaration. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon writes, “*The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* encompasses a universal, transformative and integrated agenda that heralds an historic turning point for our world. This agreement results from a truly open, inclusive and transparent process. This is the People’s Agenda, a plan of action for ending poverty in all its dimensions, irreversibly, everywhere, and leaving no one behind. It seeks to ensure peace and prosperity, and forge partnerships with people and planet at the core.”

However, many people’s organizations and movements are more cautious if not skeptical. This collection of articles produced by the Campaign for Peoples Goals for Sustainable Development (CPGSD) and IBON International illuminates why. It reflects the lived experience of indigenous peoples, small farmers and peasants, migrants, and ordinary citizens from various regions of the global south under the neoliberal mode of development – the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) notwithstanding. It also critically examines the prospects of achieving the new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda in the face of dominant trends in government policies and practices.

The publication therefore serves as a timely and urgent reminder to advocates and governments alike that the people will not be placated by lofty pledges and grand declarations. For as long as the structural roots of poverty, inequality, exclusion and environmental destruction are not addressed; for as long as the failed and unjust economic and political system remains intact; there will be reason for people to resist and to struggle for an alternative future.

The CPGSD is supported by a broad array of grassroots organizations, labor unions, social movements of women, youth, migrants, rural folks, indigenous peoples and others, non-governmental organizations, and other institutions committed to forging new pathways to the future we want. It serves as a platform for linking local struggles with one another for mutual learning and support. At the same time it challenges governments and the multilateral systems to respond to the demands of the marginalized sectors in society.

For the last two years, the Campaign for Peoples Goals has distinguished itself for consistently articulating a system-critical perspective even as it engaged governments and policy makers crafting this post-2015 development framework.

With this publication, the Campaign for People's Goals, in partnership with Misereor, the German Catholic Bishop's Organization for Development Cooperation, invites readers to critically reflect on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. More importantly, the publishers hope that it will also help promote international solidarity and support for peoples struggles on ground, and inspire more to join the peoples struggle for development justice and system change from below.

This publication will not be possible if not for the hard work of our partners: Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP); Centre for Research and Advocacy, Manipur (CRAM); Ogoni Solidarity Forum (OSF); Movimiento Migrante Mezzoamericano (MMM); and People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty, Latin America (PCFS-LAC). This publication was also made possible through the generous support of Misereor and its commitment to the cause of justice throughout the world.



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SUSTAINING UNDERDEVELOPMENT

Neoliberalism and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Every day, as we go about our daily lives, we are witness to the catastrophic failure of the dominant development pathways. These development policies, anchored on the principles of “trickle-down” economic growth, the promotion of deregulation, liberalization and privatization as well as the excessive reliance on foreign direct investments have intensified social and economic polarization in society. On the one hand, the domestic political and economic elites and their transnational corporate partners have magnified their accumulation of wealth and power as a result of these policies. Meanwhile, the majority of the world’s population – the working class, the small and landless farmers, women, children and the elderly, the indigenous peoples, fisherfolk and the urban poor have been subjected to intensifying forms of poverty and vulnerability.

These societal problems are compounded by rapid rates of environmental degradation such as deforestation, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions that are contributing to the intensifying risks associated with climate change. Despite the pronouncements of the Kyoto Protocol, advanced capitalist countries have refused to downscale their carbon emissions, offloading the risks associated with climate change to poor Small Island developing states. This is a perverse example of how these advanced capitalist states continue to privatize the wealth created through capitalism while socializing the risk associated with it. The lack of binding regulatory frameworks has compelled these advanced capitalist states, and the transnational corporations domiciled in these states to continue

with their “business-as-usual” approach: maximizing profits while externalizing the costs to the environment.

The perverse realities generated under a neoliberal development model are obviously driving the world towards a catastrophic future. Despite pronouncements made by the United Nations, industrialized countries and business sector representatives towards adopting a sustainable development approach, their adherence to neoliberalism will perpetuate inequalities and unsustainable production and consumption that characterize contemporary societies today.

It is within this quagmire of failed development outcomes that the struggle of the people and grassroots communities should be highlighted. All across the globe, individuals, communities and civil society link arms to resist the imposition of neoliberal development which has only resulted to widespread depredation of local communities and the natural environment. These communities also struggle for a much more equitable development framework anchored on the principle of “development justice”, i.e. development that promotes people’s wellbeing, solidarity and equality (within and between countries, between men and women) while respecting the limits of the earth’s carrying capacity. This development framework is based on justice and a transformative vision for society.

II. Overview of the 5 local struggles and campaigns

India

In the northeastern region of Manipur, the indigenous communities face the threat of eviction and displacement due to two proposed dam projects: The 1500MW Tipaimukh Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project and the Mapithel Dam of Thoubal Multipurpose Project. The Indian government is pushing these projects through a private-partnership agreement that attempts to leverage private sector investment in the dam infrastructure development. The Indian government has emphasized that these projects will benefit

the Manipur region, particularly water provision and electricity generation.

However, these projects have been met with intense opposition from grassroots communities. Activists opposing the Tipaimkuh dam claim that the project will sink 16 villages in the Barak Valley and will displace 40,000 indigenous people landless. An estimated 8,000,000 trees and 27,000 bamboo groves will be also be lost to the project, severely affecting the biodiversity of the area. Those opposing the Mapithel Dam argue that the project will submerge six villages in the Mapithel Hill Range and Valley, directly displacing 10,000 people. An estimated 1,000 hectares of wet paddy field and 595 hectares of forestland will be submerged.

Opposition to the project has been met with severe repression and human rights violations committed by the Indian military forces. One such incident occurred on November 3, 2008 when members of the Indian Reserve Battalion and the Manipur Police tortured more than forty (40) protesters - all women. Despite the presence of military troops and the imminent threat of repression, the people affected by the dam projects in Manipur have organized themselves into organizations and have actively campaigned for the cessation of these dam projects. These groups are also advocating for the termination of local state policies that have institutionalized the construction of mega dams in Manipur such as the Manipur Hydro Power Policy (2012) and the Manipur Loktak Lake Protection Act (2006).

Philippines

In the Central Philippines, indigenous Aetas and landless farmers residing in the hills encompassing the provinces of Tarlac and Pampanga are facing the looming threat of displacement due to another PPP scheme - the creation of the Clark Green City project. The project will comprise 9,450 hectares, a size that corresponds to a size that is half of Metro Manila. The Clark Green City is expected to cost around P200 billion and will be developed over a 50-year span through the Public-Private Partnership Scheme. Proponents of the Clark Green City, primarily the state agency Bases and Conversion

Development Authority is marketing the project through its apparent adherence to sustainable development technologies as well as being the first Philippine city to be “disaster-resilient”. Energy consumption in the proposed city will be sourced from renewable sources, adding to the allure of the project.

Despite its image of sustainability, the process driving its creation is tainted with violence and repression. According to Kilusang Nagtatanggol sa Inang Kalikasan (KINK), a local environmental coalition that opposes the construction of the Clark Green City, an estimated 20,000 Aeta and farmer families will be displaced when the Clark Green City project begins construction. These indigenous peoples as well as landless farmers have depended on the land for generations, generating sustainable livelihoods through subsistence farming and hunting. However, the impending eviction threatens to undermine these livelihoods and rendering them powerless in determining their economic destiny, as they would be dispossessed from the lands and become part of the ballooning number of reserve labor. Opposition to the project has been met with repression, as the communities are regularly threatened by Philippine military personnel. . Individuals and organizations that speak out against the project are marked as subversives by the military, rendering them as targets for physical harassments, intimidation and even killings

Despite the impending threat posed by military personnel, the people and communities affected by the Clark Green City project have not backed down from these threats. Instead, they have strengthened their resolve in campaigning for a more just outcome. Last September 2014, during the commemoration of Martial Law, 200 members of the Aeta Tribal Association marched under the sweltering heat of the sun to condemn the Clark Green City project. In November of that year, an international fact finding mission was held, led by the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Alyansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon and the Asian Peasant Coalition in order to support the affected communities and raise the issues to the global level. Early this year, farmers barricaded Aranguren village, Capas to prevent the entry of heavy equipment that they believed

will be used for construction of the Clark Green City project (Orejas, 2015)

Latin America

In Latin America, small-scale farmers and indigenous food producers are under siege from transnational agribusiness corporations through the proposed legislation of various seed laws in different countries in the continent. This is a symptom of a long-standing pattern in the continent: the continued assault of transnational corporations on food production in the continent and their continued attack on food sovereignty.

Transnational corporations such as ADM, Bunge and Cargill (United States) and Louis Dreyfuss (France), otherwise known as the ABCD of the global food trade has dominated global soy cultivation and production in key markets, accounting for 43% of oil production in Brazil, 80% in the EU, and 75% of the soy market in the United States. In Argentina, these same agribusiness TNCs account for 78% of exports of wheat, 79% corn, 71% soybean meal, 95% soybean oil and 97% oil sunflower. In terms of global grain trade, these four companies account between 75-90% of the global trade in basic food items (Lawrence, 2011). soybean oil and 97% oil sunflower. In terms of global grain trade, these four companies account between 75-90% of the global trade in basic food items (Lawrence, 2011). The corporate control on food trade is also compounded with an increasing corporate control on seeds as Monsanto (USA), DuPont (USA), Syngenta (Switzerland) and Limagrain (France) control at least 53% of the global proprietary seed market.

The dominance of these TNCs is reflected in their increasing influence in directing the agricultural policies of countries in Latin America. An example of this is the proposed seed laws in different countries in the continent. Seed laws expand corporate rights regarding the control of seeds and restricting farmers and indigenous peoples' access to seeds by criminalize age-old practices of saving and exchanging seeds. Through these laws, corporations privatize and control seeds, making farmers dependent on corporate products in order to plant for the next planting season (GRAIN, 2013).

There is a growing movement aimed in resisting the expansion of corporate control over seed production and exchange. Social movements, civil society organizations, academe and indigenous people's organizations have created coalitions against TNCs. These alliances have led various mobilizations and demonstrations to oppose the various seed laws that are being proposed in various countries in Latin America such as Chile, Argentina, and Venezuela among others as well as spur debate on the necessity of these seed laws. Other coalitions and organization have also engaged in seed conservation in order to reduce their dependency on the monopoly control of the seed market. These organizations include Red Guardian Life Seeds (RGSV) of the Peoples Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS), which already developed strategies in their campaign on seed conservation like Campaigns rescue seed, Seed Guardians Encounters, Seed Centre, Ecoversity, among others. These strategies aim to expand beyond national borders in order to mount an organized transnational resistance against TNC control of seeds.

Nigeria

In Ogoniland, Nigeria, the oil extraction activities of Royal Dutch Shell from the 1970s up until the early 1990s have left what was once a bountiful area into a desolate region. The environmental degradation in Ogoniland was due to the numerous oil spills from Shell's pipelines and how the lack of stringent environmental regulations has allowed Shell to evade corporate accountability in cleaning up its mess. An estimated total of 2.1 million barrels of oil was leaked into the environment as a result of roughly 2,976 oil spills from 1976 to 1991 (Ellis, 1995 cited in Cayford, 1996). Meanwhile, gas flares in the Niger Delta Region releases 35 million tons/year and 12 million tons of methane, making the area one of the largest contributors to global warming (Cayford, 1996). Shell has never had to be accountable for these instances of environmental degradation even as the oil extraction activities in the region have netted US\$30 billion for the Nigerian government and Shell.

Resistance to Shell's plunder of the region's oil resources has been met with violent repression from the Nigerian armed forces. In 1990, one of the earliest public demonstrations against Shell's

oil extraction held in Umuechem, east of Ogoniland was violently dispersed by the Nigerian Police Mobile Force (NPMF) which resulted in the death of 80 people and the destruction 495 houses. Shell acquired the services of the NPMF. In 1994, Ken Saro Wiwa and other Ogoni leaders opposed to Shell were arrested under the pretext that they incited the murder of pro-Government Ogoni leaders. Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni leaders were charged before a military tribunal. However, the trial was biased from the start, with military personnel the lawyers of the accused being harassed by the military. Witnesses for the prosecution were likewise bribed by the military in exchange for fabricated testimonies. The tribunal sentenced Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni leaders to death. In 1994, the Rivers State Internal Security Task Force raided Ogoni villages following the arrest of Ken Saro-Wiwa resulting in the death of 2,000 people and the displacement of more than 80,000.

The people of Ogoni have persisted in making Shell accountable for the human rights violations as well as environmental degradation that they have committed. In 2009, Shell agreed to pay US\$15.5 million in settlement to the relatives of the victims, (Pilkington, 2009). While Shell has maintained that it was innocent of the charges, environmental advocates stated that this settlement marked as a victory for a small community up against a giant transnational company. The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) has likewise proposed recommendations for the Nigerian government and oil industry operators to commence the rehabilitation of the Ogoniland such as the establishment of the Ogoniland Environmental Restoration Authority, the creation of Environmental Restoration Fund for Ogoniland with a of US\$1 billion sourced from the oil industry and the Government and the allocation a percentage of all project costs for environmental and sustainable development initiatives for oil industry operators. The organization Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, which was the organization that Saro-Wiwa headed when he was executed, is committed to the ensuring that the recommendations of the UNEP will be concretized.

Central America

Central America is gripped by one of the worst migration crisis in history as thousands of migrants are leaving their respective countries and head north in order to escape the social violence in the area. Migration in Central America is a confluence of various factors rooted in neoliberalism. Neoliberal economic policies in the region were implemented through the Central American Free Trade Agreement and have resulted in the displacement of farmers and rural agricultural workers as they could not compete with the agricultural products of the United States. The lack of domestic industries due to trade liberalization has prevented these surplus workers from being absorbed into the labor force. Furthermore, the proliferation of gangs composed of Central American deported by the United States has resulted in numerous gang instigated violence, forcing tens of thousands to seek refuge elsewhere.

The militarization of the Mexican borders through the US-funded Merida Initiative has also contributed to the uncertainty and vulnerability of these migrants. In 2015, Mexico has detained 9,483 underage migrants and 9,526 women through the Plan Frontera Sur, a component of the Merida Initiative (Soler, 2015). With the destruction of the economic base of Central America, these migrants are forced to migrate in order to survive, rendering them exposed to the violence that permeates migration corridors.

A coalition of social movements and civil society organizations across different countries in the region have mobilized to defend migrant rights in Central America. The strongest initiative for promoting migrant rights has been the movement organized by mothers across Central America who are searching for their missing family members in Mexico while they are on transit to the north. The movement was founded in 1999 by two mothers united by their common plight of searching for their lost migrant children. The two decided to form the Committee of Relatives of Migrants from El Progreso (COFAMIPRO) in 1999 and organized the first search tour in December 2000. In 2008, the Movimiento Migrante Mesoamericano (MMM) became the organizing arm of various search tours that were conducted in Mexico. The organization has

provided institutional support to mothers all across the region and has given them voice in denouncing the repressive migration policies of the Mexican state.

These disparate local struggles are united by their common experience under neoliberalism. As neoliberalism consolidate the economic and political resources of the elite, the majority of the world's population experience heightened vulnerability to their social, economic, political and geographical position. Understanding neoliberalism is a key to countering its negative consequences.

III. Neoliberal Development: The Real Agenda

The experiences enumerated above and the prevailing trends in the international development arena reveal that the prevailing neoliberal development policies associated with the Washington Consensus continue to permeate the dominant development discourse.

These symptoms of neoliberal development unite the seemingly disparate struggles of these five local struggles. From Public-Private Partnerships mega-projects in the rivers of Manipur and the plains of Central Philippines to the privatized profits of Nigeria to the monopoly capital dominance of transnational corporations on Latin America's agriculture to the waves of migrants fleeing from social violence in Central America, the neoliberalism's imprints are marked all over.

The Tipaimukh and Mapithel dam projects in Manipur as already mentioned are Public-Partnership Agreements geared towards increasing private sector control of water infrastructure as well as in providing water services in the country. These PPP schemes enable the private sector partners to undertake the implementation of the project by providing them with public subsidies, incentives and other guarantees that will insulate the private partners from any risk that would discourage investments (Bosshard, 2012). The entry of the private sector in these initiatives however only raises the specter of

another symptom of neoliberal maladies – the privatization of key sectors that were previously incorporated into the public sector. Water services were previously guaranteed as human rights by sovereign states. However, with structural adjustment programs that aim to streamline the state, management of water services is increasingly being bid out to the private sector. With private sector control of dams, one can expect the surge in prices of water services as well as other related services such as electricity costs. Unfortunately, the emerging agenda of the World Bank, the G20 and the private sector is oriented towards massive infrastructure projects financed by private sector partners (Bosshard, 2012).

The withdrawal of the state in providing social services has also had a detrimental impact towards women in the developing world. The reductions of state investments in food subsidies, healthcare spending and education have disproportionately affected women.

The Ogoni struggle in Nigeria is witness to a twisted logic being promoted by prominent development institutions and actors – the privatization of nature and subsuming its governance under the logic of the market. A particular logic is voluntary corporate self-regulation. The massive environmental degradation in Ogoniland due to oil spills from Royal Dutch Shell's operations is a manifestation of how the lack of stringent environmental regulation and compliance benefits corporate profits. Corporations, especially under the contemporary dominance of neoliberalism, have eschewed meaningful attempts at imposing binding regulatory frameworks that can hold corporations accountable; instead, they have promoted corporate self-regulation. In the context of weak states such as those found in the developing south, the notion of corporate self-regulation will only serve as a pretext for maximizing corporate profits while committing treacherous acts of environmental plunder and exploitation of people.

Privatization of nature is also manifested in the concerted efforts of transnational agricultural technology companies such as Monsanto, Bayer and Syngenta in privatizing seed supply all over the world. As shown in the case of Latin America, the privatization of seed supplies has increased the dependency of farmers to transnational

corporations, giving them full control over the food production process. This development severely undermines efforts at developing food sovereignty especially in the developing world.

The heightened dominance of these agribusiness transnational corporations can be rooted in the policies of trade liberalization implemented in the Global South during the late 1980s-early 1990s as part of the structural adjustment programs imposed primarily by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Some of these trade liberalization policies were imposed in the agricultural sector, dismantling tariffs for agricultural products imported from developed countries (where these TNCs are headquartered) and eliminating the agricultural subsidies for agriculture that have helped propped up the income of domestic farmers. These two factors have resulted in the destruction of domestic agricultural systems as they could not compete with the agricultural products still subsidized by developed countries.

The consequences of trade liberalization, as embodied in free trade agreements such as the NAFTA and the CAFTA has dispossessed farmers and rural workers from their livelihoods and have facilitated their exodus into migration corridors. Thus, as seen in numerous cases of diasporas and forced migration all over the world, the destruction of the domestic economic base has forced people to migrate into other countries in order for them to survive. Unfortunately, in numerous cases throughout Central America, they are subjected to gang violence, which is also another sad product of neoliberalism.

The implementation of neoliberal economic policies also has a detrimental impact on gender equality. For example, the emphasis on GDP growth as a measure of social progress ignores contributions to the economy that cannot be quantified in monetary form. This includes the care industry, reproductive activities and informal economy among others, sectors that are primarily dominated by women. The implication of this is that the activities dominated by women such as those in the informal sector do not have a priority in state economic plans and hence, they are deprived of their resource allocation (Kanengoni, 2014). Furthermore, the reduction

in state investments in healthcare, education and food subsidies has an enormous impact on women. Healthcare, which is one of the primary needs of women, is increasingly privatized compromising the access of poor women to quality and safe healthcare. Spiraling costs of education has led to increase in dropouts of women in the educational system as they are pulled out from school at an earlier age, especially in patriarchal societies (Campaign for People's Goals for Sustainable Development, n.d.).

Neoliberalism and its concomitant processes have initiated, and in many cases, magnified the problems of poverty, hunger, social exclusion, violence and environmental degradation. The capital accumulation of the elite has magnified under neoliberalism, while the majority of the workers have seen their wages either stagnate or decline. Leaders of different states have acknowledged the development problems that the world confronts. It is for this reason that the United Nations has initiated the different processes that will lead to the formulation and adoption of a new global development framework.

IV. Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In 2010, United Nations secretary general Ban Ki-Moon, as requested by member states of the United Nations, initiated the process of formulating a development agenda that will replace the MDG model by the time that it will expire in 2015. This post-2015 development model is expected to be more cognizant of the on-the-ground realities confronting member states, especially developing countries, small-island states and landlocked developing countries. In 2012, at the Rio+20 conference marking the 20th anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, member states approved the outcome document "The Future We Want" which indicated the need for the creation of "sustainable development goals" (SDGs) to guide the post-2015 development agenda (Pingeot, 2014).

The Sustainable Development Goals, as crafted by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development encapsulates seventeen (17) goals that span the following development concerns: poverty, food security, health, education, gender equality and empowerment, water management, energy access, sustainable economic growth and industrialization, reducing inequality, building resilient cities, sustainable consumption, combatting climate change, sustainable marine resource use, protecting terrestrial ecosystems, building peaceful societies and strengthening means of implementation and global partnerships.

The sustainable development goals are part of a post-2015 development agenda that attempts to address development problems through an integration of economic growth and sustainable use of resources. Furthermore, there is an effort towards attempting to address the problems associated with climate change, something that the MDG framework failed to engage in. Another significant thrust in the post-2015 development agenda is the increasing shift towards adopting a global partnership approach towards development, integrating a coalition of actors such as transnational corporations, nation-states, and civil society organizations (Pingeot, 2014) in order to attain targets and objectives.

Several aims of the SDGs as well as the overall post-2015 development agenda deserve praise for incorporating sectors that are historically marginalized in development plans such as health, gender empowerment, access to water and sanitation, sustainable industrialization and consumption, conservation and sustainable management of marine and terrestrial ecosystems and building peaceful societies. However, the silence of the SDGs as well as the post-2015 development agenda on the ravaging consequences of a neoliberal path of development will have severe repercussions on the ability to attain the SDGs.

The sustainable development goals contain commitments in addressing the needs of the population basic social services as well as in accessing economic resources to enable them to live a dignified life in a sustainable manner. However, the very same governments that have approved the SDGs are still committed to the perpetuation

of a neoliberal development path driven by free trade agreements that will strengthen the rights of corporations over the welfare of the population.

Case in point is the commitment of the United States, under the leadership of Barrack Obama, to initiate the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement is a proposed free trade agreement between the United States and 11 countries - Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam (Office of the United States Trade Representative, n.d.). As a free trade agreement, the TPP has two important components: reductions in tariff and non-tariff barriers as well as new rules for intellectual property rights and foreign direct investments (Johnson, 2015). What is particularly troubling is that the new rules include the insertion of investor-state dispute settlements (ISDS) that would be biased towards foreign investors over domestic investors (Perez-Rocha, 2014).

The insertion ISDS into the TPP agreement will strengthen the rights of corporations to undermine the sovereignty of states that will implement legislation to protect the welfare of the people. Under the TPP, corporations are given greater rights to sue national governments that implement regulations and policies that will impede the accumulation of greater corporate profits. Under this condition, the attainment of sustainable development goals becomes tenuous especially if it runs counter to the interests of corporations. Already, developing countries are losing numerous ISDS to transnational corporations such as Venezuela being ordered to pay US\$ 1.6 billion to Exxon to compensate for nationalizing projects and El Salvador losing a US\$301 million case to Pacific Rim, a mining company that has since been acquired by OceanaGold. When developing countries lose these cases, they also lose the funds necessary for funding much-needed social services in their territories (Perez-Rocha, 2014).

The TPP case serves as a prelude to what people can expect from the Post-2015 Development Agenda: the increasing power of transnational corporations to steer the direction of a global development agenda. This is evident in three ways: First, the private sector, especially the big transnational corporations have become

increasingly involved in the development of the goals of the Post-2015 Development Agenda (Pingeot, 2014). These goals have veered away from redistribution of resources away from the transnational corporations and the economic elite; instead, they aim to further subsume the aims of sustainable development under the aims of the business sector. Hence, there are no goals that aim to rectify centuries-old problems of inequality and exclusion.

Furthermore, the Post-2015 Development Agenda aims to increase the role of private finance in the means of implementation of the goals and targets of sustainable development (Quintos, 2014). This will be actualized in leveraging increased financing from the private sector towards development projects such as infrastructure development and service delivery through Public-Private Partnership schemes. However, as has been pointed out earlier, this only serves to guarantee corporate profits as state subsidies are provided to private sector entities in order to minimize their investment risks. The procurement of these services will still be costly for the population since the private sector will be geared towards cost-recovery, thereby making prices for these services inaccessible for the poor.

Lastly, the increased assimilation of the private sector into the policy-making process of the United Nations and other important multilateral governance structures are not accompanied with a simultaneous increase in holding them accountable to the public (Quintos, 2014 p. 12). The promotion of corporate self-regulation in lieu of legally binding accountability frameworks for these corporations increases the risk that these corporations are only using their magnified influence in the policy making process in order to advance their corporate interests within the development agenda. This does not bode well with the public since unlike states that can be held accountable, there are no available mechanisms to check and regulate corporate activities that are contrary to the interests of the public.

The Post-2015 Development Agenda is increasingly shaping up to be one that is steered by corporate interests, to the detriment of attaining development justice. Just as how the Millennium Development Goals were embedded within the wider restructuring

of the global economy along neoliberal lines, the sustainable development goals and the emerging Post-2015 development agenda serves to reignite the engines of neoliberalism as it navigates through numerous crises since 2008. Unfortunately, the perpetuation of neoliberalism will also result in the perpetuation of injustice committed against the majority of the people.

V. The road to development justice

The experience of grassroots communities and the majority of the world's population point to economic, social and gender exclusion based on a development framework skewed towards the rich and the elite. This same development framework also has no remorse for the environmental plunder that it has committed and how it has subjected the marginalized segment of the world's population to extreme weather events due to climate change. The struggles of these local communities against the imposition of neoliberal development policies gives the world renewed hope that the path towards development justice can be paved from these multitudes of diverse struggles. Development justice can be attained through five different components:

1. **Redistributive Justice:** Redistribution of economic resources can take the form of progressive taxation on the economic elite as well as the redistribution of economic assets such as land to those who actually do labor on it – the workers. Furthermore, redistributive policies can enhance public funds that can sustain the implementation of social protection schemes in the developing world. An example of this is the funding of health services through progressive taxation on transnational corporations and domestic elites. There should also be a concerted effort towards institute living wage, which can raise the standards of living for majority of the world's population. There should also be a united effort to implement redistributive schemes between countries, by mandating time-bound, concrete ODA

commitments from developed countries to the developing world.

2. **Economic Justice:** Economic justice can be attained through the transformation and reorientation of economic systems to ensure the fulfillment of human rights for all and promote people's wellbeing rather than maximizing profits. It is important to stress that decision making regarding the production process be transferred towards the local communities so that they will be empowered to produce products that will be of value to them. Furthermore, a reorientation of the economic system towards the needs of the population can provide pathways towards sustainable forms of production.
3. **Social and Gender Justice:** Social and gender justice can be achieved through the recognition of women's rights and as well as a recognition and reorientation of economic policies that fully incorporate the lived experience of women, especially in the developing world. This would take into account economic activities of women that are not captured by official records and allot resources towards these activities. Attainment of gender justice also requires challenging and eliminating the vestiges of patriarchy and all forms of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion that exist between nations, within communities and between men and women.
4. **Environmental Justice:** Environmental justice can be achieved through the transformation of political, economic and social systems to achieve ecological sustainability while ensuring an equitable and just distribution of environmental risks, burdens and benefits. This can be attained through progressive measures such as the gradual divestment from coal-based production as well as imposing binding regulation on capping carbon emissions from developed countries. By imposing these binding regulations on carbon emissions, the developed countries are able to ensure environmental justice by recognizing their historical role

in the rise of carbon emissions. Furthermore, there should be a commitment towards developing an international mechanism that can ensure the transfer of technology and finance from developed countries to least developed countries in order for the latter to develop climate change adaptation and mitigation. These efforts will ensure that the historical role of developed countries in inducing climate change is rectified in a post-2015 world.

5. **Accountability to peoples:** In order to ensure accountability, there should be concerted efforts towards empowering people to be part of free, prior and informed decision making at all stages of development processes from the local to national to international levels. Furthermore, there should be an institutionalization of legally-binding, enforceable accountability mechanisms that will regulate corporate and state actions. These mechanisms should be able to enforce regulations that will prevent these corporations from conducting operations that will be detrimental to the overall welfare of the community and the environment. These mechanisms can provide the frontline communities and organizations with important additional arsenal that can be used in the face of increasing corporatization of the social and the ecological environment.

With the advent of a Post-2015 Development Agenda, it is important to ask the basic question: Development for whom? It is becoming clear as leaders of the world herald this new development agenda that the goals and indicators have tipped the scale towards transnational corporations, advanced capitalist states and the domestic elites of the developing world. With these developments in place, the struggle for development justice gains a sense of urgency. The struggle for a post-2015 development agenda that embraces development justice starts by participating, supporting and linking people's struggles (for development justice) on the ground.

DAM(NED) COMMUNITIES

Violence and Eviction in the Manipur Region

The armed conflict prone State of Manipur lies along the North Eastern corridor of India, flanked by Burma on its Eastern side. The state covers a land area of 22, 327 square kilometers. The landscape of Manipur has two predominant characteristics: in the outer area of the state, rolling hills and narrow valleys characterize the area whereas in the inner area of the state is dominated by a flat plain, and associated landscapes. Manipur is also dotted by four (4) major river basins: the Manipur River Basin in the central part of the state, the Barak River Basin to the West, the Yu River Basin to the East and the Lanye River Basin to the North. Within these river basins lie major river systems that feed into the famed Loktak Lake.

Manipur is home not only to such vibrant geophysical characteristics but also to a plurality of ethnic groups such as the Nagas, Meeteis, Kuki, Hmar, Pangal and others. The state of Manipur has long been considered vital crossroad for economic and cultural exchange between the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia, accounting for a variety of traditions and cultures in this area. The various ethnic groups in Manipur have formed a symbiotic relationship with their physical environment, propagating a sustainable form of resource management in the area. This is evidenced in the religious traditions of the Meeteis wherein ancestral and animist worship centered on forest patches have created “sacred groves” that serve as a tool for conserving biodiversity. Researchers have discovered that these sacred groves serve as storage for flora and fauna with very high medicinal and economic value.

Manipur has become the contemporary poster child of a battle that rages on within the forests of India. Specifically this battle is waged between the forces of capital accumulation and modernity against the traditional lifeworld of indigenous communities that depend on the forests, waters and land for sustaining their ways of living. The confluence of vibrant hydrological attributes within the state and the concentration of culturally diverse ethnic communities have become a combustible situation as the major river basins of Manipur have attracted project proposals and infrastructural investments in the creation of mega-dams. These mega dam projects threaten the environment as well as the economic and cultural existence of numerous ethnic communities that have depended on these river systems for thousands of years. The focus of this article will be the 1500 MW Tipaimukh Multipurpose Hydroelectric project and the Mapithel dam of the Thoubal Multipurpose Hydroelectric Projects, aggressively pursued in Manipur. Indigenous communities have protested the numerous forms of violations conducted in the pursuit of profits. These projects come in the heel of a history of mega dam projects initiated in the Indian subcontinent, intent on maximizing profits for transnational corporations.

Mega-Dam Projects in India: A History of Failed Promises for Development

India's massive river networks have spurred dam infrastructure projects and other hydrological projects throughout its history. Dams were created in pre-colonial India wherein these infrastructure were designed to harness natural water cycle systems for human productivity by storing precipitation; tapping river inundations and recovering groundwater recharge (D'Souza 2008). Under British colonialism, modern irrigation techniques were introduced which no longer relied on the seasonal variations in the Indian climate and topographical structures. This was achieved through infrastructural interventions along the rivers' course, with water flows channeled through canal irrigation and regulated by a series of shutters. However, this had a major impact on the topographical environment as these engineering projects transformed the eastern

deltas of the Indian subcontinent (Bengal, Bihar and Orissa) from flood-dependent agricultural systems into disaster vulnerable landscapes. The legacy of the colonial hydraulic regime was one of environmental degradation, economic displacement and cultural disenfranchisement.

As the Indian state gained independence in 1947, it embarked on a massive attempt at harnessing the country's hydrologic endowments in order to power its drive towards modernization. Prior to 1947, there were 300 dams that were operating in the country. Between 1947 and 2000, this figure has ballooned to 4000 dams, half of this figure was built from 1971-1989. Currently, India ranks third in dam building all over the world, behind the United States and China (Pande, 2007). The Indian government has rationalized these attempts at dam constructions by pointing out their beneficial contribution towards flood control, water supply, hydroelectric power generation and irrigation.

Since the 1980s, dam constructions in India, particularly the mega-dam projects have come under increasing criticism from social movements and civil society actors. Protests have centered on the economic and environmental devastation caused to communities that lie along the affected sites. Since 1947, the total number of people displaced by dam projects in India has totaled to 40 million and these displaced communities have been denied meaningful resettlement or compensation (D'Souza 2008). Conflict over the appropriation of the use of water resources generated by the dams have intensified in recent years as water from dams have increasingly been diverted away from agriculture and towards urban use and industry. The consequences of mega-dam construction are evident in the two local case studies of the Mapithel Dam and the Tipaimukh Dam in the state of Manipur.

Dam Projects in Manipur: The Contradictions of Development

Tipaimukh Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project

The 1500MW Tipaimukh Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project is a proposed dam construction project located on the intersection of the Barak and the Tuivai Rivers in South Western corner of Manipur. The proposed height of the dam is 162.8 meters while its length is 390 meters. The original intent of the project was to contain floodwaters in the lower Barak valley but hydroelectric generation was later incorporated into the project.

The project was first proposed in 1984 but it has been subjected to numerous delays due to raging controversies regarding the implementation of the project. Some of these projects include interstate dispute between Bangladesh and India regarding water rights. Of particular importance to this paper however is its impact on the natural environment as well as the threat of eviction of numerous indigenous communities that lie along the Barak river basin. From 2004-2008, public consultations under the controversial Environmental Impact Assessment Notifications were held but local communities to be affected by the project mounted staunch opposition to the construction of the dam. Yet the project received environmental clearance in 2008 from the Government of India. The colossal impact of Tipaimukh dam was reinforced in 2013 when the Forest Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India, rejected the Forest clearance for the Tipaimukh Dam Project. However, there's continued push for the dam construction by both the Government and corporations awarded contract for the project, the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC), primarily. The policy stance of the national government as well as the government of Manipur has put the survival and well-being of indigenous communities at risk.

Opposition to the dam centers on the massive displacement of river-based communities once the dam is completed. According to estimates from civil society organizations opposed to the project, the size of the area that will be submerged is equivalent to 30,860 hectares. This project will submerge 16 villages in the Barak River

Basin and will render 40,000 indigenous people landless. Within this submergence zone, an official estimation revealed, at least 8,000,000 trees and 27,000 bamboo groves will be lost to the project. Biodiversity of the Manipur region will be severely affected since the submergence area is also home to a high concentration of endemic plants, herbs and medicinal plants, rare orchids and other flora and fauna. The affected forest area is also the habitat of an extensive array of endemic animals such as the Royal Bengal Tigers, clouded leopard, hillock gibbons, slow Loris, pig-tailed macaque, Himalayan black bear, Malayan sun bear, pangolin, Himalayan yellow throated marten, Indian rock python, crocodile, hornbill, capped hornbill, black panther among others. Indigenous communities dependent on this forest area for their social, cultural and economic well-being will be severely affected as they will be uprooted from their traditional homelands with little economic security and worse, without a sense of cultural rootedness. Food sovereignty will also be affected as some agricultural areas in the Barak river basin will also be submerged, displacing thousands of smallholder farmers dependent on agriculture. Dam construction in Manipur has had a devastating impact on food production in the state. Since the inception of the 105 MW Loktak Multipurpose Project in 1984, Manipur has been transformed from a self-sufficient food producer into a net importer of food products.

Mapithel Dam of Thoubal Multipurpose hydroelectric Project

The Mapithel Dam is one of the largest dams in the northeast part of India. It is 66-meters high and has a length of up to 1,034 meters. The dam is envisaged to irrigate up to 21,000 hectares of cultivable land, provide 10 million gallons of drinking water daily and generate power of up to 7.5MW. The proposal for the construction of the Mapithel Dam was initiated in 1978 and was approved by the Planning Commission in 1980. Construction began in 1989 despite heavy opposition from the affected villagers.

Opposition to the Mapithel Dam has spanned over three decades starting during the 1980s. The main reason driving opposition to the dam construction is the massive displacement of indigenous communities living along the Thoubal River. According to Mapithel

Dam Affected Villages Organization, an organization opposed to the construction of the dam, the project will submerge six villages in the Mapithel Hill Range and Valley - Louphong, Phayang, Chadong, Ramrei, Ramrei Aze (Lamlai Khunou) and Lamlai Monbung, directly displacing an estimated 10,000 people. The Natural resources of the area will also be significantly affected as an estimated 1,000 hectares of wet paddy field and 595 hectares of forest land will be submerged. The effects are already starting to be felt by some villagers as the Indian government is forcefully commissioning the project. The construction of Mapithel, pursued with extensive militarization, has led to social divisions and conflicts within affected indigenous communities. The dam is today a prima facie case of pursuance of undemocratic and brute forms of development injustice. In January 2015, the Irrigation and Flood Control Department of the Government of Manipur has started to block the Thoubal River in order to fill up the Mapithel Dam reservoir. This has resulted in a substantial loss of agricultural land, grazing areas and forest cover in the villages of Louphong, Chadong, Lamlai Khunnou, Riha etc. Affected villagers, who are threatened with their immediate survival, continue to resist the Mapithel Dam, insisting on the free flow of Thoubal River and to stop construction of the dam.

An enabling environment for large-scale destruction and human rights violations

The 1500MW Tipaimukh Dam project and the Mapithel Dam construction are just some of the several highly contentious dam projects that are being constructed in the state of Manipur. These infrastructural projects are examples of development aggression schemes that aim to drive indigenous communities from their ancestral domains in order to achieve the development objective of the local government of Manipur and the national state of India. The confluence of international financing and oppressive national and local policies has created an enabling environment for the large-scale destruction of indigenous communities within Manipur.

At the international level, international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have facilitated an enabling environment for the construction of mega-dam projects. These two institutions have become increasingly involved in financing India's infrastructure projects well before the adoption of neoliberal policies by the Indian government in the 1990s. In the 1980s, the World Bank provided a US\$450 million dollar loan to co-finance the controversial Sardar-Sarovar dam project; however in 1994, they withdrew from the project after an independent assessment discovered that the project violated social and environmental policies of the Bank. The project has led to the displacement of 250,000 people (Bosshard, 2015).

The failure of the Sardar-Sarovar project led to the World Bank's disengagement from massive hydropower projects. However, over the past few years, the World Bank has expressed its intent in pursuing dam infrastructure projects in order to address energy concerns, particularly in Africa (Bosshard, 2013). While there has been no direct funding for these two dam projects from the international financial institutions in question, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have created the support infrastructure that enables the eventual operation of these dams. An example of a project financed by the World Bank is the High Voltage Transmission Line in covering Manipur and other areas in Northeast India. An estimated twenty (20) dams in the Manipur state, including the Tipaimukh Dam, will generate power for this transmission line. The World Bank also commissioned a study detailing the hydropower potential of India's northeast regions and stressed the need to harness these resources to address the energy needs of India (Rao, 2006). The report emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships in order to effectively exploit the hydropower resources of the region.

At the state level, the antiquated Land Acquisition Act of 1894 has served as the basis of the government for expropriating communal lands from indigenous communities in order to advance infrastructural development. This act, coupled with the Manipur Land Registration and Reforms act of 1960 help facilitate the transfer of land to corporate entities by arguing that the land under question belongs to the state by virtue of "eminent domain". These laws

subsume the right of indigenous communities to chart their own paths toward sustainable development under the banner of “national” development that only prioritizes the interests of the elites.

In order to squash public resistance, state officials utilize antiquated laws such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act of 1958. This law facilitates massive militarization in these areas targeted for development by granting soldiers the power to arrest suspected lawless elements without warrants and to fire those suspected of violating the law, even if it causes death. Furthermore, this law grants soldiers legal immunity, leading to a culture of impunity in affected areas. In areas affected by the Mapithel Dam construction, this law has been used as the basis for the torture and extrajudicial executions of individuals opposed to the construction of the dam. (Vasundhara, 2011). One incident of human rights violations that occurred during the course of the opposition to the dam occurred on November 3, 2008 when members of the Indian Reserve Battalion and the Manipur Police tortured more than forty (40) protesters, all women. Another episode was the brutal dispersal of protesters demanding just compensation for villagers displaced by the Khuga Dam, also in Manipur wherein 3 people were killed while 25 were injured when they were shot upon by a combined team of Indian paramilitary forces, the Border Security Forces and the Indian Reserve Battalion. These incidents underscore how democratic forms of opposition to development aggression are brutally disregarded by the state apparatus in order to protect their investments.

In addition to the repressive mechanism of the military and paramilitary forces, the national and local states bend the regulations and laws in order to facilitate the construction of these mega dams. Villagers and communities affected by the Mapithel Dam and the Tipaimukh Dam projects assert that despite the outright opposition displayed in the various consultations held by the state agencies, these projects still continued. This shows that the Indian government violated the norms set by the United Nations requiring the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples for projects in their territories.

Implications for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The dam struggles in Manipur and the rampant incidents of human rights violations, environmental degradation, and socio-economic displacement have important ramifications for the post-2015 development agenda. A nexus of private sector actors, international financial institutions, and state agencies at the local and national level drives the dam infrastructure projects in Manipur.

The massive dam infrastructure projects in the Manipur region reflect an important component of an emerging development agenda of the World Bank, the G20 and the private sector. This development agenda is geared towards facilitating private investment in regional areas by undertaking massive infrastructure projects. These infrastructure projects, will be undertaken by private sector actors supported by national states through public subsidies and other forms of incentives and guarantees that will absorb the risks that the private sector will otherwise have to incur (Bosshard, 2012 p. 5). One of the priority sectors that these PPP projects aim to harness is the energy sector. The World Bank's infrastructure energy has recommended the revival of multipurpose dams, stressing their importance in addressing the energy, water supply and climate mitigation needs of the population (Bosshard, 2012 p. 7). The World Bank, G20 and their private sector partners believe that these infrastructure projects can trigger economic growth in areas where these projects will be implemented. The infrastructure projects being pushed by the World Bank, G20 and private sector partners however neglects the social and environmental impact of these projects. In their respective reports, the World Bank and the G20 have not incorporated the social and environmental costs of these projects. In addition, there were no plans for communities affected by these projects, particularly mega-dam projects. In addition, while the stated objective is providing energy supply to the impoverished, these mega-dam projects actually are biased towards the energy needs of industrial users and urban consumers (Bosshard, 2012 p. 10). There is reason to believe that these exclusions will also be generated in Manipur when the dams will now undergo full operation. Dams in Manipur are operated under a PPP-framework aimed at cost-recovery and profit maximization.

These power-generation projects will naturally be skewed towards the interests of urban and industrial users in Manipur region.

The ongoing dam infrastructure projects violate the purported sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda. Specifically, it undermines goals on ending poverty (Goal 1), achieving food security (Goal 2), access to water (Goal 6), access to energy (goal 7), combatting climate change (Goal 13) and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems (Goal 15). The threat of displacement of indigenous communities located in the sites of these dam projects effectively condemns these peoples to vulnerability and entrenched poverty. As shown by historical experience, communities evicted by dam projects receive little to no compensation. In addition, the displacement from agricultural and forest lands will result in the loss of livelihoods which have sustained these communities for generations. The archaic principle of evicting indigenous communities from agricultural land will have severe implications for food security, as the region will become more dependent on importation of food.

Means of implementation 7.b aims to expand renewable energy access through the development of infrastructure related to harnessing renewable energy. However, the entry of the private sector in these projects will result in a user's-pay principle in the access of water and energy services sourced from these dams leading to the exclusion of impoverished households who cannot afford to pay for such services. It undermines the principle of access to water and energy as basic human rights needed for everyday existence. Unlike states that have a mandate to fulfill the rights of their constituents, private corporations are geared towards the maximization of profits. The absence of regulatory mechanisms to govern corporate behavior will most likely lead to abuse in profit maximization and in ecological and human rights violations.

Peoples' Demands and Call to Action

The indigenous peoples of Manipur have not been cowed into submission by the repression and deception done by the Indian state

forces. On the contrary, they have actively resisted the construction of the dams, bringing into public debate the social, economic and environmental consequences that these projects will bring. These groups have likewise presented demands for the Indian state to address the growing tensions in the region.

Groups opposed to the Mapithel Dam construction have demanded that the ongoing construction of the dam be stopped until a thorough review has been conducted to assess the negative impacts of the project that cut across the social, economic, environmental and geophysical categories. Several groups in Manipur are also calling for the repeal of local state policies such as the Manipur Hydro Power Policy (2012), Manipur Industrial Investment Policy, 2013, and the Manipur Loktak Lake Protection Act (2006) etc that have institutionalized the construction of mega dams in Manipur and restricted the inalienable rights of fishing communities in the Loktak Wetlands.

There are also clear calls to stop targeting mega dams in Manipur, such as 105 MW Loktak HEP project from being considered as clean and renewable projects and to seek carbon credits from CDM mechanism of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

At the international level, groups opposed to the construction of dams in Manipur have advocated for the institutionalization of a legal mechanism that can hold corporate violators involved in exploitation of peoples land and resources in Manipur. Furthermore, these groups have called on international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, as well as international development actors such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency to desist from providing financial and technical support to mega-dam projects in the Manipur region.

The people of Manipur have likewise urged an alternative development framework that will prioritize the needs of indigenous communities and respect their right towards self-determination in order to attain these development objectives. A development framework centered on the needs and aspirations of the indigenous

peoples of Manipur will be a promising foothold towards developing sustainable development frameworks that can minimize impacts on the environment. Such a development framework needs to embrace the notion of development justice, which embraces the principle of redistribution, an end to privatization, and a demand for corporate accountability among others. Sadly, the sustainable development framework veers away from promoting development justice.

As part of the international solidarity network, we can support the anti-dam struggle in Manipur by propagating the struggles of the people of Manipur at an international level. We can do this through various social media campaigns that publicize their struggle and at the same time, mounting diplomatic pressure against the Indian government by barraging the Indian embassies with diplomatic appeals aimed at desisting from the implementation of the project. We can also directly contribute to the struggles of the people of Manipur through building the capacities of these local organizations in mounting campaigns as well as in financial contributions to their cause. Lastly, we can aid their struggle through building an international coalition linking the indigenous peoples of Manipur with other communities and regions that are facing similar struggles against dam infrastructure projects and in advancing their self determined development.

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CLARK GREEN CITY

Sustainable Development and its Irresolvable Contradictions

There are two competing claims for the land surrounding the hills in the hinterlands of Central Philippines. For the indigenous Aetas who have lived in the area prior to the arrival of colonial powers as well as the landless farmers tilling the farmlands for generations, these lands symbolize life. They depend on these lands for their livelihood but their cultural identity and historical heritage are likewise rooted in these lands. For the economic planners based in the capital, these lands are barren wastelands that can only be made productive through infrastructural investments that can generate economic development. But development for whom? The Aetas ask. Will we benefit from these developments? The farmers ask. Why do we feel that we are all left out? They collectively ask. Who benefits from the Clark Green City project?

The Clark Green City Project: A City for the Future?

The Clark Green City is a project initiated by the Bases Conversion and Development Authority that aims to convert more than 35,000 hectares of agricultural and forest land within the Clark Freeport Zone in towns of Capas and Bamban, Tarlac and parts of Mabalacat, Pampanga into a mixed urban use land that aims to create a modern, sustainable city. The master development plan of the Clark Green City proposal has indicated that the core infrastructure of the city will be comprised of 9,450 hectares within the 35,000 hectare free port zone. This area corresponds to a size that is half of Metro Manila, or the National Capital Region, emphasizing the massive scale of this project. The Clark Green City is expected to cost around P200 billion and will be developed over a 50-year span through a

Public-Private Partnership Scheme (Rappler, 2012). Phase 1 of the project will have five districts -- the government district, the central business district, an academic district, agri-forestry research and development district and the wellness and eco-tourism district. The first phase of the project aims to develop 1,321 hectares of farmland and will begin this year. In order to attract business investors and tenants to the Clark Green City, the BCDA will provide fiscal and non-fiscal incentives including tax exemptions for interested parties.

According to BCDA President and Chief Executive Officer Arnel Casanova, the aim of the project is to create a “modern” city that will be “environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive, economically competitive, culturally relevant and technologically integrated” (website). The project is expected to attract billions of pesos worth of investments. The projected economic returns are staggering. At full capacity, the Clark Green City project is expected to provide an estimated P1.57 trillion per year to the national economy and generate 925,000 jobs in the area (Rappler, 2014). Casanova expects that the project will catalyze regional economic development in the area. Eco-cities are also seen technological innovations that attempt to fix the problems of unsustainable urbanization based on dirty technologies. The creation of the Clark Green City is expected to address problems of overpopulation and congestion in Metro Manila. According to National Economic Development Agency Director General Arsenio Balisacan, the project is equivalent to building a new Metro Manila but this time “it’s going to be a city without the problems of Metro Manila.”

One of the selling points of the Clark Green City project is its emphasis on the utilization of “green technologies” within the area through adopting a Green Building System (Garcia, 2014a). Residential, commercial and industrial buildings are expected to comply with this building standard. According to its website, Clark Green City will be powered by renewable energy derived from “sustainable” sources. Furthermore, the city promises to be the first “disaster-resilient” city in the country through its adoption of “disaster-mitigation” technologies designed to address the natural hazards that plague the country (Garcia, 2014b).

The Clark Green City project envisions itself as “green” and “sustainable” development premised on lofty promises of using renewable sources of energy and green urban planning to rectify the negative consequences of urban growth in Metro Manila. By advertising to its supposed “sustainability”, the project has received unanimous praise from the private sector as well as mainstream media. However, like every massive infrastructural development project, there will be losers in the proposal. These are the invisible, the voiceless and the powerless of Pampanga and Tarlac who stand to lose their homes, their livelihoods and entire cultures from the Clark Green City project.

Right(less) in the City? The dark side of development

The indigenous Aetas consider the territory as their ancestral domain. However, historical injustice was perpetuated against the Aetas when the US imperialist forces grabbed these lands from them and other local farmers in 1947 as part of their efforts to construct the Clark Air Base. The construction of this base was legitimated under the 1947 Mutual Defense Treaty signed between the United States and the Philippines wherein the United States was granted permission to construct military bases and support facilities all over the Philippines. These bases and facilities were governed independently by the Americans, undermining the sovereignty of the Philippines. A total of 23 military bases were constructed all over the Philippines, located in 20 strategic locations and covering a land area of almost 200,000 hectares (Alyansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon, 2013). When the US military bases were expelled from the Philippines in 1991, these lands were transferred to the Philippine government. However, under the deceptive Bases and Conversion Development Act of 1992, these lands are constituted as part of the military reservation of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and were exempted from land redistribution. Rather, the Bases Conversion Development Act of 1992 envisions real estate development in these lands, in order to bolster the financial revenues of the government. Instead of rectifying the historical injustice committed against the indigenous Aetas and Filipino small farmers in the area, the

Philippine government has decided to open up the land for real estate development, privatizing the use of the land under the framework of neoliberal economic development. Furthermore, through the Bases Conversion Development Act, the Philippine state perpetuates the historical process of monopolization of the ownership of the land under the hands of the elite. This process of monopolization constitutes an act of injustice against the millions of indigenous peoples and local small farmers that have been denied the right to own their land by the Philippine state.

The dark side of the Clark Green City project is the impending eviction of almost 20,000 Indigenous Aeta families and local farmers who are currently residing in the area (Ayroso, 2014). Contrary to the claims made by BCDA President and CEO Arnel Casanova who stated that the lands where the Clark Green City project will rise is currently a “idle” (Bases Conversion and Development Authority, 2013), thousands of indigenous Aetas and farmers have developed agricultural systems in the land. These local inhabitants engage in sustainable economic activities such as planting rice, sugar, root crops and fruit-bearing trees. They sell surplus agricultural and forest products for additional income in order to cope with the increase in the daily cost of living (Ayroso, 2014). Ironically, under the BCDA considers the indigenous Aetas as well as the local small farmers as squatters since the area is considered as a military reservation. This constitutes a continuation of the historical process of the marginalization of indigenous peoples from their right to self-determination regarding their ancestral domain.

Life inside a military reservation area severely restricts the right of indigenous peoples and farmers to their livelihood and safety. The Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Bases Conversion Development authority imposes strict limits on the allowable land for cultivation as well as restricting the allowable area for hunting animals. The authorities also impose a strict curfew in the area, limiting the time for locals to trade their products as well as in freely moving around in the area. As a military reservation area, the territory serves as a training ground for massive military exercises between US and Philippine troops. However, the safety of the residents are compromised as some of the areas that are inhabited by the Aetas and

small local farmers, such as the Crow Valley Watershed lie within the danger zone for these military exercises, thereby exposing them to gunshots or to bomb explosions.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines has a huge interest in the commercial development of these contested military reservation areas. Under the BCDA law, they are entitled to a portion of the revenue generated from the sales, lease and/or joint venture developments of these land assets. According to the website of the BCDA, a total of P65.348 billion has been generated from the commercial development of these military reservations. The AFP has received P27.6 billion or 42.2% of the total revenue, channeled towards the AFP modernization program and other military-related expenses (Bases Conversion and Development Authority, n.d.).

The military control of the area has also intensified repression, intimidation and deception of residents in order to quell resistance against the Clark Green City project. Philippine military personnel as well as American troops visiting the area as part of military training exercises brandish their high powered fire arms in front of the residents, creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation in the community. Individuals and organizations that speak out against the project are marked as subversives by the military, rendering them as targets for physical harassments, intimidation and even killings. Extrajudicial killings of individuals who lead community opposition against development projects are rampant in the Philippines. According to the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment and the Task Force – Justice for Environmental Defenders, 74 environmental advocates were killed in the Philippines since 2001, with 70 percent of these victims being anti-mining advocates (InterAksyon.com, 2014). This shows that opposition to “development projects” in the Philippines comes with a bloody price.

Neoliberal Development and Displacement: An unsustainable pathway

The Clark Green City project is a product of the neoliberal policies that were pushed during the term of President Fidel V. Ramos from 1992-1998. During his presidency, Ramos embarked on a massive campaign of privatization of government assets as well as retreat of the Philippine state from provisioning of services to the Filipino citizens. Specifically, the Bases Conversion and Development Act of 1992 privatizes what is supposed to be public land by selling portions of the military reservation to private corporations in order to push real estate development in the area. The Special Economic Zone Act of 1995 covers the Clark Special Economic Zone where the Clark Green City will be located. This law promotes liberalization of domestic industries as it offers up to 100% foreign equity within these economic zones. Freeport zones are also notorious for anti-labor practices such as contractualization as a mechanism for attracting foreign investment. These laws push neoliberal policies in the implementation of the Clark Green City project.

In order to facilitate the construction of infrastructures and other support facilities within the Clark Green City project, the BCDA intends to adopt the Public-Private partnership model (PPP). Under this approach, the private sector will undertake the building, maintenance, and operation of costly infrastructure, thereby alleviating the state of the financial burden of undertaking these functions. However, in order to entice private sector investments in infrastructure, the contracts are loaded with lopsided investments in favor of these corporations. Some of these incentives include: guaranteed return on investment, guaranteed market and sales, fiscal incentives, full cost recovery including on inflation and currency fluctuation, and subsidies for production input.

Proponents of neoliberal policies argue that while corporations and banks profit from these partnerships, they provide needed infrastructure and other services which cash-strapped governments cannot provide/supply. (IBON Foundation, n.d.) Progressive think-tank IBON Foundation however notes that the shift towards the PPP model entails a corporate takeover of public service functions. Under

the PPP model, the role of the private sector in stimulating economic growth and in the provision of infrastructure and services needed for development is severely diminished. These functions are now outsourced towards the private sector, undermining the responsibility of the state in providing equitable economic opportunities for its citizens as well as in guaranteeing social protection for the marginalized and vulnerable sectors of the population (IBON Foundation, n.d.).

It is no secret that the private sector does not act out of altruism, rather, its engagement in service delivery is guided by its motivation in prospecting opportunities for profit accumulation and corporate growth. Unfortunately, the withdrawal of the state also guarantees that weak regulatory frameworks will be instituted to hold corporations accountable for negative development outcomes of their activities. Under a neoliberal framework, regulatory mechanisms serve as impediments for corporate profits, hence these must be diminished.

Ecocities: Contradictions in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

The Clark Green City is part of an emerging international trend of city-building geared towards the creation of “eco-cities”. The project is the first proposed “eco-city” in the Philippines, and is patterned after the Songdo, South Korea. Eco-cities are generally conceived as urban spaces where technologies for climate change adaptation and low carbon economy are initially adapted all while maintaining or even promising to exceed prevailing rate of economic growth (Caprotti 2014:1287; 1290).

The World Bank is one of the primary actors that push for the implementation of infrastructure projects associated with creating “eco-cities”. The bank has launched the “Eco2Cities: Ecological Cities as Economic Cities” as an initiative aimed at addressing the problems of urbanization and sustainability. One of China’s eco-city projects, the Sino-Singapore Eco-City Project (SSTECP) in Tianjin Municipality in northeast China received a US\$6.6 million

grant from the Global Environment Facility¹. In addition to this financial grant, the World Bank is also extending technical expertise in implementing the project (World Bank, 2010).

The World Bank is anticipated to be an integral partner as the Clark Green City project unfolds. BCDA President and CEO Arnel Casanova stated in a media interview that they are seeking to tap the World Bank's Climate Change Fund in order to finance the green initiatives in the Clark Green City (Navales, 2014). In addition, the World Bank is also seen as important in providing technical and expert advice in terms of disaster mitigation and economic planning.

While the World Bank envisions eco-cities as solutions towards sustainable urbanization and building resilient infrastructure, the process of creating eco-cities contradict the purported goals of sustainable development as outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Goal 11 attempts to create inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities. Unfortunately, the goal does not attempt to address the structural processes that structure exclusion in the cities. The document does not guarantee jobs for the urban poor, as well as guarantee housing and land as human rights in the city. The centrality of private developers in these eco-city projects will ultimately lead to a repetition of social exclusions that we see in megacities all over the world. Eco cities will only become the playgrounds of the elite, while those who don't have the means in living inside these spaces will be left in deteriorating urban conditions that leave them vulnerable to ecological and environmental crisis.

The process of building eco-cities also lead to displacement of people who are currently occupying lands that are being prospected as potential sites for these city-building projects. The displacement of indigenous peoples and small farmers will have potential repercussions on the goals aimed at ending poverty (goal 1), achieving food security (goal 2) and reducing inequality (10). By dispossessing the affected communities from their land and other access to livelihood, the Clark Green City, and other eco-city initiative condemn thousands to a state of vulnerability and insecurity.

Conclusion: People's Resistance

The unfortunate reality in the Philippines is that the indigenous peoples as well as landless farmers remain invisible to state bureaucrats in charge of development. When asked about the plans of the BCDA regarding the indigenous peoples that will be displaced, BCDA President and CEO Arnel Casanova stated that "I am not aware of 60,000 people being displaced. For more than 20 years, no development has happened in that area. It is time for all of us to unite to bring inclusive development to Tarlac and the entire region" (Orejas, 2014). The statement clearly a continuity of how development aggression projects all over the world over the past half century have resulted in the displacement of indigenous and rural, communities sacrificing them in the altar of development.

But even as state neglect of the plight of indigenous communities and landless farmers continues to be the policy, the people and the communities targeted by the Clark Green City project refuse to remain victims of this project. These communities have taken the lead in the struggle against a vicious development project that aims to render thousands of families dispossessed from their livelihoods and cultural heritage. Last September 2014, during the commemoration of Martial Law, 200 members of the Aeta Tribal Association marched under the sweltering heat of the sun to condemn the Clark Green City project. Participants underscored the continuity of how development aggression projects during the time of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos up to the current presidency of Benigno Aquino III have always resulted in the eviction of indigenous peoples from their livelihoods and ancestral domains. Things have remained the same even as electoral democracy has been restored (Endriga, 2014). In November 2014, an International Fact-Finding Mission led by the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, the Alyansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon and the Asian Peasant Coalition was conducted in order to investigate and document the cases of land grabbing conducted against the indigenous communities and landless farmers. This is an important step in scaling up the struggles of the local communities to a global level (Ayroso, 2014). Early this year, farmers under the Capas Green City and Proclamation No. 163 Affected Farmers Association Inc. formed human barricades in

Aranguren village, Capas to prevent the entry of heavy equipment which will be used for construction of the Clark Green City project (Orejas, 2015).

The resistance of the local communities affected by the Clark Green City project is filled with perseverance and resolve. In the face of repression and deception conducted by the nexus of state-capital alliance, these communities, with what little the indigenous Aetas have remained firm in their demand for their rights to their ancestral domain. Likewise, organizations of landless and small farmers have not buckled down from the pressure of state and business groups, explicitly demanding their right to own land. These struggles give us renewed vitality in the campaign to resist the imposition of neoliberal policies – in our communities, our national states and in the international arena.

In the spirit of international solidarity, supporters can contribute towards the amplification of the struggle against the Clark Green City through the following: 1.) pressuring the Philippine government to desist from pursuing the project by launching protests at various embassies; 2.) financial contributions to organizations and alliances that are engaged in the struggle against the Clark Green City project; 3.) Helping build the capacities of these organizations through training programs and lastly, building international coalitions that highlight the campaign against eco-cities and the damage that these projects have on local environment and communities.

Notes:

1. The World Bank established the GEF in 1991 and while the GEF has been a separate entity in 1994, the World Bank has served as trustee of the GEF fund. Up to 40 percent of World Bank Group-GEF projects have been integrated with other World Bank resources, marking a strong working relationship between these two institutions (www.gef.org; www.worldbank.org)

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SEEDING MORE MISERY AND HUNGER

Corporate Capture of Agriculture in Latin America

Seeds are the fundamental backbone of agricultural production. Millions of farmers all over the globe are dependent on seeds for their livelihoods and their sustenance. For thousands of years, agricultural activity, upon which millions of people depend on for their livelihood, has been founded on the principle of free exchange and circulation of seeds. Farmers produce these seeds within these communities every harvest season and exchange these seeds with neighboring communities, in order to improve yield and resiliency of their crops. However, over the past few decades, there has been a alarming trend towards the increased monopolization of seed control in the hands of transnational corporations. These corporations produce genetically modified seeds for purposes of increased agricultural productivity but in reality, this has been geared towards greater corporate control of the seed market. Furthermore, these transnational corporations have formed an unholy alliance with the ruling elite of third world countries in order to facilitate legislative and regulatory mechanisms that will further facilitate corporate monopoly over domestic seed markets.

The growth of corporate control in the seed market has threatened the independence of small farmers. Customary farming practices such as seed exchanges are increasingly being targeted by TNC-backed regulation intended to restrict these practices. Farmers and their allies have raised fears that these machinations of agribusiness TNCs will lead to the genetic erosion of native seeds, dwindling of food supply due to lesser seed diversity, and higher costs of food items associated with monopoly control of the market.

The confluence of transnational corporate interests and complicity of Latin American states threaten the food and seed sovereignty of local farming communities, undermining the rural sustainability of the region.

II. A GM-continent? The Scale transnational corporations' control on GM production in the Latin American region

In recent years, Latin America has seen an increasing allotment of prime agricultural land devoted to producing GM crops. Some of the countries in the region are among the top cultivators of GM crops such as cultured soy, corn and cotton. The region is now the top producer of genetically modified crops.

Brazil is the second ranked country in terms of land area devoted to GM agriculture, next to the United States, with a total of 40.3 million hectares devoted to GM crops as of 2013 (International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications, 2013). Majority of the GM crops planted in the country are GM soybeans, maize and corn. The land area devoted to soy cultivation is at 22 million hectares. It is one of the leading cultivators of soybeans, where 25 percent (1/4) of the world's production is located. In 2007-2008, soy harvest was 60 million tons, 40 percent of which was the GM crop soya-RR.

Argentina meanwhile ranks third with a land area of 24.4 million hectares devoted to planting GM crops, specifically for GM soybeans, maize and cotton (International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications, 2013). The cultivation area of GM soybeans in Argentina has reached 20 million hectares, four times the size of Costa Rica. This massive production is equally matched by massive inputs of chemicals such as 30 million liters of glyphosate. Because of the scale of GM soybeans production in the country, Argentina is ranked as one of the top producers of soybeans in the world

Paraguay ranks seventh in terms of the land area devoted to planting GM crops, with coverage of 3.6 million hectares. Majority

of the soybeans cultivated in Paraguay are exported the crop to Argentina, its biggest market, for processing. In Uruguay 500,000 hectares of agricultural land is allotted for soybeans cultivation but its yield is intensified as the country produces 800,000 tons of soybeans per year.

Smaller countries in the region have also seen dramatic increase in the rate of land allotment for GM crop cultivation as well as overall production for GM crops such as soybeans. In terms of land allotment, Colombia has devoted 100,000 hectares for cultivation of GM corn and cotton. In Chile, the last fifteen (15) years has seen a 1,200 percent growth of land devoted to the cultivation of GM crops. This land area now covers 36,000 hectares, 4.8 percent of Chile's agricultural land.

Soybeans cultivation and production in the Latin American region has become a worrying trend as it has increasingly encompassed a wide area. A total of 42,260 million hectares of soybean plantation equivalent to 422,400 km² now blankets the Latin American region. This land area is equivalent to the area twice the size of Uruguay. As the demand for GM crops such as soybeans, cotton and corn increases due to the demands of the market, there has been a concomitant pressure on the status of the natural environment. Recently, rapid rates of deforestation especially in the Amazonian rainforest have been observed as one of the last ecosystem hotspots in the world as the landscape is transformed towards agricultural use.

III. The negative impact of transgenic seed production on food sovereignty and cultural integrity in the Latin American region

The increasing prevalence of the use of genetically modified crops in agriculture, particularly in Latin America represents a threat to the food and seed sovereignty of the millions of peasants in the region. Some 75 % of the food that is consumed in the world is produced by small scale agriculture such as peasant, local, community, subsistence and family farming while 90 % of the non-

mechanized farmers produce their own seeds for cultivation (La Via Campesina, 2013). This situation clearly represents an opportunity for transnational agribusiness corporations to tighten their stranglehold on the rural industry as this number represents a substantial market for them. Thus, the rise of GM cultivation and production increases the risks of small farmers as well as indigenous farmers to be dispossessed from their seeds through the rise of patenting of plant varieties in agriculture (Alianza Biodiversidad, Red por una América Latina Libre de Transgénicos; Vía Campesina World Seeds Campaign, 2013). The continued push for growing GM crops such as soybeans, maize, and cotton among others has been justified on the grounds of increasing food security as well as providing alternative sources of energy such as biofuel. However, according to data from the Food and Agriculture Organization, the number of undernourished and obese people, signs of dietary imbalance due to poverty, has increased since 1996. This timeframe coincides with the use of GM technology in food production. Studies have shown that cultivation of GM food staples and cash crops have had marginal effect on yield, and in some cases, have even decreased the yield. A study by Dr. Doug Gurian-Sherman (2009) has shown that GM cultivation of maize led to a 13% total increase in yield over a 13 year span whereas those that were grown through organic and hybrid methods had an 80% increase over the same timeframe. Hunger in rural areas has been compounded by rural poverty and dispossession due to the privatization of the seed industry.

The increasing trend of adopting GM crops has also raised potential health risk of the people consuming these products. Particularly, the increase in GM crops has led to a rise in the use of glyphosate as an herbicide for these GM crops. The use of “Roundup Ready” crops developed by Monsanto wherein the corporation inserted an engineered gene into the crops, making them resistant to the herbicide is one such example (Wylie, 2015). The development of this technology has been a key component in Monsanto’s sales. However, glyphosate contains toxins that can be extremely harmful to humans and animals. Particularly, exposure to glyphosates, can contribute to congenital deformities as well as the development of cancer (ETC Group, 2014). The continued use of these crops and herbicides risks exposing a significant component of the world’s

population to dangerous side effects that may manifest at later points in their lives.

The cultivation of GM crops for food production is an unsustainable use of resources: the agro-industrial food industry, of which GM crops are an integral component only feeds 30% of the world's population but it gobbles up 75-80% of the world's arable land and uses up 70% of the world's water resources. Meanwhile, small-scale agriculture feeds up to 70% of the world's population while using minimal resources. Furthermore, small-scale agriculture's crops are relatively free from toxins and genetic modification, making them relatively healthier as compared to GM food production (GRAIN, 2014).

The issue of food security cannot be resolved through the recourse to genetic modification of crops; rather the issue at hand is the inequitable distribution of food as these are mediated through the market, excluding the poor from access. The only sustainable way of feeding the majority of the world's population is through promoting small scale agriculture. But with the increasing dominance of transnational corporations, food sovereignty and seed sovereignty is increasingly becoming threatened. Bernard Geier, the former president of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture has stated that the current system of food production actually lead to overproduction of food, with enough to feed each person in the world 4000 calories/day (Quinones, 2014). Instead of altering production and consumption patterns to feed majority of the world's population, we are witnessing the confluence of international and local policies that aim to strengthen the hold of transnational agribusiness corporations in domestic farming systems.

IV. Transnational corporate interests and the Latin American states

Transnational agribusiness corporations dominate the global market of the cultivation of GM crops such as soybeans. Transnational corporations based in Western states such as ADM, Bunge and

Cargill (United States) and Louis Dreyfuss, (otherwise known as the ABCD of the global food trade) has dominated global soy cultivation and production in key markets, accounting for 43% of oil production in Brazil, 80% in the EU, and 75% of the soy market in the United States. In Argentina, these same agribusiness TNCs account for 78% of exports of wheat, 79% corn, 71% soybean meal, 95% soybean oil and 97% oil sunflower. In terms of global grain trade, these four companies account between 75-90% of the global trade in basic food items (Lawrence, 2011). The ABCD group has likewise formed a strategic partnership with seed and agrochemical transnational corporations that dominate the agricultural inputs market. In terms of seed market, Monsanto (USA), DuPont (USA), Syngenta (Switzerland) and Limagrain (France) control at least 53% of the global proprietary seed market. Meanwhile, corporations specializing in agrochemical inputs such as DuPont, Monsanto, Syngenta, Dow and the two German chemical firms Bayer and BASF control 74% of the market. This growing power of TNC agribusiness is apparent in the strength of corporate lobbying of these corporations in getting international institutions as well as domestic states in implementing laws that will further facilitate the transfer of agriculture towards corporate circuits.

Transnational agribusiness lobbying seek to secure domestic seed laws in Latin American States to expand corporate rights regarding the control of seeds and restricting farmers and indigenous peoples' access to seeds. Specifically, these laws are intended to strengthen corporate monopoly over the control of seeds and to criminalize age-old practices of saving and exchanging seeds. By doing so, control of seeds is privatized by corporations, making farmers dependent on corporate products in order to plant for the next planting season (GRAIN, 2013). At an international level, there has been a significant drive to push for the application of UPOV 91 in many domestic states, particularly those in developing countries.

The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to promote plant variety protection. However, the UPOV has come under increasing criticism as it cedes greater control over patenting of plant varieties to transnational corporations. Under its latest

incarnation, UPOV '91, exclusive monopoly is granted to corporations over “discovered” varieties and provides corporations with benefits in relation to the production, marketing, and trade of these plant varieties. UPOV '91 also prohibits the utilization of plant varieties similar to the “discovered” varieties and allows property owners to confiscate products that were produced outside of corporate circuits. This includes the confiscation of seeds that were exchanged or were saved from the last harvest. Clearly, these international frameworks for governing crop varieties provide corporations with massive economic and political power (GRAIN, 2013).

Integral to the imposition of the UPOV '91 is its mandatory adoption by states that agree to free trade agreements with the United States. The earliest form of free trade agreements that ensured that the “intellectual property rights” of corporations regarding seed varieties will be respected is the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). Through the WTO, the application of TRIPS will ensure that corporations’ profits will be protected from the loss-incurring practices of seed saving and exchange. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the United States and Mexico imposed the application of UPOV in the Mexican rural landscape, providing seed corporations with exclusive rights to prevent farmers from saving and exchanging seed. In 2006, through arm twisting and hardball negotiations, free trade agreements between the United States and Latin American states such as Peru and Colombia have likewise integrated these countries within the UPOV framework. The greatest immediate threat to food sovereignty at the moment is the secretive Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) that is being pushed aggressively by the United States. Leaked documents from the negotiations reveal that the United States is not only pushing for the full implementation of the UPOV 91 but also seek to extend patenting to animals (GRAIN 2014, p.4).

The drive to implement the UPOV 91, backed by the financial and military might of the United States has forced Latin American states to implement various forms of seed laws designed to transfer control seed ownership and distribution into the hands of transnational corporations. These laws include Resolution 970 in Colombia that

criminalizes peasant seed saving and exchange. The penalty of this law is the destruction of these seeds in the hands of the state. The proposed law also gives preferential treatment to transnational corporations as their products become the required seeds that need to be planted in order to access government support in farming credit and services (La Via Campesina, 2013). This law was a condition set in a free trade agreement signed between the United States and the Colombian government. Amendments to existing domestic seed laws in order to facilitate the entry of transnational capital are also a possibility as evident in the Argentinian case when Monsanto lobbied for the amendment of the country's seed law starting in 2003. The proposed amendments gained steam in 2012, following the approval of Monsanto investments in the country. Civil society organization has denounced this "Monsanto law" stating that the law will facilitate "the greater privatization of Argentina's genetic resources and native biodiversity by expanding so-called plant breeders' rights." (GRAIN, 2013 p. 4). The increasing power of transnational corporations is also evident in attempts to overturn previous legislative bans on the use of terminator seeds in Brazil (Watts and Vidal, 2013)

V. Implications for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The dominance of transnational corporations has serious implications for attaining sustainable development under the post-2015 development agenda. Transnational agribusiness corporations specializing in seed development and fertilizer manufacturing such as Monsanto, Bayer, Syngenta and DuPont are all members of the UN Global Compact, one of the official workstreams of the post-2015 development agenda. The influence of these corporations has serious implications in the development of international, legally binding accountability mechanisms to address corporate violations on the state of the environment as well as human rights. These violations include the manufacture of pesticides containing toxic materials that has resulted in increased health risks in developing countries as well as signs of environmental degradation due to unregulated application of these materials. Some companies such

as Bayer (WW1) and Monsanto (Vietnamese-American War) have been complicit in committing war crimes through the development of chemical weapons that were deployed during these wars. Because of the history of violations committed by these corporations, there is an urgent need to institute an international, legally binding framework to regulate corporate actions. However, the embedded position of these corporations in the Global Compact provides them with greater leverage in pushing a development agenda favorable for transnational capital.

The lack of accountability mechanisms against the use of transgenic crops by transnational corporations will severely undermine the Sustainable Development Goal 2 that is centered on ending hunger, achieving food security and improving nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture. The use of GM crops will not end worldwide hunger so long as the prevalent neoliberal form of production and consumption will continue. Neoliberalism prioritizes profits over the welfare of majority of the people, effectively excluding billions of people who cannot procure costly food items. The centralization of seed control into the hands of corporations also undermines the rural sector's ability to plant crops that will feed their local communities. Target 2.4 indicates the need to build resilient agricultural systems to combat climate change. However, the trend of corporate control over seeds is towards homogenization, thereby making crops and agricultural systems more susceptible to the risks of climate change. Target 2.5 indicates the need to maintain genetic diversity of seeds through seed and plant banks and national, regional and international levels. However, without addressing the concern and risk associated with greater corporate control over seeds, these proposals will become ineffective. Under the post-2015 development agenda, food security will become compromised if it will be "business-as-usual" for corporations.

The means of implementation under the goal on achieving food security lacks ambition in veering away from corporate-dominated forms of food production. Goal 2.a calls for increased investment in the agricultural sector, including plant and livestock gene, through "enhanced international cooperation." However, without recognizing the role of TNCs such as Monsanto in privatizing seeds

and dispossessing millions of farmers, such a call would only serve to enhance the role of private capital in enhancing investments in gene technology. The lack of accountability mechanisms and processes for corporate litigation further undermines attempts at regulating the actions of these corporations and making them liable for violations committed against small farmers all over the world.

VI. People's Resistance: Seed Wars in Latin America

There is a growing resistance in Latin America against the encroaching power of transnational agribusiness corporations regarding seed sovereignty. Social movements, civil society organizations, members of the academe and indigenous people's organizations are at the forefront of defending the people's right to grow their own food and their right to control their seeds. In many countries, these alliances have led various mobilizations and demonstrations to show their opposition to various seed laws that are being proposed in various countries in Latin America such as Chile, Argentina, and Venezuela among others. The most intense protests happened in Colombia, in the wake of the approval of Resolution 970 that seeks to apply the UPOV in the Colombian seed laws. Large protest mobilizations led by peasant organizations and supported by other sectors disgruntled with the imposition of neoliberal policies in Colombia such as students and workers were met by intense repression from the Colombian police. However, the determination of the striking peasants as well as their supporters forced the Colombian government to freeze the imposition of the law (GRAIN, 2013).

Another strategy that has been implemented as a form of resistance to TNC agribusiness is the formation of various coalitions dedicated to fighting for food and seed sovereignty in the Latin American region. An example of this is the Network for a Transgenic-Free Latin America (RALLT) that is composed of various social movements and people's organizations representing indigenous peoples, fisherfolk, rural workers, women, youth and environmentalists. Another such group is the People's Coalition on

Food Sovereignty which is southern-based global network dedicated to promoting food sovereignty in developing countries. Other coalitions representing peasant interests such as GRAIN and La Via Campesina continue to be active in fighting for peasant right's to land and their right to food and seed sovereignty.

The struggle against transnational agribusiness corporations is expanding. The formation of these coalitions as well as its alliance with consumer groups in Northern countries is a sign of growing vibrancy in this struggle. Such alliances and coalitions are important in the face of organized machinations conducted by these transnational corporations; imperialist US trade agenda and their local state partners. We can show our solidarity with this struggle by providing material support, contributing to the capacity building of activists in the region, and building the pressure on Latin American governments to refrain from adopting TNC-backed policies that will facilitate greater corporate control of agriculture.

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PLUNDER AND IMPUNITY IN OGONILAND

In the southeastern corner of Nigeria, in the Niger Delta region lies the territory known as Ogoniland. Home to the Ogoni People, Ogoniland was a land of promise. After Nigeria gained independence in the 1960s, the land's massive oil reserves were touted as the key towards propelling the Ogoni People and Nigeria towards modernity. After over 50 years of extractive industries, the once fertile Ogoni Land, teeming with agricultural and fishing activities have now been transformed into a barren landscape. As one walks in the land where the rivers meet the sea, oil sleek smudges one's feet. What were once lush green vegetation dotting the landscape has now been transformed into skeletal black frames of dead trees, shrubs and mangroves. Even as oil pollutants have seeped into the ecosystem, some of the locals continue to fish in the surrounding waters, desperate for a day's catch. How did this land of promise transform into one of death and destruction? Who are accountable for such devastation?

In the words of Mr. Fyनेface Dumnamene Fyनेface, the Project Officer of Ogoni Solidarity Forum (OSF) Nigeria, "Ogoni environment was productive, life was flourishing in the area and the economic activities of smallholder farmers/fishermen who depend on the environment for their livelihoods booming till Shell came and destroyed our environment and the peoples' means of livelihoods through their oil production activities carried out without observing international best practices as required. Till date, the people of Ogoni continue to suffer as the environment has not been cleaned up despite the release of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Report on Ogoniland since August 4th, 2011".

Prospecting for Development: History of Oil Explorations in the Area

The Ogoni People have lived in what is now known as Ogoniland for almost two thousand years. During the late 19th Century, Nigeria was colonized by the British, disrupting the sustainable cultural systems that have been largely intact for thousands of years. Rapid integration into Western colonial norms, global markets and colonial modes of resource extraction has dislocated the Ogoni people from their traditional ways of living.

The livelihood of the Ogoni people was traditionally centered on agriculture, supplemented by other economic activities such as livestock herding, salt production, fishing and palm oil cultivation. But the economic potential of Ogoniland lies in location in Nigeria's largest oil reserves. The Niger Delta Region accounts for 90% of Nigeria's oil reserves and the exploitation of this resource has catapulted Nigeria into one of the world's largest oil producers. The history of oil production in the region started in 1956 when the first commercially viable oil field was discovered in the area by a joint-venture between Royal Dutch Shell (Shell) and the British Government. Oil production in what is now Ogoniland commenced in 1958, marking the start of a tumultuous relationship between Shell and the Ogoni people. The Nigerian Government became the main partner of Shell after the former declared independence from the British government.

During the course of its operations from the mid-1970s until the early 1990s, Ogoniland has produced a total revenue of US\$30 billion for Nigeria, facilitated by a joint venture agreement between the Nigerian government as the majority partner and Shell as the largest private partner (30% ownership). Oil has become the lifeline of Nigeria's economy, and the partnership between the Nigerian government and Shell has become integral to this arrangement. Eighty percent of the government's revenues were derived from oil production and this also accounted for 90% of the country's foreign exchange. The Shell Petroleum Development Corporation, the Nigerian subsidiary of Shell, together with the Nigerian Natural

Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) produced 40 % of Nigeria's crude oil. (Cayford, 1996)

Due to its profitability, oil extraction was presented as a remedy that will address the problems of poverty and underdevelopment that hounded the Niger Delta Region. The promise of oil was the age-old refrain of the purported benefits of development – the creation of modern infrastructures, improved access to health care and educational facilities, ensure improvements in the water supply of the local communities and spur economic growth due to job creation and revenues from the oil extraction. However, Ogoniland continues to be mired in the same conditions of underdevelopment that hounded the area almost half a century ago. The region is characterized by high levels of poverty and unemployment, lack of basic infrastructure and high cost of living. Worse, environmental degradation and human rights violations have accompanied the expansion of the oil extraction in the region.

Dark side of oil: Environmental Degradation in Ogoniland

Shell and the Nigerian government were able to profit immensely from oil production in the Niger Delta Region at huge environmental costs. The oil production infrastructure was characterized by poorly maintained networks of above ground pipelines that routinely leaked oil into its surrounding environment. From 1976-1991, it was estimated that a total of 2.1 million barrels of oil was released into the environment as a result of approximately 2,976 oil spills in this period (Ellis, 1995 cited in Cayford, 1996). In addition to oil spills, air pollution stemming from continuously burning gas flares became a problem not only locally but also globally. Gas flares in the Niger Delta Region releases 35 million tons/year and 12 million tons of methane, making Niger River oil fields one of the largest contributors to global warming (Cayford, 1996).

Oil exploration and production has damaged the sustainable forms of livelihood of indigenous communities that were centered on agriculture. An independent study has discovered high levels

of heavy metals such as lead, zinc, copper and iron in root crops planted near Port Hartcourt, the capital city of Rivers State (Hart et. al. 2005 cited in Kingston, 2010). The United Nations Environmental Programme report (2011) stated that when farming resumes in lands affected by oil spill, crops typically show signs of stress and harvests are characterized by low yield. The same report also indicated that expansion of oil production in the area has denuded mangroves – vital to the ecosystem as fish nurseries and filters for natural pollution that may eventually contribute to an irreversible decline of mangrove habitats in the area. The destruction of mangroves in the area as well as the widespread pollution near the coasts has affected the livelihoods of fishermen as fish have moved to areas where they can find new habitat as well as move away from polluted areas.

Apart from these massive signs of environmental destruction, activities associated with oil production pose serious health risks to the local population. Routine oil spills as well as wastage from the transportation of oil products seep into the groundwater, contaminating the water supply of local communities. The UNEP report indicated that the local population at Nisisioken Ogale derives their drinking water from a community well contaminated by benzene, a carcinogen. The level of benzene in the wells is 900 times above the limits set by the World Health Organization. Hydrocarbon contamination was indicated in 28 wells located in 10 communities. According to the evaluation, 7 of the 28 wells contained hydrocarbon levels at least 1,000 times higher than the Nigerian drinking water standard of 3 µg/l. While the locals are aware of the water pollution and associated health risks, they continue to use these water sources for their everyday activities since they have no other alternative.

The State-Oil Nexus: Converging Interests in the Plunder of Nigerian Oil Reserves

Royal Dutch Shell Corporation is the largest transnational oil corporation operating in Nigeria, accounting for almost 50 percent of the country's crude oil production. The base of its operations is located in the Niger River Delta, where they extract 80% of their total crude

oil in the country (Kingston, 2010). Shell has been responsible for the numerous oil spills that have affected the ecological health of the Niger River delta. Some of the oil spills occurred due to infrastructural neglect, with some of the pipelines used in 1957 barely maintained or replaced (Ibid). Despite the numerous oil spill incidents, Shell has avoided shouldering responsibility for environmental cleanup. One of the strategies deployed by Shell is to claim that these spills are the products of farmers and other groups sabotaging the pipelines (Cayford, 1996). Many environmental groups dispute this claim by Shell. By arguing that these spills are products of sabotages, Shell will not be liable for compensation under the Nigerian law on sabotages. Another strategy that Shell deploys is to shift the responsibility to the Nigerian government. As the majority partner of the venture, the Nigerian government will shoulder 55% of environmental costs (Cayford 1996, p. 184). This highlights how transnational companies utilize public funds in subsidizing costs related to rehabilitating environmental externalities caused by their projects.

The Nigerian government became the majority partner of Shell's operations in Nigeria after the country has been declared independent in 1960. The government structure is largely dominated by elites from the dominant ethnic groups in the country. The colonial administration created a system wherein the ethnic elites would compete with one another through the consolidation of regional ethnic blocs. Traditionally, ethnic blocs from the North dominated the political and economic resources of Nigeria although spaces were allowed for the elites from the South to be incorporated in the government. The resources and largesse offered by oil exploration in the south have been the primary incentives in consolidating the interests of the State behind the interests of Shell. A political system based on elite dominance has marginalized sentiments from grassroots communities affected by oil production activities (Cayford, 1996 p. 185-186).

The Nigerian government has facilitated the operations of Shell and has ensured that elite and grassroots opposition will not impede these operations. In order to maintain their control over the oil fields, Shell and the Nigerian government have been complicit in the use of physical coercion and violence in order to quell peaceful opposition

against oil extraction activities. In 1990, one of the earliest public demonstrations against Shell's oil extraction was held in Umuechem, east of Ogoniland. In order to disperse the protesters, Shell acquired the services of the Nigerian Police Mobile Force, a paramilitary arm of the Nigeria Police Force. The paramilitaries used tear gas and gun fire to disperse the protesters. The following day, they fired at nearby houses, killing 80 people and destroying/damaging 495 houses (Crayford 1996, p.189). In 1994, the Rivers State Internal Security Task Force raided Ogoni villages following the arrest of Ken Saro-Wiwa, prominent author and leader of the Ogoni resistance against Shell (See below for further discussion). Human rights violations were committed during these raids as police and soldiers resorted to indiscriminate firing, physical beatings of villagers, rape of women and extortion. These raids resulted in the death of 2,000 people and the displacement of more than 80,000 (Terminski, 2011). These harassment and coercion was a strategy to induce "peace and order" in the area as Shell has ceased operations in 1993 due to mounting protests from the Ogoni people.

Perhaps the most controversial case of human rights violation was the farcical trial and execution of Ken Saro Wiwa and other Ogoni leaders. Saro Wiwa and his colleagues were arrested under the pretext that they incited the murder of pro-Government Ogoni leaders. They were held in detention for eight months before being charged before a military tribunal. However, the government had already deemed them guilty even before the trial had begun, with military personnel intimidating the lawyers and witnesses for Saro-Wiwa and the other detained personalities. Witnesses for the prosecution later revealed that Shell and the Nigerian government bribed them with money and jobs in the oil fields in exchange for false testimonies against the accused. The tribunal sentenced Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni leaders to death.

In the years that followed, relatives of the Ogoni 9 filed charges against Shell, accusing it of conspiring with the Nigerian government in detaining and executing the detained Ogoni personalities. They also accused Shell of providing the Nigerian Army with logistical support in conducting harassment of communities opposed to oil production. In 2009, Shell agreed to pay US\$15.5 million in

settlement to the relatives of the victims, stating that its focus is on “the future of the Ogoni People” (Pilkington, 2009). While Shell has maintained that it was innocent of the charges, environmental advocates stated that this settlement marked a victory for a small community up against a giant transnational company. They likewise noted that the settlement indicated that Shell was not interested in a trial where its complicity in the environmental damage and human rights violations that occurred in the Niger River delta will be made public (Green, 2009).

Holding corporations accountable: Implications for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The various forms of environmental degradation as well as Shell's complicity with the Nigerian state's violent repression against the Ogoni people highlights the dangers associated with the lack of stringent frameworks regulating corporate activity. Specifically, the lack of international, legally-binding regulation to hold corporations accountable for crimes committed against the environment and against humanity has allowed Shell, as well as officials of the Nigerian government, to plunder Ogoniland with impunity.

International, binding regulatory frameworks governing corporate activities is particularly important in weak states where transnational corporations operate. These states are characterized by weak regulation, inefficient judicial system and rent-seeking bureaucrats, weakening their ability to enforce whatever regulation they have in place. Furthermore, these states are also cash-strapped, hence the financial incentives associated with allowing transnational corporations to operate in their territories is immense. An international, legally binding framework for corporate accountability will give affected communities a legal avenue in filing complaints against erring corporations. Unfortunately, negotiations on developing a post-2015 development agenda have largely skirted the issue on enforcing legally binding accountability mechanisms on transnational corporations. Dominant voices in these negotiation

processes, particularly those coming from the North have largely promoted a “business-as-usual” approach such as voluntary accountability mechanisms for regulating corporate behavior. The absence of sanctions in a voluntary approach could impede local communities’ quest to attain justice for the various forms of environmental and human rights crimes committed by transnational corporations in the service of profit.

The oil production operations of Shell also undermine goals of the 2030 Agenda on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns (Goal 12) and taking urgent action to combat climate change (Goal 13). A recent report revealed that the fossil fuel industry received US\$550 billion in subsidies, four times more than the subsidies provided to the renewable energy sector (Morales, 2014). Some of the oil drilling sites of Shell receives fossil fuel subsidies such as a proposed petrochemical refinery in Pennsylvania that is expected to receive US\$1.6bn (£1bn) in state subsidy (Carrington and Davies, 2015). These subsidies are absurd as these encourage greater investment in fossil fuel production rather than promote a shift towards renewable alternatives. However, what is disappointing in the Zero Agenda is that the means of implementation 12.c under Goal 12 calls for a “rationalization” of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies rather than an outright call of eliminating these subsidies. Such vague propositions fail to acknowledge the realities that fossil fuel subsidies drive up fossil fuel production that has led to global warming. The increase in fossil fuel subsidies can only spell future disaster, especially for the populations of developing countries, as these countries will bear the brunt of extreme weather events associated with climate change. Without a legally binding framework to ensure commitments towards reduction of fossil fuel production, the post-2015 agenda will only provide lip service to promoting sustainable development.

Continuous oil production can also impede the intended goals of the post-2015 development agenda on ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (Goal 6) and conserving and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources (Goal 14). As seen in the case of Ogoniland, the unhampered oil production of Shell from the 1970s up until the 1990s has

contaminated water sources for various communities in the region. Furthermore, they have not undertaken cleanup operations in these affected water sources. The damaged marine ecosystems, as seen in the denuded mangroves in Ogoniland also point out the risk of oil production towards sustainable management of marine resources.

People's Resistance and Demands

The worsening conditions of the environment as well as the increasing poverty of the Ogoni people due to the continued oil production in the area has resulted in the political consolidation of the various ethnic groups living in Ogoniland. In 1990, elders of the Ogoni people formed the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) as an organization that will coordinate and direct campaigns and demands for control over oil and gas resources being extracted from their land, the right to self-determination of the Ogoni people and facilitating economic development in Ogoniland. The MOSOP represents a progressive break from the elite dominated traditional politics in Nigeria as they placed emphasis on giving voice to grassroots communities in the region (Cayford 1996, p. 187)

One of the landmark institutional strategies launched by the MOSOP was the creation of the Ogoni Bill of Rights that contained key demands such as ensuring political and economic autonomy, representation of the Ogoni in all Nigerian national institutions, preservation of Ogoni culture and language, and protection of the Ogoni environment from further degradation. The MOSOP, especially under the leadership of Ken Saro-Wiwa launched numerous popular demonstrations attended by tens of thousands of people demanding US\$ 10 billion (consisting of US\$ 6 billion in royalty for past oil production and US\$ 4 billion as damages for the environmental degradation) in compensation as well as putting a halt to their operations in the area. Shell stopped their operations in Ogoniland in 1993 because of intensified opposition from affected communities.

Currently, the MOSOP is engaged in campaigns to support the enactment of the recommendations of the UNEP team that investigated the environmental conditions of Ogoniland in 2009. The report recommended measures that will enable environmental cleanup in the area among which includes the creation of the Ogoniland Environmental Restoration Authority and the Environmental Restoration Fund for Ogoniland that will be used for activities related to the environmental restoration of Ogoniland. Capitalization for this fund is estimated at US \$1 billion, to be sourced from government and oil industry contributions. MOSOP has likewise mobilized over the re-entry of oil producers, including local oil firm Belema Oil Limited to take over oil production from Shell. Ogoni communities have slammed proposals for the resumption of oil production, especially as the damage brought about by 30 years of unregulated production has not been addressed.

The MOSOP believes that sustainable development in Ogoniland will be achievable through total cleanup of the environment. Addressing the pollution caused by Shell can help revive the local economy, spurring sustainable growth by providing local employment to the Ogoni people. In the spirit of international solidarity, we can support the struggle of the Ogoni people to achieve environment and development through the following: funding the activities of MOSOP and other organizations working for Ogoni such as Ogoni Solidarity Forum in order to enhance campaigns and advocacy that will address the demands of the Ogoni; lobbying and pressuring the Shell and the Nigerian government to implement the UNEP Report on Ogoni; contributing in the training and capacity building of organizations and activists working on the Ogoni issues and campaigns; and lastly, building a coalition and network of international civil society organizations which can support campaigns for the Ogoni people.

The demand for corporate accountability of Shell by the Ogoni people constitutes one of the pillars of development justice: enforcing accountability for corporate and state actors that have committed serious violations of human rights and environmental degradation. For a post-2015 development agenda to be an instrument of development justice, it must not evade the realities of corporate

and state abuse, especially those committed against the poor and the marginalized. Otherwise, it becomes an instrument for further exploitation of the people and the environment.

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FORCED MIGRATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA

The Dark Side of Neoliberalism in the Americas

Last year, a humanitarian crisis gripped the United States. Millions of Americans watching their television were exposed to the harsh realities of immigration politics when tens of thousands of minors, most of the unaccompanied by adults, turned up in the US-Mexican border, hoping for a chance to enter the United States of America, the land of promise. Since the 1970s, migration from Central America to the United States has been prevalent. These are driven by different historical factors such as fleeing from civil wars, escaping economic poverty and more recently, escaping from domestic violence, the desire for family reunification and the demand of the US agricultural sector for low wage workers (Orozco & Yansura, 2014). Annually, more than 100,000 Central Americans enter the United States, many of them without legal status. More alarming is the number of minors making the perilous journey up north: in 2014, more than 50,000 Central American children were intercepted at the US-Mexico border, up from 10,146 children just two years earlier (Villegas, 2014). Migrants, including children are subjected to cruel physical conditions in order to make it to the border. In many instances, they are exposed to gang-perpetrated violence along these migration pathways rendering them vulnerable to execution, kidnapping, rape and extortion (Soler, 2015).

II. The invisible hand of forced migration: The complicity of United States imperialism in fostering forced migration in the Americas

In response to the migration crisis the Obama administration has promised a series of palliatives aimed at addressing poverty in the Central American region. The plan of the Obama administration was geared towards further opening up the Central American region to transnational investments as well as pumping US\$500 million dollars in economic aid to Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador (Abbott, 2015). By creating an enabling environment for transnational investments, the Obama administration believes that this will be the solution for job creation and ending the cycle of poverty that has generated migration crises over the years.

However, what American policymakers and politicians refuse to address is how the United States has been complicit to the creation of conditions that have triggered forced migration in the region. A confluence of geopolitical and economic interventions have contributed to increasing poverty as well as creating street gangs that are wreaking havoc in the region.

Geopolitical interventions

The United States has had a series of political and military interventions in the region over the past century aimed at stemming the rise of leftwing governments. In 1912, Nicaragua was invaded by the United States and was occupied until 1933 when the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza came to power. The Somoza dictatorship lasted for several decades propped up by military and economic support from the United States. When the Sandinistas ousted the Somoza dictatorship, the United States provided financial and military support to the “Contras”, a group notorious for committing atrocities and drug smuggling into the United States. In El Salvador, the United States funded the military, which committed numerous human rights violations. From 1944-1951, Guatemala elected two presidents, Juan Jose Arevalo and Jacobo Arbenz successively. These presidents pursued economic reforms aimed at economic redistribution. In 1954, the Central Intelligence Agency backed the Guatemalan

military that ousted Arbenz in a coup. Over the next decades where the military was in power 200,000 people were executed in a brutal repression of opposition to the regime (Soler, 2015).

The various forms of political and military interventions conducted by the United States have created enabling conditions for the rise of street gangs, groups that have contributed immensely to the spiraling forms of violence committed in the Central American region. Proxy wars initiated by the United States have produced countless mercenaries trained in local warfare. This is compounded with the pumping of military arms and ammunition into the region by both the United States and the Soviet Union, leading to easy access to weaponry. With the Cold-War rivalry now gone, disenfranchised fighters have increasingly turned to gang warfare and drug trade in order to make ends meet (Elkus, 2007).

Perhaps the cruelest irony is how the policies of the United States have engineered the rise of the most feared criminal gang in the Central American region, the Mara Salvatrucha (Mara). The Maras dominate the neighborhoods of Latin America, with estimated membership of up to 70,000 organized into an expansive transnational network. The Maras are armed with M16s, AK47s and military grade explosives, allowing them to profit from illicit activities such as extortion, kidnapping, prostitution and drug trafficking (Soler, 2015). The Maras are able to secure a sizeable following through a system of patronage in exchange for allegiance and tribute from the people (Elkus, 2007).

The Maras is a legacy of the decades-long conflict inflicted in the Central American region by the United States. Due to increasing violence and repression associated with Cold War interventions in the region, thousands of young people migrated into the United States' inner cities. However, instead of being able to live peacefully, these migrants were subjected to violence perpetrated by street gangs in these ghettos. As a form of protection, these migrants created gangs such as the Mara and Barrio 18, eventually controlling local neighborhoods through violence and criminal activities (Soler, 2015). In the 1990s, as a result of tightening US immigration policies, as many as 100,000 gang members were deported back to Central

America (Soler, 2015). This policy however, displaced the violence away from the inner cities of the United States into the urban areas of Central America, where gangs such as the Mara destroyed the local gangs and eventually controlled the illicit trade activities of the region (Elkus, 2007). The Maras, and other street gangs in the region have plunged the region into instability, with reckless violence perpetrated against innocent civilians. This violence has forced thousands of migrants to flee from an increasingly desperate situation.

III. Neoliberalism and Forced Migration

Neoliberal economic policies that have been imposed in Central America by the United States have also exacerbated the migration crisis in the region. During the 1990s, the United States, Canada and Mexico signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that aimed to spur economic growth in Mexico by attracting transnational investments. However, the agreement proposed the abolition of tariff protection and agricultural subsidies in the Mexican rural sector. The result was a catastrophe for Mexican peasants and indigenous food producers: the elimination of tariffs allowed for the dumping of US-produced corn that was heavily subsidized by the United States government. The lack of agricultural pricing support for Mexican corn producers incapacitated them from competing against the low prices of US agricultural products leading to losses incurred by small-scale farmers. NAFTA also compounded the instability of the rural sector by dismantling social protection schemes (Bacon, *Globalization and NAFTA caused migration from Mexico*, 2014). Rural poverty brought about by free trade policies has induced massive migration from Mexico, making it the world's largest population exporter (Chacón, 2007).

Despite the consequences brought about by NAFTA, the United States initiated under free trade agreement that aims to expand its economic influence in the Central American region. In 2003, negotiations for the crafting of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) were initiated under the term of former United States president George W. Bush. The CAFTA was

patterned after the NAFTA, with emphasis on free trade principles such as elimination of tariffs and trade barriers for agricultural and manufactured products (Aguado, 2012). The approval of the CAFTA in 2006 has contributed to the exacerbation of migration as the entry of subsidized food imports forced small-farmers out of the market, leading them to leave their farms and find employment in the city (Abbott, 2015). In addition, the trade agreement also contributed to increasing concentration of lands into the hands of the elite. In turn, these lands are converted into plantations geared towards the production of export crops (Abbott, 2015).

Evictions from rural lands have led to massive migrations into the inner cities of Central America. However, the lacks of skills and training have made it difficult for these migrants to find employment in the dwindling manufacturing sector or the new industries that are slowly replacing manufacturing. Slowly, the massive waves of migrants find themselves into the circles of street gangs such as the Maras, depending on these gangs for their survival (Chan, 2013). Unfortunately, the elimination of state subsidies in social services as well as the privatization of industries has undermined the ability of Central American states to impose social cohesion. These neoliberal policies have only enriched the elite, and the withdrawal of the state has created numerous opportunities for street gangs to expand their political and economic clout among the poor (Elkus, 2007).

IV. Migrants in Limbo: Migration policies and their strategic importance for neoliberalism

Migrants fleeing the violence and poverty in Central America face intense surveillance and restriction in transit to their destination – the United States. Migration of Central Americans has been a persistent domestic issue in the United States over the years. The 9/11 terrorist attack in New York marked a profound shift in how the United States framed the question of undocumented migrants. The increasing emphasis on homeland security marked undocumented migrants as potential security threats, together with terrorists, drug traffickers and social movements (Soler, 2015 p. 4). The manpower of

the Border Patrol was doubled over the past decade and the budget of the Customs and Border Protection has doubled, from US\$5.9 billion in 2004 to over US\$12 billion in 2015 (Ibid).

The heightened surveillance of undocumented workers have also marked a shift in US-Mexico partnership in patrolling the US-Mexico border. In 2005, the United States, Canada and Mexico signed the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) aimed at stemming drug trafficking and transnational crime. Finalization of the SPP commenced with the Merida Initiative, a three-year program centered on providing technical assistance and military training to Mexico in order to effectively counter drug trafficking. However under the Merida Initiative, measures were instituted to stem the flow of migrants coming from Central America into the United States.

The Merida Initiative brought with it the modernization of the Mexican border surveillance technology and operational practices. One of the products of this initiative is an internal control checkpoint in Huixtla, Chiapas worth US\$5.5 million (Villegas, 2014). Another is the draconian policy known as “Plan Frontera Sur” which allows security forces from across Mexico to be deployed in areas known as migration hotspots. Plan Frontera Sur, which is funded through the Merida Initiative, has led to the arrests of unaccompanied minors. In 2015, Mexico has detained 9,483 underage migrants and 9,526 women (Soler, 2015). These developments show that Mexico is increasingly becoming an immigration enforcer, responding to increasing US pressure to secure its borders from undocumented migrants (Soler, 2015; Villegas, 2014).

Repressive migrant policies are important for the perpetuation of neoliberal capitalism. The dispossession of small peasants and indigenous peoples from their lands has created a rapidly expanding reserve army of labor for global capital. By subjecting these migrants to repressive migration regulations and laws, special categories of workers are created that are denied access to basic democratic rights, rendering them cheap and malleable to the demands of capital (Chacón, 2007). Human rights violations such as extortion, lack of worker’s protections, low wages and harassment in workplaces are commonplace among migrant workers.

V. Implications for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The crisis associated with forced migration is intrinsically tied to pervasive poverty that has plagued the Central Americas over the past century. Massive rates of inequality coupled with the lack of access to social services have dismantled social cohesion within this region. In order for a development agenda to be truly progressive, it must be able to address the root causes of poverty.

Unfortunately, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development fails to address the exclusions perpetuated under neoliberal globalization. While it talks about ending poverty, it proposes to do so within the framework of neoliberalism itself! The Agenda proposes to strengthen property rights in order to facilitate economic growth in the post-2015 world. The document fails to point out that it is not the absence of property rights that cause poverty but rather the skewed distribution of economic resources such as capital and land, concentrated into the hands of the Central American elites. Without genuine programs aimed at the redistribution of economic resources, poverty will remain rooted in the region, spawning generations of migrants.

The 2030 Agenda likewise falls short of committing greater public investment in social protection schemes in the region. This is a dangerous omission as social protection schemes serve as support mechanisms that enable the poor and the marginalized to survive the vagaries of the market. The neoliberal reforms imposed by the United States in Central America have led to the dissolution of state investments in social protection schemes. In order to solve the problems of gang proliferation, perhaps it would prudent to follow the example set by leftwing governments in Latin America wherein massive state investment in social protection schemes have also led to more peaceful urban communities (Elkus, 2007).

Instead of recognizing the problem of migration as borne out of flawed neoliberal development policies imposed on developing countries, the outcome document of the OWG promotes the utilization of migration as a “development opportunity”. Target

10.c aims to reduce the cost of migrant remittance while target 10.7 calls for the implementation of well-managed migration policies (Campaign for Peoples' Goals for Sustainable Development, 2014). Means of implementation 10.c under Goal 10 aims to maximize remittance flows from migrant workers to their home countries by reducing the transaction costs of remittances to 3 percent. This is clearly an endorsement of labor exportation policy, seeing migration only in terms of the benefit it could generate through remittances. The promotion of neoliberal economic policies in developing countries, the endorsement of labor export policies and the failure to condemn the repressive labor migration policies in developed countries will only aim to develop a massive reserve army of labor for the global economy, not end poverty (Bacon, 2013).

The framework of sustainable development goals in addressing the problems associated with migration clearly fall short in attaining development justice for developing countries. It fails to provide solutions that will enforce redistributive policies that will stem migration. Instead, it promotes the continued application of neoliberal economic policies that will further open the floodgates for migrant workers. It does not address the problem of private corporate control on agriculture under free trade agreements which have dispossessed farmers from the land, leaving them to sell their labor power in the global market. It also lacks a framework for accountability that will address the complicity of the United States and Mexican government in creating an environment of impunity which has led to massive transgressions of the rights of migrant workers.

VI. People's Resistance and Demands

The people of Central America has not been silenced, despite the organized strength of neoliberal capital and US military policy in the area. A broad array of social movements and civil society organizations across different countries in the region have mobilized to defend human rights in Central America including migrant rights. These local movement have formed international coalitions to amplify their demands in a global stage.

Perhaps among the strongest initiative for social action in the region regarding migrant rights has been the movement organized by mothers across Central America who are searching for their missing family members in Mexico while they are on transit to the north. The movement was founded in 1999 by two mothers united by their common plight of searching for their lost migrant children. The two decided to form the Committee of Relatives of Migrants from El Progreso (COFAMIPRO) in 1999 and organized the first search tour in December 2000. The search tour got as far as northwest Guatemala along its borders with Mexico and the state of Chiapas in Mexico (Soler, 2015). In 2008, the Movimiento Migrante Mesoamericano (MMM) became the organizing arm of various search tours that were conducted in Mexico. The organization has provided institutional support to mothers all across the region and has given them voice in denouncing the repressive migration policies of the Mexican state.

The organization has proposed concrete measures in addressing the migration crisis gripping central america such as the creation of special prosecutor agency tasked with dealing with crimes committed against migrants; creation of national and regional mechanisms for the immediate search of all missing migrants; building a national and regional data bank of unidentified remains to aid forensic investigation; and implementation of Mexican and regional government programs tasked with comprehensive migrant care.

The strength of the mothers of Central American migrants is admirable and their resolve to attain justice is encouraging. International solidarity networks, can contribute to the strengthening of their movement through various means including:

- Protesting the United States and the Mexican embassy to end the detention and deportation of immigrants and refugees. This can incorporate direct action protests and diplomatic pressure through letters sent to embassy officials
- Joining campaigns to end sweatshop labor and helping workers attain decent work in Central America.

- Making direct financial contributions to movements supporting the cause of Central American migrants
- Pressuring the United States and Mexican governments to end their policy of border militarization through protest actions and publicity campaigns
- Supporting the struggle of Central American activists to regain control of land and resources through material contributions, amplification of local issues through social media and capacity building for these organizations

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THE POST-2015 CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA:

Expanding Corporate Power in the Name
of Sustainable Development¹

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At the height of the global financial crisis in 2008, numerous commentators were keen to consign neoliberalism to the dustbin of history. From mainstream economists like Joseph Stiglitz, to politicians like Prime Minister Kevin Rudd of Australia, to Marxist scholars like Eric Hobsbawm, pundits prognosticated the demise of neoliberalism. Even Time Magazine featured the image of Karl Marx on its cover, displaying how the establishment was being haunted by the specter of losing ideological ground to alternative perspectives.

Six years later, we are witnessing not the retreat of neoliberal globalization but its continued virulence. Instead of succumbing to the protracted crisis, elites have used the crisis itself to dispossess the toiling masses and redistribute wealth from poor to rich (e.g. through austerity). It has been used as an alibi to further restructure state institutions and social norms along market lines, with an extended raft of 'reforms' designed to advance privatization and marketization. In short, neoliberal globalization is continuing to restructure the

¹ This paper is based on a presentation made by the author at the Biennial Conference of the Asia-Pacific Research Network (APRN) on the theme of 'Building a People's Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda' held in Hong Kong, PRC last September 1-2, 2014.

world economy and social order to further expand and consolidate monopoly capitalist rule and safeguard the conditions for further capitalist accumulation.

With the overwhelming evidence of persistent poverty, deepening inequality, ecological degradation and climate change accelerating under neoliberal globalization, elites are desperately proposing new pathways towards “sustainable development” that “leaves no one behind” and protects the planet all at the same time. This is based on the objective need to re-ignite the engines of growth in a global economy still trapped in protracted stagnation, as well as to stave off the resurgence in peoples’ resistance and struggles against intensifying exploitation, oppression and profound injustice.

In this context, the UN system is now engrossed with coming out with a new set of “Sustainable Development Goals” and a “Post-2015 development framework” to succeed the Millennium Development Goals which are supposed to have been achieved by 2015.

These new goals and new framework will be agreed by Heads of States and Governments at a Special Event to be held at the UN Headquarters in September 2015. But will these new SDGs succeed where the MDGs failed? Will they really commit to a new paradigm of development or merely try to rescue the old paradigm by claiming to reconcile continuous growth in profits with eradicating poverty, narrowing inequality, and respecting the planet’s ecological limits?

The corporate sector has long been trying to position itself front and center of the post-2015 development framework. Strong business support for a linkage with the Post-2015 agenda emerged as Member States first called for the establishment of SDGs at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in June of 2012. Meeting in parallel, corporations voted by acclamation to take part in formulating and enacting this new set of goals (Mugo, 2014).

In a white paper titled “The Role of Business and Finance in Supporting the Post-2015 Agenda” published by the UN Global Compact, the authors state, “A new paradigm in development thinking is recognizing the centrality of private enterprise in pursuit

of the development agenda – and vice versa” (p. 3). The UN Global Compact is the world’s largest corporate responsibility initiative with over 7,500 business signatories in more than 140 countries, and 101 local networks. Participating companies – working with an array of non-business stakeholders – commit to align their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption, as well as to take actions in support of broader United Nations goals such as the Millennium Development Goals (and the future SDGs, it is safe to presume).

The UN Global Compact conducted a series of international consultations, surveys, and focus group discussions in 2014 where business participants identified a set of global priorities for the P2015 era – on economic, social, and environmental aspects of sustainable development: “These suggested priorities are all areas in which there is enormous potential for the private sector to advance. However, it requires the scale and intensity of corporate sustainability globally to be significantly enhanced. And it demands a new leadership paradigm that places collaboration and co-investment at its core” (p.4).

After the intergovernmental Open Working Group (OWG) on SDGs came out with its recommended list of 17 goals and 169 targets, the UN Global Compact expressed satisfaction at the results: “It is encouraging that so many of the priorities emerging from business consultations have turned out to be in alignment with the revised OWG “zero draft” released on 30 June” (p. 6).

The fact that the corporate sector is expressing satisfaction over the SDGs and the emerging Post-2015 development agenda should be enough to raise alarm bells for civil society critical of the corporate-led, market-fundamentalist paradigm that has dominated development policy over the last four decades.

This paper attempts to contribute to that critical examination by analyzing the reports and briefs from the business sector related to the Post-2015 development agenda, particularly those published by the UN Global Compact. The following discussion explains how

corporations are staking a claim to the post-2015 agenda at three levels:

1. First, by setting goals that would suit their priorities for expansion.
2. Second, by claiming a primary role in mobilizing the means for implementing these goals.
3. Third, by claiming a major role in the governance framework that would be set-up to ensure progress in this agenda.

1. Setting the goals

The UN Global Compact has released a series of issue papers outlining the critical role of the business sector in achieving global sustainability goals. A cursory reading of the proposed goals therein may lead one to think that the priorities of the corporate sector are aligned with many of the goals that civil society organizations (CSOs) are advocating and what governments have agreed to in the OWG.

Therefore these proposed goals need a second look in the cold light of actual trends in business practices and state policies today.

For instance, one of the main goals proposed by the UN Global Compact comes under the banner “**End poverty and increase prosperity by inclusive economic growth**”.

In its first issue paper “*The Role of Business in Fighting Poverty*”, the UN Global Compact outlined the many initiatives done by multinational corporations in addressing poverty including making inclusiveness of the poor a key to their business models; moving to equalize opportunities for women; forming coalitions to crack down on and find alternatives to child labor in their workplaces and among their suppliers; micro-credit organizations and larger investment institutions extending credit to lower income or traditionally marginalized groups; large corporations supporting

Proposed Goals from UN Global Compact (partial list)	Proposed Goals from Intergovernmental Open Working Group on SDGs (partial list)
"End poverty and increase prosperity via inclusive economic growth"	Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
"Good nutrition for all through sustainable food and agricultural systems"	Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
"Modernize infrastructure and technology"	Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
"Universal health coverage"	Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all
"Quality education for all"	Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all
"Build peaceful and stable societies"	Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
"Good governance and realization of human rights"	

the development of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs), including social enterprises;” and so on.

And yet there is no mention of committing Compact members to pay a living wage to their employees or to eliminate tax evasion and tax avoidance practices that rob developing countries of hundreds of billions of dollars per year. According to Global Financial Integrity, developing countries lost US\$5.9 trillion to illicit financial outflows from 2002 to 2011 – \$954 billion in 2011 alone – resources that could have been used to combat poverty directly through public investments in basic services, infrastructure and technology development, job creation, and economic diversification.

Green and inclusive policies are not even close to being the mainstream practice of the business sector. Out of the 82,000 multinational companies, only 3,000 or so are exploring inclusive models according to the Harvard Business School (Hutchinson, 2012). And some of these so-called “inclusive business strategies” are nothing but insidious ways of preying on impoverished people. Consider Unilever’s “Fair & Lovely” skin whitening cream products that are sold to women in 40 countries across Asia and Africa, especially India. Its commercials typically depict a depressed woman with few prospects of gaining a brighter future by attaining either a husband or a job unless they have fairer complexion. This is from a company that is held up as a stalwart of corporate social responsibility and one of the most influential players in embedding the corporate sustainability agenda in the Post-2015 development framework. Paul Polman, CEO of Unilever, is Vice-Chairman of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and a member of the UN Secretary-General’s High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

In Issue Paper 5, the UN Global Compact explains the business approach to achieving the proposed goal “**Good nutrition for all through sustainable food and agricultural systems**”. The authors write,

Businesses are taking part through development of new crops and training of farmers in new technologies.

Provision of affordable and quality inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, farm equipment, water-conserving irrigation systems, processing or re-cycling of waste to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and bins and containers for fragile crops such as vegetables all play an important role in helping farmers increase the scale of their operations and incomes. There is mutual advantage in integrating geographically and economically isolated, smallholder farmers – many of whom are women - into national, regional and global enterprises and their value chains.

So from the business point of view, this goal is about integrating geographically and economically isolated small farmers, many of whom are women, into the global value chains of transnational corporations (TNCs). TNCs like Nestle for instance would go from country to country contracting with small farmers for the production and supply of coffee or soy. The terms and conditions are typically determined unilaterally by the TNC: what seed variety to use; what inputs are going to go into the land; when crops are going to be delivered; what production methods are used; how much will be paid, and so on, often in very detrimental terms and conditions for smallholder farmers. As a result, many small farmers' gross incomes are increasing but their net incomes are decreasing because of rising costs of seeds and production inputs supplied by other TNCs. Just three companies control over half of global commercial sales of seeds, of which about a quarter are sales of genetically engineered seeds.

So there are definitely profits to be made from promoting “good nutrition for all” through integrating small farmers into the global value chains of these TNCs. But almost all of these gains accrue to the latter.

“Modernize infrastructure and technology” is another important goal proposed by the UN Global Compact. According to its Issue Paper 9, “Physical infrastructure presents a huge challenge and an equally massive opportunity. Requirements for new infrastructure vary from \$200 to \$1 trillion per year, depending on which sectors are included – energy, transport, water and sanitation, agriculture, ICT, and so on.”

Clearly, enormous profits are to be made in infrastructure megaprojects and urban development. But one major hindrance to private sector investment in these undertakings is risk. These are usually massive investments with significant risks and long-term gestation periods before costs are recovered. Hence the Issue Paper recommends, “Cost recovery, i.e., charges for use, will mitigate difficulties in attracting long-term investment in energy, transport and water, and also encourage conservation. Rather than provide overall discounts, price reductions should be targeted to the poor.”

This is despite the surfeit of evidence pointing to the detrimental impacts of user-fees and cost-recovery schemes to low-income families whether in health, education, water, electricity, and so on. For instance, a recent study on the privatization of development finance for public services delivery by the UK Government and its impact on the rights of poor women in developing countries revealed that user fees have not only reduced access to services but also negatively affected the time and opportunities which women have to engage in paid work, education or community activities (Lethbridge, 2014).

This negative impact on the poor is not necessarily offset by targeted subsidies such as through conditional cash transfers that have become the social safety net of choice by exponents of neoliberalism. The same study above makes the important point that “the expansion of private sector provision has detrimental effects on public sector provision because it draws middle income users away from the public sector. This undermines the process of cross-subsidization which enables universal provision of public services, funded through taxation with higher income groups contributing more than lower income groups”(p. 29).

And yet that seems to be the business reasoning behind their support for the otherwise laudable goal of “**universal health coverage**” (or “sustainable energy for all”, “education for all”, etc.).

The UN Global Compact’s Issue Paper 4 on “*The Role of Business in Improving Health*” recommends, “Policies should be pursued to ensure an operating environment that optimizes the contribution

from the private sector. Some of the key issues the private sector faces include regulatory harmonization, international reference pricing, anti-diversion, robust IP, accelerating uptake of new products and increasing vaccine coverage. Some solutions could include easing commercial entry barriers, addressing taxes and duties still imposed on medicines, and encouraging access to quality-assured medicines through private market support and advocacy in the developing world.”

This is one reason why “regulatory harmonization” is one of the major thrusts of so-called 21st century trade agreements currently being negotiated by governments worldwide, including the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the US and EU, the Transpacific Partnership (TPP) between the US and 11 other countries, and the Trade in Services Agreement in the WTO. Basically, they want to change regulations in services sectors to ease commercial entry barriers, including reductions in taxes and duties, while strengthening intellectual property rights of TNCs including pharmaceutical giants.

For instance, regulatory harmonization will mean getting rid of what these TNCs regard as ‘trade irritants’ such as the EU’s bans on GM food, chlorinated chicken and hormone loaded beef’ and other higher EU health and safety standards.

TNCs are not only poised to profit from the direct provision of goods, infrastructure and services. They also see indirect opportunities in a goal such as **“Quality education for all”**. The UN Global Compact’s Issue Paper 2 on *“The Business Role in Better Education”* rightfully underscores that “Businesses are motivated to coordinate with secondary and tertiary schools, so that graduates are prepared to fill job opportunities, with a business and social payoff in lower rates of unemployment and higher productivity.” But it is also quick to point out numerous other commercial opportunities that can be exploited by companies such as “Technology firms, for instance, that develop new software or educational systems that can be utilized over mobile phones for local and national school districts” and “media companies that sell games are developing curricula through associated non-profits, using their specific expertise.”

So businesses are now coordinating with educational institutions to make sure that school curricula are in tempo with the needs of industry and technology is increasingly used in education. Companies are now selling ever more gadgets to replace the printed book, promote online-based learning platforms and/or sell so-called educational games to “supplement” traditional learning methods. Nation building becomes an accidental byproduct of this commercialized education system.

If that is not enough, the UN Global Compact points to the public relations benefits of investing in education. The paper notes, “To build trust and brand quality in lower income neighborhoods, construction firms are contributing to improved schoolhouse infrastructure “.

Indeed human rights are just another form of currency for TNCs calling for the goal “*Good governance and the realization of human rights*”. In Issue Paper 10, the UN Global Compact writes, “The UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights sets out a clear framework for this approach, which is not only a social responsibility *but also a means for strengthening brand credentials, building customer loyalty and attracting investment*” (author’s emphasis).

In the same vein, the UN Global Compact supports the goal “**Build peaceful and stable societies**” for the simple reason that violent conflicts are bad for business. In Issue Paper 8, it writes: “Governments of countries where risks are rising are encouraged to engage in confidence building dialogues and interchanges, calling on business leaders as appropriate. In many conflict situations, business leaders are among those with most to gain from settlement of differences, and have resources that can be brought to bear in critical situations.”

But what is not acknowledged here is that businesses are actually partisan in many violent conflicts. In the Philippines, Colombia, India and in many other areas where indigenous peoples or rural communities are fighting encroachment by landlords and extractive companies, the “affected companies” are regularly consulted by the

military and by the state on how to quell resistance. This resistance is almost always depicted as subversive or terrorist. Historically and at present, many paramilitary forces, while under the command of the military, receive payments from mining and logging companies to fight these “insurgents”. These companies thereby further fuel the conflict and escalate human rights violations (Schwabe, 2013).

In sum, we should not be lulled into thinking that the SDGs are a step forward because they purport to address many of the important needs and concerns of the people. As we have shown in this section, they may very well be used to justify policies and practices that undermine the lofty aspirations we may mistake them for.

2. Means of Implementation

The second level by which corporations are staking a claim in the Post-2015 Development Agenda is in ensuring the means of implementation, especially in terms of financing these goals.

Estimates for the investments needed to achieve the unmet poverty eradication, education and health targets of the MDGs vary between \$20bn and \$200bn per year. Those for incremental investment requirements in infrastructure – taking in areas such as water management and sanitation, extension of energy grids and new and alternative sources, and cleaner, speedier urban and rural transport – range between \$600bn and \$3tn per year. This does not yet include the full costs for climate adaptation and mitigation needed to cope with climate change and keep global temperature increase to less than 2 degrees Celsius. The estimated cost of addressing the climate needs of developing countries alone is pegged at around USD 0.5-1 trillion a year.

But in the wake of the global financial crisis and amidst the continuing stagnation of the global economy, most governments are implementing fiscal consolidation. Many of the advanced economies are cutting back on public expenditure to contain deficits and debt-to-GDP ratios, affecting social benefits, public sector employment

and wages. Among middle-income economies, budget deficits and debt ratios are moderate on average but many of them are saddled with rising contingent liabilities. Moreover, most middle-income countries are faced with lower growth potentials and tighter financing conditions; hence, many of them are undertaking tax and subsidy reform to protect their fiscal stance. For low-income developing countries, immediate fiscal risks are moderate but the emphasis on fiscal policy is improving revenue mobilization (International Monetary Fund, 2014). In other words, governments across the board are in no mood to spend.

Instead, they are turning towards the private sector. Indeed, there is a very legitimate point in chasing after the money in the hands of the world's richest 1%. Just 5% of the 56.62 trillion dollar wealth of the world's so-called High Net Worth Individuals is enough to cover the annual cost of universal social protection, climate change adaptation and mitigation combined.²

But instead of exercising the political will to redistribute a significant portion of this excessive wealth of global oligarchs through progressive tax reform, taxing financial speculation, reversing illicit capital flows, eliminating tax havens, arresting tax competition among countries, amending unfair trade and investment agreements, cancelling illegitimate debts, and a myriad other systemic reforms, governments especially from the OECD are putting an emphasis on enticing the private sector to invest in sustainable development.

In a paper titled Financing Sustainable Development, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) goes so far as to say that, "In general terms, public investment covers areas where

2 High net worth individuals (HNWI) are defined as those having investable assets of US\$1 million or more, excluding primary residence, collectibles, consumables, and consumer durables. According to Capgemini's World Wealth Report 2014, the aggregate investable wealth of HNWI was US\$56.62 trillion in 2013, up by 14% from 2012 (Capgemini & RBC Wealth Management, 2014, p. 4). According to calculations by the International Labour Organization, less than 2 per cent of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would be necessary to provide a basic set of social security benefits to all of the world's poor (p. 3). This is equivalent to \$1.47 trillion in 2013. Estimates of incremental costs of climate change adaptation in developing countries range from US\$4-100 billion per annum. Estimates of incremental investments needed for climate change mitigation range from \$69 – 565 billion per annum (Climate Funds Update, 2015).

private, for-profit financing is intrinsically insufficient or impossible” (p. 23). So for the SDSN, the problem is one of incentives:

Today's markets do not provide adequate incentives for private businesses to contribute towards sustainable development. The key is to combine public financing, regulation, and private market participation into an effective public-private partnership (PPP) or “goal-based investment partnerships.” (p.24)

One way that governments and financial institutions are doing this is through “blended finance” or the practice of linking grants, provided by official development assistance (ODA), with loans from publicly owned institutions or commercial lenders. Donor countries, the World Bank Group and other development finance institutions are promoting this as a way of enhancing the financial viability and sustainability of development projects such as large infrastructure investments. But critics point out that this is essentially another way of using public money to subsidize private investments. As Eurodad notes, “There has been an increase in development finance institutions (DFIs) and EU donors using blending mechanisms to increase support and lending to private companies and to partner with private financiers by using ever larger quantities of ODA” (p. 4).

PPPs can also take the form of agreements that shift the risks associated with private investments to the public sector. This can take the form of guaranteed subsidies or credit, such as state-guaranteed loans to farmers buying new commercial seed varieties; or payment guarantees, such as a power-purchasing agreement between a private coal-fired power plant and a state-owned utility; or revenue guarantees, such as an agreement that ensures a minimum income stream to a private toll road operator regardless of actual road usage. The essential feature of these PPPs is that they provide private companies with contract-based rights to flows of public money or to monopoly income streams from services on which the public rely such as roads, schools, hospitals and health services (Hildyard, 2014, p. 6). This means that if for some unforeseen reason, investors are not able to recoup their costs from user fees, for instance, the government has to put up the money that investors had projected but failed to

realize. The proliferation of PPPs is one of the factors behind the rising contingent liabilities of some middle-income countries today.

There are also multi-stakeholder partnerships which bring together donor agencies, non-governmental organizations, private philanthropy and other stakeholders to address specific challenges – from vaccinations, to agricultural research, to child health, to provision of education, or even hand-washing. For instance the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) is a partnership between the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), a number of African governments and international research centers. According to its official website, AGRA aims to catalyze a uniquely African Green Revolution by creating “transformative partnerships” that address the challenges African farmers face today - poor soils, degraded soils, unreliable water supplies, poor access to markets, insufficient access to finance and credit and too little government support.

But critics point out that AGRA’s version of “transformative partnerships” is premised on African governments shouldering the cost and burden of developing regulatory procedures and infrastructure to enable private agribusiness to profit from new African markets. For instance, AGRA is working with governments and other international and private entities to ‘harmonize’ seed laws across the continent, to allow private seed companies greater control over seed systems. Although AGRA is not directly promoting genetically modified (GM) seeds, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation invests heavily in research and development of GM seeds on the continent and owns shares in Monsanto (African Centre for Biosafety, 2013, p. 13). This illustrates the multiple conflicts of interest embodied by many multi-stakeholder partnerships, particularly in terms of entities representing corporate interests having direct influence over the policies and priorities of “partner governments” or agencies.

To add insult to injury, despite the claims that PPPs are key to mobilizing more resources for the pursuit of sustainable development objectives, there is little evidence showing that PPPs

benefit the most marginalized and impoverished. The World Bank Group's own internal evaluation of PPPs it has supported from 2002-2012 revealed that the main measure of success for PPPs is "business performance." Data on the actual long-term performance of PPPs are rare and improved access for the poor was only recorded in about 10 per cent of cases – leaving open the possibility that low-income groups are actually worse off in 90 per cent of cases (Hildyard, 2014, p. 11). Another study by CAFOD concluded "the majority of finance in existing PPPs goes to well-performing sectors such as telecoms, where commercial returns are likely to be high". They cite other research analyzing the destination of the development finance channeled to the private sector by the European Investment Bank and the private sector arm of the World Bank, which found that big business, wealthier countries and tax havens benefitted most (CAFOD, 2013, p. 14).

3. Governance

However it is not enough that the private sector is mobilized for sustainable development goals and objectives. As the World Economic Forum laments, "while experimentation with individual public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships has flourished over the past decade, including in many international organizations, they continue to play an incremental, even experimental, role in the international system rather than a systematic one. For this to change, policy-making processes and institutional structures themselves will need to be adapted and perhaps even fundamentally repositioned with this in mind." The WEF concludes, "The time has come for a new stakeholder paradigm of international governance analogous to that embodied in the stakeholder theory of corporate governance" (p. 29)

Hence, the third level of the corporate takeover of the Post-2015 development agenda is in the governance framework for sustainable development.

The UN Global Compact and other “expert groups” who have submitted recommendations to the UN all call for a business-friendly view of corporate regulation and a soft approach to accountability. They stress the need to improve transparency and the metrics for assessing corporate sustainability but they rely on the willingness of large corporations to report on their impact and the voluntary commitments they have made (Pingeot, 2013, p. 24).

So the governance approach preferred by the UN Global Compact is to encourage corporations to put on public their commitments to principles and goals and come up with standard measurement or metrics to measure corporate sustainability. However, all these are on a voluntary basis. The rationale, according to the WEF, is that “there is an opportunity to achieve a step change in global environmental governance by focusing less on the traditional agenda (UN structure, new legal frameworks) and more on a new agenda to construct practical, often public-private, mechanisms that can accelerate progress even in the absence of agreement on new multilateral legal obligations.”

In other words, this multi-stakeholder approach to governance that rely on the voluntary commitment of coalitions serves as an alternative to a legally binding framework with clear obligations on the part of states including the obligation to regulate the private sector. So while PPPs and the “multi-stakeholder approach” increase the influence of corporations over public policies and spending priorities, they also weaken the accountability of both big business and the state to the people. There is no real accountability where there are no repercussions for states or companies failing to achieve their avowed social and environmental commitments.

This is supported by critical academic work which has emphasized the limitations of PPPs in relation to possible co-optation of NGOs, the state and UN agencies; a weakening of efforts to hold transnational corporations accountable for their actions; the development of an internal culture of censorship in non-profit and UN organizations; and the lack of effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that PPPs promote public, and not just private, interests (Lund-Thomsen, 2007, p. 2).

At the same time, the focus on business as the driver of the new development agenda and the aggressive push for “partnerships” obscure the ultimate obligation of governments in providing public goods and services and fulfilling people’s rights. The provision of public goods becomes unreliable as it increasingly becomes dependent on voluntary and ultimately unpredictable sources of financing. This adds pressure to privatize this provisioning, thereby flouting the rights-based understanding of people as rights-holders and governments as duty-bearers compelled to account for their human rights obligations under international and national laws.

To make matters worse, the so-called 21st century trade and investment agreements that governments are currently negotiating would grant greater rights to corporations, even empowering them to sue governments in secretive international tribunals for imposing new regulations that adversely affect their expected profits like what is happening in Argentina or Uruguay.

So to summarize, the stakes for big business in the Post-2015 development agenda are clear: the Post-2015 development agenda offers enormous investment opportunities to the tune of trillions per year in infrastructure alone. Second, they allow corporations to externalize costs and socialize risks in investments, particularly in infrastructure, which means more profits. Third, they allow corporations new ways of enhancing their public relations and making themselves appear environmentally and socially responsible but without real accountability.

So what is the emerging post-2015 development agenda?

One way of looking at the emerging post-2015 agenda is that it’s an expanded and revalued MDGs in the sense that it’s now introducing new issues and concerns that were absent in the MDGs. In that sense, some people welcome it. But as the foregoing discussion has shown, there are perhaps more reasons to be alarmed -- that the post-2015 agenda can actually be hijacked for furthering big corporate interests. Thus many from the civil society warn about the danger of

the privatization of the post-2015 agenda aimed at rationalizing and legitimizing the further expansion of corporate power in the guise of promoting sustainability and addressing the needs of the poor.

We need to ask the following questions regarding the emerging post-2015 agenda: is it a people's agenda? Or is it a vehicle for expanding, strengthening transnational corporate power? Is it an agenda that is simply about expanding and building on the MDGs? Or is it a strategy for reinvigorating and re-legitimizing the global capitalist model and neoliberal globalization?

If the agenda that emerges in September 2015 turns out to be a rehashed version or even an expansion of the MDGs but lacking in substantive action to overhaul the dominant neoliberal development framework, then it is an agenda that will definitely perpetuate and deepen the impoverishment, inequality, environmental degradation, and the climate crisis.

Fighting for an alternative future

The notion that history ends with the era of neoliberal globalization no longer holds ideological sway. While the corporate machine appears to be indomitable, they are in fact in panic mode. The best evidence of this is the extent to which corporate forces go to repress the people and prevent egalitarian and participatory democracy and justice to be established. They work incessantly to see to it that policies are never publicly debated, that it had to take online investigative journalists such as Wikileaks to reveal the dangers that highly secretive negotiations such as the TPP and TTIP pose to our freedom, lives, security and wellbeing.

There is a need to reflect on the role of civil society given these crises and challenges and in relation to the emerging post-2015 development agenda.

First, we need to be vigilant. Many from the civil society, especially grassroots, are unenthused over the post-2015 discussion,

opining that the UN or even governments cannot be depended on to implement reforms and address people's concerns anyway. However, there is a very compelling reason why we need to intervene in these spaces. The danger lies, not only in the post-2015 agenda falling short of addressing people's concerns and needs, but also in perpetuating and reinforcing some of the negative strategies and trends we have been fighting against.

Second, we need to be smart in the sense that we need to precisely examine and study the implications of this emerging post-2015 agenda: how it can affect our constituencies on the ground and what can be done about it. We need to examine the post-2015 process, not in isolation, but in relation to wider trends and the broader context of development policies.

We need to be organized. Many groups are doing their own bit in terms of promoting people's agenda and alternative, but what we are facing is a systemic problem concerning the entire development model. So, it requires organizational linking up of civil society across issues, across sectors, and at different levels — from local to national, national to regional, regional to international.

We need to find ways of making those links effective. We need to smartly confront these challenges at all levels and in all arenas. That entails engaging the UN, confronting the WTO, TPPA and other trade and investment agreements; COP 22 and other UN process; the G7 and the G20; and so on. It's about those local laws that are being implemented, such as GMO legislations that are being adopted in many countries. All of these we need to challenge in an organized and linked-up way.

Finally, we need to end the corporate war against the poor and challenge the system itself. It's not just enough to come up with goals unless one challenges the roots of the problem of underdevelopment, poverty, and the ecological crisis.

Development justice is a term coined by civil society and grassroots organizations for their vision of a new development model to counter the neoliberal assault. Broadly, development

justice comprises of five transformative shifts namely, redistributive justice, economic justice, social and gender justice, environmental justice and accountability to the people. Development justice strikes at the roots of the structural problems of inequality, dispossession, exclusion, and poverty and addresses sectors' manifold demands in a comprehensive and interlinked manner. Development justice, in sum, solidifies peoples' unity in struggling for a new political economy based on the principles of cooperation, equality, justice and freedom.³

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3 For more on Development Justice, visit <http://peoplesgoals.org/devjustice/>

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Member States of the United Nations (UN) have set 2015 as the year when they chart a new course for humanity. After nearly three years of consultations and intergovernmental negotiations, Heads of State and Governments adopted the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” on September 24, 2015. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon describes this as “a plan of action for ending poverty in all its dimensions, irreversibly, everywhere, and leaving no one behind.”

However, many people’s organizations and movements are more cautious if not skeptical. This collection of articles produced by the Campaign for Peoples Goals for Sustainable Development (CPGSD) and IBON International illuminates why. It reflects the lived experience of indigenous peoples, small farmers and peasants, migrants, and ordinary citizens from various regions of the global south under the neoliberal mode of development – the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) notwithstanding. It also critically examines the prospects of achieving the new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda in the face of dominant trends in government policies and practices.

This publication serves as a timely and urgent reminder to advocates and governments alike that the people will not be placated by lofty pledges and grand declarations. For as long as the structural roots of poverty, inequality, exclusion and environmental destruction are not addressed; for as long as the failed and unjust economic and political system remains intact; there will be reason for people to resist and to struggle for an alternative future.

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