

## WORLD FORUM FOR ALTERNATIVES

### **Manifesto**

#### **It is time to reclaim the march of history**

It is time to reclaim the march of history. Humanity's future is at stake. Scientific progress and technical advances, the supreme achievements of knowledge, fortify the privilege and comfort of a minority. Instead of contributing to the well-being of all, these feats are used to crush, marginalise and exclude countless human beings. Access to natural resources, especially in the South, is monopolised by the few and is subject to political blackmail and threats of war. It is time to reclaim the march of history.

#### **It is time for the economy to serve the peoples of the world**

The economy provides goods and services mainly to a minority. In its contemporary form, it forces the majority of the human race into strategies for abject survival, denying millions of people even the right to live. Its logic, the product of neoliberal capitalism, entrenches and accentuates grotesque inequalities. Propelled by faith in the market's self-regulating virtue, it reinforces the economic power of the rich and exponentially increases the numbers of the poor. It is time for the economy to serve the peoples of the world.

#### **It is time to break down the wall between the North and the South**

Monopolies of knowledge, scientific research, advanced production, credit and information, all guaranteed by international institutions, create a relentless polarisation

both at the global level and within each country. Trapped in patterns of development that are culturally destructive, physically unsustainable and economically submissive, many peoples throughout the world can neither define for themselves the stages of their evolution, establish the basis of their own growth, or provide education for their younger generations. It is time to break down the wall between North and South.

#### **It is time to confront the crisis of our civilisation**

The confines of individualism, the closed world of consumption, the supremacy of productivism - and, for many, an obsessive struggle for sheer daily survival - obscure humanity's larger objectives : the right to live liberated from oppression and exploitation, the right to equal opportunities, social justice, peace, spiritual fulfilment and solidarity. It is time to confront the crisis of our civilisation.

### **It is time to refuse the dictatorship of money**

The concentration of economic power in the hands of transnational corporations weakens, even dismantles, the sovereignty of states. It threatens democracy - within single countries and on a global scale. The dominance of financial capital does more than imperil the world's monetary equilibrium. It transforms states into mafias. It proliferates the hidden sources of capitalistic accumulation - drug trafficking, the arms trade, child slavery. It is time to refuse the dictatorship of money.

### **It is time to replace cynicism with hope**

Stock prices soar when workers are laid off. A competitive edge is gained when mass consumership is replaced with elite niche markets. Macro-economic indicators react positively as the ranks of the poor multiply. International economic institutions coax and compel governments to pursue structural social adjustment, widening the chasm between social classes and provoking increasing social conflicts. International humanitarian aid trickles to those reduced to despair. It is time to replace cynicism with hope.

### **It is time to rebuild and democratise the state**

The programme of dismantling the state, reducing its functions, pilfering its resources and launching sweeping privatisations leads to a demoralised public sector, weakened systems of education and health and the eventual usurping of the state by private economic interests. Neoliberal globalisation divorces the state from the population and encourages corruption and organised venality on an unprecedented scale. The state becomes a repressive instrument policing the privilege of the few. It is time to rebuild and democratise the state.

### **It is time to recreate the citizenship**

Millions of people are deprived of voting rights because they are immigrants : millions more fail to vote because they are angry or discouraged, because parties are in crisis or because they feel impotent and excluded from political life. Elections are often distorted by influence-mongering and deceit. But democracy means more than elections. Democracy means participation at every level of economic, political and cultural life. It is time to recreate the citizenship.

### **It is time to salvage collective values**

Modernity, conveyed by neoliberalism, has destroyed or profoundly corrupted existing cultures. It has imploded solidarities and dismantled convictions, extolling instead the high-performance individual evaluated on the basis of economic success. Rather than bringing emancipation to the world, modernity is generating a crisis in

education, fuelling social violence and triggering an explosion of insular movements that seek salvation and protection in identity politics - nationalist, ethnic or religious. It is time to salvage collective values.

### **It is time to globalise social struggles**

In fact, it is not the internationalisation of the economy per se that is to blame. It could represent a dramatic step forward for material, social and cultural exchanges between human beings. But in its neoliberal form, it becomes a nightmare lived by the victims of unemployment, young people traumatised by the future, workers shut out of the productive system and nations subjected to structural adjustment, labour deregulation, the erosion of social security systems and the elimination of networks serving the poor. It purports to link and unite, yet it separates and imprisons. It is time to globalise social struggles.

### **It is time to build on peoples' resistance**

Across the world, people are organising resistance, engaging in social struggles and creating alternatives. Women, men, children, unemployed, excluded and oppressed people, workers, landless peasants, communities suffering from racism, impoverished city dwellers, indigenous peoples, students, intellectuals, migrants, small business people, outcasts, declining middle classes - citizens - are asserting their dignity, demanding respect for their human rights and natural heritages and practicing solidarity. Some have given their lives for these causes. Others practice heroism in their day-to-day lives. Some are rebuilding

knowledge on the basis of concrete situations, some are trying out new economic models, some are creating the basis of a new kind of politics, and some are inventing a new culture. It is time to build on people's resistance.

### **Now, is the time for joining forces**

Convergence of struggles, of knowledge, of resistances, of innovations, of minds and hearts for a world of justice and equality, invention and material progress, optimism and spiritual development. We can build this world by seeking and discovering viable alternatives to neoliberalism and unilateral globalisation - alternatives based on the interests of the peoples and respect for national, cultural and religious differences. Now is the time for joining forces.

### **A time of creative universal thought has arrived**

Honest, probing analysis of the current economic, social, ecological, political and cultural consequences can only delegitimise this phenomenon which is paraded to the world as the paragon of progress. The search for a balance between personal initiative and the pursuit of collective goals - based on a celebration of human diversity and creativity - must open the way to new

models. Studies of expanding non-market sectors, productive techniques that respect the well-being of those who use them, and the organisation and nature of work will help create more human forms of organisation. A time of creative universal thought has arrived.

### **The time to rebuild and extend democracy is here**

Democracy is no longer merely a goal for the organisation of societies. It is also the key to the functioning of communities, social movements, political parties, business, institutions, nations and international bodies. It is progressively experienced as an essential contribution to the respect of popular interests and the preservation of national and international security. By prising open spaces for all cultures - not patronisingly, but because they represent humanity's endowment - we can reverse the retreat into enclaves of narrow self-interest and the seclusion of identity politics.

The existence of democratic, competent and transparent states is considered the basis for restoring their power to regulate. Regional economic and political groupings based on internal complementary are viable answers to the real needs of the population and a necessary alternative to neoliberal globalisation.

Strengthening and democratising regional and international institutions is a realistic imperative. It is a condition for progress in international law and the indispensable regulation of economic, social and political relations at the global level, particularly in the fields of financial capital, taxation, migration, information and disarmament. The time to rebuild and extend democracy is here.

### **The time for action has already begun**

This is why the signatories of this declaration support the creation of the *World Forum for Alternatives*. At this moment, we need to create a network of committed individuals, popular organisations, social movements and research centers.

The time has come to establish a « *forum of forums* », bringing together existing organisations throughout the world. To think and work together, support the social struggles that embody hope for the future, encourage viable alternatives to neoliberal globalisation, share and disseminate the results of study and experience. These tasks are imperative. We believe it is possible to build viable, democratic alternatives that respect the identity and dignity of every human being.

We invite you to sign this declaration, to join the Forum and to bring movements and institutions that share these ideals, and to which you belong, into the Forum.

### **It is time to reclaim the march of history.**

*For more information :*

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