
What is at stake at Rio+20

This edition of the WRM bulletin is being released as the Rio+20 People's Summit is beginning in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In May, during a meeting of the International Coordination Group of the People's Summit () – of which WRM forms part – an international call was launched. We would like to share with all of our bulletin readers this message for the unity and mobilization of the peoples in defence of life and the commons, for social and environmental justice, and against the commodification of nature and the "green economy":*

One month before the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, or Rio+20, the peoples of the world have not seen any positive outcomes in the negotiation process taking place within the official conference. There has been no assessment of the progress made in fulfilment of the agreements reached at the 1992 Earth Summit, nor any discussion of how to address the causes of the crises facing the planet. The focus of discussion is a package of proposals misleadingly called a "green economy" and the establishment of a new system of international environmental governance to facilitate it.

The real structural cause of the crises is capitalism, with its classical and renewed forms of domination, which concentrates wealth and generates social inequality, unemployment, violence against the people, and criminalization of those who denounce it.

The current system of production and consumption – represented by the big corporations, financial markets and governments who ensure its maintenance – generates and aggravates global warming and the climate crisis, hunger and malnutrition, the loss of forests and of biological, social and cultural diversity, chemical contamination, the growing scarcity of drinking water, desertification of soils and acidification of the oceans, land grabbing, and the commodification of all aspects of life both in rural and urban areas.

The "green economy", contrary to what its name suggests, is simply one more stage of capitalistic accumulation. Nothing in the "green economy" questions or seeks to replace the extractivist, fossil-fuel based economy, or its patterns of consumption and industrial production. Instead, it opens up new areas to the economy based on exploitation of people and the environment, feeding the myth that unlimited economic growth is possible.

The failed economic model, now dressed up in green, aims to subject all of the life cycles of nature to the rules of the market and technological control, through the privatization and commodification of nature and its functions, as well as traditional knowledge, while contributing to the further expansion of speculative financial markets through mechanisms like carbon markets, payments for environmental services, biodiversity offsetting and REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from avoided Deforestation and forest Degradation).

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs), agrotoxics, *Terminator* technology, agrofuels, nanotechnology, synthetic biology, artificial life, geo-engineering and nuclear energy, among others, are presented as "technological solutions" to the natural limits of the planet and the multiple crises it

is facing, without addressing the real causes that provoke them.

It also promotes the expansion of the agroindustrial food production system, which is one of the main causes of the climate, environmental, economic and social crises, deepening food speculation and promoting the interests of agribusiness corporations at the expense of local, peasant, family and indigenous and traditional peoples' production, thus affecting the health of all.

As a negotiation strategy in the Rio+20 conference, some governments of wealthy countries are proposing a regression from the principles agreed on at the Rio 92 Earth Summit, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, the precautionary principle, and the right to information and participation. They are also threatening already established rights, such as the rights of indigenous and traditional peoples and of peasant farmers, the human right to water, the rights of workers and migrants, the right to food, housing and cities, the rights of youth and women, the right to sexual and reproductive health, the right to education, and cultural rights.

There are also attempts to establish so-called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will be used to promote the "green economy", further weakening the already inadequate Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The official Rio+20 process aims to establish global environmental governance mechanisms that would serve to manage and facilitate this "green economy", in which a key role would be played by the World Bank and other public or private, national and international financial institutions. This would result in a new cycle of indebtedness and structural adjustments dressed up in green. There cannot be democratic global governance without ending the current corporate capture of the United Nations.

We reject this process and call for increased mobilization and the construction of alternatives worldwide.

We are struggling for radical change in the current model of production and consumption, reaffirming our right to develop alternative models based on the multiple realities and experiences of the peoples which are genuinely democratic, respectful of human rights and collective rights, in harmony with nature and with social and environmental justice.

We support the proposal and collective construction of new paradigms based on food sovereignty, agroecology and the solidarity economy, on the defence of life and the commons, on the affirmation of all threatened rights, including the right to land and territory, the right to cities and the rights of nature and future generations, and on the elimination of all forms of colonialism and imperialism.

We call on all the peoples of the world to support the Brazilian people's struggle against the destruction of one of the most important legal frameworks for the protection of forests, the Forest Code, which would open the door to further deforestation to serve the interests of the agribusiness sector and the expansion of their monoculture plantations; and to support the fight against the implementation of the Belo Monte mega dam project, which is threatening the survival and livelihoods of forest peoples and Amazonian biodiversity.

We renew our call for participation in the People's Summit to be held 15-23 June in Rio de Janeiro. This is an important step in the global struggles for social and environmental justice that we have been building since Rio 92, and particularly since Seattle, the World Social Forum and Cochabamba, where struggles have been amplified against the WTO and the FTAA, for climate justice, and against the G20. We also include mass mobilizations and popular struggles such the Occupy and Indignados

movements, the Chilean students' struggle, and the Arab Spring.

Finally we call for global mobilization on 5 June (World Environment Day), on 18 June against the G20 summit (which will focus on "green growth"), and on 20 June for the March of the People's Summit in Rio de Janeiro and worldwide, for social and environmental justice, against the "green economy" and the commodification of life and nature, and in defence of the commons and the rights of peoples.

Rio de Janeiro, 12 May 2012

**The International Coordination Group (CG) of the Civil Society Facilitating Committee (CFSC) for the People's Summit at Rio+20 is made up of 35 networks, social movements and organizations from 13 different countries. Its representatives work together with the National CG (with 40 represented networks) to coordinate the methodologies and policies of the People's Summit, a parallel and critical event to Rio+20, which will bring together thousands of people in "Aterro do Flamengo" from 15 to 23 June.*