
[From one forum to the next: Another world is possible](#)

In January 1998, and coinciding with the annual meeting of the Davos World Economic Forum --the small luxury skiing station in Switzerland that gives its name to this event-- 192 organizations from 54 countries, united in the Global Peoples' Action, launched a "Declaration against the Globalisers of Misery."

The World Economic Forum is a corporate organization, whose members belong to the 1,000 most powerful corporations in the world, crucial in the formulation of business policies and directives on a worldwide scope. Every year they hold a strategic forum in Davos, where celebrities are gathered, such as Mike Moore, Director General of the WTO, Michael Dell, president of Dell Computers, the greatest supplier of computers in the world, Carleton Fiorina, president of Hewlett-Packard, another main supplier of computer hardware and information technology suppliers, Bill Gates, president of Microsoft and the richest person in the world, George Soros, president of the largest fund for high-risk investments, Richard Parsons, member of AOL Time Warner, the world's largest media company.

However, the accelerated centralization of political and economic power brought about by globalization, and its gradual change towards anti-democratic and closed institutions, such as the World Trade Organizations (WTO), has engendered an antagonistic process. The peoples of the Third World countries, together with poor and excluded sectors of industrialized countries that have suffered and continue to suffer from the devastating effects of economic globalization and the dictatorship of international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the WTO and governments serving their interests, were seeking a way out.

At the end of 1998, some social organizations made an open invitation to hold a Davos Alternative. It was meant to show that the economic issues addressed by the World Economic Forum do not interest the whole world, but only a small group of interests, that other forces exist that respond to world diversity and that it is urgent for decision makers to consider other ways of dealing with economic issues and addressing development. It was thus that at the 1999 Davos Forum, hundreds of demonstrators were present, launching the slogan "Freedom, not free trade."

In the meanwhile, the idea took shape that it is no longer possible to introduce palliatives or improvements to this world, but that it is essential to create another world. In the search for answers to this challenge of building "another world" where economy would be at the service of human beings and not the other way round, the Brazilian organization committee organized the First World Social Forum in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil in January 2001. Some 20,000 participants met around the slogan of "Another World is Possible."

The idea was to create an open forum for reflection, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experience and the establishment of links and contacts among civil society groups and movements opposed to neo-liberalism and world domination by capital. And truly, the World Social Forum was an open platform for the discussion of strategies to resist the globalization model formulated in Davos by the major transnational companies and their gendarmes: the national governments, the IMF, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization.

As the World Social Forum itself sets out in its Charter of Principles it “is a plural, diversified, non-confessional, non-governmental and non-party context that, in a decentralized fashion, interrelates organisations and movements engaged in concrete action at levels from the local to the international to build another world ... open to ... diversity of genders, ethnicities, cultures, generations and physical capacities.”

In broad terms, the common idea exists of building a planetary society in which human beings establish harmonious relationships among each other and with the planet.

During the next two years, Porto Alegre was again host to this growing and permanent world process searching for and elaborating alternatives with an international dimension. Over 55,000 people from 131 countries took part in the Second Forum, while 100,000 took part in the Third Forum. In order to increase its scope, it was decided to hold the 2004 World Social Forum in India, bringing the opportunity to participate to other peoples of the region.

At this stage, the World Social Forum has become totally separate from the event which originated it. The Davos World Economic Forum was left far behind and undoubtedly came second when highlighting the news, showing that there is increasing conviction that the creation of another world is not only possible, but can no longer be put off.

The WRM has been participating in this civil society proactive process right from the start, adding its input to this context that promotes the creation of new links and tightens the already existing ones. It has also participated with this objective of incorporating the issue of forests into the social agenda, emphasizing the social dimension they fulfil, both as the means of livelihood for millions of people and as a basis for human survival on the planet. Additionally, we have also highlighted the serious impacts caused by large-scale monoculture tree plantations, imposed on a worldwide scale within a scheme favouring major capital interests and deteriorating the social and environmental conditions of those who are a majority on the planet.

The World Social Forum is part of WRM’s path, and in this melting pot of ideas and proposals, we shall be contributing ours, together with our conviction and willingness to make an input to the creation of this “other possible world.”