



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Lagos, November 2015**— CORA Remembers Ken Saro-Wiwa (20 years after)  
**Port Harcourt/Uyo/Lagos**— Rift Valley Blues-- HS07 with Frank Muramuzi as  
Instigator— **May 2016**

## DOCUMENTARY OF NOTE:

### *Nowhere to Run*

Nowhere to Run is a 50 minutes video documentary produced by Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation. This documentary lays out the critical environmental challenges facing Nigeria in an age of climate change. It is a crucial contribution by the YarAdua Centre to an understanding of the interconnectedness of Nigeria's environmental problems. Although the picture is grim, this is a story of hope.



**MARTYRS OF ACTIVISM**

The Eco~Instigator is a quarterly publication of Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF)

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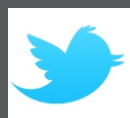
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### Resistance is a Right

The 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2015 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the execution of nine iconic Ogoni leaders,

1. Ken Saro-Wiwa

2. Saturday Dobee
3. Nordu Eawo
4. Daniel Gbooko
5. Paul Levera
6. Felix Naute
7. Baribor Bera
8. Barinem Kiobel
9. John Kpuine

These gallant men were executed after a kangaroo trial and even before the expiration of the appeal period set by the brutal military dictator Sani Abacha.

This issue of your Eco-Instigator commemorates the dastardly execution and pays respects to all martyrs of extractivism across the world. We bring you the voice of the widow of Barinem Kiobel as she urged the US courts to punish Shell for the judicial murder of her husband and the other Ogoni leaders. Read Esther Kiobel's article, A Living Story Of Shell's Cruelty.

It may come as a shock to some people, but a report by Global Witness (Deadly Environment – A rising death toll on our environmental frontiers is escaping international attention, April 2014) attested to the gruesome fact that up to two environmental activists were killed every week as they worked to stop the plunder of natural resources. The report revealed that up to 40 per cent of those killed were ordinary members of local communities simply struggling to maintain their livelihoods, cultural roots and dignity.

We also serve you among many other fares the story of resistance to fracking in the Algerian community of In Shalla by the outstanding Algerian activist Hocine Malti. And we are certain you would not want to miss John Foran's Just Say No to the Paris COP. Elizabeth Beltram writes from Bolivia on Water a Source of Life, Connection and Hope reminds us that water is life and brings up the struggles for the Rights of Mother Earth.

We had a great week with Vandana Shiva when she visited Nigeria to speak and campaign on the topic Soil Not Oil! She delivered the second annual Right Livelihood Lecture at the University of Port Harcourt and addressed our Sustainability Academies during the visit. It was a great season of instigation. She also led in the planting of two Gardens of Hope – one in Ogoni and the other in Egi, both in the Niger Delta. Cadmus brings you a brief report of that epochal week.

We always like to hear from you. Do send your articles, opinions, poems, stories, whatever you feel will instigate actions for a better environment. Our pages are for you.

**Until Victory!**

**Nnimmo**



Martyrs of Activism

# KEN SARO-WIWA

## LIVES ON

Nnimmo Bassey  
and Lars Johansson

Twenty years have passed since Ken Saro-Wiwa was hanged by the most brazen military dictatorship that Nigeria experienced. Saro-Wiwa, born 10 October 1941 was elected president of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) in 1990. His leadership capacity and love for his people was displayed by the Ogoni people when they elected him president even while he was in military detention. MOSOP pioneered peaceful mass movement building with particular focus on fighting for environmental justice, social equity and minority rights. The Ogoni people at that time numbered 500,000 and ranked as one of the marginalized minority ethnic nations among Nigeria's over 250 ethnic groups.

The struggle of the Ogoni people under the leadership of Ken Saro-Wiwa was built on the principle of non-violence and non-compromise with injustice and oppression. The group pursued its demand on the basis of the Ogoni Bill of Rights that was prepared and presented to the Nigerian government in 1992. The sheer fact that a previously voiceless minority group could rise up, speak up and firmly demand to be treated with dignity and respect frightened the Nigerian military junta and their collaborating oil corporations while at the same time inspiring other oppressed peoples in the region.

The Niger Delta has become known as

probably the most polluted environment in the world. Fifty two years of oil exploration and extraction has meant shattered dreams, polluted creeks, destroyed farmlands, deforestation and socio-economic collapse. Oil spills in the oil fields of the Niger Delta are routinely under reported or even go unreported. When spills are reported, the companies claim that they are mostly caused by sabotage whereas a bulk of their pipelines have already been in commission beyond their expected service lifespan.

Nigeria extracts more than 2 million barrels of crude oil from the Niger Delta on a daily basis. The crude is carried through a network of pipelines measuring over 7000 kilometres and taking up a land area of about 30,000 square kilometers. A number of these pipelines are fixed above ground and sometimes serve as streets in grossly neglected villages. The oil fields are not only rich in low sulphur oil popularly known as sweet crude, they are also rich in natural gas that comes up as the crude is being extracted. Oil companies like Shell and the other majors routinely burn the associated gas sometimes in the middle of communities. They release a cocktail of noxious elements into the environment causing cancers, bronchitis, asthmas, blood disorders and an assortment of other diseases.



Ken Saro-Wiwa and MOSOP challenged the destructive activities of Shell in Ogoni land, demanding a change for the sake of the people and their livelihoods. That was not to be. In an orchestrated move, the military began what was codenamed a wasting operation in Ogoni land, killing, maiming, raping and generally assaulting the people and communities. The height of the orchestrated violence was reached in 1994 when four Ogoni chiefs were gruesomely murdered. Ken Saro-Wiwa and nine other Ogoni leaders were charged for the murders, tried in a kangaroo military tribunal and sentenced to death by hanging. Although the military decree setting up the tribunal set a 30 days period for appeals to be made after sentencing, Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other accused were hanged on 10 November 1995 a mere 10 days after the infamous verdict.

It is instructive that Shell held a watching brief throughout the sham trial confirming that they had deep interest in the case and probably some influence on the outcomes. There was international outcry following the declaring of guilt and the subsequent murders of these patriots. We note that Shell, who was ejected from Ogoni land in 1993 has still not been able to get back to resume operations in the area since then. Before 1993 it was estimated that there were four incidents of oil spills every week in Ogoni land due largely to failure of corroded pipes and poor maintenance. Shell is still rejected by the people and the scars of the injuries they inflicted on the people are still raw and may remain so for years to come.

The story of Shell's record in the Niger Delta has continued to echo over the years. A recent controversy pertains to the contamination study being undertaken by the United Nations Environment

Programme (UNEP). For that study, Shell paid UNEP the sum of \$9.5 million and an official of UNEP announced in August this year that they have found that the bulk of the pollutions in Ogoni is caused by local people. This understandably raised objections from local people and internationally as the assertion flies against the grain of perceived reality.

Back in May 2008 a Swedish MP, Sofie Arkelsten, went on a "study tour" of South France on the ticket of Shell. Evidently impressed by her sponsored study tour she quotes a "boss from Shell" in her blog as saying "Energy lifts people out of poverty." A visit to the Niger Delta will easily show that oil extraction plunges people into poverty and desperation. That year Shell made a record profit of more than 200 billion Swedish kronor (\$32.4b)

That year also, poverty deepened in the Niger Delta region and thousands of young, unemployed men considered joining the rebel groups who kidnapped oil workers and there was a threat of civil war. Over the years the oil companies operation in the Niger Delta have worked behind military shields. As the threat of violent rejection heightened flow stations owned by companies such as Shell and Chevron received higher levels of protection by military forces, whose stock-in-trade often was bombing of communities as a form of collective punishment in a bid to stop attacks by armed groups in the region.

Later that year, Sofie Arkelsten praised Shell's work with the climate in a debate in the Swedish parliament.



Photo: By Ed Kashi

But in the Niger Delta, Shell continued to flare enormous volumes of gas instead of utilising its energy or re-injecting the gas back into the ground. Gas flaring in the Niger Delta releases more greenhouse gases than the entire Swedish car parks.

The Niger Delta is said to have experienced about 3400 oil spills in the past 4 years. The figures for the past fifty-two years of oil extraction has been equated to the equivalent of one Exxon Valdez spill every year. The volumes of spilled oil and the damage to ecosystems and livelihoods are far greater than the BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico, yet there is rarely any cleaning-up and usually no compensation is paid to affected people and communities. Instead the oil companies routinely blame the victims, claiming sabotage and threats of violence as reasons for not stopping leaks or maintaining international standards

New York May 2009: Shell pay \$15m in an out-of-court settlement to the families of Ken Saro-Wiwa and five other Ogonis who were executed in 1995. Yet the company claims it is innocent to the charges of complicity and says it pays the money as a "humanitarian gesture." It is interesting to note that after Ken Saro-Wiwa was sentenced to death under Shell's watch, they also made a plea for leniency on "humanitarian" grounds.

The settlement does not mean the end of the legal process, since a parallel class-action suit is being prepared, a class action suit in which the entire Ogoni nation seek justice. But in September 2010 a US court established that while individuals and states can be prosecuted for human rights violations, corporations enjoy immunity.



This puts a lid over thirteen years of investigation into shell's role in the bloody repression of the nineties where thousands of people were killed. Thousands of pages of testimony are laid to rest in locked archives until the US Supreme Court possibly overturns this judgment.

[In January 2015 Shell agreed to pay \$83m to Bodo community fishermen impacted by oil spills from their pipeline in 2008/2009. This was another out of court settlement in case brought against Shell in the United Kingdom. The company also paid \$9m for the Assessment of the Environment of Ogoniland by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the basis of "polluter pays principle".]

In his last testament after conviction by the military tribunal, Ken Saro-Wiwa declared that we all stand before history and that Shell will one day be in the dock. The oil corporations operating the Niger Delta continue to externalise costs to the environment and poor local communities, but refuse transparency, wriggle out of court processes and meet criticism with greenwashing. They continue to tread the

path of impunity polluting the environment, destroying livelihoods and cutting live expectancy to a mere 41 years.

Today there is call for new oil to be left in the soil everywhere in the Niger Delta. Closing leakages caused by ongoing massive oil thefts can easily block projected revenue deficit that this may entail. Halting the search for new oil will also directly curtail other forms of corruption in the sector. And very importantly a full-scale environmental audit and detoxification of the Niger Delta is imperative that cannot be further delayed.

Above all, we see a ray of hope for justice in the fact that in the face of all these assaults the struggles for which Ken Saro-Wiwa laid down his life continues to be waged by Ogoni people and others who agree that crimes against any environment is a crime against all of humanity. Ken Saro-Wiwa may have been hanged, but his ideals live on.

# Dr Kiobel's Widow: A Living Story Of Shell's Cruelty

**The Ogoni 9**  
By Esther Kiobel,  
Plaintiff – Esther Kiobel et al Versus Royal Dutch Shell

The nature of this Esther Kiobel et al versus Royal Dutch Shell case makes it incumbent on the U.S. Supreme Court to reach a decision that would curtail the genocidal activities of corporations, rather than passing a judgment that would be tantamount to double standard. This is because there is adequate evidence that expose Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC)'s evil collaboration with Nigerian government, which invariably poses legitimate and explainable fear that if ever the case is referred to Nigeria, the oil giant will be exonerated.

In other words, transferring the case to any other court outside the U.S. would invariably imply arming the defendant with the jurisdiction of the case. Thus, in as much as I and my co-plaintiff are not praying for a verdict based on sentiments, the attention of the court ought to be

drawn to the danger inherent in a failure to decide this case here in the United States. The court ought to be reminded that the case we have against Shell is that of collaborating, aiding and abetting human rights violations by the Nigerian Government, and as a result, the Nigerian courts lack the rectitude to decide the case, since, by virtue of being an arm of government, they are Shell's accomplice. It would discredit the United States Supreme Court's judgmental competence if this case is referred to Nigeria, because even a child in the crèche knows that you cannot ask an abuser to be his or her own judge. The United States Supreme Court must be keen to recognize that the Alien Tort Statute 28 U.S.C. §1350 is unarguably the appropriate legal apparatus for recognizing a cause of action for violations of human rights by corporations outside the United States.



My appeal is that the Supreme Court's decision on this case may not be like the declaration of the U.S. Appeal Court of the 2nd Circuit, which ensured the connotation that because international law didn't specifically apportion liability to corporations, or because no corporation had been held liable under international law, corporations could do as they pleased, invariably resulting in further corporate killings, genocide and instability in Africa and such other oppressed lands.

I was brought into the United States in February 1998 as a refugee, including the rest of Plaintiff in Kiobel versus Shell case 10-1491 currently in the U.S. Supreme Court, and we are now citizens of the United States. We are holding Shell responsible for the crimes committed against us and the rest of humanity. I was stripped naked, tortured, and locked up twice, while my husband and the rest of the Ogoni 9 were maimed, strangled, killed and acidized. I have proofs of those who were paid by Shell, and who were in their payroll to lie, testify, some of them sworn affidavit in court and some of them are in America. I do have documents that implicate Shell. The documents were sent through my late husband's office as Honorable Commissioner for Commerce and Tourism during the Komo administration as military governor of Rivers State. I do have pictures of Shell's cronies airlifting my husband in their helicopter, dressed in uniform and helmet that bore Shell's logo. There are also secret documents to prove how Shell tried to bribe my husband in an executive meeting at the government house in Port Harcourt, when they planned to arrest and kill Ken Saro-Wiwa. And when they did not succeed, they turned around to mastermind the killing of the Ogoni 4, in a bid to set confusion amongst the Ogoni

people – a problem that has remained to date.

New undeniable evidence suggest the Nigerian military killed four Ogoni elders, whose murder led to the execution of my husband, Hon. (Dr.) Barinem Nubari Kiobel, Ken Saro-Wiwa and the rest in 1995.

The evidence also reveal that the notorious military commander, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Okuntimo, whose troops were implicated in murder and rape, was on the payroll of Shell at the time of the killings, and was driven around in a Shell vehicle, bearing the company's logo.

Since the time of their death, Shell has insisted that it had no financial relationship with the Nigerian military, although it had admitted paying it “field allowances” on two occasions. They have consistently denied any widespread collusion and payments. However, the UK Independent gained exclusive access to witness accounts that were to be used in evidence in the case of Wiwa v Shell, brought by Ken Saro-Wiwa's family. The case was settled out of court for \$15.5 Million just days before it was due to start in New York. The settlement meant that the testimonies were never made public.

However, they provide fresh insight into Shell's financial and logistic involvement with the Nigerian military and with Lieutenant Colonel Paul Okuntimo. Some of the key witnesses due to testify in court were Mr. Ejiogu Boniface, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Okuntimo's orderly in Internal Security Task-force, a coalition of army, navy, and police. Mr. Ejiogu testified to standing guard as victims were raped and tortured while Lieutenant Colonel Paul Okuntimo was in command. Asked if he ever saw his Commander receive money from Shell.



He said he witnessed it on two occasions. Mr. Ejiogu described in detail how just days before the Ogoni elders were murdered, he drove with Okuntimo to Shell's base in Port Harcourt, where the officer received seven large bags of money. “I was there when other soldiers were carrying Ghana-must-go bags” he testified. The bags were so heavy; the soldiers had difficulty carrying them, and one fell open. Mr. Ejiogu said, “I saw it was money in bundles,” he said.

On another occasion, Mr. Ejiogu witnessed four bags being given by a Shell security official to Lieutenant Colonel Paul Okuntimo at the official's house late at night.

Another witness due to testify was Raphael Kponee. Also due to testify was a policeman working for Shell. On a different occasion, he saw three bags being loaded into Lieutenant Colonel Paul Okuntimo's pick-up truck by his driver and another driver in front of security building at the Shell base.

Shell officials have admitted that money was paid to the officer, but purely as field allowances for his men who were

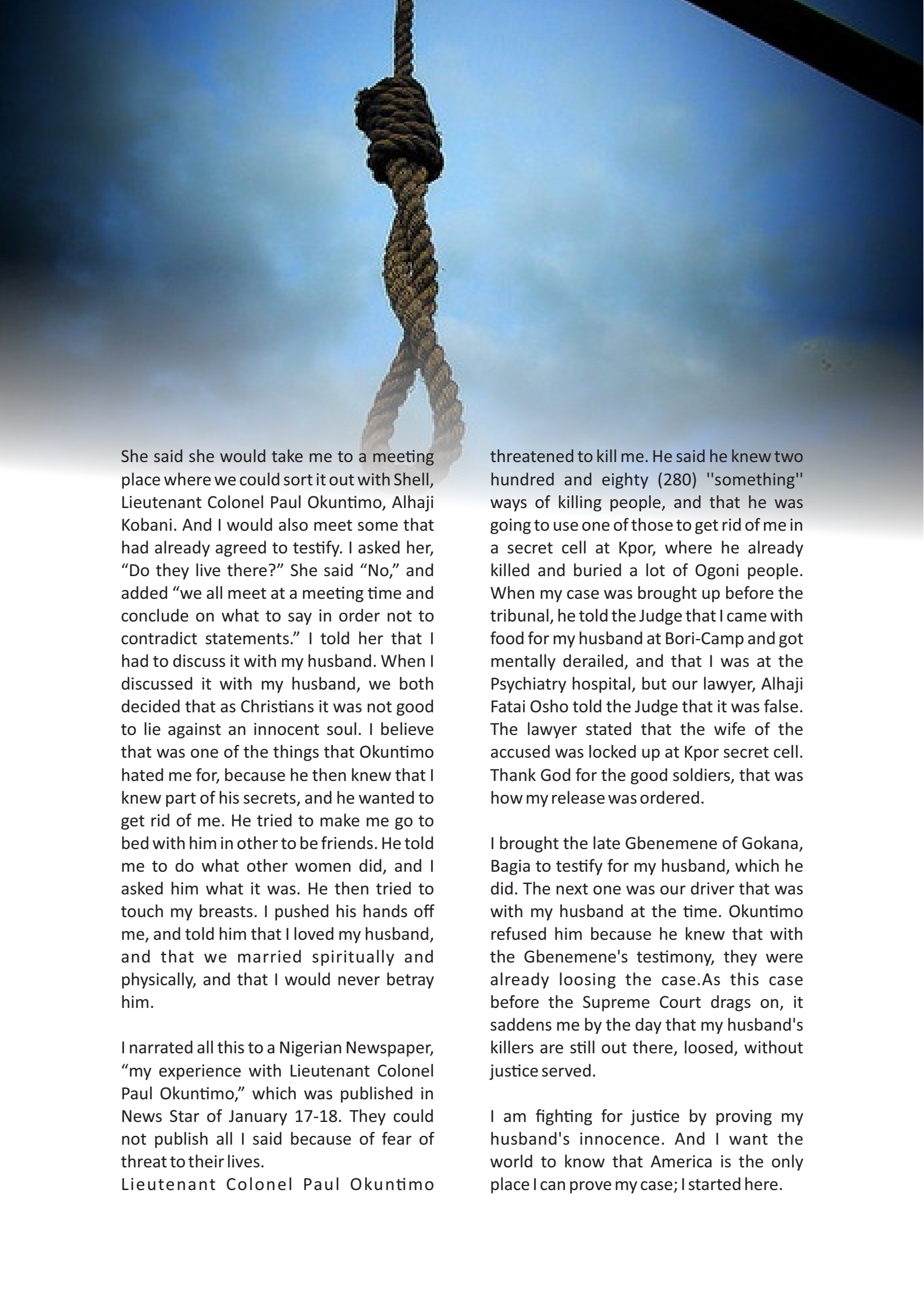
protecting Shell property in Ogoni land.

Mr. Ejiogu also offers compelling evidence as to who may have murdered the Ogoni four elders at the meeting on May 21, 1994. Saro-Wiwa was due to speak, but was turned away by the military. Mr. Ejiogu said he heard Lieutenant Colonel Paul Okuntimo tell his task-force commander to “waste them.” In the army, they use the term “waste them” when they refer to shooting rapidly.

Within 24 hours, Kenule Saro-Wiwa, Barr. Ledum Mitte, and Hon. (Dr.) Barinem Nubari Kiobel were arrested and charged with murder. It was implied that they had had the elders killed because of their moderate stance on Ogoni issues.

Despite an international outcry, they were hanged on November 10, 1995, following a fake trial. Other witnesses to testify that [missing word/phrase] were in Shell payroll were Mr. Naayone Npka, Mr. Charles Danwi, etc. I was also called by Precilia Vikue from Bodo at Creek Road fish market Port Harcourt. She said my husband would be saved if he could testify against Ken Saro-Wiwa.





She said she would take me to a meeting place where we could sort it out with Shell, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Okuntimo, Alhaji Kobani. And I would also meet some that had already agreed to testify. I asked her, “Do they live there?” She said “No,” and added “we all meet at a meeting time and conclude on what to say in order not to contradict statements.” I told her that I had to discuss it with my husband. When I discussed it with my husband, we both decided that as Christians it was not good to lie against an innocent soul. I believe that was one of the things that Okuntimo hated me for, because he then knew that I knew part of his secrets, and he wanted to get rid of me. He tried to make me go to bed with him in order to be friends. He told me to do what other women did, and I asked him what it was. He then tried to touch my breasts. I pushed his hands off me, and told him that I loved my husband, and that we married spiritually and physically, and that I would never betray him.

I narrated all this to a Nigerian Newspaper, “my experience with Lieutenant Colonel Paul Okuntimo,” which was published in News Star of January 17-18. They could not publish all I said because of fear of threat to their lives.

Lieutenant Colonel Paul Okuntimo

threatened to kill me. He said he knew two hundred and eighty (280) "something" ways of killing people, and that he was going to use one of those to get rid of me in a secret cell at Kpor, where he already killed and buried a lot of Ogoni people. When my case was brought up before the tribunal, he told the Judge that I came with food for my husband at Bori-Camp and got mentally derailed, and that I was at the Psychiatry hospital, but our lawyer, Alhaji Fatai Osho told the Judge that it was false. The lawyer stated that the wife of the accused was locked up at Kpor secret cell. Thank God for the good soldiers, that was how my release was ordered.

I brought the late Gbenemene of Gokana, Bagia to testify for my husband, which he did. The next one was our driver that was with my husband at the time. Okuntimo refused him because he knew that with the Gbenemene's testimony, they were already losing the case. As this case before the Supreme Court drags on, it saddens me by the day that my husband's killers are still out there, loosed, without justice served.

I am fighting for justice by proving my husband's innocence. And I want the world to know that America is the only place I can prove my case; I started here.

If this case is treated here, my children and grandchildren, who are all Americans, will derive a sense of security and the assurance that their well-being and protection is catered for by this country they have been taught to see as the home of the free.

This is the country that rescued me from being killed, and I still rely on this same country to vindicate me, especially owing to the provision in the American judicial system to cater for cases like mine. It would be so endangering if the Alien Tort Statute, which has attracted remedies for about three decades, now cannot work in this case. The Alien Tort Statute gave succor and relieves in the past to victims of corporate human rights abuses that now would be stymied if this case is dismissed or referred to Nigeria or any other place. I plead that the attendant consequence of the Supreme Court's decision be considered in deciding this case alongside legal precedents.

I seek justice for Shell's genocidal activities of which my late husband and I and my children, as well as the rest of the plaintiff in this case were victims. My first daughter was beaten and physically abused by Okuntimo when she brought food to my late husband, because I was locked up, and my husband had refused to eat any food not brought to him by me and my children. It is saddening to think of how my daughter was abused that way by a military man, the trauma of which has remained in her to date without help. With scores of human rights abuse cases hanging on Shell's neck, the company's manipulative tendencies have become unprecedentedly diabolical than ever. It is sickening to hear Shell's lawyers claiming the company was off the hook of the human rights violations and my husband's death, whereas the company announced their presence at the

fake tribunal from day one till the end, and even had their lawyers who had come from Europe and America. The company was involved in full force, and therefore cannot be exculpated.

They have succeeded in the past and saved their face from the shame they deserved, but this time they cannot escape justice again, no matter how hard the company fights to silence the prevalence of truth.

The world now is aware that Shell would do anything to quench a potential legal embarrassment. For instance, settling the Wiwa case out of court with \$15.5 million in 2009 shows to what extent Shell can prevent itself from facing judgment for their heinous crimes. And the American public and literate people of good conscience around the world, including legal luminaries are expecting the Supreme Court now to put these companies in check by passing a judgment that would vindicate the oppressed, since the Alien Tort Statute is undoubtedly the last hope for the oppressed in this instance. A contrary judgment will give legal permit to corporations to kill without recourse and unabated.

I am seizing this medium to plead for justice. I am a victim, widow and a mother fighting to make my voice and those of others in my shoes heard. I am constantly mindful of the pain and agony my children and I faced as a result of what Shell did. Every thing around me in one way or the other makes fresh the horror of abuse I faced, and my husband's cries have remained ineradicable in my mind's eye. I wish to beg the Supreme Court to; favor me and favor the oppressed; vindicate my late husband and appraise the concept of innocence; and bring Shell to justice and punish perpetrators of human rights abuses.





# GHANA: MARTYRS OF EXTRACTIVES

By Noble Wahdza

Artisanal mining has been an age long socio-economic and livelihoods activity over the centuries. These mining activities were undertaken to meet cultural needs and to support trade and exchange as well as for maintaining solidarity among peoples and communities.

With the turn of history mining has become the chief target of capital and profit, relegating human and ecosystems values to the background. The rise of capitalist and neoliberal modes of trade and commerce in the early engendered the valuing of profit over any other variable and ensured that

the walls of social harmony and solidarity that occasioned artisanal mining business and commerce centuries ago began to crack, exposing people communities and the environment to many levels of risk.

From the 1980s the World Bank//IMF have not spared Ghana as they dug in with their privatization evangelistic mission (as in other developing countries) carved on the slab of Structural adjustment policy and propelled by mythical promises of the flow of investment capital through Foreign Direct investment (FDI).

Being the first natural resource sector to experience deep dosage of liberalization policies, the mining sector has become the guinea pig for deregulation and privatization policies and gold was enthroned as the driver of gross domestic value.

The negative social and environmental footprint that came along with the gold age was stunning, giving rise to a growing dissension over the net benefit of the mining investment, when pitched against the physical destruction caused to people and the environment. The impact spreads over social, cultural, public health and safety as well as directly on livelihoods and security for citizens and communities.

These in addition to the dislocation of peoples and communities, conflicts and the wave of criminalization and militarization of communities convinced public spirited citizens and to question the veracity of the mining's contribution to the economy. This laid the grounds for confronting gold capitalists. Defending the vulnerable, peoples the environment is not for the fainted heart. Those who have stood for the truth, suffered deprivations, and even lost their lives in some cases, continue to inspire us on. A common experience of criminalization of their struggles has brought kidnappings and executions or being buried alive in the bowels of the earth have remained their lot. These gruesome and harrowing conditions that confront their resilience cannot be ignored.

What did they ask for? The over 70 small scale miners who lost their lives in 2010 in Dunkwa on Offin in Ghana's Western Region? They were only involved in activities aimed at meeting their livelihoods demands when the mining pit

gave up on them. The pit symbolizes the legacy of mining and paints a picture of poor decommissioning after many years of reaping profits by the big mining companies.

In August 2015 the bell tolled for small-scale miners of Ayamfuri community in the central region. Small-scale miners of Ayamfuri had their fair share of assaults by state security agents. Indeed when a combined team of police and the military force descended on them the result was predictable: serious injuries from gunshots and rubber bullets freely used on them.

As usual a foreign mining company was at the center of this development. The military and the police have done it again as their mastery and the art of brutality against ordinary citizens in defense of capital and profit is not in contention.

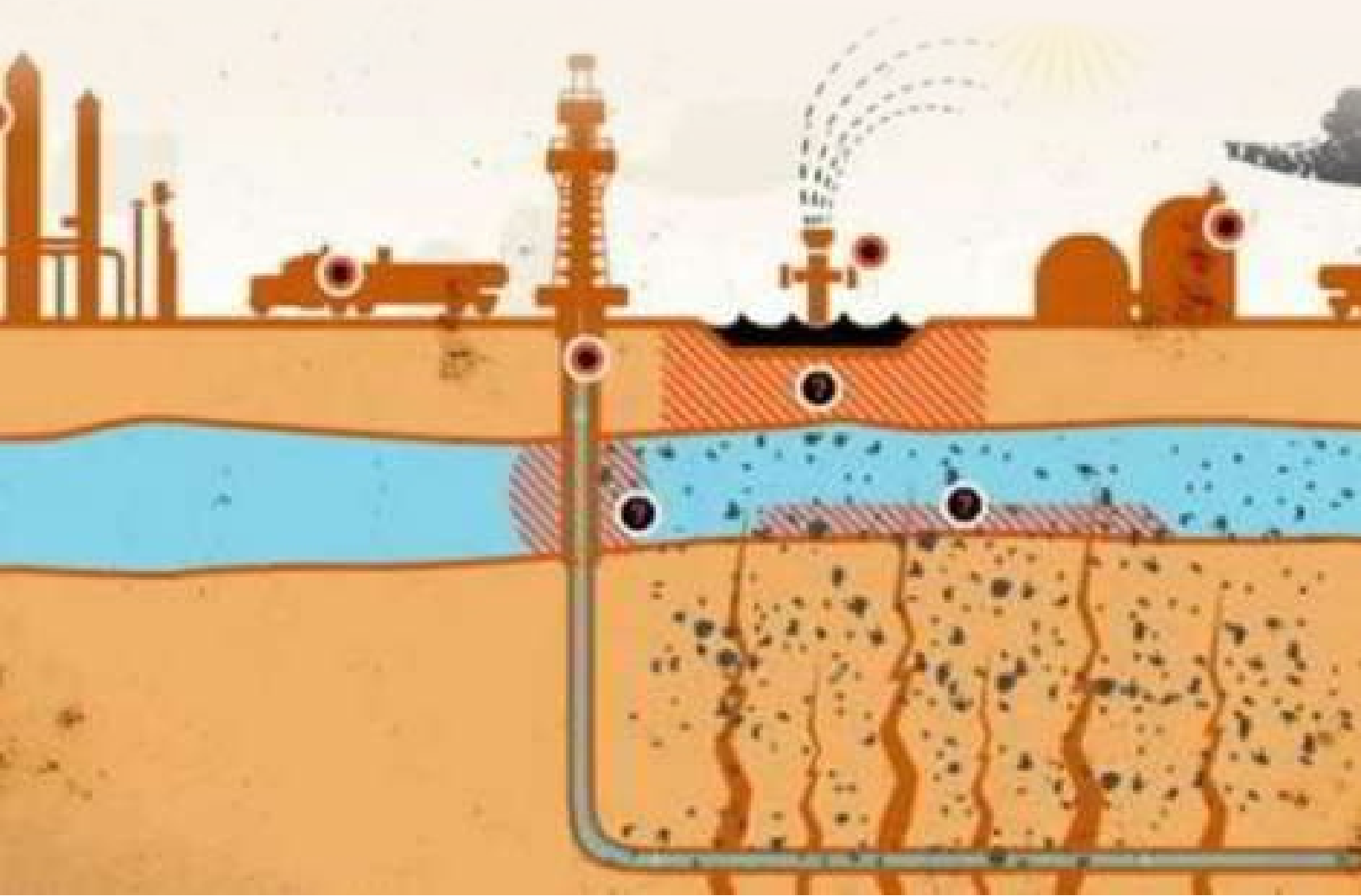
One of the chief moments of measuring the benefits of Natural Resources extraction, particularly oil mining and gas is to externalize the associated social and environmental costs. In line with this model, the mining benefits continue to discount the miserable social conditions of ordinary citizens and mine workers. At the 11th quadrennial conference of Ghana Mine workers in September 2015, the executive director of the Ghana Chamber of mines described the industry as the bulwark of the country's economy – the largest contributor to gross merchandise export and the leading source of foreign direct investment (FDI). Though the conference was themed "Rethinking the Remuneration landscape in the mining Industry: Critical Perspective for Change" it ironically did not elaborate any measure to address the externalities borne by people and the environment, thus maintaining the conditions for future martyrs





# RESISTING SHALE GAS IN SHALA, ALGERIA:

by Hocine Malti



The situation in Algeria is unique in the sense that only the national hydrocarbons company, Sonatrach has started some activity for shale gas. For various reasons foreign companies are not yet interested there. TOTAL was associated with Sonatrach on the Ahnet permit located in the In Salah region said it's no more present; ambiguous explanations provided, however, did not convince.

## The situation

Sonatrach would have drilled to date about ten shale gas wells, (I say "should" because the most total omerta prevails in this area), two of them on this permit. A law enacted in 2012 and endorsed by the Algerian Parliament in 2013 has authorized production of shale gas. The protest movement that took shape as soon as became known in 2012, the first provisions of this law took the momentum after its promulgation. It was at In Salah that he was and is still the most powerful; there was created in the course of 2014 a collective anti shale gas. Since 1 January 2015, the entire population of this small town in the heart of the Sahara is manifesting daily its anger on the central square of the city and renamed it "Sahat Essoumoud" (Place of resistance).

This population has already suffered other injuries in the past, including the French nuclear tests in the 1960s and the sequestration of carbon dioxide in the gas field Krechba, where extremely dangerous leaks to humans, environment and that promote global warming are taking place. Two statements, made in 2014, by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Energy contributed to pour oil on the fire; the Prime Minister said that the chemicals used in hydraulic fracking are not more harmful than those that are soaked baby

diapers, while the energy minister said that the people of In Salah want to hurt their country and seek to lead Algeria in the situation in Iraq or Libya by their demonstration of reject of the government's project.

This protest movement is unprecedented in Algeria for several reasons. This is indeed the first time that citizens revolt that has lasted so long. Although it has recently abated because of Ramadan that has just been over and because of the scorching temperatures that prevail at this time of the year, the anger continues to rumble at In Salah.

Secondly, contrary to what has happened in the past, these people do not express any political claims, nor financial. Third, this is the first time that we see almost as many men and women in a street demonstration. During the first quarter of 2015, were created all over the country the same collective as the one in In Salah that gathered in a "National Collective, No to shale gas" that addressed, on February 23rd a petition for moratorium to the President of the Republic. In the arguments accompanying the request had been highlighted all dangers for man, fauna and flora, of hydraulic fracking which is the technique used to extract the gas from the mother-rock.

There were also mentioned the huge quantities of water consumed in each well (15 to 20 million litres), a precious commodity in the desert zone. It was also stated that the production of shale gas is not a profitable activity in Algeria, given the enormous capital it requires and because the Algerians do not master the necessary technology. There was finally made reference to the risk of pollution of soil, subsoil, air and underground water layers that cause fracking.



photo: www.shale-world.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2014/05/algeria.jpg

The greatest danger is the possible contamination of the Albian layer that contains tens of trillions of cubic meters of fossil water from rains that fell since the beginning of time over the Atlas Mountains situated in the north of the country, a water that has been accumulated in this geological layer. If such an event were to occur, the life of generations of North Africans would be endangered. Pollution is already there, since that not knowing what to do with used water, operators reject in ponds dug in the sand, covered with plastic, which ensures a very relative tightness; in fact these waters containing all kinds of extremely hazardous chemicals eventually seep into the ground.

Furthermore, as exposed to air and sunlight, this water pollute the atmosphere during the evaporation by the fumes they give off and the land by the residues that they generate. In fact, the In Salah people found out since these two wells were drilled in the immediate vicinity of the city,

that pigeons, hawks and flocks of migrating storks died. They asked the local authorities to look into the phenomenon and determine the causes of such carnage, as they asked the national hydrocarbons company to install devices for measuring the toxicity of the air in the region. These requests have been ignored for the moment. However, by its resolute approach, the population seems to have won the battle, since Sonatrach, with the agreement of the State certainly, seems to have abandoned the drilling of a third well that was programmed on this permit.

### **Why such a sustained pressure from the state?**

Two reasons explain the stubbornness of the regime which want to exploit shale gas at all costs: alignment with US policy in the matter and the panic that reigns in the ranks of power since that was recorded the drastic fall in the oil revenue of the country.

When they called Abdelaziz Bouteflika and elected him President in April 1999, the army and the security services, which are the backbone of the regime, have made him understand that he could not exercise his powers beyond red lines they have drawn him from the outset. In order to escape this tutelage - not be a 3/4 president as he often said himself - and hoping that he will gain respect of the army generals who had settled him in the chair of the president of the Republic, he sought support from abroad, especially that of the US president. In two meetings with George W. Bush in October and November 2001, he made a deal with him: Algeria will immediately adopt the new US doctrine on energy, the result being a disguised sale of the Algerian oil wealth to US companies; it will also make available to US security services the huge amount of information on Al Qaeda that it then held. In return the US would provide to the men of the regime and to him personally, support and protection.

The most controversial provisions of the law on hydrocarbons which was then adopted - a 100% copy of the doctrine of the administration of George W. Bush on the matter - were finally cancelled at the end of a saga that lasted 5 years, but the commitment of Bouteflika of intensive exploitation of Algeria's oil resources to meet the needs and wishes of the Americans was maintained.

It is in this framework that the Ministry of Energy made, in the course of the years 2010/2011, secret contacts with multinational oil companies that led to the enactment in 2013 of the new law authorizing the exploitation of shale gas. The alignment of Algeria on US policy in this area has come to light in the first

quarter of this year. Being afraid that the virus of anti shale gas dispute reaches the management of the national company of hydrocarbons, the government appealed in February of this year the services of a "specialist" Mr. Thomas Murphy, director of a research centre in charge of monitoring the operations on the Marcellus gas field in Pennsylvania, he invited him to Algiers with the purpose to "preach" the good word to the senior managers of Sonatrach (his master voice).

When we know that the financing and the management of the centre that Mr. Murphy runs are provided by some 300 companies involved in varying degrees in the exploitation of shale gas in this field, we can easily imagine what Mr. Murphy did say to the executives of Sonatrach. We noticed, as well, in March of this year, the declaration of the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Mr. Rivkin during his visit to Algeria; he said during a press conference held at the US embassy, that he had no advice for Algerians, but informed them nonetheless that the exploitation of this gas created jobs in his country, that the technique of hydro cracking was safe and without hazards and that the United States were willing to provide them the necessary technical assistance, if they wished.

The second reason why the regime has decided to do the forcing to shale gas began to take shape in 2011, when he suddenly realized the shortness of oil and gas fields where production was began (and continues) to drop. Meanwhile, the price of oil began a nosedive that became even more important since November 2014.



The problem is that hydrocarbons provide 98% of the foreign currencies of Algeria and that the country imports almost everything it consumes. Since nothing was done by the regime to prepare for what he calls "the post-oil era", (a matter that he has been talking about during the last fifteen years at least), he finds himself panicking due to his carelessness, because he knows that any decline in these revenues will directly affect the daily life of citizens, whose rude awakening he fears.

Moreover and most importantly, this annuity (endow, grant) is the foundation of the regime that he uses for buying consciences and support inside and outside the country and also buying social peace by distributing money at all -va (various grants, loans which are never refunded, etc.) in order to extinguish the numerous hotbeds of tension that occur daily around the country. It then bails out oil revenues that allow it to strengthen and perpetuate its power, that also allow the barons of the regime to swell their bank accounts by the huge commissions they receive from oil companies operating in the country, and also those they perceive on sales of oil of Sonatrach and on almost all its contracts of supply of equipment and services.

These are then the reasons why the government in place in Algiers has adopted a scorched earth policy, replacing an annuity (a grant) with another, why it allows the exploitation of unconventional hydrocarbons, although it is aware of dangers to the population. However, I am convinced that the mobilization of the In Salah population has managed to sow doubt in the minds of Algerian politicians. And this also is a fact unprecedented in Algeria. At all times and on all occasions the regime considered it alone possesses the

truth, that citizens were minors incapable of any thought, it therefore did not have to discuss or negotiate anything with them and could therefore manipulate them at will. But here for the first time, we really feel it hesitates. That is why our support to anti shale gas Algerian militants, the residents of In Salah in particular is important and will certainly help to overcome this reluctance and impose the desired policy change.

*(This paper was presented at Summer University of ATTAC - Marseille - August 27, 2015)*

Photo: agony\_by\_hatakeyondalime

## 1 Let Us Pretend We Can Write It

Let us pretend we can write it, using words that fled with the air from the tightening noose to maintain their ground, words that floated belly-up in the creek, their eyes coated

with the ash of the fire beneath. Let us plait to the hair the maddened mourner plucked from her head, the word that's cry and loss and curse and ask forgiveness for those that mocked.

But where is the word and where is the hand to match the heart that bleeds alone? Don't ask! Pray only to trace the silence and the scream

and fix to its spot of earth (which the murderer denies the martyr) the echo with which our cry hallows their death.

## 2 Memory was his Saviour and his Death

Memory was his saviour. And his death! He remembered the swamps and the rivers, the fish shivering in a choked net, the colony of creeks and mudskippers

founded by retreating tides. And the farms swollen with roots and bulbs. He remembered

# THE AGONIST

*(for Ken Saro-Wiwa & the Ogoni 9)*

by Ogaga Ifowodo

a bounty whose splendour wrote psalms chanted by the peasant to winds and birds.

*Memory was his saviour and his death.*

He had known the floods, the tides and the waves that softened the land and brought the fish home; at one with nature's lore, they left no graves.

He came to know the black springs of the fuel oil spewing liquid fire from iron pythons coiled like rigs of death round their love and toil;

he came to know cities floated on the oil plundered from the land under his feet, where councils held in big halls to share the spoils

and memory became his saviour from death

when the housewife stood aghast by her plot of cassava and herbs swallowed by slick when trees, fish and animals in mourning surrendered to acid rain and gas poison



when the canoe paddling children to school  
capsized far from bridge or motorway

when the army invaded the village  
shooting bombing burning raping  
laughing!

when the commander of the mob boasted  
two hundred and twenty-one ways of  
killing,

memory became his saviour from the death  
when he bore witness to the rape and the  
shame!

### 3 *Hurry Them Down into the Grave*

Hurry him down, hurry them down into the  
grave,  
hurry them down before their bones nail  
my guilt.  
Now my eyes are redder than the blood I  
have spilled and my vision no further than  
my gilded chair recedes into my head to  
blaze forth my fear,  
hurry him down, hurry them down into the  
grave.

Hurry! hurry! time marches against me  
swifter than the horse. Before their blood  
cools, I was warned, they must be in their  
grave.  
Hurry to the grave to bury the curse and  
their cause so the burning creek  
and swamp can stand still for the drilling  
rig, its foot planted in the core of their  
earth by the ace lifter.

Hurry them down, hurry them down, for  
the prescribed sacrifice. At Ramadan, I will  
prove my faith by spurning Allah's grace to  
slit man and ram.

Hurry!hurry! The world closes around me  
and I see Ken's spirit singing, his pipe now a  
gun pointed at me and I quail with a terror I  
cannot describe!

Hurry him down, hurry them down into the  
grave time races against me swifter than

the horse and my eyes redder than the  
blood I have spilled grow too heavy for my  
face.

Hurry to the grave before my barrel runs  
over with the last drop  
hurry! hurry! and save me from the brave.

### 4 *The Good Pupil*

Years of steady understudy had cleared  
the needed footpath through the thicket  
of his mind. Too feeble for sums or spelling  
he would excel in making guns  
shrill wildly across the land. And biding  
his time, learn through fear to be feared.

Blind luck had lifted him to the right place  
where poetry, philosophy or kissing  
are alien arts, where booty and the  
honours of state await the unquestioning  
murderer, who ponders only when and how  
the blood he spills will blaze his forgettable  
name.

The moment came gift-wrapped in the  
folds of a fool's robes when his country  
dangled from the web of his ex-master's  
plots.  
He needed no speeches, no pretence  
at learning or wisdom, just a rifle angled  
to drill the deepest wound. Only with  
frayed cloths

and blistering pepper would he bind  
the wounds, raw and red, festering  
in the sun. Buffeted by the world's curses,  
he steadied his nerves downing endless  
shots  
of his gin-and-blood cocktail, hardening  
his liver like the stone in his heart.

But he could never fully face his fear  
of forever falling below the mark, denied  
a soldier's honour—so he spilled cold blood  
to claim valour. And just like a bully,  
one bold stand sent him fleeing into the  
valley  
of bones he broke to learn well his lesson.

## REPORTS

# SOIL NOT OIL

## Vandana Shiva said it all

By Cadmus Atake

The sixth edition of HOMEF's Sustainability Academy had the theme SOIL, NOT OIL. The theme was taken from a book of same title written by Vandana Shiva who was the instigator for the sessions. This HSA was held alongside the Annual Lecture of the Right Livelihood College (RLC) campus.

Vandana Shiva, a 1993 Right Livelihood Award laureate was the instigator at the lecture held on the 23rd Of July 2015 at the International Students Conference Hall University Park, University of Port Harcourt (UNIPOINT), Nigeria.

The Lecture was well attended by deans of faculties, lecturers, students and heads of Departments. Among those present were – Prof Henry Alipiki, Prof. Sam Arakogu - associate Dean, Prof. Charles Oyegun - former Dean faculty of social sciences, Prof T.Agrobenibo, Dr. Fidelis Allen-Coordinator RLC, UNIPOINT, Mr. Festus

Eguaoje- Federal Ministry of Environment/GEF, Prof. Joe Jaja - Carnegie fellow in UNIPOINT, and M. O. Chifor - MOSOP representative.

Prof. Arakogu in his welcome word, urged everyone to take environmental issues very seriously as they are the most vital issues of the day.

The Vice Chancellor of University of Port Harcourt, represented by the Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences gave the V.Cs welcome words and stressed that the issues of environmental degradation should be at the front burner of global discourse rather than political issues because it affects everyone. He urged everyone to adhere to the suggestions and resolutions to be arrived at during the lecture and use them as tools to fight for a better environment.



Nnimmo Bassey, Director HOMEF, in his welcome words, acknowledged the management of UNIPORT and all participants present for taking out time to attend the lecture and gave the assurance indeed we need soil Not Oil as oil has caused a lot of problems in our nation. He reminded everyone that one of the aims of the program was to commemorate the 20 years of Ken Saro-Wiwa's execution.

He however agreed with the statement made by Prof. Alapiki on the issue of the environment being placed at the front burner rather than politics or any other issues globally and noted that our peoples live in a severely degraded environment, heavily polluted by the activities of oil corporations. He said that the Niger Delta region should be declared an Environmental Emergency as proposed by the Bayelsa State Commissioner of Environment regarding the death of 14 persons in a pipeline explosion in that State.

In her lecture, Dr. Vandana Shiva expressed her delight to be in Nigeria and to be in the home town of Late Ken Saro-Wiwa – something she had been dreaming of for the past 20 years. She recalled that she was in a RLC lecture in US, when she heard the news of Saro-Wiwa's execution and that she had to automatically turn her lecture for that day into a memorial/tribute lecture in his honour.

Shiva in her lectures explained that extraction of our natural resources has brought a separation between man and nature and it has destroyed our environment and our seeds. Multi-national corporations and the oil sectors are the causes of the deadly violence and wars in the world, such as the ones ongoing in Syria and other parts of the

world. The struggle to control petroleum resources has brought about wars, violence, environmental pollution and deaths. She urged everyone to remember that we all are from the soil and that soil brings life.

Dr Shiva spoke passionately about how multinational companies are rapidly turning people into commodities, displacing small farmers, grabbing their lands and depriving them of their resources and rights. She stressed the fact that fossil fuel driven agriculture destroys soils and create crises, pain and death.

Our foods presently are literally filled with fossil fuels and they are unhealthy unlike those produced from the organic systems which work with nature. Industrial farming produces less and causes more wastage. It generates violence and crisis all over the world, but the culture of soil produces life in its totality.

She stressed on the need to care for our environment because the word care is link to life and nature but carelessness is linked to fossil fuel as mentioned by the Pope in his word on climate change. It might interest you to know that 40% of emissions we have today comes from an industrialized economy.

In the industrialized world 50% of the food are been wasted through food processing, food rrrt and in the process of their distribution. These industries strive for products uniformity in terms of sizes, colors and amount of nutrients by using chemicals calls and other artificial means. In India over 300,000 farmers have committed suicide because of the failure of industrial agriculture and the use of GMOs, especially Bt cotton







We have three main threats that human faces today which are: violence and wars; pollution and environmental degradation and Hunger and poverty. The soil holds the key solving the problems that oil has created. The age of oil is over. We must now work to build the age of the soil.

### OWED AT OGONI

On 24th of July 2015, the HOMEF team headed to Ogoniland for Sustainability Academy on Seed Democracy and for the planting of the Garden of Hope. This session was dedicated to interaction with the Ogoni women with the aim of building solidarity and equipping them with knowledge for ecological defence. OWED is grassroots gender monitoring effort set up with the support of UNDP.

The team made a brief stopover at Goi community where Dr. Shiva expressed her shock at the level of destruction on the environment caused by a Shell oil spill that occurred in 2004. She urged the government to take a action to ensure that the land is cleaned up and prosecute that

caused the extreme pollution all over Ogoniland.

Chief Henry Dooh explained the depth of loss suffered by his family as well as the entire Goi community. He spoke of their legal battles against Shell, the fact that the community was not given any mention in the UNEP report and the fact that although all Goi community members are now environmental refugees as both government and Shell have ignored their plight.

### GARDEN OF HOPE AT BORI

The Ken Saro-Wiwa Peace Centre, was filled to capacity by the time we arrived there. There was palpable excitement in the air.

The event was anchored by comrade Fyनेface D. Fyनेface and had the MOSOP president Comrade Legborsi and the recently elected chairman of Khana LGA, Comrade Celestine Akpobari in attendance.





The event started with the women sharing their experiences and challenges faced in trying to make a living in a polluted environment. The women in attendance were mostly less in their twenties. They explained that there were no old women in the meeting because "pollution had stolen their mothers."

After the highly interactive session and sharing on how women could and must be in the forefront on defending the environment, Vandana Shiva expressed her joy in being able to visit Ogoniland twenty years after the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the other Ogoni leaders. She paid tribute to the martyrs and made a call on the government to urgently implement the UNEP report on the environment of Ogoniland.

The MOSOP president as well as Comrade Akpobari echoed the call for the clean up of their land and praised the patience of their highly traumatized peoples.

The planting of a Garden of Hope by Vandana Shiva and others present rounded off the highly successful event.

### **A NEW DEMAND AT EGI**

The next stop was Erema in Egiland on the 25th of July 2015. The focus was on Seed Democracy and Environmental Monitoring. It turned out to be a huge town hall meeting with key traditional rulers in attendance. These included His Royal Highness, Eze Zion Omekwe, Comrade Che Ibegwura. Highlights of the event here included the formal inauguration of the Egi Environmental Monitoring Committee and the presentation of a petition by the Egi Joint Action Team for onward transmission to

the president of Nigeria calling for a "forensic assessment that of the environment of Egiland." Other key highlights included the planting of a Garden of Hope and the delivery of a talk on Soil Not Oil by Dr. Shiva.

The need for keen monitoring of the environment was stressed and the monitors were urged to make regular reports and maintain environmental records in line with what they had learned.

According to her when talking of soil we are talking about our culture. She noted how oil has created unbearable situations in the community and in the Niger Delta as a whole. She noted also that nature has been generous in providing good soil. This soil must be restored and protected. She spoke about how local communities in India were resisting mining and defending their territories. Some have lost their lives in the struggles but they have remained resolute in their peaceful resistance.

She assured Egi people of international solidarity in their struggle against the degradation of their environment by Total, the French oil company.

### **ABUJA**

Vandana Shiva's visit was rounded off with a press conference in Abuja with over 20 media persons in attendance representing various media houses in the nation. A joint statement issued by Shiva and Bassey, titled Stemming the Tide Together marked the closure of the visit and also swerved to commemorate UN the year of the soil in Nigeria.



# STEMMING THE TIDE TOGETHER: SOIL, NOT OIL

Dr Vandana Shiva and Nnimmo Bassey

**W**e are living in a changing and challenging world. The change that has become our reality has not come about by accident. This change has been carefully planned, organized and orchestrated and the price has been dire. The driving force of the change we speak of has been greed and the power to exploit peoples and Nature without any sense of responsibility and with continually constricting space for redress. We live in a world that is not only unipolar but one in which a handful of corporations and entities control the global supply of food, water and power. In

the quest for absolute control these corporations strive to merge and turn into behemoths of absolute power. Some of these corporations are already playing God by claiming to invent seeds and thus holding patents on the gifts of nature.

Oil companies and others locking the world into extractivism refuse to heed the call for tackling global warming at source by allowing 80 per cent of known fossil fuels reserves to remain underground and rather deny that global warming is happening;

and when they agree it is happening they present a false path for action. False actions presented include carbon capture and storage, genetically modified crops, carbon trading mechanisms such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) and geoengineering. These false solutions allow polluters to continue with their polluting acts and externalize the problems to vulnerable peoples and poor nations and communities through reckless pollution, land grabs and displacement of communities.

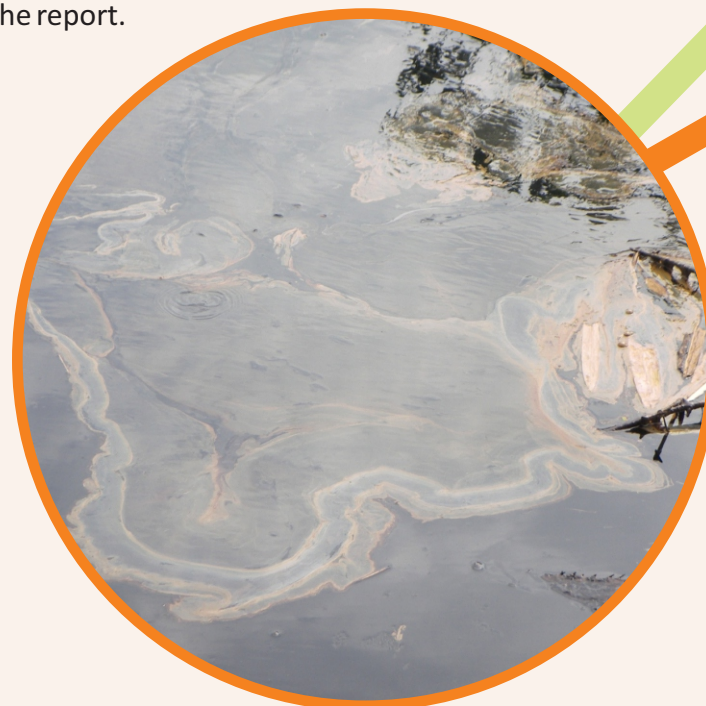
We are living in a chaotic, violent world. In history this violence has been marked by slavery, colonialism and imperialism. These continue today under different guises and are sugar-coated with the cloak of neoliberalism. Naked exploitation and despoliation remain the creed. Wars are prosecuted, nations are destroyed and people are massacred all for the purpose of securing access to oil, other fossil fuels and other resources to maintain an unsustainable lifestyle in a finite world. No wonder we see the sudden spike in interest on planets in other galaxies and universes that no human can expect to reach.

### The Social and Ecological Destruction of Oil

Yesterday we were at Erema in Egi, Rivers State. Before then we had visited Ogoniland and seen the dastard pollution at Goi - a forgotten and totally deserted village. The people are groaning under severe oil pollution and loss of land. We shared ideas on environmental monitoring and protection, on the value of soils and the need to preserve our seeds and food systems. The interesting thing at Egi was that the cardinal request is that the Federal Government should enlist the help of the United Nations Environment Programme

to conduct a forensic audit of their environment in a way similar to what was concluded on the environment of Ogoniland in 2011. They are not entrapped by current infrastructure politics. They simply want their soil back! We heard similar demands during the interactions at the Right Livelihood Lecture held at the University of Port Harcourt. Ken Saro-Wiwa was a fellow Right Livelihood Awardee (1994). We are here to pay tribute on the 20th anniversary of his execution, and to commit ourselves to continue the struggle for which he gave his life. We also the martyrdom of other Ogoni leaders who stood for justice and community rights.

The Egi people see their problem clearly as a human right issue. And they are right. The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights declares that All Africans shall have a right to a safe and satisfactory environment in which to develop. The Egi people were quick to add that they want both the audit and clean-up of their environment to be undertaken expeditiously and not left to gather dusts on some shelves as has been the case of the Ogoni environmental assessment- four years after submission of the report.



The 2011 UNEP assessment of Ogoni environment showed incredible levels of pollution caused by the activities of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC). The report highlights that in over 40 locations tested in Ogoniland, the soil is polluted with hydrocarbons up to a depth of 5 metres and that all the water bodies in Ogoni land are polluted. It also reported that in some places the water was polluted with benzene, a known carcinogen, at levels 900 above World Health Organisation standards. With life expectancy standing at about 41 years, the clean up of Ogoniland is projected to require a cumulative 30 years to clean both the land and water. Meanwhile weekends in Ogoniland are marked by carnivals of funerals of people in their 20s and 30s.

### Soil, Water and Climate Wars

It has been estimated that with rising global warming and shrinking water resources violence may increase in Africa by 54 per cent by 2030. Lake Chad is a major example of what looms ahead. The lake has diminished in size to less than 5% of what it was by 1960. The lake shrunk from 22,772 square kilometres in size to 15,400 square kilometres between 1966 and 1973. Satellite images showed that the size stood at 2,276 square kilometres by 1982 and at a mere 1,756 square kilometres by 1994. The presence of invasive species over about 50 per cent of what is left of the lake further compounds the problem. This has led to the displacement of farmers, fisher folks and pastoralists that depended on it for their livelihoods. Although soil degradation and the management of the river systems that recharge the lake may be a contributory factor to its shrinkage, it is estimated that climate change and extreme and extended



dro ughts triggered by it contributes at least 50 per cent to the current deplorable situation. If this is so, then ecological degradation and climate change are factors in the diverse manifestation of insecurity in the area, including the scourge of Boko Haram as analysed in the Manifesto Terra Viva, Our Soil, Our commons, our future which we have collectively drafted. Care for the Earth is the best antidote to the rise of insecurity, violence and terrorism.

### Food and Agriculture

It has been acknowledged that smallholder farmers hold the key to feeding the world. They also hold the key to cooling the planet because the agro-ecological food production enriches the soil rather than destroying it as industrial agriculture does. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has just issued an illuminating report Agroecology to Reverse Soil Degradation and Achieve Food Security that buttresses this fact. We cannot afford to be drawn into a system that promotes genetically engineered seeds and organisms, and chemical fertilisers that do not deliver on any of their promises but rather have yielded a harvest of pains, deprivation and deaths. While these costly inputs make super-profits for giant corporations, they destroy our soils, and trap our farmers in dependency and debt.



With over 300,000 farmers suicides already recorded in India, the harmful nature of this agricultural model is without doubt.

The pressure on Africa to adopt uniform seed laws such as those promoted under African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) is all aimed at seed colonization of Africa and must be resisted. The same goes with the promotion of GMOs through the weak Biosafety bills such as the one signed into law in Nigeria in the last week of the previous presidency. The unrelenting attack on our staple foods, including our cassava, cowpea (beans), corn and banana must be halted. The planting of genetically modified cotton in Burkina Faso was held up as a great success, yielding bumper harvests and enriching farmers. Recently Burkina Faso stopped planting Bt. Cotton. What example will they bring up next? Will Nigeria walk into that trap with her eyes open?

Soil, not oil is not a slogan but a statement of reality. Oil is a wasting resource and has wasted lives and now threatens the Planet. Oil economy is subject to political manipulation as we see with current price crash and the exposure of our countries to deep shocks. The oil economy is a negative economy on many levels. Our call today is that we must recover our sovereignty over our political structures, over our resources, over our food systems and over our lives. Soil, not oil. The soil is our life and our true wealth.

# THE COMING TRAGEDY OF PARIS: A DISASTROUS CLIMATE DEAL THAT WILL SEE THE PLANET BURN

BY: MARY LOUISE MALIG

**L**ike reading the ancient Greek tragedy of Homer, we are at the pages of the Iliad where we can see what hell ahead shall befall Troy. We are now in that exact moment, seeing in the horizon the fires that will burn for ten years. However, we are not looking in the horizon of the ill-fated Trojans, but rather, we are looking at the future of humanity, nature and the planet.

There are only 5 negotiating days left before the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). From October 19-23, 2015, the UNFCCC is supposed to hammer out the modalities of the Paris deal. At this point, we should have a good sense of what the Paris deal will be.

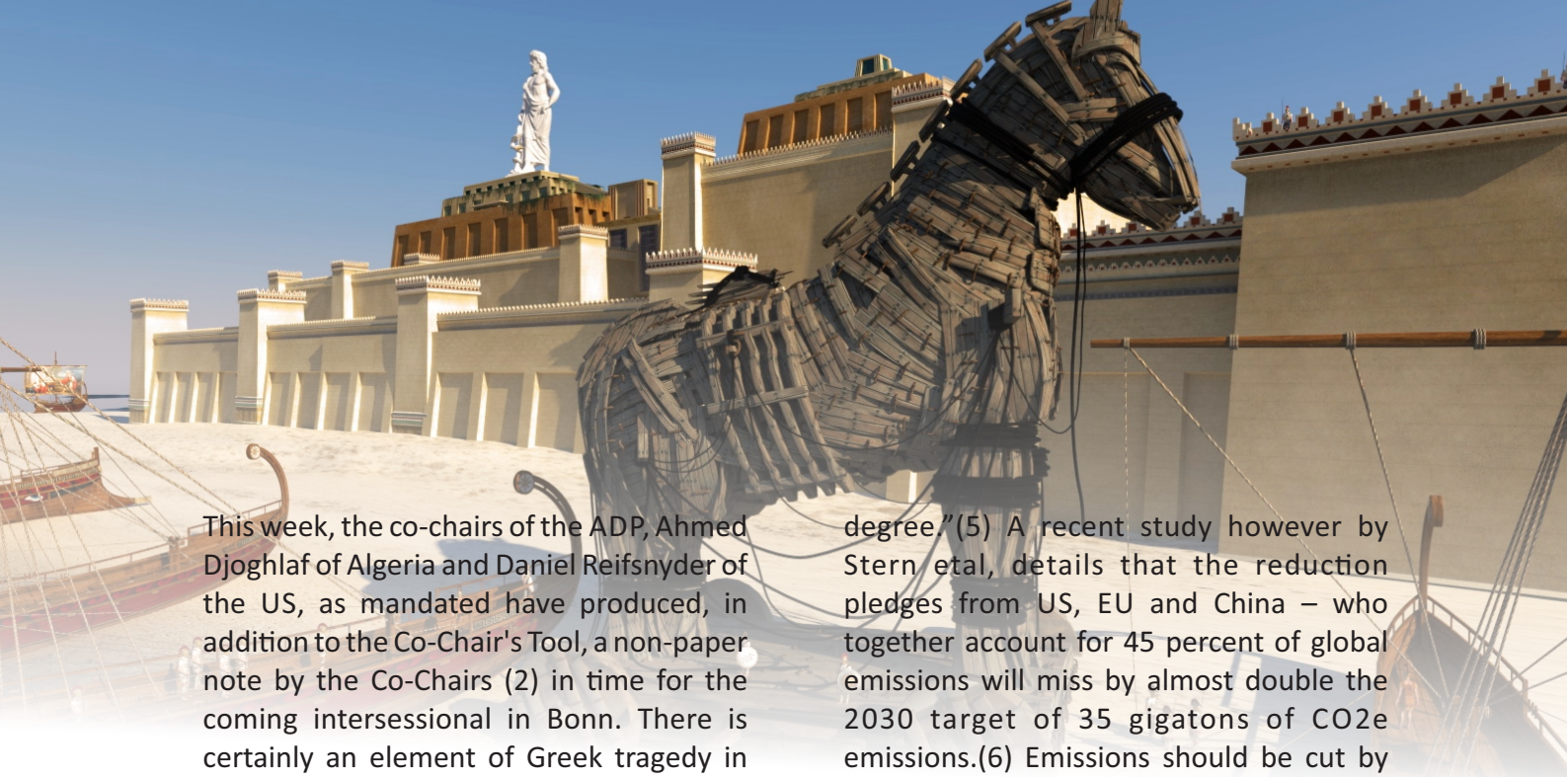
After all, since the COP17 in Durban, South Africa, where the mandate to draft a new climate agreement until 2030 was adopted, there have already been a total of 85 negotiating days, a carbon filled amount of flights for 193 parties to the convention, and at the wayside thousands of dead and displaced from destructively intense typhoons, hurricanes, floods or droughts. In the Philippines alone, the strongest typhoon to ever make landfall, Typhoon Haiyan, killed 6,000 and left thousands more homeless and without livelihood.

However, at this point,

there is no agreed text yet for a Paris deal. Instead, there are a number of documents. First you have a "Co-Chairs Tool"(1) that lays out the possible scenario. At the last intersessional in Bonn in September, the co-chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) presented a tool for the negotiations that has three parts: The first part includes the issues that can be included in a potential Paris agreement, the second part those issues that will be listed in a decision and the third part includes those issues that need further negotiation and will neither be in the

COP21 agreement nor decision. In the Co-Chairs tool, the elements of a Paris deal are clear: emission cuts will be voluntary, flexibility mechanisms will be continued, more market mechanisms will be proposed and accounting loopholes and techno-fixes will abound. Already, the term "net zero" emissions indicates an accounting trick because "net zero" is a term to mean you've balanced your accounting columns out. "Net zero" emissions therefore does not translate to zero emissions, which is what the climate urgently needs.





This week, the co-chairs of the ADP, Ahmed Djoghlaoui of Algeria and Daniel Reifsnyder of the US, as mandated have produced, in addition to the Co-Chair's Tool, a non-paper note by the Co-Chairs (2) in time for the coming intersessional in Bonn. There is certainly an element of Greek tragedy in the fact that one of the co-chairs is from one of the biggest emitters and the one who, as a matter of irony, never ratified the last climate protocol.

The October 5, 2015 non-paper details a draft agreement and a draft decision for Paris. The Chairs have also issued a draft decision on workstream 2 or the pre-2020 ambition. (3) All these documents are still under negotiation.

Another critical reason as to why we know that Paris is going to be a deal that burns the planet, is that, as of writing, following the October 1 deadline of the UNFCCC, 119 submissions of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) have been made. This includes the 28 member states of the EU as 1. All major emitters are in these 119 submissions. These INDCs are the voluntary pledges of the countries on how much emissions they are targeting to reduce by 2030. (4) An issue of the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development reporting on these submissions states, "although some estimates contend that the actions outlined thus far would result in a planetary warming of three degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, overshooting an international commitment by one

degree." (5) A recent study however by Stern et al, details that the reduction pledges from US, EU and China – who together account for 45 percent of global emissions will miss by almost double the 2030 target of 35 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions. (6) Emissions should be cut by 2030 to 35 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub>e and with the current INDCs of the most important countries annual global emissions will be around 60 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030.

## AS IN THE ILIAD, TROY WILL BURN

This 2 degree target was internationally agreed on in 2007, after the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its Fourth Assessment Report (7) which detailed that to avoid dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, that emissions had to be kept to below 2 degrees by 2020. It is now 2015, and the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report has come out to reiterate that danger and has even highlighted that "Many aspects of climate change and associated impacts will continue for centuries, even if anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are stopped. The risks of abrupt or irreversible changes increase as the magnitude of the warming increases." (8) This means that the longer the delay in reducing emissions, the higher the danger that the feedback mechanism of the climate system will go beyond the 2 degree "safe" limit.

This is the heart of the problem of the Paris deal. The emission targets of the countries are not under negotiation. They are voluntary promises that they may or may not implement and may even use market mechanisms to cheat their way out of. Emissions need to be cut deeply, at source, without loopholes or market mechanisms, today, not 10 years from now. The decade lost waiting to reduce by 2030, will be a decade lost forever. The climate system does not work like the movies – where warming stops the moment the protagonist saves the day – the emissions put into the system now will burn well beyond 2030. There may not be a planet to "save" by 2030.

The whole process being captured by corporations especially by the fossil fuel and extractive industry – the main source of emissions – is most evident in the support of business as usual. In the entire 88 pages of the Co-Chair's Tool, "fossil fuel" is only mentioned once and only to encourage governments to reduce or eliminate incentives for fossil fuel subsidies: "52 a. [Parties [are encouraged] to [take steps to] [reduce][eliminate] [international support][public incentives] [for][phase down] high-carbon investments[, [including][and] international fossil fuel subsidies];" {paras 102, 103 and 113 bis d. SCT}" (9)

In the statement of the Climate Space, it reiterates the demand of social movements for 80 percent of the fossil fuel reserves to be left underground in order to stay below the 2 degree limit. (10) And how will this demand be met if the sponsors of the COP21 are from fossil fuel and large carbon emitting corporations such as EDF, Engie, Air France, Renault-Nissan and BNP Paribas? (11)

## THE TROJAN HORSE OF CARBON ACCOUNTING & CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE

In addition to not addressing the main sources of emissions, the climate agreement, since the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol, has allowed the use of market mechanisms. The creation of this carbon market has led to the massive cheating by Annex 1 countries (37 industrialized countries), escaping their legal commitment to cut emissions by at least 5 percent below 1990 levels in the commitment period 2008-2012. The Kyoto Protocol flexibility mechanism allowed Annex 1 countries to "offset" their emissions by doing "clean development" projects in developing countries or by buying and selling their carbon credits.

The Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation plus (REDD+) scheme, the final rules of which are supposed to be formally adopted in Paris, adds significantly to this cheating by allowing countries to present any kind of tree planting or protection as a contribution to mitigation, even when such activities are not additional or permanent, or when they trigger deforestation in other areas or countries or are otherwise environmentally or socially damaging.



It allows countries to commodify or even sell their forests as carbon sinks, ignores the real drivers of forest loss, but blames indigenous peoples and small farmers for deforestation instead. As the NO-REDD in Africa Network has stated, “Reports show that deforestation and the related emissions continue, and that REDD+, instead of reducing them, is harming and vilifying forest-dependent communities and those who produce the majority of the world's food—small scale farmers.” (12)

The belief in carbon markets as panacea extends to the proposed Paris agreement, with proposals on the inclusion of land use related emissions and emission reductions. Already a loophole by itself in the flawed accounting approaches it proposes, combined with market mechanisms, will create an entire new grab for land as it creates a REDD+ for agriculture and soils.

The impermanence of land in the first place, makes it a far more theoretical carbon sink for emissions compared to the very real continued burning of fossil fuels. More importantly, the logic of carbon accounting determining agricultural policy means that agriculture will prioritize the needs of the carbon market rather than feeding people and that of food sovereignty.

The World Bank and other transnational corporations (TNCs) in the Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture are pushing for this Climate Smart Agriculture – a system that produces more food on less land, while being weather resistant and absorbing carbon. The production of more food on less land is clearly supported by corporations pushing the use of GM seeds. But it is the creation of a new market for soils and agriculture that poses the greatest attraction to TNCs. Just how the

monetary incentive of REDD+ displaced Indigenous Peoples, the potential financial gains will displace small farmers and add further to the already existing land grab. As La Via Campesina, the world's largest movement of small farmers states, “Climate smart agriculture will lead to further consolidation of land, pushing peasant and family farmers towards World Bank Projects, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other institutions, creating dependency on so-called new technologies through their complete packages that include prescriptions of “climate smart varieties”, inputs, and credit, while ignoring traditional tried and true adaptive farming techniques and stewardship of seed varieties in practice by farmers.” (13) It continues, “The possibility of big profits with investments in carbon credits generated from farmlands involved in climate smart agriculture projects will increase speculation in the carbon market, leading to further “carbon land grabs” by large-scale investors and producers, and the further displacement of peasant and smallholder farmers, just as REDD displaces indigenous people. Under this climate smart agriculture framework, there is little hope of reducing and removing greenhouse gases, trying to solve food insecurity or any significant rural economic and social development.” (14)

## CHANGE THE STORY, CHANGE THE SYSTEM

This story does not need to end in tragedy. In fact, it is being challenged valiantly, everyday, with all the daily struggles being carried out by frontline communities, Indigenous Peoples, small farmers, women, workers, students, activists and heroes and heroines of Mother Nature.

The future needs to be reclaimed, the system changed and peoples alternatives be pushed forward.

The draft Chairman proposals for the Paris deal: the agreement and the decision – need to be squarely rejected. The real danger of a bad deal is the fact that it will lock us into a permanent agreement of business as usual of burning the planet. The extreme hype around the Paris deal being desperately needed to “save the world” is scaremongering people into accepting a disastrously bad deal. Reminiscent of the days campaigning against the World Trade Organization (WTO) Doha Development Agenda, the call for no deal is better than a bad deal, rings true. No Paris deal is better than a bad and false Paris deal – exactly because just like the WTO Doha Development Agenda has locked the world into unfair trade rules on food and agriculture; will a false Paris Climate Agreement lock the world into a laissez faire regime of polluting as always, countries making cuts when they feel like it, manipulating accounting loopholes to cheat their way out of emissions cuts, and using and creating even more market mechanisms to commodify, financialize and profit from the remaining resources of the planet. If we are to make Paris about saving the planet, then it should be about rejecting the false deal that is on the table.

The original Climate Convention that was adopted in 1992 and ratified by practically every country in the world, including the US and other big polluters, is a rather generic but important agreement. It

obliges countries to prevent dangerous climate change and is firmly based on the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities. Ever since the Kyoto Protocol was established and introduced a cap and trade regime based on quantified accounting and flexibility mechanisms, the climate negotiations have moved nowhere but backwards. Legally binding commitments have turned into voluntary pledges, and then into intended nationally determined contributions. Common but differentiated responsibility has turned into a vague regime applicable to all parties, disregarding both historical accountability and responsibility of Annex 1 countries and the fact that those who have done the least are least responsible. The long-standing demand of real compensation for loss and damage has just been paid lip service with the acknowledgement of the impacts of climate change.

A no Paris deal scenario in December is not a disaster - it is an opportunity. It will create the space for a recuperation to the original goals of the climate convention to halt dangerous climate change by holding polluters to account. It would also create the space for community-driven solutions some of which are already in practice and are cooling the planet – from peasant agroecology and community-based sustainable energy solutions to community forest conservation. It would allow for alternative proposals such as holistic policies and measures that are not centered on carbon accounting and markets.

**“A world without a Paris deal is not only possible, it is necessary if we are to avoid tragedy. There are no limits to the alternatives.”**



# BOOKS YOU SHOULD READ

It will give space for transformative measures to be implemented to accomplish the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals including the historical zero deforestation by 2020 target. There are many more alternatives and proposals that can be given space for – rights of nature, climate jobs, “buen vivir”, food sovereignty, degrowth, deglobalization, and many more.

A world without a Paris deal is not only possible, it is necessary if we are to avoid tragedy. There are no limits to the alternatives.

*\*Mary Louise Malig, a researcher and trade analyst, is Campaigns Coordinator of the Global Forest Coalition.*

## ENDNOTES

(1)[http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/a\\_dp2/eng/4infnot.pdf](http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/a_dp2/eng/4infnot.pdf)

(2)[http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/a\\_dp2/eng/8infnot.pdf](http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/a_dp2/eng/8infnot.pdf)

(3)[http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/a\\_dp2/eng/9infnot.pdf](http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/a_dp2/eng/9infnot.pdf)

(4)<http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/indc/Submission%20Pages/submissions.aspx>

(5) <http://www.ictsd.org/bridges->

[news/biores/news/un-members-adopt-post-2015-development-agenda-prepare-climate-talks](http://news/biores/news/un-members-adopt-post-2015-development-agenda-prepare-climate-talks)

(6)[http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Boyd\\_et\\_al\\_policy\\_paper\\_May\\_2015.pdf](http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Boyd_et_al_policy_paper_May_2015.pdf)

(7)[https://www.ipcc.ch/publications\\_and\\_data/publications\\_ipcc\\_fourth\\_assessment\\_report\\_synthesis\\_report.htm](https://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_ipcc_fourth_assessment_report_synthesis_report.htm)

(8) <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/>

(9)[http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/a\\_dp2/eng/4infnot.pdf](http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/a_dp2/eng/4infnot.pdf)

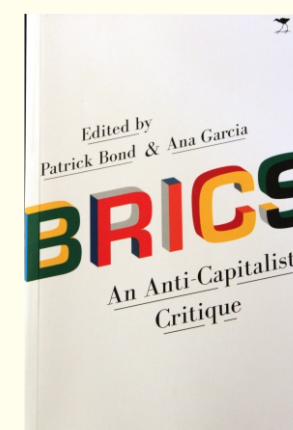
(10)<https://climatespace2013.wordpress.com/2015/09/01/fight-for-system-change-now-why-we-need-to-build-alternatives-and-dismantle-a-process-that-will-lock-us-into-another-decade-of-burning-the-planet/>

(11)<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/may/29/paris-climate-summit-sponsors-include-fossil-fuel-firms-and-big-carbon-emitters>

(12) <http://www.no-redd-africa.org/index.php/declarations/147-durban-declaration-on-redd>

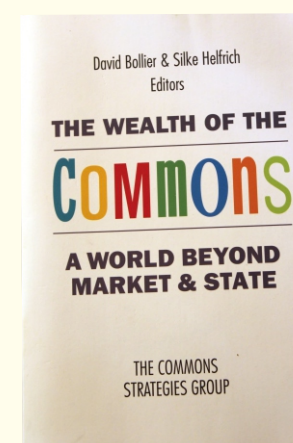
(13)<http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/main-issues-mainmenu-27/sustainable-peasants-agriculture-mainmenu-42/1670-un-masking-climate-smart-agriculture>

(14) *ibid*



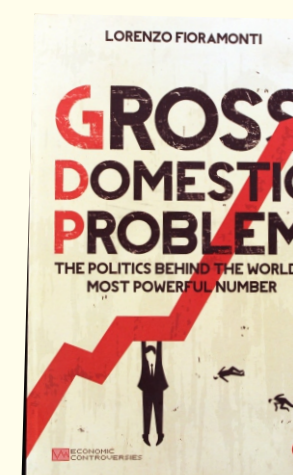
This book aims to fill a gap in studies of the BRICS grouping of countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). It provides a critical analysis of their economies, societies and geopolitical strategies within the framework of a global capitalism that is increasingly predatory, unequal and ecologically self destructive - no more so than in the BRICS countries themselves.

In unprecedented detail and with great innovation, the contributors consider theoretical traditions in political economy as applied to the BRICS, including “sub imperialism”, the World systems perspective and dynamics of territorial expansion. Only such an approach can interpret the potential for a “brics from below” uprising that appears likely to accompany the rise of the BRICS.



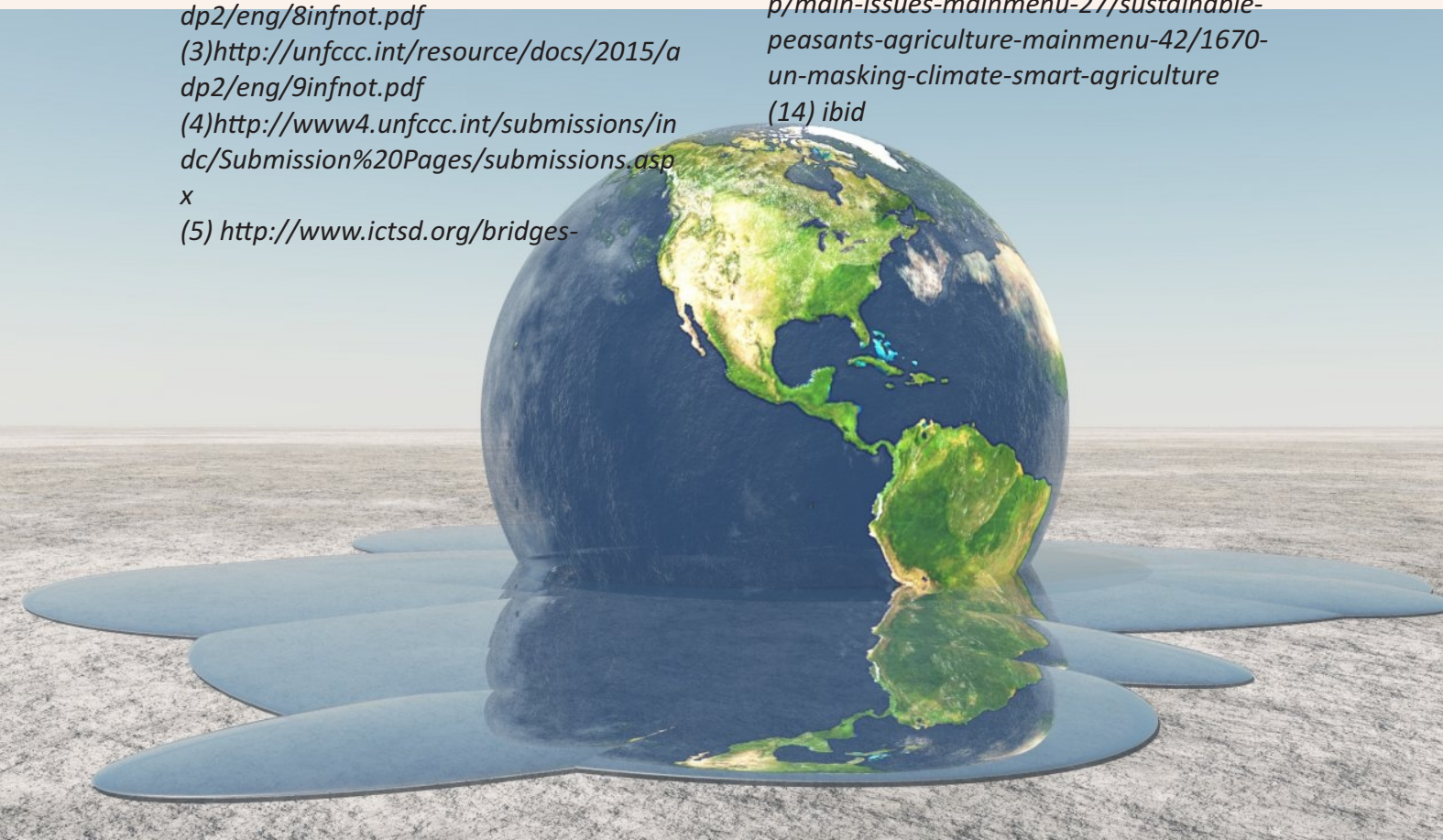
We are poised between an old world that no longer works and a new one struggling to be born. surrounded by centralized hierarchies on the one hand and predatory markets on the other, people around the world are searching for alternatives.

The Wealth of Commons explains how millions of commoners have organized to defend their forest and fisheries, relevant local food systems, organize productive online communities, reclaim public spaces, improve environmental stewardship and re-imagine the very meaning of ‘progress’ and governance. In short, how they’ve built their commons.



Gross domestic product is one of the best known and most powerful statistics in the contemporary world. It drives government policy on a variety of vital areas, from health to education. Yet perhaps for the first time since its intervention in the 1930s, a wide range of people regard this icon of economic growth as a problem.

Gross Domestic Problem unpacks GDP - what it measures what it doesn’t and why - and reveals the powerful politics that have allowed it to dominate today’s economies. Lorenzo Fioramonti demonstrates just how little GDP has to do with equity and social and environmental justice and shows that an alternative is possible.







Flicker of hope for Ogoni Clean Up

# IMPLEMENTING THE UNEP REPORT ON OGONI ENVIRONMENT: **Change HYPREP TO HYCUP**

By Oluwafunmilayo Oyatogun

**H**OMEF applauds President Muhammadu Buhari for signalling the real commencement of the clean up of the devastated environment of Ogoniland. The delay in implementing the 4 years old plan was unconscionable by all standards. It is noted that the process leading to this had some consultations and that some structures have been established for its execution.

HOMEF, however, believes that the body saddled with the task of cleaning up Ogoniland should be renamed. Certainly government does not wish to "restore pollution" as the name Hydrocarbons Pollution Restoration Project (HYPREP) suggests. The object is to remediate the environment, not to restore pollution.

HOMEF recommends that the name be changed to Hydrocarbons Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) or Hydrocarbons Clean-up Project (HYCUP). Better still, the body should be renamed as Ogoni Environment Restoration Agency as recommended by UNEP. If the idea is to pave way for an agency that serves the entire Niger Delta, the needful thing to do, while having a specific project for Ogoniland, would be to rename the Niger Delta Development Commission (NNDC) as Niger Delta Environment Restoration Commission.

"There are rough edges that still require smoothening for a smooth take off of the clean up project," notes Nnimmo Bassey, Director of Health of Mother Earth Foundation. "A significant aspect is the non-inclusion of at least one representative of civil society in the structures set up by the President. The role and deep stakes of civil society in the struggle for the clean up of Ogoniland and the Niger Delta cannot be overlooked. Their inclusion is essential for oversight reason

"HOMEF also recommends that the new HYPREP or HYCUP should ensure that verified debts owed workers and staff of the defunct body are settled. In terms of the budget to commence the immense tasks ahead, in addition to the \$10million

from the Federal Government, the polluter, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), should place the \$1billion estimated by UNEP as a start up sum on the table now without further prevarications," Bassey added.

The new body should engage in urgent and transparent consultations to agree on steps to be taken, the competences to be employed in the clean up and the milestones to be targeted.

"This laudable step of President Buhari should be followed with a commissioning of environmental audits on other devastated territories in the Niger Delta, in line with the call for one by the people of Egi Land. These should be the starting point for an urgent and thorough auditing of the total state of the Nigerian environment, from the South to the North and from the East to the West," says George Awudi, a member of the governing board of HOMEF.

HOMEF applauds the Ogoni people for their consistent and dogged struggles to ensure that their environment is cleaned up. With this coming in the year that marks the 20th anniversary of the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni martyrs, the sacrifices made by the Ogoni people justify the stanza of our national anthem that declares that the "labour of our heroes past shall never be in vain."



# JUST SAY “NO” TO THE PARIS COP

A Possible Way to Win Something for Climate Justice

John Foran

*For a Just Climate Future, We Must Have No Agreement in Paris*

*A very simple argument makes the scale of our failure absolutely clear.... let's just call it the Vicious Syllogism. It goes as follows:*

**Premise 1:**

If we do not keep average atmospheric temperature rise below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, we are in for dangerous, unpredictable and potentially catastrophic climate change.

**Premise 2:**

If the world does not keep further anthropogenic emissions of CO2 equivalent to no more than (say) 1,300 billion tonnes, we shall not keep average atmospheric temperature rise below 2°C.

**Premise 3:**

If [the UN FCCC is] not now even minimally embarked on a programme that might make limiting ourselves to such a carbon budget even remotely feasible, we shall not keep further anthropogenic emissions of CO2 equivalent to no more than 1,300 billion tonnes.

**Premise 4:**

[The UN FCCC is] not now even minimally embarked on such a program.  
So (by Premises 4 back through 1):

**Conclusion:**

We are (already) in for dangerous, unpredictable and potentially catastrophic climate change.

-- John Foster, John Foster, After Sustainability: Denial, Hope, Retrieval (London: Earthscan, 2015), 2-3, with “the UNFCCC” replacing “we” in the original

## “Paris is Coming”

In the long-running medieval soap opera Game of Thrones, they say that “when you play the game of thrones, you win ... or you die. There is no middle ground” (season 1, episode 7 bears this title).

In the long-running contemporary soap opera At the COP, the same maxim holds true, it seems to me. “When you are dealing with the risks posed by climate change, you must play to win ... or people will die.”

This is why the global climate justice movement and its allies everywhere must confront the looming nightmare of COP21 in Paris in early December, and live with its outcome long after that. This is why the global climate justice movement and its allies everywhere must confront the looming nightmare of COP21 in Paris in early December, and live with its outcome long after that. And we will need to be very imaginative indeed to defeat our enemies—the largest corporations in the world, the global political elite, and the systems whose levers they believe they control: capitalism, the world energy supply, the mass media, and a largely-rigged brand of democracy that systematically excludes radical challengers.

Paris will attract large numbers of climate activists, concerned citizens, good, bad, and indifferent NGOs, young people, old people, journalists and communicators of every stripe. While few in the climate justice movement expect much of the fatally flawed and compromised climate negotiations that are supposed to finalize an “agreement” of some kind in Paris, it is a place where a good part of the world's attention will be turned, and thus presents opportunities for increasing the momentum and strength of our beautiful movements.





Paris will also likely be the site of intense narrative and political contention over the value and outcome of the negotiations, since world leaders, especially from the global North, will be seeking to declare a victory on the basis of some common text they will do everything in their power to get their counterparts all over the world to sign onto.

The whole world will be watching (and actually, we have to make sure that as much of the world as possible brings its attention to the spectacle). Meanwhile, we must summon all the creative powers we have to gather a force capable of pulling the emergency break on the out-of-control locomotive of the COP before it takes us over a cliff.

The Paris COP has been held up by the global one percent as the site for a climate treaty that will set us on the road to a definitive solution to the “problem” of climate change like some holy grail.

Those of us who have followed the COP over the years through the critical perspective of climate justice know better. In another strange parallel with Game of

Thrones, the phrase “Winter is coming” heralds an apocalyptic never-ending winter where people must battle with zombie-like creatures risen from the dead, while ever since the 2011 COP17 in Durban, South Africa, negotiations have been set on a zombie-like track to catastrophic global warming where market solutions and national “pledges” have dominated the discourse. It has been plainer to see with every passing year that the treaty process will not close the emissions gap needed to keep the world under two degrees Celsius of warming (we can see what .9 of one degree is doing to the people of the planet right now so two degrees is not acceptable either).

The negotiations will not produce the kind and degree of technology transfer and generous public money that would be needed to build the low-carbon infrastructure the global South needs to overcome the poverty that the same system increases every year.

It will not fund the “**loss and damage**” mechanism that Philippine delegate Yeb Saño pleaded and fasted for at COP19 in Warsaw in 2013



And it will not produce a legally binding treaty, the expressed goal of the negotiations for two decades. Even French President François Hollande, in a rare moment of candor, has said :

***that a “miracle ... would be needed for a compromise to be reached on the future of limiting greenhouse gases that would involve both developed and developing countries” (in some elite form of magical thinking he is able to overcome any cognitive dissonance by avowing that he does of course believe that such a miracle will occur).***

Reality suggests that we are on course to lock in an inadequate, woefully underfunded, and criminal set of non-binding “pledges” whose deadlines are laughably too late already. And the governments of the world at the Conference of Parties to the United

Nations Climate Change Convention will be asked to hail this as a huge victory for humanity, with the transparent lie that it sets us on a course for what is needed at some unspecified future date. For the well-respected newsletter ECO, what's needed in Paris are “equity, trust, solidarity, and action.” These are precisely the ingredients that will be missing.

This is the narrative and the outcome that we have to stop by the time Paris has come and gone.

How are we going to do it in little more than two months?

Here are a few of the ways that might open up a chance for a better outcome to occur: that no climate treaty is agreed to, because any treaty that could realistically (or even improbably) be agreed to in Paris will lock in already dangerous climate change and push us into the disaster zone.

### **Delegitimizing the COP: scientifically, politically, economically, morally – in a word, as climate injustice**

Part of our job is to counter the triumphalist narrative that has been scripted for Paris and described above. To this task we must bring all our ingenuity, knowledge, and imagination, and we must take advantage of the several fronts on which that narrative has gaping weaknesses.

In particular, we must be prepared to counter the claims that the outcome – “however flawed” – is the “first step” in some “process” that will ultimately “save the planet” when we already know that it will not set us on a path to the steep reductions required by science and the justice demanded by humanity (I realize of course that some readers and perhaps





many in the wider climate movement think otherwise, and it is with them as well as those who agree that I hope further discussion will arise).

### **How do we counter the mainstream media discourse?**

The radical implications of mainstream climate science need to be communicated.

As the clock ticks and the planet warms, leading climate scientists such as James Hansen continue to make heroic efforts to warn the world of the threat posed by climate change:

“The bottom line message scientists should deliver to policymakers is that we have a global crisis, an emergency that calls for global cooperation to reduce emissions as rapidly as practical.” But let's face the facts: despite a chorus of scientists shouting this very message from the rooftops, what is on offer in Paris has no prospect for deep emissions reductions; on the contrary, *after twenty years of*

*COPs, global CO2 emissions are up from 23.6 gigatons to 35.2 gigatons, some 49.6 percent higher than they were when we started with COP1 in 1995.*

What lies behind global elites' willingness to overshoot the atmosphere's carrying capacity and so blatantly ignore the precautionary principle?

The fossil fuel industry's control of the process and the discourse, basically. And this brings us to the foundations of the problem, so pointedly put by Naomi Klein in the title of her invaluable book, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate*, where she makes the case that we cannot get a grip on the defining existential challenge of our time without confronting global capitalism decisively. So, not only do widely available mainstream climate science and elementary political reasoning tell us we will need radical social change, we have to do it in a hurry, the sooner the better.

From a certain point of view, then, the COP is nothing more than a concentrated distillation of the system, not a distraction or a waste of our time. If the problem is capitalism, then you have to take the COP seriously on some level, and confront it.

The political economy of climate change at the COP has to be discredited.

Along with bringing the radical implications of the science forward on every level and to every audience, we must undermine the political and economic distortions of the science into policy at the COP.

Many organizations, including the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance PACJA, Friends of the Earth International (FOEI), 350.org, Greenpeace, and Oilwatch, joined with “representatives of Southern social movements of climate-impacted communities and of international faith, labor, development and environmental organizations” in July to form the 'Peoples Test on Climate, which has issued a set of demands that they will fight for at the Paris COP; these include deep emissions cuts, climate finance, loss and damage, technology transfer, and real, not false, solutions—in a word, climate justice.

The best analysis we have at the moment may be that of the Climate Action Tracker Consortium whose August Briefing makes clear which countries could be our allies inside the negotiations (an analysis I will turn to later) and which ones are the problem (hint: they tend to have two characteristics: they are wealthier and bigger emitters than most of the nations of the world).

Broadcasting far and wide the shortcomings, dead ends, false solutions, and faulty logic embedded in the

negotiating text is a necessary task for shifting the narrative playing field in advance of Paris. The same holds true for the nations' “individually determined national contributions” [known as INDCs, you can see those which have been submitted so far here]. Let's think about how to amplify all these voices as far and wide as possible as they make their findings known.

### **What might we do at the COP? The spectrum of inside-outside strategies**

The climate justice movement has been trying to find promising strategies of repudiation of the UNFCCC and the Paris process and outcome, together with organizing to build numbers and turn the larger movements and NGOs in the more radical direction that the crisis we face requires of us.

Hundreds of thousands of people will march; thousands more will likely pursue direct action in many forms and concrete acts; still others will create spaces to articulate and build post-Paris visions of climate justice; and many of us will be communicating with our frontlines back home. What follows are just a few of the possibilities for building movements for climate justice around and in Paris.

### **Climate Justice: the inside game**

For years, scores of dedicated activist organizations and committed NGOs have tried to influence or protest the discourse and outcomes of successive COPs by maintaining a presence as civil society delegates on the inside. At COP after COP, we have seen inventive, symbolic actions and a variety of practical and visionary side



events, as well as press conferences and counter-narratives sent into global webspaces.

One of the most striking actions in the history of these civil society efforts was the large walk-out that took place just before the close of COP19 in Warsaw in 2013.

Seeing no meaningful progress in the talks, finding themselves excluded from the process on many levels, and witnessing the blatant corporate presence – even sponsorship – at the meetings, hundreds of activists staged a walkout from the National Stadium, most of them vowing not to set foot in it again. By any reckoning, a significant portion of all civil society delegates to COP19 simply walked out.

The mood was defiant; the white shirts said “Polluters talk, we walk!” and on their backs, “Volveremos!” – “We will be back!” The messages were clear, passing judgment on the complete inability of the UNFCCC to advance the treaty process at COP19, and signaling that this walkout was tactical, that the movement would return, with renewed force, to the 2014 COP20 in Lima, Peru, and to Paris this year.

My comrades at the Climate Justice Project, Summer Gray and Corrie Ellis made a video that captures the elevated mood of the participants as they turned their backs on the Warsaw COP.

Despite its symbolic success, however, the great civil society walkout at Warsaw must be seen for what it was: a major event and statement laid down by a movement that by its own admission is still too small to do what it needs and wants to accomplish – the herculean feat of somehow making the outcome of the negotiations reflect the global demand for climate justice.

Marching in numbers to change the world  
Most of the people who come to Paris to bear witness will be on the outside of the COP space, of course, and the various parts of the climate movement itself have proposed a variety of approaches. Some will join with Avaaz, NGO allies, and many others to stage a massive march the day before the COP begins, building on the great People's Climate March of September 2014 with the aim of influencing the negotiations in the direction of something that can lay the foundations to somehow save the planet. They intend to take the rhetoric of global leaders and turn it into a weapon with which to shame or encourage them into doing the right thing.

A more focused version of this people power approach is that of Yeb Saño, inspired like millions of others by Pope Francis's bracing climate encyclical *Laudato Si*. Saño has been helping to build the 'Peoples Pilgrimage, which, like the encyclical itself, is open to people of all faiths (including the climate justice faith). As he said: “Paris is not our destination. Our real destination will be the hearts and minds of people, so our journey continues even after Paris.”

It is crucial to see that these marches are not in a competition with other activities in some kind of mutually exclusive zero sum game. Movements appeal to new members in a variety of ways, and different people respond to different messages. Forging a truly broad and deep climate justice movement will require moving more and more people into and through climate action to climate justice, and these marches can be (literally) steps in that direction.



### Creating a People's Space

The movements have also sought to create strong counter-spaces on the occasions of the COP meetings, and the impact of these projects too on countless activists would be hard to overestimate.

In Paris, the network of French and global organizers who have come together as Coalition Climat21 will build on past achievements and try to do even more to enable us to share insights, teach skills, strengthen bonds, plan actions, and envision futures across a variety of venues. One of these will be a two-day Citizen Climate Summit on December 5 and 6, in Montreuil, a working-class neighborhood of Paris, conceived as a place “to put forward solutions tackling climate change. Let's show decision-makers that these solutions already exist and are building a better world: with more justice, more solidarity, more happiness!”

This will be followed between December 7 and 11 at the Climate Action Zone (ZAC) located in the northern part of Paris, where “one can get basic information on the climate crisis and the UN negotiations, as well as meet with others to share information, create, and organize.”

During the “crunch time” of the second week of the COP when the negotiations will likely be floundering, participants in the Climate Action Zone will generate plans for their movements' actions and messages at the end of the COP on Saturday, December 12, thereby creating the chance to “have the final word” on COP21.

A parallel initiative is the Climate Games, the latest brainwave of the Laboratory of Insurrectional Imagination (le Labofii), which has issued a call for a series of “hackathons,” to “bring artists, activists,



designers, scientists, hackers, architects, gamers, performers and other citizens together to conceptualise, and build and rehearse effective new tools and tactics of resistance to be used during the COP21.” For details, and to enter, stay tuned here.

### **A People's Climate Strike to build a movement with teeth**

Another intriguing and promising new strategy is to build support for a “global climate strike” in the run-up to, during, and after the COP. This idea has been put forward by the Global Climate Convergence, a coalition of U.S.-based activists involved with the Green Party, 350.org locals, System Change Not Climate Change, and others.

As U.S. Greens Ben Manski and Jill Stein explain, “A strike is an economic stoppage. A strike does not plead. It does not demand. It simply does.”

At this point, the plan is for decentralized actions to occur around the world starting on November 26 just before the COP starts and continuing through December 12, to coincide with the final actions planned in Paris. “A People's Climate Strike is being planned – to bring the engines of economic and ecological destruction to a grinding halt, demonstrate our growing power, and promote community-controlled, just, and green alternatives.

The People's Climate Strike will move us from the symbolism of marches towards the assertion of power in the streets. We will begin to develop a tool that has been essential for democratic social change throughout history.”

### **Could We “Seattle” the COP?**

The idea of “Seattle-ing” a COP was first raised by legendary South African activist and poet Dennis Brutus for COP15 in

Copenhagen 2009, shortly before his death. Patrick Bond and others have raised the possibility that we might be able to “Seattle Paris,” as suggested by Canadian author and activist Pat Mooney of ect: “It should start like New York [where 400,000 marched together in September 2014] and end like Seattle [where the global justice movement shut down the meetings of the WTO in December 1999]. Shut the thing down!”

On Saturday, December 12, many activists will converge in the streets of Paris under the rubric of a Blockadia-style series of actions that have yet to be determined but about which discussions are now being held.

As the Coalition Climat21 website puts it: “We do not want to remain mere spectators of the end of the UN conference, patiently awaiting the verdict of the negotiations! We will show that the movement for climate justice possesses the energy and determination to impose its solutions, and to grow even stronger in 2016!”

### **Just Say “NO” to the COP!**

With people everywhere who are truly concerned about the planet's future we need to discredit the COP and not let it declare victory. But is there any chance of it actually ending as an unmistakable failure that even world leaders and the global media would be unable to deny? COP21 is the best chance for all those countries (and there are many) who will get very little out of the treaty on the table to use their veto and say “No, not without \$100 billion or more annually in new money (not aid that has already been committed or loans with the usual awful conditions) for the Green Climate Fund, not without

equally substantial funding for Loss and Damage, not without free technology transfer, not without closing the huge emissions gap to stay under 1.5 degrees so our populations don't starve, drown, die of thirst, or get killed in floods, not without a treaty that is legally binding, and much more.”

These are merely, after all, the promises made in Copenhagen, Durban, Warsaw, and Lima, none of which look likely to remain standing when the Paris outcome is announced.

Can we not imagine a different, more unscripted ending to COP21, even a complete collapse, as with the WTO in Seattle, with NO possibility of declaring the outcome a success?

Pablo Solon has already floated this idea, noting that “A bad deal in Paris will lock in catastrophic consequences for the future of the planet and humanity.” In March at a meeting of climate activists at the World Social Forum, he said: “I think we need a clearer narrative: let's stop an agreement that's going to burn the climate. We already know that agreement exists. If China peaks emissions only by 2030 or if we accept Obama's offer to China, we all burn. The Paris agreement will be worse than the draft we've seen. The point is not to put pressure for something better. It's to stop a bad deal. We are against carbon markets, geoengineering and the emissions targets.”

Two diametrically opposite and legitimate objections may be made to the “No” argument: the first is that it may not be possible to achieve it, as Patrick Bond has cautioned in one of the best analyses of movement options to date, while the second is that it would be a mistake in the first place to prefer no agreement or

condemn in advance the agreement that we might be able to get in Paris, which may after all be a step on the road to something better, as Avaaz hopes.

Yet blocking something bad – until something better can be constructed – can be a recipe for climate justice. When the Keystone pipeline, which looked sure to be approved when it first surfaced early in Barack Obama's first term was opposed by a handful of activists, this delayed approval until facts on the ground changed enough for it to be almost inconceivable today: a slam-dunk turned into a very likely “no,” and built a movement in the process. Why should we aim for anything less?

Who could be our allies inside the negotiations? Which countries might stand up as strongly as Bolivia did in Cancún in 2010, or as individual leaders and negotiators from the Maldives, Sudan, or the Philippines have done in the past? Clearly, an important task is to know enough about each country's and each bloc of countries' positions on the key issues, and who will be negotiating for each. Another key task will be to find ways to communicate and dialogue with these potential allies (assuming they exist) before and during the COP.

There are various candidates for stronger stands to be taken in this COP, countries who may be willing to say no in the name of climate justice, intergenerational equity, common but differentiated responsibility, and plain human common sense inside the negotiations. In May, the Climate Vulnerable Forum – twenty countries in front-line positions as climate change advances – issued a [statement](#) that “Two Degrees Celsius is Inadequate.”



The Climate Action Tracker Consortium's August Briefing points out that AOSIS, the 44-member strong Alliance of Small Island States, has endorsed keeping warming under the safer, if more difficult limit of 1.5 degrees Celsius, and has called on the nations of the world to be fully decarbonized by 2050.

The 48-member Least Developed Countries bloc issued a statement in February calling for “emissions peaking for developed countries in 2015, with an aim of net zero emissions by 2050 in the context of equitable access to sustainable development.”



The most hopeful sign to date is the just concluded Africa Climate Talks in Tanzania, where negotiators met civil society activists, including Patrick Bond, who argued for their joint collaboration, as reported in a PANA Press account: ***“Once it is clear that a deal, which will be nowhere near to 2 degrees Celsius will be adopted, this is when we need African societies to demand that they don't negotiate further”....***

All evidence indicates, however, that for

Africa and the Small Island Developing States, temperature increases above 1.5 degrees Celsius are already catastrophic. 'If they (African negotiators and the civil society) unite and decide to walk out, they will deny consensus and then force the next COP (Conference of Parties) which is going to be in Africa, Morocco in 2016, to then change the power balance in the meantime.’” Let's remember that the great civil society walkout in Warsaw was preceded two days earlier by a walkout of representatives of 133 countries of the global South over the non-inclusion of loss and damage at that point in the negotiations.

Is this a pipedream? Possibly. Maybe probably. But what have we got to lose from trying this approach? And what might be gained for the planet if an opening in the global climate talks is somehow breached?

### What could we do after Paris?

A “No” in Paris would compel the world's governments to come back and negotiate seriously lest they be the ones condemned in global opinion for lacking the courage to take action for the common future of humanity.

Surely we will also need to figure out ways to elect governments that would go to the COP with ambition, wherever that is possible (and we should be attempting to go beyond the possible, as radicals do all the time). It's high time for a new UNFCCC altogether – let's imagine what it would look like and how to make it happen.

Maybe it will take some new combination of radical social movements and a hitherto unknown, more horizontal kind of political party to bring about deep transformation of our societies in the direction of economic equality, climate justice,

and participatory democracy. Determined movements can force parties to make good on their promises, and radical governments must draw their strength and legitimacy from uncompromising movements in order to stand up against the forces that will seek to destroy us all.

There is no easy path, as Syriza proved in Greece, but new paths have ways of opening up to those who dare to seek them. There have been hints of this in the past, and this possibility remains alive in the present, and always in the future.

I continue to believe that many approaches hold promise. Our movements – if they are real – can't be competing with each other. They must learn to work together, despite their diversity of tactics, and yes, even of strategies.

For John Jordan, “Only a broad space of disobedience where we do not condemn the actions of others will keep us strong. We must hold ourselves together in unity and diversity, just like the rich networks that make up the resilient ecosystems we are protecting.”

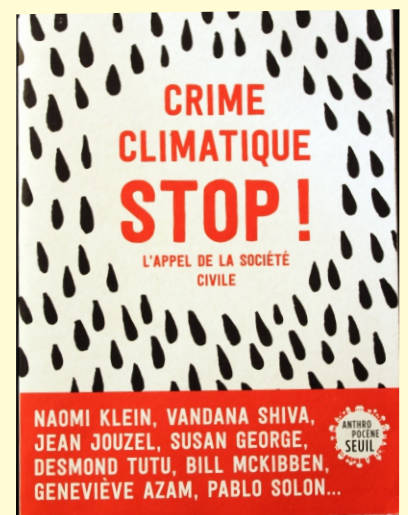
Or as Cam Fenton has recently put it in an essay that should be widely read: “In the end, if we are constantly building alignment along fault lines, any big tent will be stronger and more valuable in the long run. After all, fault lines are the points that have raised mountains, carved shorelines and shaken the earth with powerful quakes.”

I dream of radical climate action of the kind needed to address the interlocking crises of capitalist globalization, militarism and violence, and the disillusionment of so many people with politics as usual.

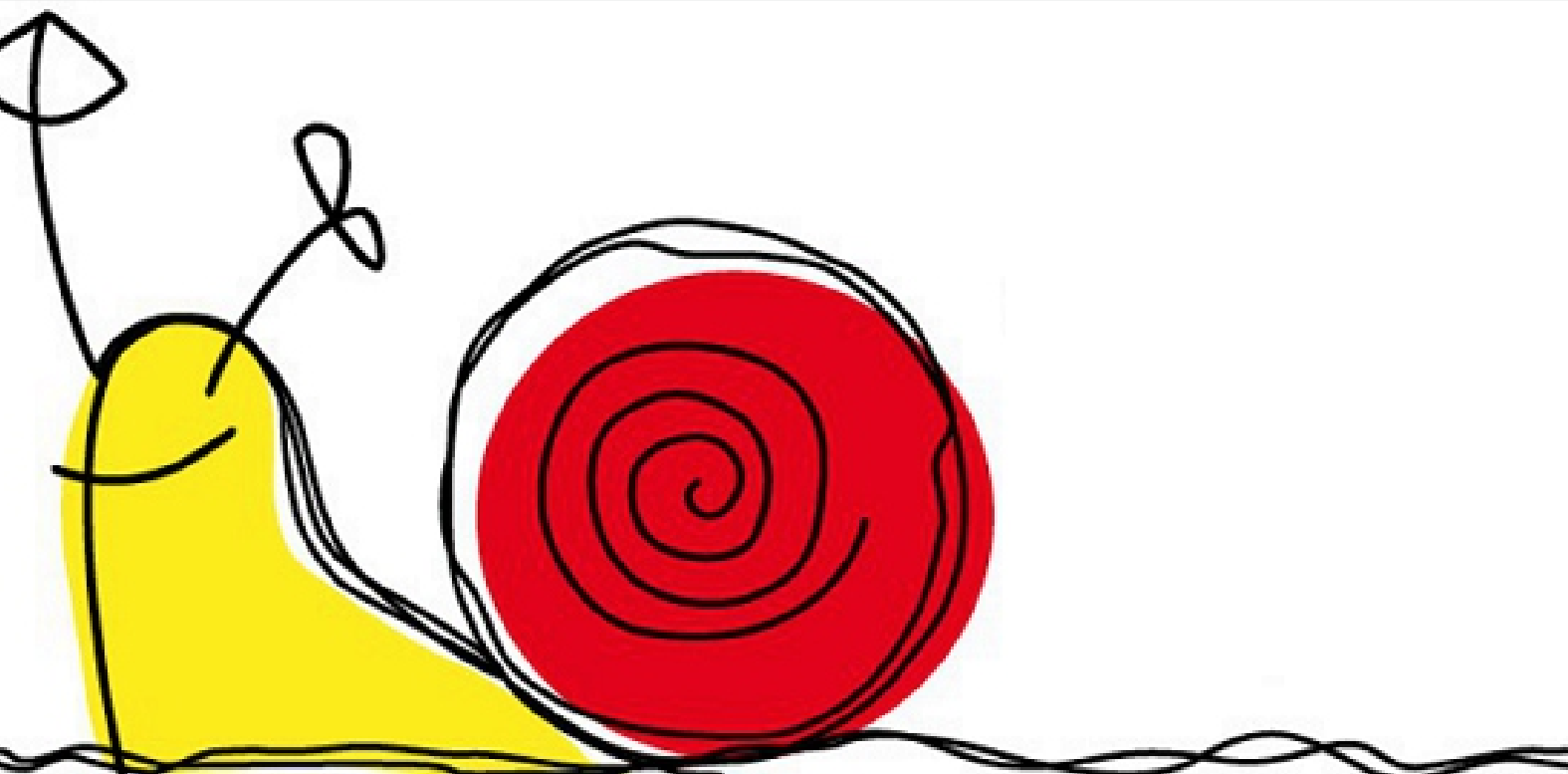
To deal with simultaneous social, economic, and political crises while managing climate change as best we can requires deep systemic change and a movement that can create a non-linear trajectory into the future. To weather this storm, we will need both the spirit of Blockadia – that “vast but interwoven web of campaigns standing up against the fossil fuel industry” and Alternatiba – the web of sustainable, life-affirming alternatives to the death spiral of fossil-fueled neoliberal capitalism.

The climate justice movement may just have a world-historical role to play in bringing these new things into the world.

## BOOKS TO READ







# DeGrowth IS NOT A CHOICE AVAILABLE TO THOSE IMPOVERISHED BY CAPITAL

Interview with Firoze Manji

**La Décroissance:** Faced with global warming, the upholders of green capitalism promote the acceleration of the deployment of technologies and advocate for “sustainable” development. Why has this strategy failed since the beginning of climate negotiations?

**Firoze Manji:** The failure is partly due to the promotion of false solutions but it is also due to the fact that the dynamics of neoliberal capitalism actually exacerbate the problem.

We are living in a period of a major crisis of capitalism characterized by the generalized decline of the rate of profit. It is also a period of unprecedented concentration and centralization of capital, with a few

hundred corporations controlling every aspect of life, and an unprecedented financialization of capital. The falling rate of profit in production encourages capitalist speculation in credit, property and stock markets -- the unproductive sectors of the economy.

We are in an era of 'take, don't make'. Under such conditions, accumulation by dispossession is the order of the day -- anything to get a faster rate of return: land grabbing that results in the dispossession of millions of a means of livelihood; elimination of jobs and the reduction in the value of the living wage; natural resource extraction (amputation of non-renewable resources); commodification of nature so that it too can be a source of profit through speculation;

forced opening of territories for exploitation (if necessary through the use of military force). And all of this is making our governments more accountable to corporations, banks and financial institutions than they are to citizens.

Neoliberalism, in a word, is the policy promoted by capital as the solution to the crisis of capital. Capitalism has produced global warming, serious loss of biodiversity, alarming increase in deforestation and desertification, toxicity and pollution of air, water and the soil. With growing public concern about climate change, capital has been desperate to ensure that its thirst for higher rates of profit is cloaked under a 'green' mantle. But that green has nothing to do with the conservation of nature: rather it is the green of the US dollar bill.

Resolving the problems of climate change requires long-term and carefully thought-out interventions. But the current desperation of capital for profits militates against such an approach. 'The rules are short-termism, asset-stripping, rent-seeking, stealing, resource-grabbing, forced distribution from poor to rich, accelerated enclosure and all sorts of new swindles perpetrated under the rubric of “shareholder value”.'.

In keeping with the prevailing neoliberal ideology, the 'solution' promoted as 'green capitalism' involves increasing the commodification and financialization of nature, of living things and of ecosystems. 'Green capitalism' assumes that everything has a market price, even the regulation of the climate. Green capitalism's 'solutions' include REDD (Reducing Emissions through Deforestation and Forest Degradation), privatization of water, the promotion of industrial agriculture, chaining small farmers to the domination of the agro-

industrial complex, investment and promotion of geo-engineering and genetically modified organisms, nanotechnology and so on. Far from reducing emissions, the evidence suggests that these solutions are only exacerbating the problems associated with global warming. This is hardly surprising. As Einstein put it, you cannot solve problems with the same thinking used to create them. At heart, the so-called 'green economy' is only a variation of business as usual, that is to say, the drive for economic growth to increase the rate of profit by any means and as fast as possible.

**La Décroissance:** In Africa, the consequences of climate change are more substantial than in Europe: desertification, water scarcity, food problems etc. What are the main threats?

**Firoze Manji:** The continent of Africa is one of the most vulnerable of all continents to the impact of climate change. This is due not only to the fact that temperature rises on the continent are expected to be several degrees higher than elsewhere, but also to the economic, social and political devastation that African countries have faced over the last 30 years as a result of the imposition of neoliberal policies. These have left the populations impoverished, vulnerable and already severely impacted by global warming. The wide-scale privatization of the commons, the flooding of African markets with commodities produced in the advanced capitalist countries, the dramatic decline of value-added manufacturing, the removal of subsidies to farmers, the leasing or selling off of vast quantities of the most productive land to transnational corporations for speculation, have resulted in unprecedented levels of landlessness and unemployment.



Large regions of marginal agriculture have been forced out of production. With projections of a reduction in yield of food in some countries by as much as 50%, the continent faces serious food insecurity. Even without climate change, it is estimated that more than 25% of the population of Africa (200 million people) already experience 'high water stress'. Diminishing water tables are already being poisoned by effluents from mineral extraction and industrial agriculture operated by transnational corporations.

With current projections of global warming, it is estimated that a further 600 million people are likely to face increased water stress over the next 20 years or so. Low lying lands on the coasts and the small islands are already facing inundations with rising sea-levels, and the situation will get worse over the coming years. Changes in weather patterns have already resulted in unpredictability of growing seasons. Ecological stresses as a result of climate change are contributing to conflicts as desertification forces communities to move into more fertile areas imposing on established and settled people, a factor that contributed, for example, to the crisis in Darfur.

**La Décroissance: Must we decrease production, consumption, transportation, and reconsider our needs and our economic organization? Do you think that we have to opt for degrowth?**

**Firoze Manji:** When people talk about 'we',

to whom are they referring? Seen from the perspective of Africa, 'we' have suffered from a devastating period of degrowth over the last 30 or more years since the adoption of neoliberal policies by our governments. And what little is produced in Africa – primarily agricultural products, oil and minerals – is virtually all destined for transformation and consumption in the advanced capitalist countries.



There is precious little local production to fulfill the needs of the majority of the people of our countries.

To resolve our situation, we need in Africa to increase production and improve transportation and communication so we don't have to starve, so we don't have to live in cardboard shacks, so that we have access to clean water and sanitation, so that we can build schools, hospitals and

health centres, so that we have decent employment and affordable drugs, food, clothing, housing, to mention only some of the human needs that we currently lack. We need to invest in the infrastructure and means of production of human and social needs to break Africa's historical and current subordination to the needs of industrialized North. In effect, we need to break with the domination of our economies by transnational corporations and financial institutions.

*So in Africa we need growth: not the mythical one measured by GDP growth that reflects the enrichment of the few and the pauperization of the many. We've had enough of degrowth.*

The choice of 'degrowth' may be an option for those, including our elites and middle classes in Africa, who have been brought up with the over-indulgences of advanced capitalism. It is not a choice available to those impoverished by the same system.

The overproduction of commodities, destructive extraction of natural resources, and fierce accumulation by dispossession are symptoms of a system that is desperate to stave off the declining rate of profit. It doesn't make sense then to treat only the symptoms (degrowth) without addressing the underlying causes (capital accumulation).

**La Décroissance: Do you think that there is an elemental opposition between economic growth and ecology?**

**Firoze Manji:** I think there is a fundamental opposition between growth of the capitalist economy and maintaining a balance with the ecosystem of which humans are a part. Ever since its origins, growth of the capitalist economy has always been achieved at the expense of that ecosystem.

It has involved enslavement of millions, genocide, colonization, amputation of non-renewable resources, pillage, piracy, militarization, theft, poisoning of ecosystems, loss of species of animals and plants, dispossessions and imprisonment of cultures and societies within capitalist social relations of production, all in the interest of accumulation of capital by a few. The growth of capital has always required enforced degrowth, and resultant impoverishment, of the vast majority of the peoples and economies of the Third World.

Many people are finally becoming aware of

the cumulative effect of this destructive mode of production on the ability of the ecosystem to renew itself in a sustainable manner, and of the impending threat to the viability of the planet as a living system.

I don't believe that there is an 'elemental opposition' between economic growth and ecology per se. An economy based on meeting the needs (not just material) of all of humanity and of 'mother earth' need not necessarily result in disequilibrium within the ecosystem. Having a system in equilibrium – homeostasis – need not necessarily mean that there would be no growth in any part of that system.

It may be that a system that is geared towards fulfilling human needs and towards maintaining the equilibrium of the planet's ecosystem would require some degree of degrowth. But the system we have today is not open to the possibility of equilibrium because its very nature is to use every means possible to allow a minority to accumulate by dispossession and destruction. It is this logic that results in the serious disequilibrium within the ecosystem that threatens its very existence.

**La Décroissance: How could we re-organize our societies and our way of life towards simplicity and solidarity? What political actions could we take to massively reduce our energy consumption and abandon the obsession for economic growth?**

**Firoze Manji:** This is not the place for outlining a 'manifesto', but let me make some suggestions for discussion. The problems we face have been created and perpetuated by a system that has a voracious appetite for profits without regard to ecological impact.



What is frequently forgotten is that that ecology includes human societies. The solution cannot therefore be considered in technological or even technical terms, but rather we need to consider it in social and political terms.

The precondition for the solution to re-establishing an ecological equilibrium has to be the encouragement and nurturing of popular movements, especially amongst those most disenfranchised and impoverished by the system. Without the active participation of the popular masses, we cannot arrive at a solution that overcomes that democratic deficit of the current system.

Perhaps the first step requires public discussion about how do we democratize the economy and the ways decisions are made. Who decides what is produced? Who decides what is produced, why it is produced, how much is produced, and for whom it is produced? Who benefits from the production that takes place? And what is done with the value so created? Currently a minority makes these decisions without any accountability or even reference to citizens. Public debate on such questions are needed to challenge the 'right' of that minority to make decisions that affect the majority. Democratization of every aspect of life – be it about production, distribution, healthcare, housing, sanitation, education, etc. – is fundamentally necessary.

A billion people are considered today to be 'hungry' not because there is not enough food in the world but because people, even those who labour in agriculture, are unable to afford the price of basic foods due speculation of food on the stock markets. This calls for an ending of

speculation on food and other basic necessities.

Similarly there is an urgent need for democratization of the management of natural resources. There has already been massive extraction (or more correctly, amputation) of non-renewable resources which then are stockpiled for speculative reasons. Is there a need to continue extraction of non-renewable resources? To what extent can we “Keep the oil in the soil; the coal in the hole” as Nnimmo Bassey has proposed? Similarly, we need to consider what needs to be done about democratization of energy, food production and resource management and so on.

But all these aspects of life are currently controlled by transnational corporations who are backed by the might of the imperialist triad – US, Europe and Japan. The struggle for the democratization is inevitably, thus, an anti-imperialist struggle.

Nairobi, June 2015.



# WHY LAW CAN SAVE THE EARTH

by Femke Wijdekop,

## INTRODUCTION

Who of you has ever seen a TED Talk that changed the course of your life?

It happened to me. It was New Year's day 2013 and outside it was 6 degrees. Grey clouds were blocking out the weak winter sun, rain dribbled down on my windows and when I looked outside the street was deserted. I had some free time between my late breakfast and a visiting friend and decided to watch Polly Higin's TED Talk on Ecocide that had been on my 'to do'-list for some time. When I finished watching that talk, 18 minutes later, something had fundamentally changed inside of me.

All of a sudden I understood why I had become a lawyer, why I had left the world of law in my mid-twenties out of discontent, and most importantly, why it was now time for me to return to it. And 2

and a half years later I am standing here, on the red dot of TEDx Haarlem, giving a talk on this year's topic of Enlightenment.

## THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The Enlightenment was a crucial period in the development of the rule of law. It gave us the separation of state powers and the fundamental rights and freedoms of man. Central to the Enlightenment was the ideal of liberation: the liberation of man from repressive traditions and religions and from power abuse by all-mighty kings. The idea of individual autonomy took root and thanks to fundamental rights and freedoms, like the freedom of speech, the freedom of religion and the freedom of property, individuals (better said: white men ;) were now free to think, act and believe as they chose as long as they did not violate other people's rights to do the same.



The Enlightenment also further developed the philosophy of materialism, which says that physical matter is the only reality and that everything, including thoughts and feelings can be explained in terms of physical phenomena. Thanks to new scientific discoveries and technological innovations, we could now measure, understand and ultimately, control these physical phenomena.

By using reason and applying scientific methods, we could finally dominate Nature (or so we thought!) and organize Nature in neatly divided categories. Because another characteristic of the Enlightenment mindset was thinking in terms of separation. The Enlightenment separated facts from values, reason from faith, and humans from nature.

Nature lost its sacred dimension and became an “object” that we could control and exploit. The invention of the steam engine played a big part in this. It freed humans from the forces of nature and boosted the enormous projects of industrialisation and colonialism. Thanks to coals and the steam engine, ships could cross the world seas, independent of the direction and strength of the wind. Merchants and colonists now controlled their access to foreign lands and the raw materials they contained. The idea

took root that not only foreign peoples, but Nature itself could be conquered. Legislative assemblies passed laws that enabled economic expansion and chartered companies to 'go and conquer the earth'. 18th century Clergyman and philosopher William Derham pretty much summarized the spirit of his time when he said:

“We can ransack the whole globe, penetrate into the bowels of the earth, descend to the bottom of the deep, travel to the farthest regions of this world, to acquire wealth.”

### EXTRACTIVE MINDSET ENSLAVES THE EARTH

In the 20th and 21st centuries the destructive effects of this 'extractive mindset' in combination with increasingly powerful technology became clear. Natural disasters caused by humans influenced climate change and massive damage and destruction of ecosystems (“Ecocides”) such as overfishing the North Sea, the massive deforestation of the Amazon and the Fukushima nuclear disaster are the talk of the day. We have come face to face with the effects of an economic system that makes profit out of exploiting the Earth.

Over the last 50 years, environmental legislation has been on the rise. But Environmental law has not been able to stop the destructive effects of the exploitation by extractive industries. In our legal system, nature is seen as property and the starting point is that not all of life is protected.

Environmental law protects nature in a fragmented way, and environmental issues are treated as planning issues, which ignores the complex issues that arise when we interfere with ecosystems in an interconnected world.

Environmental law has failed to address the real flaw in our system, which is that the Earth is seen as a lifeless object instead of the living, super complex organism that it really is.

While the Enlightenment liberated man, it contributed to the development of an extractive mindset that has come to enslave the Earth. Law has enabled this development and this lack of consciousness so greatly disillusioned me in my mid-twenties that I decided to leave the world of law behind.

But seeing that TED talk on New Year's Day 2013 opened my eyes. I realized that more and more lawyers are now waking up to the fact that enslaving the Earth endangers our own hard-won fundamental rights and freedoms.

Without a clean and safe living environment, it's really challenging to enjoy our right to health, our right to employment, to freedom of expression and religion. A healthy and safe Earth is an absolute 'must' if we want to flourish politically and economically. There are no human rights on a dead planet.

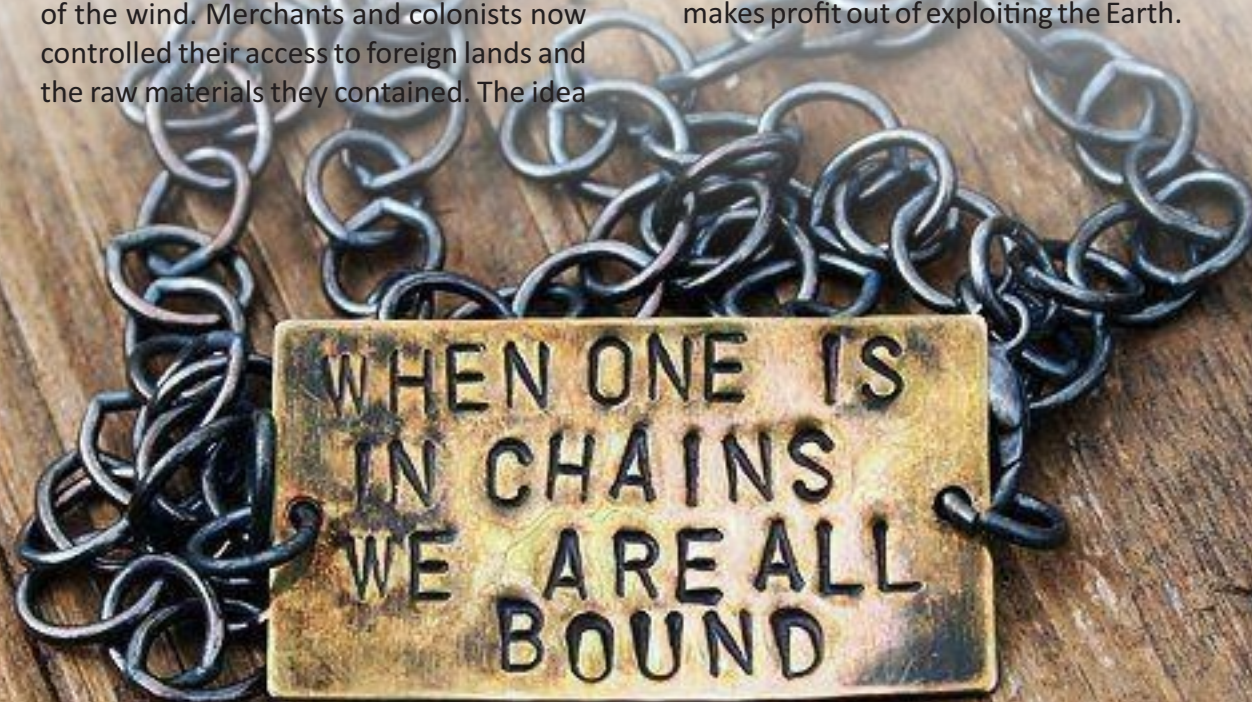
## THE CLIMATE CASE AGAINST THE DUTCH STATE

This realization lies at the basis of Urgenda's Climate Case against the Dutch State, which was presented on 14 April this year. I joined the case as a co-plaintiff, together with almost 900 citizens other Dutch citizens – a unique case in the Netherlands and in the world. According to Roger Cox, Urgenda's lawyer, the Dutch State falls short of its duty of care by not taking adequate action to reduce CO2 emissions fast enough to prevent catastrophic climate change in the future. As co-plaintiffs, we asserted the right to a clean and healthy environment on behalf of ourselves and of future generations and demanded that the State gets serious about its climate obligations. This is a powerful example of present generations acting as 'stewards' for future citizens, giving a voice to our children's children who are voiceless but who will be greatly affected by the climate decisions our governments take today.

## EARTH LAW

Other lawyers take it one step further. They leave the focus on humans behind and adopt an ecocentric point of view. Ecocentric means that they recognize that the natural world has intrinsic value regardless of its usefulness for us humans, and should be treated with respect. These ecocentric or Earth lawyers advocate a shift in the way law treats the Earth.

Instead of seeing the Earth as a lifeless object, as a property under law, they want to change the status of the Earth to one of possessing rights and dignity.





In this new way of seeing the world, humans don't own the Earth, but act as its caretaker. Human laws should harmonize with the laws of Nature and citizens can even enforce Nature's rights in court.

It is this vision that so greatly excited me that I decided to immerse myself in the world of Earth Law. It made total sense to me on a gut level and I loved the intellectual challenge of building a bridge between Earth Law and the system we are in right now. Because how do we anchor these wonderful ideas in our current reality?

That is the big question. I started to do research, interview Earth Lawyers, publish about these new developments, and joined national and international campaigns.

And quicker than I could have fathomed 2,5 years ago, these 'heroes' became my colleagues and I was interviewed myself and invited as a speaker. I realized my break from the world of law had served to prepare me to come back to it, because now I could use my work experiences in communication, community- and event organizing that I gained in these years to spread the message of Earth Law. I also found like-minded people here in the Netherlands with whom we have established a documentary platform called

Facing Crossroads to inject these ideas into the public debate.

## ECOCIDE

The idea central to the work of Facing Crossroads and the topic of the TEDTalk that sparked the change in my life is the work of Scottish barrister Polly Higgins. Since 2010 she has been on a global mission to make Ecocide – massive damage and destruction of ecosystems – the 5th Crime against Peace under the Rome Statute, which is the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court (next to genocide, crimes of aggression, crimes against humanity and war crimes). The term Ecocide was invented in 1970 by American biologist Arthur Glaston. In the 1950s, Glaston worked in a laboratory where he helped prepare a chemical component for the notorious defoliant Agent Orange, which was used in the Vietnam War.

When Glaston saw how Agent Orange was put to use in Vietnam – destroying vegetation on a massive scale and poisoning human health - he was appalled. He turned into an anti-war activist overnight and was the first to call the massive damage and destruction of ecosystems “Ecocide.”

Ecocide was put on the international agenda in the 1970s and 1980s, and was part of the draft Rome Statute in the early 1990s. However, the draft provision to make Ecocide a crime was withdrawn from the final treaty text and today Higgins is travelling the world to gather government and civil society support for including Ecocide as the missing 5th Crime against Peace very soon.

This mission could truly change the course of history, because making Ecocide a crime would change the rules of the game of how we do business dramatically – no longer would it be legal for corporations to make profit out of destroying the Earth – and it would be a great catalyst for our transition to a green economy.

## WILD LAW

South African Cormac Cullinan is another leader in the Earth Law movement who I interviewed. Cullinan, a white South African, became an anti-apartheid activist as a law student, fighting for social justice and racial equality. When Apartheid ended, he worked as a lawyer and drafter of environmental legislation and was confronted with the flaws of a legal system that treats the natural world as property. He realized that after Apartheid, the enslavement of the natural world is the new frontier.

Cormac wrote a book called Wild Law in which he explored the possibility of a radically different legal system. Wild Laws are human laws that balance the rights and responsibilities of humans against the rights of plants, animals, rivers and ecosystems. It starts with the idea that all of life is protected and creates a framework or 'constitution' for an ecologically thriving

world.

This may sound very utopian, but in only a couple of years Wild Law principles found their way into the Ecuadorian constitution, which now states in its Chapter 7 that Nature or Pachamama has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles. Bolivia now protects the rights of Mother Earth in its national legislation. Over 100 communities across the United States have included Nature's rights in their ordinances. In 2010, a Belize court ruled that a reef is not property but a living being, and cannot be sacrificed for commercial interests.

In Europe, Switzerland recognises the dignity of all beings in its constitution; Spain recognises the rights of Apes; and this year European citizens, led by British lawyer Mumta Ito are preparing the European Citizens Initiative to give Rights to Nature.

## ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS

So Earth Law is correcting a system that by placing the costs of pollution onto the natural world, has contaminated the soils, seas and air of the only planet we have. It has done so to such a degree, that our survival may be at stake.

And for many people around the world, this is already the case. Small scale farmers, fishers and hunters – especially indigenous peoples – are confronted with the destruction of forests, pollution of rivers and landgrabs of their farmlands because big corporations want to take the natural resources – the coal, the oil, the wood - to make profit.



Many farmers and tribe leaders stand up against this destruction, on behalf of their community, future generations and the Earth herself, which is sacred to most indigenous peoples.

We call these individuals Environmental Defenders and the tragedy is that being an Environmental Defender is an extremely dangerous form of speaking out. In the last four years, on an average two Environmental Defenders were killed every week according to reports from Global Witness.

Like 22-year old farmer Indra Pelani from Indonesia, who was killed last February for defending the rights of farmers against the corporate takeover of their lands. Thanks to NGOs the work of Environmental Defenders like Indra Pelani is now monitored internationally and being in 'the public eye' can make a huge difference for their personal safety. The Grrrowd Initiative even created a crowdfunding platform through which we can support these brave Environmental Defenders in their struggle by helping to finance the costs of their David vs. Goliath-like battles.

## USING OUR RIGHTS AND FREEDOM TO DEFEND THE EARTH

What Environmental Defenders and Earth Lawyers are doing is they are using their fundamental rights and freedoms – the freedom of speech, the right to demonstrate, the right to form associations to protect nature – to help restore the health of the Earth. They realize that we ourselves can only be free on an Earth that is clean, on an Earth that is healthy and on an Earth that is safe.

The sharp distinction between us and nature – which is an inheritance of the age

of Enlightenment – drops away, because this time around we realize that we are always connected to nature, because we are part of nature. In this Enlightenment 2.0 our individual freedom and autonomy is not defined in isolation, but experienced in the context of a flourishing Earth community.

And I have found my purpose in using my own freedom of speech and legal education to express my love for the Earth and for those who defend her. I took the inspiration I got from that TEDTalk and with it literally changed the course of my life. I discovered that when an idea calls to you so strongly, it's probably because you are meant to become one of its spokespersons. For me this journey has been one of daring to take my space and speak up for something I believe in.

And you too can speak up for the health of our Mother Earth, by signing petitions to end Ecocide ([www.eradicatingecocide.com](http://www.eradicatingecocide.com)), by supporting Environmental Defenders on Grrrowd.org and by becoming an Environmental Defender in your own sphere of influence.

And whenever I start to think it's all too much of an uphill battle, I remind myself of these words by Denis Levertov which always give me great hope:

***But we have only begun  
to love the earth.  
We have only begun  
to imagine the fullness of life  
How could we tire of hope?  
So much is in bud.***



# WATER: A SOURCE OF LIFE, CONNECTION AND HOPE

By Elizabeth Peredo Beltran

*(Many thanks to the Biotope of Healing at Tamera Community and the Water Symposium 2013. Their experience of restoring water landscapes is reminiscent of Mikhail Kravcik's statement: "The most important right in the world, is the residential rights of a drop of water"... to return again to the cycle of life.)*

Water is the source of life; we are water beings who all belong to the water cycle. We are part of it. We all originate in a "big drop" growing inside a woman's body, thanks to love, and that is something that moves me so deeply in my personal life. Humans are part of the water cycle, and through water we can connect in our daily lives, with the small details of life and through water we relate to the very complex problems of water on the Planet. This also connects us at a level that opens up the possibility to conceive of a utopia. Water has the power

to drive our feelings and our thoughts to the sky, to give thanks for life.

I became conscious of this vital importance of water in 2000. Just after the Water War in Cochabamba, when the people's courage reminded us a very simple concept based on the most basic common sense: WATER IS LIFE.

At that time we had forgotten it, as consequence of a long economic adjustment program in the 1990's that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund had imposed in our region in conjunction with complicit national neoliberal governments. Such a simple phrase mobilized thousands of people, almost forcing the Bolivian president to resign, forcing out the powerful U.S. multinational Bechtel and, for a while, the people recovered control over their water systems.



As an activist and a researcher, I soon noticed that women were key actors in this huge mobilization, particularly women belonging to the rural irrigators trade unions. In Bolivia there are still about 4,500 irrigation systems that manage water independent of the government or the state. They are traditional water organizations in rural communities who manage water for agricultural activities and they are very systematically organized. Women play a very important role in those organizations, not only as authorities of the water systems, but also providing their organizations a vision of the details in the daily task of providing water for agriculture; they are responsible for care.

Urban women also; the poorest, vendors in the popular markets, neighbours that know how to provide water to their families, sometimes taking many hours to collect water. They too took an active part in the struggles in the streets. They organized so quickly providing solidarity in the form of pots of food to feed the water activists. In just a couple of days they organised this solidary system much to the concern of the elites that were waiting watching in fear looking out from their windows and hoping for a favourable end of the conflict.

The people won and, since then, we became connected to the World. Water, once again, connected us to other people... this time all over the Planet. The indigenous wisdom and knowledge gave us the key words to defend water and spread this vision worldwide. Many of us Bolivians involved in water struggles, began to be called "water warriors" making contact with thousand of activists, researchers, defenders of water on an international level. We built and organized large campaigns to continue the defence

of water.

We then realised that water has different meanings: while for us water means life, for corporations and even governments it means money. It is a commodity, and all of regulations that reign over commodities applied as the representatives of the World Bank told us when Bechtel began its trial against Bolivia for having removed them from Cochabamba and losing the corporation a fortune in future income. They wanted Bolivia to pay between \$40,000 to \$100,000 as a punishment for the Bolivian rebellion against the privatization of water. Shame on them! They wanted us to pay for their expectations of future incomes without having invested; they wanted us to pay for their dreams of greed. The movement begun a huge global campaign to stop these unfair demands from corporate power and again we won: in 2002 Bechtel had to "sell" us their water company just two dollars.

We also faced new struggles defending the underground (fossil) water supplies in the southern highlands in Uyuni, where mining companies in the north of Chile wanted to use this water for their activities citing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). There were large mobilizations for the public water systems in La Paz and in El Alto. We took an active part in the promotion of a social vision of water management in the World Water Forums.

So, between 2000 to 2010, the Bolivian people did so many things both the country and its activists. We changed our own government, we conducted global campaigns against FTAs, we took part in the popular Latin American rejection of the Free Trade

Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), we struggled against corporate power, and we demanded that water and food should be removed from the domain of the World Trade Organization (WTO). We even could convinced our new government to pull Bolivia out of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), a private tribunal for corporations that litigate against governments in investment disputes (part of the World bank) of which our country was a member. We changed our Constitution and wrote new laws. Now our Constitution states that water is a fundamental right for life. As a nation we even promoted and made a large contribution to the 2010 United Nations Resolution on the Human Right to Water and Sanitation, a huge victory for people in the multilateral system.

We helped to build a Bolivian social process. We produced a narrative, which inspires the World: the concept of Living Well and the Rights of Mother Earth, bringing Pachamama to centre stage for life. We also have been able to contribute to the struggles and narratives on climate justice and the ecological debt. We cried out to the World about the urgent necessity to reduce global warming emissions and to the North to assume their great responsibility without forgetting common responsibilities. We have to be proud of these huge victories for the Bolivian social movements and for global social struggles.

But then our contradictions began to become more and more evident; Rights for Mother Earth is more of a discourse than a practical approach on the ground and we faced the fact that we really have no tools on which to build a new system (not only laws, or proposals) that both respect Human Rights and the Rights of Mother

Earth. We have problems: Bolivia has a relative high per-capita contribution to climate change due to deforestation that is mainly produced by industrial agricultural corporations and by the process of internal emigrational. We are also experiencing an important rate of loss of biodiversity and loss of forests compared with other countries of the region, but no one faces up to this. Bolivia has reopened its economy to monoculture agriculture, to mining and extractive enterprises in order to promote economical growth and to provide resources for social programs but, at the same time, this extractivism is poisoning our water, damaging our own food sovereignty, destroying the environment and jeopardizing human and indigenous rights. Our underground (fossil) waters which we defended in wonderful Uyuni, are now being exploited by the Japanese Corporation Sumitomo in a silver mine (called San Cristóbal) that uses 50,000 cubic metres of fossil water supplies per day. The Law on Productive Promotion for agriculture (2011) opened our fields to GMOs that are entering more and more into our food production: 98% of Bolivian soy is now transgenic.

In short, the redistributive and productive government schemes have become a perverse cycle, where poverty is supposed to be overcome at the cost of a vast environmental destruction. Just last May the Bolivian vice-president officially expressed the government decision, in public declarations, to begin oil exploitation in our National Parks (in the Amazon region) the biggest fount for biodiversity and water on the Continent.



Although we have made many advances in fighting social injustice, colonialism and racism, there are many examples that demonstrate how this process became something we can no longer identify with, if we truly wish to go further in transforming this unfair World, the product of Capitalism and Extractivism. And there is a special keystone encapsulating this phenomenon: the TIPNIS Road scheme. Approved for completion in 2010, something officials called the ecological road, even at the time of the Peoples Conference for Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, the same Bolivian leadership was officially providing their approval for the construction of the TIPNIS road through the Isiboro Sécure National Park, a territory in which indigenous communities live which is also extremely rich in biodiversity. Many people protested against it, even Juan Pablo Ramos, Vice-minister for the Environment resigned in July 2010 in protest for the measures assumed by the Government for the road thru the forest, but politicians did nothing, social criticism was not heard.

Although we made many efforts to build a new society, capitalism, patriarchy and colonialism somehow always found a way to survive in a World governed by corporate interests, by the addiction to economic growth and by over consumption as a measurement of wealth, social redistribution and social justice. In this dynamic, governments and leaderships can easily become simple functional adjuncts.

At some point I felt that the fighters and activists had come to inhabit a kind of large mammoth, living inside this big beast that fed itself of our energy. A place where we even think we need G.P.S. devices to orientate ourselves. We believed that our declarations, our activism and lobbying would be enough. But we were just living inside the beast of power.

In that context little of our unfair relationship with Water and with Nature has really changed. This is particularly evident in the use of water for mining and oil exploitation, in the loss of forests and of environments which retain water, and in the access to clean water for the poorest indigenous communities in the highlands and lowlands which is still a great challenge.

Despite this, we still believe in change. Despite this, we are still here to do our best. We can consider ourselves as survivors of the experience of being trapped inside empty words, in discourses that have been hollowed out, trapped by the substitution of action by words. Of course this is a very human mechanism that makes us believe that we are doing when we are simply talking. But the world urgently needs us to change our paradigm from thinking to acting.

We need to connect back with life and face the challenge to regain common sense in our growing cities, in mining camps, in the forests, in the countryside... in our own homes.

And at the same time we need to support those initiatives where people are doing real things daily with their own hands and their own bodies for change; going beyond words.

From that intense experience in my personal life I have learnt that is not enough to be from the South to defend life or Mother Earth – sometimes we tend to idealize – nor is it enough to be women or to be indigenous to have ecological or caring practices.

It is not enough to have political power to change societies. We have to be very conscious to build an ethic based on an ecological and humanist vision. This change does not require cultural determinism, but rather a new civilizational construction of consciousness.

Water in our daily lives is of such importance and we tend to forget it as we think that we have just to open a pipe to access it.

I was reminded again of the complex social meaning of water when the Bolivian trade union for domestic workers produced a tiny document reminding their employees that is not ecological to tell domestic employees to wash the street on a daily basis with drinking water, or wash the car with that water, or not allow them the reuse of water for washing the dishes. So, common sense again returned reminding me that when we come back home we see how much love has gone into our daily lives to make us feel comfortable and to feel loved. We are especially reminded that our

homes are our mirrors. Probably it is there where love and empathy develops most.

We are too used to talk about changing large realities, big scenarios. It sometimes drives us into the hands of evil powers and greed, as I have seen happen close-up. We may need to stop talking about “models of development” and begin to talk about restoration experiences and social commitments. By opening our eyes maybe we will be able to see that Water means solidarity, empathy, daily work, intimacy, self-responsibility, discipline, reciprocity, love and care.

W.H. Auden is often quoted on water saying "Thousands have lived without love, not one without water" but I say that without love, compassion and solidarity, it will be impossible to restore the real significance of water as Life, nor will it be possible to assure clean and safe water for everybody.

I am convinced that Love and Care are the commons we have to maintain as social values to rebuild new societies. Thereafter, probably the most important is to develop the capacity to connect what we think with what we do; what we say with what we feel; what we live with what others feel or live. What matters is how much we care for others... for people and for nature.

There are no models, but experiences; there are no receipts, but creativity; there are no heroes, just one responsibility and community ties. We need empathy, creativity and courage to keep on caring for Water as fount for Life.





**W**e, local communities, peasants movements, Indigenous Peoples and civil society organizations from Africa and all over the world, call upon the United Nations, the World Forestry Congress, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Bank and states to reject top-down forms of development, including false solutions to climate change and forest and biodiversity conservation that only serve the dominant market economy.

We are united to oppose and reject the commodification, privatisation and plunder of Nature, which include REDD+[1] and other market-based mechanisms including biodiversity and conservation offsets that put profit above the wellbeing of humanity and the planet.

These mechanisms include the “financialization of nature,” which commodifies, separates and quantifies the Earth's cycles and functions of carbon, water, forest, fauna and biodiversity – turning them into “units” to be sold in financial and speculative markets. However, Mother Earth is the source of Life, which needs to be protected, not a resource to be exploited and commodified as a 'natural capital.'

REDD+ is also the pillar of the Green Economy. REDD+ is being misleadingly billed as saving the world's forests and climate and is the anticipated main outcome of the UN's Paris Accord on climate change in December 2015. In addition, REDD+ is a false solution to climate change that is already including forests, plantations and agriculture in the carbon market.

Reports show that deforestation and the related emissions continue, and that REDD+, instead of reducing them, is harming and vilifying forest-dependent communities and those who produce the majority of the world's food – small scale farmers. Furthermore,

- REDD+ promotes monoculture tree plantations and genetically modified trees
- REDD+ increases land grabs and human rights violations
- REDD+ restricts access to forests, threatening livelihoods and cultural practices
- REDD+ causes violence against peasants, Indigenous Peoples, women and forest-dwelling communities
- REDD+ is combined with other offsets including payment for environmental services (PES)
- REDD+ imposes market driven neo-liberalism on forests, which undermines and monetizes community conservation and social/cultural processes and creates inequalities
- REDD+ projects tend to force subsistence communities into the cash economy and exploitative wage-labor
- REDD+ hinders and prevents much needed policies that support endogenous, bio-cultural approaches to biodiversity conservation and restoration.

Therefore, we join with the **No REDD in Africa Network** and the **Global Alliance against REDD** to demand that governments, the United Nations and financial institutions stop the disastrous REDD+ experiment and finally start addressing the underlying causes of forest loss and climate change!

Put forward by the **No REDD in Africa Network (NRAN)** and the **Global Alliance Against REDD**, with endorsement and support by the following. To be presented to the World Forest Congress 2015, the UNFCCC COP21 and beyond:

Organizations:

No REDD in Africa Network  
Global Alliance Against REDD  
Indigenous Environmental Network  
JA!/Justica Ambiental - Friends of the Earth Mozambique  
All India Forum of Forest Movements/India  
Carbon Trade Watch  
CENSAT Agua Viva – Friends of the Earth Colombia  
Health of Mother Earth Foundation, and over 70 other organisations and individuals



**T**oday, just few months before the 21st Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP21) in Paris in December 2015, we see with great foreboding that a very bad deal is coalescing.

The consequences of the problematic UNFCCC process leading towards the Paris deal are incredibly grave. If the world is locked into another decade of burning the planet, there will be disastrous consequences including the loss of biodiversity, mass extinctions, loss of habitat, the flooding of Small Island States, and the melting of Polar Regions. The predicted negative outcome in Paris will notably have a disproportionate impact on local communities, and indigenous and marginalized peoples.

A recent study shows that the current emission reduction pledges from US, EU and China – who together account for 45% of global emissions – are grossly inadequate, and if implemented will almost double the 2030 target of 35 Gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions. [1] Instead of real reductions and solutions, the proposed increase in carbon market and techno-fixes, such as carbon capture and storage (CCS) will only worsen the situation and open a dangerous path towards climate manipulation through geoengineering.

# Fight for System Change Now!

**WHY WE NEED TO BUILD ALTERNATIVES AND DISMANTLE A PROCESS THAT WILL LOCK US INTO ANOTHER DECADE OF BURNING THE PLANET**

**[September 2015, Climate Space Statement]**

## **Intended Contributions are Severely Insufficient**

After twenty COPs, emissions of greenhouse gases continue to rise and are forecasted to increase even further. In 1990 global emissions were at the level of 38 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e. . Twenty years later they have reached a perilous 50 Gt CO<sub>2</sub>e. To avoid a catastrophic increase of 2°C in global temperature, worldwide emissions of greenhouse gases should have peaked last year and then begun their decline. However, the peaking year will not be reached this decade and probably not even the next.

The United Nations Environment Program's Emissions Gap report and other studies show that to be consistent with a trajectory that limits the increase of the temperature to 2°C, global greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced to 44 Gigatons (Gt) of CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2020, to 40 by 2025 and then to 35 by 2030. This is the cap that is needed to avoid a global future that is too dire to imagine. The UNFCCC's draft text does not reference these figures and only mentions proposals related to percentage reductions for the next half of the century, which are nowhere near sufficient to the action that needs to be taken.

Just this past March, the European Union proudly announced its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). At first sight, the EU seems to aim for a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (compared to 1990 levels), but the pledge is full of flaws and hot air. The most significant gaps in the commitment are caused by the fact that it continues to calculate for bioenergy as 'carbon neutral' 'renewable' energy. Moreover, due to significant carbon accounting flaws in the so-called Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector, the emissions caused by the forest degradation triggered by this bioenergy demand are not taken into account.

In the current UNFCCC proposal every country will do what they want through their voluntary INDCs and the UNFCCC will simply take note of them. The easiest way to understand this is to visualize a scenario where a great fire is coming and everyone needs to commit to stop it, some more than others because of historical responsibility. The UNFCCC should be holding all nations to account, instead, countries are allowed to simply contribute what they feel is necessary, whether a glass of water or a bucket. The UNFCCC will just keep track of all of these contributions, not caring if the fire engulfs us all.

No government has challenged this suicidal path by demanding that the negotiating text include a global target to reduce global emissions to only 40 Gt of CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2025 to avoid an increase in the temperature of 4°C to 8 °C. In reality some governments are pledging even more lax reductions like Canada for example who says that it will only reduce emissions by 14% between 1990 and 2030.

## **The Corporate and Fossil Fuel Industry Capture of the COP**

It is well known that to achieve the goal to limit the temperature increase to below 2°C, we need to leave 80% of the current known fossil fuel reserves under the ground. This has been stated in many studies, reports and interventions, but not one single country has submitted this proposal in the current text of negotiations. The word “fossil fuels” only appears twice throughout the text and only in reference to the reduction of fossil fuel subsidies. It is impossible to make genuine, deep emission cuts if the fossil fuel industry is not confronted head on.

On the contrary, French officials are defending the acceptance of financial support for COP21 from fossil fuel firms and large corporate carbon emitters. Dirty energy corporations such as EDF, Engie (formerly known as GDF Suez), Air France, Renault-Nissan and BNP Paribas will fund 20 percent of the 170million Euro costs of the Paris COP21. The public trust is being subverted when multilateral negotiations designed to stop pollution are funded by the biggest polluters.



## More markets, loopholes, and damaging technologies

Despite the clear failure of carbon markets, the proposals on the table for Paris are all about how to enhance the current market mechanisms and develop new ones, including the development of high risk technologies.

False solutions abound like carbon pricing, climate smart agriculture, REDD+, BECCS, Carbon Capture and Storage, bioenergy, nuclear, synthetic biology, geo-engineering, fracking and other technological proposals that arrogantly claim to be able to cheat Mother Earth.

Carbon market mechanisms are mentioned 27 times and REDD+ 13 times. In the text there are mentions of an “enhanced Clean Development Mechanism (CDM+),” the “Emissions Trading System (ETS),” “REDD Plus,” “market mechanism in the land use sector,” “sub-national and regional emissions schemes” and “carbon pricing.” A reading of the text shows that COP 21 will open the door for new carbon market mechanisms that will be developed and agreed to at future COPs. In addition, the largest oil companies, the biggest culprits for climate change, are now telling the UNFCCC that they will save the planet with carbon capture and storage technologies and bioenergy (CCS and BECCS, both geoengineering proposals) while they continue to exploit the planet's most unconventional sources of oil.

## Changing the System is our Hope for Reclaiming our Future

We know what is going to come out of Paris and it is not going to be the system change that we want but more corporate power, more carbon markets, and more dangerous techno fixes that will lead to the financialization of nature. We know what is going to come out of Paris and it will not be about leaving fossil fuels under the ground, but will be about ambiguous concepts like “net zero emissions” that will open the door to geo-engineering.

We are therefore prepared to march to Paris like we did in New York, however we hope for a situation more like Seattle so that the UNFCCC and governments will finally learn that there is a mass movement that will not accept business as usual. This movement needs to: dismantle the process of climate negotiations that have been captured by corporations; stop a very bad deal that will burn the planet; and build a political, ecological and economic system that is good for the people and Mother Earth.

## System Change for the people and Mother Earth means to:

1. Leave fossil fuels under the ground and under the ocean floor and to have clear binding targets for emission cuts for this decade and the next. It is a call to stop false solutions like carbon pricing, climate smart agriculture, REDD +, BECCS (bioenergy with CCS), Carbon Capture and Storage, bioenergy, nuclear, synthetic biology, geo-engineering, fracking and other false solutions that treat Mother Earth like a thing that can be exploited;
2. Stop the big projects of industrial infrastructure such as airports, high speed railways, extractive industries, huge industrial farms, dams, all of which are projects designed to accelerate growth and result in increased global emissions;
3. Dismantle free trade agreements like TTIP, TPP, ISDS and the WTO;
4. End all austerity measure and cancel the debts imposed to benefit the banks. System change can only be achieved if we transform radically the banking and financial systems;

1. Reclaim real democracy for the people and not for corporations;
2. End all wars and military intervention.

For all these reasons, we need a radical system change. Neither the planet nor the people and societies can bear capitalism, which is intrinsically founded on anthropocentrism, productivism, patriarchy and neo-colonialism. Therefore, we must confront the capitalist model of accumulation and reclaim democracy for the people and not for corporations. Not only to move to a system based on genuine and public sustainable energy but also to a socially just low energy society where we stop overconsumption, over production and waste.

System Change is not going to come from States in collusion with transnational corporations but from people on the ground and frontline communities resisting fossil fuel development. It will take all of us, it will take everyone: from small farmers and peasants that are cooling the planet with agroecology and food sovereignty; from indigenous peoples who preserve Mother Earth and implement community conservation, traditional knowledge and protection of the forests; from citizens that confront coal plants in their communities, and other big projects including free trade; from students who are promoting disinvestment from fossil fuels and many others grassroots movements.

System Change is not something that will happen in the future. System change is something that we are building here and now.

Our strategy is not to wait for Paris to see what happens. We are saying now and before Paris: we don't trust the UNFCCC and the corporations that have captured the process. The movement for systems change is growing and various sectors of society are getting mobilized and are aligning around common action on the road to Paris, during the UNFCCC negotiations and beyond.

We have all long hoped for the possibility of another world. Today, we take that hope and turn it into courage, strength and action, so that together we can change the system. If there is to be a future for humanity, we need to fight for it right now.

## SIGNED:

Initiating Organizations of the Climate Space

- Alternatives International, ATTAC France
- BiofuelWatch, Critical Information Collective
- Ecologistas en Accion, ETC Group
- Fairwatch, Italy, Focus on the Global South
- Fundación Solón, Grassroots Global Justice Alliance
- Global Forest Coalition, Health of Mother Earth Foundation, (HOMEF) Nigeria
- Indigenous Environmental Network, La Via Campesina
- No-REDD Africa Network, Migrants Rights International
- Oilwatch International, Polaris Institute
- Transnational Institute