

Extractives Assembly, World Social Forum
Political Declaration
TUNIS - 31 March 2013

We, organisations assembled here, bear witness to a global extractivist boom that is leading to great misery for many hundreds of millions of the Earth's people and destroying the very basis for life and its reproduction in significant parts of the Global South, and also the Global North. It is corporations, financiers and the rich that benefit, and not the majority of peasant and working class peoples. This extractivist, growth fixated and profit oriented maldevelopment model is expanding capital's reach and destroying our common goods of water, land, air, forests and oceans. In this phase of global capitalism, power relations are shifting, with emerging economies and corporations of the Global South joining the traditional actors of the Global North in plundering and colonising the natural resources of South and North. Extractivism is not just the activity of resource extraction but a development model, which organises the political, socio-economic, gender and cultural dynamics within society and the state and its institutions.

We specifically note that:

1. International financial institutions are encouraging extractivism as the major engine to fuel economic growth. On the back of the financial crisis, financiers and investment bodies are looking for new areas for profitable investment, mainly financialised forms of profit making, with natural resource extraction representing a site for rapid and substantial accumulation.
2. While MNCs, TNCs and their financial backers promise jobs and development on the back of new growth, we instead witness rising poverty and inequality in communities and nations significantly impacted by extractivism.
3. Extractivism is characterised by intertwined collusion between state and corporations, with major public finance investments, poor transparency in deals, and corruption. This collusion, linked to state intervention and poor regulatory frameworks, results in major tax losses and capital flight in countries affected by extractivism.
4. Extractivism encompasses sites of extraction, processing activities, the transportation of raw goods, and the nodes of exportation. We, thus, see extensive impacts beyond local areas.
5. Extractivism is resulting in the displacement of peasant, indigenous people and rural populations, as land is grabbed for mining, oil extraction, plantations and dams. The rights of indigenous populations to make decisions about their land and to veto developments they reject is consistently violated.

6. Water theft accompanies and is often a motivation for land grabs as agricultural corporations, investment companies and wealthy individuals search out new sources of fresh water, one of the scarcest natural resources and already subject to open financialisation, which trend will greatly escalate in the future. Extractivist activities consume enormous quantities of water, resulting in water shortage and water pollution.
7. Extractivism destroys natural resources and whole eco-systems upon which the livelihoods and reproduction of peasant and indigenous populations depend. Because women are the majority of the world's producers (70-80% of domestic food production in SSA, for example), and are primarily responsible for caretaking natural resources held in common, this trend is particularly harmful to them.
8. Many forms of extractivism emit greenhouse gases which significantly contribute to climate change, the effects of which (floods, droughts, and irregular rainfall patterns) negatively impact upon poor peasant and working class urban populations.
9. Workers in extractivist and linked industries, many of whom are migrants, earn low wages, are subject to dangerous work, exposed to toxic chemicals, and increasingly subject to contract and informal conditions of work. Women workers experience particular oppression: sex for work at the point of recruitment, sexual harassment, rape and inappropriate facilities.
10. Women's unpaid labour has been central to the accumulation strategy of mining and other extractives corporations for centuries. The migrant labour system maximises profits for mining capital by inhibiting family migration and locating responsibility for the social reproduction of the work force and the next generation of workers in the rural areas.
11. Extractivism leads to rising militarisation in and repression of communities resisting extractivism, including extra-judicial killings, torture, persecution and harassment of activists. Women experience gender specific violence, including rape and sexual harassment by private security and state police/military.

We recognise and celebrate the struggles of communities and movements around the world fighting extractivism, and struggling for their land, livelihoods and their very lives. In acknowledging the might of the MNCs and TNCs, their financial backers, and our very governments, we commit to building the power of communities and movements by further linking and unifying our struggles against different forms of extractivism.

We have agreed the following concrete actions for the year ahead:

- We endorse the climate space proposals that have been presented to us (attached separately)
- We specifically agree to support a common day of action, Global Frackdown, on 19th October 2013, bringing in other struggles against extractivism- we will link the day of action to a day of action against TNCs

- We all commit to link our struggles and build a common global political platform and movement against this current form of highly destructive extractivism
- We will build on and develop existing alternatives such as the Million Climate Jobs Campaign
- We specifically agree to support local communities reassert their rights over the commons, as a key point of emphasis in our activism and work. Other suggested areas for emphasis are land and food sovereignty; women, gender and extractivism; labour and the transition away from damaging extractivism; post-extractivism agenda etc.
- We will work together, and in alliance with other organisations/initiatives doing similar work, to develop a global interactive map of struggles/resistances against extractivism
- We will make every effort to engage the labour movement in a dialogue about how to transition into a future based on a radically different extractivist model to create jobs that do not harm the natural environment
- There was a proposal to convene a global conference on extractivism, possibly running parallel to the World Economic Forum
- Intersect with other global processes related to corporate and state accountability.