

A SOUTHERN NGO SUMMIT TOWARDS JOHANNESBURG & BEYOND

ALGIERS, ALGERIA

March 16 - 17, 2002

ALGIERS DECLARATION

- Eradicate Poverty***
- Reinforce Human Rights***
- Establish Economic Justice***
- Provide Universal Social Safety Nets***
- Harness Globalization for the Benefit of All***
- Enable Community participation in Sustainable Economic Development***
- End Discrimination on basis of Race, Age, Gender, Ethnicity, & Religion***

The Southern NGO Caucus For Sustainable Development

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ALGIERS DECLARATION

We, the delegates of the Southern NGO Summit for Partnerships in Sustainable Development, representing thousands of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in developing countries of the world, met in Algiers on the 16th and 17th of March 2002. At the Summit we evaluated the first decade since the adoption of Agenda 21, described our present conditions, and proposed solutions and actions plans.

We declare that:

In the past decade very little progress has been made with respect to the eradication of poverty. However, we have witnessed the increase of war, genocide, and refugees, as well as the restriction of liberties. Intolerance and a lack of respect for diversities of cultures and political systems have become too common place. The elimination of racism, of ethnic and gender discrimination has not been adequately addressed.

Environmental degradation and destruction have not been arrested. The gap between the rich and poor, within and between countries, has widened. Debt commitments have continued to increase the burden of peoples and communities through the new processes unleashed by global regulations and trade agreements, like Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMS), General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS), and the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). Resources to implement Agenda 21 have not materialized and top-down international initiatives have failed to substantially improve the lives of millions of people.

There has been a lack of adequate provision for participation of independent representative of the peoples and communities-at-risk in developing countries, in international and regional fora, where decisions are being made, affecting diversity and plurality in everyday life in the South.

There is increasing concern about the promotion of genetically modified foods which will have grave impact on peoples=lives and production processes.

AIDS and HIV are a global threat to our communities and sustainable livelihoods and must be collectively dealt with. We further recognise that health has a direct correlation to sustainable development and national programs must be designed to provide for health for all.

Whereas:

These circumstances call for the creation of alternative strategies, master plans and actions plans by the NGO movements for Sustainable Development in developing countries in partnership with the other Major Groups, Civil Society Organizations, governments and international bodies,

We, therefore,

Commit ourselves, as NGOs of the South involved in Sustainable Development, to the vigorous pursuit of new alternatives for development that will lead to the implementation of the vision that follows:

We, the representatives of National and Regional Networks of the developing countries of the world that actively participated directly in the National and Regional Consultations and in the Multi-Regional Electronic Forums leading up to the Southern NGO Summit and present at the Summit in Algeria, do hereby also declare that we envision a world:

Where peace with justice prevails, where wars instigated to exploit the resources of the South cease, and where the Earth Charter and other culturally-diverse values frameworks, and the Indigenous Platform for Human Rights that adopted ethical foundations for human interaction, are considered;

Where wars no longer displace people not only from their roots but also their livelihoods, exploit the resources of the occupied, and violate human rights charters;

Where refugees are granted the right to return to their homelands, and that peace be provided with all the means for their well-being; where the occupied peoples are granted the right of self-determination so that they have complete sovereignty, access to resources, sustainable livelihoods and that their basic human rights are respected;

Where there is equality of opportunities for all, and racism and other forms of discrimination cease to be obstacles to sustainable development; where peoples and CSOs of developing countries of the world have the opportunity and the tools to participate effectively in sustainable economic and social development;

Where our communities and developing nations are seriously considered and respected as stakeholders deserving respect, security, and equal consideration of our interests;

Where gender is mainstreamed into the development process at all levels. Women must be considered as equal partners in all aspects of sustainable development efforts;

Where the world, including CSOs from the North, funding sources and United Nations agencies, recognize the rights of peoples and CSOs of developing countries to speak for themselves in all international fora, without manipulation and interference;

Where the CSOs, the communities and Major Groups that we represent are able to participate in the creation of action plans for the sustainable development of our communities, in collaboration with local, national and regional government authorities;

Where the CSOs, the communities and Major Groups that we represent, are able to develop working alliances, partnerships and linkages among ourselves, with other CSOs, and international institutions, that enable us to advance our respective agendas, while contributing to the elimination of poverty and conservation of the environment;

Where the International Financial Institutions include CSOs, based in developing countries and involved in Sustainable Development issues, as equal participants in development of economic models, and recognize them as legitimate sources of information and knowledge and implementing aspects for the elimination of poverty;

Where International and Regional Financial Institutions, UN agencies, private sources of funding and other donors support grass roots initiatives, like regional community development banks, which would be developed, owned and operated by the communities;

Where education becomes a fundamental human right and we develop programs with focus on education for sustainable development;

Where the north does not enrich itself at the expense of the south, through natural resource exploitation of the south;

Where sovereignty of our southern states is not undermined by the process of globalisation through the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and other international institutions.

We also endorse the Vision Statement of the Millennium Forum:

(as declared by 1,350 representatives of over 1,000 NGOs and other CSOs, from more than 100 countries, gathered at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York from 22 B 26 May 2000)

Our vision is of a world that is human-centered and genuinely democratic, where all human beings are full participants and determine their own destinies. In our vision we are one human family, in all our diversity, living on one common homeland and sharing a just, sustainable and peaceful world, guided by universal principles of democracy, equality, inclusion, voluntarism, non-discrimination and participation by all persons, men and women, young and old, regardless of race, faith, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity or nationality. It is a world where peace and human security, as envisioned in the principles of the United Nations Charter, replace armaments, violent conflict and wars. It is a world where everyone lives in a clean environment with a fair distribution of the earth's resources. Our vision includes a special role for the dynamism of young people and the experience of the elderly and reaffirms the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights -civil, political, economic, social and cultural.@

We endorse all the multi-regional position papers submitted and the outcomes of all the major groups assembled here in Algeria.

We affirm that the following Overarching Issues must be adequately addressed:

Living up to our Earth Summit commitments

We reaffirm that the WSSD agreements should not be based on re-negotiation of Agenda 21 but should focus on further implementation of Agenda 21. Emerging issues such as Racism, Capacity-Building for Southern CSOs, and emerging trade conflicts related to WTO and globalization, must be adequately resolved. Institutions, especially those in the north, should respect the ability of Southern CSOs to represent themselves and there must be reform of the aid system, so that more resources can be directly mobilized to implement action plans for sustainable development and the elimination of poverty.

Racism and Discrimination as Obstacles to Sustainable Development

Racism, in all its forms, is a serious impediment to sustainable development and people in the south, particularly African, African descendant, and Indigenous Peoples, and these aforementioned populations in the north, are disproportionately impacted by racism. The WSSD must address environmental racism, as it relates to poverty and its other manifestations. Environmental racism includes the trans-boundary shipment of toxic waste from the north to the south, the placing of toxic waste sites near particular populations, the double standards used in the extraction of natural resources which all lead to detrimental health, environmental, socio-cultural and economic problems, with profound and irreversible damage to land, air, water, and all living organisms and people.

Reparations

Colonialism- and slavery-related actions have resulted in, and continue to be the cause of, gross violations of human rights for the purpose of economic enrichment of the colonizers and enslavers, and have created long-lasting conditions that impede development. The concept of reparations must be recognized as one of the motivating forces for adequate financing of developing agendas of the countries and peoples that have suffered from colonialism and slavery.

Linkage of Financing for Development System to the UN

The failure of the Conference on Financing for Development to recommend greater linkage between WTO and the United Nations and, particularly, the Commission on Sustainable Development leaves open a serious defect that will continue to be an obstacle to sustainable development. The World Summit for Sustainable Development must address this issue.

Linkage of Outcomes from Social Summit and Other CSO Events to Sustainable Development

We endorse and support the positions developed in the Social Summit and urge the WSSD to include, in strong language, consideration of social and cultural issues as part of sustainable development. We consider social and cultural impacts to be the basis of a people-centered policy of development.

Southern NGO Major Group Participation in the Work of Major Groups

We support and encourage the efforts by Southern NGOs to organize regionally and in Multi-regional formations to participate in the work of, Women, Youth, Labor, Farmers, Local Authorities and Business as Major Groups.

Southern CSO Participation in International Fora

We condemn the practice of discriminatory funding between Northern and Southern CSOs. We also condemn conditionalities attached by funding agencies with regard to representation.

Southern NGO Participation in Government National and Regional Plans

The WSSD should encourage and support direct access to resources for capacity- building and participation of CSO national networks that are inclusive of Major Groups, in the preparation of national government action plans for Sustainable Development (NGAPSD).

Making Aid Programs Work in Support of NGAPSDs that include CSO Input

The WSSD should encourage greater effort on the part of foundations, international donors, and United Nations-related bodies and agencies, to focus on funding for government and CSO initiatives, that contribute to the successful implementation of national and regional government action plans, and development processes.

Capacity Building of SD CSOs with participation of Southern Professionals

UNDP must be given additional capacity-building resources to assist national networks of CSOs, to develop national and regional CSO action plans and initiatives. This should include resources to facilitate representation in regional and international fora.

CSO Access to Capital and Credit

Given the acknowledgement of the significant contributions of CSOs to the development process, and the expansion of the sector involved in sustainable development, governments and international institutions should encourage the development of surplus income-generating initiatives. Innovative mechanisms must be created to provide affordable access to capital and credit for existing initiatives of this type.

Community Based Development Banking

Given the history of racism and other forms of class and caste discrimination against groups of people, International Financing Institutions should be encouraged to support joint ventures, regional and national community-based development banking, initiated and organized by communities, especially discriminated and marginalized groups.

Adopted at the Southern NGO Summit in Algiers, Algeria, on March 17, 2002.