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A call for the campaign "Reclaim People's Dignity"

Thursday 24 September 2009, by [BELLO Walden](#), [CHENOY Anuradha M](#), [CHENOY Kamal Mitra](#), [LIM Paul Joseph](#), [ROUSSET Pierre](#), [SCHMIDT Johannes Dragsbaek](#) (Date first published: 16 September 2009).

Dear Friends,

Warm greetings!

We seek to start a campaign pursuing an agenda for transformative and institutional social protection as a democratic and human rights response to the current crisis.

Based on international human rights laws and instruments, to which most of our governments are signatories, this campaign, which we're calling "Reclaim People's Dignity," began to take shape after the caucus of poor people's movements at an Asia-Europe civil society summit last year in Beijing. After that, there has been considerable headway this year, especially in Asia. Now, the campaign is taking a step further—with a manifesto for a social protection initiative that is transformative and institutional.

The manifesto starts with a recognition that the current crisis presents the golden opportunity for us in the progressive movement to advance humane and democratic alternatives already embodied in conventions of the United Nations and International Labour Organisation.

Unlike development benefits from corporate-driven economies that ineffectively trickled down to the poor, the terrible effects of the crisis (principally joblessness) that has started in the financial sector have gushed out and poured down the poor, threatening to figuratively drown them in literal poverty, hunger, despair, and overall misery.

But this need not be the case. The time is ripe—as leaders of states and multilateral bodies search for the obvious as well as the underlying reasons behind the crisis, and for possible new frameworks of development—to convey our own concerns, analyses, and people-centered proposals.

The manifesto asserts that any discussion or debate on the crisis must begin with an acceptance that people have an inherent right to live with dignity, and that these basic human rights (to employment, food, and access to essential services particularly health, housing, water, education, and electricity) have been violated by a socio-economic system that considers human rights only as an afterthought.

Beyond the vital and practical demands we're making (for jobs, social protection, etc.), the campaign also seeks to address issues of equity, empowerment, and solidarity—essentials to democracy.

We seek to get everyone to the idea that we (state, business, labour, civil society) are all in this together, that the globalised economy has linked us together in more ways than economics (think global warming), and that our actions and inactions will affect our individual and collective future.

May we ask you to sign and endorse the manifesto and be actively involved in the campaign.

Warm solidarity,

Dr. Walden Bello

Dr. Anuradha Chenoy

Dr. Kamal Mitra Chenoy

Dr. Paul Joseph Lim

Pierre Rousset

Dr. Johannes Schmidt

See the manifesto: [Reclaim People's Dignity - Transformative Social Protection: A Democratic and Human Rights Response to the Crisis](#)
