

9th AEPF New Delhi preparatory conference on the crisis and people's alternatives: a report

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Contents

- [Introductory Session, 6 \(...\)](#)
- [Session I: Overall analysis of](#)
- [Session 1 \(Continued\)](#)
- [Session II: Sustainable Energy](#)
- [Second day, 7 August 2012](#)
- [Session I: Peace, Security and](#)
- [Session II: South-South \(...\)](#)
- [RESOLUTIONS](#)

SUMMARIZED REPORT of 9TH ASIA-EUROPE PEOPLE'S FORUM (AEPF) PREPARATORY CONFERENCE SERIES-SOUTH ASIA on ECONOMIC CRISES AND PEOPLES' ALTERNATIVES IN ASIA AND EUROPE

6-7 August 2012, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

Prepared by Dr. Khush-Hal S. Lagdhyan and Vineet Thakur
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi - 110067

Report: Two-day conference of the '9th Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF) Preparatory Conference Series - South Asia' on Economic Crises and Peoples' Alternatives in Asia and Europe held on 6-7 August, 2012, at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.

Five years ago, an economic bubble burst in the United States in the form of a sub-prime crisis leading to, what was described as, the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of 1930s. Today, the crisis has shifted its epicenter to Europe with no signs of it abetting. In such a scenario, when people across the world are reeling under capitalist onslaught while their governments are laying prostrate to capitalist interests, what options do the peoples' movements have? How do they fight back this offensive? What are the alternatives before us? What are the possibilities that these alternatives can be fructified? What are the potential challenges that these alternatives face? How do we advance a peoples' agenda while also being fully alive to the possibility of the tyranny of the alternatives? How do we forge solidarities that are not only transnational but also trans-regional? What can we learn in South Asia from experiences of movements situated at far off places like Europe?

These were some of the questions that stimulated this conference. But before these questions were discussed, it was also important to understand the ramifications of this crisis itself. Is it a crisis or multiple crises unfolding at the same time? The general understanding now is that there are multiple

crises involved here – political, financial, economic, ecological, energy and so on. How do they relate to each other? Do we need a single hybrid strategy or multiple strategies at multiple levels to tackle these crises? How can we broaden the understanding of each crisis in order to mainstream the marginalized in each discourse?

Besides, there are also questions about how these different crises pan out in different countries. What are the ways in which they can be tackled locally? Can they be divorced from other countries in the region? Can civil society movements in different countries in the region develop solidarities when most of them are deeply nationalist? What are the challenges these civil societies movements face in fashioning such solidarities?

Finally, the critical gaze also has to be inverted inwards. Can we speak of a Global South when there are pockets of affluence and arrogance within the so-called South and oppressed spaces in the so-called North? What does being ‘internationalist’ mean? How do we create solidarities – Should they be pan-regional or should we first only focus on the region? Can we think about generating regional solidarities in South Asia when war between India and Pakistan is always a great possibility?

These, and many such, questions were at the center of discussion in the two day conference.

Introductory Session, 6 August 2012

Prof. Anuradha Mitra Chenoy from Jawaharlal Nehru University welcomed delegates to the preparatory conference of the Asia Europe Peoples’ Forum – South Asia on the theme ‘Economic Crises and Peoples’ Alternatives’.

She noted that the conference was being organized at a time when multiple crises were confronting the peoples of Europe and Asia. Apart from the deepening financial and economic crisis which stemmed out of the neo-liberal structure of the current global economic order, one can simultaneously trace crises in energy, ecology, environment and politics. The last comes out a politics of inequality and a politics of insecurity stemming out of a politics of war and militarization. Concomitantly, the spaces of democracy are being squeezed every day and the social movements which attempt at a politics of inclusion and vision are being marginalized. Disconcertingly, we are witnessing reversal of the gains of the past that peoples’ movements had achieved.

Political leadership has shown an extreme lack of creativity, credibility and character and is hand-in-glove with the capitalist class. The people have been at the receiving end of rising inequity and insecurity. States and societies are increasingly being militarized in the name of enhancing security of the State, but in reality jeopardizing security of the peoples.

The international system is witnessing a decline of the traditional centers of power i.e. America and Western Europe. There are a slew of actors, collectively referred to as ‘emerging powers’ today, which are seen as the new stakeholders in the international system. However, it is fast emerging that elites in these countries also have hegemonic visions of foreign policy. They are more inclined towards mimicking the western model rather than exploring alternative possibilities and practicing emancipatory politics. The Global North-Global South is also fast losing its relevance as a binary which indicated the direction of oppression and repression. Instead there are oppressed people within Global North and oppressors within Global South. Moreover, the Global North is adopting strategies of co-option as well as containment towards the leading powers of the Global South. For example, vis-à-vis China, the United States is following a policy of military containment but financial cooperation, while vis-à-vis India, its policy was military co-option and financial containment. Against the BRICS, there is a concerted effort “to isolate Russia, to co-opt India, to contain China, to

leverage South Africa, and to use Brazil". The solidarity of the Global South is thus being fractured.

This situation, Prof. Chenoy stated, throws up a number of questions that need to be investigated more closely. What is the nature of relationship between the Global North and the Global South today, as they can no longer be separated with the traditional categories of metropole and periphery. What are emerging powers doing with their new found power? How are they connecting with the Global North? Are they being co-opted? Is the Global South being fractured? Is the postcolonial vision ending? What happened to Global South solidarity? How much pressure can peoples' movements exert on their countries to retain their linkages with the South as opposed to being co-opted by the North?

Amidst this, she reiterated the importance of a platform like AEPF which is the only permanent network forum linking movements of Asia and Europe. At a time, when there are concerted efforts being made by the ruling class to put curbs on civil society, crack down on any form of dissent and the middle ground of debate and discussion was getting smaller and smaller, the importance of such forums and the need for informed and vibrant debates was amplified.

Charles Santiago (MP, Malaysia), in his introductory speech, noted that AEPF was started 16 years ago in 1996 to bring together social movements, frontline communities and campaigning networks, and progressive NGOs, academics and parliamentarians across Asia and Europe on a common platform to discuss issues affecting peoples of these continents. The Forum was also envisioned as a platform for building and fostering solidarity among peoples from Asia and Europe. Today, it is the only continuing civil-society inter-regional network that connects people's movements across these two continents. In its short life, it has become a major outlet of people's voices that has an impact not only on the movements of people within these two continents but also globally. The first issue that was taken up by AEPF after its inception was the fight against water privatization. That issue today has snowballed into a robust global movement. Further, its initiatives in forming coalitions and initiatives against free trade agreements, transformative social protection, and participatory governance in pursuit of alternative regionalisms have contributed positively to creating and strengthening global networks on these issues.

He noted that peoples movements are facing new challenges everyday as States and Corporates think of devilishly ingenious ways to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few. They create and play on the psychosis of fear and scarcity. Giving example of the recent blackout that affected almost 600 million in India, he argued that this instance would now be used to justify nuclear energy and more nuclear reactors by the Indian government. While the debate on nuclear energy in South Asia is quite pronounced, it is surprising that even in Southeast Asia there was now a race for nuclear energy. Malaysia, he argued, was building two nuclear reactors. In this context, he proposed developing new caucus on energy in this meeting. The Caucus, he averred, would create a network on alternatives for energy which would provide critique of the prevalent sources of energy and also suggest how clean and safe alternative energy sources could be made feasible. He also informed that a caucus on food security was created by the AEPF network in Southeast Asia and a caucus on social protection was being planned by AEPF groups in Mekong Area. All these will converge in a meeting in Laos in October. The AEPF was also looking at the investment chapters of free trade agreements which are severe attacks on the sovereignty of nations as they result in complete subordination of governments to corporate.

Deliberating on the current global crisis, Santiago referred to a UNICEF report on the global crisis which revealed that as a result of the two economic crises in last five years, people in 60 developing countries are paying 80 percent more for food. This, he argued, was a pointer to how crises are created for business to make profit. Forty percent of workers worldwide were unable to find jobs; governments in 73 countries are reducing salaries of working class and an equal number of

governments are reducing subsidies on food and fuel. The Report comes up with many such revealing statistics which clearly establish that the neo-liberal order had proved disastrous for the people and there was an urgent need to upturn it.

He emphasized that through this forum the peoples of Asia and Europe wanted to convey to their governments that they wanted a different world. Given the fact that the crisis is becoming more and more entrenched, he was skeptic if the governments could actually think of genuine alternatives. At a time when the crisis was getting entrenched further, he placed the responsibility for providing alternatives on the civil society.

Session I: Overall analysis of European Crisis - Its Implications and Challenges to Europe and Asia

Prof. Anuradha Mitra Chenoy moderated the first session of the day. The session dealt with how the Global Economic Crisis, which started in 2007, has now shifted to Europe. Speakers from countries in Asia and Europe discussed how the crisis has impacted their domestic political, economic and social lives and debated what lessons could be drawn from the crisis. The session also assessed if the social movements in Asia and Europe were resilient enough to intervene in this crisis and discussed ways in which to strengthen peoples' movements to tackle the challenges that the crisis has thrown.

Pierre Rousset, a veteran social activist from France, began by pointing out that there is not one but multiple crises in Europe. The crisis is seen and experienced differently in different countries of Europe. However, just as this is a financial crisis as well as a crisis of overproduction, it is more crucially also a crisis of governance. He argued that this crisis of governance was indicative of the failure of the process of European integration. The European Union project was envisioned to create an organic European power in the world. As an alternative centre of power, against United States and Soviet Union, it was envisioned as a descendant to the former centrality of Europe to the world. However, in the 21st century, it faces many challenges - both external and internal. Externally, the emergence of China, India and other non-European powers has pushed EU into the background. More seriously, however, the political and economic challenges it faces internally are severely straining the integration process. The Euro Zone crisis has only accentuated this decline.

As Europe stumbles from one crisis to other, the roots of this failure can be extended back to 1986 when neo-liberalism was pushed into the centre of the integration process. Western Europe, he argued, was the 'fatherland of welfare state', but the bourgeoisie have led an organized attack on the State by actively championing the race to bottom thesis. As a result, today, European governments have the least power to govern. Along with the erosion of economic rights of people, even political rights are being denied to them in Europe. He claimed, "Political democracy doesn't exist anymore in Europe".

Peoples' movements have had a vibrant past in Europe. In the current scenario, with Europe plunging into gloom, some peoples' movements have come up which give a ray of hope. However, he humbled this optimism by expressing his deep sense of pessimism at how all the old peoples' networks have withered away. The Europe Social Forum was already dead and it was unclear as to who would organize and shepherd the new voices of resistance, which otherwise run the risk of fading out.

Prof. C. P. Chandrasekhar from Jawaharlal Nehru University underlined that five years after the Global Economic Crisis started it still persists with certain degree of geographical shift and intensity

from US to Europe. When we speak of this crisis today, it has branched into multiple crises – energy crisis, food crisis, political crises and so on. However, he limited his speech to identifying three separate elements of this crisis. The first was the financial crisis which originated as the US sub-prime crisis and spread to most countries barring a few. The second crisis is that of neoliberal growth itself which was premised on replacement of debt finance public expenditure with debt finance private expenditure. The third crisis is a crisis of public debt. The way the crisis is presented today, it is made to seem as if there is too much of debt accumulation on the part of governments, not private sector, in Europe, as in Greece and Spain. The fact however is that sovereign debt was accumulated to bail out private debts.

The accumulation of the public debt, he argued, was because the public sectors had to address in large measures a crisis which was created by the financial system premised on a certain kind of capitalism, which has always sustained itself through the proliferation of debt given to the private sector. It began to face crises since the late 1910s and through the decades, it has sustained itself by the creation of bubbles financed by public debt. There are only two ways in which this could be set right. First, setting right the balance sheets of the household sector and preventing the huge transfer from the state to the private sector. Second, the state should undertake expenditure to revive economies but simultaneously adopt parallel policies to prevent that expenditure from spilling over in the form of inflation. The first option, it is argued, is not feasible because the state, after transferring so much of money to the private sector, does not have more money to transfer to people in form of subsidies. On the second option, neo-liberal economists argue, that since all the economies are heavily indebted there is no more fiscal headroom available. Public debt is already high and state cannot spend more.

Prof. Chandrasekhar saw two problems with these arguments. First, public debt does not create a crisis. In Spain, public debt is not as high as Italy yet we have a debt crisis in Spain but not Italy. In any case, in Spain too public debt is only 8 per cent of the GDP. Second, state is not like private sector which seeks to earn what it spends. Rather, state can tax its population and earn. However, this issue is not spoken about because essentially it would mean taxing the rich which the latter would be uncomfortable with. If one looks at figures, it is remarkable how while the top 0.1 per cent rich in the US have increased their income 532 times from 1970 to 2008, there is a simultaneous huge collapse in taxes of close to 70 per cent marginal rate taxes of 34 per cent. Further, there is a huge increase in inequality meaning the rich have become richer. These clearly point to the fact that state can tax its rich more.

He also added that the state should not tax the capitalist class alone but also financial profits because financial profits have come to account for an increasingly large share of total corporate profits. Finally, he concluded by saying that today capitalism is in deep crisis, not just in US and Europe but also in emerging economies such as India and China, and there must emerge ‘a Roosevelt of tomorrow’.

Questions/Comments

- The social movements in Europe have not been defeated completely. There have been cases of some social movements winning cases against corporations and governments in the regional human rights courts. To state a blanket ‘Europe Social Forum is dead’ would be to undermine the possibilities for springing up alternatives that peoples’ movements in Europe still have. The peoples’ movements in Spain are still ongoing.
- In the meetings such as AEPF and of other social forums, there seems to be a general reluctance to discuss social movements which do not speak in the language and tone that suits the sensibilities of the audience. There is a need to engage with all sorts of social movements.

- The preceding point is especially important given the fact that social movements are also developing a new vocabulary of their own, invariably by a hit and trial method of the new generation. The old generation may not be able to comprehend them and thus is dissatisfied with them. However, there is always a need for new generation of activists to come up and shape a new future.
- There needs to be more focus on forms of resistance by the people, what the limits of our own instruments and instrumentalities are, and what the way forward is. There needs to be focus on charting out the ways of intervention.
- Arab states seem to be absent from any understanding of Asia even within the AEPF.
- In the Global North, especially in Europe, there is a welfarist model that can still be strengthened.
- Questions about democratic accountability in Europe are not adequately addressed. Of the three major institutions of EU, democratically elected European parliament is very weak, while the European Council which constitutes a Secretariat is disproportionately strong.
- Lessons need to be learnt from Iceland. The country did not follow the neo-liberal model that was preached and prescribed to it. Instead, the people fought and kicked out the Parliament and brought in a new Parliament. As a result, Iceland is becoming very successful.
- Instead of bailing out the banks, what if we increase the social security net as has been done in Latvia?
- Women are still absent from the debates about the financial crisis. How do we link the shrinking of women space in subsistence economies to the present economic crisis?
- How is the impending European meltdown going to affect the employment market in the Third World countries?
- What happens when China manages the Global economy in future?

Responses

Pierre Rousset:

Rousset replied that his pessimism towards social movements in Europe was tactical, although he was still strategically optimist. He explained that partly because our understanding of social crisis is old-modeled, given the fact that Europe has not had a crisis since World War II, we are unprepared for a new one whose dynamics are completely new. The discussions we should have should be about finding new ways to tackle a new crisis, however, he felt, let down that most discussions are usually set under the old paradigm. Rousset said, it was the unpreparedness for the new crisis that made him sober in his assessment.

He admitted that he was “one of the relic of the defeated, deeply defeated generation”. This meant that there is clearly a break from the past. The new generation does not have anything to take on from the past, which could be both a good thing as well as a bad thing. Good because the new generation is not tied up with old notions and language, but bad because they can’t also learn any positives from the past which would help them to face the struggle ahead. The current generation of activists does not form organizations, whether in trade unions, political parties or big social movements. They do not try to build permanent and sustained organizations which hampers building up of a lasting front. However, in terms of issue areas, the new generation has widened the agenda

by combining ecological, social, and political and identity issues. There needs to be some sort of an inter-generational dialogue.

Charles Santiago:

He argued that the world was witnessing an important moment in history when most of the leaders of the world are essentially drawn from investment banking and consultancy firms like Goldman Sachs and Mackenzie at a time when the Global Economic Crisis by very much created by such firms. The newly appointed European Central Bank Chairman, the Prime Ministers of Italy and Spain and previous Prime Minister of Greece, all come from Goldman Sachs. The appointment from IMF for managing the Crisis in Europe is also from Goldman Sachs, former US Treasury Secretary and the current one too come from Goldman Sachs. So, we have Goldman Sachs managing the market price and global economy. In Southeast Asia, the new finance and trade minister from Indonesia is also from Goldman Sachs. The Indonesian government is advised by Goldman Sachs. It becomes therefore clear that Goldman Sachs enacts a great influence on how governments think, or rather dictate what governments think. As a lawmaker in Malaysia, Santiago felt, that governments had lost their own ability to think and defend the political and economic lives of its people. "Thinking", he said, "is now privatized".

Secondly, he observed that the only way to come out of the crisis was to push for an equitable income distribution. In order to increase the spending power of the people and thus resuscitate the economy, it was imperative that wealth was equally distributed. This would call for increase in minimum wages, a drastic restructuring of the labor market, and serious engagement with questions of distribution in thinking about governments' approaches to managing resources or privatization.

Prof. C. P. Chandrasekhar:

In his response, Chandrasekhar stated that the question is not whether capitalism can 'create or generate' another bubble to get itself out of this crisis, in fact through the constant sermonizing about monetary easing, it is already doing it. It is another matter whether it is evicting itself out of crisis or entrenching itself more. Today, the developing countries too, because of their entrenchment in the financial system, are witnessing the symptoms that were visible in the developed world.

Here, he emphasized, Asia can learn from Europe. The 1997 Asian crisis was a result of contagion however today the structures that develop the contagion are also visible in Asia. The kind of fragility that was visible in Europe is also becoming manifest in Asia and steps need to be taken before this blows up. The Asian countries too have a large accumulated private debt today, interventions against which will need to be taken otherwise the crisis in countries with completely different per capita incomes could be worse. Here, he underlined, popular movements, civil society organizations, democratic fronts and other such organizations should intervene before it gets worse.

Session 1 (Continued)

Chair, Nizamudin Nizamani stated that we were living in times of oppression both economic and political, and in this lieu, there is a strong need to connect social movements from India and Europe.

Hari Roka from Nepal stated that the Eurozone crisis has had its repercussions on the countries of the Global South as well. Nepal, for instance, was undergoing a huge crisis because Nepali exports are not being purchased in Europe, and this leads to other problems like rising unemployment. Quoting a report published in the Guardian, he stated that the crisis will not be over in another 20 years. Moreover, sovereign debt will only increase. This would have an adverse impact on Nepali

economy.

However, the crisis in Nepal cannot be merely blamed on Europe. Rather, just as Europe, in Nepal too the crisis is structural emanating from faulty economic foundations. He stated that from 1950 to 1984, Nepal followed a protected economy model. This model however only benefitted the landlords as adequate land reforms were not made. In fact, in the 1960s the government had embarked on a policy of land reforms but they proved to be only cosmetic as they only distributed land from one dominant class to another. During this period, Nepal's economy grew at 2.1 per cent. From 1985 onwards, Nepal's government has followed a neo-liberal model, continued even by the Maoist government. The growth rate has been 3.1 per cent but this is exceeded by Nepal's population growth.

Lack of adequate land reforms has meant that there is no capital formation at the grassroots. Most people do not own a land and thus work as bonded labourers. They do have access to education and basic amenities and thus cannot be expected to help in capital formation. Without capital formation, Nepal has to depend on foreign aid for all its needs. 70 percent of Nepal's development budget comes in form of international aid. With such a deeply dependent economy, Nepal can never become self-sufficient and this plagues not only its economic but political future also.

However, this also means that for a structural economic change to happen, political change will have to precede it. In a situation with Nepal's political future is stalemated, this seems unlikely.

Farooq Tariq from Pakistan recounted the fact the even as the people of Pakistan fought a 9 years battle against military rule of General Musharraf, the civilian government in Pakistan has consistently betrayed that legacy. The government led by Pakistan's Peoples Party (PPP) has bowed its head in front of the global capitalist bloc led by the IMF, World Bank, MNCs and corporates. The government is neck deep in corruption and the people are suffering a neoliberal onslaught, political, economic and military. The situation has worsened so much that the ongoing debate in Pakistan is if we should back to the military government. The deep sense of agony and frustration among the people has once again created a space for the right wing forces to emerge. The economic crisis in Europe has also contributed in some ways to the emergence of right wing forces. The crisis has fanned a major xenophobic tendency in Europe of which the immigrants are the targets. This is leading to an identity crisis among the immigrants, who feeling unwanted in their adopted home are clinging hard to their old identities. This is making these immigrants very conservative, and they are contributing to the right wing, fundamentalist agenda in Pakistan in cash, kind and personnel.

The crisis of governance in Pakistan is also to a large extent due to western imperialism. Since the beginning of war on terror in 2003, in FATA alone, NATO as well as Pakistani forces have conducted 5500 jet sorties and 300 drone attacks. Almost 100000 Pakistani armed forces and 40000 frontier constabulary are deployed in the area. The conflict has caused about 30000 deaths and over 1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Pakistan economy is on a nose dive. In 2008, the Pakistani rupee was pegged to dollar at 66 to 1, today it is 95 to 1. Pakistan has a trade deficit of \$4.25 billion every year, most of it with Europe and America. Foreign direct investment is plummeting and in last one year alone, it has gone down by 62.5 per cent. In absolute terms, it is less than \$1 billion for this year. Pakistan has also piled up a loan of \$62 billion, and Pakistan pays more money back for loans than it gets the FDI. Last year, Pakistan paid \$2.53 billion as loans to various international financial agencies. In 2010, when 1/5 of Pakistan was devastated by floods, Pakistan had to live up to its loan commitments and repay the loan even at that difficult time. This clearly shows that Pakistan economy is further and further being entrenched into a *cul de sac* of a loan cycle.

Urging the left wing progressive forces to intervene and come up with an alternative agenda, Tariq argued that if Pakistan is allowed to go this way, there is a very strong chance that right wing forces would be back at the helm.

Nimalkha Fernando from Sri Lanka explained to the audience the effect of the global crisis on Sri Lankan economy. Sri Lanka, she informed, had followed a free market model since 1977. However, given the sensibilities of the government in power the terms used for it differed. So while from 1977 to 1994, free market economy was used to refer to the Sri Lanka economic paradigm, when the Sri Lanka Freedom party came to power, with the backing of the left, the terminology used was 'Globalization with a human face'. In the present context, a more jingoistic 'economy our way' appears in government discourses. The character of that economic model however does not differ any way from the free market model.

The global economic crisis did not affect the war-time Sri Lanka. In fact, from 2005-2009, Sri Lanka benefitted from the war economy as many countries like India, China and others assisted Sri Lanka in the name of war against terrorism. The growth rate during these years was projected to be a healthy 7-8 per cent (excluding war affected areas), which compared with the Indian economic growth rate. Unemployment was said to be decreasing and economic indicators were healthy. However, in real terms, this growth was spurious. The employment generated was mostly through recruitments into the military. Vast agricultural lands in the north and the east were appropriated by the government and ravaged in war. Productivity was low and productive work could not be done. External debt kept on increasing and today Sri Lanka has an external debt on \$8.6 billion. Despite this, Sri Lanka is currently negotiating a \$2.6 billion bailout with the IMF. The growth rate estimates for Sri Lanka have also begun to come down and projections for this year are 6.75 per cent.

The government meanwhile is not doing anything for the people. It is not investing in the internally displaced persons and local infrastructure, devastated during war, is not being built. Instead, the government is engaging in white collar criminal activities as important government offices are filled with cronies or relatives of the President.

Nevertheless, the resistance from the people is increasing.

Anita Kelles-Viitanen from Finland spoke on the lessons that were to be learnt from the crisis in Europe. She pointed out that the crisis is neither a crisis of Europe, nor a crisis of the Banking system. But more generally, it was a crisis of paradigm. The neo-liberal model is no longer the old productive and industrial capitalist system, but the one in which financial capitalism rules. "In this system," she said, "financialisation is no more just investing in productive firms but owning them and governing them according to its rules. It is not interested in anything but to make profit, and preferably quick. Successful companies are not necessarily kept alive but chopped into bits for sale. Labour is a tool in its stock-games. Increasing jobs is not rewarded by the stock markets but shedding them!" Similarly, she noted that climate had also become an object of financialization. More disconcertingly, basic necessities of human life, water, food and care are also being financialized as private firms are engaged in massive land grabs, privatization of water and health care. Although some subsidy still comes from States and the European Union even for private sector companies for public and essential services, the multinational companies are not contributing anything since they operate from tax havens and evade paying taxes to the governments.

This is increasingly becoming apparent to the people in Europe that the neo-liberal system is bankrupt. This opens an opportunity for social groups in Europe to push forward alternative ideas and visions. She noted that the European civil society had prepared a five point roadmap in 2011 which suggested dealing with public debt crisis, radical downsizing of the financial sector, reversing of austerity policies, a new green deal for large investments to support ecological transition towards

sustainability, and expansion of democracy at all levels with citizen's participation in decision making.

Finally, she called for implementation of a new public service model. It is to be based on four principles: i) democratic citizenship with active role of people in designing and monitoring of the services; ii) participation by people and civil society organisations; iii) humanism based on people's needs and rights; and iv) recognition of social nature of service delivery where all care situations are seen as social interaction and not cold economic activity, where people are objects at the whims of the market.

Questions/Comments

- What can be done to control the role of International Financial Organizations like IMF, World Bank and the ADB in putting conditionalities on the poor countries?
- In discussing the energy crisis in Pakistan, a mention also needs to be made of the attempt by the Americans and the Europeans to sell nuclear reactors to Pakistan.
- Prof. Kamal Mitra Chenoy made a short comment about China. China has the form of socialist polity, since it is led by the communist party, has a politburo, and officially follows a Marxist-Leninist thought. However, it is not a socialist economy because it has a very large private sector. It has not gone outwardly for neoliberal reforms although it invests heavily in Africa and has donated \$43 billion for the European Fund. It is also not a democracy and civil society oppression is well known. Further, there are still raging questions of nationality in Tibet, Xinjiang and Mongolia. However, it is not an ordinary capitalistic society. China is quite ingenuous in changing policies to adjust to the world situation.
- The issue of illicit money transfer from developing countries from Bangladesh, India and Nepal should also be addressed. It is being reported that US \$ 1.56 billion has been transferred from Bangladesh alone.
- FTAs which are being signed in the region and even with the ASEAN will be another important point for meeting like this. FTA which is currently being negotiated between India and Europe is going to increase problems. The kind of structures which led to the economic crisis in Europe will be now pushed to India through such FTAs. There is a push for liberalization of banking sector in India. It is the regulatory structure of the banking sector which so far has prevented the European type of crisis in India. Therefore, we need to have a very big alliance of Asian movements and Asian campaigns against these kinds of FTAs which are being pushed in this region.
- The opposition between religion and socialism is the old way of looking at religion and its potential to bring change. As evident in the recent Arab spring, Islam is creatively being used by people to oppose capitalist regimes. These synergies between Islam and the Left should also be recognized.
- Another comment made on the relationship between religion and resistance differed with the previous assertion. Arab spring parties are not opposing capitalism; they are opposing western cultural and western domination. Most of the parties heading the movement are very much capitalistic and connected with American imperialism on the issue of capitalism.
- It is very high time to realize that what Europe, Italy and the US are going through will soon be replicated in China. China has manipulated its figures over a period of time. It is already facing housing bubbles of which Beijing is already showing signs of. China's revenue figures, currency devaluation, and prices of the land are distorted. Therefore, China should not be hailed as a model. It won't lead us anywhere.

- The Global South should collectively decide not to pay back the illegitimate debts. Anti-debt campaigns around the world should be concretized.
- In 1980s, the European trade union movements had strongly argued for linking social clauses to trade in the global South. The suggestion made was that whenever there is any TRIPs, FTAs or any agreement, social clauses on unionization, wages etc. must be inserted. This unfortunately was opposed not just by the capital, but also by the nationalist trade unions also in the South. This ultimately proved suicidal for the Southern trade unions because small unorganized unions have now taken over and no safety nets are left over to the workers in these organizations. The Asia-Europe movement must again focus on this question and take up the issue of tying social clauses to trade agreements for its future campaigns.
- Chinese capitalism is one of the worst state capitalism in the world. The government machineries and bureaucracy use their coercive powers to make money. The government machineries including Chinese bureaucracy, police and educational departments run their own businesses. Chinese educational departments run their own schools to make money, and Chinese police runs their own private security agencies to make money.
- China is biggest carbon emission country in the world. Though China's per capita carbon is very low but there is a great inequality in this. It has a class character.
- There should be opposition to the US in opposing its agenda on China; however we should be also very careful about Beijing consensus or the China Model.
- Discussion should also focus on the ways in which human rights issues could be raised in negotiations between global North and global South since the states in the Global South are very sensitive on the issue.

Responses

Hari Roka:

He emphasised that in South Asia 60-80 per cent households are living below poverty line. Our motto should be to raise the capacities of these people and for that we require a new programme, a new philosophy to. Here, we would need to borrow from both capitalism and socialism.

Farooq Tariq:

Tariq stated that we need to realize that all the governments in South Asia are unanimous or in full agreement on implementing neoliberal agenda and are staunchly in favour of privatization. It has resulted in poverty, unemployment and insecurity in the region and total regional domination of the imperialist forces. We require a combined effort to fight these forces.

He differed on the issue of finding synergies between Islam and socialism. He contended that Islam cannot be used to oppose capitalism because Islam and capitalism believe in same economic philosophy of private property. In Pakistan, the religious parties are the strongest opponents of land reforms and the land reforms in Pakistan have been declared 'non-Islamic' by the Islamic court.

In Pakistan particularly, we could see that most of the Islamists were brought up by the imperialist forces in 1980s. The Islamists today oppose imperialists only because the latter stopped giving them money. It would be naive to suggest that Islamic fundamentalists are anti-imperialist or anti-capitalists. Therefore, we need to oppose both, religious fundamentalism and capitalism. Moreover, a state should not be a religious state; it should be secular in its credentials. Religion needs to be separated from the state for the development of society.

Nimalkha Fernando:

On the issue of human rights and linking social clauses to trade agreements, she informed that Sri Lanka had a GSP Plus tax concession, which came from Europe. The civil rights activists lobbied at the UN and the EU against this, pressing them to make the Sri Lankan government to sign human rights treaties first. In response, the Sri Lankan government resorted to calling the civil society as imperialists and traitors and even launched physical attacks on civil society members.

She noted that, unfortunately, the US which had passed a resolution in Geneva calling for war crimes investigations still continues to give tax concessions to Sri Lanka, although the EU has withdrawn them. The US also still continues to have very strong bilateral trade agreements with Sri Lanka. So while talking about introducing social clauses, such issues, she said, had to be kept in mind.

She also stated that the rise of xenophobia in Europe should also be looked at seriously. This relates directly to the issue of rights of migrant workers and prevalent Islamophobia in Europe. The politics of exclusion and racism is leading to the rise of communal politics in Europe. The rise of the rightwing is a global challenge today, most prominently in South Asia.

Anita Kelles-Viitanen:

She averred that the issue of human rights is very important. However, today there are strong global as well as regional human rights mechanisms and bodies which have been strengthened over the years. These platforms can be creatively used to raise and address questions of human rights. She also noted that while talking about debt we would also need to look at the other side of it, which is that money is actually being flown to tax heavens. From India money is going to Mauritius. That is why we have less money to overcome poverty, and plan pro-poor schemes etc. Therefore, sustained campaigns are required to stop the out flow of money and to bring it back to the country.

Session II: Sustainable Energy

*While chairing the session, noted activist, **Kavita Srivastava**, in her introductory remarks noted that the right to dissent was under severe challenge in whole of South Asia and forums like AEPF are strong assertions against this onslaught of the state across South Asia. The session witnessed wide range of discussions on the issue of energy security. Problematising how the debate on energy security was securitized, the speakers discussed how the debate should also incorporate marginal voices. Debating how access to energy was governed by capitalist mode of production, proposals about making access to energy a 'right' were advanced. Further, the session also addressed questions about how energy crisis was fanning the rivalry between India and Pakistan. Finally, the future of alternative energy resources was discussed.*

Rokeya Kabir from Bangladesh was invited to be the first speaker of the session. She began by pointing out the whole debate on energy has been securitized to the extent that energy security, depleting fossil fuel reserves, volatile global oil prices and continued global economic instability have been firmly placed at the centre of any discussion on energy. In contrast, the issue of energy poverty – the inability to most people on the planet to get access to clean energy – has been completely marginalized. When it comes to the issue of energy for people, the debates do not go beyond 'electricity for all', while in reality the issue of energy access ought to address the equally crucial, if not more, issue of access to clean energy. She informed that while 1.3 billion people around the world do not have access to electricity, more than double that number, which is 40% of the world's population, continues to rely on traditional biomass for cooking and heating. Not only do

these traditional energy sources emit harmful carbon and led to depletion of forests, they also have an immeasurable impact on the health of the household, especially women. The inefficiency of these energy sources also means that they lead to increase in workload of women thus reducing their time for productive and reproductive work and does not allow them to enjoy leisure time. In this regard, she also pointed out the even renewable energy was not necessarily gender-neutral. Nevertheless, she reposed her faith on the possibility that development of technologies can flatten the field where women can take advantage of better technologies of energy generation.

A more holistic debate on energy must thus include key issues like (a) universal access (b) equity (in terms of bridging the gap between urban and rural users; availability of energy supply and access to services as well as addressing gender differences in access to and usage of energy) (c) reliability (d) affordability (pricing and subsidies) and (e) appropriate and adequate supply. She called for a bottom-up approach to energy planning which aims to mainstreaming gender considerations into energy policies and addresses the huge disconnect between calls for inclusive development and the lopsided growth in energy consumption that leaves too many poor people behind. A revealing indicator of the latter is that only 11 percent of the world's population in the Global North produces half of all greenhouse gas emissions.

Tom Kucharz, civil society activist from Spain, stressed that access to energy is very much related to capitalist form of production. The core-periphery relationship exists even in terms of energy production-consumption patterns. In this division of labour, some countries are given the role of source suppliers while others consume it. The countries of the Global North exploit the countries of the South and control access to energy through the vast militaries of the former. One can also note that important technological innovations are taking place within military structures, largely because it allows these militaries to create new control regimes. Thus, the energy consumption patterns around the world are extremely lopsided, raising even moral and ethical questions. For example, Spain alone consumes as much energy as the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa put together.

By 2030, EU will be completely dependent on external resources of energy. This would have huge implications for the Global South as Europe would use imperialist and militarist ways to satiate its own energy needs. The fossil-fuel energy production-consumption that EU and America has adopted is greatly responsible for climate change. More than 350,000 people die every year of climate change. Clearly, this also relates to issues of human rights. It is even more pathetic because while EU exploits people at the margins, it gives 360 billion euro subsidy on import of fossil fuel.

Tom, therefore, stressed that we need to think of energy as a right. In this regard, democratization of the energy sector is the key. EU should stop its exploitative resource extraction, and in fact pay back the economic and ecological debt it owes to the exploited countries. A concerted, mobilized effort needs to be started within Europe and outside by the people. It took more than 30 years of peoples struggle in Germany to gain success against nuclear power. Similarly, it might take some time but a peoples' movement can force governments to amend themselves.

Farrukh Sohail Goindi, the former minister from Pakistan, acknowledged that his expertise was on matters of peace and security and he felt awkward to be speaking on energy. As a layman, however, to him the energy crisis not only affected the normal lives of people and economic life of the country as a whole, but it has a more insidious affect on the psychology of the people. Long electricity cuts have fostered a sense of frustration leading to Pakistani society becoming an intolerant society.

In Pakistan, the energy crisis is a result of the politics between the IPPs and the government. In their tussle, it is the people who have 'become shuttlecock between IPPS and the State'. Moreover, the right wing takes advantage of this frustration and directs it towards India by claiming these problems occur because of India's unjustified stance on river waters between the two countries.

He highlighted the fact that without regional cooperation many of the South Asia problems could not be solved, as they are interconnected. Regional cooperation therefore was necessary. More generally, he said, Pakistan is currently lacking a coordinated peoples' movement. The civil society in Pakistan is not fulfilling its function of providing an intellectual alternative. He called up the intellectuals to come over this intellectual crisis and share the responsibility.

Praful Bidwai from India asserted that in order to address the question of climate change, we have to holistically look into questions of energy. Whenever the question of energy is raised, usually the discussion focuses on the supply side of energy and even in that there is an overemphasis on electricity. Electricity, in fact, caters to only one-third of the primary energy consumption around the globe. The question of energy, he argued, needs to be looked at from a comprehensive angle in which other activities in which energy is consumed, such as cooking, transportation, heating and cooling of our surroundings, industries and so.

Thirty per cent of the world population today is energy deprived. The traditional fuel used in homes for lighting and cooking such as kerosene oil wastes a lot of energy. The need is surely to move into more efficient energy sources such as electricity. Nuclear energy, which was hailed as the efficient alternative, is finally giving in to other new renewables. In fact, three years ago, the installed capacity of new renewables, excluding electricity produced from hydroelectric projects, exceeded nuclear energy around the world. From its peak in 17 percent, nuclear energy has come down to 11 percent. Nuclear energy is being rejected around the world by markets, banks, insurance companies as well as the people. It is now being realized that nuclear energy is not only dangerous – Fukushima has brought that reality to fore – but also extremely costly. There is a five-fold increase in the capital cost of a nuclear power plant in the last decade.

There is an undergoing renewable revolution. Renewable energy today is the fastest growing energy sector and contributes to about 18 per cent of primary energy consumption needs. In fact, in Germany this figure is about 50 per cent. In India, renewables are growing at a rate of 30 per cent. Wind energy is the fastest growing source of energy. Moreover, solar energy is fast becoming competitive. The cost of solar cells have fallen incredibly to about \$1.3 per peak watts from about \$10 sometime ago. When it reaches \$1, solar cells will become competitive with natural gas. The promise is enormous.

Thus, it is imperative that steps are taken to give initial subsidy to renewable power, until it becomes competitive with other sources. Moreover, subsidies on electricity to the rich have to be cut down drastically. There has to be decentralization of energy grids, in order to avert blackouts like the one witnessed recently in India. And finally, we also need to focus on energy efficiency.

Questions/Comments

- In Southeast Asia, countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Cambodia, Philippines, and Burma are looking at having between 2-5 or more nuclear power plants. While there is so much of focus on nuclear energy in South and Southeast Asia, revolution in renewable energy is not much discussed. Why?
- How do we best utilize the abundant renewable energy resources, such as wind, solar, water, oil, and coal etc, which are in abundance in some of the Southeast Asian and South Asian countries? How do we go for a comprehensive energy policy?
- Is it correct that 40 per cent of all energy used globally is related to the military apparatuses of the countries? Even if it is not as huge but is still a very substantial amount, and we would need to consider that question of energy and demilitarization are interlinked.

- In India over the last 20 years there has been substantial increase in the generation of electricity. Is it true that the number of un-electrified villages has remained the same?
- Is it possible that we can reach to a common understanding of sustainable energy?
- The peoples' movements in India have shown an inspirational lead in fighting against nuclear energy. The level of knowledge, the level of mass participation and the range of spheres in which it has emerged is absolutely exemplary. Jaitapur, Koodankulam are commendable examples of peoples' struggle and this must be applauded.
- The question of waste management needs to be put far more centrally on the agenda of peoples' movements.
- There ought to be strict rationing of energy for hazardous industries such as mining, bauxite extraction, chemical pesticides and other products which are used for military purposes. Also, subsidies for profiteering industries, which are hazardous to the environment and humanity as a whole, ought to be stopped.
- While there is almost a consensus against building big dams, micro or small dams are hardly discussed. As the speaker from Sri Lanka discussed, such small dams and reservoirs are also dangerous for the environment. This needs to be further investigated, and more discussions with technical insights into the issue need to be organized, in order to build a sustained opposition to such dams.
- In Pakistan, the constant tussle between the government and the IDPs has led to the suffering of people. The only way to address the issue is to nationalize these IDPs under workers' control.
- The politics of water between India and Pakistan in which Pakistan constantly accuses India of stopping its water is a serious issue. Could the panelists explain if it is only a whipping of rhetoric by Pakistani politicians or India is actually playing a political game?
- In sustainable development, 'sustainable' is not adequately defined. It should include equitable distribution, accessibility, affordability within our present level of technical knowledge and available global situation. Also, issues such as gender issues, poor peoples' issues, issue of marginalization, urban-rural divide, caste issues, and depletion of ecology ought to be included in order to bequeath an equitable future for our succeeding generations.

Responses

Tom Kucharz:

In response to the question about alternatives for energy, he highlighted that in Europe, community based energy alternatives have been advanced since 1970s. Reports on such alternatives are prepared by activists, often anonymous, and then civil society organizations work with governments to implement such plans. The peoples' movements have taken advantage of technical knowledge and expertise to convince governments that alternative energy plans are possible. What is needed today is that such ideas should be able to travel across places and movements around the globe should be able to share notes to build up a strong movement for alternative energy. He proposed that free available technology could be shared by social movements with each other by merely sharing them over internet.

On the issue of waste management, he stated that many local alternatives were available. Many companies in South Korea were recycling organic waste, linking it to waste water management and

producing energy. This shows that not only are there alternative cycles but that even capitalists are aware of them.

He also raised that issue of agro-ecology. He pointed out that many huge dams in India consume highly productive agricultural areas. Resultantly, the people of these productive agricultural areas are being displaced to dry and less productive areas where they have to use water pumps to irrigate dry land. This requires huge electricity. According to some figures, at worldwide level between 20-25 per cent of electricity consumed in industrial agriculture sector is associated with water cycle and water pumps. He argued that agro-ecology and food sovereignty are linked to this dimension, and if these issues are adequately addressed, the amount of energy consumption could also be enormously reduced.

He called for denunciation of the European Common Agriculture Policy at the AEPF meeting in Laos and its replacement with a call for Food Sovereignty and Agro-Ecology.

Praful Bidwai:

He conceded that there was a strong nuclear lobby in many countries of the Global South. However, he emphasized that the opposition to nuclear energy is becoming stronger and stronger in countries like Malaysia, Cambodia and Vietnam. In Thailand and Sri Lanka, the fight has already been won. The fight is to educate the public about the inappropriateness of nuclear power, its high costs, its enormous long term problems, particularly in nuclear waste, and its potential for catastrophic accidents. Given that the world has already had five huge nuclear accidents, at this rate a Fukushima or Chernobyl is averaged every eight years in 400 odd reactors of the world. An official estimate, calculated in Germany, has placed the economic damage from a nuclear accident at 6-8 trillion Euros which is twice the GDP of the world's third biggest economy, Germany.

In India, the noteworthy aspect about resolute anti-nuclear campaigns Jaitapur, Koodankulam or Fatehabad is that they are not led by any political parties. The movements like Koodankulam are actually self-supporting powerful campaigns. He called for bringing all the movements together to launch a solid political solidarity reaction in support of these campaigns. To lose, he said, is not an option.

Although he did not have the statistics about how much percentage of total consumption is used for military purposes, he stated it was very unlikely that military used about 40 percent, as asked. The figure he felt would be significantly lower. To another question, he responded that India has doubled its power generation capacity over the past decade; the numbers of un-electrified villages has decreased only very slightly. More importantly, drawing attention towards the official definition of 'electrification', he said that a village is considered to be electrified if only 14 per cent of its households have a power connection, which of course does not mean they get power. In reality, at least 40 per cent of all Indian households have no electricity. This means 500 million people in India are still without electricity, which is actually a crime against humanity. This number was about 50 per cent 10 years ago, but has come down to 40 per cent now.

Therefore, our emphasis here should be on equity, de-centralized generation of consumption, vigorous promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency without which, he argued, the energy crisis would not be managed.

He also suggested various other measures to promote agro-ecology. Stopping the promotion of supermarkets, such as Walmart, which enormously increase food wastage, discontinuing with using extremely chemical and energy intensive methods of agriculture, moving towards low input, low water consumption and local eco-friendly methods in agriculture, were some of the measures he suggested.

On the question of energy exchange between India and Pakistan, he noted that there is a bright prospect for trade in energy from India to Pakistan. In several parts of India, there are vast surpluses in energy which are severely mismanaged, so much so that the transmission and distribution losses, which ought not to exceed 2 per cent, are 28 per cent in India. A major overhaul of our energy policy that would check the theft of power, look into non-collection of bills, stop and protest irrational decisions of certain states which give free power for agriculture purposes, stop the practice of fixed rate for per horse power per pump, is required. Then only the trade between India and Pakistan can take place smoothly. He concluded by saying that pricing would also need to be restructured in which the rich should be charged three-four times to what the poor are charged for consumption of electricity.

Hemantha Withanage:

He noted that overconsumption and overproduction both were problems for sustainable energy. At the UN, a process is underway to chalk out sustainable development goals for which the inputs of civil society will be taken.

He stated that micro-hydro, mini hydro projects or run of the rivers dams were also very harmful to the flora and fauna of the dams sites leading to deforestation, soil erosions, and crop damages. Rivers have become dry. In India, some rivers have more than 300 mini hydro projects on them. He suggested that every country should conduct studies to ascertain the environmental impacts of small, mini hydro projects.

He also cautioned against too easily buying into the 'alternative' tag. In an example, he revealed that it was believed that the use of CFL bulbs would lower the energy consumption nearly up to 80 per cent. However, now studies have shown that each bulb contains 0.5 mg to 5 mg of mercury. The CFL bulb plants dumps thousands and thousands of bulbs in their vicinity when recent studies have shown that even 5 mg of mercury is enough for destroying about 20 acres area of a lake. The efficiency of CFL bulbs is also questionable, as most of them are cheaply made in China. In some countries, the governments are trying to minimize the hazards caused by these bulbs by using mercury collecting machines to collect the mercury waste of these bulbs. He thus argued that while various kinds of alternative energy methods are being proposed, there are environmental costs attached to even these. In the longer run, the only way out is to change our life style.

Second day, 7 August 2012

Session I: Peace, Security and Demilitarization

*In her introductory remarks, the chair **Sapna Pradhan** from Nepal highlighted to need to explore alternative mechanisms of peace building which would lead to sustainable peace in conflict torn countries, like her own - Nepal.*

The session explored various dimensions of peace and security ranging from its international dimensions to bilateral level in South Asia to domestic dimensions of post-conflict peace building. The session also conferred on how militarization was deeply linked with an emerging global military-industrial complex. The speakers suggested various pathways to building peace in South Asia and discussed how civil society movements can contribute in terms of ideas.

Prof. Achin Vanaik, from Delhi University chose to confine his address to a very narrow conception of peace and security in the region - military security. He argued that the biggest obstacle to peace in the region is the tumultuous relationship between India and Pakistan. In this dyad, he saw India

as the bigger culprit. India's aspirations to be a global power, Vanaik argued, have contributed to the fragile peace in the region in a number of ways. First, India has obsessed itself with the idea of power projection which causes immense insecurity to India's neighbours. Indian pundits justify it by saying that in an anarchic world, power projection is not a matter of choice, but compulsion, especially for big countries like India. He disagreed with this analysis by giving the example of Brazil, which is a relatively sound middle power but does not project power. Second, this obsession with power projection has led to a massive militarization drive in India, which is quite obviously causing insecurity to neighbouring states, especially Pakistan. Third, India has focused more on global platforms like G-20, G-8, UNSC, IBSA, BRICS etc. and invested relatively little in making regional platforms stronger. As a result, SAARC has never been able to take off. Fourth, India's global ambitions have spurred it to act tough on what are considered fissiparous tendencies, thus increasing state repression in Kashmir and the North East.

Pakistan, on the contrary, has only regional ambitions and thus its anxieties are even more enhanced by India's projection of power. Given this situation, peace in South Asia can only happen if both sides show their commitment to peace. In this regard, he asked what role the civil society can play. One role of the civil society is to agitate and raise critical issues. Thus, it is imperative that the civil society keeps its voices high and shrill in favour of the recognition of self-determination of Kashmir, opposition to the US-Israel alliance into which India is being drawn in, opposition to neo-liberal economic policies, opposition to BMD and calling for resolution of India-China border issues on a principle of give and take.

In a very specific way, the civil society can contribute by advancing new ideas that can be made acceptable to both the sides. Prof. Vanaik proposed some suggestions likewise. First, he proposed a simultaneous 'no war pact' and a 'no first use' declaration from both sides. This would help alleviate fears of both sides. Second, he proposed a demilitarized corridor between India and Pakistan which would drastically reduce any chances of a war stemming out of misperceptions of certain actions or snowballing of relatively minor incidents. Third, he proposed a bilateral no testing agreement and closing of the test sites. Fourth, he demanded that the whole of Kashmir, both the Indian and the Pakistan one, should be declared a nuclear weapons free zone. Fifth, he stated that Bangladesh has called for a South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. Since, India and Pakistan are unlikely to sign it, Bangladesh or even other countries of South Asia should join the ASEAN nuclear weapons free zone initiative and extend this pact to their own countries. Finally, he suggested that in the new constitution that is being made in Nepal, the country should declare itself a single state nuclear weapons free zone. The last two steps would shame India and Pakistan on international platforms.

Farooq Tariq from Pakistan stated that Pakistan military was the biggest actor in Pakistan against which no single institution has the wherewithal to take up issues. In the 60 years of Pakistan's independence, the state has been ruled by the military for 35 years directly. For the other two and a half decades of intermittent democracy, it has mostly been the military which has pulled the strings. At least, no political leader has been so powerful to take on the military directly. Even the current government came into power with an explicit understanding between the political leadership and the military that General Musharaff would not be touched. He was allowed to go scot-free by the government, although now the same party i.e. the PPP has been calling for his return and trial.

Pakistan military has always been feudal in character and is one of the primary reasons why Pakistan has not developed. The military runs a parallel economy of its own and is neck deep into corruption. However, no one can raise a voice against it. Moreover, the military has kidnapped and killed various activists with impunity. Ayesha Siddiqi's much quoted work 'Military Inc.' in Pakistan has revealed that the military owns 12 per cent of agricultural land in Pakistan. It has numerous business interests. Military people are into real estate business, not surprising since they own most of the expensive urban land, they do construction, run pharmaceutical industries, have a huge stake

in the food industry, and can be prominently seen even in sectors like banking, insurance, education and dairy products. The military allocation of Pakistan's budget is 20 per cent. To make matters worse, there are no audit accounts of military spending and military has a free run with the money without any accounting.

Another, more revealing, facet of Pakistan's military is its Islamic character. Teachings of Maulana Maududi – the founder of Jamaat-i-islami – form the core of their training syllabus. They begin their day with allahu akbar and are constantly fed an anti-India rhetoric. The military also has ambitions on Afghanistan and contributes to the instability there.

Farooq also stated that with respect to Kashmir, the Pakistani progressive forces call for independence of Kashmir. 'Kashmir', he said 'is for Kashmiris'. On the nuclear question, he felt saddened at the mentality of Pakistani leaders who could proclaim 'We would eat grass, but have our own atom bomb'. This mentality has led not only to the nuclearization of the state, but also the weaponization of the whole society. Today, hand-grenades are available at mere Rs. 150 in Baluchistan.

He concluded his address by emphasizing that whatever may be the reason, there should be no support for military rule in Pakistan. The military budget, he demanded, be reduced by at least 10 per cent and military should be kept out of both politics and business. Finally, he extended support to Achin Vanaik's proposals for peace in the region.

Peter Custers from Netherlands and an expert on issues of militarization focused on what he called, the emerging 'transnational military industrial complex' (TMIC). The TMIC, led by the companies in the US, has now formed a strong alliance with the big armament companies in Europe and progressively we are witnessing this being extended the Asia Pacific region. This, he said, was particularly relevant in the light of the emerging scramble for resources and an area of influence between the US and China in the Asia Pacific region. The US, he argued, is using this pretext to create more vulnerability in the region and draw the countries of the Asia Pacific in a military alliance with it. A major factor behind this, he argued, was the profit the US MIC wanted to accrue from sales of military equipment to the region. Not only this, the US MIC has also found local lackeys, which do not compete but collaborate with the US MIC to sell more arms in the region. This follows the pattern of how US MIC collaborated with the European MIC. The five major armament firms in US entered into joint ventures with European firms and also pocketed most of the deals. The relatively smaller European companies responded by merging to form larger companies like the BAES and thus increasing their markets and profits. In the longer run, the MIC has become more transnational and entrenched. Ironically, while the EU was created to ensure more peace in the continent, the EU MIC is using the integration process for its own sinister purposes of creating a joint bloc of armament suppliers.

Testimonies to the increasing influence of the TMIC in Asia Pacific are the recent SIPRI reports which clearly document the shifting pattern of military sales and procurement. According to the SIPRI report for 2011, five Asian powers top the list of importers of armament systems. India in fact tops the list and the size of its purchase is double than that of China in global terms. This is an important statistic, because not very long back the Middle East countries were the top importers. In the recent past, we have seen how various countries in the Asia Pacific have been co-opted into the US bandwagon against China, primarily, Japan, Australia, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, and now even, Vietnam. There is a major flare up of tensions in the South China Sea which is said to have huge reserves of oil and natural gas. This has given the US an opportunity to entrench itself further in the region. The MIC, without a doubt, is having a gala time. The MIC feeds on conflicts and resultantly it creates them. Interestingly, one could also find how the issue of militarization of South Asia and Asia Pacific has completely disappeared from media in Europe.

The redeployment and extended deployment of US forces in Asia-Pacific and several islands must be seen in this light and for the sake on preserving peace, all efforts to oppose this US led TMIC ought to be opposed and resisted.

Prashant Jha from Nepal gave a detailed backgrounder of the unfolding situation in Nepal. He narrated that Nepal has attempted multiple transformations in a very short while and that has been one of the dominant causes of the jittery peace process in the country. From war to peace, from a Hindu state to a secular state, from being an autocratic monarchy to a democratic republic, from exclusionary nationalism to more inclusive notions about citizenships, and most crucially from being a unitary state to a federal state. These are difficult transformations on their own, and attempting all of them almost together naturally becomes a humongous task.

On the political front, the Constitutional Assembly is deadlocked. There is still no consensus among the political parties about how to go forward. The issue of integration of Maoist army into the national army is still unresolved, though some gains have been made there. However, the crucial question that today faces Nepali army is the tension between becoming more inclusive as well as reducing its strength. In five years during war, Nepali army swelled from 45,000 to 95,000, and Nepal does not need such a huge army. It has to be pared down, as envisioned in the constitution, but the issue of inclusion of Maoists and also making it more inclusive in terms of allowing the marginalized groups more representation (the Madhesi strength in Army is only 5000) would mean that innovative ideas would have to be advanced lest it becomes a deadlock.

He also delved into detail into the question of federalism in Nepal. After about 40 years of unitary government, the voices of the marginalized are being heard and there is a raging debate about federalism in Nepal. Various models are being attempted, however he felt ethnic-federalism - ethnicity-based provinces - would prove to be more harmful. While there was no escape from recognizing that certain ethnicities have been marginalized in Nepal (the Brahman-Kashatriya elites from the hills have been the rulers for too far long now) and they need to be given more access to resources in the provinces where they are in majority, mechanisms to protect minority rights should also be put in place (he called it a more identity based-federalism). He also drew attention towards the 'politics of naming' and asserted that how and what 'names' of provinces are given have a lot of symbolic resonance.

Herman Kumara from Sri Lanka spoke on the post-LTTE transition phase in Sri Lanka. The war against LTTE was decidedly a war of the state forces against its own people. In the last two months of the war alone in May 2009, around 40,000 people were killed, 59,000 women lost their husbands and around 11,000 were imprisoned. Outside powers such as the West, India, China and Pakistan gave full support to the Sri Lankan regime which could claim the victory as Sri Lanka's second independence. After this pyrrhic victory, the government has utilized its new found legitimacy with its own constituency and the supporting powers to crush all forms of dissent, struggle movements and opposition. The government has discarded all reports coming from national and international agencies who have been critical of its handling and human rights record. The Sri Lankan government had assured the UN Secretary General that in six months' time i.e. by the end of 2009, it would settle all the displaced people and also prepare its own account building report. Such report never came out.

The UN Secretary General then appointed an advisory panel which came out with a report in April 2010. The Rajapakse government rejected it summarily and instead appointed its own eight member committee named Lesson Learnt and Reconciliation Commission. The commission came out with a report which gave a clean cit to the government for war crimes, and put the blame on LTTE. However, even this report, stated that rule of law should be established, one of the recent war time amendments that concentrated powers in the President should be reverted, Presidential powers be

reduced, and support to the people who were affected by war including women, Children and the Muslims evicted from the north should be adequately resettled and palliative measures should be adopted. The government rejected these demands. The civil society in Sri Lanka, despite the fact that this commission had freed the government from war crimes, supported some of the LLRC resolutions in Geneva since it envisioned a more democratic society. The government's insincerity in supporting points of a report prepared by a committee set up by itself, prompted the civil society to support US resolution against the Sri Lankan government at the UN. For this the civil society and progressive media in Sri Lanka has faced a crackdown from the government and smear campaigns have been launched against activists. In the last two years, 35 media people have been killed and 60 of them have had to go out of the country. More than six media stations were burned. And such operations are still going on. The government has even co-opted the peace activists. The peace activists have been claiming that the humanitarian operations are doing fine and everything is well.

Kumara concluded by saying that civil society is battling with a hostile government to accept and implement five principles – ensuring peace, power sharing, rule of law, democracy and better future for the people. In pursuance of these objectives, he called on the other countries in South Asia especially India to give support to these voices against repression.

Questions/Comments

- How does one analyze the strategic role of China in the context of India and Pakistan problem, given that China is increasingly playing an important role in the region.
- While there is a debate on the question of demilitarization in the context of the region, there also needs to be a debate on demilitarization within the countries especially considering the fact that countries like India have deployed an enormous force in places like northeast and Kashmir.
- The meeting also should raise its voice about the ethnic cleansing of the Muslims in Burma. This aspect has been completely missed. In Pakistan, there is now an increasing demand for government's intervention in Burma on behalf of the Muslims who are being killed. How do you see the situation emerging?
- War has a moral dimension which is not adequately exploited by peace movements and social activists. How can we creatively use symbols like Gandhi and Buddha in constructing a counter-narrative to war and militarization?
- Can there be an inter-state peace without resolving societal questions such as unequal social structures and economic inequity?
- How do we deal with the Indian hegemony in the region?
- We need to change the narrative on Kashmir in India and Pakistan. Kashmir is somehow presented to be a problem of India and Pakistan. However, the actual problem is for the people. It is they whose rights and liberties are being suppressed. By reducing the Kashmir problem to an inter-state issue, the voices of the people are not being heard. The civil society in India and Pakistan needs to bring out this narrative that it is a problem of the people. The people of Kashmir are central to any dialogue that happens on Kashmir and there they need to be represented.
- What is role of Russia in the context of trans-Atlantic militarization and European militarization?
- In post-conflict Nepal and Sri Lanka, how are women being incorporated in the peace building process?

- The role of women in social and political movements is severely underplayed. Women's movements across the globe have been very important constituents of peoples' movements against oppression. However, they usually go unrecognized. There is a need to highlight these struggles and give them their due.
- In the sphere of human rights, Sri Lankan and Nepalese grass root organizations should establish contacts with the Colombian and other Latin American organizations and with other movements of the victims of the state terrorism.
- Nepal should also draw lessons from Constitution making processes in Ecuador and Bolivia with regard to inclusion of indigenous people and protecting their rights.
- With regard to militarization, movements in Europe are pressurizing banks to stop financing weapon making companies. To help this campaign, victims of European weapons from Sri Lanka, Nepal and other countries of South Asia should be taken to EU offices in Brussels.
- The militarily interventionist role of emerging economies such as that of Brazil's role in Haiti need to be opposed.
- In Nepal, is there an absence of a pressure from below, as reforms seem only to flow down from the top?
- How does civil society help during a conflict situation? In Sri Lanka, when distress calls were being made from Sri Lankan civil society to civil society in India to do something to stop the violence, Indian civil society was pressuring the government not to take any tangible intervention which could have prevented a lot of violence. Similarly, in Nepal, civil society has taken a human rights approach after the conflict had ended. This has a very limited effect since it is all post-facto, and nothing could be done to prevent violence after violence has already occurred. Civil society needs to seriously rethink its own ways of doing things.
- Is India-Israel strategic relationship autonomous or does America have a huge role to play in it?
- What are the political parties in Nepal doing regarding the ongoing Nepalese brain drain? Nepali youth are frustrated and do not want to stay back.

Responses:

Prof. Achin Vanaik:

Prof. Vanaik linked India's role of a regional bully to its domestic debate. He argued that in the last two decades as the society in India has moved to the right with emergence of rightist forces like BJP, its foreign policy has also become more hawkish towards the region. Therefore, India's external behavior is linked to social transformations that are happening within. He agreed that Kashmir needs to be taken up as an issue of its people and the minimum that the civil society in both the countries can do is to raise voices for inclusion of Kashmiris in the dialogue. On the question of demilitarization in the northeast, he revealed that the estimates for number of forces deployed in northeast currently vary from a minimum 200,000 to a maximum of 400,000. To contextualize how big the number is, he told that a maximum of 165,000 American soldiers were deployed in Iraq at a time. Similarly, in Kashmir, the number of soldiers deployed is more than that in Palestine. These figures severely puncture India's grand notions of projecting itself as a benign power. In fact, the Indian state, he argued, is most brutal in maintaining its internal unity.

On the moral dimension of war, he argued that in his view war could be justified when it is fought

against oppressors. Nevertheless, even then, there are moral dimensions to it like not killings non-combatants. However, he severely disagreed with the idea about using Gandhi as a symbol. Arguing that Gandhi, at best, was a contradictory figure who supported the participation of Indians in first world war, even if in auxiliary roles, as also endorsed India's decision to send military in Kashmir, he stated that the eulogization of Gandhi needs to be challenged.

China's relations with India, Achin argued, were determined more by the dynamics between US and China. In United States, there are two views about how to deal with China. One section believes that China is a strategic opponent and hence needs to be contained, while the other believes that it is not a strategic opponent and needs to be co-opted. Ironically, US is adopting both strategies simultaneously towards China. How China responds to India, he argued, would be conditioned by how US responds to it given the fact that India is closely allied with the United States. As regards, how India should respond to China, the most dominant viewpoint is one of uncertainty. Again, he averred, it would depend on how US-China relationship pans out. With regards to the Pakistan factor in India-China relationship, he believed that after the end of the Cold War, China seems to be more accommodative of India than earlier, even at the cost of offending Pakistan.

Farooq Tariq:

On the Pakistan-China friendship, Farooq stated that all military dictatorships in Pakistan have been supported by China. China has a lot of strategic interests in Pakistan ranging from business interests to Gwadar port to the Gilgit-Baltistan region. China is also militarily expanding into the region. However, with regards to India, while earlier China completely supported Pakistan, now it has become more diplomatic about its support.

Responding to another point made in the discussions about the killings of Muslims in Burma, he called upon the civil society to show solidarity with those who have been killed and are being suppressed. He stated that criticism of the Burmese regime ought to be made at every level. However, he also cautioned against the co-optation of this agenda by the rightist forces. He noted that the Islamist fundamentalists in Pakistan have greatly exaggerated the killings of Muslims and are using it to bolster their own agenda of hate mongering and waging religious wars. Ironically, the same fundamentalists who were hand in glove with the imperialists earlier are now trying to project themselves as real anti-imperialists. This needs to be severely guarded against.

Herman Kumara:

On the question of Sri Lankan civil society's call for external help during the humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka, Mr. Kumara explained the interventions for peace and security and to protect people's struggle should not be seen as external. He clarified that during the humanitarian crisis in his country, nobody said that help rendered by other countries was an intervention. He also pointed out that there is a need for a common understanding between Indian and Sri Lankan civil society over such issues.

In response to questions he pointed out that the Sri Lankan government's mega tourism project has become a nightmare to the fisher-folk. The project has caused many evictions, restricted the people's access to sea, and damaged the ecosystem. So far this project has been detrimental to the Marine Protected Areas also. Sri Lankan government has no concrete intention of rehousing or compensating affected people.

While answering about the situation of human rights defenders in Sri Lanka Mr. Kumara elaborated that the dissent has no place there in his country. Human rights defenders have been facing repeated threats, surveillance and intimidation.

About the women's role in peace building process Mr. Herman said that women have formed nation-wide NGOs which urge state authorities to investigate human rights violations as part of the peace and reconciliation process. These organizations also have been addressing the politically sensitive issue of impunity, and assist victims with compensation claims.

Prashant Jha:

In its constitutional transformation process, Nepalese political class has engaged itself with the other countries also. Few delegations of ethnic and religious leaders did go to Latin American countries such as Bolivia. Now, whether it was constructive or not at the moment it is difficult to say. He reiterated that multiple changes in a short time have complicated the political theater in Nepal. He said that in 2005-2006 Nepalese civil society from the grassroots played a major role to overthrow the monarchy in Nepal. But now the Nepalese civil society is fragmented which is a reflection of poor polity in Nepal. There are very few initiatives which come from the below. The last local elections in Nepal happened in 2007 and later all local bodies were dissolved. Therefore, there is not only the absence of civil society initiatives from the below in Nepal but total absence of grassroots political initiatives because of the absence of representative institutions.

About the Indian role he said that India is an important actor in the region and will remain so. Earlier almost for two years India invested lot of political capital in Nepal to keep the Maoist out of power, such moves should be opposed. But right now in the current ongoing federalism debate India has kept itself out of it which is a positive move and has given Nepal enough room to settle its domestic polity. But there are some people in Delhi's establishment who want military rule in Nepal. Such thinking needs to be opposed.

Women's Movement since 2006 has played a major role in pressuring the government to amend discriminatory provisions against women in Nepal. Interim Constitution includes women's rights as a fundamental right. The government has also explicitly recognized women's reproductive rights as Human Rights in a National Constitution. In Nepalese CA 33% representation is reserved for women.

Peter Custers:

On the question of India-Israel arms trade Peter Custers pointed out that there has been substantial arms trade between these two countries. He noted that along with European arms players such as Russia and France India is also becoming a major arms supplier in South Asia and elsewhere.

About the NATO and American missile defence system which is being billed as defending European Alliance members in Eastern Europe from potential nuclear threats from Iran or North Korea, he pointed out that initially in 2010 when NATO was trying to pull in Russia to participate in missile defence it appeared that Russia was interested. But later on Russia became very wary of the mentioned defense shield and vehemently opposed it. He mentioned that Russia is still the second largest arm exporter after the US in the world.

Session II: South-South Dialogue: On Ways Forward

*The chair **Meena Menon** from India provided the initial impetus by provoking a thought as to whether by invoking North-South dichotomy we weren't replicating the binaries created in the west. This dichotomy, she argued, reinforced the traditional notion of nation-states with hard borders.*

All the speakers in the session highlighted how there is a North in the Global South and a South in

the Global North. Much as there was a need to fight the Global North, the North within the Global South also presents a formidable challenge. Countries like China, India, Brazil and South Africa were following the same model of exploiting their fellow states in the South, as the North had historically done. The session debated how this could be resisted and challenged.

Au Loong-Yu from Hong Kong spoke on the rise of China and its implications for the peasant and working classes in China. He stated that one cannot hide from the fact that in the decade from 1979-2009, China's GDP has grown more than 10 per cent per year. In absolute terms, it means, that China's economic size has increased by 15 times in this duration. This is a staggering figure by any imagination. Such a fast paced process of modernization and industrialization has lifted China from being a very poor, largely agrarian economy to a modern and urban country. Almost half of the population now lives in urban areas, this figure however cannot be relied upon since a huge chunk of this is a floating population. This process of urbanization has however created vast swathes of poverty. This has had an adverse effect on peasants, workers and also environment.

China's industrial working class accounts for $\frac{1}{4}$ of the world total and its service sector for nearly $\frac{1}{5}$ of the world. This is a gigantic work force. Despite high growth and a large earning population, the internal market of China is still small. The household consumption in China is just 36 per cent of the GDP which is incredibly low whereas in India it is more than 60 per cent. Since Chinese growth is export oriented which is achieved in great measure by exploiting its people and paying them low wages to keep domestic consumption low, Chinese government is acutely sensitive to maintaining its overseas investment and export capital. This, in some part explains, China's increasing flexing of its political, economic and even military muscle.

China's growing clout certainly has ramifications on its neighbours. He gave the example of Burma where much of the economic activities on China-Burma border are controlled and monopolized by Chinese merchants. The Chinese media explains it away by claiming that since the countries which share border with China are very poor so China can go there and make money. In Ya's view, such instances necessitate a dialogue between social movements in China including Hong Kong with their counterparts in South Asia, as also with other parts of the world. For a beginning, social movements in China and South Asia can commonly take up the issue of business monopoly in the border areas.

Arjun Karki, from Nepal, taking on from Meera Menon's introductory remarks about the complexity of thinking in binary of the Global North and the Global South, argued that these binaries can be very facile. From his own experience of visiting many of the 48 Least Developed Countries, especially in Africa, he surmised that there are pockets of extreme wealth even in these countries. There is a North in the South populated by those who serve as lackeys of western neo-liberal agenda in the South. Sadly, he said, even the political left seems to have moved away from its ideology in not only having made peace with neo-liberalism but in many instances supporting it wholeheartedly. In this regard, he gave the example of Maoists in Nepal, who when came to power followed the same economic policies which were followed by their previous two governments. They earnestly accepted the economic models dictated to them by the IMF and World Bank, even agreeing to public-private partnerships and Special Economic Zones.

On an international level, the new Spartans of the South – India and China – are merely mimicking the US model of neo-liberal hegemony. The Indian and Chinese MNCs are in a resource race in Africa, each trying to outwit the other in exploitation. In future, they would not even shy from militarily intervening to protect their assets.

Karki also highlighted how because of urbanization, the peasant population is in fact depleting. Land is increasingly being deprived of the tiller which would have enormous implications of food supply and also environment. Finally, he emphasized the need to globalize the struggle and not think in

terms of the North or the South. The notion of South-South is not enough to connect the social movements across the world, a significant number of which also happen to be in what is considered to be the Global North. There is a strong need to find a mechanism where the movements of the poor across the globe can converge. This, he urged everyone to remember, would have to happen in a context where the state would attempt with all its might to crush these voices. Movements like AEPF and People's SAARC are important steps in that direction.

Rezaul Chowdhury from Bangladesh drew attention towards the catastrophic impact of climate change on the population of Bangladesh. Currently, he argued lakhs of Bangladeshi migrants spread across various cities of India. In Gurgaon alone, there are 30000-50000 Bangladeshi who work in menial jobs. Most of these he revealed come from the area in Bangladesh which was submerged in the 2009 cyclone. The IPCC report on climate change states that in the next 100 years 1/3rd of Bangladesh will be submerged creating more than 30 million climate migrants.

The citizens of Bangladesh, however, will suffer this calamity for which they are minimally responsible. Seen in per person carbon emission, one US citizen per year emits 20 tons of carbon; while one Bangladeshi emits only 0.2 ton of carbon. The industrialization economies of India and China are only making it worse. Referring to the UN General Assembly 1986 resolution and the Vienna Declaration in 1993, Reza stated that provisions for reparations, transfer of capital, technologies, goods and services in return for excessive use of a common good such as environment is an entitlement to the affected people, not a charity bestowed on them.

He observed that the South-South cooperation is developing. In fact, 37 per cent of the global trade today is between the countries of the global South. According to UN figures, there has been 20 times increase in the trade between South-South countries during 1992-2008. In Africa, India is among the top five exporting countries. Brazil's investment in Latin America and Africa in last ten years has increased 20 times. The global economists believe that one percent growth in China translates into 0.2 per cent growth in low income countries, because Chinese investment is increasing in these countries. In terms of international aid, 10 per cent of the aid today comes from India, China, Brazil and South Africa.

However, increasingly it is becoming evident that the bigger countries of global South, especially China and India, follow a very aggressive trade policy. While Brazil and South Africa are sensitive to the recipient country's ownership pattern, India and China are not. So much so, that in 22 low income countries, the nature of South-South cooperation is supply driven not demand driven.

Kamal Mitra Chenoy from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, called for a new intellectual vigour to envision new alternative orders. One of the tragedies of the Global South, he argued, has been the inability of its intellectuals to think new ideas. There are no new forms of organizations being envisioned including the possibility of reformed state capitalism of public sectors to go along with private sector until the state became ripe for a more radical system. In fact, the intellectual class has only mimicked the models purveyed from the Global North. None better example than India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. This, he argued, indicated towards the danger as well as the importance of intellectuals.

On the dichotomy between the Global North and the South, he argued, that today the bigger countries of the Global South are exploiting the other countries of the South. In their eagerness to reach the status of the North, countries like India and China are imposing a capitalist agenda on the countries of Africa. The recent bailout of Europe in which China and India contributed \$43 billion and \$10 billion to the IMF when millions are starving in their own countries speaks volumes about their desperation for status. They are more concerned about gaining a place in the power hierarchy rather than democratising the international power structures. An example is the assertion of claims

for gaining a seat into the UNSC by India, Brazil and South Africa; while it would be far more valuable for global democracy if the powers of UNSC are clipped and of the UN General Assembly increased.

The countries of the Global South also have vast differences between themselves which precludes any attempt towards building solidarities. South Africa is fighting against other countries in Africa for a UNSC permanent seat, Turkey has aligned with NATO against Syria, India and Pakistan have built up huge arsenals against each other, and so on. Internally, many of these countries like India, China and Turkey have unleashed insidious oppression on their own population. In such an environment, Global South solidarity sounds only whimsical.

The Global South was thus clamouring for alternatives, and this is the responsibility of the intellectuals. The IMF-World Bank ordained neoliberalism has to be challenged with an alternative paradigm, the basis of which should be the idea of equality. He concluded his address by quoting for Rousseau – “no people who oppress another can themselves be free”.

Karamat Ali from Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research, Pakistan, began by flagging that the setbacks to the European integration process in lieu of the euro zone crisis have given boost to some skeptics in South Asia to question the viability of SAARC and efforts towards integration in the region. This is a dangerous tendency. While a South Asian union is not something that people movements envision in the region, nevertheless there is a strong need to foster solidarities and bring socio-economic and political lives of peoples closer to each other.

For that to happen, however, the states in the region would need to take strong decisions to reduce fear. No militarism, no nuclearization and less sovereignty and nationalism seems like a civil society wish list, but if concerted efforts were made, we could progressively move towards achieving these goals. He supported Prof. Vanaik's suggestions on nuclear weapons free zones. He noted that there was strong peoples' movement in Europe against militarization, arms trade and nuclearization. People's movements in South Asian should build a common network with these movements and pursue these goals.

Besides, one needs to impress upon the fact that despite long claims from both India and Pakistan neither do their armies have enough capacity to fight long wars – none of the India-Pakistan wars have lasted for more than two and a half weeks; nor do both navies have been successful in protecting their interests overseas – Somali pirates have been catching their ships in which both India and Pakistan navies have had to pay ransom. The large military architecture India and Pakistan have constructed has only helped in fanning fears on both sides, and thus increased insecurity rather than enhancing security. The basic needs of the people on both sides are still unmet, and both governments only keep on piling on their defence budgets.

He also alluded to the fact that there are strong lobbies on both sides, which have a strong interest in keeping these military budgets high, including military institutions whose legitimacy and relevance depends majorly on the India-Pakistan rivalry.

Questions/Comments

- The world is not as same as before, therefore the old style South-South definition or approach needs to be changed for our future tactics and strategies. Moreover, we also need to be conscious of the 'tyranny of the alternative' and dialogically explore 'alternatives'.
- How do we develop solidarities to ensure justice, peace, women rights and human rights?
- South Asian civil society seems to have ruptured its links with movements in the ASEAN. These

need to be revived.

- At times, civil society is utilized by the government to harness its own nefarious agenda. How do we ensure that civil society is not misused?
- The understanding of peace and security, as discussed in the meeting, ought to be broadened to include issues like water scarcity and climate change.
- In South Asia, the question of peace is usually limited to India-Pakistan. Relations with and between other neighboring countries also need to be discussed.
- Solidarities also need to be built up with trade unions and civil society organizations from Europe. They could be of great help especially on issues of technology.
- Grassroots campaigns need to be launched against FTAs. The technical nature of these agreements means they remain limited to NGOs, academia and policy makers. They need to be simplified and brought into the domain of peoples' movements.
- India's river interlinking projects also need to be looked into. It will have major repercussion to Bangladesh.
- Malaysian civil society groups have been in support and solidarity with the Tamil Tigers almost for 15-20 years, in all kinds of support. Malaysian civil society groups organized various protests in Malaysia in support of Tamil Tigers, importantly during the time of UN resolution. Interestingly Malaysian government abstained at the last moment. When the foreign affairs minister of Malaysia was pressed about it, he said that it was India which lobbied with Malaysia and other countries to support the Sri Lankan government.
- Post Bandung approach towards South-South dialogue or cooperation has been an utter failure. Governments in the South have become lackeys of business interests or act as middlemen of big powers like China and US. The case in point is the recent meeting on South China Sea, where ASEAN for the first time since its inception could not even issue a communique. It happened because Cambodia took a pro-Chinese position and therefore broke the so called unity of ASEAN.
- Governments cannot be relied to forge strong regional solidarities. We need to look at Alternative Regionalisms, where we have peoples' across regions forging solidarities and forming groups. We need to evolve a conception of people-centered South or people-centered ASEAN.
- Forge common initiatives and more close cooperation between the four alliances of the South Asian region i.e. Peoples' SAARC, SAAPE, AEPF and SAHR.
- We need to strengthen our South-South campaigns on migrant workers, medicine issues, chemical pesticides, anti-monopoly banks and climate degradation.

Responses:

Au Loong-Yu:

He agreed that China has imperialistic designs in Southeast Asia and it has co-opted Cambodia, along with Burma, to ward off any anti-China resolutions in the ASEAN. In the South China Sea, he stated that he did not support China's claims. Moreover, while acknowledging that Philippines has a claim that ought to be heard, the intrusion of United States into the region, supposedly on behalf of Philippines complicates the whole issue. The whole issue, he reckoned, needed more discussion and

its various angles need to be explored.

Rezaul Chowdhury:

He maintained that the issue of climate change is pushing for a paradigm shift not only in how we understand the issue but also in how we should create a movement. He stated that recent reports have suggested that while a decade ago the frequency of cyclones in Bay of Bengal was only 3 times, today it has increased to 9 times. Every year, more than three lakh people are killed because of climate change and if by 2015 neo-carbon agreements come into play, by 2030 this figure will go up to 10 lakh people dying from climate change every year. Much as these figures are startling, these are only a few of the figures that tell us how starkly we are faced with doom. There is a tremendous mass of information and knowledge on climate change today made possible by science.

These figures and data, he stated, needs to reach the people. These should be part of the education of people and the civil society needs to systematically intervene by diffusion and dissemination of this knowledge. The civil society should aim for creating mass awareness about the harmful effects of climate change. This knowledge based activism, he stated, was the need of the hour. Otherwise, sitting and discussing these issues in a closed workshop would only help create, what he called, 'an island of happiness'. Specific targets of this education, he emphasized, should be the youth because they are the future.

Arjun Karki:

In his remarks, Karki stated that any perspective that talks about South-South solidarity should aim to address global inequities. The solutions should aim towards making the Global South self-sufficient and not more dependent. Keeping this in mind, it becomes obvious that 'aid' is not a solution to problems of developing countries.

Kamal Mitra Chenoy:

Responding to the comment on journalists being utilized by the government for its own ends, Chenoy stated that this is part of the larger game in which media is consciously advancing capitalistic interests. Not only this, media is complicit with the state in endorsing and propagating the latter's agenda of militarization. One can see how Indian media constantly attacks left movements across the country.

On dealing with the North in the South, he argued that social movements and the left parties would need to align with each other to launch a sustained attack on capitalism. These alignments need not only to be across political or social sphere, but also across nations. A vibrant peoples' movement can only be built up when the like-minded anti-capitalist interests unite. Aware of the fact that there are internal differences between these various anti-capitalist strands, but for the sake of building egalitarian alternatives capitalism has to be smashed and that can only happen when the 'force of numbers' outwits the 'force of guns'.

Karamat Ali:

He disagreed with many comments which argued that solidarities with countries in the South and Europe need to be built up on priority. He said this could only happen when first solidarities in South Asia are built. South Asia is the least integrated region in the world which is true not only of inter-governmental cooperation but also of cooperation between peoples' movements and left parties. In fact, most of the left parties in South Asia are extremely nationalist. They are unconcerned about people in other countries. Left parties in India and Pakistan are completely unconcerned about what

happens in Sri Lanka or Nepal. Turning the critical eye inwards, he pointed out that in the AEPF meeting, there was no effort made to get a representation from Afghanistan which is very much a member of SAARC. More distressingly, in all the comments and observations made in the two days, there was not even a mention of Afghanistan. This is a major lacuna which has to be first addressed if we want to think broadly about Global South solidarity. Internationalism of any kind has to build up through first fashioning regional solidarities, and in South Asia, building up regional solidarities has to be a priority.

RESOLUTIONS

- The dialogues of civil society groups and peoples' movements such as South-South dialogue and Asia-Europe People Forum should be continued.
- We should find structures and mechanisms to converge dialogues of South-South cooperation and Asia-Europe People Forum.
- There is a need to initiate people to people movements, labor to labor and peasantry to peasantry levels of macro dialogues.
- To counter the hegemonic models, we need to explore multiple alternatives.
- There are various ideological and intellectual challenges. Therefore, we need to bring in resources both ideological and intellectual into the movements and make broad base for larger alliances.
- We need to explore means and methods in order to democratize Internet intellectuals.
- Explore means and methods to map the skills.
- Sustained efforts are required to demilitarize and de-communalize the region.
- There is an urgent need to make South Asia a weapon free zone.
- We propose that there is a need to do some research about the new role of China, India and BRICS countries vis-à-vis the South itself to find out about development assistance and new hegemony.
- The issues related to energy, ecology and climate change should be looked through the people's point of view.
- The South Asian labour forum of landless people should be revived again.
- Post-Bandung approach has failed therefore, an alternative regionalism is required which need to be rejuvenated through people to people interactions.
- We propose to build anti-debt campaigns between Europe, Asia, and Latin America.
- We propose to launch campaigns against the imperialist role of Indian and Chinese MNCs and banks in Africa and other parts of the world.
- There is a need to create repository of contacts and intellectual knowledge in the field of alternative sources of energy.
- We propose that a international mechanism of legal instruments need to be set up to look into war

crimes and human rights violations in Sri Lanka, Jammu & Kashmir and elsewhere in the region.

- The community rights, rights of indigenous people and people's land rights need to be respected and protected.
- The issue of land grabbing needs to be addressed.
- We demands that the charges against activists and political prisoners who have been arrested or prisoned for organizing strikes, mobilizing people against governments for their anti-people policies, should be dropped and those arrested or prisoned should be released.
- Corporate funding of elections should be stopped.
- Surveillance and data base of the citizen such as Unique Identification (UID), biometrics etc. should be stopped.
- The dumping of hazardous and toxic waste by the USA in Indian Ocean should be stopped immediately.
- At this AEPF meet we pledge to work for sustainable energy by aiding the designs and implementation of policies that support the efficient use of existing resources as well as the development of cleaner alternatives. We stand against future nuclear energy plants, big dams, coal plants and thermal plants.
- Gender and marginal groups' perspectives should be incorporated in every sector.
- There is a need to address the poor sanitation conditions in all South Asian countries.
- Carbon trading needs to be abandoned.
- All FTAs need to be boycotted.

Policy Dialogues - Issues to be raised at IOC Meeting

- FTAs
 - Arm Trade
 - Nuclear Energy
 - Land Grabbing
 - Human Rights
-