

Shared concerns and issues emerging from the 1st Science and Democracy World Forum

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This text is the initial result of the 1st Science & Democracy World Forum which took place in Belém on 26-27 January 2009.

It has been written and accepted by citizens of 18 countries from 4 continents. It initiates an open and inclusive global process that seeks to build an international network of movements, organizations and individuals concerned about issues of science and technology and other forms of knowledge in relation to societal and democratic concerns.

BROAD ISSUES AND CONCERNS

1. All knowledge, including science, is a common heritage of humankind. To increase human knowledge has been one of the most fundamental endeavours of humanity throughout history.
2. Knowledge and the methods of its production can result in both emancipation and advancement of societal interests and/or domination and oppression.
3. We support regimes that ensure and promote common public goods and other systems of rewarding innovation that are not premised on creation of monopolies over, or deriving profits from, knowledge.
4. Issues related to science & technology (S&T) form an important part of the overall economic and climate/ecological, democratic crisis that the world faces today as well as crisis related to energy use and production, food security, war and militarism. It is necessary to deepen our understanding of how issues related to S&T are part of these problems and are also part of solutions to these crises.
5. It needs to be recognised that the values of scientific communities are shaped by and rooted in historical and cultural processes. The autonomy and social responsibility of researchers, openness, and universality of science need to be promoted while being sensitive to the contemporary social and cultural diversities.
6. We recognize that diverse knowledge-production regimes exist in different countries and at different levels, including scientific institutions and local communities. Historical contexts influence the political, cultural, educational and scientific developments in society, giving rise to a diversity in the production of both academic and traditional knowledge. There is a need for a new kind of an eco-knowledge-system that is sensitive to different knowledge property regimes. In this context we support initiatives such as the one for Open Access Initiative for scientific reviews & repertories of

scientific selfarchiving.

7. Endeavours to promote informed involvement of citizens in decision-making processes on S&T policies at international, national and local levels must be strengthened.
8. There is a need to change the present situation where the interests of the market, corporate profits, the consumer culture and military uses are the main drivers of research, technology and innovation.
9. We are committed to the principle that preservation of human life is a core value of science practice and hence call upon the S&T community not to engage in research that is put to military use.
10. There is a major need to promote social demand and empowerment of the people in order to exercise democratic control over policies of research and innovation.
11. Systems of collaborative, bottom-up and participative research need to be promoted.
12. We aim to build an international network that seeks to underline the importance of S&T, while at the same time pursuing an approach that looks critically at some dangerous trends in S&T today regarding democratic and environmental issues and the dynamics of capitalist globalization.
13. This open network should include both communities of scientists and engineers and diverse social movements. We shall aim to establish a democratic dialogue and collaboration between scientific and social organisations.
14. This network aims to strengthen movements that challenge the manner in which S&T is sought to be taken over by corporate, private, military, political and related State and other power interests which impact the ethical values and production of S&T knowledge.

This text is addressed to

- scientists, engineers, academics, educators and experts and their institutions around the world;
- indigenous peoples, farmers' organisations, trade unions, other social and political movements, NGOs, organizations and institutions with science and technology concerns
- all actors of the global, regional and local social forums;
- international, regional, national and local public authorities, all over the world.

Science, research, technologies and innovations are connected to broader and major issues about the future of our societies and environment. Therefore, we invite all of you to make concrete connections between your own agendas and political priorities and the content of this document.

We invite all scientific and social organisations, actors of Social Forums and all citizen around the world to enlarge and strengthen this movement from now on and invite you to join following agenda:

- January 2010: Science and democracy regional forums
- January 2011: 2nd Science and democracy world forum

From now on, we invite all concerned people, all kind of organisations, movements and networks to organise public debates around the world in order to empower the largest part of our respective societies and communities about these issues.

Belém-Brazil, February 1st 2009.

