

Report of the Assembly of Social Movements Rostock, June 1st, 2007

Thursday 25 February 2010, by [ODY Morgan](#), [Social Movements Network](#) (Date first published: 1 June 2007).

Minutes taken by Morgan Ody (Via Campesina) Following Christophe's and Daniela's presentations.

1. Discussion about the Global Day of Action

About the groups involved

The 26th has to be a day of strong mobilization, with all anticapitalist, antiwar movements mobilizing around their own objectives. If it is a success, then we will plan a global day of action every two years, between 2 WSF. A very broad mobilization, which would go well beyond the member groups of the International Council of the World Social Forum and beyond the countries and regions represented here, is needed.

About the organization of the process

The call has already been launched, but from now on we will work on this global day of action at the international level, we will find coordination mechanisms and common tools. What is important is to organize grassroots mobilizations, coordinated on an international scale and part of a global process. Tools (slogans, graphic design) are needed to make it visible.

About the subjects and main lines of mobilization

The objective is to work in diversity, as well as to develop convergence (unity, common actions) between movements. All struggles are important and it is not possible to agree on priorities. That is why the call mentions what we all agree about: we are fighting against neoliberalism, patriarchy, racism, war.

A clearer line of mobilization is needed. We have to decide whether we want to keep being a space or whether we want to become a movement that makes decisions, gets structured in order to destroy capitalist globalization. We have to try and find targets rather than topics: colonialism for instance, or multinational companies. In 2008, there will be the US presidential elections, and the withdrawal of the US from Iraq: it is the most important political event of the year. It will also be the sixtieth anniversary of the occupation of Palestine. In September 2008, we are organizing in the US a march with one million poor people. We will take advantage of this day of action to mobilize before September.

About the date

January 2008 is close to the Moroccan Social Forum, which will take place around the signing of the Economic Partnership Agreements (many mobilizations will be organized at that time).

2. About the functioning of the Social Movements Assembly, about our coordination

Critical balance of the experience of the Secretariat of Social Movements we had in Brazil. We have to design mechanisms of functioning, without a secretariat. During the Assembly in Brussels, we finally agreed on setting up a facilitation team.

There is a need for a geographical coordination (between regions) and for coordination by subject (between campaigns...). Some continents, such as Latin America and Europe, do have regional structures. People have direct meetings, and do not communicate only by e-mails, and it works. At the European level, we could create a working group which would meet in September during the ESF. On other continents, such as Asia, because of diversity, it would be better to work at a national level, and through the existing networks on different subjects (debt etc)

Communication: too much information is circulating through the e-mail list. There should be a web site with someone in charge of posting the articles that circulate.

Let's talk about the question of the credibility crisis of the Social Movements Assembly (SMA). Some important movements are missing, such as many Asian movements. A programme has to be set up to reach actively these movements. In Africa, the movements are scattered. The Social Movements Assembly (SMA) should be built on the January 26th mobilization. Since last September's ASM meeting in Brussels, not much has been done.

A structure is necessary, but we also need to deepen the debate. The social movements are very diverse and it is hard to set up a schedule and common political lines. We have to work as a collective forum of analysis where we identify our common enemies and the mechanisms of oppression. We should also begin to discuss the kind of relationship we want to establish with other actors fighting for another world (political parties...).

Synthesis: 4 aspects

reaffirm our objectives
coordination and functioning
logistical and operational means
view of priority initiatives

The objectives of the SMA:

a space for exchanges
deepen common analysis and studies
importance of political interrelation
between campaigns and sectors discussion on the launch of campaigns, such as the 2003 antiwar campaign, which the SMA helped. January 26th is another opportunity.

Coordination and functioning

Our proposal is to form a coordination space, with sectors, regions and networks being well represented. It is made up as follows:

1/ 4 global movements: the World March of Women, Via Campesina, Jubilee South and CADTM. Each movement designates two delegates from two different continents.

2/ the national or regional networks are also very important (two delegates for each, according to the same principle): the Continental Social Alliance + la Compa, Grassroot Global Justice Network, Focus on the Global South + one person from India.

3/ National organizations or international networks which designate a delegate: Indaba Social

Movement (South Africa) Stop the Wall Campaign (Palestine) Iraqi Oil Workers Union OWINFS International Alliance of Inhabitants 4/ and for Europe (2 delegates from the ESF) - to be determined during the next European preparatory assembly (sept Stockholm).

During the meeting, various groups get into the coordinating committee: OWINFS, International Alliance of inhabitants, Stop the Wall Campaign and the Iraqi Oil Workers Union.

This facilitation group has to organize the January 26th action; it has to be its main task. Then, we will see consider the best way of working. This group is also in charge of extending the ASM to new groups. The coordination is open for those networks who would like to join. Question of the representation of underrepresented regions (Central Asia, Middle East). A commission has to be set up in order to find movements from these regions.

Financial problems to make the delegates come

Idea to set up two working groups within the ASM: "ecology and social movements" and "communication". In the IC, there are also several commissions (action, communication...), there should not be two structures for a same objective (for example the mobilization day of January 26th) It is necessary to set up a schedule of the 2008 campaigns, and to look for opportunities in order to make these regional convergences result in common initiatives. US and Moroccan Social Forums, the struggle against EPA in Africa, the preparatory assembly of the WSF in September 2007, the IC meeting in Belem, Brazil in October 2007. The presence of our coordination in the latter should be guaranteed. It will also be an opportunity to meet the movements from the Brazilian Amazonian region that did not participate in the WSF and ASM.

Strategies SMA /IC

Our priority now is to define our functioning, but we also have to discuss our position vis-à-vis the IC. Indeed within the IC, there is a harsh debate about WSF strategies that will go on in 2008. There is a debate about WSF usefulness in which we should take part. After the forum in Nairobi, the WSF is at a turning point. Various organizations signed a statement that criticized the merchandization and militarization of the Nairobi forum. In the IC, there is also a debate between those who ask for a better integration with the movements of struggle and those who want to ensure the continuity and visibility of the WSF. In the social of movements, we want to develop a pedagogy based on actions, and not on events. The SMA is a space where struggles gather and connect; it was born in the WSF context. There were very strong SMAs, but continuity and coordination has not been achieved; each time, the participants are different.

We should systematically organize a meeting before each IC meeting, so as to reach an accord. About the global day of action, the IC is not the owner of the mobilization, but it facilitates it. The social movements will be the major actors.

The WSF has a positive impact because it allows groups with different ideologies to work together. In India for example, this process has made the different groups work in a more united way. For the feminist movement, the WSF is important but we need the ASM to go further. The 2008 action is a good opportunity to act and learn together.

2009 World Social Forum: in Amazon

The decision has been taken to organize the 2009 WSF in the Amazon region in Latin America. Welcome to Amazon!

P.S.

* Translated by CADTM.