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From Seattle... 20 Years of Supporting Struggle for Global and Environmental Justice

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Globalization Monitor is celebrating its 20th anniversary!



Founded in 1999, shortly before the big protest in Seattle. Globalization Monitor is a non-profit organization based in Hong Kong that opposes “free trade”, deregulation, privatization, flexibilization and subcontracting. It was the first group in Hong Kong to monitor the adverse effects of globalization on workers and the environment in developing countries, including China, through the global supply chain of international brand companies.

This booklet recalls our work supporting struggle for global and environmental justice and includes a selection of our reports from the past 20 years.

ABOUT GLOBALIZATION MONITOR

Welcome from Globalization Monitor's Executive Director

An Important Year for Celebration!

This year is the 20th anniversary of Globalization Monitor (GM). The 10 founders came from the labour, environmental, feminist and community movements and I am honoured to be one of them.

1999 was an important year for the era of globalization. At that time, few people knew the real meaning of the new term “globalization”. The mainstream media portrayed the future as a rosy picture, where everyone would live in a global village and share a decent life created by “globalization”. However, as time went by, the lives of most working people all over the world, including most of the citizens in the developed world, kept deteriorating under the neo-liberal politics. In the autumn of 1999, led by unions and civil society in Seattle, USA, the global anti-globalization movement started booming and mobilized people to fight back collectively.

The Seattle anti-globalization movement was very critical and sceptical of the positive approach to globalization promoted by the governments and multinational corporations of the developed world. Instead of belief in the idea that “in the internet and digital era without borders, people around the globe will live in a harmonized global village”, the Seattle movement saw globalization creating more social, economic and political injustice. The unionists and other social movement activists of the Seattle movement thought that the super-rich were only interested in using globalization to make more profit and not in making a feasible plan to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor or in letting every citizen in both the developed and developing worlds earn a decent wage and live in dignity.

Echoing the anti-globalization movement in Seattle, GM was the first group in Hong Kong to be concerned about the adverse effects of globalization on working people and the environment. With the motto “people before profit”, we published a by-monthly Chinese magazine called “Globalization Monitor”, providing critical information and analysis and initiating public discussions about the negative impacts of globalization on different groups of people.

Beside publications and organizing seminars about the adverse effects of “globalization”, we also organize actions against violations by international brands and the global supply chain of workers’ and environmental rights in developing countries and demand remedial actions.

We also push for government legislation to protect the rights of young people, workers, women, consumers, migrants, marginal groups, indigenous people and the environment and promote an autonomous social movement to fight for political and economic democracy and the just distribution of social resources.

In the past twenty years the global social and labour movement has been fighting hard against poverty and for labour rights. Honestly, our campaign has not been very successful; the gap between the rich and the poor globally and nationally has been growing even bigger. Global corporations have created huge amounts of wealth through exploitation all over the world in the name of globalization. But most of this wealth has gone into the pockets of the super-rich.

According to a 2018 Oxfam report, “Eighty two percent of the wealth generated last year went to the richest one percent of the global population, while the 3.7 billion people who make up the poorest half of the world saw no increase in their wealth”. *

GM’s 20th anniversary, 2019, is also a very important year for the Hong Kong people, particularly for the young generation as they are the key leaders of the Anti-Extradition Bill movement actively fighting for democracy and freedom. The movement started in March and slowly developed into a big and well-known movement in June.

We are pleased to see the young generation coming out in their thousands to demand basic political rights and universal suffrage in Hong Kong. It would be even better if this were linked to social and economic distributional justice as well. The lack of concern for these issues once again reflects the lack of awareness of the gap between the rich and the poor and its negative impact on the

population. Poverty impairs the ability of marginalized groups to participate in politics and public affairs in a meaningful way except by casting a vote every four or five years. Greater attention to these issues in the future will be beneficial to the whole of Hong Kong society.

People before Profit! Stand with Hong Kong!

May Wong October 17, 2019

Download the full report below:

https://www.globalmon.org.hk/sites/default/files/attachment/20%20Anniversary%20booklet%20english%20versionFINALfinal_0.pdf

P.S.

Globalization Monito, 2019/11/29:

<https://www.globalmon.org.hk/index.php/node/1695>