

People's Agenda for ASEM Parliamentarians



Final Declaration from The Asia Europe People's Forum 12, Ghent, Belgium 1st October 2018

The People's Agenda for ASEM Parliamentarians is an expression of the visions and demands of over 425 women and men who are citizens from diverse backgrounds, representing people's organisations from over 48 countries across Asia and Europe joined together to work for a **Just, Equal and Inclusive Asia and Europe**. We met in the Asia Europe People's Forum12 in Ghent, Belgium between 29th September and 1st October 2018 ahead of ASEM12.

We are linked and brought together through the Asia Europe People's Forum (AEPF). The AEPF is a strategic civil society gathering of Asian and European social movements, non-governmental organisations and campaign networks that are confronting poverty and inequality and working for social, economic and climate justice.

We are committed to promoting, consolidating and strengthening engagement with ASEM governments' leaders, parliamentarians and related regional bodies and enabling people's voices to be shared and heard.

We are committed to working in constructive ways with the governments who are members of ASEM to implement people-centred responses to the current crises in an effective and responsible manner.

We believe that priority must be given to poor, excluded and marginalised people and more democratic and accountable institutions must be in place to assure that processes and measures will lead to a just, equal, inclusive and sustainable Asia and Europe based on respect for gender equality and the promotion and protection of human, economic and socio-cultural rights, environmental security and the protection of our Commons.

The Enforced Disappearance of Sombath Somphone

On 15th December 2018, it will be six years since the enforced disappearance of Sombath Somphone. Sombath was one of the main organisers of AEPF9 held in Vientiane just before ASEM9. Sombath's abduction on 15th December 2012 was captured by a police CCTV camera. Since then, the Lao PDR Government has provided no meaningful information to Sombath's family, friends and the public about his abduction and continuing disappearance. Instead, successive statements and actions by the Lao Government indicate a continuing denial of its basic responsibility and obligations.

We should be reminded that while concerns continue to be raised in the confines of the Universal Periodic Review and similar human rights dialogues, the policies and programmes of governments, donors, regional development banks and development agencies remain largely unaltered.

We ask again that the Lao PDR agree to accept the continuing offer from other countries of technical support for the investigation.

We sincerely demand that the Lao Government complete their investigation into Sombath's disappearance, make public the investigation report, and take forward appropriate legal processes against the perpetrators of the crime. We urge ASEM member states to monitor the fulfilment of these demands and ensure that Sombath and his family receive the justice that is surely their right and that he is returned safely to his family.

We are sincerely presenting the **People's Agenda for ASEM Parliamentarians** to you, our elected and appointed representatives at local, national and regional levels. You, and the governments that you are part of, have the responsibility to ensure that we can all live in peace, security and dignity.

As Asian and European social movements, organisations, networks and citizens committed to working for a just and equal world, we call on our Asian and European Parliamentarians and our governments to join with us in taking forward a People's Agenda founded on four fundamental principles:

- i) the promotion of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights as agreed in international human rights and humanitarian law;
- ii) the promotion of environmentally, socially and economically sustainable patterns of development;
- iii) greater economic and social equity and justice, including equality between women and men;
- iv) the active participation of civil society organisations in democratic life, governance and decision-making process of their countries.

Why we are addressing and engaging with ASEM Parliamentarians

We present this **People's Agenda** to you at a time of continuing and growing inequalities, injustices and poverty experienced by an increasing number of people across Asia and Europe. What is often presented as a 'financial crisis' we believe is in reality part of a series of interlinked crises - food, energy, climate, human security and environmental degradation - that are already devastating our lives, and compounding the poverty and exclusion faced on a daily basis by millions of people across Asia and increasingly across Europe. Overall, the gap between the rich and the poor is widening, and access to resources, livelihood opportunities and essential public services remains grossly unequal.

There is a strong consensus among women and men across Asia and Europe that the dominant development approach over the last decades - based around deregulation of markets, increasing power of multinational corporations, unaccountable multilateral institutions and trade liberalisation - has failed in its aims to meet the needs and rights of all citizens. This has led to a gradual hollowing out of democratic accountability and a corrosion of a growing number of democratic institutions as elites make decisions and implement policies with limited or no scrutiny from citizens, creating the conditions for poverty, inequality, environmental devastation and growing social unrest. There is a deeply felt need and demand for change and for new people-centred policies and practices.

There is a widespread and growing sense that the inequalities across Asia and Europe are creating now, more than ever, insiders and outsiders from concentrations of power and wealth. Fractured economies have consolidated divisive and polarising politics. The growth of racism and xenophobia is toxifying social relations and contributing to already pronounced democratic deficits. In a significant number of countries there is a perceived and dangerous shrinking of democratic and civic spaces. The AEPF is compelled to share these deep concerns with our elected representatives.

Despite the policy failures of trade liberalisation, market deregulation and privatisation, the majority of our governments continue to ignore the growing tangible consensus for fundamental policy changes. Climate change, debt, financial, energy and food crises, which have been caused and compounded by the policies and practices of many governments in both rich and poor countries and the blanket privileges gained by big domestic and transnational corporations, have caused increasing social polarisation between peoples and states. In Asia the crises are exacerbating poverty and inequality already widespread before the present crises. In Europe the crises are creating indebtedness, precarious work, joblessness, the erosion of access to inclusive public services and income insecurity. The powers of transnational corporations have become even more entrenched as 'corporate capture' of governance and policy processes spread to more political arenas, giving corporate business significant control over our lives and livelihoods.

The power of corporate industry is rising rapidly, with transnational corporations *de facto* turning into 'corporate nations' that are bigger and more powerful than some nations. Through mega-

mergers and corporate concentration, these powerful global players control an ever-growing share of the world's economy, and exert great influence on economic policies from trade to tax policies. Their operations across the globe have huge economic, political, social, environmental and cultural impacts.

Their global power is reinforced by trade and investment agreements focused on unfettered liberalisation of trade in goods and services and the market access and post-establishment protections for foreign direct investors.

Forced migration is also a growing reality for millions of people.

Countries around the world spend over \$1tn a year on weapons of destruction, while millions of children die of easily treatable diseases.

Statistical economic growth has been founded on the growing desecration and destruction of our Commons, our resources, our environment, our climate. Our Climate crisis has demonstrated a quick destruction of many species, as historical injustices on climate policies continue. Our governments' have deflected progressive calls to protect the planet and protect the people. We expect urgent and people centred collective and national responses for framing our futures.

The responses of citizens are often at local and national levels and to complement these, the AEPF is looking to encourage and strengthen cooperation and solidarity of people's networks regionally, inter-regionally and globally.

AEPF12 provides a unique space to share and discuss these lived experiences and how people, communities and social movements are responding by developing and taking forward alternatives essential for more just, equal and inclusive communities, countries and even regions.

Every person on this planet shares a common humanity. We all want our children to grow up healthy, to have a good education, have decent work, drink clean water, breathe clean air and live in peace.

ASEM Parliamentarians have an historic opportunity to enable ASEM governments to heed what the AEPF had been pressing for over the last twenty two years - to reverse the current trends to more inequality and the erosion of people's fundamental social, economic and political rights and begin to build a more just, equal and inclusive Asia and Europe.

We call on our Governments to work with citizens, including poor, excluded and marginalised people, to develop and implement policies that will lead to a just, equal, inclusive and sustainable Asia and Europe, and more accountable and democratic institutions – based on respect for gender equality, our environment and fundamental human rights.

To do this, as citizens, we call upon Parliamentarians and ASEM Governments to develop legislation and mobilise the resources for the following:

Participatory Democracy, Reclaiming People's Rights and Fundamental Freedoms – People's Visions and Recommendations for change

The current phase of neo-liberal globalisation based on control of intellectual and material resources has hastened the pace of corporate capture of legal and political processes. 'New technologies', 'new economics' and 'new ways of communicating' are marked by the continued destruction of many public services and their privatisation. This has led to a crisis in the ability of elected representatives, governments, to fulfil their supposed responsibilities to their citizens. This has contributed to polarising people and creating atmospheres of partisan politics that threaten to tear societies apart. We live increasingly in a world of insiders and outsiders, of concentrations of power and wealth and of the regime of the corporations. Divided and dividing economies have increasingly consolidated dividing and divisive politics.

State endorsed corporate captures of natural and maritime resources, resource extractivism and labour replacing technologies, linked to rapid economic growth, profit maximising and climate change are alienating people from their livelihoods and our Commons. Such policies are contributing to forced migration and refugee movements with severe ramifications, especially for women and children. There has been the rise of vigilante and violent, conservative social and cultural groups.

A growing number of countries across Asia and Europe are experiencing more authoritarian and excluding politics. In many countries, the spaces and freedom of people to express their concerns to their elected representatives at local and national levels are being systematically limited, restricted and threatened. Summarised as shrinking democratic spaces, this translates as an exclusion and suppression of fundamental human rights, of voices, and of the rights to associate, organise, mobilise and demonstrate. This trend, that already existed in some authoritarian states, has now traversed into managed democracies. Linked is a discernible hostility toward democratic norms, antagonism toward a free press and intolerance toward some ethnic and religious minorities and migrants.

In a growing number of communities and countries a climate of fear is being consolidated for women and men who are promoting and protecting human, economic and socio-cultural rights, environmental security and the protection of our Commons.

This climate of fear is increasingly being expressed in urgent Issues across Asia and Europe.

We are compelled, following the testimonies from a, disturbingly, growing number of communities and countries, to sincerely remind all ASEM member states of their human rights obligations, both domestically and internationally.

The AEPF views with utmost concern the sharp decline in participatory democracy, human rights and shrinking democratic and civic spaces in many countries of Asia and Europe.

The AEPF12 strongly condemns the military coup d'état and the establishment of a military regime in **Thailand**. While celebrating its commitment to democracy, ASEM is legitimising a military regime by recognising its representatives. The official statements by ASEM on democracy, human rights and good governance are mere rhetoric if no action is taken against the military regime in Thailand.

1. We demand that ASEM members exert real and significant pressure on the Thai military regime to return human rights, the freedom of speech, the right of assembly, allowing all political parties to register and campaign for elections, and honouring the results of the popular vote, allow the right to campaign on the constitutional referendum and, as a result, democracy back to the people of Thailand.

Following the local elections in **Cambodia** in June 2017, the government has silenced critical voices by shutting down independent media outlets, suspending some NGOs, restricting travel and activities of people in rural areas, inventing a conspiracy about a “colour revolution,” and dissolving the main opposition party. As a result, the July 2018 elections have been widely recognised as not being inclusive and not being representative of the democratic will of all of the Cambodian people. Accordingly, the current elected government is not representative of all Cambodian people.

2. We express our demand to ASEM to work with the Cambodian authorities to restore democracy, to engage in dialogue with the opposition, and to create conditions conducive to free political debate, in which the media and civil society, including human rights, environmental, land and labour rights defenders, can freely exercise their rights without undue restrictions.

The mass, violently forced, exodus of nearly 725,000 **Rohingya** women, men and children to Bangladesh following their systematic repression by the government of **Myanmar** and a violent military campaign has generated worldwide attention, horror and criticism of Myanmar. However, the voices of peaceful Rohingya representatives and civil society organisations that are bringing this concern to multi-governmental political arenas like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are not being heard and given space.

3. We support the conclusions of the UN Report of the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar (September 2018) and we implore the ASEM Parliamentarians to include the actions of the Myanmar military and government with respect to the Rohingya

to be part of your deliberations, and support all diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means to assist Myanmar in meeting its responsibility to protect its people, including the Rohingya, from genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Relevant regional organisations, including the European Union and ASEAN, should develop strategies to ensure accountability for perpetrators of crimes under international law in Myanmar. ¹

Since President Rodrigo Duterte assumed office in **The Philippines** in July 2016, conservative estimates indicate that more than 12,000 men, women, and children coming from the most impoverished sections of Philippine society have been killed by the Philippine National Police or state sponsored and sanctioned Death Squads. The killed include human rights defenders, political, social, environmental, land rights and Indigenous Peoples' activists and catholic priests and at least 102 children. These significant human rights violations including Extra Judicial Killings, Enforced Disappearances and Torture, have created a climate of fear that is undermining democracy. The apparent admission by the President of his support highlights the urgent need for international investigations into the thousands of killings and other human rights violations committed in the name of the government's 'war on drugs'.

4. We urge President Duterte to end this 'campaign' and to stop demonising and threatening government critics and human rights defenders, including the ICC's Chief Prosecutor. The call continues for President Duterte and his government to cooperate with international investigations by the UN and the ICC in the absence of a national, independent and impartial inquiry into these killings and human rights abuses.

Also in Europe democracy is under threat. In **Hungary**, the government fails to respect the rule of law and human rights. Government representatives are increasingly hostile to journalists and engage in anti-migrant, anti-Muslim and xenophobic rhetoric including through publicly funded campaigns. Authorities have introduced legislation targeting civil society organizations and universities receiving funding from abroad. The worsening constitutional crisis which currently concerns the Polish State is the source of many doubts about the existence of the separation of powers and of the rule of law in **Poland**. There are growing concerns over the respect for the independence of the media. As a result of the management changes of public media, many journalists have been fired and replaced by others that are apparently more favorable to the Government's policy.

Responding to more authoritarian governance and shrinking democratic and civic spaces

Two years ago in Mongolia, the AEPF urged ASEM to defend substantive democracy and rights. Currently in many countries human rights defenders, not only of minorities and marginalised groups but also of some voices of dissent, are being silenced by climates of fear, threats of violence,

¹ file:///C:/Users/andyo/Documents/Fresh%20Eyes%20-%20PPT/Burma/Rohingya/A_HRC_39_64%20UN%20Report%20sept18.pdf

arbitrary detention and imprisonment.

We believe that three decades of neoliberal economic and corporate led-globalisation have led to increasing poverty and exclusion; centralisation of power; and the increasing use of national security mechanisms and surveillance to exclude and repress citizens from civic and political engagement and activity. This is harming inter-community and gender relations, and democratic and corporate accountability.

There has been the rise of vigilante violence and violent extremist social and cultural groups, the erosion of the human rights of migrants and refugees and the alarming increase of racism and xenophobia. Dissent is increasingly criminalised and violence often used to assert power.

Simultaneously across Asia and Europe, there is an increasing commitment to build transnational popular movements with a growing number of people joining to retain secular heritages and rights and justice based democracies and to end austerity and the processes of privatisation of public services.

Our Key Recommendations and Demands for Change to ASEM Parliamentarians

We call on ASEM governments to:

1. Promote substantive participatory democratic processes with respect for diversity by creating and expanding spaces for dialogue, interaction, tolerance and for enabling voice for all. This should be done without creating and reproducing class, caste, ethnic, gender, religious identities;
2. Enable local and national governments to share information and be accountable to citizens, to interact with local communities and ensure genuine access to processes of decision making. Local communities should be consulted at every stage of the decision making processes where their lives, livelihoods and living environments are affected. Citizens should be able to effectively use various mechanisms including right to information, social audits and participatory budgeting, according to specific country contexts;
3. Adopt legislation to enable markets and corporations to adopt democratic and accountability mechanisms and respect human, social and civil rights;
4. Adopt legislation and appropriate monitoring mechanisms to ensure adherence to legislation to create safer working environments, free of police repression, for all workers, especially women, and particularly in terms of sexual harassment. Governments are called to guarantee that the laws and norms that do exist are translated into reality.
5. To advocate for political party and electoral legislation in which there is provision for administrative requirements to form a political party, which includes standing in an election, and which should not undermine the right to association.

6. Enable Governments and Civil Society Organisations and social movements to promote democratic governance by making full use of SDG 16 which, as a cross-cutting goal, integrates peace, human rights, democracy and transparency;
7. Promote equality for all, regardless of class, ethnicity, nationality, race, caste, religion, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and expression) and age in fulfilment of international human rights law;
8. Establish mechanisms and support affirmative action to enable the making visible and giving voice to young people, women, LGBTQI Plus people, people with disabilities, HIV+ status, ethnic, religious and other minorities.
9. Urge ASEM governments to continue to uphold equality for all in legislation and policies by meaningful engagements of all relevant parties, especially of young people and the diverse minorities, through public information, awareness building and all forms of education aimed at ending all forms of discrimination and violence;
10. In the context of increasing assaults on civil society activists and shrinking spaces for the marginalised we urge ASEM civil society to continue building on intersectional solidarity arising from the diversity of people. With the view of promoting awareness, information and respect around these diversities and enabling meaningful participation and inclusion of all minorities in the matters of governance as well as of resources and means;
11. Recognise that, in addition to Sombath Somphone, there are a growing number of cases of Enforced Disappearances, abductions, arbitrary arrests, extra-judicial killings and other Human Rights abuses. We call on ASEM member governments to reaffirm their commitments to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent agreed Human Rights including UN Conventions and end the gap between agreed commitments and the lived realities of many peoples and communities;
12. Support and assist in creating opportunities for human rights defenders' and civic actors from Asia and Europe to build solidarity across countries, cultures, struggles, issues and sectors;
13. Appeal to ASEM to recognise the special needs of disabled people, including those with hearing disabilities and introduce sign language as official means of communication. The disabled people should be accorded all assistance, including technological support, to enable their equal participation;
14. Make a specific recommendation to ASEM to adopt sign language as an official language and encourage the European Union as the host of ASEM12 and subsequently the Asian host of ASEM13 to take this forward.
15. Make interventions to ensure that UN bodies play their mandated role in resolving conflicts occurring around the world;

Promoting a fair and sustainable financial system, which contributes to just, equal and inclusive societies

The promise that we will have increased economic growth through “free trade” **and economic and legislative liberalisation that would** improve our lives and the health of our planet has not been delivered. Natural resources are continuing to be over extracted and the damage to the planet from excessive and continued extraction of fossil fuels and the current approaches to production and consumption are now producing domino effects with both foreseen and unpredictable consequences. The irresponsible exploitation of the planet in the name of endless growth has put us all on a suicidal path to destruction.

Economic growth alone has not been the answer to poverty. If governments want to address poverty and inequality, they require more policies and programmes with redistributive mechanisms and effects.

The globalisation of finance and the process of financialisation are at the heart of the phase of neoliberalism. Ten years on from the financial crisis, the biggest banks have tripled their sizes, and some of the financial regulations intended to prevent a new crisis have already been rolled back.

Given this context, we sincerely advocate for a constructive cooperation with initiatives at the UN to achieve an international legally binding instrument (UN Binding Treaty) on Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with respect to human rights.

Through “free trade” rules in the WTO, the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and the Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) governments have been witnessing the writing and implementation of a new global constitution for the benefit of Transnational Corporations. Agreements on trade go beyond the issues of trade in goods. They also deal with food, health, employment, water, energy, climate, land, justice and almost all areas which sovereign states are supposed and obliged to have governance over.

The new-generation of comprehensive free trade partnerships are also ‘investor rights’ agreements. They are cemented by the much-hated and very dangerous Investor-State-Dispute-Settlement or ISDS that gives powers to transnational corporations to sue governments when they sense that their profits will be affected by state policies aimed at protecting people’s rights and the environment. We see global trade rules, especially ISDS trumping national sovereignty and forcing governments to comply and take away countries’ policy space.

We call on our governments to end the absurdity of the rich and multinational corporations holding over \$21tn in offshore bank accounts to avoid paying their fair shares of taxes and then demanding that their respective governments impose an austerity agenda on their working families.

This global political economic order has led to crisis-prone, short-term, unequal economies which are literally contributing to burning our planet

Financial systems reform –

Our Key Recommendations and Demands for Change to ASEM Parliamentarians

There is a widespread felt need for fundamental economic restructuring. There is a continuing need to put in place an alternative financial architecture and infrastructure that will promote and enable a more equitable, carbon neutral and just global economic system, reclaiming national development policy rights and empowering working people. To this end:-

1. We urgently need an international, legally binding instrument (UN Binding Treaty) on Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises. As a priority, we demand that you support the process mandated by the June 24 Resolution 26/9 of the UN Human Rights Council that is building such a binding UN Treaty on Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Respect to Human Rights;
2. We demand taking investment out of trade agreements and treaties. This includes the Investor-State-Dispute-Settlement or ISDS;
3. Parliaments should assert their role to oversee trade and investment negotiations and not let unelected and unaccountable trade and investment negotiators control our futures;
4. Parliaments should legislate to encourage more divestment from fossil fuels;
5. Legislation should be enacted to end tax breaks for fossil fuel and nuclear energy companies;
6. Invest significant, structural and public funds in improved energy efficiency, low carbon emitting public transport, renewable energy and environmental repair;
7. Improve the performance of public enterprises through democratising management – encourage public service managers, staff, unions and consumer organisations to collaborate to this end;
8. If we are to avoid a repeat of the 2008 financial crisis, the “too big to fail” banks should be broken up;
9. Public banks, local savings banks and cooperatives should be supported as they are effective in supporting climate-friendly measures, in particular those which have a not-for-profit public interest mandate;
10. Create people-based banking institutions and strengthen existing popular forms of lending based on mutuality and solidarity;
11. Prioritise lending, at minimum rates of interest, to meet social and environmental needs and to expand the already growing social economy;
12. An end should be put to speculation on food commodities and a global Financial Transaction Tax should be introduced, from which the returns will be used to tackle climate change;
13. National and appropriate regional legislation should urgently be implemented in order to end ‘offshore’ banking systems, which takes advantage of tax havens while facilitating tax avoidance globally;

14. Measures must urgently be put in place to end the unregulated shadow banking system, which can be found all over the world;
15. Financial institutions and financial decision making must become truly accountable and transparent. Institutionalise full transparency within the financial system through the opening of the books to the public and introduce parliamentary and citizens' oversight of the existing banking system;
16. Cancel or stop payment of all illegitimate debt and end the use of loans and debt relief to impose conditionalities;
17. Introduce incentives for products produced for sale closest to local markets.

We present our concerns and recommendations for five core areas:-

Social Justice - People's Vision and Recommendations for change

The Social Justice thematic pillar of the Asia Europe People's Forum is concerned with the growing social distress of people all over the world, faced with multiple problems of war, environmental degradation and climate change, rising inequalities and persistent poverty, economic crises, austerity policies and growing authoritarianism, erosion of human rights, discrimination and intolerance.

We consider comprehensive and universal social protection rights to be a primary element to promote social justice, within a coherent and just political and economic context.

While giving our full support to the existing global initiatives, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the ILO Social Protection Floors, our main objective is therefore to promote a stronger philosophy on social protection, one that goes beyond the traditional rights, that encompasses environmental needs and bridges the unacceptable gap between production and reproduction.

In our perspective, **social protection is a common**, emerging from the democratic and participatory actions of citizens with demands for public authorities. Social protection is **not a correction mechanism for the economic system, but should be transformative**, that is, contribute to a better productive system and to the sustainability of life. We see social protection as a collective and democratic endeavour for achieving a life in and of dignity for all. Democracy and social dialogue are indeed at the heart of social protection.

Our Key Recommendations and Demands for Change to ASEM Parliamentarians

We pursue on the Action Plan adopted at AEPF11 in Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia in 2016. We **submit a Global Charter for Universal Social Protection Rights**, mentioned therein, pointing to the interlinkages of the different sectors civil society organisations are working on, such as trade, the environment, gender equality, democracy and peace. Our Charter asserts the fundamental importance for rights-based solidarity mechanisms, embedded in national laws and fully respecting all universal human rights, as well as for the specific demands of the Ulaan Baatar Action Plan.

We put people at the forefront of our concerns for building a better world, caring for the planet and for a sustainable use of all its resources.

We believe social justice should be the overarching objective of all efforts to achieve a just and sustainable economy with fair trade, just finances and binding rules for governments and corporations.

The Charter recalls the international instruments for promoting human rights, several UN Declarations and the ILO Constitution stating that peace is not possible without social justice.

The Charter considers social protection as a condition for social citizenship, intrinsically linked to a social process of structural solidarity.

The Charter considers that social protection goes beyond poverty reduction and is aimed at eradicating and preventing poverty as well as at reducing inequalities. It consists of social security, social assistance, labour rights and extensive social services. It is a primary responsibility of States and has to come about in a participatory and democratic way.

In order to broaden support for the Charter, it is conceived as an **aspirational text**, not as a binding charter with all of its detailed points to be adopted or agreed with. It is not a text with demands but with **principles**. It is meant as a source of inspiration for movements, for parliaments and governments working towards social justice.

For Asia and Europe, we more particularly want to focus on the strategic needs for a life of dignity for all:

1. Nation-wide and regional social protection principles and standards;
2. Decent work and sustainable livelihoods in terms of living wages, employment guarantee programmes, an end to contractualisation, access to land and subsidies for small farmers. With half of the world's population engaged in agriculture, land should be a common resource and accessible to all tillers;
3. Decent social services in terms of universal, accessible and quality health care, free education up to the tertiary level, public housing, living requirements for water and energy;
4. Decent social security in terms of living pensions for the elderly and People with Disabilities, income guarantees during unemployment and natural disasters.

As for the detailed principles of our global Charter, based on the Ulaan Baatar Action Plan, we refer to our website www.globalsocialprotectionrights.eu in English, French and Spanish.

1. We make a plea for the promotion of public education and training sessions, so as to make people aware of their rights. Public authorities should make resources available for this.
2. We strongly advocate for the coherence of all policies, since social justice is not a single issue but the result of coherent just policies at the economic, environmental and social level. When focusing on one or other point, pensions or social services for example, demands should not be seen as context-free single demands. On the contrary, **the Charter helps to translate principles into detailed demands and gives meaning to them within an emancipatory and transformative context.**

3. We make a call on civil society to refer to these principles when campaigning for universal social protection systems, by all and for all.
4. We call on parliamentarians globally to advocate for and legislate, universal, comprehensive and effective social protection systems. We also call on them to monitor States' implementation of their social protection programmes and systems in particular through effective oversight on resources and budgets.
5. We call on governments to take this Charter as a guideline for social policies and to support all initiatives, politically and financially, aimed at achieving the principles of this Charter. We sincerely demand road maps with timelines and budgetary allocations for the immediate realisation of universal and comprehensive social protection systems. These should not lead to more borrowings or burdensome taxes for the poor and low income groups.

Climate Justice and Just Transitions – People’s Vision and Recommendations for change

Climate change is a manifestation of the planetary social and ecological crisis brought about by the dual expansion of capitalism and industrialism that has produced a skewed process of global wealth creation. In 2015, the 196 governments that attended the 21st Conference of Parties (COP) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed to pursue efforts to halt the global average temperature increase to below 1.5°C from pre-industrial levels. This aspiration, however, was not matched by the reality of current voluntary pledges in countries’ Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). This is not only a step back from the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities stipulated in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, but will also condemn us to a 3°C warmer world. Only a just, comprehensive and immediate transition away from a globalised neoliberal capitalist system and its patterns of production and consumption could begin to address the manifold challenges of climate change.

A central requirement to solving climate change is a complete transition, as soon as possible, from fossil-fuel dependent, undemocratic and unjust energy production and use.

Our Key Recommendations and Demands for Change to ASEM Parliamentarians

Energy is vital to realising people’s rights, social justice, and sustainable development. Yet the world’s dominant energy systems completely fail more than two billion people and have destructive local impacts – damaging our health, destroying our crops, and poisoning our rivers and forests. The current energy systems are also driving global warming. This climate change is already wreaking havoc on the lives of tens of millions of people worldwide by intensifying floods, droughts, and storms; driving people from their homes; acidifying the oceans; and driving an unprecedented extinction of non-human species. Climate change puts all of our lives, livelihoods, societies, and cultures at risk. The transformation is already happening but we must accelerate it.

We call on ASEM governments to:

1. Ban new ‘dirty energy’ projects and stop the expansion of fossil fuel energy production and consumption;
2. End government subsidies and public handouts to ‘dirty energy’ and related companies;
3. Stop excessive energy consumption by corporations and global elites;
4. Redirect and mobilise public finance to ensure people’s universal access to energy and make the complete shift to public and community/decentralised renewable and clean energy systems as soon as possible;
5. Divest from fossil fuel corporations;

6. Keep fossil fuels in the ground and support the transition needs of societies in their path towards increased use of energies that are renewable, clean, accessible, sustainable, and more importantly democratically owned;
7. Have concrete short term and medium term plans for appropriate emissions reduction to ensure the possibility that the 1.5°C limit will still be possible so potentially preventing climate catastrophe. Financial resources and technology assistance to developing countries for mitigation and adaptation needs must be extended, also for the loss and damage suffered from climate-induced disasters;
8. Stop aggressive and comprehensive trade and investment agreements, negotiated through highly secretive and exclusive processes that include the Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanism, which could adversely affect the introduction, strengthening and implementation of ecologically sound laws, policies and measures to ensure that environmentally harmful profit maximising economic activities are regulated.

Towards realising the above, we urge ASEM governments to adopt appropriate legislation to enable the following as a matter of urgency:

1. COMMIT to 100% renewable energy for all, to be achieved not later than 2030 for developed countries and as early as possible before 2050 for developing countries;
2. PLEDGE the finance necessary to build democratic, renewable energy systems for communities, ensure a just transition, provide universal access to energy, support demand-side reduction and energy saving measures;
3. AGREE to an international moratorium on new coal projects to be implemented no later than January 2019;
4. BAN fracking and newgas projects and adopt a global moratorium on new fossil fuel exploration and extraction techniques starting in 2018, towards ending fossil fuels extraction as soon as possible;
5. STOP large and dangerous energy projects;
6. ANNOUNCE a phase out of public subsidies for fossil fuels to be completed by 2020 for all developed countries and the international institutions they fund, and by 2025 for all developing countries;
7. WITHDRAW all public financing of large-scale biomass burning, agro fuels, mega-dams and waste incineration by 2018;
8. ADOPT binding national and international policies that prohibit industries that profit from fossil fuels and the climate crisis, and those representing their interests, from participating in international and national climate policy forums.

Trade Justice and Corporate Accountability – People’s Vision and Recommendations for change

Current trade and investment agreements are an integral part of a policy framework aimed at holding down wages and boosting profits for shareholders, while globalised patterns of production and consumption have a devastating effect on our environment and climate.

Under modern free trade agreements, transnational corporations enjoy highly enforceable rights and protections. Investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms, included by rote, enable TNCs to directly sue sovereign states before international tribunals over virtually any government measure impacting negatively on their investments, severely impacting states in their duty to regulate in the broader public interest and the respect of human rights, directly undermining democracy in the Global North and the Global South.

At the same time, when their corporate activities, either directly or indirectly, impact negatively on human rights and the daily lives of people globally, these same TNCs are able to evade national jurisdictions because of their transnational character, and the unprecedented economic, financial and political power they command, their economic and legal flexibility, and the complex structures they use to carry out their operations. Impunity therefore typically prevails, especially when the affected communities and peoples are in the Global South.

Trade and investment agreements aimed at liberalisation carry well-documented risks of highly adverse impacts on access to public services, access to public health and medicines; erosion of policy space; the right to food; environmental destruction and irreversible climate change, through an architecture of impunity and a structure of power that puts corporate rights above human rights and Peoples’ sovereignty.

In light of growing global inequality, the destruction of our planet’s eco-systems and irreversible climate change, what we need is a longer-term vision on how to regulate trade in the interest of economic, social and environmental justice

Trade and investment agreements must be redesigned to end impunity for TNCs, by enshrining extra-territorial obligations for their home and host states aimed at enhancing corporate accountability, as well as directly enforceable obligations on transnational economic actors to respect human rights and promote sustainable development, including conservation of our planet’s biodiversity and prevention of irreversible climate change.

Trade and investment agreements must no longer primarily be aimed at liberalisation, but at the establishment of frameworks to comprehensively regulate trade and investment flows, with the objective of promoting genuine sustainable development and the protection and fulfilment of basic human rights.

Our Key Recommendations and Demands for Change to ASEM Parliamentarians

To develop their future priorities to enable their policies and practice to

- i. balance the unfair consequences of unregulated globalisation by addressing the asymmetries of power between States, communities, individuals and corporations, and
- ii. enhance corporate accountability for the human rights violations committed by transnational corporations and other business enterprises,

To bring about

1. A 'reset' of the architecture of trade and investment agreements to regulate trade and foreign direct investments in order to ensure that they contribute to social, economic and climate justice which must include a supremacy clause to ensure that human rights, climate policies and measures to protect the environment take precedence over corporate rights and protections;
2. A transparent and inclusive process of negotiation and ratification of trade and investment agreements, that includes active engagement with civil society to ensure sensitive issues are identified and addressed in line with the principles of participatory democracy;
3. An end to the inclusion in trade and investment agreements of investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms that enable foreign direct investors to directly challenge public policy decisions of sovereign states and abuse their economic power to exert undue influence over democratic decision-making processes;
4. Specifically refraining from ratifying the EU-Vietnam and EU-Singapore FTAs until the European Court of Justice has provided clarity on the legality and compatibility with EU law of the Investment Court System as the latest form of investor-state dispute settlement, enshrined therein;
5. Constructive cooperation with initiatives at the UN to achieve an international legally binding instrument (UN Binding Treaty) on Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with respect to human rights, that:
 - a. Extends to the rights recognised in the ten main international human rights treaties, in the international humanitarian law, and particularly economic, social, cultural, civil, political and labour rights; the right to development, self-determination and a healthy environment; and all the collective rights of indigenous peoples and native communities;
 - b. Establishes the primacy of human rights, reaffirming the hierarchical superiority of human rights norms over trade and investment treaties and developing specific state obligations in this regard, including the rejection of arbitration clauses that give

- international arbitration bodies jurisdiction over state-investor dispute resolution processes (ISDS); and binding the International Economic and Financial Institutions (IFIs) to the general objectives and principles of the United Nations Charter, which include the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- c. Imposes direct obligations on Transnational Corporations (TNCs) to close the gap by which they escape their responsibilities and ensure their compliance with International Human Rights Law, International Environmental Law and international labour standards;
 - d. Extends to all transnational activities along the supply chain of TNCs; supply chains consists of companies outside the TNC that contribute to the operations of the TNC, including contractors, subcontractors or suppliers with whom the parent company or the companies it controls carry on established business relations, as well as the investors and the funds providing the capital of the TNC;
 - e. Enables victims to proceed before the courts of the home and host States of TNCs and Other Business Enterprises, in the States where the TNC carries out its substantial activities, or before an International Court on Transnational Corporations and Human Rights that shall be established with the competence to receive, investigate, judge and enforce its decisions.
 - f. Recognises the moral and legitimate authority of the persons and peoples affected by TNCs' activities; protects Human Rights, Environmental Rights defenders and whistle blowers; and establishes the right to reparation, information, justice (access to a just and impartial system) and guarantees of non-repetition of any human rights violations.
6. Support for an enabling legal, regulatory and scrutiny environment by respecting and, where necessary, establishing:
- a. The definition of mandatory due diligence obligations for TNCs and other business enterprises, including with respect to their subsidiaries;
 - b. the recognition of extraterritorial human rights obligations of states;
 - c. the recognition of corporate criminal liability;
 - d. mechanisms for coordination and cooperation among states on investigation, prosecution and enforcement of cross-border cases;
 - e. the setting-up of international judicial and non-judicial mechanisms for supervision and enforcement;
 - f. the imposition on States of the obligation to adopt regulatory measures requiring companies to apply human rights due diligence policies and procedures by means of companies being accountable in either the forum where the harm was caused, or the forum where the parent company is incorporated or where it has a substantial presence

7. **Data** The rise of 'big tech' is opening a new frontier in extractivism and the control of resources by big business. Data is the 'new oil', and online connections are the 'new gold'. This process not only threatens fundamental rights to privacy but, crucially, extends inequality between the global North and South, and entrenches corporate power across all aspects of our economic lives.

We call on ASEM policymakers to

- a. Take as a starting point a commons-based approach to the digital economy;
- b. Ensure the e-trade agenda - whether via the rules of the WTO or in any trade agreements between Europe and Asia - steers clear of including any e-commerce provisions that limit the policy space of governments;
- c. Use all available policy tools to break up the monopolies of big tech, and ensure that corporations active in the digital economy pay their fair share of taxes and respect Human Rights, labour and environmental law.

We strongly urge ASEM policymakers and Parliamentarians not to negotiate, sign or authorise trade and investment agreements that do not respect the principles outlined above,

And, as we see new cases emerging every day where powerful transnational corporations are using this mechanism to bend public policies to suit their interests, we very strongly call on parliaments in Europe and Asia not to ratify any trade or investment agreements that contain the investor to state dispute settlement mechanism in any way, shape or form.

Food Sovereignty and Resources Justice – People’s Vision and Recommendations for change

Across Asia and Europe, land, water, seeds, forests and fisheries are being subjected to the pressures from neo-liberal globalisation policies - whether from industrial agriculture or blue carbon initiatives; the expansion of mining, energy and the extractive industries; mega infrastructure projects; real estate development; luxury tourist enclaves; or conservation and market-based climate mitigation strategies. These pressures, especially when bolstered by national laws that are geared towards profit rather than peoples’ rights, are having a corrosive effect on livelihoods, cultures, and ecologies. The struggles are rooted in fights for social justice, and against all forms of discrimination based on gender, class, ethnicity, caste and religion. In particular countries and regions, this has been accompanied by the rise of militarism and increased authoritarian repression of civil society organisations and environmental and human rights defenders.

Against this backdrop, communities in both Asia and Europe are mobilising to put forward real alternatives based on grass-roots organising and social movement action to further the vision of food and resource justice based on their right to choose their own self-determined ways of living. This is exemplified by, *inter alia*, the global movement for food sovereignty, alternatives to mining and anti-extractivism campaigns, protection of the commons, and the multiple ways in which small farmers, pastoralists, fishing communities, and indigenous peoples are making strategic use of national and international governance instruments to claim and defend their access to and control over territories and natural resources as matters of human rights.

It is our overall objective to strengthen these People’s Visions and empower social movement actors and civil society organisations across Europe and Asia to assert democratic control over the land and water-scapes upon which they depend. These Peoples’ Visions are based on a commitment to solidarity, social and economic justice, and concern for the most vulnerable and marginalised. This stands in contrast to the false solutions offered by techno-capitalism, rising authoritarian populism, sectarian and exclusionary nationalism as well as a multi-stakeholder approach that seeks to balance different interests, erase power differentials, while mitigating the worst effects of a “business as usual” approach. Truly elevating People’s Visions means prioritising the voices of those that are most affected in decision-making around food and natural resources in accordance with the important principle of “nothing about us, without us”.

Our Key Recommendations and Demands for Change to ASEM Parliamentarians

These initial recommendations build on the final declaration of the AEPF 11, and were finalised during the AEPF 12 meeting. They also take their inspiration from key social movement documents such as those issued by the Nyéléni International and Nyéléni Europe movements for Food Sovereignty and the International Peoples Conference on Mining (IPCM)

These recommendations include:

1. To ensure there are constitutional guarantees to support those most at risk from shrinking spaces for civil society, protecting, investigating and sanctioning to prevent attacks and threats against environmental and human rights defenders.
2. Hold governments accountable for their human rights violations also with regard to their extra-territorial human right obligations. To ensure this, there should be support for a strong binding treaty on transnational corporations.
3. Ensure strict laws and their enforcement so that companies along the whole supply chain, including downstream companies, abide by national and international human rights standards. There should be thorough and independent Environmental Impact Assessments, as well as Human Rights Impact Assessments of all development projects and investment programmes.
4. Oppose land, ocean, coastal and Small Island resource grabbing and respect the human rights of indigenous peoples, peasants, pastoralists and small-scale fishers to their lands, territories, fishing grounds and resources, utilising instruments such as the FAO Small-scale Fisheries Guidelines and the Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests.
5. Ensure good faith negotiations with affected communities according to internationally agreed human rights instruments, using free prior and informed consent as a minimum standard specifically for indigenous peoples, and apply its principles to all communities.
6. In recognition of the critical role that rural and indigenous women have in food production, and in the struggle for food sovereignty and resource justice, there should be meaningful, substantive participation of women in the development of their land and territory, and the utilisation of their resources.
7. Organise widespread campaigns to reduce overall consumption, which is driving resource extraction and, with the issue of climate change in mind, fossil fuels need to be left in the ground.
8. Promote and advance the arrested agenda of land reforms, and land to the landless, and take measures to counter land concentration and land speculation.
9. Promote food sovereignty, sustainable agriculture and peasant agroecology by providing research, extension, credit, subsidies and market access support.
10. Support the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

11. Protect our Commons against privatisation; Recognise, respect and protect ancestral domains and territories of indigenous peoples, as well as their indigenous governance systems.
12. Create common village level seed banks, to decrease dependency on commercial seeds, recognising the rights of peasants to freely use and exchange their own seeds. Maintain a diverse selection of native seeds to support agro-ecology and a re-generative environment.
13. Develop strong support systems so that farmers and consumers can interact directly, through means of alternative food systems such as Community Supported Agriculture, Farmers Markets, and Community Gardens.

Peace and Security - People's Vision and Recommendations for change

At the 2016 Asia-Europe People Forum (AEPF) in Ulaanbaatar, peace movements and people's organisations made a variety of recommendations to deal with issues such as nuclear weapons, refugee crises, violent conflicts, inter and intra state disputes and tensions, military spending, social inequalities, terrorism, state and non state violent actions and submitted these to ASEM leaders in an effort to maintain sustainable peace and people's security in Asia and Europe and the world as a whole.

Since then, peace and social movements within the AEPF framework have worked with others to significantly contribute to maintaining peace and security in Asia and Europe and the world. As a result, we have witnessed some positive changes: the adoption of the binding treaty to ban nuclear weapons in 2017 and the recent progress in the settlement of the conflicts in the Korean Peninsula; peace negotiations in several armed conflicts; and the women's movements' mobilisation and passing Security Council Resolution 1325.

However, the peace and security situation remains complicated. Opposition of nuclear-power states to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the USA's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal increases greatly the tensions in West Asia where there the many ongoing violent conflicts, destruction and breakdown. Militarist values and defence budgets continue to increase in many countries, even while the most compelling needs are for social expenditure and saving the environment. Besides, conflicts and disputes in 'hot spots' including South China Sea and East China Sea, boundary and unresolved conflicts in South Asia, the plague of terrorism, extremist politicised religious fundamentalism, forced displacement of ethnic minorities and the severe refugee crises continues to evolve in complex and dangerous ways that negatively impact people, communities and states. Destructive economic policies without including environmental considerations, resulting in climate change, evident by such ecological catastrophes in the Mekong Delta, floods in Japan, France and heat wave in Europe which threaten people's lives and livelihoods. In addition, populism, xenophobia and the rise of the far right wing are leading to multiple threats, insecurities and violent conflicts in the world in general and in Asia and Europe in particular.

Neo-liberal globalisation has led to an extraordinary concentration of finance capital and political power with deep inequalities and exclusions.

Our Key Recommendations and Demands for Change to ASEM Parliamentarians

AEPF would like to reiterate and submit proposals to ASEM leaders to maintain sustainable peace and people's security in both continents and the world as a whole:

1. Immediately sign, ratify and implement the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; encourage discussion of the possibility of establishing Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone as one of the options of addressing the issue of denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and contributing to regional confidence and stability;

2. Take serious steps to cut military expenditures and announce yearly reductions and transfers of resources to social needs;
3. Put an end to armed conflicts and initiate negotiations in major hot spots like West Asia; encourage peaceful resolution of disputes in the South China Sea in accordance with international law, notably the UN Charter and UNCLOS;
4. Encourage the Korean peace process and support people's movements and diplomatic efforts, so parties stay on the negotiating table till real de-militarisation is achieved and people are united again;
5. Stop threats and use of force in international relations. Stop military interventions and sanctions since it harms the vulnerable, poorest and the excluded but has little impact on regimes and leaders that are targeted;
6. Strengthen international institutions and reforms towards democracy and accountability;
7. Support the promotion of education for peace and human rights, develop peace advocacy based on nonviolence, human rights and secularism;
8. Stop all destructive policies, respect international and regional agreements, and strengthen cooperation in the protection of the environment for human security;
9. Strengthen dialogue and information sharing with all other stakeholders, including academic sector and people's organisations and CSOs, especially the grassroots movements and people's organisations for a peaceful Asia, Europe and the world as a whole;
10. Be responsible for necessary assistance to war victims, including Hibakusha, victims of Agent Orange and chemical barrel bombs in their daily lives and their struggles for justice;
11. Address the refugee crises based on humanitarian and human rights' principles and assist countries and populations through strategic partnering, association agreements, civil society/ people-to-people dialogue and direct aid. To sensitise different sections of society including political parties, organisations and institutions to the problems faced by refugees and migrants and the common responsibilities to address this issue.