



APRN NEWSLETTER

The Official Newsletter of the Asia Pacific Research Network

Second Quarter 2015

Whose Economic Community?

CSOs gather at the ACSC/APF to interrogate the ASEAN Economic Community, build solidarity among ASEAN peoples (see story on next page)



Thousands of CSOs and activists gathered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for the 10th ACSC/APF. In this panel discussion, advocates for migrant rights decry the continuing abuse of migrant workers and demand the release of Mary Jane Veloso, a migrant worker sentenced to death in Indonesia. (Photo from theonlinecitizen.com)

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Whose Economic Community?

ASEAN Economic Community and the People

CSOs interrogate the rationale and content of the ASEAN Economic Community in a workshop at the ACSC/APF

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The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is on the cusp of establishing the ASEAN Community by the end of 2015. The ASEAN Community was born out of the efforts of the 10 member states (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) to spur regional integration in order to be able to assert ASEAN's centrality to ensure that it remains the driving force in shaping the constantly evolving regional architecture, and to attract more foreign investments by using its combined market strength.

ASEAN is being projected as a new destination for investments because of its growth rate, which is currently faster than EU, and the size of its economy, set as the 7th largest with a collective GDP of USD2.4 trillion in 2014. The region is also rich with human and also natural resources such as fossil fuels, minerals, and forests. Investors are saying that ASEAN will continue this economic 'success' as long as it fulfills its setting up of the ASEAN Economic Community which is at the heart of ASEAN Integration. The AEC, along with the other two pillars, Political-Security and Socio-Cultural, have their own blueprints charting the path towards achieving the ASEAN Community.

Exclusive growth, resource grabs

ASEAN has experienced positive economic growth since the Asian Financial Crisis. Poverty rates did drop from 45% in 1990 to 18% in 2011. However, these numbers do not adequately reflect the realities on the ground. Rural poverty is still high, with 70% of the poor living in rural areas. More than half of ASEAN's labor force or 61% in 2013 are employed in vulnerable forms of employment, which lack security and are prone to abuse and exploitation. Of those who are employed, 32% are in working poor conditions, unable to adequately provide for their basic daily needs.

Perhaps, the starkest evidence that growth in the region has not benefited the majority of the population is the rising inequality. Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam have the highest rates of inequality in the region. Among these countries, the Philippines has the highest income inequality with a Gini coefficient of 44% in 2011, higher than Thailand's 42.5 %, Indonesia's 39.4 %, Malaysia's 37.9 % and Vietnam's 37.8 %. In 2014, 10% of the richest Filipinos owned over 70% of the country's total wealth.

Further driving poverty and inequality are the land and resource grabs to feed other countries' need for energy, raw materials, and even food. In Cambodia, an estimated 400,000 farmers in poor rural areas have been affected by land grabbing since 2003. The global need for palm oil, fossil fuels, and precious and semi-precious metals are also causing, land grabbing, displacing farming and indigenous communities from their territories in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Deforestation rate in ASEAN is at 3.7 million hectares per year, with Malaysia on the lead, losing 14.4% of its forest cover from 2000-2012. Note that this rate can still increase when palm oil and timber plantations are removed from reforestation efforts.

Corporations and local elites perpetrating these resource grabs are seldom penalized. Instead, laws in ASEAN give them more carrot than stick. For example, mining liberalization in the Philippines gave foreign mining companies 100% ownership of their profits, tax breaks, as well as investment defense forces, comprised of military and paramilitary personnel that provide 'protection' to the mining companies in case of resistance from the people. However, no mining company has ever been held accountable for the human rights violations and environmental destruction that their operations had caused.

These persistent challenges will not in any way be addressed by the AEC. Instead, these will be worsened when the AEC will be implemented at the end of 2015.

A blueprint for corporate exploitation

The AEC blueprint outlines the four components of the AEC: (a) a single market and production base, (b) a highly competitive region, (c) a region of equitable economic development, and (d) a region fully integrated into the global economy. Each pillar has core elements that need to be achieved in order to establish the AEC.

The fact that the AEC is a large-scale, coordinated exercise to attract foreign investment gives way to the intensification of neoliberal policies that gives more rights to foreign investors, in exchange for people's rights. In order to fulfill the four components, massive liberalization measures will be implemented to enable the free flow of goods, services, labor, and investments.

This new wave of liberalization will further endanger people's rights over their natural resources, as well their access to public services which are in danger of being turned into profit-making businesses through privatization or public-private partnerships. Small holder producers' livelihoods and SMEs are again threatened by the influx of foreign goods and corporate giants. Furthermore, the AEC will reinforce neocolonial relations between developing ASEAN countries and developed non-ASEAN countries as ASEAN's economic integration into the global market will support the region's role as a vast supplier of natural resources and cheap labor to more developed economies.

Amidst the removal of protection measures for local industries, including the small and medium enterprises, the AEC, through the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement (ACIA), will increase protection for foreign investors. Aside from protection from expropriation, ACIA reinforces existing laws that provide investors invest defense forces that will provide them security in times of strife. ACIA also gives corporations increased power to influence domestic policy through the Investor-State Dispute

Settlement (ISDS), which them the right to sue governments for implementing policies that will lessen their profits, even if those policies cater to public interest. ISDS will give corporations the right to sue governments for raising minimum wages for example as Veolia, a French company, has done to Egypt. Despite the power given to corporations, measures to ensure accountability remain weak, to virtually absent.

ASEAN peoples do not need an economic integration that will further siphon the region's wealth into the pockets of a few, worsen resource grabs, and human rights violations. What is needed is a people's economic community that responds to the demands for Development Justice. It must be based on solidarity, cooperation, and complementarity, instead of competition. ASEAN peoples are already building alternatives on the ground through their cooperatives, fair trade systems, and solidarity economy. Ultimately, these grassroots alternatives will have to be complemented by struggles against neoliberal policies at the local and regional levels in order to build a genuine, people-centered economic community.#

CSOs dissect the ASEAN Economic Community at the ASEAN People's Forum

Regional organizations Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM), and Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN) teamed up to organize the workshop Unpacking the ASEAN Economic Community: Exposing the Implications and Building Alternatives to the Neoliberal Economic Integration. The workshop was conducted on April 24 at the ASEAN Peoples Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The objectives of the workshop were to understand the history and drivers pushing for the regional economic integration of the ASEAN, understand the critical components of the AEC and raise awareness on its implications on the ASEAN peoples and to discuss proposals on alternatives to the AEC that espouse the principles of development justice.

Antonio "Tony" Tujan, Jr of IBON International walked the participants through the history and geopolitical context of the ASEAN, from its Cold War roots, to the triumph of neoliberalism that heightened the exploitation of natural resources and labor of the region's peoples. According to Tony, at the heart of the current regional economic integration is the desire of all ASEAN countries to increase investments by transnational corporations (TNCs), which will intensify resource grabs.

Ma.Cristina "Tinay" Palabay of human rights group Karapatan shared further details on how the ASEAN Economic Community's liberalization blueprint will give corporations more power than ever to control the region's resources at the expense of the poor, marginalized communities. According to Tinay, the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement (ACIA) contains investor protection measures, including the investor-state dispute settlement which allows foreign corporations and investors to sue governments over

policies/laws that hurt their profits, even if these policies/laws protect people's rights and welfare.

While agreements are being signed to promote the integration, the ASEAN people know so little about it. In fact, a survey commissioned by the ASEAN secretariat in 2013 found out that 76 percent still "lack a basic understanding" of what ASEAN is and what it is striving to do. Eni Lestari from the International Migrants Alliance discussed how little the migrant workers and grassroots people know about the ASEAN economic integration. According to Eni, the AEC will fuel more forced migration because of resource grabs in sending countries.

Kate Lappin of APWLD and Marjorie "Marj" Pamintuan of APRN talked about what would be alternatives to the current neoliberal economic model that the ASEAN is currently following. Kate outlined the development justice framework which would be needed to deliver an just regional integration. The five foundational shifts of development justice are: redistributive justice, economic justice, gender and social justice, environmental justice, and accountability to peoples. Meanwhile, Marj expounded on the principles of the Bandung Asia-Africa Conference and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of America (ALBA), which both present alternative frameworks for regional integration and cooperation.

Participants and discussants shared among each other their diverse concerns on AEC and whether CSOs can really build an alternative regional integration. It was pointed out that ALBA was born out of peoples' struggles to install responsive, accountable governments, and also for a regional integration that works for peoples' rights and welfare.

More than 1400 delegates from an estimated 1000 civil society organizations gathered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for the ASEAN People's Forum from 21-24 April, 2015. #

Measuring Development Inaccurately: What the UN's Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals Should Be Measuring

Statement delivered by APRN Chairperson Ma. Theresa Lauron at the March 2015 Intergovernmental Negotiations in New York, focusing on targets and indicators

In the Philippines, like many other countries, statistics have been used to mask poverty and inequalities between rich and poor, men and women. A few magical waves of statistical wands support governments' claim that poverty has been greatly reduced, and that globalization has been good for all. But walk with me through Manila's slums and I'll show you that poverty, no matter how it's measured, is deeply felt by millions. Come to our rural communities and see how resource grabs, the privatization of water, energy, education and health are greater indicators of misery.

Statistics are political acts. They matter for those we choose to count. They matter even more for those we don't count.

This is no more clearly demonstrated than in the continued use of policy makers, governments, and institutions of the World Bank-defined extreme poverty headcount ratio pegged at \$1.25/day that monitors the number of people living below this level of income. By using such a distressingly low level of income to define the poor, the World Bank is able to give the positive spin that the number of people living extreme poverty has decreased dramatically in the past three decades: from half the citizens in the developing world in 1981 to 21 per cent in 2010, even with a 59 per cent increase in the developing world population.

Being the arbiter of global poverty statistics, the Bank has used the \$1.25/day yardstick to promote neoliberal globalization as the ultimate weapon to combat poverty. Since the inception of the MDGs in 2000 up to now, it has consistently depicted the global poverty situation in rose-tinted glasses while effacing the millions victimized by the Bank's policies of privatization, liberalization, and globalization: women and youth who have no access to social services, workers who work under vulnerable and precarious conditions, and indigenous peoples ejected from their ancestral domain by the government and big business.

The statistics we select should measure transformation. And it's not hard. We can measure:

- growing wealth inequalities between countries and between people;
- how much of the world's wealth is sitting in offshore bank accounts;
- whether a country provides living wages;
- the ratio between labour share and profits. We could even measure the time it takes the world's richest person to gain what a Bangladeshi garment worker will earn in a year (which is one second, by the way).



We can measure policies, not just outcomes. Let's measure:

- military spending and compare it to versus public health spending;
- taxes paid by corporations and by the wealthy;
- interest in loans paid by developing countries;
- how many trade agreements are subject to human rights and gender audits.

These are statistics that should measure poverty across a wide range of factors, not only in terms of income. We should come up with goals and indicators that express and reinforce the interlinkages of the three core pillars of sustainable development: economic development, social development, and environmental sustainability.

We need to amplify the voice and increase the participation from civil society and developing country representatives in the deliberation and negotiation for the post-2015 development framework.

Civil society can play a powerful role in monitoring the SDGs including through institutionalized participation at all levels, connecting local realities to global policy debates, and in building new paradigms for social transformation and development justice.

CSOs have continued monitoring these processes, maximising the official space provided for them to engage with key stakeholders in the intergovernmental sessions. It is unclear, however, whether their strong calls will resonate in the content of the Post 2015 Agenda.#

Strengthening Integration, Implementation and Review- the HLPF after 2015

AP RCEM Statement delivered by APRN BOC Member Ajay Jha of CECOEDECON at the Meeting of the ECOSOC President with Major Groups During the HLPF in New York

I present this statement on behalf of the APRCEM. The APRCEM's main guiding force is a call for development justice, which demands five transformative shifts; redistributive justice, economic justice, social and gender justice, environmental justice and accountability to the people.

The APRCEM believes that the post 2015 agenda, perhaps for the first time, offers the UN an opportunity to address systemic failures and meaningfully integrate economic, social and environmental objectives of the development. The science and the society tells us that failure to do so, may not give us another chance to make up for this last opportunity! To do this HLPF must cultivate itself as an independent, transparent and inclusive institution that provides motivation and force for the implementation of the SDGs. Towards this end we recommend the following;

1. The HLPF must use its hybrid structure to ensure policy coherence and overcome the differences between the developed and developing countries and attract highest political commitment. It must also

create harmony among the institutional objectives of the UN, the World Bank & the IMF and the WTO.

2. Establish a fair, transparent and effective review and follow up mechanism based on human rights commitments, which integrates accountability at all levels rather than only creating different levels of reporting.
3. Review should include impact of non- state actions on sustainability including those of the Private sector, IFIs, Trade, Technology and investment measures and UN agencies.
4. The review should not only be a fault finding exercise but must support MOI looking at filling the gaps in institutional and legislative capacity, incentivizing follow up, and remove obstacles to safe and appropriate, gender sensitive and economically viable and equitable technologies.
5. It must ensure widest possible participation of the major groups in its diversity, follow the principle of non- regression and encourage this practice at regional and national mechanisms.#

Asia Pacific CSOs Demand Development Justice at the 2nd APFSD

AP RCEM Statement for the Special Session : Asia-Pacific models of sustainable development at the 2nd Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

Growth in Asia Pacific did not benefit those who need it most, as evidenced by the shocking levels of inequalities and severe environmental destruction. It is time to do away with this market-driven model that allows the 1% of the population to own more than the 99% and threaten to destroy the very planet that we live in.

CSOs from Asia Pacific collectively propose a new development model that provides a new vision for an equitable, sustainable and just development. This model, called Development Justice requires 5 foundational shifts.

We call for redistributive justice. To address inequalities within and between countries- wealth, power, and opportunities should be redistributed to all human beings equitably by dismantling the existing systems, which channel resources and wealth from developing countries to wealthy countries, from people to corporations and elites.

We need economic justice to make sure that economies work for the people and not the other way around. Production should enable the people to live dignified lives.

Environmental Justice is needed because our planet is rapidly approaching towards an ecological/climate disaster. Addressing the problem of environmental sustainability

should also not forget the responsibilities of countries and corporations that caused this in the first place.

Eliminating patriarchal systems and fundamentalisms to address gender-based violence and discrimination, challenging existing social structures, and affirmation of sexual and reproductive health and rights, requires much work, along with addressing other social justice issues. For this, we need Gender and Social Justice.

Participatory democracy is being undermined by restricting space for civil society, while on the other hand, corporation's influence over how public policy is developed and implemented are being increased, without proper mechanisms in place to ensure their accountability. We need a genuine review and follow up mechanism that will ensure accountabilities to the peoples.

Development Justice can only be achieved through collective action, some of which are already happening: from agro-ecological practices of farmers, fair trade movements, to indigenous peoples blocking destructive investments from their ancestral lands, and garment workers demanding decent work and living wages. Clearly, people on the ground have started to build, and travel on the road to development justice. We invite, you, to travel the road to development justice with us. #

Joint CSO-LA Statement on the Occasion of the 2nd Regional Meeting of the Policy Forum on Development in Asia Pacific

Delivered by APRN BOC Chair Ma. Theresa Lauron at the PFD Meeting on May 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand



CSO and LA participants with EU representatives at the Policy Forum on Development discuss the EU's Post 2015 Agenda

We, 50 Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities from Asia and the Pacific, gathered together at the 2nd Regional Policy Forum on Development on June 24-25 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Coming together, we have realized that CSOs, LAs, and their constituents, face some common issues and challenges in the field of development, which could be addressed with support from EU, through the following measures:

- Support the enabling environment for CSOs and LAs through measures such as:
- CSO and LA participation in the development – planning, implementation, and monitoring of policies and projects, at all levels (national, regional, and international).
- Capacity building for CSOs and LAs to improve their own development effectiveness and accountability.
- Coordinate financing mechanism with other donors so as to avoid duplication and enhance synergies using need-based approaches, and moving from project-based to program-based funding.
- Capacity development for the implementation, monitoring and data collection system, and evaluation of development policies.
- Supporting accountability mechanisms for

corporations, such as the Business and Human Rights Mechanism

- Support more public-public and public-people partnerships in development cooperation.

We welcome and acknowledge the value of the PFD, as a space for policy debate, consultation and exchange of information and experiences on the EU's main policies and initiatives in the development field. In order to continue working together, more efficiently and effectively, deeper trust needs to be developed among the different actors involved to recognize their common vision and challenges, while respecting the differing contexts where they are coming from. More trust-building exercises are needed, and these will take a lot of time, commitment, openness, and resources.

In the spirit of moving forward, we recommend the continuation of the PFD with regularity, and with more structure through adopting thematic-based meetings, with the participation of relevant directorates of the EU, to address the different aspects of EU's development policy.

The upcoming evaluation of the PFD presents a good opportunity to reflect on its experiences for the past two years, and revisit its mandate to make it into an effective space for policy influencing.

CSOs and LAs will continue working together with the EU with the common objective of making development work for the people and the planet.#

CSO Key Messages for a Just and Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda

Statement Submitted by CSOs at 2nd Regional Meeting of the Policy Forum on Development in Asia Pacific



CSO Representatives at the interactive panel on the key issues, challenges, opportunities in the Post-2015 process

We, Asia and the Pacific civil society organizations, representing various major groups and stakeholders, gathered in Bangkok, Thailand on June 24 to 25 on the occasion of the Policy Forum on Development Meeting of the Asia and Pacific region.

In this meeting, we raise our collective voices to call on the European Union to champion Development Justice in its policies and actions in Asia and the Pacific. The five foundations of Development Justice : Redistributive Justice, Economic Justice, Social Justice, Environmental Justice, and Accountability to Peoples, provide a transformative framework that aims to reduce inequalities of wealth, power, opportunities, and resources between countries, between rich and poor and between men and women.

Furthermore, we urge on the EU to embrace a rights-based approach, and ensure that the human rights principles of equality, equity, non-discrimination and inclusive participation and decision-making underpin its development cooperation in the region.

The EU can support redistributive justice and reduce inequalities between countries by:

- Promoting progressive taxation, including capital gains taxes and financial transactions taxes, EU is also called upon to review trade and investment provisions that allow corporations to reduce tax obligations.
- Promoting cooperative system of public-peoples enterprises and public-private ventures, which practice

democracy, equality, equity and solidarity and embrace the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for people and planet.

- Review the EU's energy projects in the region to ensure that these do not lead to loss of livelihoods and instead promote the aspirations especially of small producers at the local level.
- Promoting less military expenditure and reallocate the resource for poverty eradication, including for people deprived of telecommunication services and access to information to reduce the Digital Divide between rural and urban areas.

The EU can promote economic justice in its development cooperation in the region by:

- Ensuring economic cooperation contains appropriate safeguards so as not to constrain domestic policy space for development.
- Reviewing public-private partnerships (PPPs) to ensure that these follow the principles of democratic ownership and respect for human rights.
- Ensuring open source access to intellectual property essential for sustainable development in the EU's trade and investment agreements.
- Support trade unionism and freedom of association and social dialogue. Commit to internationally-recognized framework of International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Decent Work and Living Wage agenda, and ILO's Social Protection Floor Initiative as a starting point for basic social protection for everyone.

EU can support gender and social justice in its policies and projects in Asia and the Pacific through:

- Uphold governments' roles as duty bearers of human rights, and in respecting, protecting and fulfilling rights to communications and information, and the wider freedom of expression, speech, movement, and to organise as civil and social movements.
- Supporting women's empowerment and participation, especially those coming from small holder producers, in policy development, implementation, and monitoring.
- Requiring trade and investments to be child and disabled-friendly, and gender-responsive, addressing the conditions of women, including decent work and gender discrimination in the workplace.
- Advance the substantive gender equality for achieving women's human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, as central to sustainable development.
- Promote universal access to health care, including for sexual and reproductive health, and comprehensive sexuality education, including for young people and girls.
- Empower and strengthen capacity of women and girls to address gender inequities, alongside efforts to integrate needs of women and girls into the development process.
- Revoke discriminatory and punitive laws and policies, including traditions and local practices.
- Mandate targets for women in decision making at local and regional levels.

EU support the achievement of environmental justice through:

- Ensuring that renewable energy projects (windmills, solar energy, agrofuels, etc) supports climate policies that address the adaptation and mitigation needs of developing countries in a just and equitable manner.
- Promote the role of civil society and private sector in delivering the sustainable development agenda, particularly, their interventions on climate change to ensure that these will be people-oriented.
- Committing to full recognition of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) and genuine, pro-people solutions over market-based mechanisms.
- Committing to climate finance that is new and in addition to ODA and accounted for separately. Likewise, climate finance must be immediate, public and non-debt creating. It should synchronize mitigation and adaptation efforts and assist grassroots communities in accessing climate finance for adaption.

Lastly, the EU can guarantee the accountability to peoples through:

- Supporting the cultivation of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) into a strong, independent, transparent and inclusive institution that provides monitoring, review and enables implementation and enforcement of commitments reiterated through the Sustainable Development Goals.



Antonio Tujan, Jr. IBON International Director (Left) delivering the key messages of CSOs during the closing session of the PFD Meeting in Bangkok.

- Upholding the primacy of Human Rights and the UN Charter over trade and investment agreements.
- Ensuring free prior informed consent from IP communities as well as all affected communities. Support democratic ownership by ensuring transparency and people's participation in the negotiation, implementation, and monitoring of trade and investment agreements.
- Providing regulatory mechanisms, such as the Business and Human Rights Mechanism, which would serve as guide for institutions and corporations from EU member states as they conduct business particularly outside the EU member nations and hold multinational corporations accountable for human rights violations and erosion of state capacity.
- Promoting enabling environment for CSO participation through:
 - Formalize, operationalize, and institutionalize, the participation of CSOs and grassroots communities in the development, implementation, and monitoring of policies, at the subnational, national, regional, and global levels. This can be supported through creating platforms for multistakeholder platforms involving CSOs and grassroots communities as equal partners in development.
 - Supporting capacity building for CSOs to improve their development effectiveness and accountability.
 - Supporting the sustainability of CSOs through longer-term financing rather project-based funding, and coordinating financing mechanism with other donors so as to avoid duplication and enhance synergies using need-based approaches.
 - Utilising EU's donor position as leverage to promote enabling environment for CSOs in the midst of government crackdowns.

We believe in the power of dialogue and constructive engagement, and wish to see the Policy Forum on Development, turn into an effective space for policy influencing for a transformative development agenda.#

Neoliberal economic model still dominates European policies

Ziad Abdel Samad, APRN BOC Vice Chairperson

In late May of this year, the European Commission organized the second annual Forum for “Civil Society South” in Brussels. It brought bringing together a broad range of civil society representatives from the Neighborhood South along with the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security and the head of European External Action Service (EEAS) Federica Mogherini, Commissioner for the European Neighborhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations (ENP) Johannes Hahn, and their advisors, in addition to the Development Directorate (DG near).

The Forum was held in parallel with the extensive consultations launched by the EEAS and the ENP, following the selection of the new Commission in the wake of the European Parliament last year. The meeting was also compelled by the EU’s new challenges in dealing with the countries of the Southern neighborhood, particularly with the tragic outcome after four years of the Arab Spring.

On the other hand, the negotiations launched by the Commission include a quick review of the previous period, which was marked by the EU and its member states focusing on their own interests as a priority. However, the consultation document (green document) saw the need to redraw relations with the neighborhood in a flexible and differentiated manner, in the interest of the various parties of this process. A key focus must be put on common priorities and collective ownership of various tracks.

Prior to these negotiations, the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker launched an investment plan that later carried his name. It proposed earmarking €315 million in the coming three years (2015-2017) to support investments in southern Europe. These countries had suffered the brunt of the 2007 economic and financial crisis in the EU. The plan’s authors believe that the sharp decline in investments during the crisis years had been the result of loss of investor confidence in demands for products and goods, due to decreased purchasing power and low consumer capacity, as well as fragmentation and decline in the financial markets. This led to a lack of capacity to take enough risks to stimulate investments.

Since the onset of the crisis, European decision-making circles were mobilized to defend neoliberal economic ideology as the sole way out of the crisis and its only solution. Bilateral free trade negotiations tracks were launched in earnest across the Atlantic (with the US) and with China, Japan, and others, to promote free trade. Simultaneously, the EC proposed the deep and comprehensive free trade negotiations with neighboring countries. A report by the EU Trade Commission in February 2014 stressed that these negotiations will contribute to increasing the economic growth rate in Europe as a whole by 2% and to decreasing unemployment by 1%. The report considers the conclusion of such agreements to be as important as the accession of a country the size of Denmark to the EU. However, several analysts believe the economic crisis was specifically caused by the nature of the financial and trade systems, which are

grounded in the theory of free trade.

Insistence on these options led to the adoption of austerity measures in EU policies and their imposition on southern European countries, which had suffered the brunt of the crisis and benefited from assistance and loans from international and European financial institutions. These measures were often compared to the Structural Adjustment Policies applied in developing countries, which called for reducing public spending and increasing public revenues to achieve financial stability (balance of payments). In practice, however, it led to reducing the role of welfare states in providing basic services/citizens’ rights. This was in addition to expanding the tax base and taxes on consumer goods to collect additional income, for use as collateral for the obtained loans.

Due to the crisis, whose spillover consequences are still felt across Europe, the economic and financial paradigm, the basis of all European internal and external relations, was placed under the spotlight. The same model, known as the Washington Consensus, had been promoted by international financial and trade institutions in developing countries, including the South Mediterranean (Europe Neighborhood South).

The consultations launched by the EC on the European neighborhood policy with southern Mediterranean countries should be concluded by the end of June, the joint communication should be issued between October and November. However, the document fails to present the actual reasons behind the challenges that the European Neighborhood Policy is facing, which had been lax concerning the application and protection of human rights standards. An approach based on human rights must be comprehensive and impartial, without distinction between political and civil rights, on one hand, and economic, social, and cultural rights, on the other. The EU had been very flexible regarding investments and European multinationals at the expense of economic and social rights.

The new neighborhood policy consultation document and the rhetoric of the two commissioners and their representatives contained clear signs that the EU is completely aware of the wide discrepancy between the situation in the Eastern neighborhood and that in neighboring countries in the south and plans to address each region differently. But it is also clear that the EC does not plan to reconsider its macroeconomic options or the nature of trade and financial relations with neighboring countries. Its objectives focused on bilateral free trade negotiations to promote European investments in infrastructure and energy sectors and provide technological and technical support to the private and public sectors. The overall developmental process will be negatively impacted, without the adoption of “binding and non-negotiable human rights standards”, especially labor standards, the right to organize, assemble, express, and access information. Social and political stability will thus be at risk, the crises will grow deeper, and relationship between neighboring countries and their neighbors will be stained.#

INTERNATIONAL PEOPLES CONFERENCE ON MINING



Manila, Philippines
July 30 to August 1, 2015

The International People's Conference on Mining (IPCM2015) will be held on July 30 to August 1, 2015 in the Philippines.

With the theme "Highlighting peoples' lives and struggles in defense of rights, the environment and a common future: An international conference of mining communities and peoples", the IPCM2015 aims to pave the way to ignite new ideas in addressing issues around mining-affected communities, people's rights, justice and the right to development while strengthening solidarity among people's organizations, CSOs, the academe, and technical and legal experts united in a common commitment to stop the harm from improper mining and push a pro-people mining agenda.

The conference will feature case studies of mining action, a daily plenary session, skill-shares, and a press conference. It will also provide time for the crafting of special sub-regional and company-targeted campaigns and networks. Workshops will revolve around eight themes: Human Rights Campaigns, Mine Workers' Struggles, Mining Advocacy, Gendered Impacts of Mining, Science and Tech Tools for Corporate

Mining Accountability, Legal Aspects of Mining, and Mining Finance and Divestment. Participants will also have an opportunity to join a learning and solidarity mission with select mining communities prior to and after the conference program.

The IPCM is jointly organized by various environmental and social movements in the Philippines and the world, namely the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, Center for Environmental Concerns – Philippines, Jaringan Advokasi Tambang Mining Advocacy Network (Indonesia), Kairos Canada, Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, EcuVoice Philippines, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, Pacific Asia Resource Centre, London Mining Network, Geneeskunde Derde Wereld (Belgium), War on Want (United Kingdom), Australia Action for Peace and Development in the Philippines, Solidagro (Belgium), Asia Indigenous People's Pact, and the International League of Peoples' Struggle – Commission 13.

Visit <http://www.peoplesminingconf.net/> for more

Stop TPP campaign toolkit

Negotiations for the TransPacific Partnership agreement (TPP) are still going on and we would like to strengthen our actions and resistance to this trade agreement that will cement corporate power over people.

The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) prepared a toolkit that contains materials that can be used by anti-TPPA campaigners in sharing with networks in media and social media.

To download these resources, follow this link
<http://apwld.org/stop-tpp-campaign-toolkit/>

Social media hashtags

#StopTPP
#DevelopmentJustice
#NoFastTrack



We, women, civil society organisations, and social movements from around the world, declare our unequivocal opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). We believe that the TPP will significantly infringe upon people's rights and freedoms. It is designed to entrench corporate dominance, inequalities, and exploitation.

We call for an absolute end to the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement and for the main text to be publicly released! We know this will expose the TPP for what it is: a framework that further institutionalises profit over people!

Your personal message or signature

Keep the Military out of Lumad Community Schools

Under the Aquino administration children's rights violations are rife, with military occupation of schools becoming out of control and interrupting the education of future generations. This must not be tolerated!

International laws covering conflict situations expressly prohibit the use of public infrastructures such as schools; hospitals and rural health units for military purposes such as command posts, barracks detachments, and supply depots.

Education is a basic human right, however over recent years there has been an alarming increase in the number of reports of schools being militarized, being used as barracks and detachments in the course of the Aquino government counter insurgency campaign.

This recurring child rights violations gave birth to the Save Our Schools network.

The Save our schools Network is a network of child rights advocates, organizations and various stakeholders working together to bring light and take action on the ongoing violation of children's right to education, particularly those in the context of militarization and attacks on schools.

To know more about the campaign, please visit: <https://saveourschoolsnetwork.wordpress.com/>

To sign their petition, please follow this link: <http://chn.ge/1HIcvFR>





The **Asia Pacific Research Network** is a network of leading research NGOs in the Asia-Pacific. It is active in promoting exchange, coordination and capacity building support in research.

Office Address:

2nd Floor, IBON Center
114, Timog Avenue
Quezon City
1103, Philippines

Landline: (632) 9277060
loc. 202

Telefax: (632) 9276981

Email: secretariat@aprnnet.org

Website: www.aprnnet.org

Secretariat:

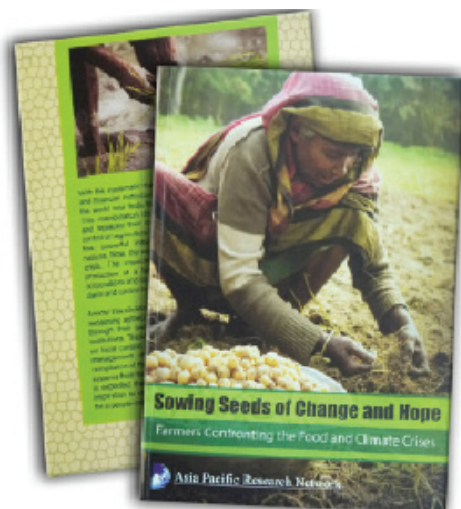
Marjorie Pamintuan
General Secretary

Jodel Dacara

Programme Officer

Send your comments, inquiries,
write-ups, and contributions to
secretariat@aprnnet.org

Available APRN Publications



Sowing Seeds of Change and Hope

The food producers of Asia Pacific are now reclaiming agroecological farming systems and methodologies through their own farmers' organizations and other support institutions. These local 'alternatives' from the people are rooted on local context and situation and are mindful of sustainable management of communities' resources



WTO and Maldevelopment

Two decades since the establishment of the World Trade Organization, only developed countries gained and prospered. Developing countries, on the other hand, suffer from the plunder of corporate economy, giving way for more profit for the rich and powerful nations.



Women Resisting Crisis and War

Although women are mostly at the receiving end of the negative impacts of neoliberal globalization and war, the reality is that they also go through various cycles of coping with, adapting to, and resisting the onslaught of the multiple crises.



Asia Pacific People's Tribunal on ADB

Taking into account the need to create space to examine the roles and impact of ADB on the issue of development, APRN and its members from Indonesia, organized the Asia Pacific People's Tribunal on ADB to gather studies, researches, and testimonies from affected communities on the negative impacts of ADB projects and submit these evidences before a tribunal of law experts, development practitioners and parliamentarians.

Contact the secretariat to get the full list of publications and how to avail of copies.