

## **PLATFORM OF THE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS INDABA FROM SOUTH AFRICA AT THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM IN NAIROBI 2007**

### ***OUR WORLD IS NOT FOR SALE!***

As the delegation of the South African Social Movements Indaba proceeds to Nairobi on January 19<sup>th</sup> to meet in Conference with social movements and other like-minded social actors coming from all over the globe, we wish to state categorically that we continue to stand foursquare on the platform presented to the world by the SMI in Mumbai in January 2004. On this occasion, we want to draw attention to the particular areas of deterioration which have occurred in the social and political conditions of the poor in this country and abroad in the intervening period. The wars in Iraq, Palestine, Sudan, Somalia, and Zimbabwe have sharpened to the brink of civil war. Since it is the single-minded intention of imperialism to rob and dispossess the people of the whole world of their resources and create a world economy that is driven by unbridled greed and wholesale plundering and pillaging of resources and of entire societies, it is necessary for us to declare today that there is no going back. Another path for the social movements of the world is not given. Working classes, peasant masses, women's organizations, youth formations, environmental activists, and health practitioners – in short all social justice activists – are being offered the historical challenge: "Here you have come to the banks of the Rubicon - show what you can do!" In these circumstances it beholds us in the platform of '07 to underpin the systemic and structural fault lines upon which our entire movement needs to stand. This we shall do on a world scale as well as within the borders of our country. In particular, it is absolutely necessary for us on this continent to employ this occasion so as to make it the running point of all these struggles of the people of Africa so that WSF Nairobi '07 will place the struggles of our people on a higher, if irrevocable pedestal.

The platform of any social movement is a product of history. In South Africa, that of the SMI was born out of the social struggles for jobs, social services, and land after 1994. It was articulated further in the struggle at the World Conference Against Racism in 2001, and against the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. The final consolidation of this platform occurred at the December 2006 conference of the SMI in Durban. In large measure, it is descended from the Mumbai platform of 2004.

The South African state is built on the idea of a national consensus of all classes. This is the universal modernization of the notion of the state under conditions of globalization and the worldwide multilateral system. This in turn articulates the hegemonic domination of the capitalist system. Today the power of imperialism rests on the domination of the big metropolitan governments. This system gives privilege to the interests of the huge multinational corporations. This is the system that is regulated by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization – a triumvirate which has itself fallen into deep crisis. Capitalism so articulated transfers wealth from the poor to the rich, from the countries of the South to the countries of the North.

Side by side with the wanton destruction of non-renewable resources of energy in all the countries of the South, capitalism has driven the world economy to the edge of an ecological cataclysm. In the United States, the rulers are at their wits end in determining a sustainable energy policy. This has caused them to become even more desperate in their bellicose intentions. In Myanmar, they operate in open collusion with the dictatorial regime. In this theatre, they pay lip service to the dynamics of a democratic movement which has displayed an exemplary resilience over the last twenty years. They aim to use the power of the generals as the bulwark of reaction throughout both Southeast Asia and the ASEAN states. In Iran, they propose to extend their strategy in the territories of the old "Eastern question". The unconditional control of the sources of oil in the vast ocean of energy on the southern tip of the oilfields at the bottom of the Caucasus Mountains is the tail end of war maneuvers that will put the Middle East in the same bag as the Southern states of the former Soviet Union and the countries below the Balkans. This is the boldest stand yet taken by empire builders in all history. Truly, the warmongers of the United States have overreached themselves.

It is a section of this discredited strategy which brings the US and a China that is rapidly going reactionary into conflict in the Sudan. To be sure, the challenge to these intentions has been picked up with far greater sagacity by the people of Latin America. With the landslide victory of Hugo Chavez in the recent elections in Venezuela, following so closely upon the similar crushing victory of a progressive government in Bolivia, the Cuban Revolution has received immeasurable reinforcement in this part of the world. This is especially remarkable with the recent announcement by the Venezuelan government that it will follow Cuba in nationalizing the commanding heights of that country's economic resources under the guardianship of a worker-orientated regime. There is no doubt that a line is being drawn across the sands of the world class struggle.

Nothing mitigates the reactionary character of this worldwide system when a species of what is actually called "disaster capitalism" fails so miserably to keep its promises in relation to the Tsunami on the waters of the Pacific and further acts to corporatize the lives of the people in Louisiana and the Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina. Capitalism can lead humanity one way only – down the drain of history. Under these conditions, the social movements of the South will express their unity in action when the people of Africa unite with those in Latin America and Asia in opposition to imperialism. The working people in the countries of the North together with marginalized communities therein, and the progressive intelligentsia will also march in the ranks of the worldwide opposition to imperialism. Indeed, these are the people of the world who in Nairobi must reply with one voice: ***Enough Is Enough! Our World Is Not For Sale!***

The SMI is a detachment of the social movements in South Africa. It aims to work toward a comprehensive unification of all the social organizations of the poor in this country including, especially, the Federations of Labour. As such, it works against the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy of the ruling class. On a continental scale, it seeks to build unity with similar social formations in Southern, East, Central, West, and North Africa. At this level, we have identified NEPAD as the primary tool through which imperialism exploits and oppresses the working people in Africa. In

this country, we are particularly alarmed when so powerful an organ of “public/social investment” as the Public Investment Commissioners, controlling a purse of some R6 hundred million, want to go to the world markets and raise finance to the tune of \$US1 billion for the purpose of extending the financial sovereignty of the South African state over other countries in Africa. Is this not a pincer movement being constructed by South African corporate power whose aim is to tighten their stranglehold over the energy and telecommunications assets in Africa? At the same time, we need to note the advance of the South African bankocracy led by Standard Chartered and the “new” Barclay’s into this country’s hinterland stretching far and wide across the continent. The war machine perfected by Bush’s war against terrorism that has taken South African armies into the Great Lakes region is promising to carry them further into Somalia, the Sudan, and some parts of West Africa. We need to make our position on these matters crystal clear. In any local wars on the African continent, as well as in any broader general war, the social movements in South Africa will stand firmly with the oppressed masses of the continent against both South African imperialism and its masters further a field. On this score, our position is unshakeable: ***Africa Is Not For Sale!***

In this country, the foundation of the strategic position of the SMI is contained in the social conditions of the impoverished masses in town and country. The economic policies of austerity, monetarism and privatization are employed to transfer wealth from the poor to the rich. These translate into new and intensified processes of dispossession and displacement. They result in two-way urban-rural migratory movements manifest in the frayed fringes of cities and towns known as informal settlements. They also result in the cutting down of investment in housing, education, health, water and sanitation services, power supplies and transportation systems for the working people. At the centre of this economic order stand the all-pervading ravages caused by debt. The crisis of national debt degenerates into generalized social indebtedness.

In practice, deindustrialization has established a situation of joblessness throughout the whole economy, and has caused a deterioration of the quality of existing jobs. Real wages are shrinking on an ever-downward spiral. The vulgarization of labour is emphasized by the widespread casualization and temporalization of work. Conditions of casual and seasonal work has led to the continuous spate of farm worker evictions that send this sector of the working class into exile – resulting in the further swelling of informal settlements. In truth, this is nothing less than the ruralization of urban life. Inside these settlements, water and sanitation services, educational facilities, health institutions, and public transportation are dislocated at a thousand points through financial austerity and privatization. Prospects for land and agrarian reform are denied. The scourges of HIV/AIDS and debt haunt the land. The extractive industries, whose inglorious arrival in this country was announced by gold and diamonds, are reviving the traditions of parasitism dominant in early predatory capitalism. The platinum belt, very much like the East African Great Rift Valley, binds the northern provinces of this country to Zimbabwe in a chain that ends on the borders of Malawi. This is a new front in dispossession and exploitation that will stay with the Southern African economy for the next hundred years.

These conditions abound in South Africa today in the same way that the South African experience was anticipated over twenty years ago by an application of the same principles throughout the rest of Africa. Indeed, this is the history of poverty throughout the colonial world in the aftermath of World War II. In all these countries, a coterie of indigenes was, so to say, handpicked by the capitalist system and absorbed into the privileged strata consisting of colons, settlers, and metropolitan corporations. The prosperity of the central economy throughout stands in inverse proportion to the universal impoverishment of the masses of the people.

In Nairobi, the social movements of the people of this continent will stand side by side with their brothers and sisters coming from all over the world in repeating the refrain:

***Our World Is Not For Sale! Another World Is Possible!  
Long Live the Struggles of the Working Men and Women!  
Aluta Continua!***

19 January 2007

List all organization that endorse statement and follow other protocols.

