

WSF DOCUMENT

ORIGINAL

WORLD SOCIAL FORUM CHARTER OF PRINCIPLES

APRIL 2001 VERSION

ABONG — Brazilian Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
ATTAC — Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens
CBJP — Brazilian Justice and Peace Commission, National Council of Bishops (CNBB)
CIVES — Brazilian Business Association for Citizenship
CUT — Central Trade Union Confederation
IBASE — Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Studies
CJG — Centre for Global Justice
MST — Movement of Landless Rural Workers

The committee of Brazilian organisations that conceived of, and organised, the first World Social Forum, held in Porto Alegre from January 25 – 30, 2001, after evaluating the results of that Forum and the expectations it raised, consider it necessary and legitimate to draw up a Charter of Principles to guide the continued pursuit of that initiative in the terms of the Information Note that it issued at the close of the Forum. While the principles contained in this Charter — to be respected by all those who wish to take part in the process and to organise new editions of the WSF — are a consolidation of the decisions that presided over the holding of the Porto Alegre Forum and ensured its success, they extend the reach of those decisions and define orientations that flow from their logic.

1. The WSF is an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, [and the] free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a

planetary society centred on the human person.

2. The WSF at Porto Alegre was an event localised in time and place. From now on, in the certainty proclaimed at Porto Alegre that “Another World is Possible !” it becomes a permanent process of seeking and building alternatives, which cannot be reduced to the events supporting it.

3. The World Social Forum is a world process. All the meetings that are held as part of this process have an international dimension.

4. The alternatives proposed at the WSF stand in opposition to a process of capitalist globalisation commanded by large multinational corporations and by governments and international institutions at the service of those corporations’ interests. They are designed to ensure that globalisation in solidarity will prevail as a new stage in world history. This will respect universal human rights, and those of all citizens — men and women — of all nations and the environment and will rest on democratic international systems and institutions at the service of social justice, equality and the sovereignty of peoples.

5. The WSF brings together and interlinks only organisations and movements of civil society from all the countries in the world, but intends neither to be a body representing world civil society nor to exclude from the debates it promotes, those in positions of political responsibility, mandated by their peoples, who decide to enter into the commitments resulting from those debates.

6. The meetings of the WSF do not deliberate on behalf of the WSF as a body. No one, therefore, will be authorised, on behalf of any of the editions of the Forum, to express positions claiming to be those of all its participants. The participants in the Forum shall not be called on to take decisions as a body, whether by vote or acclamation, on declarations or proposals for action that would commit all, or the majority, of them and that propose to be taken as establishing positions of the Forum as a body.

7. Nonetheless, organisations or groups of organisations that participate in the Forum's meetings must be assured the right, during such meetings, to deliberate on declarations or actions they may decide on, whether singly or in coordination with other participants. The WSF undertakes to circulate such decisions widely by the means at its disposal, without directing, creating hierarchies, censoring or restricting them, but as deliberations of the organisations or groups of organisations that made the decisions.

8. The WSF is a plural, diversified, non-confessional, non-governmental and non-party context that, in a decentralised fashion, interrelates organisations and movements engaged in concrete action at levels from the local to the international to build another world. It thus does not constitute a locus of power to be disputed by the participants in its meetings, nor does it intend to constitute the only option for interrelation and action by the organisations and movements that participate in it.

9. The WSF asserts democracy as the avenue to resolving society's problems politically. As a meeting place, it is open to pluralism and to the

diversity of activities and ways of engaging of the organisations and movements that decide to participate in it, as well as the diversity of genders, races, ethnicities and cultures.

10. The WSF is opposed to all totalitarian and reductionist views of history and to the use of violence as a means of social control by the State. It upholds respect for Human Rights, for peaceful relations, in equality and solidarity, among people, races, genders and peoples, and condemns all forms of domination and all subjection of one person by another.

11. The meetings of the WSF are always open to all those who wish to take part in them, except organisations that seek to take people's lives as a method of political action.

12. As a forum for debate, the WSF is a movement of ideas that prompts reflection, and the maximum possible transparent circulation of the results of that reflection, on the mechanisms and instruments of domination by capital, on means and actions to resist and overcome that domination, and on the alternatives that can be proposed to solve the problems of exclusion and inequality that the process of capitalist globalisation currently prevalent is creating or aggravating, internationally and within countries.

13. As a framework for the exchange of experiences, the WSF encourages understanding and mutual recognition among its participant organisations and movements, and places special value on all that society is building to centre economic activity and political action on meeting the needs of people and respecting nature.

14. As a context for interrelations, the WSF seeks to strengthen and create new national and international links among organisations and movements of civil society, that — in both public and private life — will increase the capacity for social resistance to the process of dehumanisation the world is undergoing and reinforce the humanising measures being taken by the action of these movements and organisations.

15. The WSF is a process that encourages its participant organisations and movements to situate their actions as issues of planetary citizenship, and to introduce onto the global agenda the change-inducing practices that they are experimenting in building a new world.

São Paulo, Brazil, April 9, 2001