

THEMATIC SOCIAL FORUM

ON MINING AND THE EXTRACTIVE ECONOMY

OCTOBER 16 -20, 2023 | SEMARANG, INDONESIA



DECLARATION

We, the participants of the Thematic Social Forum on Mining and Extractivist Economy, gathered in Semarang, Indonesia from the 16th to the 19th October 2023, to strengthen and build a broad global movement of resistance to mining and extractivism and build mutual solidarity and common solutions to guarantee human rights, the rights of nature and to ensure a just and equitable world for present and future generations.

We come from mining-affected communities, civil society organisations, NGOs, people's organisations, women's movements, the LGBTQIA+ community, faith-based groups, Indigenous Peoples, smallholder farmers, fisherfolk, youth, support groups, workers, Trade unions and academics from 53 countries across Asia, Africa, the Americas, the Pacific, and Europe.

We celebrate our diversity, recognizing our different perspectives and the alternatives we offer, but understanding that in the face of the poly-crisis, we are bound together by our desire for a future free from mining and extractivism.

Current Realities

We are very worried that the continued reliance on fossil fuels and increased drive for mining of the purported '**critical**', '**strategic**' or '**transition**' minerals and other resources for the **new digital and 'green' technologies** (renewable energy systems) and the blue economy, has become the driving force for further intensified extractivism bringing frontline communities to a vulnerable position while posing a great threat to decent work.

In an aggressive form of **greenwashing**, renewable energy, and so-called sustainable mining and the certification of it are being used to justify and legitimise exploitative and **colonial** economic systems.

This is resulting in the creation of new **sacrifice zones** through new practices such as deep-sea mining, expanded mining, geoengineering, and other false solutions to the climate crisis across the world, which is destroying ecosystems, and threatening the lives and livelihood of peoples.

A fantasy of **endless economic growth** conceals an intensification of **violent, racist, patriarchal** practice that threatens to undercut the conditions of life on Earth. Further commodification and financialization of nature (Land, oceans, rivers, forests, and ecosystems) are destroying local economies by this logic of wealth accumulation that benefits mining and other corporations with the complicity of rich States. Furthermore, this is leading to the undermining of workers' rights – where they exist. Public development banks and International financial institutions (PBs/IFIs) are still financing these companies and corporations. In this way, they are exacerbating climate change, global poverty, human rights violations, and other crises. Meanwhile, communities are confronted with unmanageable debt to global financial institutions.

The co-optation of traditional leaders and division of communities to facilitate the penetration of extractivism into our territories is rapidly undermining the legitimacy of these structures in many places and calls for the renewal of popular democracy at all levels, especially at the local community level.

Impacted communities, Indigenous Peoples, and women bear the **double burden of the intensification of global warming, and climate injustice**. They are suffering from deforestation, extreme weather conditions, climate disasters, losses and damages, and displacement. At the same time, their bodies, lands, farms, coasts, water sources, and communities are seized, grabbed, or destroyed by extractive activities justified as responses to the climate crisis. These impacts violate our rights and threaten to destroy our way of life, our relationship with nature, and our future. These same communities have contributed least to the climate crisis and have often suffered the grave impacts of violence from every form of extractivism.

Threats

The Militarization of our Territories & Criminalization of our Resistance

New and reformed laws are designating minerals as “transition”, “strategic”, “critical” or of “national or public interest” in order to fast-track mining and further weaken communities' rights. Communities are actively divided through corruption and false development promises. We denounce the growing criminal violence established by the states, their repressive military, and police apparatuses, in collusion with mining and transnational companies' crimes, which is causing deaths and criminalization of eco and human defenders and communities around the world. We demand respect for the rights of defenders and to strengthen the role of social movements as a counterweight.

Women, youths, and people who defend human and environmental rights face special risks due to patriarchal power structures. When women dissent, state and corporate-sponsored violence often takes a sexualized or gendered form.

There is an increasing closure of democratic spaces in resource-rich countries in the form of the withdrawal of basic freedoms such as free movement, freedom of speech, and freedom to associate and assemble. Trade unionism is attacked, and only compliant unions are permitted

Resistance

We celebrate life in all its forms and our victories; affirm our common resistance, and solidarities, and build knowledge. We recognize and acknowledge the existing and ongoing initiatives of communities as they resist, fight, and build alternatives to the impacts of an extractivist economy.

We recognize that corporate privilege and power institutionalised through trade and investment agreements is anti-people and nature and must be abolished.

The ongoing negotiations at the United Nations for a binding international treaty to hold corporations accountable for human rights abuses are particularly critical and should be accelerated, along with other relevant UN, national, and regional initiatives, and struggles for the full implementation of UNDRIP and UNDROP, and other relevant instruments like ILO 169, and for Latin America the Escazú Agreement or globally making Ecocide an international crime.

The right to say NO is the right to defend our communities and our rights, including the right to self-determination, guardianship, and the right to a healthy environment, among others.

At the same time is clear:

- **YES**, to the right to defend our communities, people, air, land, livelihoods, water, forests, biodiversity, and ways of living in harmony with the rest of the web of life.
- **YES**, to the recognition that nature is not a collection of resources for exploitation and (maximal) profit.
- **YES**, to valuing the care work over economic growth and profit.
- **YES**, to production for subsistence / common good and not exchange.
- **YES**, to respecting the rights and valuing Indigenous People's identity, traditional knowledge, and perspectives.
- **YES**, to women's struggle to dismantle patriarchy and any system oppressing them, and
- **YES**, to reparations for the historical, ecological, and social debt owed to the people who have borne the cost of slavery and colonial exploitation, which has gained new relevance through the concept of climate debt.

Alternatives

The planetary emergency rising from centuries of capitalist extractivism requires a deep transformation not only of our energy systems but also of how we relate to energy, how we relate with nature, and how we produce, consume, and organise our lives.

The 'just transition' as proposed from a corporate perspective deepens the existing fossil fuel and extractive development model, which doesn't offer an alternative to the prevailing climate crisis.

Without the self-determination of peoples and public participation in decision-making, without gender justice, economic justice, racial justice, and climate justice, there can be no just transition.

We recognize the place of the commons, their struggles, and their rights, thus the Just transition should prioritise moving away from the existing destructive extractive model.

We proposed the reskilling of workers, and the transference of knowledge and technology in a just, equal, and fair collaboration. Decent livelihoods and work can flourish in building the socially owned and democratically managed renewable energy systems; agro-ecological food systems; small-scale fisheries; land, ocean, and ecosystem restoration; community health and social housing that underpin a real just socio-ecological transition.

A real socio-ecological transition should centre the needs and aspirations of communities alongside workers, and ensure decent and dignified livelihoods, and public services for all.

Central to the struggles for alternatives is the Right To Say NO.

We say NO to this model of extractivism and converge on the position that all remaining coal, gas, oil, and mineral reserves must remain underground, **for a future safe for nature, peoples, and Mother Earth.**

Excessive consumption must be curbed, based on the principles of sufficiency and decent livelihoods. Productivism, endless growth, and accumulation for accumulation's sake must be reversed.

As it was said during the Forum: **'We do not live to produce but we produce to live'**. Contesting the narratives of capitalist "progress" and "modernization,"; defending and strengthening our own knowledge, cultural practices, and cosmovisions; and sharing stories, experiences, and testimonials are important strategies for building wide and coherent networks of resistance to extractivism in all its forms and expressions.

Local initiatives and the reconstruction of social issues are the foundation for building the counterpower needed to challenge and change the system.

Nature, air, water, oceans, minerals, and all forms of life are not for sale and are worth more than minerals. These are the commons that we must protect and share with all peoples and future generations. Respecting its preservation is an ethical imperative and a foundation for peace, and social justice.

With the ongoing war and genocide in Palestine by Israel as we write this declaration, we acknowledge that war strengthens extractivism and we call on Israel to immediately implement a ceasefire, as has been tabled by over 120 countries in the UN and allow for humanitarian aid and rebuilding in Gaza. We strongly condemn all indiscriminate killings and targeting of civilians.

In this regard, we are inspired by the perspectives of many Indigenous Peoples and local communities who affirm nature's rights and understand that nature is not a property. Every ecosystem has the right to live and flourish, 'water has the right to flow and birds to drink and fly'. Oceans, rivers, and land are rights-bearing entities, and we need to recognize their sacredness. In many cultures, every being experiences a special connection to nature, and the destruction of ecosystems is related to the violence imposed on them.

The convergences and solidarities forged in this Thematic Social Forum provide the inspiration for our collective campaigns, actions, new global alliances, and assemblies of the peoples which will guarantee our common future beyond extractivism.

Semarang, Indonesia

19 October 2023