

# Copenhagen NGO-Conference 2005

In Preparation for the Millennium+5 Summit  
June 8<sup>th</sup> –10<sup>th</sup> 2005

## Freedom for all

### ***1. Time is of the Essence***

**WE** the Civil Society Participants from 37 countries meeting in Copenhagen, June 2005;

**Conscious** that our world has enough to provide for the basic needs of all people, where a few powerful individuals, groups and nations have unlimited access to, and control over most of the resources, and that their excessive ways of life continue to deprive billions of the world's population of the most basic necessities of human life.

**And further** that this pervasive model of development has occasioned unacceptable destruction and depletion of the world's natural and cultural heritage.

**Aware** that the transnational corporations and a group of powerful nations continue to amass, monopolize and control instruments of power to the detriment of other nations of the world and their citizenry.

**Recognising** that the enormous role of Civil Society Organisations in addressing and solving global challenges is largely not acknowledged and therefore

**Reaffirming** our demand that Civil Society Organisations involvement and participation be institutionalized in all governance processes and structures at all levels,

**Asserting** we can no longer bear this senseless abuse of power, denial of peoples' fundamental human rights and the spread of militaristic and imperialistic designs.

**Therefore** we emphasise the need for immediate action to establish a comprehensive democratic and inclusive multilateral governance framework to address this situation.

### ***2. Freedom from want and excess***

Poverty as well as excess is the result of inequalities. More than "just" unequal distribution of income, poverty has its source in an unequal distribution of assets, affordable access to social services and opportunities, and is furthermore rooted in marginalisation due to ethnicity, gender and class and lack of political participation and information.

The accumulation of wealth and power by a few individuals, strong nations and multinational corporations leads to poverty. The rapid non-transparent transfer of power from governments to corporations requires global governance with binding and enforceable rules.

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Economic growth is consequently not in itself the solution to eradicating poverty, as the understanding and promotion of growth prioritizes growth over equity, rights and sustainable development. Nor is the surplus created through growth distributed equally. Redistribution of not just income but also other resources can be part of the solution, but the present hopelessly inadequate national taxation-systems in many countries cannot even remotely remedy this inequality. External financial support cannot substitute anti-poverty strategies such as employment, land reform, and policies to promote the position of women.

The Millennium Development Goals do focus the world's attention on a set of key targets that must be achieved by 2015. This is vital in sub-Saharan Africa which is the furthest away from reaching the targets. The General Assembly President's Draft Resolution rightly points out that the development challenge is far more complex and requires addressing many more issues. One core issue is that gender, ethnic, racial and cultural equality and women's empowerment must be mainstreamed into the MDGs and the outcome of the Summit. Reproductive and sexual rights, health and services should be included in the MDGs, and should be added as a new target under MDG 5 because this issue area is necessary to combat poverty, violence against women and HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. Also omitted from the MDGs is the crucial importance of gender equality and women's empowerment as a crosscutting issue for achieving sustainable development, the protection of human rights, peace and security. The ICPD Program of Action (1994), Beijing Program for Action (1995), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), and other UN plans of action must be used as the basis for the work. Special emphasis should be put on integrating the ICPD goals of universal access to reproductive health by 2015 into strategies to attain the MDGs.

Regarding trade, the negative impacts of economic liberalisation in developing countries are not addressed in the proposed President's Draft Resolution, nor are the existence of one billion dollar a day subsidies to products in the developed countries, creating an extremely uneven playing field. To solve this and other imbalances, thorough reformation of the decision-making structures in trade negotiations and International Financial Institutions towards open structures that permit developing countries to participate on for them reasonable terms, is necessary. Emphasis must be put on stopping International Financial Institutions (IFIs) from imposing certain macroeconomic policies like privatization of public services.

Reciprocity should not be required for increase in market access from developing countries either through bilateral or regional negotiations like EPAs, nor through the WTO or the IFIs. There should be no pressure on developing countries to liberalize services. The right of developing countries to protect their markets to ensure domestic food security is vital, and thorough reviews and revisions of the WTO trade agreements must be conducted, assessing their impacts on poverty, gender equality, environment and human rights.

The redefinition of debt sustainability should not be left at just achieving the MDGs but aim at total cancellation of the debt. The proposals of increasing ODA to developing countries should only be based on development needs and aim at poverty eradication of these countries. The debt

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sustainability framework should be participatory, taking on board developing countries and not only the multilateral institutions.

Growth connected with the notion of a “green revolution” is also not a solution in itself, as it seems neither sustainable nor in accordance with traditional knowledge and culture. The struggle against poverty will be in vain if the present course of over-utilisation of natural resources and man-made climate change continues; the global society has a collective responsibility to protect the environment.

To achieve a sustainable world and a higher quality of life for all people, states should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. We believe that one of the greatest threats to the world comes from climate change and we call on all governments to work together to set new drastic targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas production while recognizing common and differential responsibilities.

We call for the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to set up the process to negotiate a framework convention on corporate accountability and the UNGA to start the process on setting up a UN Environmental Organisation (UNEO). Formulation of MDG 7 should be improved and its implementation should be mainstreamed across all MDGs by **a)** expanding targets with the MDG plus<sup>1</sup>; and **b)** establishing the link between national poverty reduction plans and their budgeting processes with all MDG and MDG 7 plus targets and implementations.

The 20<sup>th</sup> and early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen enormous change with the accelerated development of new technologies that are being absorbed into society without proper societal consultation. We have seen this with Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and are now seeing this with nanotechnology. We believe that the UN should negotiate a framework convention to deal with new technologies to ensure that they are developed in the best interests of all people and are accessible to all people.

Environmental destruction has the greatest impact on the poor, including women and children, who are most vulnerable, and the related effects have a higher death toll than terrorism. We therefore believe that security has to do with human and environmental concerns primarily and not terrorism. On that background we call for a world summit on human and environmental security in 2010.

Peace, development, human rights and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible, warfare is destructive and wrong.

Education must be seen in a broader sense, looking further than being implicitly content with teaching the basic skills. Learning for life starts after being taught the basics and includes quality and relevance of, equality and access to and full participation in education for women, men, girls and boys. We must remember the decade for education for sustainable development (ESD) and the inclusion of ESD in

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<sup>1</sup> MDG plus are: 1) targets for replenishing depleted fish stocks

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any relevant curriculum. Thus learning can contribute to the creation of an active citizenship, an indispensable component of democratic society.

### **3. Freedom from fear and threats**

Development is the indispensable foundation of a broader, more comprehensive concept of **common** security, but only if the development is sustainable and leads to poverty reduction, ensuring peace, human rights and protection of the environment.

We call for a drastic reduction in the levels of military budgets and other military related spending and the funds saved must be used to finance peace building and global development.

The global arms trade is also an area of concern, especially as the key members of the Security Council also are prominent members of the arms dealers club. Small arms trade must be regulated by a binding agreement. An independent non-political mechanism should be established to quality audit and monitor production, consumption and access to arms in order to ensure that arms trade does not contribute, initiate and fuel armed conflicts. Proper registration of arms manufacturers, and arms suppliers should be strengthened and made publicly available.

We call for the abolition of biological, chemical, nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, the implementation of relevant conventions and a strengthening of the IAEA and other related agencies. In addition we must formulate treaties to enable the agency to prevent the use of nuclear, biological and chemical materials for weapons production.

An independent, permanent expert panel or similar capacity to effectively prevent conflicts and any levels of war from breaking out by continuously monitoring conflicts and establishing an early warning system must supplement the proposed Peace Building Commission.

The transition from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention must be expedited, and the UN and the international community should support national governments, and local, national and regional organisations and initiatives in their efforts to build Programmes for conflict prevention. These should also include principles of the UN monitoring of countries' use of heavily armed forces internally, and support for national, regional and local capacities for conflict prevention.

Peace building processes should include gender perspectives and strong civil society participation *and be continued until a sustainable settlement has been achieved*. The Peace building Commission should promote non-violence education, peoples reconciliation and mediation initiatives.

In dealing with common security matters, access to Information, Public Participation in decision-making and access to justice, should be provided.

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Time and again superpowers break UN agreements and for the first time in UN history, countries have ignored the Security Council, breaking the agreement as established in the UN charter, and gone to war.

The war in Iraq again exposed the vulnerability of the UN vis-à-vis the wills of strong members. Therefore the proposal of defining the principles for application of force is of the greatest importance; but leaving it to the Security Council to define the principles is not acceptable, it must be a decision taken by the General Assembly. Neutrality must be a key concept of any and all UN peace creating, peace keeping, and peace building missions.

Manipulation and utilization of fear has not only been used to legitimise the wars against Afghanistan and Iraq and the “so-called “war on terrorism”, but has also had other undesirable effects such as militarization of the International discourse and narrowing of civil rights and fundamental freedoms.

The report proposes a definition of terrorism that we are welcoming; but we need further protection from the so-called “war on terrorism”. As described above it has been widely used in violating human rights. Causes of terrorism must be dealt with by civilian means.

Life of all species, including human beings, is at stake due to the depletion of natural resources, global warming and other processes that cause environmental degradation. Planetary environmental security must be ensured, by respecting ecosystems, natural services and environmental rights. Citizens, individually or collectively, States and the UN should act accordingly to protect environmental security.

Many conflicts are triggered, fuelled or sustained by the exploitation and misuse of, and the fight for, control over natural resources. It is important that the Peace Building Commission develops mechanisms to monitor the effects of this and devise means to monitor and control the use of natural resources e.g. through a certification system in line with the system used for the trading of diamonds.

#### ***4. Freedom to live in dignity and in mutual respect***

We affirm that development, security, and human rights are indispensable and are pillars of the United Nations system.

Human rights are indivisible and we commit to enforcing human rights standards - economic, social, cultural, civil and political - equally for all women and men, children and vulnerable groups. We affirm the right to development, which has to be sustainable.

We call on all governments to ratify all human rights treaties and their protocols, including CEDAW, without reservations, and all existing reservations must be waived. Under no circumstances, neither the war on terrorism nor the war on poverty, can states deviate from the rights of humans.

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We strongly support strengthening the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, providing substantially more resources for this work, and we fully endorse elevating the Commission on Human

Rights, to the level of a Council on Human Rights with real authority. The rights of civil society organisations must be extended to the new Human Rights Council including strengthening their right to actively monitor the performance of States in implementing universal human rights. The Council must have the authority to compel States to implement international human rights law into national law and to protect human rights defenders.

Without the end of impunity, it is not possible for justice, peace, and human rights to be inextricable components of the democratic rule of law. Therefore, we strongly support the prosecution of all who commit serious violations of international law, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. We fully support the International Criminal Court and call on all nations to ratify the Rome Statute, and to adopt comprehensive national implementing legislation. All individuals and States must be equal before the law, none should have immunity to commit these horrendous crimes.

International law must apply equally to both the most powerful and weakest of States. We further support strengthening the International Court of Justice and call on governments to agree that all States should accept the jurisdiction of the World Court in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We fully endorse the strengthening of the United Nations commitment to promoting democracy as proposed in the "In Larger Freedom" report of the Secretary-General, in its diverse and multiple forms. We are in support of the participatoriest forms of democracy and believe strongly that every individual has the right to be involved in decision-making at both national and international levels. This includes freedom of expression and association. We strongly urge the UN to engage more profoundly with civil society and dedicate greater resources towards building civil society capacity to enhance democratic practices.

It is unacceptable that the world's most powerful national democracies are the primary opponents of international democratic governance. All nations should abide by democratic principles in the governance of international organisations. The Security Council Resolutions must apply to all parties without any exception. No nation should have the 'right' to appoint leaders of particular international organisations, whose leaders should submit to democratic electoral procedures. We thus, call for a fundamentally strengthened and more democratic United Nations in the reforms of the UN General Assembly, Security Council, and in the International Financial Institutions.

The development of greater international democracy must be under girded by greater democracy at the local and regional levels, in consonance with the principle of subsidiarity.

We endorse the new norm of the responsibility inherent in national sovereignty to protect civilian populations. When a State is unable or unwilling to protect its civilians, the international community then has a responsibility to protect vulnerable populations. Where such interventions are called for,

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they must be guided by internationally agreed mechanisms and criteria that must conform to existing international law. We recommend that the UN strengthen the capacity for local and regional organisations to provide more immediate responses and interventions. The UN institutions and processes should be the last resort when it comes to intervention.

Humanitarian intervention must always conform to international law and the UN Charter. Further more all international responses and interventions must be backed by specific UN resolutions. The responsibility to protect applies not only to situations of large-scale violence, but also to natural and other human catastrophes. The responsibility to protect requires first and foremost, the responsibility to prevent, followed by the responsibility to react and to rebuild.

We recognize the right of people to basic human rights - individual and collective - freedom and security. We commit ourselves to the concept that human security is fundamental to state security and we commit to take all measures to ensure the security of all people from war and conflict, from hunger and poverty. These measures being to provide people with quality health, education, essential public services and employment that abides by core labour standards.

## ***5. Strengthening the global solutions through the UN***

### **Review and update the UN Charter.**

The world has changed profoundly since the founding of the United Nations. A view based solely on the primacy of the state must yield in the face of the realities of the modern world: a world where problems and challenges does not respect nor know of any national borders, and where the solutions must be found across borders. This calls for the reaffirmation of the principles and ideals in the Charter. The UN organs decision making processes and internal procedures of the UN should be democratized to improve transparency and accountability. In addition, the role of the International Court of Justice must be strengthened and the International Criminal Court should be included in the Charter. Finally we also call for the abolishment of permanent membership of the Security Council, including veto powers.

### **Institutionalise the role of Civil Society Organisations**

The state no longer has the capacity to address all challenges and must increasingly rely on non-governmental actors. Civil society has risen to the call and wishes to live up to the responsibilities demanded.

One of the more important and hence debated global issues is corporate power and its implications for international politics. Numerous initiatives for regulating the responsibilities of multinational corporations have been developed. Nevertheless, the issue of corporate accountability is absent from the report. We do not believe that it is possible to effectively address the challenges ahead without addressing the role and responsibilities of transnational corporations and their investments. Against this background, it is indisputable that solutions cannot be found without the involvement of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). It also requires effective problem identification and in turn effective

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handling of these challenges requires institutionalisation of the role of CSOs at all levels of the UN. Thus democratisation of the UN demands involvement and participation of CSOs.

## **Coherence within the UN system**

Since the establishment of the UN, the organisation has had an unprecedented increase in membership and mandates, which creates a significant challenge for better coordination and coherence between and within the UN agencies and organs. This has resulted in lack of effective coordination and coherence within the UN system. To face these challenges, the UN system should be reformed to enhance coordination and modernise its policies in the light of new mandates.

## **The relation between the UN and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs)**

The world cannot maintain a sustainable growth if nation-states and the UN continue to lose out to the ever emerging international economic associations such as the IFIs (including the World Bank, IMF), GEF and WTO.

These IFIs must be integrated and brought under the direct control of the UN through a functioning, strong, and effective ECOSOC.

## **Elevation of the Human Rights Commission**

The ever expanding obsession with global security and anti-terrorism continues to replace the overarching imperative to respond to and address wide spread abuses of people's most basic human rights. Indeed, human rights continue to be sacrificed in pursuit of a more and more secure world. The UN must put in place a more elaborate and binding framework for safeguarding the right to protect the world from abuses of fundamental human rights. This will require the elevation of the current UNHRC to the level of a HR Council with an expanded mandate.

*All participants in Copenhagen did not put emphasis on the same issues and points raised in this paper. The strength of the global civil society is our ability to complement each other's work. This paper presents however briefly the complexity of our work and focus, and aims to bridge our different views. In Copenhagen we had the opportunity to exchange views and learn from each other's experiences. The real success of the gathering lies in our ability to continue our work with a more holistic perspective towards and beyond the UN Summit in September 2005.*

Participating in the discussions were:

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Organization Name</b>	<b>Country</b>
Ziad	Abdel Samad	Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)	Lebanon
Somarin	Adejare Taofeek	Peace Initiative International for Africa (PIIA)	Nigeria
Rashida	Al-Hamdani	Women National Committee	Yemen
Chernor	Amadu Jalloh	Bajito-Onda-Atrira	Gambia
Nur	Amalia	Indonesia Peoples Forum	Indonesia

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Rubens	Born	Vitae Civilis Inst. for Dev., Env. and Peace	Brazil
Mohammed	Boukheddar	FOREM	Algeria
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Frescia	Carasco	Latin American and Carribbean Health Network	
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Annie	Chimphango	Sustainability Watch	Malawi
Hans Peter	Dejgaard	Sustainability Watch & Danish 92 Group	Denmark
Arjun	Dhakal	Sustainability Watch	Nepal
Felix	Dodds	Stakeholder Forum	UK
Simon	E. Omoding	Sustainability Watch	Uganda
Annelise	Ebbe	Kvindernes Int. Liga for Fred og Frihed	Denmark
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Mathilda	Felthaus	Kvinder i Dialog	Denmark
Teresa	Flores Bedregal	Environmental Defence League (LIDEMA)	Bolivia
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Mónica	Garrido	MS	Denmark
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Daniel	Ghebrelul	Eritreanske Støtteforening i Danmark	Denmark
Boudjema	Ghechir	Algerian League for Human Rights	Algeria
Bonian	Golmohaddi	UNA-Sweden	Sweden
Janice	Goodson Førde	KULU	Denmark
Niels	Groth	DHC	Denmark
Henny	Hansen	Sex & Samfund	Denmark
Sonja	Haugaard Christensen	Dansk russisk Forening	Denmark
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Roy	J. Cabonegro	Sustainability Watch	The Philippines
Torleif	Jonasson	FN-forbundet	Denmark
Lars	Josephsen	MS	Denmark
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Ghania	Kebir	FOREM	Algeria

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Corinne	Kumar	El Taller	Tunisia
Birgit	La Cour Madsen	Action Aid England	England
Lone	Lai	Danish UNA	Denmark
Lise	Loft	Human Rights March	Denmark
Birgit	Lundbak	Save the Children	Denmark
Vibeke	Lyng	Danmarks Lærerforening	Denmark
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Joy	Mabenge	Zimbabwe Social Forum	Zimbabwe
Prince	Mashele	Institute for Security Studies	South Africa
Rosendo	Mauricio Sermeño Palacios	Unidad Ecologica Salvadoreña (UNES)	El Salvador
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Hanne	Müller	DGI	Denmark
Richard	Navarro	CESTA	El Salvador
Haggag	Nayel	Arab Program for Human Rights Activitists (APHRA)	Egypt
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Helle	Nielsen	KULU	Denmark
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