



Report of activities

February 2012

THEMATIC SOCIAL FORUM 2012¹



The international agenda of the 2012 is marked by the commemoration of the **20 years of the United Nations (UN) Conference on Sustainable Development** that will take place from the 20th to 22nd June in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). The path towards Rio is full of events that try to prepare the most important subjects and to mobilize the international civil society with a view to the next June's meeting. One of the first stages on this path was the celebration in Porto Alegre, the cradle of the World Social Forum, of the **Thematic Social Forum about "Capitalist crisis, social justice and environmental justice"**

from the 24th to the 28th January.

The Forum included an opening march, a dialogue with the Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff (in which UBUNTU's director was invited), different self-managed activities, workshops, presentations, meetings and a series of initiatives that were useful to prepare the People's Summit which will take place alongside the official conference and to set the basic ideas that civil society wants to bring as a message to Rio. In this context **the UBUNTU Forum organized two activities** about two of the most outstanding fields within the negotiations of Río+20: **world governance and food sovereignty.**

"FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND GLOBAL DEMOCRACY"

On 25th January in the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, the UBUNTU Forum together with the Global Policy Forum Europe organized a panel entitled "Food sovereignty and global democracy" in order to **tackle the food problems, their relation and impact on the democracy and possible solutions** (as the idea of the food sovereignty) in a situation where almost one billion people are suffering from hunger in the world (62 millions in Latin America). For that, the event counted with the participation of Irijo Conti, president of FIAN International, Benjamin Ludig from CIDSE, Germán Niño from LATINDADD, Barbara Adams from Global Policy Forum Europe – Social Watch and Manuel Manonelles, the UBUNTU Forum's director, as moderator.

The intervention of Irijo Conti focused on the idea of the interdependence among three concepts: the human right to food, the food security and the food sovereignty. From them he established, as Barbara Adams did later on, the transcendence of **dealing with the food problems from the point of view of the individual as a rights-bearer** and giving up the

¹ Report and pictures by Hernán Cortés (UBUNTU Forum)

welfare vision from the side of the State, vision that has dominated historically. Human right to food it is, therefore, a key element. For this purpose, all along the years a legal framework has been created that must be effective. It is formed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 25), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (article 11) and, in Brazil, the article 6 of the Constitution.



Benjamin Ludig analyzed the existing **crisis convergence** (energy, financial, food), focusing on the effects from the first two on the third (food) and **the problems of the land ownership**. Food crisis is amplified by the transfer of financial investments to this sector and by the policies from some governments, which favor this dynamics in a context of high prices of the raw materials. On the other hand, **this gives a boost to the increase of civil society groups working on issues related to food**, and, therefore, the pressure on these subjects. The solution goes through, according to Ludig, the food sovereignty and the land sovereignty.

Germán Niño, member of the network LATINDADD, commented the present moment from the vision of **an historical transition of our civilization**. Within it, the climate change becomes a core issue to tackle and solve.



To conclude, Barbara Adams analyzed the “Zero draft” of the Rio+20 negotiations and reviewed historically the steps forward and deficits in the negotiations within the UN. To her, **the Rio ones show the existing fragmentations between the different levels of governance**, and how the three pillars set up in 92 (financial, environmental and social) should be more integrated and coordinated. However, there are two fields where integration has been made but not a real implementation: the gender and the aid effectiveness. As Irio Conti did, Barbara Adams exhorted to a change of perspective, from an assistentialist to a right-based one, although for this purpose states with capacity to implement and to ensure the rights are needed.

Lastly, she highlighted the **need of public resources to meet all the development needs** and made a short but deep analysis of the **Sustainable Development Goals** that will be one of the main points to be dealt with in Rio. According to Adams, these objectives are talked about, but not **how are they going to be implemented or funded**. Therefore, without discussing seriously these two questions and without ensuring that they are not minimum objectives and only for a few, this new initiative could be, again, another failure.

“WORLD GOVERNANCE, ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE: PROPOSITIONS AND CHALLENGES”

One of the most decisive aspects to be discussed in Rio next June -and one of the most worrying for the civil society in the present situation of crisis- is the **governance on environmental issues and the funding of the needs related to the climate change, the desertification and the preservation of the biodiversity**. The UBUNTU Forum works on these two issues and wanted to tackle them in the event co-organized with ITUC-CSI on 28th January. It took place in the Plenary Hall of the Legislative Assembly of Rio Grande do Sul. It counted with the participation of Gustavo Marín from the Forum for a New World Governance, Denise Auclair from CIDSE, Marcelo Furtado, director of Greenpeace Brazil and Nair Goulart, vice-president of ITUC-CSI.



The first speaker was Gustavo Marín who confirmed the importance of governance as one of the basic pillars for Rio+20. **Governance understood not only as an institutional change, but as a larger paradigm change**. This vision was shared by most of the speakers, above all Marcelo Furtado and Nair Goulart.

Denise Auclair, representing the catholic network CIDSE, made a systemic analysis of the state of the world, the role of the UN, the essential issues to be dealt in Rio and the main doubts and challenges. To Auclair there is a clear **systemic unbalance** which is reflected in the UN and in the processes that they lead, among them Rio+20. Nevertheless, on the three covenants from 1992 (climate change, biodiversity and desertification) there have been made some steps forward, though there is an **unbalance between the implementation of the environmental decisions and those financial and social** that should be solved. Some positive achievements in these last years about the world governance have been the creation of the Human Rights Council and the FAO's Committee on Food Security.

One of the **crucial points** in the sustainable development issues is **financing**. In this sense, in Durban (South Africa), during the meeting of the COP on the UNFCCC (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change), the **Green Climate Fund** was created to provide 100 billion US\$ a year for adaptation and mitigation of climate change. On this point, Auclair made some

questions focusing on the **governance of these funds** and, specially, **their origine**. As CIDSE and the UBUNTU Forum defend for some years, a **financial transactions tax** would help.

Marcelo Furtado, along the lines of the presentation of Denise Auclair, said that we **face a human and a long-term civilization challenge** that goes beyond the medium-term one that the financial crisis sketches. This way, the UN must respond to the people's needs. Besides, today it has no sense to talk in terms of "North-South" as within the northern countries it exists a more and more evident south.

Nair Goulart, vice-president of ITUC-CSI –organization that brings together over 176 million workers in over 150 countries–, stated that the current situation is not only an economic, political and social crisis, but also –and perhaps more important– a **crisis of principles, ideas and values**. In order to this, it is necessary to include the idea of decent work when we talk about development, and in this sense, the implementation of a social GDP should be a significant measure. To finish, she explained an idea that is one of the main issues of the agenda of Río+20 and of the existing situation: the concept of **"green economy"**. To Goulart, this concept has the **only goal, as it is now set out, of "greening" the capitalism**.

During the closing time, after a bright discussion among the participants, Manuel Manonelles pointed out the subjects that from the UBUNTU Forum will be at stake in the Conference of Río+20: the UN reform so as to get a real world governance; the question of financing; and the role that new innovative mechanisms to finance the development could carry out.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

During the Thematic Social Forum, the UBUNTU Forum delegation also participated in other activities:

- Thematic Group “ World Governance and power architecture”;
- Informal meeting of the World Social Forum International Council;
- Meeting of the Forum of Local Authorities;
- Meeting with the President of the Republic of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff.

THE PATH TO RIO+20

The Thematic Social Forum has started its path towards the Rio Summit next June. Within its framework, there will take place not only the official meeting and the global dialogues, but also the side-events where civil society, activists and different kinds of actors will come together to discuss and build alternatives in order to get truly climate and social justice in a world that puts the persons' interests before those of the capital. That is going to happen mainly in the **People's Summit**.





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of International Institutions

www.reformcampaign.net

Secretariat

Edifici Nexus II (UPC)
C/ Jordi Girona, 29
08034 Barcelona
Tel. (+34) 93 413 77 73
Fax (+34) 93 413 77 77

ubuntu@ubuntu.upc.edu
info@reformcampaign.net

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