



ThePORTO ALEGRE memo

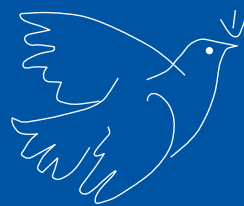
Report of activities of the UBUNTU Forum and its Ad Hoc Secretariat at the 3rd World Social Forum (WSF)

PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL, ON 23-28 JANUARY 2003



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Introduction

The 3rd World Social Forum (WSF) took place in Porto Alegre, Brazil, on 23-28 January 2003.

Around 100,000 people attended the event, which has become a leading international meeting-point for civil society debate on alternatives and new ways of focusing on both local and global affairs. The Forum also enjoyed considerable impact in the international media.

The UBUNTU Forum and the Ad Hoc Secretariat were present at the WSF, playing an active role at several meetings and workshops, and holding a Seminar on the Reform of International Institutions.

This is a report on some of the activities at the Forum.

The World Campaign for the In depth Reform of International Institutions

This campaign was launched for the first time within the framework of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg on 30 and 31 August and 1 September 2002.

The campaign has since been presented in other places and forums: at the Global Governance meeting in Montreal, Canada; at the European Social Forum in Florence, Italy; in Barcelona, Spain; and at the Asian Civil Society Forum in Bangkok, Thailand.

Moreover, the first meeting of the Organising Committee took place in Barcelona on December 7-9. The meeting was attended by an important number of civil society networks interested in the development of the campaign. More information on the campaign and the meeting can be found at our website on reform: www.ubuntu.upc.es/reform

What is the Campaign About

The process of globalisation is leading to a dispersion of political authority: while markets are becoming global, the influence of political institutions required for their effective functioning decreases every day. In this state of the affairs, people all over the world are starting to claim their democratic entitlement to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Global civil society is called upon to play a key role in fostering democratisation of the international system.

This campaign aims to promote a series of reforms towards a more effective, representative, accountable and democratic system of international institutions, through representative procedures involving actors all over the world, contributing to the construction of a fair, diverse, sustainable and peaceful world. The campaign aims at system-wide reforms to democratise international institutions and to help make other reform moves within specific organisations more effective and coherent by framing them in a general vision of a fairer and more accountable global architecture.

Who supports the campaign

Organisations and personalities who support the launching of the WORLD CAMPAIGN for an in-depth reform of the system of international institutions

As for 15 september 2002!

Personalities Intellectuals

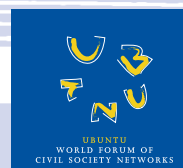
Samir Amin	Forum du Tiers Monde	Edgar Morin	Assoc. pour la Pensée Complexe
Leonardo Boff	Theologist	William Pace	World Federalist Movement
Anil Bordia	Found. for Educ. and Dev.	Adolfo Pérez Esquivel	Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
Jorge Brovetto	Grupo Montevideo	Anaisabel Prera	Fund. Cultura de Paz
Ignasi Carreras	Intermón Oxfam	José Ramos-Horta	Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
Noam Chomsky	Writer	Jeremy Rifkin	Writer
R. Díez-Hochleitner	Pres. Em. Club of Rome	Joseph Rotblat	Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
Nawal Elsaadawi	Writer	Sebastião Salgado	Photographer
Leonel Fernández	Fund. Global Demó. y Des.	José Saramago	Nobel Prize in Literature Laureate
Jim Garrison	State of the World Forum	Roberto Savio	Inter Press Service
Boutros Boutros Ghali		Vandana Shiva	R. Found. for STE
Asma Jahangir	Human Rights Activist	Mario Soares	Fundação Mario Soares
Hans Küng	Center for Global Ethics	Alain Touraine	EHESS
Alexander Likhotal	Green Cross International	Aminata Traoré	Writer
Federico Mayor		M. Vázquez Montalbán	Writer
Rigoberta Menchú	Nobel Peace Prize Laureate	Cora Weiss	Hague Appeal for Peace
Danielle Mitterrand	France Libertés	Muhammad Yunus	Grameen Bank
Gertrude Mongella	Advocacy for Women in Africa		

International Organisations

Advocacy for Women in Africa	Institut International Jacques Maritain
Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives	Intermón Oxfam – Oxfam International
Centro Internacional para una Cultura Democrática	International Peace Bureau
Community Organisations Development Institute	Int. Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War
CONGO Conference of NGOs Consultative to the UN	Inter Press Service
EarthAction	IUCN The World Conservation Union
Federation of African Women's Peace Network	Jubilee
FEMNET African Women's Dev. and Com. Network	Justice and Peace Europe
FLACAM Foro Latinoam. de CC Ambientales	Latin American Inst. of Education for Dev.
Foreign Policy in Focus	Peace Round Table
Forum du Tiers Monde	State of the World Forum
France Libertés	Society for International Development
Fund. Global Democracia y Desarrollo	The Arab Organisation for Human Rights
Fundación para una Cultura de Paz	The Global Youth ACTION Network
Fundación Rigoberta Menchú	The Hague Appeal for Peace
Fundação Mario Soares	United Nations Association Spain/Latin America
Global March Against Child Labour	UNESCO Centre of Catalonia
Global Policy Forum	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Org.
Grameen Bank	World Civil Society Conference
Green Cross International	

Academia

Abdullahi An-Na'im	Emory University
Donald Gerth	University of California Sacramento
Sami Naïr	Université Paris-x-Nanterre
Adil Najam	Boston University
Santiago Ramentol	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Gordon Smith	Centre for Global Studies
Josep Xercavins	Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya



Seminar on the Reform of International Institutions



▲ Poster announcing the Seminar

World Confederation of Labour

A seminar on the Reform of International Institutions was organised by the UBUNTU Forum on the afternoon of January 26. It was held at the auditorium in Building 50 at the PUCRS (Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul), main venue of the World Social Forum.

The seminar, chaired by **Federico Mayor**, was attended by **Renata Bloem** (CONGO), **Eduardo Estévez** (WCL), **Hazel Henderson**, **Flavio Lotti** (Peace Roundtable), **Sara Longwe** (FEMNET), **Adolfo Pérez Esquivel** (Nobel Peace Prize winner), **Roberto Savio** (IPS), and **Cora Weiss** (The Hague Appeal for Peace/ IPB); and was presented by **Josep Xercavins** (Ad Hoc Secretariat).

The first round of speeches was followed by an interactive debate with members of the public. Several aspects relating to the reform of the UN system and other international organisations were discussed.

The seminar as a whole served to emphasise the importance of reforming the system of international institutions, particularly in view of the present globalisation process. The discussion was followed by a large and enthusiastic audience, including MPs, members of social movements and NGOs.



▲ From left to right: Sara Longwe, Hazel Henderson, Cora Weiss, Federico Mayor, Josep Xercavins, Roberto Savio, Eduardo Estévez and Renata Bloem



▲ View of the seminar room



▲ Adolfo Pérez Esquivel addresses the meeting

Other activities at the WSF

World Confederation of Labour Seminar

Prior to the WSF, the WCL organised a seminar on "An economy for human development" at the CESC Events Centre in Porto Alegre. Manuel Manonelles, from the Ad Hoc Secretariat, gave a talk on global governance on the afternoon of January 20, as well as presenting the World Campaign at the event.

International Council of the WSF

The International Council of the WSF took place at the PUCRS, the main WSF venue, on January 21 and 22. The Ad Hoc Secretariat of the UBUNTU Forum attended the meetings through the good offices of the World Confederation of Labour.

Meeting with President Lula

Federico Mayor accompanied Mario Soares at an informal meeting with the president of Brazil, Ignacio Lula da Silva, on the afternoon of January 24. The meeting, organised by the Brazilian intellectual Candido Mendes, was also attended by the Head of the Civil House of the President and Gianni Vattimo, member of the European Parliament.

Federico Mayor on the Panel on New Dimensions of the Democratic State

Federico Mayor spoke at the panel on the "New Dimensions of the Democratic State" organised by the WSF Secretariat on the afternoon of January 25. The panel was chaired by Hillary Wainwright of the Transnational Institute and took place in the Armazéns do Cais do Porto, venue of the WSF panels. Other speakers were: Alexander Buzgalin (Alternatives – Russia), Barbara Ehrenreich (USA), Francisco de Oliveira (NEDIC, Brazil), Frank Bsirske (VER.DI, Germany) and Roxana Vazquez (Cladem, Argentina).

Federico Mayor at the Seminar on Decent work A globalisation with dignified jobs

This seminar was organised by three international networks of trade unions: the World Confederation of Labour, the European Confederation of Trade Unions and the International Federation of Free Trade Unions. Federico Mayor took part in the session on "World Governance" on the evening of January 25.

Workshop on UN Reform organised by CONGO

The Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations organised a workshop on United Nations Reform at the WSF in the morning of January 25. Josep Xercavins, Coordinator of the Ad hoc Secretariat, took part, along with Peter Hesse (P. Hesse Foundation), Anselmo Lee (Pax Romana) and Peter Prove (Pres. Special NGO-Committee on Human Rights). The workshop was chaired by Renata Bloem, president of CONGO.



▲ View of the WCL seminar



▲ View of the meeting of the International Council of the WSF



▲ View of the Panel on "New Dimensions of the Democratic State"



▲ Federico Mayor speaking at the Seminar on "Decent work. A globalisation with dignified jobs"

Informal contact with members of the World Commission for the Social Dimension of Globalisation

In the evening of January 25, an informal meeting took place between supporters of the World Campaign and Commissioners of the World Commission for the Social Dimension of Globalisation (established by the ILO), organised by the Ad Hoc Secretariat.



▲ From left to right: Lluís Miret, Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, Peter Weiss, Gerry Rotgers, Núria Molina, Josep Xercavins, Susan Davis, John Foster, Roberto Savio, Federico Mayor, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Hazel Henderson, Martin Khor, Cora Weiss and Manuel Manonelles.

Interview with Federico Mayor in Terraviva

Gustavo Capdevilla



▲ Federico Mayor

The Spanish scientist and former Director General of UNESCO (1987 – 1999), Federico Mayor Zaragoza, is participating in the World Social Forum in his capacity as a member of the international council and also as a leading figure in a campaign for in-depth reform of the system of international institutions.

A summary of his impressions on both matters is offered below.

"I have been present at some significant events of the Forum, for example on the 24th when we listened to president Lula. My impressions of that encounter are extraordinarily positive. For the first time society, the people, have appeared on the world stage. And they have appeared, not with the use of violence, but rather it is something they have achieved. It is an achievement that has enabled the voice of the people to reach the world's highest echelons of power and president Lula, perhaps the most immediate fruit of this great movement, has now been able to say, 'I have come to take your feelings, these emotions and these reflections, to those who represent the opposite pole, in a situation hitherto characterised by confrontation, and perhaps dialogue can now begin.'

Following this, I was able to spend time with president Lula and I took part in a number of events. I can say I was impressed with the quality of both. I think this is how constructive work can be done in the future: from very different origins and positions but with the conviction that the time of the people has come. The time has come for us



to realise that that we can no longer ignore the fact that 30,000 people die of hunger every day. The time has come for a different world to be constructed on our great ethical foundations. This is why the slogan "Another world is possible" seems to me to be so suggestive. It is positive, it represents the taking of a firm stance, but it also represents constructing bridges and the desire to come to general agreement.

As for the future of the Forum, I would be very careful about institutionalising movements that, naturally, must have specific proposals. However, there are times when institutions slowly lose sight of their origins, roots and strong messages. In the end, internal institutional motives come to take precedence over their essential missions. I believe, then, that organisation and periodicity combined with conserving this genuine spirit of non-violence and admitting all criteria and points of view, is one thing. I think it necessary that this should exist. However, going from this to institutionalisation is something we have to be very careful about. My advice would be that the Forum should be orderly, should be organised, but we must be very cautious.

If we want reform in the international institutions it is because we are aware that these instruments, which were created with very clear missions in the beginning, have slowly been pushed aside, or have had their missions changed, by more powerful forces. I refer to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the United Nations (UN).

In some cases, the idea of reform is simply to return to the original aims of these institutions because their principles of equality, solidarity and justice, which are universal, do

not need to be changed. What we must do now is to find new means. What we must do is to put into practice human rights that make us 6,100 million people with human dignity. We cannot continue with 17% of privileged people and the rest living in slums. This is what must guide all our actions. One must be coherent. At present, on the national scale, some countries have democracy, formal democracy at least. But when we move to the international scale, we find drug-trafficking, arms trafficking, capital trafficking, trafficking with human beings and tax havens, ever-greater impunity, a jungle, and there is not a single guideline, a single norm or a single law to regulate it. This cannot go on. All these dreams of accountability, of the International Criminal Court, will never come into effect if we keep believing that we are democrats, that the people have a voice on the national scale but, beyond that, we permit an oligarchy, a plutocracy. And now it is worse than ever. We are moving dangerously close to a hegemony. It is no longer even a group, no longer the G-7 or the G-8. Now we could end up with the hegemony of a single country.

I believe that a great receptivity is coming into being. Five years ago, this capacity to listen did not exist among the great powers. It exists today. People, like the new president of Brazil himself, are starting to appear and they are able to say, 'Listen, my war is against hunger, my war is against poverty, my war is a fight for human dignity.' Now we have direct messengers.

Participating in the campaign for institutional reform is a group of people, headed by professor Josep Xercavins of the Technical University of Catalonia, and they aim to unite a great number of NGOs, a great number of people, so that we can contribute towards this new and different message with very specific proposals. We seek the opinions

of very important and already established people and institutions, like Intermon-Oxfam, Civicus, university teachers' associations, Danielle Mitterrand and her group France Libertés, etc.

We must have a clearer idea of the world as a whole and we need to look further so that everyone today, and the coming generations, will benefit. We must work with scenarios of five, ten, fifteen years. What will happen if there are no changes? There will be tremendous migratory movements, there will be more terrorism, more discontent, more instability.

The most immediate goal of the reform project is that many proposals arise from the initiative. One example is that drawn up by Xercavins. Why must the IMF, the World Bank, and now the World Trade Organisation (WTO), be outside the framework of the United Nations system? If the United Nations were really strong, we would have guidelines of conduct. Just as there is a Security Council to deal strictly with issues of war, we should also have an economic and social security council that would be a worldwide democratic system for ensuring order. Then we should also have a security council for the environment, and another for culture and ethics.

First, there must be a political decision, but it must come from the people, as has happened now in Porto Alegre, or in our world forum of civil society networks known as Ubuntu. First, states whose management capacity no longer exists would make the political decision. The world cannot be governed if we do not have institutions on a worldwide scale that can step in where a state's ability to govern ceases to be effective."

PORTO ALEGRE 2003 "NO TO WAR YES TO LULA"

Josep Xercavins i Valls

For the third consecutive year, the World Social Forum is being celebrated in Porto Alegre. Only half an hour after arriving I was asking myself how it ever crossed my mind to wonder whether there was any point in coming. All of us have "crises of faith" and the situation of the world right now is conducive to that. But just participating in the inaugural march, you "start to believe again" in "the best of humankind", represented here once more, perhaps as in no other event in the world right now, by a wonderful melting-pot of races, ages, languages, ideologies, cultures, proposals, religions, etc. I would like, above all, and with

these few lines, to share with the reader who has not been able to come to the "rally", the "good news from the ralliers": we are not alone, there are many of us, many more of us, who say and think that food, health, peace, education, justice, freedom can, and must, be enjoyed by all humankind.

The Social Forum, which arose as a counterpoint to the World Economic Forum in Davos, has dared to propose simply that "another world is possible" (another world in which the more human concerns are more important than

the more economic concerns, instead of the opposite, which is clearly the order of the day). It has developed into an explosion of proposals, that are still to be brought together, as an alternative to the economic and commercial liberalism that has predominated since the 1980s, and this year's Forum is taking place at one of the most critical times of humanity's recent history: with the threat of a unilateral war, by and for – and nobody doubts this any more – the oil and economic interests of the most powerful people in the world. The facts of 11 September 2001 did not change the course of the World Social Forum of 2002. On the contrary, we were (and are) all convinced that only by declaring “war” on poverty, on injustice, on underdevelopment, can we construct a peace that is free and safe for everybody because, in this way, we would be eliminating the germs of hatred and vengeance on which terrorism feeds.

Nonetheless, the World Social Forum of 2003 has had to turn its attention, inevitably – and especially right now – to the threat of war in Iraq. There is a general awareness that this would be the most significant retrograde step taken by humanity since the 20th century world wars. Porto Alegre is, in this regard, one of the best possible loudspeakers for voicing the resounding opposition to this war from all around the world.

The second day of Porto Alegre 2003, was notable for the presence of the recently-elected and newly-appointed

president of Brazil, Lula. He wished to declare publicly that he has something in common with all the rest of the Forum. He (along with the Forum) has declared another “war”, the “war” against poverty in his country and, in solidarity, against poverty in a world where half of the people are hungry. Yet he wonders if he can really win this war in an international context which is being poisoned by the courses set by war and terror. It was precisely because of this that we applauded when he proposed going to Davos to say the same thing, as the de facto representative of the World Social Forum. This is why I have been bold enough to begin with the desire to “convey the good news” to the reader, and why I venture to conclude in the same spirit. Lula is tremendously good news. World civil society that is concerned to construct another kind of globalisation – one of solidarity, ethics ... — has, perhaps, a considerable leader in him. He is a leader who speaks about Democratic Politics in capital letters, from the heart and without any kind of subterfuge. He, like so many others, and like the World Social Forum, has the priority right now of contributing towards preventing the war in Iraq so as to be able to continue making a reality of the slogan “another world is possible”.

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Open letter to President Bush War on Iraq? The worst remedy for the world's grave problems

During the World Social Forum, and in the framework of the increasing danger of a war against Iraq, the following "Open letter to President Bush" was drafted and passed on for consultation.

The final version of the letter immediately began to gather a large number of signatures. The letter was sent to President George W. Bush and to the press. It had a large impact on the media. It was published in the International Herald Tribune on February 7 and subsequently appeared in other newspapers around the world, such as Le Monde (February 15), La Republica, Uruguay (February 6), the Nuevo Diario, Nicaragua, La Vanguardia, Spain, and others.



Going to war, any war, is always a step back. A failure for democracy, development and understanding: a defeat for the whole of humanity!

We have always been for life and against violence, but particularly since 11 September 2001. However, the belligerent attitude of the US towards Iraq threatens the foundations of world co-existence and international law. These are foundations that began to be laid after two world wars and under US leadership precisely to prevent war in the future.

Despite the efforts of the UN and several states to moderate the US tendency towards unilateral action – Security Council Resolution 1441 reopened the path towards a diplomatic solution of the conflict – it appears beyond doubt that, ignoring the results of the UN inspections and the serious objections of many people, institutions and governments all over the world, you are determined to unleash a war against Iraq, one certain to cause even more death, misery and desperation to a people already oppressed, their endurance tested to the very limit.

Despite the disinformation campaigns, the great majority of world public opinion sees no reason for preventive war.

Does the US government really believe that it is helping to build a more peaceful and democratic world, a fairer, freer and safer world with disinformation campaigns and preventive wars? Are you deaf to the indignant clamour that rises from all over the planet and from within your own country?

We call on you to remember your great responsibility before history and to use the enormous resources available to you to help humanity recover its faith in itself as your country has done in the past. Do not help spread the harsh message that only economic interests, linked in this case to oil and the war industry, can move the world's powerful to take action and sow more violence poverty and hate around the world. Respond to these problems in a spirit of solidarity, justice and aid. This is what humanity needs and what it expects.

We continue to share and understand the American people's grief and fear over the tragic events of September 11. But the best way to prevent this pain from being repeated and from spreading, to erase the seed of terrorism from the face of the world, is to do the opposite of what you are now doing. We call on you to take a radical change of direction to build peace, justice and development in the world.

Federico Mayor
Noam Chomsky
Mario Soares
Rigoberta Menchú
Joseph Rotblat
Adolfo Pérez Esquivel
Cora Weiss
José Saramago
Susan George
Ignasi Carreras
Alexander Likhotal
Eduardo Estévez
Kailash Satyarthi
Andrew Simms
Mohammed Fayek
Cornelio Sommaruga
Kin Chi Lau
Alain Touraine
Kumi Naidoo
Sara Longwe
Jorge Brevetto

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
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Transnational Institute
The Hague Appeal for Peace
Nobel Prize in Literature
Intermón Oxfam – Oxfam International
Green Cross International
World Confederation of Labour
Global March Against Child Labour
New Economics Foundation
The Arab Organisation for Human Rights
Foundation Caux-Initiatives of Change
ARENA Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives

CIVICUS
FEMNET The African Women's Development and Communication Network
Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo

Lois Barber
Paul Ortega
Abdullahi An-Na'im
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Mary-Wynne Ashford
Hazel Henderson
Félix Martí
Fatma Alloo
Anaisabel Prera
Arcadi Oliveres
Gabriela Cauduro
Àngels Mataró
Martí Olivella
Martha Honey
Warren Bell
Raimon Ribera
Paiboon Wattanasiritham
Gurutx Jáuregui
Josep M. Fàbregues
Josep Xercavins

EarthAction
World Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations
Emory University
Centro Internacional para la Cultura Democrática
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War

Linguapax Institute
DAWN Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era - Africa
Fundación para una Cultura de Paz
Justice and Peace - Europe
Servicio Justicia y Paz - Latinoamérica
Asociación para las Naciones Unidas - España y Latinoamérica
Alianza para un mundo responsable, plural y solidario
Foreign Policy in Focus
Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment
Centre UNESCO de Catalunya
Community Organizations Development Institute

Coordinadora Catalana de Fundacions
UBUNTU Forum Ad Hoc Secretariat