

**HUMAN RIGHTS, PEOPLE'S SECURITY, AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT- UNDER ATTACK
NO TO MILITARISATION AND UNFAIR TRADE!**

The agreed statement from the ASEM4 People Forum 22 September 2002

Over 600 women and men representing more than 30 countries across Asia and Europe met at the ASEM4 People Forum between the 19-22 September 2002 in Copenhagen, Denmark. The meeting held wide-ranging discussions under three main themes - Globalisation, People-centred Security and social, economic, political and cultural Rights.

ASEM4 People Forum has been a venue for people, their organisations and social movements to exchange ideas, analysis and visions on Asia-Europe relations and above all the effects of the current structure of economic development on the lives, livelihoods, rights and security of the women, men and children in the two regions. ASEM4 People Forum participants expressed their frustration about the effects of economic and social development that has been and are increasingly dominated by the interests of multinational corporations, financial markets and unaccountable multilateral institutions. Representatives shared their deep and growing concern about the increasing militarisation of international relations, the weakening of democracy and the attacks on human and social rights. Women's and Indigenous Peoples' rights and livelihoods are specifically under threat.

ASEM4 People Forum demands immediate and fundamental changes in Asia-Europe relations so that the necessary steps can be taken toward establishing a just and equal world where people's rights, sustainable economic and social development and people-centred security predominate. We continue to call for the development of a strong social dimension to all aspects of the ASEM process. We call for the establishment of a 'Social Forum' which can act as an interface between the official ASEM process and civil society, including Trade Unions. This should be established following appropriate consultation by ASEM5. As an initial step we call for a seminar on labour issues and the establishment of regular meetings of ASEM Ministers responsible for Labour and Social issues.

PEOPLE'S SECURITY IS NOT FOR SALE

The privatisation of services has made it more difficult for the growing poor to meet their basic care and social reproduction needs. Access to water, in particular, has been transformed from a human right to a commodity, from a common good into a private property and scarcity of water turned into a profitable venture. The WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services underpins the public-private partnerships and enables corporations to take control of public services and resources in an increasing number of Asian and European countries.

Privatisation of public resources such as water, health and education should be stopped immediately and, where possible, reversed to ensure greater public control and public

financing of these services. This is the basis for improving access. ASEM governments should make every effort to ensure that access to water becomes a fundamental human right and is enshrined in the constitutions of their respective countries.

Drawing from the overarching WTO Agreement on Agriculture, agricultural policies everywhere are being pursued in favour of corporate agri-business farms, the use of genetic technology, and the generation of profit from trade in agricultural products. At present there is no level playing field among farmers within countries as well as farmers in Asia and Europe. Agricultural subsidies that favour large-scale European producers discriminate against small-scale farmers in Europe and Asia. Asian farmers are further impoverished by the lack of support from Asian governments.

ASEM4 People Forum calls on ASEM leaders to position food safety, sovereignty and access at the centre of their agricultural policies in order to achieve food security for all. They should seriously re-think the inclusion of Agriculture in the WTO regime. European leaders should ensure the end of agricultural dumping and agree to a timetable to phase out agricultural export subsidies. The right of developing countries to protect and promote their domestic agricultural sectors in the interest of food security and ecologically sustainable rural development should be recognised.

The corporate-state interaction between the Asia Europe Business Forum and the ASEM Finance and Economic Ministers meetings underlines the corporate bias of the ASEM process. By contrast, Ministers have not had the political will to meet with social actors from civil society. The close relationship between governments and business has paved the way for the expansion of discussions within the ASEM process on new trade-related issues, such as, investments, competition policy and government procurement which are on the agenda of the next WTO Ministerial.

ASEM4 People Forum demands that the ASEM reject the inclusion of the 'new issues' in the WTO and to express this at the forthcoming 5th Ministerial Meeting in Cancún.

RESOLUTE ACTION FOR PEACE AND HUMAN SECURITY

The current preoccupation on state militarism and interventionism has eroded millions of people's security and well being. ASEM4 People Forum calls on ASEM leaders to condemn and not to support the plans for the weaponisation of space. In Asia and Europe the US led "war against terrorism" has been used as an excuse to impose restrictive laws on citizens, criminalise peaceful grassroots movements and legitimate opposition. A US led military action against Iraq which might be legitimised by the ASEM members would lead to greater regional and global insecurity. Moreover, military expenditure lures away the still hoped for peace dividend that could be spent on health, education and human welfare which are necessary for sustainable development.

We call on ASEM heads of State and government to play a positive role for global peace by preventing any interventionist and belligerent attack on Iraq. In consultation with civil society, ASEM should also independently address long term solutions for security problems based on promoting peace and sustainable development and prioritising non-

violent means of conflict resolution. ASEM should establish a regular mechanism to enable common visions of foreign and security policy that are based on human security.

RECOVERING DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

ASEM4 People Forum is deeply concerned that human rights and democracy across the regions are under attack. The global war against terror, unleashed by the United States and endorsed by the heads of State and government of ASEM countries combined with the determined liberalisation of trade have eroded the civil liberties and rights of peoples and have compromised genuine democratic processes across Asia and Europe. Many governments are now using anti-terrorism as a pretext for limiting the freedoms of citizens and suppressing their legitimate civil and political activity, some are also reverting to torture. 'Fortress Europe' is strengthening itself with repressive laws. Many of these criminalise migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers, many of whom are women, and threaten them with expulsion and repatriation.

We demand the withdrawal of the proposed European and Asian anti-terrorist initiatives as well as the repeal of existing undemocratic forms of security legislation. These are an attack on people's fundamental rights. Any additional security measures - whether domestic, continental or inter-regional, must be subjected to democratic discussions by citizens and their Parliaments and respect international Human Rights Covenants and agreements.

In closing, ASEM4 People Forum participants reaffirm their commitment to the world-wide struggle for an alternative world in which peoples everywhere enjoy genuine peace, sustainable development, equality of peoples and the sexes, human rights and democracy. ASEM4 People Forum reaffirms our belief and commitment that another world is possible and we must build it for all our futures.