



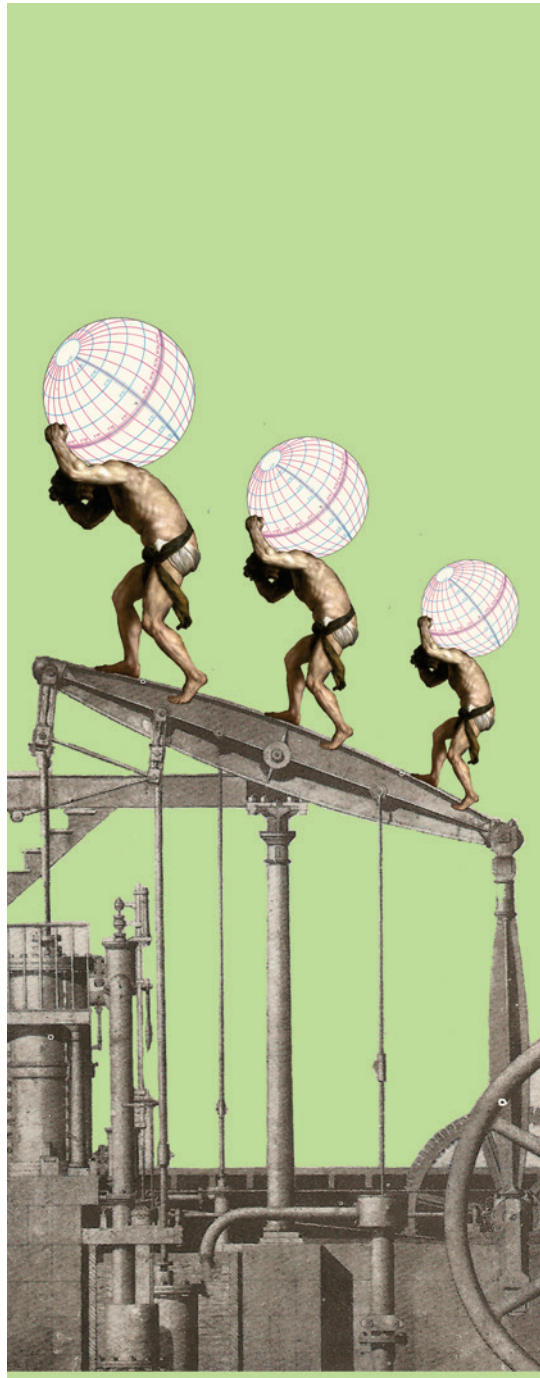
HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG  
ECOLOGY

VOLUME 38

# Resource Politics for a Fair Future

A Memorandum of the Heinrich Böll Foundation

Edited by the **Heinrich Böll Foundation**





# **RESOURCE POLITICS FOR A FAIR FUTURE**



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PUBLICATION SERIES ECOLOGY  
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## About the artist

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Resource Politics for a Fair Future

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Volume 38 of the Publication Series Ecology (English edition)

Edited by the Heinrich Böll Foundation 2014

Editorial design: feinkost Designnetzwerk, C. Mawrodiew (based on the origin layout by blotto design)

Printing: Druckerei Arnold, Großbeeren

Cover picture and illustrations: Ines Meier

ISBN 978-3-86928-127-8

This publication can be ordered from: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Schumannstr. 8, 10117 Berlin, Germany

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# CONTENTS

Foreword	6
Acknowledgments	8
The Story of this Memorandum	9
Summary	12
<b>1. Abundance and equity</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2. Drivers of environmental stress and inequity</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>3. Why has it been so difficult to stop these trends so far?</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>4. A normative framing for fair and sustainable Resource Politics</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>5. Strategies for a fair future</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>6. What next?</b>	<b>49</b>

# FOREWORD

From the extraction of tar sands in North America and in Congo to large-scale land purchases in Asia and Africa and from China's investment in the Mekong region to mining and soya production in Latin America – the global resources bonanza is a fact. The Heinrich Böll Foundation, in common with many partners, does not acquiesce to it, because it is not resulting in a fair distribution of the profits – as was widely hoped for – or any reduction in poverty. On the contrary, we observe all the phenomena of the resource curse: the concentration of economic and market power, the degradation of ecosystems and rising social inequality. We therefore support very different ideas and conceptions of an equitable and ecological future – a global overhaul of energy and agricultural policies fundamentally new resource politics. We stand in solidarity with people defending themselves against suppression of their democratic rights and destruction of their livelihoods. We support social and ecological transformation everywhere, at home in Germany and Europe to Nigeria, the Czech Republic and the Western Balkans. We campaign for a strong reduction of resource use, for binding standards of transparency and accountability for European corporations. In our view, ecology, democracy and equity are inseparable parts of a whole.

The central question for us, therefore, is how the use of natural resources needs to be organized so as to respect the ecological limits of our world and, at the same time, strengthen human rights and democracy. In order to capture the diversity of regional perspectives on this question, we have conducted an international dialogue process entitled «Resource Equity in a Finite World» which sought to harness the knowledge and experience of young people in particular, both in our partner countries and in Germany and Europe.

One outcome of this dialogue process is this Memorandum, which articulates a normative framework for our Resource Politics work and sets out fields of action and options for intervention. These now merit attention, discussion and further development in the relevant regions and countries. The Memorandum is to be thought of as one possible component in a Resource Politics strategy. The dialogue process in our foreign offices and partner networks is the start of an intensive engagement with the challenges of resource politics which gives pivotal significance to democratic participation, human rights, resource protection and equity. I would like to thank those colleagues in the foreign offices who have organized regional future workshops and thus played a crucial role for the overall success of this project.

I am excited by the great number of people who have taken part over the last two years in the overall process and the ten future workshops, involving participants from 29 countries, in order to share their ideas, perspectives and analyses with us. My thanks go to the Advisory Board for its support in distilling and helping to structure



the many ideas. I owe the utmost appreciation to Christine Chemnitz and Lili Fuhr. They hatched the idea for this process and coordinated and took responsibility for it from the outset. They engaged in countless rounds of feedback on the Memorandum with the many participants. I am convinced that the final text will inspire reflection and action. My special thanks go to Ralph Griesse and Annette Kraus. As the moderator of the overall process, the future workshops and the resources summit, Ralph Griesse made a key contribution to their success and, especially, to the motivation and enjoyment of the participants. Annette Kraus kept a confident hold on the administrative, organizational and financial reins. I would also like to thank the following people for their active participation and contributions: Janine Korduan, Inka Dewitz, Abby D'Arcy, Ramona Simon, Lara Cahal and Inka Bosch.

Berlin, June 2014

Barbara Unmüßig  
*President Heinrich Böll Foundation*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the following people for their inputs and comments on various draft versions of this Memorandum:

Amal Dababseh, Ana Di Pangracio, Andrea Bues, Andrew Ihlo, Axel Harneit-Sievers, Barbara Unmüßig, Betzabet del Valle Morero, Carlos Monge, Cathrin Klenck, Chan Ramy, Christine Moser, Cintia Barenho, Corinne Deek, Dawid Bartelt, Divja Gupta, Durukan Dudu, Erick Onduru, Fredrick Njau, Gitanjali More, Hans Verolme, Heike Löschmann, Heidi Feldt, Jagoda Munic, Jenny Franco, Johanna Sydow, Jutta Kill, Kate Raworth, Katja Heubach, Katrin Seidel, Kimani Sankara, Kulthoum Omari, Lennart Kümper-Schlake, Maiana Teixeira, Maja Göpel, Malik Fercovic, María Cecilia Reeves, Maureen Santos, Max Marwede, Michael Buesgen, Muna Dajani, Ozgur Gurbuz, Pinaki Das Gupta, Raimund Bleischwitz, Recaredo Gálvez, Samuel Nguiffo, Sebastián Ainzúa Auerbach, Sisay Misganaw, Sunita Narain, Svenja Oberender, Thomas Fatheuer, Uli Brand, Wolfgang Sachs, Xu Ting, Zukiswa Kota

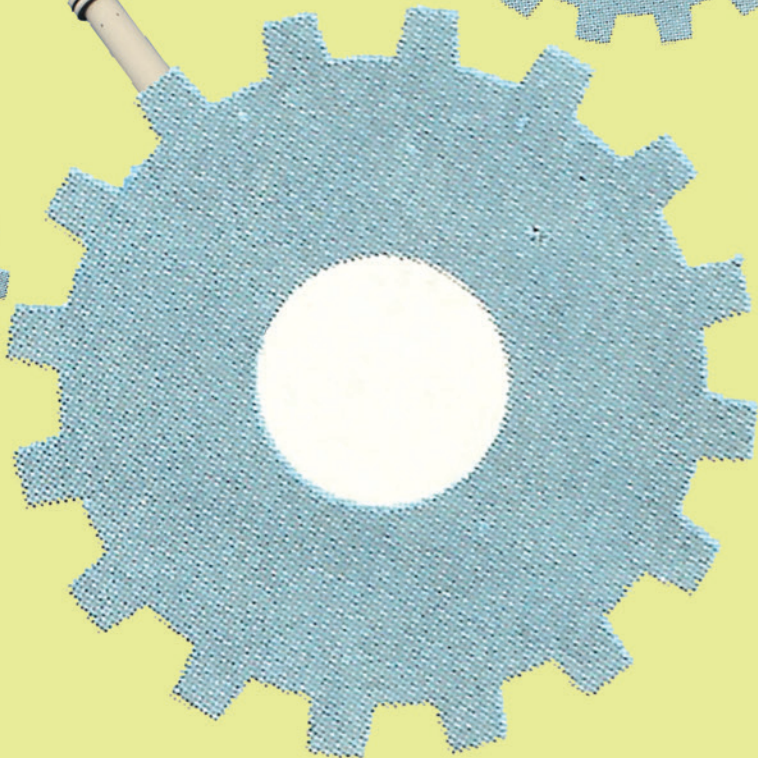
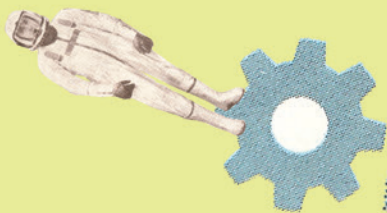
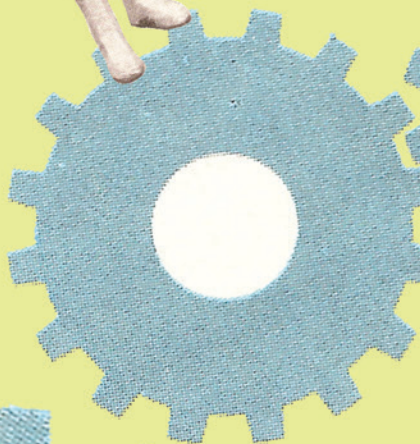
# THE STORY OF THIS MEMORANDUM

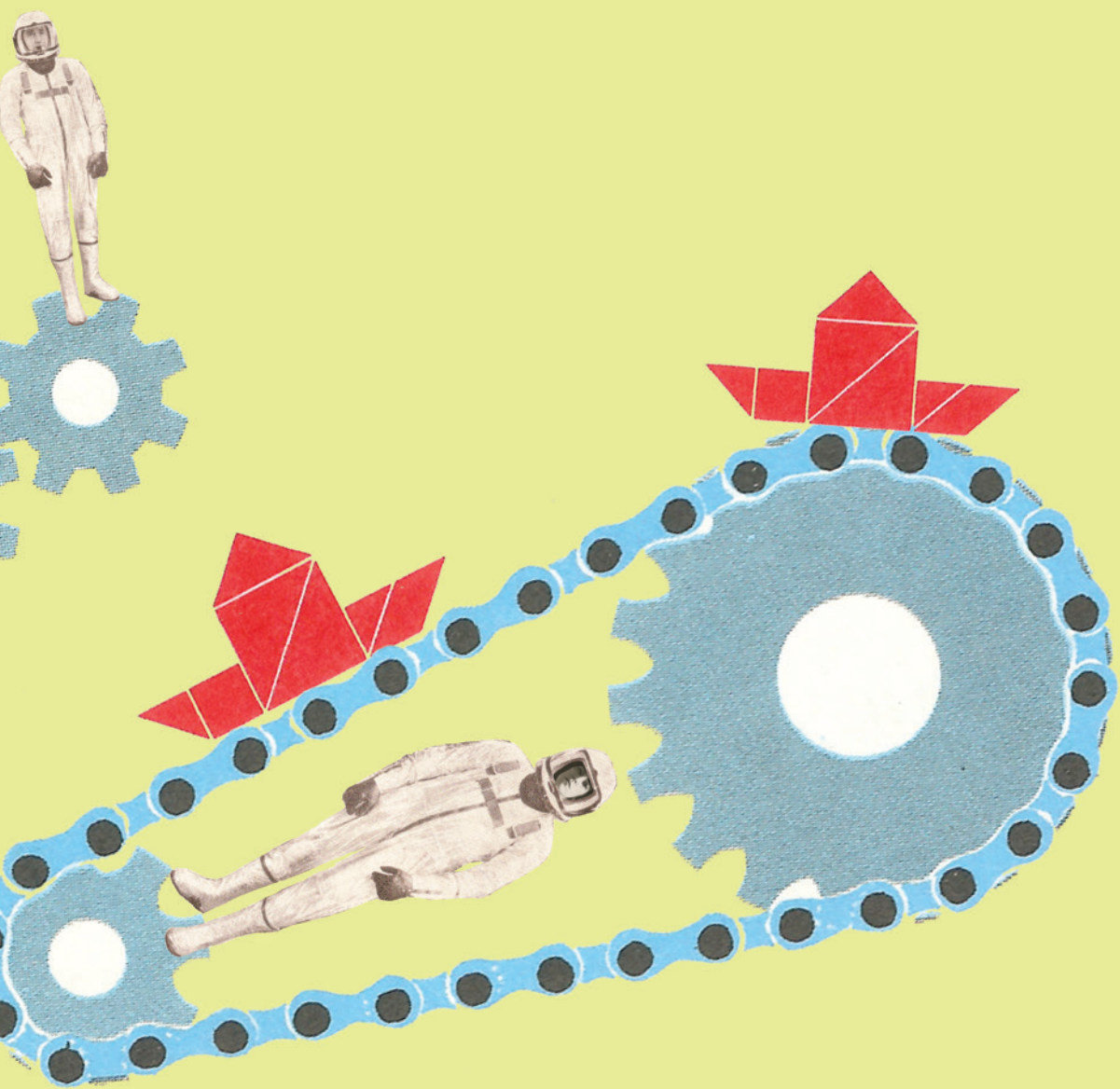
«Through an alternative vision we point out different views of the world from the indigenous people of our lands, for whom the forests, the sun, wind and water are not resources but essential elements of nature and common goods that give life to the complex web we belong to. This is why we emphasize the need to reinvent our words, in order to deconstruct the dominant discourse by remodeling our relationships towards the world surrounding us.»

Edgardo García, Mariana Reyes and Rosalía Soley,  
*delegates from the future workshop Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean*

This Memorandum is the outcome of a two-year process. With the dialogue project «Resource Equity in a Finite World» the Heinrich Böll Foundation brought together young people from 29 countries who have examined resource issues in their respective regions in ten «future workshops» in Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa (including Turkey), sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Delegates of each future workshop brought their experiences, ideas and visions to Berlin, where they spent two days with the German and international Heinrich Böll Foundation team, discussing and developing these ideas further. The process was supported by an advisory board consisting of eleven internationally renowned environmentalists and human rights experts.

This Memorandum aims to pull together the very different strands of the debate. It cannot aspire to fully represent the great complexity and diversity of the regional debates. However, it is deeply inspired by the outcomes of the regional future workshops, the very different perspectives of the delegates and the views of the advisory board members. It is a subjective selection and conclusion by the two lead authors and by no means attempts to portray a global consensus – which does not in fact exist! The Memorandum seeks to be a first step in exploring a new perspective – one of many possible perspectives and one that is strongly characterized by the European background of the lead authors. It does not proffer a conclusive outlook, nor does it provide a blueprint for every country, region and community. But it lays out a set of principles and ideas for Resource Politics in the triangle of socio-economic, environmental and democratic justice with an international perspective – one that now urgently needs to be translated, processed and debated in the different countries and regions.





## SUMMARY AND KEY MESSAGES AT A GLANCE

In this Memorandum the notion of *Resource Politics* is introduced to provide an analytical lens and inform strategies to change who controls and uses nature in which way. *Resource Politics* proposes to look at current conflicts around resource use as a complex set of interactions between nature, humans, interests, power relations and cultures in different *territories* (local, regional, global). This perspective offers solutions that protect the rights of people and nature. It questions the very notion of nature as a resource and thus creates freedom to think about transformative strategies.

Key drivers of environmental stress, inequity and shrinking democratic spaces include:

1. A deep-seated belief in the power and efficiency of markets to regulate economic exchange between individuals and nations, combined with a belief in political progress defined as GDP growth, creates institutional and mental infrastructures that lead to a financialization of nature, enclosure of commons and a justification for a continued grab for the last resources.
2. Large enterprises (private or state-owned) engage in very different economic sectors at the same time and gain a vast amount of money by keeping the current exploitation model as it is. These enterprises are getting too big and too powerful to be governed. They are, in fact, just like international banks in that they are «too big to fail» – and therefore mostly also too big to jail.
3. The economic governance regime for trade and investment protects large investors' rights but not people's rights or the environment, while the «other» global regime of human rights and international environmental law under UN mandate is treated as «soft law». Private and public economic governance structures are captured by the interests of corporate and political elites to serve a global consensus that relies on further extraction and trade in resources – the «commodity consensus».

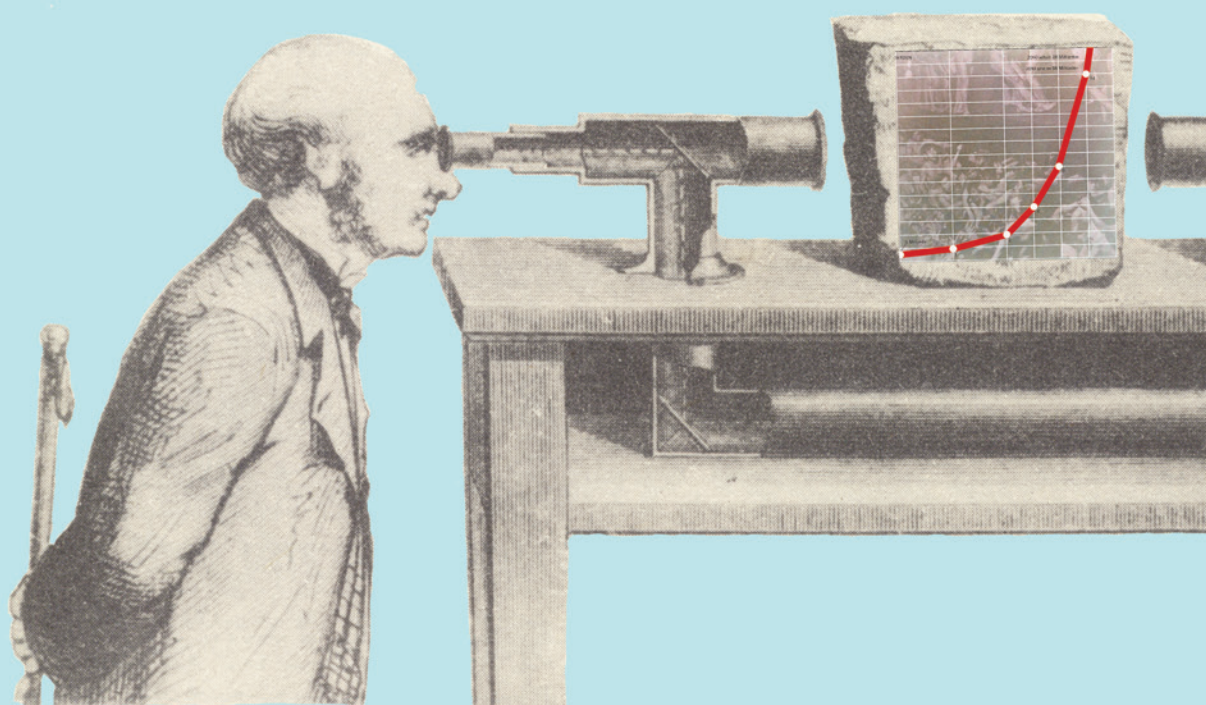
This Memorandum offers a new perspective which inextricably combines democracy, ecology and human rights and lays out three fundamental ways forward that can form the basis for fair and sustainable Resource Politics.

- a) Secure the rights of people and nature over markets and profits and empower people to claim and assert their rights
- b) Stop concentration of power and bring access to and control over natural resources, financial capital and technologies back into the hands of the people

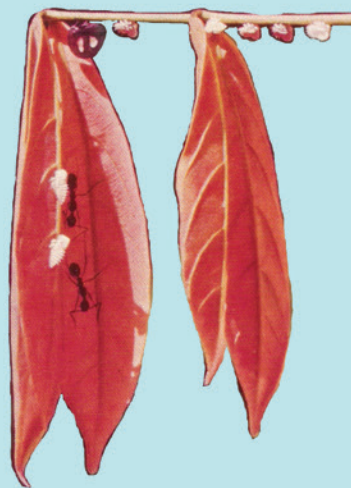
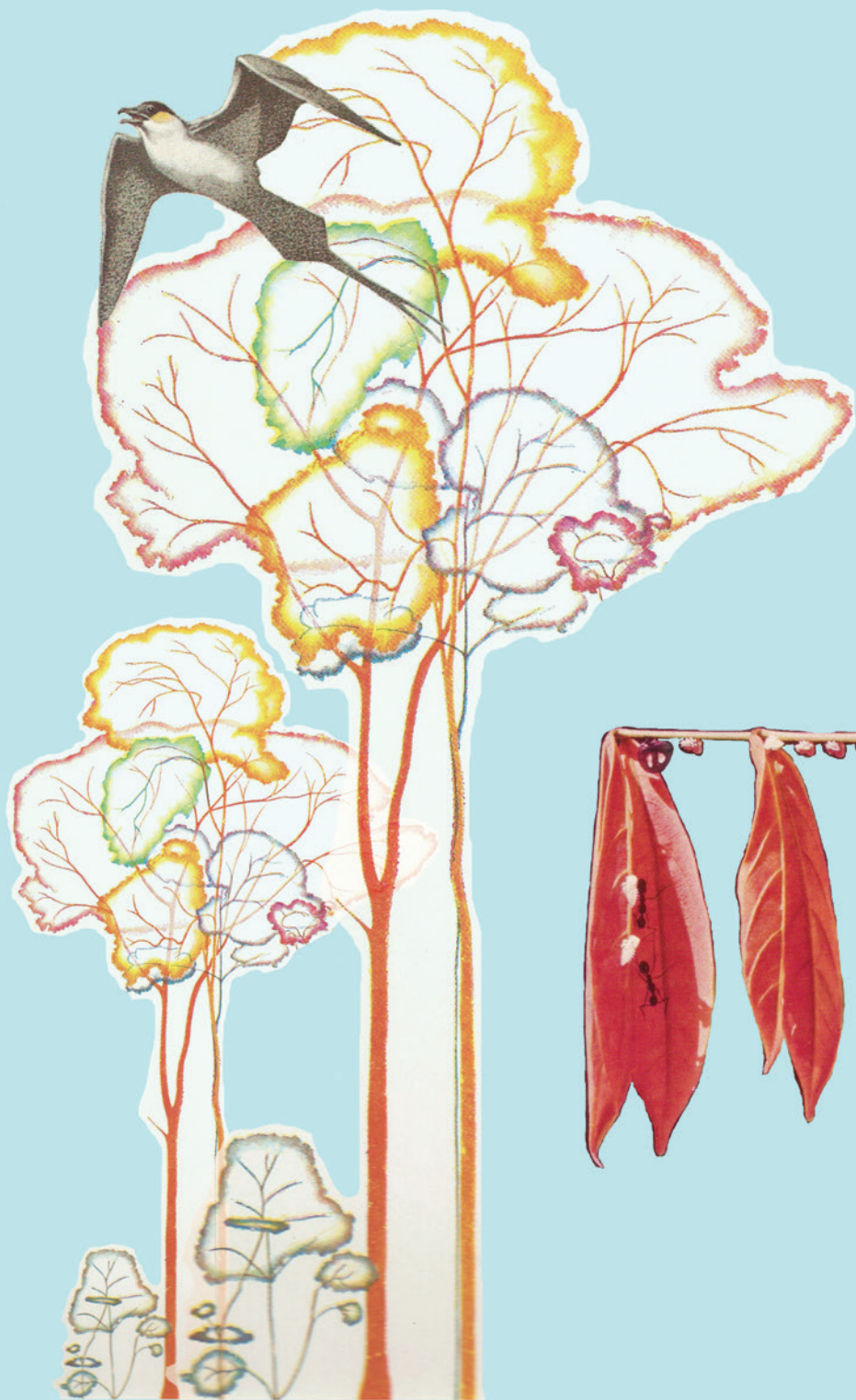
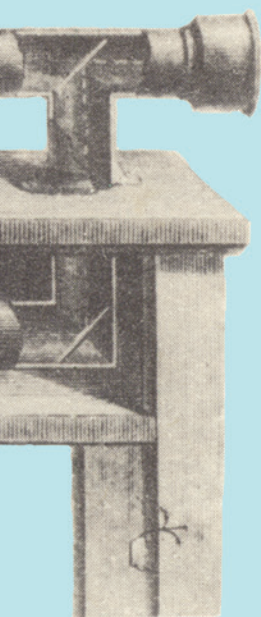
- c) Transform production, consumption and livelihoods towards socio-ecological justice

Since conflicts and power structures are highly specific to the national and local levels at which they operate, this memorandum can only offer a few ideas for the international context. Each region will have to define which approach is best suited to address its specific challenges and which alliances are needed to advance that approach.









# 1. Abundance and equity

Did you read the news today? Depending on which country of the world you are located in you might have seen stories about new oil fields in Brazil, new mining areas in Mexico, oil shale developments in Jordan, new tar sand exploitation in Canada, new land investments in Ethiopia, destruction of ancient forests in India, and new palm oil plantations in Malaysia or biodiesel developments in the EU. No matter where you are – stories about extraction of natural resources are increasingly prominent in today's media coverage.

These stories suggest that only by extracting more resources can the world achieve economic growth and will thereby be able to prosper and combat poverty. Since natural resources are considered scarce, only a more efficient use may continue today's economic growth and the predominant development model. The commodity super-cycle of high demand and high prices has indeed fuelled economic growth and helped to lift thousands of people out of poverty in many countries. The right to development is a precious yet contentious one: which development path, for whom, at what cost? For those left behind in the current model the human story behind the headlines is one of natural disasters, climate change impacts, poverty, hunger and inequality, corruption, unemployment and ever more precarious forms of employment and migration.

It is often not expressed or even understood what most forms of resource exploitation have in common: ecosystem integrity and basic human rights are ignored; people are disempowered and human rights are sacrificed for an economic model that works neither for the majority of people nor for the planet.

This Memorandum offers a new perspective on how to look at the relationship between humans and nature. In order to do so, it challenges some of the basic assumptions of mainstream economics. In contrast to the prevailing assumption, nature itself is not scarce. It has a great potential to restore, reproduce and renew structures, organisms and processes. From a biological perspective nature is abundant. The problem is not nature; the problem is the human relationship with nature. Seeing nature through narrow neoclassical economic perspectives has become the standard for many societies. With such a lens, only the individual chunks of nature and their monetary value become visible and are turned into «resources». Some of these resources are renewable, others are not – at least not on human timescales. Hence, nature is not scarce but it is under stress due to the intense way humans use, pollute and destroy it.

The concept of scarcity is not only applied to nature but is embedded into many cultures, lifestyles and aspirations. Battles for finite resources are under way within societies. But having more does not automatically mean being better off. Constant hoarding with the fear to fall behind in the competitive race to secure one's share is

impacting on people's wellbeing and social relations. Tim Jackson's quote that we are «persuaded to spend money we don't have on things we don't need to create impressions that won't last on people we don't care about»<sup>1</sup> captures well the Western lifestyle that is seen as the norm by many people around the world.

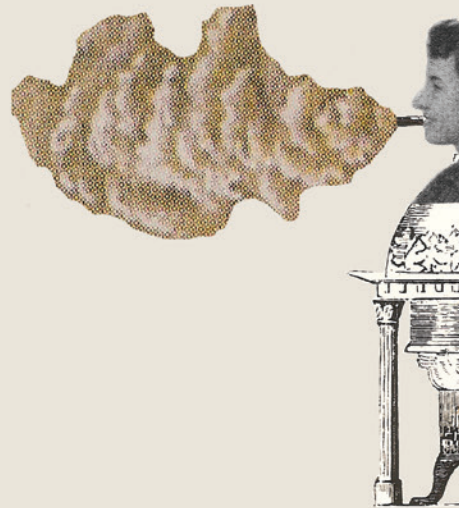
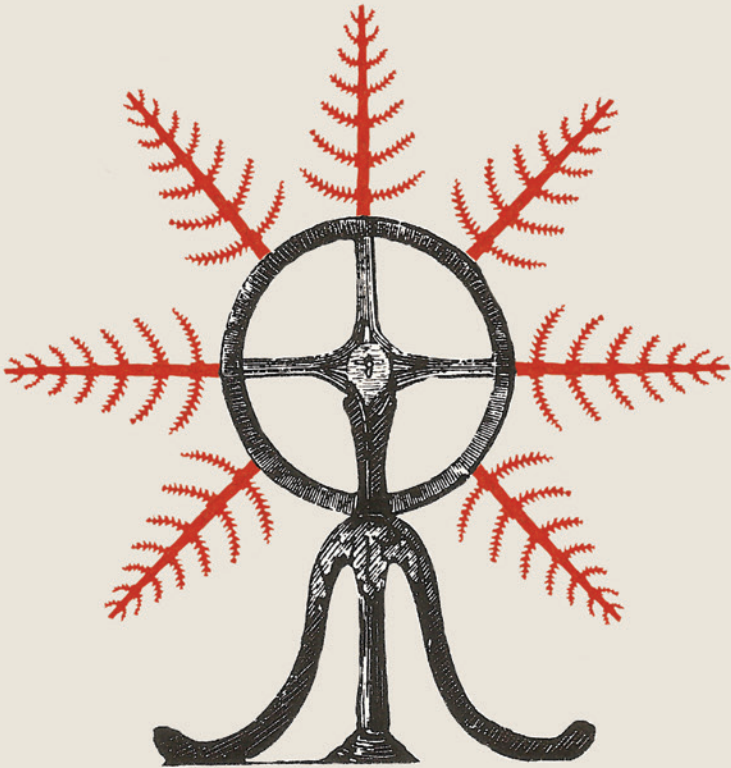
There is a difference between exploiting natural resources and making sustainable use of nature to secure human rights, livelihoods and a decent standard of living. Part of that difference is respect for those who suffer from exploitation, respect for nature and respect for future generations. Are forests sites of timber extraction, sites of ecosystem conservation or habitats for people? Are healthy soils the basis of food security, livelihoods and a rich pool of biodiversity or are they a scarce asset for agricultural production and thus easily turned into an asset for speculation? When nature is considered a resource, it will always seem scarce.

Today the world is a highly unequal place in which a small number of people live lifestyles that would require several planets if all inhabitants of the earth were to follow suit, while the majority of people do not have access to the resources they need to survive and fulfil their basic needs. The perspective of scarcity has tipped our world out of balance. We will only create equity if we dare to reconnect between ecological sustainability, social justice and democracy.

In this Memorandum the notion of *Resource Politics* is introduced to guide critical analysis and inform strategies to change who controls and uses nature in which way. *Resource Politics* proposes to look at current conflicts around resource use as a complex set of interactions between nature, humans, interests, power relations and cultures in *different territories* (local, regional, global). This perspective offers solutions that protect the rights of people and nature. It questions the very notion of nature as a resource and thus creates freedom to think about transformative strategies.

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1 [www.ted.com/speakers/tim\\_jackson](http://www.ted.com/speakers/tim_jackson)







## 2. Drivers of environmental stress and inequity

Evidence of the predominant, unfair and unsustainable economic model abounds everywhere and every day. Studies of ecosystem sensitivity provide ample proof of the incompatibility of constant economic growth with natural restorative and reproductive cycles, and there is more than enough evidence of the human rights violations that result from excessive resource extraction and use. However, the existing institutions, the policies, laws and regulations they adopt and the politics that shape their enforcement are currently not seeking to stop the trends. The opposite is true: the last few years have witnessed a new dimension of a global resource grab that intensifies the already high pressure on nature and human rights.

### **a) Ecological injustice: a planet out of balance**

Humans are overstepping several environmental risk points at the same time and at increasing speed. The resulting destruction is partly irreversible and very often taking place in areas that were previously untouched by human interventions. Humans are not only emitting more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere than can be absorbed, they have also long overstepped other important ecological risk points. Loss of biodiversity and nitrogen cycles are two of the «planetary boundaries» that are currently being overstepped – both on the global and in many cases on the local and national levels. Moving beyond these balance points means unpredictable changes for humanity's wellbeing. Scientists are just beginning to predict how the different environmental risks are interconnected. The tipping points of the planetary system may be much closer than currently assumed.

The fossil resources that fuel today's production systems are finite resources with reproduction cycles way beyond human timescales. The same is true of the fertile soil that can be used for the production of either food, or fuel and fibre – and which is lost on a dramatic scale day by day outside the public gaze.

### **b) Socio-economic injustice: unfair distribution and unequal access**

One important fact is easily overlooked when focusing on the ecological dimension of mounting global consumption: there are still millions of people around the world who are using far less than their «fair share» of natural resources and carbon storage capacity. Millions of people around the world have no access to clean drinking water, energy, adequate food and nutrition or basic health services. Gender, age, race or

ethnic belonging and other social factors are important in determining access, distribution and power. A patriarchal system gives women little power in decision-making. Children's and future generations' rights are under assault and they have no voice in the decisions that will determine their futures and livelihoods.

While the planetary boundaries mark the natural limits of the Earth, human rights and basic social and economic needs define a minimum foundation. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: «Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.» This is what governments signed on to and this is what they need to be held accountable for. Economic systems, lifestyles, consumption patterns and cultures must not undermine this common goal.

Even though, globally, GDP disparity between countries is shrinking slightly, inequality within countries is increasing. Except for Latin America the Gini coefficient, which measures income distribution within societies, is developing negatively all around the world. The gap between haves and have-nots is not only widening, but also becoming more complex. A small but growing global elite is consuming far beyond its fair share. The global middle class (for which there is no globally agreed definition) is growing in total numbers, but its share of the global population will only increase slightly. Most African countries – regions with major population growth – will hardly participate in this trend. One thing is clear: the current economic model is failing millions and millions of people and violating their human rights in order to serve the demands of the growing urban middle classes. The right to development is hard to defend in a system that reproduces inequalities and environmental destruction day by day. It can only be defended by redefining development pathways, production patterns, livelihoods and global solidarity.

### **c) Lack of real democracy: procedural injustice, material inequity and unequal voices**

Political upheavals in various countries around the world are transforming political systems – leading to more rights and more participation in some instances while in many others spaces for democratic decision-making and participation are shrinking rapidly. In several countries laws have been changed in recent years to hamper civil society engagement. Moreover, civil society involvement is not only legally restricted by the state. Often enough civil rights are violated where they at least exist in law: civil society actors, environmental activists, women's rights advocates and local community leaders are being persecuted, threatened and sometimes killed – despite the fact that their governments have signed onto international treaties and have binding national laws to implement them.

Ecosystems and knowledge systems that are not privately or publicly owned and thus not captured and controlled by the market economy are in danger of becoming

either wiped out or enclosed by the market logic. The commons – not only a thing or a shared resource, but the social interactions, rules and institutions that guide their use and distribution sustainably and equitably – are under severe pressure. This is undermining the livelihoods of those who depend on the commons and defend them.

Furthermore, ever more power is being concentrated in the hands of very few people and corporations. This is especially true for the natural resource sector (mining, oil and gas, agriculture), but also for the financial sector or for resource dependent sectors such as chemistry, transportation or communications, to name a few. Along with the economic and financial power comes political power – and often corruption. This situation makes any resistance or positive change extremely challenging. The race for control over natural resources is at full speed and the political and corporate elites have little appetite to give up their power and personal profits.



### 3. Why has it been so difficult to stop these trends so far?

All available facts and figures point at what is wrong and why global society needs to change course. From the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment of 2005 to the Assessment Reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), from the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) to the International Resource Panel's reports and from the FAO State of Food Insecurity to IFAD's Rural Poverty Report – the academic research is sound and comprehensive. One can point to climate change impacts, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, lack of water quality, social inequality and governance failures – in some cases even the economic cost for different societies and of political inaction have been calculated.

However, the gap between knowledge and action (implementation) is huge. Thus, while overall awareness may have increased in some parts of society, the overall trends are not stopped. On the contrary – as described above – ecosystem degradation and human rights violations are expanding. This is obviously not the result of lacking knowledge about the negative social and environmental effects. It is rather the outcome of lacking political will, vested material interests and deeply ingrained, unsustainable political, economic and cultural practices.

There are several root causes of the failing system that translate into destructive path dependencies and are major reasons for not being able to resolve the problems identified above. These root causes need to be addressed in order to create new political visions, alliances and solutions. This Memorandum proposes to consider, firstly, a deep belief in liberal markets and growth and, secondly, the concentration of power as two intertwined root causes of the current crises. The structure of today's economic governance is then conceptualized as an institutional manifestation of those two causes.

«Although there is more knowledge about global interdependencies and planetary boundaries than ever before, decision-makers as well as individuals are far away from being shocked into action. Looking at the political realms, in resource politics one can observe an astonishing lack of both will and power to safeguard social and ecological interests – both nationally and internationally.»

Cathrin Klenck and Lennart Kümper-Schlake,  
*delegates from the future workshop Germany*







## a) Deep belief in liberal markets and growth

*In the current era of finance capitalism there is a deep-rooted belief in the power and efficiency of markets to regulate economic exchange between individuals and nations, and in GDP growth as the dominating indicator of economic and political performance. These beliefs create institutional and mental infrastructures that prompt new instruments for the financialization of nature and push the enclosure of the remaining commons. What emerges is an accelerated grab for the last resources.*

People exchange goods and services and markets are one way to structure this exchange. There is little to criticize as long as markets respect social and environmental norms, serve the majority of participants and do not undermine other forms of exchange and social interactions such as in a commons-based regime. This ideal is far from the reality of global markets. Markets striving only for growth and profit do not serve society's needs. They serve increasingly powerful and oligopolistic private interests.

One major problem is that the modern capitalist economy is structurally reliant on economic growth for its stability. When growth falters, politicians panic. The immediate answer appears to be to wind down market regulation, labour regulation or other social and environmental norms in order to trigger new investment and growth. Those who seek to think out of this box and beyond growth and markets are easily marginalized in the debate. There are very limited attempts to train a critical academic elite that would be able to question the market mantra. It is astonishing how untouched the deep belief in liberal markets and growth still is in large parts of Western societies and among their decision-makers, even though several countries in that part of the world experienced the severe consequences of failed markets – both within their societies and in relation to neighbouring countries.

The belief in markets goes hand in hand with the belief in economic growth. Growth in GDP is defined as a necessary precondition for progress. Together with employment rates, it is taken as the success indicator of political decisions. The forms taken by an economization of politics that measures success against that definition of progress vary among political systems but generally lead to a denial of planetary boundaries, normative values, the need for global solutions and democracy. In some cases, for example in Africa, it can take the form of a «disease of gigantism», a reliance on mega-infrastructure projects for «development» without reflection on possible decentralized, small-scale, sustainable alternatives.

This by no means implies that certain economies or parts of the economy should not grow. Economic growth will continue to be necessary to lift people out of poverty in many countries around the world. Yet it will need to be a completely different kind of growth for some, and for others there will need to be an end to a growth-dependent pathway of wellbeing – both acknowledging planetary boundaries.

Growth is not only a concept for national economies, it is also part and parcel of most people's lives. Competition is spoiling friendships, time pressure is undermining



family and social life, stress and burn-out are synonyms for the illness of a system that forces to compete and perform.

Since the mid-1970s capitalism has shown signs of reaching limits to capital accumulation. Finance capitalism has been the answer, which finally led to the 2008 crisis. Investors searching for new asset classes perceive nature and its goods and services as a new market and thus attend of financialization of nature can now be observed.

The pursuit of direct regulatory measures like hard caps for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and stricter environmental and social standards to reduce natural resource consumption and protect workers seems to have fallen out of fashion, with crisis-stricken economies concerned that such direct regulation would impede investment and trade. And as old methods have lost credibility, some governments, NGOs, economists and international institutions like the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank are now advancing a new approach, based on the view that nature provides «ecosystem services». In doing so, the onus of addressing environmental risk is shifted onto the private sector.

In this new paradigm, ecological preservation is viewed both as a necessity and as a commercial opportunity. According to Pavan Sukhdev, the lead author of The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity study (TEEB), which aims to highlight the economic impact of environmental degradation: «We use nature because it's valuable, but we lose it because it's free.»

«One of the most relevant obstacles is the centrality that the market has acquired in our societies in the last decades. Operating as a prior instance of social coordination, the market, while allowing an increasing access to mass consumption to our middle classes, has also enlarged the pressure on our natural resources and favoured a widespread «individualism», leading to the loss of old solidarities between different social groups.»

Malik Fercovic, Recaredo Alberto Gálvez Carrasco, María Cecilia Reeves, Betzabet Morero, Ana Di Pangrancio, Maiana Teixeira and Cintia Barenho, *delegates from the future workshop Cono Sur*

The danger of that perspective lies in how easily the important «polluter pays» principle could lead to a privatization and enclosure of commons as well as to a financialization of nature – the transformation of nature into tradable goods – that would allow business as usual to continue by offsetting misbehaviour elsewhere. Who decides over the value of nature? In such an economization of nature corporations tend to fully exhaust the legally allowed destruction instead of reducing it. By allowing those who have the money to buy their way out, it actually undermines not only strict legislation but our democracy per se.

There is no true price for nature but there is a politically set value – and that requires a societal debate. Societies with weak implementation of legislation will likely arrive at unfair solutions. For example, Brazil's powerful agribusiness lobby

managed to push the government to approve a new forest code, which uses market-based instruments to give agricultural producers more leeway on conservation. As a result, landowners who cleared more vegetation than is legally permitted can now – instead of restoring the forest illegally cut – return to compliance by purchasing offset credits through the Rio de Janeiro Green Exchange (Bolsa Verde) where those with more than the mandated minimum amount of forest cover offer their «excess» of protected land.

With this mental and cultural infrastructure the race for the last resources – tar sands, shale gas, deep sea minerals, «marginal land», the resources of the Arctic – is hard to stop.

## **b) Concentration of power**

*Large enterprises (private or state-owned) engage in very different economic sectors at the same time and gain a vast amount of money by keeping the current exploitation model as it is. These enterprises are getting too big and too powerful to be governed. They are, in fact, just like international banks in that they are «too big to fail» – and therefore in most cases also too big to jail.*

The long held belief that markets should be regulated and monopolies prevented to ensure individual civil liberties and control economic power was already eroded back in the 1980s in the USA (but also elsewhere) in the name of efficiency. People were told that larger corporations would be able to deliver goods for the consumers at better quality and lower prices (= more efficient). This not only turned out to be wrong (prices increased, innovation slowed down and jobs were lost) and spurred globalization but marked the beginning of a new understanding of the aim of antitrust law: lower prices for consumers instead of power control. The negative impacts on social equity and democracy were huge and are still being felt today.

The implications of concentration of corporate power for democracy are manifold. One major problem is the missing clear cut between political decision-makers and economic decision-makers. There is a widespread lack of transparency over the nature and extent to which political decision-makers hold positions in private or state-owned enterprises. This secrecy not only generates opportunities for bribery and corruption but can also create conflicts of interest: where politicians have several professional functions in industry it is very difficult to track the rationale behind certain decisions.

This problem culminates when major enterprises from all parts of the world are (partially) state owned (e.g. BP, Saudi Aramco, Vattenfall, Gazprom) or where governments and government representatives are simply looting the wealth that belongs to their people for personal profits. Other governments that are highly dependent on the extraction of and trade in natural resources are spending those revenues for social welfare and education (e.g. Argentina, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador), thus weakening or even suppressing social unrest and protests against the ecological consequences of the extraction.

«Even though the natural resources around these communities are typically their most important economic assets, they often have limited rights to use them and where they have gained ownership or secure access, they may be hampered by inadequate levels of public investment, inappropriate policies, or competition from corporations unrestrained by regulation. Government and other powerful interests often claim exclusive access to these resources and their benefits. Corruption and mismanagement are longstanding problems and large land acquisitions by foreign investors for farming are now trending.»

Dinma Nwanye,  
*delegate from the future workshop Nigeria*

Another problem is that governments often have a short-term interest to take decisions in favour of big enterprises by citing the belief in job creation and related prosperity. Aspects of global and intergenerational justice, human rights included, do not repay from a short political perspective – jobs are the main currency politicians are looking for. State-owned companies in emerging economies do not perform any better than their private competitors in this regard.

Among many other fields, one new area where the destructive and dangerous implications of this concentration of corporate power can be witnessed is the «bio-economy». This concept is about the intention to transform the economy in a sustainable way by substituting fossil fuels with a renewable resource base. Currently this is taking place largely in the pharmaceutical and chemical sector but some developments can be observed in the energy and transport sector as well. This new demand is one important driver that is making industrial agriculture highly profitable. The use of land, water, fertilizer and pesticides is increasing drastically.

The most dangerous aspect of the bioeconomy debate is that it pretends that everything can continue as it is – only the resource base has to be substituted. It is globally a handful of very powerful corporations (for example BASF, Bayer, Dow, DuPont, Syngenta, Monsanto) that are driving the bioeconomy agenda forward, for example by buying up small start-up companies, aiming to control the resources (biomass, land, genetic resources) and technologies (synthetic biology, nanotechnology, geo-engineering) needed to control our industrial production in the future.

«Natural resources belong to every Cambodian and each of us has the right to know how much the government receives, how much the government pays. The government needs to know our concerns and suggestions to effectively manage natural resources for the benefit of all.»

Chan Ramy,  
*delegate from the future workshop Southeast Asia and China*

### **c) (All) Powerful economic governance: merging the deep belief in markets and growth with the realization of corporate interests**

*The economic governance regime for trade and investment protects large investors' rights but not people's rights or the environment, while the «other» global regime of human rights and international environmental law under UN mandate is treated as «soft law». Private and public economic governance structures are captured by the interests of corporate and political elites to serve a global consensus that relies on further extraction and trade in resources – the «commodity consensus».*

While most multilateral governance systems seem to have extremely limited impact, international agreements appear to be highly binding as soon as it comes to multilateral or bilateral trade and investment. The WTO has the mandate to punish member countries if they do not respect WTO rules. In addition, many countries conclude bilateral trade agreements which add further aspects to the WTO regulations.

Since it is in the very nature of free trade agreements to reduce any barriers to trade this has far reaching implications for various policies on the national level. Currently there is no monitoring mechanism or evaluation whether the developments resulting from the free trade and investment agreements themselves might be a threat to human rights or to environmental or procedural justice in a country or region. There are on the other hand very few possibilities for individuals and communities to claim their rights over resources, territories, ancestral lands and genetic resources in court.

*«Since the resource issue is multi-level, and affects different groups of people differently, the approach might automatically exclude the issues that are important to the poorest of the poor.»*

*Chol Bunnag and Naw Ei Ei Min,  
delegates from the future workshop Southeast Asia and China*

The realities are further complicated by the «investor to state dispute settlement mechanism», a provision in some bilateral trade and investment agreements that grants an investor the right to initiate dispute settlement proceedings against the host country government if the political situation changes in a way that diminishes the investor's expected gains. One can imagine that changing environmental or animal welfare or health laws would fall under the dispute mechanism. Therefore, investor state claims inhibit the capacity of domestic governments to pass public health and environmental protection legislation that impact the investment after the deal has been signed. Moreover, arbitrations are often carried out in secret by trade lawyers who are not impartial as they are paid by the parties and are not accountable to the public. This is an instrument that clearly serves the interests of large corporations and not those of small and medium-sized or family enterprises.

Today, few people retain any hope that United Nations conventions like the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological



Diversity (UNCBD) and the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) can avert global warming, the loss of biodiversity and the depletion of arable soil and water. The United Nations are the sum of its members and it is disturbing and alarming to realize that one would very likely fail to get all governments to sign onto the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 today.

While progress on global and multilateral rules for the advancement of global human rights and environmental law is faltering, private and public global players are setting up a governance regime in the form of public-private partnerships that are promoted by clubs such as the G20 or BRICS. Both clubs cooperate closely with large corporations (organized for example as the B20 in the context of the G20 summit processes). Other partners are private investment banks or multilateral development banks, for example through the International Development Finance Club, IDFC.

«While most countries in the [Southern African] region have policies and legislation that govern natural resource management, it is poignant to note that either these policies tend to be archaic and have loopholes that promote corruption or are strong but not adhered to.»

Edfas Mkandawire, Euan Hope, Tafadzwa Kuvheya and Zukiswa Kota,  
*delegates from the future workshop Southern Africa*

The G20 appears more inclusive than the G7/8. And one could imagine that the BRICS would pursue a more development friendly agenda than the old industrialized powers. These clubs unite individual members states with very different (geo) political interests. They also harbour wide disparities when it comes to economic and political power. However, the members of these plurilateral clubs share the position that they are not ready to set limits to the ongoing resource grab. Quite the opposite, in their quest for resource security they are even undermining human rights as well as environmental and social standards that have been agreed in the multilateral UN system. This realization should not come as a surprise since political and corporate elites agree on one thing across the globe: further extraction, use and trade of resources (commodities) for profit and growth. This kind of «commodity consensus» is global in reach.







## 4. A normative framing for fair and sustainable Resource Politics

Resource Politics looks at who controls and uses nature in which way. The answers are complex and full of contradictions. Institutional structures, power, knowledge, scale and time are important underlying factors. Equally important are human agency (with conflicting perspectives) and the interactions between political strategies of competing groups and actors. There are three important fundamental principles that together can help to create *Resource Equity*:

**Ecological equity:** There are risk and tipping points when it comes to how much pressure our planet can tolerate without harming humanity's wellbeing. These need to be respected at all levels (from local to global) in their interconnectedness to safeguard the wealth and the resilience capacities of ecosystems for present and future generations.

**Social equity:** People need nature, biodiversity and nature's reproductive capacity to survive. In order to protect human rights and fulfil the basic needs and wellbeing of every human a very different distribution of resource access, control and use (between countries and people, ages, gender, generations etc.) is needed. The equitable way to use water, forests, knowledge, seeds, information, to name just a few examples, is to ensure that one person's use of those resources does not restrict anybody else's potential to use them, or even deplete the resources themselves. That implies fair use of everything that does not belong to only one person. It's about respect for the principle «one person – one share», especially with regard to the global commons. To achieve this requires trust and strong social relationships within communities and between individuals.

**Democracy:** Everybody who is or will be potentially affected by a certain decision needs to be part of the decision-making process. Gender, age, race, class, origin, sexual orientation, bodily and mental (dis)ability must not determine whether or not we have the power to decide. However, it is not merely a set of useful tools and procedures for participation that forms the basis of democracy. Real democracy sets a much higher bar and includes a full realization of human and peoples' rights (including their material base), equity and justice.

All of these three principles are closely interlinked and interact with each other. To really respect all three principles of Resource Equity is quite challenging in practice.

For example: full participation at the local level does not necessarily lead to decisions that respect global planetary boundaries. And participation alone – if performed within highly unequal power relations – is never enough. What is being proposed here instead is to take these three principles into account when searching for solutions and to set out an enabling policy frame at every level of decision-making.

There is an infinite number of possible visions for a better future. Actually spelling them out is extremely challenging. Once put on paper, they will always be vulnerable because they can never be complete. But sometimes it can help to dream a little. Just imagine the principles described above were actually being taken seriously – what kind of world would we live in? What would one possible vision of the future look like?

### **A Message from the Future: Welcome to the Fair Future Forum 2044...**

2044: Today the world is close to fully phasing out fossil fuels (including those for synthetic fertilizers) and the positive effects have already been experienced without major social disruptions. No new coal or nuclear power plants have been built in the last 25 years and the massive deployment of decentralized and off-grid renewable energy systems – as well as clean water and sanitation – has greatly improved the livelihoods of poor rural and urban communities around the world.

The vast number of successful bi- and multilateral fair and sustainable raw material partnerships prepared the ground for the UN Resource Convention that is now successful in its 10th year of implementation. All major regional and global territorial and resource conflicts have been solved peacefully.

Organic small and medium farmers around the world secure the human right to food. Since pesticides are hardly used anymore bee populations have doubled. Land reforms which respect communal land use have secured land rights for small farmers. Women and men have equal access to productive resources and share productive and reproductive work equitably across gender and age. National agricultural extension services provide farmers with knowledge that combines traditional production practices and a variety of non-patented seeds with the latest scientific knowledge of compost management to safeguard soil quality.

Due to modern dietary education, the consumption patterns of the global middle class have changed dramatically. People eat meat only once or twice a week while nearly half of the population of North America and Europe turned to vegetarianism – and is a lot healthier today. Those animal populations consumed by humans are linked to the surface area they can be fed by. This fostered regional and local economic cycles in all parts of the world and reduced pressure on land. There is no global market for animal feed anymore. In addition, modern transport, education and cultural infrastructure have greatly increased the quality of life in many rural areas.

Modern cities today provide free public transport for everybody, reducing the absolute number of privately owned cars in cities by 90% compared to 2014. The global consensus to create a closed-loop, zero-waste economy has greatly lifted recovery rates of minerals and metals, creating a great number of new jobs in urban mining and recycling in the world's mega cities.

Fresh water – not too long ago considered one of our scarcest resources and potential source of conflict and war – is nowadays a major source of cooperation amongst watershed communities, including across national borders. It is hard to imagine that our widespread public-commons water companies were once considered strange beasts.

Already in the second decade of this century we saw a new trend: global deforestation rates slowed steadily until 2025 when they reached zero. Today the natural forest cover of our planet is increasing again, and even more importantly: forest peoples' rights are secured. Monocultures are hard to find today. More than 10% of all ecosystems are protected – thus exceeding the ambitious targets of the UNCBD convention signed in 1992 – and the race for even higher targets is on. The new diversity can even be witnessed in cities across the globe: urban gardening is a mass movement, (trans)forming industrial landscapes, societies and cultures.

The internet has connected everything to everyone. A new technology infrastructure has overcome the divide between consumer and producer. Prosumerism prevails and has limited the power of markets. Peer to peer networks (communication amongst equals) are the backbone of an ever growing non-profit sector. Capitalism as we know it is challenged to its core. Care work is recognized for what it is: the precondition of the human capacity to work.

# 5. Strategies for a fair future

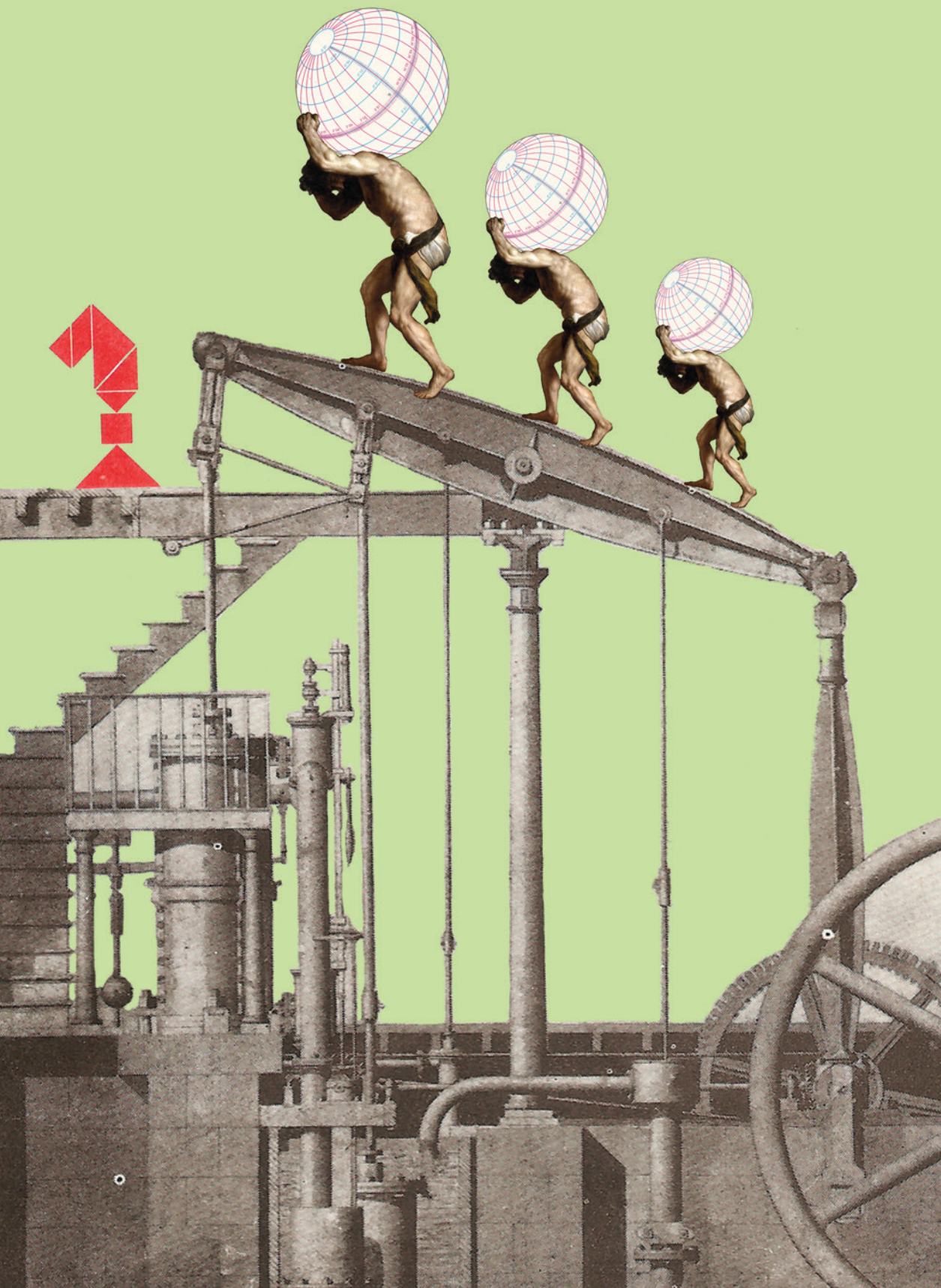
Many good initiatives are already underway; these need to be strengthened. A new perspective which inextricably combines democracy, ecology and human rights can help to move forward in a truly transformative way, not getting stuck in business as usual and incremental change. The core problems cannot be solved with a sector-only viewpoint. Power relations within all different levels of societies need to be addressed in order to move away from the hegemonic perspective of liberal markets serving inclusive development. Resource Politics in this context is aiming to produce more equity concerning who controls, who owns, who has access to and who decides over how humans and society interact with nature. A truly transformational agenda also requires a fundamental shift in production, consumption and lifestyles, and equal recognition and integration of care work. Resource Politics can help to shape that agenda.

However, this Memorandum does not attempt to offer a global blueprint of solutions. It merely offers a new and joint perspective and a number of possible fields of intervention, focusing on the international level. Each region will have to define which approach is best suited to address its specific challenges and which alliances are needed to advance that approach.

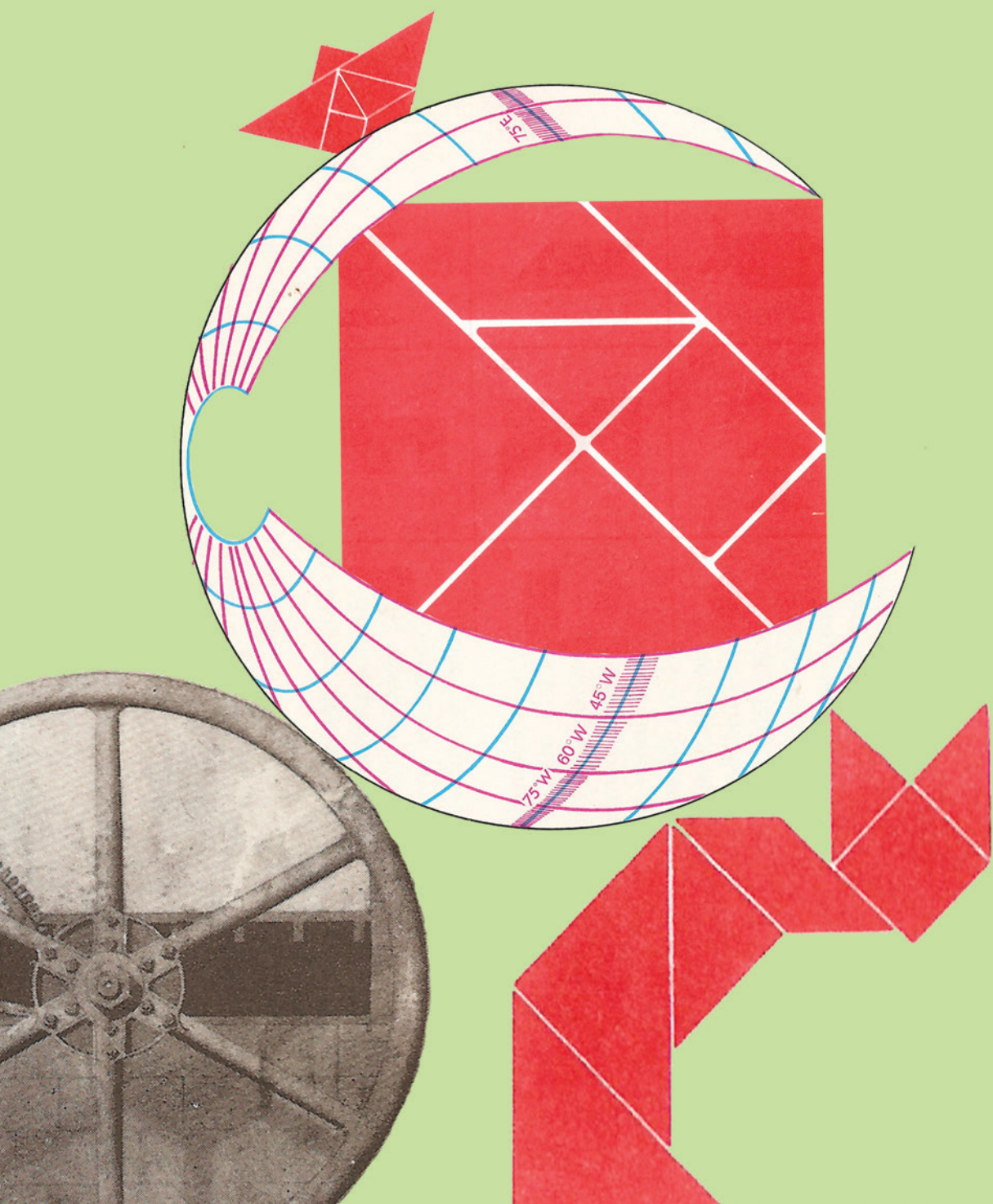
«We consider that it is more appropriate (both conceptually and politically) to speak of «territory» instead of the reductionist notion of «resources», fundamental in their proposal. The concept of territory enables us to better understand the set of dynamic dimensions (social, geographical, cultural, and economic) expressed within a local context.»

Malik Fercovic, Recaredo Alberto Gálvez Carrasco, María Cecilia Reeves, Betzabet Morero, Ana Di Pangraccio, Maiana Teixeira and Cintia Barenho, *delegates from the future workshop Cono Sur*

The new perspective proposed here is like a web or a complex system. In Latin America there is a strong debate on «territories» (Spanish & Portuguese: «territorio») that has since been picked up in other regions and languages as well (French: «territoire», Italian: «territorio»), but the term not yet frequently used with the same meaning all around the world. The notion of «community land» or «ancestral land» in Africa differs from the notion of territories. The territory approach implies that each region consists of a complex set of interactions between nature, humans, interests, power relations and cultures which are always influenced again by «external» actors and interests. The world market and geopolitical relations between states and regions







are also webs and complex systems characterized by conflicts, struggles and power relations. These conflicts interact with and affect the territories. Only by looking at this web through the lens of human rights, democracy, culture and environmental justice can one understand and identify possible solutions that are both sustainable and just.

Resource Politics is taking place on every political level – international, national, regional and local – each of which has to resolve different strategic challenges. With that in mind this Memorandum offers *three fundamental ways forward* that can form the basis for a Resource Politics strategy that will ultimately have to be translated and adapted to local and regional needs and circumstances. Since conflicts and power structures are highly specific to the national and local levels at which they operate, this memorandum can only offer a general perspective.

Yet it does attempt to highlight a few strategies for the international and global level. International institutions like UN bodies and conventions, multilateral development banks or plurilateral government clubs could – in contrast to what they mostly do today – create an enabling environment to respect nature and human rights by safeguarding democracy. The effects of such an international regime would then inspire and guide the national and local context. A prerequisite for these strategies is that the different structures of power within the web of territories first needs to be analysed, understood and made visible and finally recognized on all levels.

## **a) Secure the rights of people and nature over markets and profits and empower people to claim and assert their rights**

The existing legal frameworks, especially when it comes to human and environmental rights, are often not bad on paper. The Nagoya Protocol (on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization); Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for Indigenous Peoples; due diligence guidelines for companies and transparency requirements are good examples where there has been recent progress after year-long fights by civil society, communities and social movements. The problem is that many of these rights (and obligations) exist only on paper for a large part of this planet's population. They need to be strengthened, people have to know their rights and also need the right to know. This would empower them to claim their rights in courts whenever and wherever required. In order to be able to fully participate and make their voice and interests heard, people have to know what is at stake. This includes questions that have national, international or global implications.

Communities, individuals, social and environmental movements around the world are already protesting large mines, fighting for the human right to water, opposing land grabs and insisting on Free Prior and Informed Consent. Their governments have often signed on to international treaties that should make human rights abuses impossible. However, in many cases these are just words on paper and the relevant institutions to enforce them are either missing completely or too weak. Justice itself is often elusive, and courts and laws are a reflection of the unequal

power relations in the society that produced them. Empowerment, institution-building and litigation strategies must work hand in hand to lead to a power shift. In the context of Resource Politics this could mean to empower local communities to assert and exercise their (individual and collective) rights over land, water, forests, genetic resources, traditional knowledge etc. in court vis à vis the interests of corporations and governments. Legal innovations for new property rights systems beyond existing forms are needed. Such a strategy needs to be extremely sensitive with regard to existing and potential conflicts within and between communities and individual community members.

«The momentum to re-empower people and re-establish their connection to natural resources is inevitable today. Raising awareness of people's right to natural resources is the foundation for building a surge of change that will deliver informed and active critical mass that will pressure decision-makers to design their policies in a more sustainable and inclusive lens.»

Muna Dajani,  
*delegate from the future workshop Middle East, North Africa and Turkey*

The (international) multilateral institutions should establish guidelines which lay down the environmental, human rights and democracy framing for national law and local initiatives, including extraterritorial obligations. This means that states do have the obligation to ensure that investments from their home country enterprises respect, protect and fulfil human rights in other countries. If, for example, investments by European firms lead or contribute to human rights violations in third countries the local communities often have neither the means nor the institutional possibilities to fight for their rights. Yet the EU has the legal obligation to secure that investments of its enterprises protect, respect and fulfil human rights in other countries. The extraterritorial obligations are of special importance in a world of shrinking democratic spaces in various world regions.

Therefore, a very different human rights clause to the one existing today in many trade agreements should be included in resource partnerships agreements, investment agreements and trade agreements. Today the human rights clause is all about punishing in case of «unfair» production measures which in the end disfavour one of the trading partners. This means that one country can withdraw (or curtail) the preferential market access of the other country if the trading partner fails to respect human rights (e.g. products produced with child labour) and thereby can sell the product at a lower price than the home country. A really operable and new human rights clause in trade and investment agreements should relate to the agreement itself and monitor whether the developments under the agreement lead to any human rights violations. This would be a serious acknowledgment of extraterritorial obligations under the human rights frame.

«The respective governments need to come up with a policy and legal framework that ensures protection of all the citizens' rights to a fair share of their natural resources, rights to adequate compensation in case of being affected by resource exploitation activities and protection of our environment.»

Erick Owino Onduru, Tamiru Sisay Misganaw and Florentina Julius Kideka,  
*delegates from the future workshop East and Horn of Africa*

The Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests – which have been developed in the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) – are an important process as well as product to learn from in this regard. The Tenure Guidelines are highly remarkable because for the very first time a highly inclusive process enabled the active participation of civil society on the UN level within the negotiation and development of the Guidelines. Another important reason is the comprehensive human rights perspective of the document. As a result, civil society around the world is highly supportive of the agreement.

As their main objective the Tenure Guidelines formulate that they «seek to improve governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests for the benefit of all, with an emphasis on vulnerable and marginalized people, with the goals of food security and progressive realization of the right to adequate food, poverty eradication, sustainable livelihoods, social stability, housing security, rural development, environmental protection and sustainable social and economic development. All programs, policies and technical assistance to improve governance of tenure through the implementation of these Guidelines should be consistent with States' existing obligations under international law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.»

Even though the Tenure Guidelines are voluntary they consistently refer to the human rights frame – which is binding for all signing states. The human rights framework hence empowers the political enforcement of the Guidelines. No agreement (or law) is enforced or implemented automatically. Popular pressure, mobilization and organization to demand enforcement or implementation of the positive provisions are required to give life to any agreement (or law) and make them work as a force for social change. Hence, only an inclusive process which commits civil society to using a certain political frame or supporting a certain law with struggles on the ground provides the needed force for implementation and realization.

## **b) Stop concentration of power and bring access to and control over natural resources, financial capital and technologies back into the hands of the people**

Not only the size of companies is problematic («too big to fail and jail»), but also the very business model that puts profit over people. A first step in the right direction would be to track and expose corporate power and corporate capture of politics at the national and international level. This requires research, advocacy and eventually litigation.

The largest concentration of power today is the accumulation of financial capital. Financial institutions and banks (private and public) are key actors when it comes to large investments in resources (land, mining, fossil fuels etc.) and they also play a key role in allowing political elites to misappropriate public money and conceal it in tax havens. Resource Politics needs to go hand in hand with a regulation of financial markets, with tax justice (including a financial transaction tax), a ban on money laundering and other measures that aim to both redistribute financial power (income and property) and make it impossible for those with money to buy political decisions in their favour. Extraction taxes would bring revenues to developing countries and should be allocated to respective territories and people. Binding regulation for revenue transparency in the natural resources sector that has been set up in the USA and Europe is a very small first step in the right direction and should be expanded to cover the whole value chain and other sectors. The fact that such legislation was difficult to push through in the first place and is currently fiercely contested by industry demonstrates that it threatens a cornerstone of their business model.

«Payment disclosure is however far from enough to ensure the transparency and compliance of overseas investment of China's extractive sector. In parallel with their existing CSR reports, we believe China's extractive companies should issue separate compliance anti-corruption reports to disclose their activities ranging from prevention, detection to punishment of illegal payments and noncompliance.»

Ting Xu,  
*delegate from the future workshop Southeast Asia and China*

One important political struggle when it comes to fighting the superiority of markets is resistance against the introduction or expansion of new market offset mechanisms that claim to protect nature but in reality – often with the help of financial market actors – allow business as usual to continue for those who have the money to buy their way out. One of most important fora to resist this false solution is international climate politics where the expansion of carbon trading schemes and the idea of incorporating biocarbon (in forests and soil) as an offset for fossil fuel based emissions is endangering the integrity of the climate regime as well as local livelihoods and rights, especially through enclosure of the last remaining commons (forests, land, water etc.).



Another focus of attention should lie on those companies currently seeking to gain control over biomass, genetic resources and the technologies they will need to control the Green Economy of the future. In this regard it is of major importance to fight for open access technologies, seeds and breeds – a further struggle against the modern enclosure of commons. Trade related aspects of patents are regulated in trade and investment agreements under the TRIPS Agreement (Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights). No regulation under TRIPS should affect the free access of producers to seeds, breeds and other technologies. Human rights impact assessments and human rights clauses as mentioned above would address problems of human rights violations by patent regulation.

«By taking communities into confidence, mutual trust and relationships are established by continuous consultation and communication from the beginning of the projects. Communities should be informed about the benefits, impact, expected contributions toward country development, and what benefits projects will bring to targeted communities.»

Mohammad Tawab Stanikzai,  
*delegate from the future workshop South Asia*

Two decades of accelerating technological development and deployment, in the context of massive trade and investment liberalization, has left humanity in far worse straits than it was when the very concept of sustainable development was in its infancy. It is time for a technological re-think. New high-risk technologies, ranging from the very small (synthetic biology, nanotechnology) to the very large (geoengineering), are rapidly developing. Their promoters promise that they hold the keys to solving climate change, world hunger, energy shortages and biodiversity loss. Yet the precautionary principle and social and economic impacts are often ignored in the rush to deploy the latest technofix. The international level needs to set rules for the strict application of the precautionary principle and a transparent and participatory form of technology assessment.

### **c) Transform production, consumption and livelihoods towards socio-ecological justice**

Society can only allow itself to look at nature as abundant if it dares to change its interactions with nature. First of all, everybody needs to have access to his or her «fair share» of nature. This implies a shift in power relations between men and women as well as between generations, ages, classes etc. It will only work if global middle and upper classes radically reduce their consumption, increase the efficiency of resource use and establish zero-waste strategies and a circular economy. New technologies can help with that, but they will never be enough and might even lead to new problems.

The real transformation happening in many places around the world is one that is taking place bottom-up with people reclaiming control over their water supply,

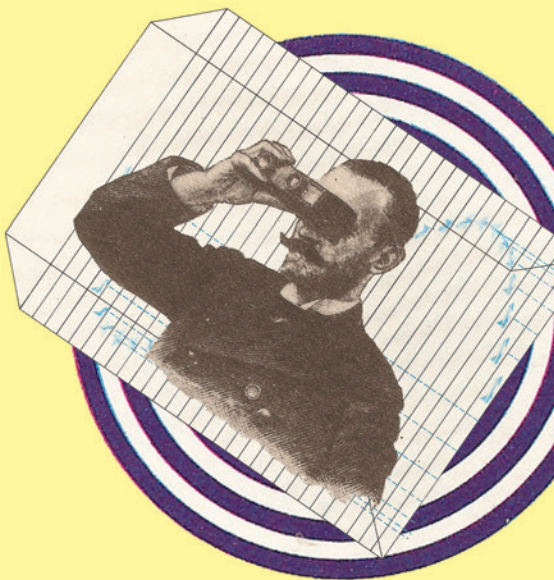
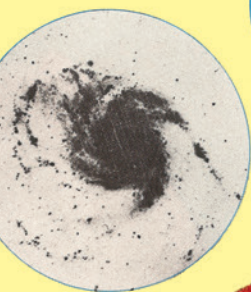
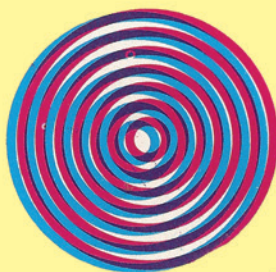
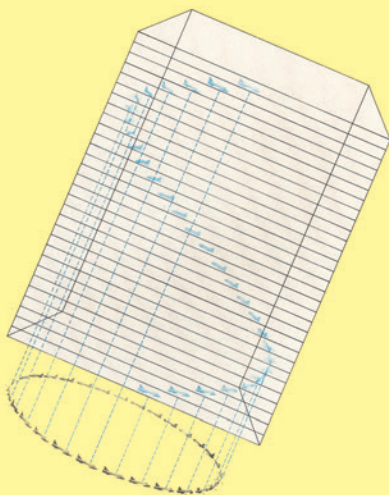
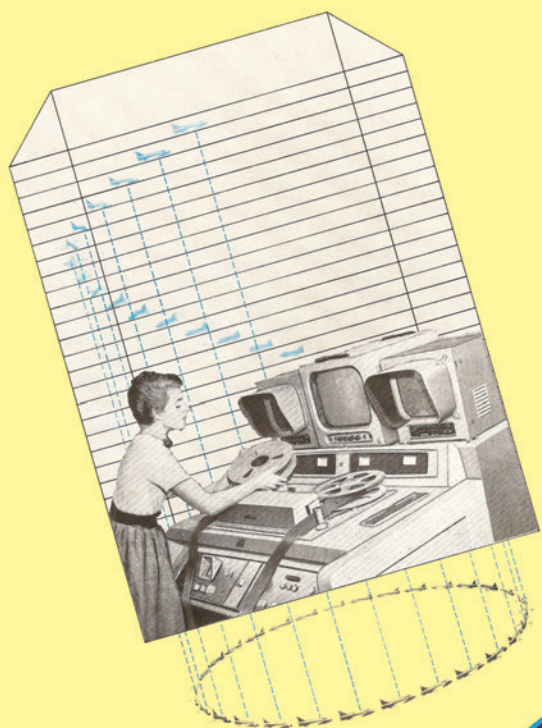
electricity grids and natural habitats. More recently, and increasingly, people are tackling the mode and purpose of production and thus undermining the power of the private corporations and the worshipped markets. This transformation needs support. More and more people are becoming much more deeply and directly involved in trying to shape their own lives and the situations they find themselves in by diverse means. Such means range from large-scale mobilizations to block a mine and mass protests on the streets to social media activism or mass collection and distribution of disaster relief outside government channels. These people are reclaiming their livelihoods and fundamental rights. Already today millions of people have organized to defend their forests and fisheries, reinvent local food systems, organize productive online communities, reclaim public spaces and improve environmental stewardship. They are re-imagining the very meaning of «progress» and governance. A lot of this is happening underneath the radar and is not visible to the global media public. Gaining a voice and making it heard has become more complex and difficult, necessitating sophisticated strategies and simultaneous inside-outside political struggles in multiple arenas, from local to global.

«While our discussion could get quite heated, and sometimes it was difficult to agree on some of the specific things we need to do, we agreed on most of the principles. Localized production of goods and energy, waste as a resource, corporate power as a threat – overconsumption and overproduction as symptoms of this power, a more democratic and sustainable dialogue on resource-use and exploitation on a decentralized, but also on an international level, and maintaining basic human rights and civil liberties are all crucial in our pursuit of sustainability.»

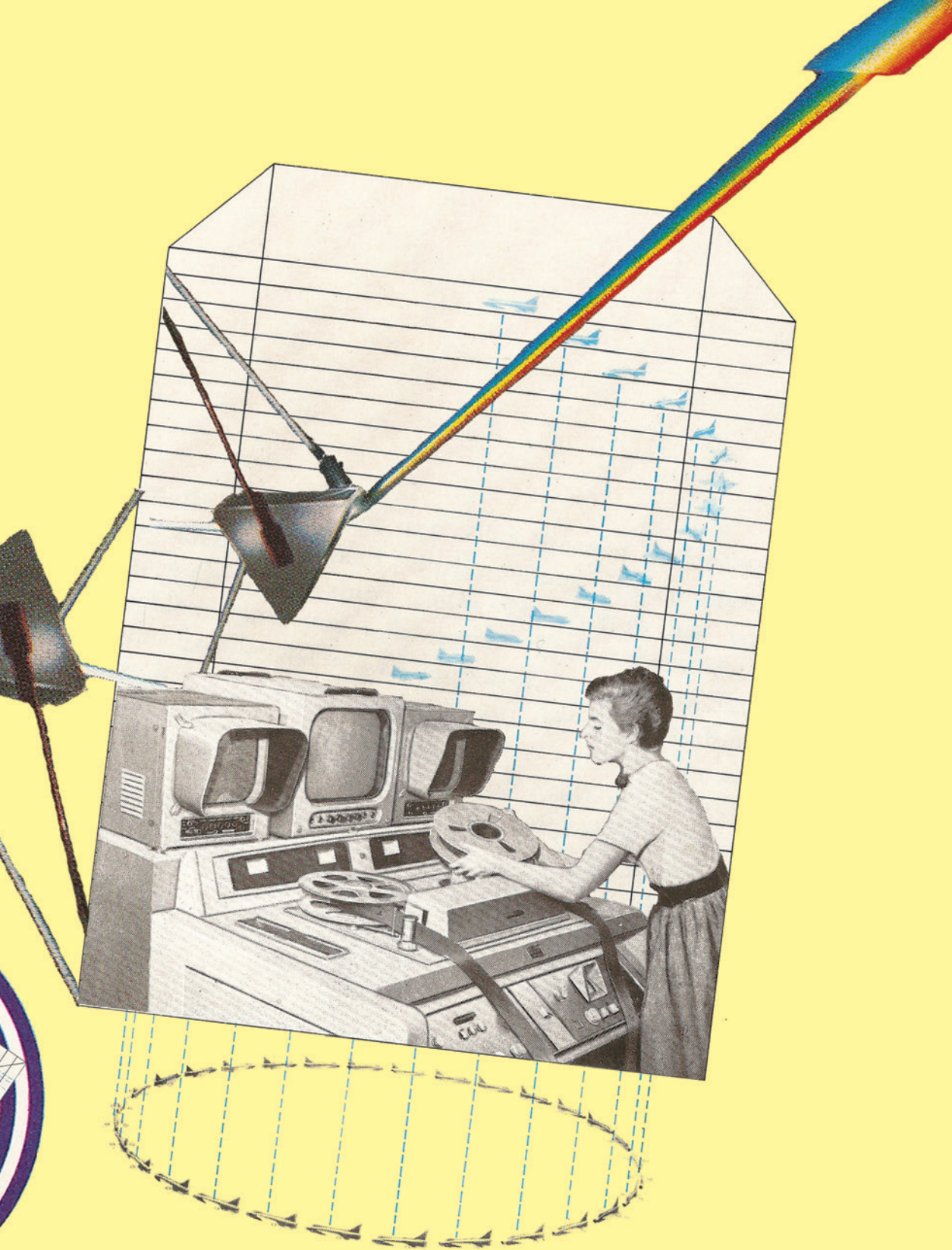
Nora Feldmar, Dominika Gmerek, Sven Janovski and Johanna Sydow,  
*delegates from the future workshop Europe*

On the international level, changes in the consumption patterns of the global middle and upper classes can be informed by debates on alternative economic governance systems like the sharing economy and the collaborative commons, whose successes depend less on market-oriented than needs-oriented production. It is not economies of scale, but economies of scope, it is not growth in GDP but the wellbeing of society, people and nature that should inform policy orientation and regulation. The approaches and frameworks with respect to human rights and nature set out above would by themselves induce new forms of production, consumption and trade.

One prominent example would be the meat consumption of the middle classes, which leads to environmental degradation, poverty and violations of the human right to food. While a change in lifestyle by individuals is important this is by far not enough. It is – including from the perspective of extraterritorial obligations – an obligation of the EU to change its agriculture policy with regard to industrial meat production. Political and financial support of industrial meat production harms nature and human rights.







«There needs to be a shift of focus of resource governance from increasing GDP to a more inclusive approach that takes into account collaboration, social capital, social and mental wellbeing and aspirations of people, for example through the GNH (Gross National Happiness) approach of policy-making in Bhutan.»

Divya Gupta, Pinaki Dasgupta and India,  
*delegates from the future workshop South Asia*

Specific resources and territories need specific governance regimes that do not necessarily have to be either public (controlled by the state) or private. There are functioning commons-based resource management systems related to water, food, seeds, forests, grassland and many more resources and knowledge systems all over the world that range from very local solutions to the regional scale. Many of them are under severe pressure from privatization and enclosure by market actors. Real empowerment requires new «cultures of sustainability», with values beyond consumerism. They are focused instead on sharing, reclaiming or defending the commons and, in many parts of the world, re-learning the mode of «commoning».



## 6. What next?

The process that led to this Memorandum has been extremely exciting, challenging and inspiring. The knowledge, perspectives, visions and strategies it has generated are the beginning and not the end of a global dialogue on Resource Equity. The new perspective and normative framework offered will hopefully inspire others to relate to this Memorandum, develop it further and translate it into their local and regional contexts. It will hopefully also provide inspiration to those searching for solutions on the international level.

Will you read the news tomorrow? Depending on which country of the world you are in you might see stories about a local food cooperative in Europe, a community land trust in Brussels, a prevented tar sands pipeline in North America, cross-border collaboration on water issues in the Middle East and North Africa, a crowd-sourced vibrant green corridor in the City of Toronto, no-go mining zones in Central America or an energy transition in Eastern Europe. No matter where you live and work – stories about a better future are already all around us. They will hopefully become more visible globally and move step by step towards our imagined futures.





**NEW!!!**

## **New Economy of Nature**

From climate change to ecosystem degradation – the solution to these problems could reside in an economic «valuation» of nature and its services. But if the existential benefits that nature provides to humankind are expressed in terms of euros and dollars, can that really give nature any better protection?

The publication «New Economy of Nature» by Thomas Fatheuer provides a readily understandable introduction to the subject and illuminates the concepts and instruments that follow from the idea of monetarizing nature. Accessible examples show the social and ecological goal conflicts and the powerful but risk-laden influence of this New Economy.

Publication Series on Ecology – Volume 35:

### **New Economy of Nature**

A critical introduction

By Thomas Fatheuer

Edited by the Heinrich Böll Foundation

Berlin, April 2014, 68 pages

ISBN 978-3-86928-124-7

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From the extraction of tar sands in North America to large-scale land purchases in Africa and from China's investment in the Mekong region to mining and soya production in Latin America – the global resources bonanza is a fact. But all this use of natural resources doesn't respect the ecological limits of our world and it doesn't result in a fair distribution of the profits.

In this Memorandum the notion of new politics is introduced to look at current conflicts around resource use as a complex set of

interactions between nature, humans, interests, power relations and cultures. With this text the Heinrich Böll Foundation offers a perspective which combines democracy, ecology and human rights and lays out fundamental ways forward that can form the basis for fair and sustainable *Resource Politics*.

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ISBN 978-3-86928-127-8