



People's Agenda for ASEM Parliamentarians

The Asia Europe People's Forum

July 2019

The People's Agenda for ASEM Parliamentarians expresses the visions and demands of hundreds of progressive peoples' movements, non-governmental organisations, campaign networks and individuals, that are confronting, researching, collating popular knowledge for alternatives, campaigning for policies against poverty and inequality and working for social, economic and climate justice, so contributing to a more **Just, Equal and Inclusive Asia and Europe**.

We are linked and brought together through the Asia Europe People's Forum.

We are committed to working in constructive ways, promoting, consolidating and strengthening engagement with ASEM governments' leaders, parliamentarians and related regional bodies to develop and implement people-centred responses to the current crises in an effective and responsible manner.

We believe that priority must be given to poor, excluded and marginalised people and more participatory, inclusive, democratic and accountable institutions must be in place to assure that processes and measures will lead to a just, equal, inclusive and sustainable Asia and Europe based on respect for gender equality and the promotion and protection of human, economic and social and cultural rights, environmental security and the protection of our Commons.

We are sincerely presenting the **People's Agenda for ASEM Parliamentarians** to you, our elected and appointed representatives at local, national and regional levels. You, and the governments that you are part of, have the responsibility to ensure that we can all live in peace, security and dignity.

As Asian and European social movements, organisations, networks and citizens committed to working for a just and equal world, we call on our Asian and European Parliamentarians and our governments to join with us in taking forward a People's Agenda founded on four fundamental principles:

- i) The promotion of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights as agreed in international human rights and humanitarian law.¹
- ii) The promotion of environmentally, socially and economically sustainable patterns of development.²
- iii) Greater economic and social equity and justice, including equality between women and men.³
- iv) The active participation of civil society organisations in democratic life, governance and decision-making process of their countries.⁴

¹ This can be enabled by priority being given to poor, excluded and marginalised people

² This can be enabled by the promotion and protection of human, economic and socio-cultural rights, environmental security and the protection of our Commons.

³ This can be enabled by processes and measures for just, equal, inclusive and sustainable Asia and Europe based on respect for gender equality

⁴ This can be enabled through more democratic, accountable and transparent institutions being in place.

Why we are addressing and engaging with ASEM Parliamentarians

We present this **People's Agenda** to you are at a time of continuing and growing inequalities, injustices and when, overall, the gap between the rich and the poor is widening, and access to resources, livelihood opportunities and essential public services remains grossly unequal.

There is a consensus among people that the dominant development approach over the last decades - based around deregulation of markets, increasing power of multinational corporations, unaccountable multilateral institutions and trade liberalisation has failed to meet the needs and rights of all citizens. This has led to a gradual hollowing out of democratic accountability and a corrosion of a growing number of democratic institutions as elites make decisions and implement policies with limited or no scrutiny from citizens, creating the conditions for poverty, inequality, environmental devastation and growing social unrest. There is a deeply felt need and demand for change and for new participatory and inclusive, people-centred policies and practices.

The rapidly rising power of corporate industries, with transnational corporations *de facto* turning into 'corporate nations' that are bigger and more powerful than some nations, controls an ever-growing share of the world's economy. Their global power is reinforced by trade and investment agreements focused on unfettered liberalisation of trade in goods and services, market access and protections for foreign direct investors.

This 'corporate capture' of governance, allowing great influence on economic policies from trade to tax policies, has significant influence over our lives and livelihoods and huge economic, political, social, environmental and cultural impacts, globally.

Countries around the world spend over \$1tn a year on weapons of destruction, while annually millions of people die of easily treatable diseases⁵.

Forced migration and displacement is a growing reality for millions of people.

Statistical economic growth has been founded on the growing desecration and destruction of our Commons, our resources, environments and climate. Our climate crisis has demonstrated a destruction of many species, as historical injustices on climate policies continue. Our governments' have deflected progressive calls to protect the planet and protect the people.

In Asia the crises are exacerbating poverty and inequality already widespread before the present crises. In Europe the crises are creating indebtedness, precarious work, joblessness, the erosion of access to inclusive public services and income insecurity.

Fractured economies have consolidated divisive and polarising politics that are creating now, more than ever, insiders and outsiders, the growth of racism and xenophobia that makes social relations toxic and conflictual. It is contributing to pronounced democratic deficits. In many countries democratic and civic spaces are shrinking, with the hollowing out of democratic accountability, corrosion of a democratic institutions and rights.

⁵ https://www.who.int/whr/1996/media_centre/press_release/en/

Our Call

Every person on this planet shares a common humanity. We all want our children to grow up healthy, to have a good education, have decent work, drink clean water, breathe clean air and live in peace.

Our governments' have deflected progressive calls to protect the planet and protect the people. We all need urgent and people centred collective and national responses for our common futures.

We expect urgent and people centred collective and national responses for framing our futures.

We call on our Governments to work with citizens, including poor, excluded and marginalised women and men, to develop and implement policies that will lead to a just, equal, inclusive and sustainable Asia and Europe, and more accountable and democratic institutions – based on respect for gender equality, our environment and fundamental human rights.

To do this, as citizens, we call upon Parliamentarians and ASEM Governments to develop legislation and mobilise the resources for the following:

Participatory Democracy, Reclaiming People's Rights and Fundamental Freedoms – People's Visions and Recommendations for change

The current phase of neo-liberal globalisation based on control of intellectual and material resources has hastened the pace of corporate capture of legal and political processes. 'New technologies', 'new economics' and 'new ways of communicating' are marked by the continued destruction of many public services and their privatisation. This has led to a crisis in the ability of elected representatives, governments, to fulfil their responsibilities to their citizens. This has contributed to polarising of people and creating atmospheres of partisan politics that threaten to tear societies apart. We live increasingly in a world of insiders and outsiders, of concentrations of power and wealth and of the regime of the corporations. Divided and dividing economies have increasingly consolidated dividing and divisive politics.

A growing number of countries across Asia and Europe are experiencing more authoritarian and excluding politics. In many countries, the spaces and freedom of people to express their concerns to their elected representatives, at local and national levels, are being systematically limited, restricted and threatened. Summarised as shrinking democratic spaces, this translates as exclusion and the suppression of fundamental human rights, of voices, and of the rights to associate, organise, mobilise and demonstrate. This trend, that already existed in some authoritarian states, is now growing in managed democracies. Linked, is a discernible hostility toward democratic norms, antagonism toward a free press and intolerance toward some ethnic and religious minorities and migrants. This trend is also contributing to forced migration and refugee movements with severe ramifications, especially for women and children. There has also been the rise of vigilante and violent, conservative social and cultural groups in some countries. Dissent is increasingly criminalised and violence often used to assert power.

We urge ASEM Parliamentarians to defend substantive democracy and rights. Currently in many countries human rights defenders, not only of minorities and marginalised groups but also of some voices of dissent, are being silenced by climates of fear, threats of violence, arbitrary detention and imprisonment.

We believe that nearly four decades of neoliberal economic and corporate led-globalisation have led to increasing poverty and exclusion; centralisation of power; and the increasing use of national security mechanisms and surveillance to exclude and repress citizens from civic and political engagement and activity. This is harming inter-community and gender relations, and democratic and corporate accountability.

Responding to more authoritarian governance and shrinking democratic and civic spaces:-

Our Key Recommendations and Demands for Change to ASEM Parliamentarians

We call on ASEM Parliamentarians to work with their governments to:

1. Promote substantive participatory democratic processes with respect for diversity by creating and expanding spaces for dialogue, interaction, tolerance and for enabling voice for all. This should be done without creating and reproducing class, caste, ethnic, gender and religious identities;
2. Enable local and national governments to share information and be accountable to citizens, to interact with local communities and ensure genuine access to processes of decision making. Local communities should be consulted at every stage of the decision making processes where their lives, livelihoods and living environments are affected. Citizens should be able to effectively use various mechanisms including right to information, social audits and participatory budgeting, according to specific country contexts;
3. Adopt legislation and appropriate monitoring mechanisms to ensure adherence to legislation to create safer working environments, free of police repression, for all workers, especially women, and particularly in terms of sexual harassment. Governments are called to guarantee that the laws and norms that do exist are translated into reality.
4. Enable Governments and Civil Society Organisations and social movements to promote democratic governance by making full use of SDG 16 which, as a cross-cutting goal, integrates peace, human rights, democracy and transparency;
5. Promote equality for all, regardless of class, ethnicity, nationality, race, caste, religion, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and expression) and age in fulfilment of international human rights law;
6. Establish mechanisms and support affirmative action to enable the making visible and giving voice to young people, women, LGBTQI Plus people, people with disabilities, HIV+ status, ethnic, religious and other minorities.
7. Urge ASEM governments to continue to uphold equality for all in legislation and policies by meaningful engagements of all relevant parties, especially of young people and the diverse minorities, through public information, awareness building and all forms of education aimed at ending all forms of discrimination and violence;
8. In the context of increasing assaults on civil society activists and shrinking spaces for the marginalised we urge ASEM civil society to continue building on intersectional solidarity arising from the diversity of people. With the view of promoting awareness, information and respect around these diversities and enabling meaningful participation and inclusion of all minorities in the matters of governance as well as of resources and means;
9. Recognise that, in addition to Sombath Somphone, there are a growing number of cases of Enforced Disappearances, abductions, arbitrary arrests, extra-judicial killings and other Human Rights abuses. We urge ASEM Parliamentarians to work with their governments to reaffirm their commitments to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent

agreed Human Rights including UN Conventions and end the gap between agreed commitments and the lived realities of many peoples and communities;

10. Support and assist in creating opportunities for human rights defenders' and civic actors from Asia and Europe to build solidarity across countries, cultures, struggles, issues and sectors;
11. Appeal to public institutions, including local and national Parliaments, to recognise the special needs of disabled people, including those with hearing disabilities and introduce sign language as official means of communication. The disabled people should be accorded all assistance, including technological support, to enable their equal participation;

Migrants and Refugees - People's Vision and Recommendations for change

Everybody has a right to stay in his/her country of origin, and everybody should have a right to migrate. In many countries the “refugee crisis” is actually a “humanitarian crisis created by the wars and military interventions.

The situation of resulting travelling migrants has been dramatically accentuated by changes in migration and border regimes, an, in some areas, the erecting of walls and electrified fences.

We denounce the deaths of thousands of refugees and migrants on the migration routes within Asia, within Europe and between Asia and Europe.

Our Key Recommendations and Demands for Change to ASEM Parliamentarians

We call on ASEM Parliamentarians to work with their governments to:-

1. All governments should ratify the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and its Additional Protocol (1967) and the UN Convention on Migrants' Rights (2003). They should immediately enact appropriate domestic legislation and internal policies to ensure legal protection of the persons of concern;
2. All countries should adopt legal provisions for immigration, for granting asylum and for protecting stateless people. The prime framework of reference should be human rights rather than borders' regimes, nation states and national identities;
3. We call on ASEM Member governments to work collaboratively with other appropriate international institutions for an international status for economic migrants, similar to the UN Geneva International Convention on refugees;
4. Establish transparent mechanisms to monitor border regimes, movements of migrants and state practices. Provide appropriate, accessible information for migrants and not reproduce a climate of fear. Establish and enable support structures and self-organised grassroots solidarity in order to give migrants a voice and break up divisions between people;
5. Counter all attempts to divide up migrants in legal and illegal, good and bad, and root causes of migration into legitimate and non-legitimate. Most motivations for migration are for a life of dignity, and peace with economic security;
6. Recognise that the root causes of migration such as loss of livelihood, poverty, climate change, trade and investment policies, inequalities and war should be addressed through comprehensive, collaborative international actions and programmes. Nobody should be displaced or forced to leave their country of origin.

Promoting a fair and sustainable financial system- People's Vision and Recommendations for change

After the 2008 global financial crisis, 'big banks' were rescued and public spending was curtailed. Despite all the pledges to reform the system in the wake of the 2008 crisis, virtually no structural reforms have taken place.

First, the "too big to fail banks" problem has become worse. The big banks that were rescued by the US government in 2008 because they were seen as too big to fail have become even more too big to fail. Second, the products that triggered the 2008 crisis are still being traded. Third, the new stars in the financial firmament, the institutional investors' consortium made up of hedge funds, private equity funds, sovereign wealth funds, pension funds, and other investor entities, continue to operate globally unchecked, operating from virtual bases called tax havens, looking for arbitrage opportunities in currencies or securities, or sizing up the profitability of corporations for possible stock purchases. Ownership of the estimated \$100 trillion in the hands of these floating tax shelters for the superrich is concentrated in 20 funds. Fourth, financial operators are gaining profits in a 'sea of liquidity' provided by many central banks, whose releasing of cheap money in the name of ending the recession that followed the financial crisis has resulted in the issuance of trillions of dollars of debt, pushing the level of debt globally to \$325 trillion, more than three times the size of global GDP.

There is a persistent myth that the public sector must rely on private finance to solve excessive inequality and ecological destruction. However, as shown above, private finance has not only failed to address these problems, it has intensified them. The public does not have to rely on the private sector. Public funds are much bigger than we imagine: equivalent to 93 per cent of global GDP. Public banks have enough resources to raise the many trillions needed to invest in the so needed public services and climate infrastructure, without having to turn to private financiers.

There are potentially enough funds at public disposal to meet our collective everyday needs. Once these are spent and invested by publicly owned and democratically organized institutions, and no longer extracted by the private sector and market mechanisms, we can start to redirect wealth to finance the future we want.

Our Key Recommendations and Demands for Change to ASEM Parliamentarians

We call on ASEM Parliamentarians to work with their governments to:-

- 1. Create local, democratic and publicly owned banks to finance investments to meet people's needs.** A public bank enables a local or regional government to deploy public funds locally in the form of loans, (re)investments and financial services. Public banks are better suited to providing equity-oriented financing where profit-maximizing is not the primary motivation.

2. **Build robust democratic ownership of public financial institutions by ensuring that worker, user and community representatives are on supervisory or director boards (along with requirements for gender and diverse ethnic representation).** The principle of affected interests should be upheld to ensure that those most impacted by a public bank have the decision-making power to ensure it is fulfilling its mandate and mission, and guaranteeing access to finance and banking as a right and public service. The principle of subsidiarity should be followed to decentralise decision-making power as much as possible.
3. **Establish a binding public mandate and a socio-ecological mission for public financial institutions.** This can ensure that profits are not extracted, but rather reinvested in society to achieve long-term, equitable development. Social actors should be able to define the mandate of the institution.ⁱ
4. **Use public financing to directly invest in public services and low-carbon infrastructure,ⁱⁱ instead of private deals such as public-private partnerships (PPPs).** Public-Private Partnerships are attractive to some jurisdictions, because they bypass spending controls and keep debts off public balance sheets. However, private investors are interested in short-term investments that make quick profits, leading to higher public costs in PPP deals over the long term and the prioritization of certain types of investments over others. Society needs long-term investments to rebuild public services and upgrade our heating, electricity and transportation infrastructure to be run on renewable sources.
5. **Curb private money creation by reclaiming privatised banks.** When democratic and publicly owned banks rather than private banks are allowed to create money through lending, they can invest in sustainable infrastructure and public services, which in turn reduces inequality and redistributes wealth.ⁱⁱⁱ
6. **Transform the public money system by demanding that governments use their money-making powers** to create funds for much-needed public spending in the face of the urgent climate and inequality crises. This can be achieved first by democratically deciding how much money should be issued to build climate-friendly public services and infrastructure, and second how much should be retrieved through progressive taxation once spending has occurred.
7. **Expose the corporate welfare model by carrying out a transparent citizens' audit of the government budget** – at the local, regional or national level – to reveal the amount of public funds that are benefitting big business and to set up citizens' platforms to discuss alternative spending of those resources.^{iv}

8. **Demand a broader public mandate with social and environmental targets for central banks** in order to achieve full and secure employment and to finance an equitable transition towards a sustainable and low-carbon society.^v
9. **Build popular pressure to force central banks to buy out the big private energy companies** in order to keep fossil fuels in the ground. The buyout should marry a binding mandate to decommission fossil fuels with increased investment in democratically renewable energy, while leaving no worker or community behind.^{vi}
10. **Create a Citizens' Wealth Fund by implementing higher levels of taxation of public and private wealth, including robust inheritance taxes.** This would give all citizens a direct stake in the economy, boost public support, transfer wealth into the hands of all citizens and reduce economic inequality. Over time, this fund could pay for new public services, climate-resilient infrastructure and a regular citizens' dividend.
11. **Dilute corporate ownership by obliging companies to transfer a growing percentage of shares, say 0.5% a year to the Citizens' Wealth Fund.** This would gradually socialize a portion of private wealth to be owned on an equal basis by citizens.^{vii}
12. **Deliver tax justice by stopping tax evasion and implementing a progressive tax system** in which big corporations and wealthy individuals are forced to pay the highest taxes, wherever they live and operate. There should also be an accountable and participatory process to democratically decide how these revenues can maximize people's long-term well-being.
13. **Create regional finance networks to fund production and service cooperatives** in order to improve the region's socio-economic resilience. Cooperative finance institutions could provide grants and low-interest loans to democratic enterprises that cultivate the land or provide essential services, such as housing.^{viii}
By connecting rural-based agriculture cooperatives with urban, retail cooperatives, more equitable regional development can be achieved.^{ix x}
14. **Prevent public companies and cooperative financial bodies from corporate take-overs.** This could be done, for example, by inscribing in law that a popular referendum should always precede any kind of take-over of a public or cooperative institution. This can safeguard against speculation and corporatization.^{xi}

15. **Encourage public ‘anchor’ institutions such as hospitals and universities to purchase from and invest in democratic businesses**, such as worker cooperatives, employee-owned firms and community-based social enterprises. In particular, public purchasing can encourage those who succeed on the basis of well-paid and secure employment. Local government subsidies, investments and support services can also help democratic businesses to scale-up into more resilient enterprises. If this is also combined with inclusive hiring policies and workforce development efforts, it can create career pathways for low-income, minority and underemployed populations.

We present our concerns and recommendations for five core areas:-

Social Justice - People's Vision and Recommendations for change

We are concerned with the growing social distress of people all across the world, faced with multiple problems of war, environmental degradation and climate change, rising inequalities and persistent poverty, economic crises, precariousness of work, austerity policies and growing authoritarianism, erosion of human rights, discrimination and intolerance.

We consider comprehensive and universal social protection rights to be a primary element to promote social justice, within a coherent and just political and economic context.

We give our full support to the existing global initiatives, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the ILO Social Protection Floors. We also want to go beyond these traditional rights, to encompass environmental needs and make the link to other sectors such as peace, democracy and trade. In that way, social protection is **not a correction mechanism for the economic system, but can be transformative**, that is, contribute to the sustainability of life.

We believe that **social protection is a common**, emerging from the democratic and participatory actions of citizens with demands for public authorities. We see social protection as a collective and democratic endeavour for achieving a life in and of dignity for all. Democracy and social dialogue are indeed at the heart of social protection.

While at different levels of development, Europe and Asia face the same challenge to pursue social justice with renewed and more meaningful roles for the State and social movements. Social justice is based on the concepts of human rights, solidarity and equality. Across the two continents, civil society groups and social movements urgently demand for social justice with the goals to guarantee a life of dignity, to empower people, and to transform societies in a just and sustainable manner based on the principles of equality, justice, solidarity, and participatory democracy.

We are deeply concerned that across Europe and much of Asia neoliberal as well as authoritarian populist policies including de-regulation, eroding of workers' rights, severe cuts to social spending and large-scale privatisation of essential goods and services have caused widespread joblessness and precarious work, profound social inequality, and further social exclusion. These have made the lives of millions of men, women and children more vulnerable. Therefore, we call on our governments to pursue social justice that addresses the structural causes and processes of poverty, inequality, and disempowerment.

Our Key Recommendations and Demands for Change to ASEM Parliamentarians

We call on ASEM Parliamentarians to work with their governments to:-

1. Meet their international obligations and fulfil their responsibility to guarantee sustainable

livelihoods with the full participation of civil society, workers and employers' organisations in a process of extending **inclusive, solidarity-based universal social protection systems**.

2. Develop adequate **fiscal policies** that generate sufficient domestic funds for universal and comprehensive social protection systems.
3. **Stop and ban the privatisation and commodification of common goods** that are vital and indispensable for sustaining life. Promote instead public-public partnerships or public partnerships with people's enterprises or solidarity economy including co-operatives.
4. Institutionalise mechanisms for people's meaningful participation in decision-making processes affecting their lives and livelihood in total transparency so as to consider their **economic, social and environmental rights as commons**.
5. Promote a **rights and solidarity-based system of universal social protection**, with social insurances (security), labour law, social assistance for the poor and public services.
6. Promote **decent work**, stop the contractualisation of work, respect the ILO's Core Labour Standards, enforce living wages, implement programmes to guarantee work for everyone and integrate all workers, including those from the informal sector and care in a regulated and solidarity-based social protection system. Prepare workers for the technological changes of the 21st century.
7. Stop the privatization of essential services and **guarantee socialized services** such as for food, health care, water, electricity, housing, education and others, with mechanisms for democratic access, ownership and control.
8. Use the ILO initiative for **Social Protection Floors and the UN Sustainable Development Goals** as an initial step for a universal, transformative and solidarity-based social protection system.
9. To the ASEAN Member-States, adopt an **Agenda for a Social ASEAN** that ensures implementation of all above-mentioned points, enabling democratic, participatory and people-centred processes not only in the implementation but also in the design and monitoring of these programmes in order to put people over and above corporate interests in the context of the ASEAN regional economic integration project.
10. Set up a Regional as well as a Global **Social Protection Fund** as proposed by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food Olivier de Schutter and UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights Magdalena Sepulveda, in order to meet the basic costs of putting universal social protection systems in place.

Global Charter for Social Protection Rights – for all and by all

www.globalsocialprotectionincharter.eu

Our social protection is based on the valid principles of the past, though it takes into account the new circumstances of the 21st century. It is based on human rights and solidarity.

It consists of insurances and assistance, of labour rights and public services.

We see social protection as a commons, as something that belongs to us all.

Our social protection is universal, it is by all and for all, without any exceptions. This means it goes beyond poverty reduction. Its implementation is a major responsibility of States/public authorities, because they are the guarantors of our human rights, and because States have to be seen as a kind of public service, at the service of citizens.

In this way, social protection as commons basically means a democratisation of social protection, with the participation of all. It thus becomes emancipatory, it can free people from the chains of capital. That is why our social protection is incompatible with neoliberalism.

This Charter is not a binding text, but can be an inspiration for all those who want to work on social justice.

As such, it is directly linked to many other sectors and can be transformative. In other words, social protection with a view on social justice can be a starting point from which you embark on changing all other policies. It is a way to convince people, offering them direct material advantages, it is a way to broaden your audience, not to say, to win elections. Because one should never forget: all people need protection and broadly speaking, there are only two ways to offer protection: by way of economic and social rights, or by way of the police and the military. The choice is ours.

Climate Justice and Just Transitions – People’s Vision and Recommendations for change

Climate change is a manifestation of the planetary social and ecological crisis brought about by the dual expansion of capitalism and industrialism that has produced a skewed process of global wealth creation. In 2015, the 196 governments that attended the 21st Conference of Parties (COP) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed to pursue efforts to halt the global average temperature increase to below 1.5°C from pre-industrial levels. This aspiration, however, was not matched by the reality of current voluntary pledges in countries’ Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). This is not only a step back from the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities stipulated in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, but will also condemn us to a 3°C warmer world.

A central requirement to solving climate change is a complete transition, as soon as possible, from fossil-fuel dependent, undemocratic and unjust energy production and use.

Energy is vital to realising people’s rights, social justice, and sustainable development. Yet the world’s dominant energy systems completely fail more than two billion people and have destructive local impacts – damaging our health, destroying our crops, and poisoning our rivers and forests. The current energy systems are also driving global warming. This climate change is already wreaking havoc on the lives of tens of millions of people worldwide by intensifying floods, droughts, and storms; driving people from their homes; acidifying the oceans; and driving an unprecedented extinction of non-human species.

Climate change puts all of our lives, livelihoods, societies, and cultures at risk.

Some positive transformation is already happening but we must accelerate it.

Our Key Recommendations and Demands for Change to ASEM Parliamentarians

We call on ASEM Parliamentarians to work with their governments to:-

1. Ban new ‘dirty energy’ projects and stop the expansion of fossil fuel energy production and consumption;
2. End government subsidies and public handouts to ‘dirty energy’ and related companies;
3. Stop excessive energy consumption by corporations and global elites;
4. Redirect and mobilise public finance to ensure people’s universal access to energy and make the complete shift to public and community/decentralised renewable and clean energy systems as soon as possible;
5. Divest from fossil fuel corporations;

6. Keep fossil fuels in the ground and support the transition needs of societies in their path towards increased use of energies that are renewable, clean, accessible, sustainable, and more importantly democratically owned;
7. Have concrete short term and medium term plans for appropriate emissions reduction to ensure the possibility that the 1.5°C limit will still be possible so potentially preventing climate catastrophe. Financial resources and technology assistance to developing countries for mitigation and adaptation needs must be extended, also for the loss and damage suffered from climate-induced disasters;

Towards realising the above, we urge ASEM governments to adopt appropriate legislation to enable the following as a matter of urgency:

1. COMMIT to 100% renewable energy for all, to be achieved not later than 2030 for developed countries and as early as possible before 2050 for developing countries;
2. PLEDGE the finance necessary to build democratic, renewable energy systems for communities, ensure a just transition, provide universal access to energy, support demand-side reduction and energy saving measures;
3. AGREE to an international moratorium on new coal projects to be implemented no later than January 2021
4. BAN fracking and new gas projects and adopt a global moratorium on new fossil fuel exploration and extraction techniques starting in 2020 towards ending fossil fuels extraction as soon as possible;
5. STOP large and dangerous energy projects;
6. ANNOUNCE a phase out of public subsidies for fossil fuels to be completed by 2021 for all developed countries and the international institutions they fund, and by 2025 for all developing countries;
7. WITHDRAW all public financing of large-scale biomass burning, agro fuels, mega-dams and waste incineration by 2021;
8. ADOPT binding national and international policies that prohibit industries that profit from fossil fuels and the climate crisis, and those representing their interests, from participating in international and national climate policy forums.

Trade Justice and Corporate Accountability - People's Vision and Recommendations for change

Today's trade and investment rules go well beyond the issue of trade in goods. The global decline of national political authority and their increasing failure to manage national politics, economy and information are contributing to the imbalance in the distribution of planetary wealth and resources, as well as flows of capital. These are largely unquestioned and are making trade rule all aspects of life including food, health, employment, water, energy, climate, land and justice.

The architecture of the WTO trade rules, trade agreements and international and bilateral investment agreements together constitute what amount to a new global constitution for the protection of the interests of global transnational corporations and foreign investors. These agreements are primarily aimed at liberalisation for the benefit of business and carry well-documented risks of highly adverse impacts on access to public services; access to public health and medicines; erosion of policy space; the right to food; environmental destruction and irreversible climate change, through an architecture of impunity and a structure of power that puts corporate rights above human rights and Peoples' sovereignty. They are an integral part of a policy framework aimed at holding down wages and boosting profits for shareholders, while globalised patterns of production and consumption have a devastating effect on our environment and climate.

Under modern free trade agreements, transnational corporations enjoy highly enforceable rights and protections. Investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms, included by rote, enable TNCs to directly sue sovereign states before international tribunals – i.e. bypassing national legal systems - over virtually any government measure impacting negatively on their investments – including over policies to protect people's rights and the environment. This severely hampers states in their duties to regulate in the broader public interest and to respect human rights, directly undermining democracy in the Global North and the Global South.^{xii}

At the same time, when their corporate activities, either directly or indirectly, impact negatively on human rights and the daily lives of people globally, these same TNCs are able to evade national jurisdictions because of their transnational character; the unprecedented economic, financial and political power they command; their economic and legal flexibility; and the complex structures they use to carry out their operations. Impunity, therefore, typically prevails, especially when the affected communities and peoples are in the Global South.

The lack of transparency in the negotiating process, which tends to take place largely behind closed doors and without (sufficient) parliamentary oversight, is a threat to democracy and the protection of human rights.^{xiii} In light of growing global inequality, the destruction of our planet's eco-systems and irreversible climate change, what we need is a longer-term vision on how to regulate trade in the interest of economic, social and environmental justice.^{xiv}

Our Key Recommendations and Demands for Change to ASEM Parliamentarians

We call on ASEM Parliamentarians to work with their governments to:-

1. Ensure public scrutiny and democratic control over trade and investment negotiations;
2. Insist on a transparent and inclusive process of negotiation and ratification of trade and investment agreements, that includes active engagement with civil society to ensure sensitive issues are identified and addressed in line with the principles of participatory democracy;
3. Assert parliament's role to oversee trade and investment negotiations and not let unelected and unaccountable trade and investment negotiators control our futures;
4. Insist on a prior, independent assessment of the economic and social impacts of trade and investment agreements in relation to national equitable and sustainable development that must inform the negotiations;
5. In the same vein, insist on a prior, independent human rights impact assessment with road participation of civil society as a prerequisite for ratification of trade and investment agreements;^{xv}
6. Sign on and Participate in the **Global Inter Parliamentary Network (GIN)** - a network initiated by Parliamentarians (now 350) calling for the Binding Treaty - <https://bindingtreaty.org/> and express support to the process.

We call on ASEM Parliamentarians to work with their governments to:-

1. 'Redesign' trade and investment agreements so that they regulate rather than liberalise trade and foreign direct investments in order to ensure that they contribute to social, economic and climate justice.^{xvi}
Key elements should include:
 - a. The inclusion of a 'supremacy clause' to ensure that human rights, climate policies and measures to protect the environment take precedence over corporate rights and protections;
 - b. An end to the inclusion in trade and investment agreements of investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanisms that enable foreign direct investors to directly challenge public policy decisions of sovereign states and abuse their economic power to exert undue influence over democratic decision-making processes;
 - c. Enshrining extra-territorial obligations for their home and host states aimed at enhancing corporate accountability;

- d. Including directly enforceable obligations on transnational economic actors to
 - i) close the gap by which they escape their responsibilities and
 - ii) ensure their compliance with International Human Rights Law, International Environmental Law and international labour standards.
 - e. Enabling victims of corporate abuse and malpractice to proceed before the courts of the home and host States of transnational corporations and foreign investors, or in states where they carry out their substantial activities.
2. Be aware that negotiations on e-commerce, as a new issue in trade and investment negotiations, have extensive implications for equitable and sustainable development. The rise of 'big tech' is opening a new frontier in extractivism and the control of resources by big business: Data is the 'new oil', and online connections are the 'new gold'. This process not only threatens fundamental rights to privacy but, crucially, extends inequality between the global North and South, and entrenches corporate power across all aspects of our economic lives.

We call on ASEM Parliamentarians to work with their governments to:-

- a. Take as a starting point a commons-based approach to the digital economy;
 - b. Ensure the e-trade agenda - whether via the rules of the WTO or in any trade agreements between Europe and Asia - steers clear of including any e-commerce provisions that limit the policy space of governments;
 - c. Use all available policy tools to break up the monopolies of big tech, and ensure that corporations active in the digital economy pay their fair share of taxes and respect Human Rights, labour and environmental law.
3. Establish an (inter)national framework of binding rules and obligations to end corporate impunity and ensure (trans)national corporate actors and investors must respect human rights and promote sustainable development, including conservation of our planet's biodiversity and prevention of irreversible climate change.

We call on ASEM Parliamentarians to work with their governments to:-

- a. Establish constructive cooperation with initiatives at the UN to achieve an international legally binding instrument (UN Binding Treaty) on Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with respect to human rights;
- b. Strengthen national legal frameworks and global governance instruments to recognise and protect fundamental freedoms; human rights; the right to development, self-determination and a healthy environment; and all the collective rights of indigenous peoples and native communities; and establish the hierarchical superiority of human rights norms over trade and investment treaties;

- c. Define of mandatory due diligence obligations for TNCs and other business enterprises regarding economic, social, cultural, civil, political and labour rights, environmental protection and climate change mitigation - including with respect to their subsidiaries;
 - d. Ensure monitoring and enforcement of national and international legislation and standards, including along the supply chain of TNCs; supply chains consists of companies outside the TNC that contribute to the operations of the TNC, including contractors, subcontractors or suppliers with whom the parent company or the companies it controls carry on established business relations, as well as the investors and the funds providing the capital of the TNC;
 - e. Work towards an International Court on Transnational Corporations and Human Rights that shall be established with the competence to receive, investigate, judge and enforce its decisions.
4. Create a national regulatory framework establishing a binding mechanism on transparency, public participation and democratic scrutiny of trade and investment agreements, including an obligation on the part of the State to commission independent Sustainability and Human Rights Impact Assessments (SIAs/HRIAs) to
- a. inform the negotiations and
 - b. aid the parliamentary process re the ratification of such agreements.^{xvii}

Food Sovereignty and Resources Justice – People’s Vision and Recommendations for change

Across Asia and Europe, land, water, seeds, forests and fisheries are being subjected to the pressures from neo-liberal globalisation policies - whether from industrial agriculture or blue carbon initiatives; the expansion of mining, energy and the extractive industries; mega infrastructure projects; real estate development; luxury tourist enclaves; or conservation and market-based climate mitigation strategies. These pressures, especially when bolstered by national laws that are geared towards profit rather than peoples’ rights, are having a corrosive effect on livelihoods, cultures, and ecologies. The struggles are rooted in fights for social justice, and against all forms of discrimination based on gender, class, ethnicity, caste and religion. In particular countries and regions, this has been accompanied by the rise of militarism and increased authoritarian repression of civil society organisations and environmental and human rights defenders.

Against this backdrop, communities in both Asia and Europe are mobilising to put forward real alternatives based on grass-roots organising and social movement action to further the vision of food and resource justice based on their right to choose their own self-determined ways of living. This is exemplified by, *inter alia*, the global movement for food sovereignty, alternatives to mining and anti-extractivism campaigns, protection of the commons, and the multiple ways in which small farmers, pastoralists, fishing communities, and indigenous peoples are making strategic use of national and international governance instruments to claim and defend their access to and control over territories and natural resources as matters of human rights.

It is our overall objective to strengthen these People’s Visions and empower social movement actors and civil society organisations across Europe and Asia to assert democratic control over the land and water-scapes upon which they depend. These Peoples’ Visions are based on a commitment to solidarity, social and economic justice, and concern for the most vulnerable and marginalised. This stands in contrast to the false solutions offered by techno-capitalism, rising authoritarian populism, sectarian and exclusionary nationalism as well as a multi-stakeholder approach that seeks to balance different interests, erase power differentials, while mitigating the worst effects of a “business as usual” approach. Truly elevating People’s Visions means prioritising the voices of those that are most affected in decision-making around food and natural resources in accordance with the important principle of “nothing about us, without us”.

Our Key Recommendations and Demands for Change to ASEM Parliamentarians

These recommendations build on AEPF Final Declarations and take their inspiration from key social movement documents such as those issued by the Nyéléni International and Nyéléni Europe movements for Food Sovereignty and the International Peoples Conference on Mining (IPCM)

We call on ASEM Parliamentarians to work with their governments to:-

1. To ensure there are constitutional guarantees to support those most at risk from shrinking spaces for civil society, protecting, investigating and sanctioning to prevent attacks and threats against environmental and human rights defenders.
2. Hold governments accountable for their human rights violations also with regard to their extra-territorial human right obligations. To ensure this, there should be support for a strong binding treaty on transnational corporations.
3. Ensure strict laws and their enforcement so that companies along the whole supply chain, including downstream companies, abide by national and international human rights standards. There should be thorough and independent Environmental Impact Assessments, as well as Human Rights Impact Assessments of all development projects and investment programmes.
4. Oppose land, ocean, coastal and Small Island resource grabbing and respect the human rights of indigenous peoples, peasants, pastoralists and small-scale fishers to their lands, territories, fishing grounds and resources, utilising instruments such as the FAO Small-scale Fisheries Guidelines and the Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests.
5. Ensure good faith negotiations with affected communities according to internationally agreed human rights instruments, using free prior and informed consent as a minimum standard specifically for indigenous peoples, and apply its principles to all communities.
6. In recognition of the critical role that rural and indigenous women have in food production, and in the struggle for food sovereignty and resource justice, there should be meaningful, substantive participation of women in the development of their land and territory, and the utilisation of their resources.
7. Organise widespread campaigns to reduce overall consumption, which is driving resource extraction and, with the issue of climate change in mind, fossil fuels need to be left in the ground.
8. Promote and advance the arrested agenda of land reforms, and land to the landless, and take measures to counter land concentration and land speculation.

9. Promote food sovereignty, sustainable agriculture and peasant agroecology by providing research, extension, credit, subsidies and market access support.
10. Support the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.
11. Protect our Commons against privatisation; Recognise, respect and protect ancestral domains and territories of indigenous peoples, as well as their indigenous governance systems.
12. Create common village level seed banks, to decrease dependency on commercial seeds, recognising the rights of peasants to freely use and exchange their own seeds. Maintain a diverse selection of native seeds to support agro-ecology and a re-generative environment.
13. Develop strong support systems so that farmers and consumers can interact directly, through means of alternative food systems such as Community Supported Agriculture, Farmers Markets, and Community Gardens.

Peace and Security - People's Vision and Recommendations for change

Context

Peace movements and people's organisations have consistently shared recommendations to address peace-security issues such as nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, refugee crises, violent conflicts, inter and intra state disputes and tensions, military spending, social inequalities, terrorism, state and non state violent actions in an effort to maintain sustainable peace and human security in Asia, Europe and across the world as a whole.

Peace and social movements have worked with others to significantly contribute to maintaining peace and security in Asia and Europe and the world and have witnessed some positive changes: the adoption of the binding Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in 2017^{xviii} and the recent progress in the settlement of the conflicts in the Korean Peninsula; peace negotiations in several armed conflicts; and the women's movements' mobilisation and passing Security Council Resolution 1325^{xix}.

However, the peace and security situation remains complicated. Opposition of nuclear-power states to the TPNW and Iran-US tensions are reaching new heights. Militarist values and defence budgets continue to increase in many countries.^{xx} Besides, conflicts and disputes in 'hot spots' including the South China Sea and East China Sea, boundary and unresolved conflicts in South Asia, the plague of terrorism, extremist politicised religious fundamentalism, forced displacement of ethnic minorities and the severe refugee crises, continue to evolve in complex and dangerous ways that negatively impact people, communities and states.

Destructive economic policies which exclude environmental considerations, resulting in climate change, evident by such ecological catastrophes in the Mekong Delta, floods in Japan, France and heat wave in Europe which have threatened people's lives and livelihoods. In addition, xenophobia and the rise of authoritarian populism are leading to multiple threats, insecurities and violent conflicts in the world in general and in Asia and Europe in particular.

Our Key Recommendations and Demands for Change to ASEM Parliamentarians

We call on ASEM Parliamentarians to work with their governments to:-

1. Immediately sign, ratify and implement the TPNW; encourage discussion of the possibility of establishing Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone as one of the efforts to denuclearise the Korean peninsula; encourage the Korean peace process and support people's movements and diplomatic efforts;
2. Take serious steps to cut military expenditures and announce yearly reductions and transfers of resources to social justice expenditure;
3. Support the promotion of education for peace and human rights, develop peace advocacy based on nonviolence, human rights and secularism;

4. Put an end to the use or threat to use force and encourage negotiations and other peaceful resolution of disputes in major ‘hot spots’ including West Asia and the South China Sea in accordance with international law and with respect to legal processes;
5. Stop military interventions and sanctions since they harm the vulnerable, poorest and the excluded;
6. Strengthen international institutions and reforms towards democracy and accountability;
7. Stop policies that put people, the environment and climate at risk, respect international and regional agreements, respect international and regional agreements, and strengthen cooperation in the protection of the environment for human security;
8. Facilitate dialogues and information sharing with all other stakeholders, including peoples’ organisations and civil society organisations, especially grassroots movements for a peaceful Asia, Europe and the world as a whole;
9. Take responsibility for assisting war victims, including the Hibakushas, victims of Agent Orange and chemical barrel bombs in their daily lives and their struggles for justice;
10. Address the refugee crises based on humanitarian and human rights’ principles and assist countries, populations and peoples through strategic partnering, association agreements, civil society/ people-to-people dialogue and direct aid.

ⁱ For example, the mandate of a community bank could specify that it provides financial services to particular groups that typically face exclusion and barriers to access, such as low-income households, cooperatives and small and medium-sized enterprises. The mission should say that the institution serves the well-being of its population. All this would better equip banks to support socio-economic and environmental objectives.

ⁱⁱ Worldwide, public finance institutions, such as public banks, have over US\$73 trillion in assets, which could be invested directly in public services and infrastructure.

ⁱⁱⁱ In the Netherlands, the ‘Our Money’ campaign is calling for bringing money creation back under public and democratic control.

^{iv} The International Citizens’ Debt Audit Network assembles networks and movements from 12 European countries in order to implement audits as a strategy to fight austerity measures.

^v Such a mandate would first ensure that the central bank’s power to issue public money would not create another financial bubble, but rather finance social and ecologically sound economic activities. Second, this would allow central banks to finally use their toolbox to help redirect private financial flows towards sustainable activities.

^{vi} The public buyout proposal could and should be part of the push for a Green New Deal in the United States, which is a set of measures that aims to address the climate crisis, racial injustice and economic inequality.

^{vii} In the 1980s, Sweden applied a variation of this model by creating ‘wage-earner funds’, commonly known as the ‘Meidner Plan’.

^{viii} For example, the MOBA Housing Network in Central and South-eastern Europe enables lower income populations to collectively access finance for cooperative housing solutions that are affordable, more stable and socially owned.

^{ix} The Malabar Meat cooperative in Kerala, Southern India, shows how social alliances between peasants and workers can lead to a thriving network of cooperatives, interconnecting rural and urban areas.

^x Vietnam's 1,100 People's Credit Funds are community-based credit institutions created by the country's central bank that have helped family farms to create their own agriculture cooperatives allowing them to become more productive.

^{xi} Italy's celebrated credit cooperatives, for example, cannot legally be appropriated by members who seek a private profit, so in the event of liquidation, the remaining assets are transferred to a cooperative support fund.

^{xii} For examples on how ISDS cases impact public policy space and the protection of public interests, see 'Red Carpet Courts: 10 stories of how the rich and powerful hijacked justice', at: www.10isdstories.org

^{xiii} In Indonesia, civil society organisations successfully contested the fact that trade and investment agreements could be ratified without requiring parliamentary approval before the Constitutional Court: <https://igj.or.id/constitutional-lawsuit-on-international-treaty-law-no-24-2000-governments-expert-bit-has-fundamental-consequences/?lang=en>

^{xiv} For example, Friends of the Earth Europe describes a way forward in their comprehensive report 'Sustainable Trade: A new trade agenda that serves people and the environment', FOEE (2018): https://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/eu-us_trade_deal/2018/trade_alternatives_designreport_v6_ld.pdf

^{xv} <https://igj.or.id/democratic-deficit-on-fta-negotiations/>

^{xvi} The Binding Treaty text - **Treaty on Transnational Corporations and their Supply Chains with regard to Human Rights** - has been built on a very broad consultation of movements, sectors and CSO networks from all global regions throughout 2017. It was finalised with inputs from several international law and human rights experts and formally submitted to the Open Ended Inter-governmental Working Group (OEIGWG) mandated in 2014 by the UNHRC Resolution 26/9 to develop 'a legally binding instrument on Transnational Corporations (TNCs) and Other Business Enterprises (OBEs) with respect to human rights.

https://www.stopcorporateimpunity.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Treaty_draft-EN1.pdf

An example of a 're-designed' model agreement that takes sustainable development rather than trade liberalisation/investment protection as its starting point, was designed by the team of the Creative Disruptors, comprising a group of progressive trade experts. Their innovative model won a shared first prize in the Stockholm Treaty Lab 2017/18 competition aimed at designing new frameworks to incentivise and protect green investments: <http://stockholmtreatylab.org/the-outcome/> (this page includes an [introduction to the team](#), [the model treaty](#) and [the argumentation on how the model treaty meets the criteria](#))

The International Institute for Sustainable Development has also developed a Model Agreement on investment for Sustainable Development. Their handbook, containing the full text of this model plus a detailed explanation of the intent behind it, can be found at: <https://www.iisd.org/library/iisd-model-international-agreement-investment-sustainable-development-negotiators-handbook>

TNI, SOMO, Milieudefensie and Greenpeace's 'Position Paper on the Enforceability of Trade and Sustainable Development Chapters in EU Trade and Investment Agreements' offers recommendations towards more equitable and sustainable trade and investment agreements, policy coherence between trade and investment policy and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, binding commitments for transnational corporate actors and access to remedy for victims of corporate misconduct:

<https://www.somo.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/of-trade-and-sustainable-development-chapters-in-eu-trade-and-investment-agreements-juni-2017.pdf>

CIDSE et al. published a report written by Prof. Dr. Markus Krajewski, of the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg, on 'Ensuring the Primacy of Human Rights in Trade and Investment Policies: Model clauses for a UN Treaty on transnational corporations, other businesses and human rights':

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2939354

^{xvii} See, for example, The Legal Consequences of the Constitutional Court Verdict in Indonesia:

<https://igj.or.id/statement-of-the-advocacy-team-for-economic-justice-in-the-post-court-verdict-concerning-the-international-treaty-law/?lang=en>

^{xviii} <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/tpnw/>

^{xix} <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/#resolution>

^{xx} <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2019/world-military-expenditure-grows-18-trillion-2018>