

ON THE FRONT LINES

From Cochabamba, A New Internationale and Manifesto for Mother Earth

Terisa E. Turner

Author's introductory note:

I participated in the Cochabamba conference on the Ecosocialist International Network panel, one of hundreds of autonomously organized events that paralleled four days of debate in 18 working groups.¹ I also spent two weeks with social movement activists in Bolivia gaining insight into popular transformations and the huge obstacles they confront. Among these are the growing dominance of a kind of shadow narco-state along with deep corruption, neo-fascist resistance from the displaced elite, entrenched capitalist relations, meddling "aid-funded" NGOs fronting for transnational corporations, religious fundamentalist entrepreneurs, and everywhere, damage from climate change. On the other hand, the astonishing energy of the diverse indigenous uprising promises a chance of victory. Having taken state power, the indigenous movements and their many allied organizations are trying to overcome capitalist factions in and out of government. To do so they recognize the imperative of international alliances. The Cochabamba gathering can be seen in this light. It accelerated the formation of friendships of solidarity among the exploding numbers of concerned citizens and groups worldwide who, with the BP spill as an accelerant, are now armed with both a manifesto, the Cochabamba Accord, and an Internationale, the Peoples' Movement.

In the wake of the Obama-engineered failure of the December 2009 Copenhagen negotiations on climate change, Bolivia's indigenous president, Evo Morales, invited social movements and governments to the First Peoples' World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth. Between April 20-22, 2010, more than 35,000 people from 140 countries gathered in Cochabamba, Bolivia and developed the People's Agreement, also known as the Cochabamba Accord.² This consensus-based document puts forward fundamental solutions to the climate crisis. These solutions require people to take power and transform global social relations and our relations with nature. The World People's Movement that arose from the conference summarized the core conclusions of the Cochabamba People's Accord as follows:³

¹ The conference program is available at: <http://pwccc.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/program-cmcc-english-final-v-2.pdf>.

² According to Bolivia's ambassador to the United Nations, Pablo Solon, who was also a major organizer of the Mother Earth conference, 9,254 of the 35,352 people who took part in the conference came from 140 countries, and 56 countries sent official delegations. The discussions of the conference were organized into 17 working groups, which began meeting over the Internet several months before the event. The text that became the People's Agreement, and the project for the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth came from the 17 working groups. See Pablo Solon, "Bolivia in Bonn Presentation of the 'People's Agreement,'" June 1, 2010, online at: <http://pwccc.wordpress.com/2010/06/01/bolivia-in-bonn-present-of-peoples-agreement/?blogsub=confirming#subscribe-blog>.

³ Pronouncement of the World People's Movement/*Pronunciamento del Movimiento Mundial de los Pueblos*, May 28, 2010, "Boletín CMPCC," online at: <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/movement-for-mother-earth>.

1. A 50 percent reduction of domestic greenhouse gas emissions by developed countries for the period 2013-2017 under the Kyoto Protocol, domestically and without reliance on market mechanisms.
2. The objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations at 300 parts per million (implying a 1°C average world temperature rise).
3. The need to begin the process of considering the proposed Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth to reestablish harmony with nature.
4. The obligation of developed countries to honor their climate debt toward developing countries and our Mother Earth.
5. The provision of financial resources equal to 6 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) by developed countries to help confront the climate change crisis.
6. The creation of a mechanism for the integral management and conservation of forests that, unlike the United Nations' REDD-plus (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries, with the addition of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks),⁴ respects the sovereignty of states, guarantees the rights and participation of indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities, and is not based on the carbon market regime.
7. The implementation of measures for recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples must be secured in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and applicable universal human rights instruments and agreements. This includes respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples; their rights to lands, territories, and resources; and their full and effective participation, with their free, prior, and informed consent.
8. The incentivizing of models of agricultural production that are environmentally sustainable and that guarantee food sovereignty and the rights of indigenous peoples and small-scale farmers.
9. The protection and recognition of the rights and needs of forced climate migrants.
10. The promotion of the establishment of an International Climate and Environmental Justice Tribunal.
11. The consideration of a World Referendum on Climate Change that allows the people to decide what will be done about this issue, which is of vital importance to the future of humanity and Mother Earth.⁵

⁴ See: <http://www.un-redd.org/AboutREDD/tabid/582/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

⁵ The full text of the People's Agreement and the reports of the 17 official working groups are available at Working Groups, People's Agreement and Final Conclusions of the Working Groups of the People's World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, Cochabamba, Bolivia, April 30, 2010, online at: <http://pwccc.wordpress.com/category/working-groups/>.

These conclusions were rapidly and widely disseminated. The Accord gained support from various governments and regional bodies including ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance of Our Americas)⁶ and UNASUR (Union of South American Nations).⁷ Morales presented them to the UN secretary general and the Group of 77 plus China in New York in early May. The Peoples' Conference intended that its Accord inform the draft negotiating document for the next meeting of governments on climate change, the Conference of the Parties, or COP16, which is scheduled for early December in Cancún, Mexico.

Before the April 26, 2010 deadline, the Plurinational State of Bolivia made an official proposal, comprised of the core components of the Cochabamba People's Agreement, to the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA),⁸ under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). A little over two weeks later, this working group produced a draft negotiating text that completely ignored the findings of the Cochabamba conference, paving the way for a major confrontation.

International Diplomatic Intrigue

Cancún's COP16 in December 2010 is a crucial follow-up meeting to the "do-nothing" official disaster that was COP15 in Copenhagen in December 2009. In Cancún, the world's governments will be tasked with determining levels of cuts in greenhouse gas emissions that industrialized countries will enforce for the next five years (2013-2017) under the Kyoto Protocol.

The power politics behind climate change negotiations include efforts led by the U.S. government, starting in Bali, Indonesia at COP13 in December 2007, to sidetrack the Kyoto Protocol (which has legal status but was never signed by the U.S.). The U.S. and its allies sought to replace Kyoto with a different plan (track two) that in substance provides expanded profit-making opportunities for so-called "green capitalists" but does not cut emissions. Although the Kyoto Protocol has the force of law and specific commitments for cuts in greenhouse gases, with the exception of its promotion of carbon trading, the protocol has been largely ignored by signatory governments. The carbon market, however, has not resulted in any cuts in greenhouse gases. Instead, as the carbon market has grown, emissions from industrialized countries have increased 11 percent between 1990 and 2007.

⁶ The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, *Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América*, or ALBA, is an organization intended to socially, politically, and economically integrate nations of Latin America and the Caribbean. Started by Cuba and Venezuela in 2004, ALBA now has nine member countries including Bolivia, Nicaragua, The Dominican Republic, Honduras, Ecuador, Antigua, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. See: <http://www.alianzabolivariana.org/>.

⁷ The Union of South American Nations was set up on the model of the European Union and made official on May 23, 2008, with the signing of the treaty setting up UNASUR ("*Tratado Constitutivo de la Unión de Naciones Suramericanas*") in Brasilia by the heads of state of the governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Surinam, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

⁸ The Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action, or AWG-LCA, is an official body proposed at the COP13 climate talks in Bali. Its task is "to facilitate detailed discussions on ways to implement the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) beyond the current expiry date of the [Kyoto Protocol](#)." AWG-LCA was supposed to "resolve as many of the details of a post-2012 climate change agreement as possible in order to enable an agreed outcome to be adopted at the [COP15](#) conference...in Copenhagen in late November and early December 2009." See: http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Ad_Hoc_Working_Group_on_Long-term_Cooperative_Action.

False capitalist market “solutions” proliferate around trade in “rights” given or sold by governments to corporations to pollute the atmosphere with greenhouse gas emissions. Certain governments and social movements, especially in the global South, have opposed this “carbon colonialism.” One example of a spin-off of the trade in carbon polluting “rights” is REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), which encourages corporations to buy up (or otherwise enclose) land and forests, largely in the global South. In exchange for allegedly maintaining these acquisitions as “forests,” corporations are permitted to continue to pollute. In practice, this results in vast monoculture plantations, the expulsion of forest peoples, and “leakage,” which entails more intense logging in other forests. All of these activities result in a dangerous acceleration in emissions. Consequently, a tipping point looms. Many forests are so degraded that rather than absorb carbon, they threaten to emit net amounts of it. Yet the corporations that profit from this carbon scam have mobilized their home governments to ram through REDD at the December 2010 Cancún climate talks.

Geoengineering⁹ is another of the disastrous schemes in the corporate pipeline to Cancún. A handful of capitalists have quietly mobilized a slick global campaign aimed at getting COP16’s approval for global “experiments” allegedly to address climate change. They want to inject vast quantities of iron filings into the oceans and sulphur into the atmosphere.

These green capitalist scams can be advanced only through subverting the transparent, democratic UN procedures that require debate on draft negotiation documents and approval *only by consensus*. Contrary to these democratic procedures, in Copenhagen at the eleventh hour, the U.S. and its allies illegitimately introduced a bribe proposal, which offered money to governments that accepted a 4°C increase in average global temperatures—an end to life as we know it on Earth—but allowed carbon profiteering to proceed. Although it is not an official UN document and has no status in the UNFCCC negotiations, this was the deceptively named “Copenhagen Accord.”¹⁰ This short-sighted and irresponsible outcome galvanized social movements and certain governments to take a stand for a fundamental, structural solution to climate change.

In Copenhagen, for the first time, a global peoples’ parallel congress came up with a declaration entitled “System Change, Not Climate Change.” The December 2009 declaration called for “urgent climate action” including, first, “A complete abandoning of fossil fuels within the next 30 years, which must include specific milestones for every five-year period.” The people’s declaration further demanded an immediate cut in greenhouse gases from industrialized countries of at least 40 percent of 1990 levels by 2020.¹¹

On December 12th, 100,000 demonstrators marched on the streets of Copenhagen to denounce those who profit from atmospheric pollution. And a small but significant action called

⁹ “Geoengineering” refers to “any large-scale human-made effort to intentionally adjust major planetary systems to cope with climate change. It includes proposals to pump sulphates into the stratosphere to block sunlight or blow ocean salt spray into clouds to increase their reflectivity.” “United Nations Science Body Calls for Halt on Climate-hacking Experiments,” ETC News Release, May 18, 2010, online at: <http://www.etcgroup.org/en/node/5140>.

¹⁰ The so-called “Copenhagen Accord” is merely the wish list of the U.S., E.U., and their allies. The non-official status of the U.S.-engineered Accord was acknowledged by the UN’s December 18, 2009 “Decision -/CP.15.” This Decision is a fifteen-word model of brevity: “The Conference of the Parties, Takes note of the Copenhagen Accord of December 18, 2009.” See Terisa E. Turner, “System Change not Climate Change: Has a New Social Formation Emerged at the Kyoto II Climate Change Talks in Copenhagen?,” *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, Vol. 21, No. 1, March 2010, pp. 8-12.

¹¹ Klimaforum, “System Change, not Climate Change!” Copenhagen, December 10, 2009, online at: <http://climateandcapitalism.com/?p=1395>.

“Regain Power” inspired a major leap forward in resistance to climate manipulation and subversion of the UN’s one-nation-one-vote procedures. In the Regain Power action, climate activists invited government delegates and others accredited to the official COP15 negotiations to walk out of the heavily militarized meeting site and join the popular forces on the streets. The point here was for progressive governments to demonstrate their class-based rejection of both the U.S. manipulators and their corporate lobbyists in favor of the unity of interest and organization between some states’ representatives and the social movements from around the world. This unity informed the government/social movement alliance behind the Cochabamba conference and its Peoples’ Agreement, which is expected to unite social movements and certain governments in countering the capitalist agenda, most immediately at COP16 in Cancún.

The appeal to climate justice and solidarity to reconfigure the world economy into one that supports instead of threatens the Earth’s current life-support systems and inhabitants, however, seems to be a tough sell to the bureaucrats defending the planet-trashing capitalist agenda. Five months later, in response to the AWG-LCA draft negotiating document for the forthcoming Cancún meeting that completely ignored the Cochabamba Accord, the World People’s Movement noted: “The Chair and the Vice Chair of the AWG-LCA (from Zimbabwe and the United States respectively) have instead incorporated all of the proposals of the Copenhagen Accord, which does not even have the consensus of the United Nations.”

The World People’s Movement insisted to the UN that the core demands from Cochabamba be reflected in the Cancún negotiating draft. It called for global endorsement of the following request:

We urge the UNFCCC to embrace the conclusions reached by social movements, indigenous peoples and international civil society in Cochabamba. It is both undemocratic and non-transparent to exclude particular proposals from the negotiations, and it is imperative that the United Nations listens to the global community on this issue critical to humanity. We call on all countries in the United Nations, and in particular the President and Vice-President of the AWG-LCA, to include the core conclusions of the Cochabamba People’s Accord in the negotiations in the run-up to Cancún.

The World People’s Movement also invited supporters to sign an online petition with the following demand:

We demand that the conclusions established by the World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, which protect life and Mother Earth, be incorporated into the negotiating text during the negotiations in Bonn, Germany, from May 31st to June 11th, 2010. There cannot be an equitable, transparent, and inclusive negotiation process, nor true solutions to the urgency of the climate crisis, if the AWG-LCA negotiating text ignores the voices of the peoples of the world that the negotiators should be representing.¹²

But the UN pre-Cancún meeting in Bonn persisted in ignoring the Cochabamba Peoples’ Agreement. According to Bolivian Ambassador Pablo Solon,

Proposals from Cochabamba have been sidelined, but every single element of the so-called “Copenhagen Accord” has been included, even though it was not recognized by the United Nations. This means that, on finance, we are only considering \$100 billion a year to respond to climate change—just \$20 per person in the developing world—to solve climate change. It’s clear that climate change impacts are not going to be dealt with for just \$20 per person.

¹² Pronouncement of the World People’s Movement/*Pronunciamiento del Movimiento Mundial de los Pueblos*, May 28, 2010, “Boletín CMPCC,” <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/movement-for-mother-earth>.

Solon noted that the Bonn meeting excluded 18 different ideas, including 50 percent emission cuts for rich countries by 2017, a 300 parts per million (ppm) greenhouse gas stabilization target, a proposal for a declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth, and a new, realistic assessment of finance needed to fight climate change.¹³

National Political Intrigue

This international diplomatic intrigue was paralleled by national political intrigue. In Cochabamba just preceding the Peoples' climate change conference, there was a meeting of the International Water Conference commemorating the tenth anniversary of the April 2000 Water War, when Cochabamba citizens succeeded in forcing U.S. corporation Bechtel to relinquish private control of the city's water supply after it imposed huge hikes in water rates. Among the celebrants was an autonomous working group (WG18, also known as Mesa or Table 18) that was refused participation in the official Mother Earth conference.

Three dimensions of WG18's activities deserve emphasis here. WG18 was important as the focal point of an indigenous mine takeover. The group challenged power relations between the Bolivian government and transnational corporations. And it demonstrated the availability and importance of global solidarity.

Prior to 2006 when the Morales-led Movement Toward Socialism or MAS came to power, Bolivia was a poster-child for International Monetary Fund structural adjustment and the neoliberal "reforms," which centered on corporate takeover of public sector services, including water. The successful resistance against Bechtel's usurpation of Cochabamba's water not only led to the expulsion of that corporation from Cochabamba and Bolivia. It also precipitated the refusal of indigenous and Third World peoples around the world to accept the supposed "benefits" of global capitalist efficiency. Evo Morales, then the coca growers' union sports organizer, fought the police alongside thousands of Cochabambinos to re-socialize the water infrastructures, many of which—canals, reservoirs, pipes and water taps—had been built and installed by self-organized urban and rural neighborhood committees. In 2000 these committees organized to eject Bechtel immediately after the corporation tripled water rates, outlawed the collection of rainwater from roofs, and claimed the peoples' infrastructure as part of its privatization. The Cochabambinos' historic victory in the Water War was widely publicized by the new Indymedia at the April 2000 demonstration against the World Bank and IMF in Washington D.C., hot on the heels of the December 1999 Battle of Seattle. Morales frequently points to the leadership of women—and especially indigenous women—in the Water War and other social movement actions against corporate predation.¹⁴ His

¹³ Pablo Solon, "Bolivia in Bonn presentation of the 'Peoples Agreement,'" June 1, 2010, online at: <http://pwccc.wordpress.com/2010/06/01/bolivia-in-bonn-present-of-peoples-agreement/?blogsub=confirming#subscribe-blog>.

¹⁴ In January 2010 Morales announced his new 20-member Cabinet of whom ten are indigenous people and of these, three are women. Important background on the power of Bolivian indigenous women and the women of mining communities is available in the classic scholarship of June Nash and Domitila Chungara. See Domitila Chungara and Moema Viezzer, *Let Me Speak! Testimony of Domitila, a Woman of the Bolivian Mines*, trans. Victoria Ortiz (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979); June Nash, *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us: Dependency and Exploitation in Bolivian Tin Mines* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); and June Nash, "Bolivian Resistance to Economic Conditions Imposed by the International Monetary Fund," *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 19, No. 2, May, 1992, pp. 275-293. There was very little attention given to women or gender in the final conference declaration. The working group reports' references to women were limited to constructing them as victims or advocating gender parity in organizations and institutions. On these limitations, see Ana Filippini, "Women and Climate Change in Cochabamba," *World Rainforest Movement Bulletin*,

union/indigenous background and fame within the new millennium's groundswell against corporate globalization shaped the MAS government's mixed response to the revolutionary Working Group 18 at the Mother Earth conference.

In the April 2010 Water War commemorations, militants including representatives of some 700 indigenous Qulla, convened Working Group 18 on "Collective rights and rights of the Mother Earth." Other social movements from across the continent and the world joined WG18. Discussions started "to point out the contradictions between the external discourse on capitalism of the conference and the ongoing domestic mega-projects and extractive industries contributing to social injustice and climate change within Bolivia and Latin America."¹⁵ The National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu (CONAMAQ), an indigenous self-governing structure, wanted WG18 to discuss environmental problems in Bolivia, including Sumitomo Corporation's pollution of the Madera River and the concern about Lake Intikjarka (Titikaka) "being filled up with sewage" from the cities of El Alto, Batallas, Huarina, Tiquina, Achacachi, and Mina Matilde in Bolivia and Puno and Huancane in Peru. CONAMAQ identified the lake as an important fishing resource for the Qullas and Uru-chullunis.¹⁵

The Mother Earth conference organizers refused to let WG18 participate in the conference on the questionable grounds that WG18 dealt with national issues and the conference was about international issues. The Bolivian Deputy Minister of Environment, Juan Pablo Ramos, stated that it was not the government's "intention to circumvent the discussion, but the world conference is not the appropriate setting because it will be focused on global issues." The Qulla expressed frustration over President Evo Morales' refusal to let them set up Table 18 at the Climate Conference. Nevertheless, CONAMAQ announced that they intended to proceed with Table 18, "because the Earth is our mother [and she has the right], for example, not to be contaminated."¹⁶

WG18's struggle reveals three dimensions of the power dynamics prefiguring a global transition to a cooler and post-capitalist world: (1) a class analysis of climate change, (2) successful direct action against its corporate perpetrators, and (3) burgeoning global organization from below.

Class Analysis of Climate Change

No. 154, May 2010. A word search of the 40-page conference program (<http://pwccc.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/program-cmcc-english-final-v-2.pdf>) reveals that the terms "women," "feminist" and "gender" arise a total of 12 times within nine panels. However, the attendance of women was very high and visible. The World March of Women (http://www.worldmarchofwomen.org/index_html/en) was a co-organizer, as it was for the December 2009 people's forum in Copenhagen. The fundamental "missing link" behind this understated ecofeminism is a gendered class analysis. Such an analysis specifies the connection between profits and theft, through capitalists' exploitation, of women's production. If we understand how profits come, significantly, from the appropriation of women's creativity, we can easily move to the next step—the realization that women's resistance is class struggle. There is yet another step—the realization that without women's resistance, there is no victory or transition out of capitalist relations to a commoning, ecosocialist, fossil-fuel-free world. This analysis is very difficult to make not only because of the entrenchment of liberal feminism ("gender sensitivity" and tokenism) on the left, but also because it requires a focus on those men who assist capitalists in profiting from women's work. See Terisa E. Turner and Leigh Brownhill, "Ecofeminism as Gendered, Ethnicized Class Struggle: A Rejoinder to Stuart Rosewarne," *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, Vol. 17, No. 4, December 2006, pp. 87-95.

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¹⁵ Agi and Ben, "Report Back from the People's Climate Conference, Cochabamba, Bolivia," May 17, 2010, online at: <http://climatejustice.posterous.com/>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

First, WG18 published conclusions that linked massive mining corporations with climate change. It challenged Bolivia's neoliberal extractive industries' policies and criticized those factions within the Morales government that were using nationalist and indigenous rhetoric to cover up pro-capitalist economic practices. It insisted instead on a version of indigenous revolutionary culture infused with a commitment to assert class power over land, minerals, and all decisions. With respect to "so-called popular Latin American governments," Working Group 18 stated:

The development plans of these, including the Bolivian government, only reproduce the development model of the past. ... We demand the retraction [withdrawal] and expulsion of all transnationals, of those NGOs which support projects of the aforementioned corporations, and the media that propagandize and violate collective rights. We demand the recuperation of the natural goods that have been devastated and exhausted. We propose the suspension of all extractive activity, work or projects that are responsible [for] and a cause of climate change, the displacement of peoples from their territories, and the environmental social effects in territories of nations and peoples in the world. ... We renounce imperialism, transnationals and the so-called progressive Latin American governments that implement mega energy and infrastructure projects under the IIRSA¹⁷ in any of Latin American territories—particularly in Indigenous territories and protected areas—which are designed by banks, businessmen and private builders with a neoliberal and exploitative vision. ... Because of the lack of the will from governments of the world, we demand the power, as social organizations and farmers/peasants, to define a new management model and direct control of natural patrimony, with direct control by the workers from the farm and the city to establish policies of managing biodiversity in relation to necessity and not [in relation to] the dependence of our countries.¹⁸

Some analysts have characterized the MAS government as neoliberal capitalist and developmentalist.¹⁹ Hugo Blanco, longstanding indigenous leader of the peasant movement in Peru, editor of the newspaper *La Lucha Indígena*, and a coordinator of the Ecosocialist International Network,²⁰ predicts that: "Sooner or later, in Bolivia, they [the indigenous] will be confronting the government of the 'Movement toward Socialism,' which is still not the indigenous democratic government but an anti-imperialist government midway between the oligarchy and the indigenous and Bolivian population in general, similar to the governments of Ecuador and Venezuela."²¹

In a debate with Pablo Stefanoni, editor of the Bolivian edition of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, who claimed the Mother Earth conference placed too much emphasis on indigenous issues, Blanco pointed out that the indigenous "do not 'take' power, they build it from below in an authentically democratic form. They do not call it 'socialism' because the 'socialist' government in Chile has been

¹⁷ IIRSA, the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure in South America, is a massive project to build and link transportation infrastructure, energy, and communication in the twelve South American countries to ensure "the physical integration of South American countries and the achievement of a pattern of sustainable and equitable regional development." See: <http://www.iirsa.org/acercadeiirsa.asp?CodIdioma=ESP>.

¹⁸ "Working Group 18: Collective Rights and Rights of the Mother Earth," May 2010, online at: <http://climatejustice.posterous.com/>.

¹⁹ James Petras, "Separatism and Class Politics in Latin America," *The James Petras Website*, September 21, 2009, <http://petras.lahaine.org/articulo.php?p=1788&more=1&c=1>; James Petras, "Bolivia: Fascism Seizes Power," *The Palestine Chronicle*, September 17, 2008, PalestineChronicle.com; James Petras, "Latin America's New Middle Class Rulers: Stabilization, Growth and Inequality," *The James Petras Website*, May 21, 2010, <http://petras.lahaine.org/articulo.php?p=1807&more=1&c=1>; Revolutionary Socialist Alternative, "Morales and MAS Win Presidency and 2/3 Control of Congress in Landslide Election," Committee for a Workers' International, January 4, 2010, <http://socialistworld.net/eng/2010/01/0401.html>.

²⁰ See: <http://www.ecosocialistnetwork.org/>.

²¹ Pablo Stefanoni and Hugo Blanco, "Do Indigenous Concepts Help or Hinder in Fighting the World's Climate Crisis? A LeftViews Debate between Pablo Stefanoni and Hugo Blanco," trans. and intro. Richard Fidler, *Socialist Voice*, May 24, 2010, <http://www.socialistvoice.ca/?p=1228>.

jailing the Mapuche using Pinochet's laws, and in Ecuador, as we said, they are struggling against 'Socialism of the 21st century.'" Blanco also defended indigenous agriculture, community democracy, and capacities for solidarity in anti-capitalist struggle:

We agree with the criticisms by the *compañeros* of Mesa 18 of the continued resource extraction practices of the Bolivian government. They criticized the government specifically for not being, as Stefanoni puts it, consistently "*pachamamista*." ... The use of the *pachamámico* language by government agencies and NGOs, which use it to hold back the movement and for other purposes, does not invalidate the Indigenous spirit, the Indigenous *cosmovision*, the Indigenous language, the Indigenous struggle. "Marxism-Leninism" was also used in the Soviet Union to massacre the workers' vanguard, which does not invalidate Marxism or Leninism. The so-called democratic neoliberal governments do not invalidate democracy.²²

An emergent bureaucratic elite in state office has supplanted many of the long-dominant politicians of Bolivia's business and landowning class, the so-called 100 families of the five southeast departments²³ that are rich in minerals and natural gas. Moreover, the vast majority of Bolivia's 10 million people, 6 million of whom are indigenous, have benefited less than the wealthy elite from the increased state revenues from natural gas exports.²⁴ Consequently, Bolivians remain the poorest of all Latin Americans. They are also reputed to be the most class conscious and politically experienced, in part due to generations of working-class organization in the country's prolific mines (silver, tin, lead, zinc, and more recently, lithium and iron ore).²⁵ Some commentators claim that capitalist factions threw their electoral support behind MAS and Morales as the only means to demobilize the indigenous, *campesino*, and worker social movements and unions that between 2000 and 2006 had repeatedly brought the country to a halt through strikes and road blockades, including the Water and Gas Wars. Under the Morales government, rapid, large-scale expansion of mining by foreign (especially Canadian) transnationals has strengthened the economic power of Bolivia's elite and solidified the de facto alliances of interest between new (ex-social movement and NGO) state and old private bourgeois factions.²⁶

Direct Action

Working Group 18 challenged corporate perpetrators of climate change. Members were directly involved in a high profile major shutdown of Bolivia's largest mine, San Cristóbal, in the

²² *Ibid.* *Pachamama* means Mother Earth. *Pachamamaistas* are defenders of Mother Earth or nature or the ecological reality, although the words "*pachamamaismo*" and "*pachamamaista*" are sometimes used in a derogatory (even racist) or critical way.

²³ A "department" is an administrative political subdivision of territory within a country, similar to a state. Eleven countries in Latin America have departments, as do seven in Africa, and France. Bolivia has nine departments. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department_%28country_subdivision%29.

²⁴ Jeffery R. Webber, "Rebellion to Reform in Bolivia, Part III: Neoliberal Continuities, the Autonomous Right, and the Political Economy of Indigenous Struggle," *Historical Materialism*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 2008, pp. 67-109; Jeffery R. Webber, "Naked Barbarism to Barbarism with Benefits: Neoliberal Capitalism, Natural Gas Policy and the Evo Morales Government," in Laura Macdonald and Arne Ruckert, *Post-neoliberalism in the Americas* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

²⁵ Richard Gott, "This Time Things May Be Different: The Crisis in Bolivia," *CounterPunch*, June 14, 2005, <http://www.counterpunch.org/gott06142005.html>; Richard Gott, "A Landmark for Bolivia," *The Guardian*, January 26, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/jan/26/bolivia-evo-morales-constitution>;

Mark Weisbrot, "Latin America's Economic Rebels: Ecuador and Bolivia are Achieving Remarkable Growth because they Reject Conventional Economic Wisdom," *The Guardian*, October 28, 2009.

²⁶ Neil Burron, "No Smoking Gun—Yet: Canadian Democracy Assistance in Bolivia," *NACLA Report on the Americas*, Vol. 43, Number 3, May/June 2010, pp. 35-39, 42, <https://nacla.org/naclareport>.

central Potosí region on the border with Chile about 310 miles (500 kilometers) southwest of the capital, La Paz.

Japanese transnational Sumitomo owns 100 percent of the San Cristóbal mine but contracts operations to Colorado-based Golden Minerals under a management services agreement. San Cristóbal began operations in August 2007 and is expected to exhaust its resources by 2023. The massive open pit mine yields some 1,300 metric tons of zinc-silver ore and 300 metric tons of lead-silver ore per day from the daily energy- and water-intensive processing of 40,000 metric tons of mineralized rock. According to Sumitomo, San Cristóbal is the world's sixth largest producer of zinc and the third largest producer of silver.²⁷ The San Cristóbal mine is the main source of Bolivia's zinc and silver exports, which accounted for 60 percent of the country's total income from hard mineral exports in 2009.²⁸

Indigenous *campesinos* timed the ten-day action (April 12-22) to coincide with the climate change conference. Not only was this the world's largest indigenous meeting to date, it was also a massive assembly of Bolivia's indigenous peoples, who, in their diverse movements, had just waged an electoral campaign that brought MAS back into power for a second term with an absolute majority in government.

The new Bolivian constitution declares water a human right and a public good. The MAS government has called on the UN to enshrine water as a human right. People throughout the Andes are alarmed over melting and collapsing glaciers, which will inevitably lead to more severe water shortages, drought, and crop failures. Although climate change is an immense, daily threat, its outside origins make alliances with outsiders imperative. In the villages around Sumitomo's mine, contamination has rendered water undrinkable, leaving the San Cristóbal *campesinos* without water—a direct result of Bolivia's 1997 mining law and the concession granted to Sumitomo in 2007, which has allowed the corporation to consume and pollute unlimited quantities of water for free.

During the action, some 700 militants demanded the complete shutdown of the mine. They trashed the operating company's offices, overturned ore containers, and blocked roads and rail lines.²⁹ The Qulla accused Sumitomo of dumping mine waste directly into the Madera River, contaminating the land and threatening their water supplies, and “trampling on the rights of Mother Earth” by constructing roads. They demanded compensation for the environmental damage and called on the government of the Potosí department to honor its agreements to provide basic infrastructure, cell phone connectivity, water, and electricity for communities in the Andean highlands.³⁰ “Our demands are fair and must be met. The mine is ransacking our natural resources. We want compensation for the damage and ... we want help with our development,” protest leader Mario Mamani told local radio network *Erbol*. He said protesters had seized control of 80 loaded

²⁷ Eduardo Garcia, “Local Residents Block Mine's Railway Line,” April 14, 2010, *Reuters*, “Changes to Mining Law Not Affecting Legal Stability—Expert,” April 21, 2010, online at: <http://www.bnamericas.com>.

²⁸ Irena Renuncio Mateos, “Local Protesters Disrupt Mining Operations in Bolivia,” April 15, 2010, IHS Global Insight Daily Analysis.

²⁹ Agi and Ben, “Report Back from the People's Climate Conference, Cochabamba, Bolivia,” May 17, 2010.

³⁰ ENP Newswire, “Indigenous People Take Over Mining Firm in the Wake of Climate Change Conference,” April 20, 2010; Eduardo Garcia and Diego Ore, “UPDATE 2-Protest Against Sumitomo Bolivia Mine Worsening,” *Reuters*, April 16, 2010, online at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN1615291820100416>.

containers of ore, overturned several of them, and stormed a small San Cristóbal office near the border with Chile. “Every five hours we’ll spill the contents of another container,” said Mamani.”³¹

The business press dutifully reported Sumitomo’s claim that it is an environmentally conscious corporation in full conformity with Bolivian law. This turned the spotlight on the MAS government, factions within which supported the indigenous protestors. For example, Bolivia’s foreign minister David Choquehuanca told *La Prensa* newspaper that San Cristóbal “doesn’t pay a cent” for its consumption of some 600 liters (158 gallons) of water per second for its metal mining operations and accused the company of stealing Bolivia’s natural resources and plundering tons of minerals every day. Choquehuanca lamented that previous governments passed legislation friendly to foreign mining concerns and said the Morales administration was working to change the laws.³²

Despite recent promises in the Japanese press to offer hundreds of millions of dollars of aid for environmentally friendly projects to Bolivia and other countries rich in rare metals,³³ Sumitomo called upon the Morales government to constrain the *campesinos*. Claiming that the San Cristóbal mine had been complying with Bolivian laws and regulations on the environment and occupational health and safety, a company press release called the protests “extremely unfortunate” and said it was “determined to continue mining operations that contribute to the economic development of Bolivia.”³⁴ But repression was unthinkable in the midst not only of the Rights of Mother Earth conference, but also of the celebration of the Water War of 2000 that had thrust Morales into power. The shutdown came to a negotiated end.³⁵ The government conceded to the protesters’ demands and promised to replace the neocolonial mining law with an improved version.³⁶

Bolivia’s current mining code was passed in 1997 during the first term of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. The proposed revision in the mining law would change concession contracts and calls for a review of the agreements with mining companies currently operating in the country.³⁷ Bolivia’s mining and metallurgy ministry announced that companies will be required to sign mining agreements that give the state a participating interest and local mining rights over mineral resources. Under the country’s existing mining code, mining concessions and free water use rights are granted together. This conflicts with Bolivia’s new constitutional stipulation that water is a “human right.” Pedro Mariobo, senate advisor to the energy and mining committee and a former mining minister, says under the new mining code, companies will be required to pay for licenses for the use of both ground and surface water. However, while the Bolivian Congress rewrites the mining code and legislation so that they comply with the new Bolivian Constitution, Mariobo says San Cristóbal will continue to enjoy the use of free water under the existing mining code.³⁸

Global Solidarity and Building the Global People’s Movement

³¹ Garcia and Diego Ore, “UPDATE 2-Protest Against Sumitomo Bolivia Mine Worsening, April 20, 2010.

³² “Bolivia Slams Japan Mining Firm for ‘Plundering’ Resources,” *Agence France Presse*, April 18, 2010, online at: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5j8BaKqhsos3hrINPDVznAR4qE3KQ>.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ “Effect of Protests in Bolivia on the San Cristóbal Mine,” Sumitomo Corporation news release, April 23, 2010, online at: http://yutoku.com/shi/english/news/2010/20100423_042721.html.

³⁵ Helen Popper, “UPDATE 1: Bolivian Protesters Suspend Sumitomo Mine Blockade,” *Reuters*, April 23, 2010.

³⁶ “New Potosí Governor Proposes Mining Code Reform to Industrialize Sector,” *Business News Americas*, April 13, 2010. **[[[Typesetter, please delete this space (and instruction). I can’t do it for some reason.]]]**

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ “Changes to Mining Law Not Affecting Legal Stability—Expert,” April 21, 2010.

The San Cristóbal mine drama inspired significant global solidarity. On learning of the communities' mine shutdown, international participants in WG18 immediately announced a "solidarity stunt" to be carried out by comrades in London. The networks involved had years of experience in the practice of coordinated, simultaneous, and often theatrical cross-border direct action against transnational capital and its allies. Climate camps are an integral but by no means unique part of this multi-faceted organization of global peoples' power.³⁹ This rapid-response solidarity expresses the kind of organization that is a prerequisite for the exertion of enough power to broker a transition from capitalist control to popular commoning.

The importance of these three dimensions in the practical realization of the rights of Mother Earth—a national/global analysis of the class relations giving rise to climate change, direct action against its corporate perpetrators, and the building of a strong global people's movement that can throw off the chokehold of capitalism in favor of popular commoning—will become more evident in both the build-up to COP16 in Cancún and in popular responses to BP's oil spill in the Gulf. What is remarkable about these BP-instigated "crude awakenings" is their profound anti-capitalism and the ways in which they take a lead from longstanding refusals of Big Oil by Nigerians, Ecuadorians, and others.⁴⁰ Inspired by Nigerian women who damned oil companies with the curse of nakedness, U.S. women bared all in May 2010 at BP Headquarters in Houston.⁴¹

³⁹ I have suggested that climate camps are part of a new, emerging social form that confronts capitalist power, provides training for replacing it, and prefigures an ecosocialist democracy by modeling a commoner's way of life. The camps are ideally lived experiences in producing minimal emissions, recycling, composting, providing vegetarian fare, and touring interested visitors through the site. Terisa E. Turner, "System Change not Climate Change, March 2010.

⁴⁰ See: "BP Fails Booming School 101," YouTube, online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vx8kMXufu3w>; <http://www.seizebp.org/>; Sharon Begley, "What the Spill Will Kill," *Newsweek*, June 6, 2010, online at: <http://www.newsweek.com/2010/06/06/what-the-spill-will-kill.html>; Horace Campbell, "Drilling and Killing: From the Gulf of Guinea to the Gulf of Mexico," *Pambazuka News*, Issue 481, May 13, 2010, online at: <http://pambazuka.org/en/category/features/64408>; Alex Free, "Multinational Oil, the U.S. and Nigeria: A Crude Contrast," *Pambazuka News*, Issue 481, <http://pambazuka.org/en/category/features/64412>; and Amazon Defense Coalition, "Tragic BP Gulf Spill Casts Light on Chevron Disaster in Ecuador," June 3, 2010, online at: <http://upsidedownworld.org/main/news-briefs-archives-68/2522-tragic-bp-gulf-spill-casts-light-on-chevron-disaster-in-ecuador>.

⁴¹ According to Code Pink co-founder Medea Benjamin, the 100-strong "naked truth" demonstration in Houston resulted from a call from Diane Wilson, a fourth-generation shrimper from the Texas Gulf and co-founder of Code Pink. "Diane was inspired by the example of a group of women from Nigeria who took over a Chevron oil rig and threatened to strip naked if the company didn't hire more local workers and invest in the community. Faced with just the threat of nudity, Chevron gave in. 'If the Nigerian women could use their bodies on the Niger Delta, why can't we do it in downtown Houston?' Diane reasoned. ... 'BP should be shaken down like a rotten fig tree,' she said. 'The government should seize their profits and use them for the clean up and then to invest in clean energy. ... And we should demand that our government stop offshore drilling. No new permits, period. We have to seize this moment to move our country away from fossil fuels that are responsible for environmental devastation and wars.' ... [Diane] is calling on people throughout the country to [boycott BP](#)—not just passively, but by getting out to BP gas stations to protest and educate their communities on the company and the catastrophe.... 'Pass out fliers to drivers. Ride your bikes around the stations. Get creative. Hey, maybe you even want to do your own nude protest,' she grins. 'Expose BP. Expose that Drill, Baby, Drill means Spill, Baby, Spill. After all, what's at stake is nothing less than our planet.' And that's the naked truth." Medea Benjamin, "Getting Naked to Expose BP," Mike and Friends Blog, May 27, 2010, online at: <http://www.michaelmoore.com/words/mike-friends-blog/getting-naked-expose-bp>; and "National Campaigns: BP: Expose the Naked Truth!," at <http://www.codepink4peace.org/section.php?id=427>. Also see the following articles and one comic by Terisa E. Turner and Leigh Brownhill on ecofeminist/ecosocialist direct action against Big Oil by women exposing their vaginas to declare a fertility/sex strike: "Climate Justice and Nigerian Women's Gift to Humanity," *Women and Environments International*, Special Double Issue on Women and Global Climate Change, 74/75, Spring-Summer 2007, pp. 47-48; "Why Women are at War with Chevron: Nigerian Subsistence Struggles Against the International Oil Industry," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Special Issue on Africa and Globalization, Vol. 39, No. 1-2, March 2004,

The dramas around WG18 illuminate a more radical response to climate and system change than diplomacy. The San Cristóbal mine struggle provides a hint of how Cochabamba supported a radicalization within the Bolivian state, moving one of its factions to announce a new mining law. It created an atmosphere that sparked several more takeovers and assertions of Bolivian people's power.⁴² For example, on April 17, 2010 just prior to the beginning of the Mother Earth conference, the communities hosting the San Antonio natural gas extraction site blocked a road outside the gas field for six days in a direct action to demand jobs at the gas field. The San Antonio field, one of the largest natural gas fields in the country, is controlled by Brazil's Petrobras.

The Mother Earth conference and its results promoted a globally coordinated move against capitalism and its nemesis, climate change. The demands from all 18 working groups, backed by rich analysis, have shifted the debate on climate change away from false capitalist market solutions and toward fundamental transformations in global power relations. The confrontation between "green capitalists" and the Peoples' World Movement is building in the lead-up to the December 2010 climate talks in Cancún.

Many of the Mother Earth conference organizers prioritize engagement with the UN process. Others prioritize direct action. It remains for commoners to plan how to move forward.

The conference did provide invaluable space for movements and peoples "to meet, share stories, strategies and continue the process of building a linked-up global movement to fight for climate justice."⁴³ Just as the peoples' Copenhagen declaration, "System Change Not Climate Change!," underlined an "urgent need to build a global movement of movements," the Cochabamba Peoples' Agreement called for a global mobilization in addition to the creation of many new institutions for practicing world democracy. Immediately after the Cochabamba meeting, this Global Movement mobilized via the Internet, asking participants to exert pressure on the U.S. and its allies in the UN to ensure that the Cochabamba Accord is reflected in the Cancún draft negotiating documents.⁴⁴ This Global Movement (or "Commoners' Internationale") was framed by Working Group 16 on Action Strategies in its "Action Plan of the Peoples Agreement":

Aware of the importance to join efforts to support the fight for the Defense of Mother Earth, the participants of the WPCCC call for the creation of a "**Global Movement of Peoples for Mother Earth**," to make possible the unification of social forces to Defend Mother Earth and Life, to face [confront] climate change and capitalism. This movement will be formed voluntarily and with the most extensive characteristics of democracy, openness and flexibility, respect for the autonomy and diversity of its members, preparing to work as a network to propose, coordinate and support joint and individual actions at national, international and global levels around the implementation of the "Peoples Agreement" in Cochabamba, to save our Mother Earth.

pp. 63-93; and with artist Seth Tobocman, "Nakedness and Power," *World War Three Illustrated*, Issue 35, June 2004, pp. 55-63, also available at: http://www.uoguelph.ca/~terisatu/nakedness/nakedness_1.htm; "We Want Our Land Back: Gendered Class Analysis, the Second Contradiction of Capitalism, and Social Movement Theory," *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, Vol. 15, No. 4, December 2004, pp. 21-40; and "Women and the Abuja Declaration for Energy Sovereignty," in Ariel Salleh (ed.), *Eco-Sufficiency and Global Justice: Women Write Political Ecology* (New York: Pluto, 2009), pp. 230-248.

⁴² Helen Popper, "UPDATE 1-Bolivian Protesters Suspend Sumitomo Mine Blockade," April 23, 2010.

⁴³ Stefanoni and Blanco, "Do Indigenous Concepts Help or Hinder in Fighting the World's Climate Crisis?," May 24, 2010.

⁴⁴ World People's Movement, "People's Voices Must be Heard in Climate Negotiations: Official UNFCCC Negotiating Text Ignores World People's Conference Solutions," May 27, 2010, statement: <http://pwccc.wordpress.com/> and petition: <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/movement-for-mother-earth>.

The Alliance will be founded on the basis of complementarity and respect for diversity of origin and vision of its members, constituting an autonomous space of cooperation and convergence of efforts of the peoples for the development of actions at local, national, sub regional, regional and global levels.

The movement's priority is to be nurtured by and articulated with campaigns, networks, regional and global organizations that in recent years have worked to address climate change and defend the rights of Mother Earth and other networks, regional and global organizations, sectoral and thematic, that have made the same commitment.⁴⁵

Has Cochabamba made a difference? How does it connect to ecosocialism? What is different post-Cochabamba is that progressive factions within all governments and popular organizations have a host of new weapons for waging the struggle. Most important among these is the World Peoples' Movement, which has a clear anti-capitalist analysis reinforced by a sketch of an alternative life-centered, democratic world. Both analysis and organization are informed by praxis that is class-based and indivisibly indigenous, feminist, universalist, socialist, ecological, and "in common, for the commons."

The BP Gulf oil disaster that began on April 20, the same day as the Peoples' Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, drove home the need to keep oil in the ground, make the polluters pay, and effect a massive transfer of resources to compensate peoples and nature for the damages. Multiple indicators impinge on governments and citizens with the clear and urgent message that these damages are, as Kovel argues, an inevitable result of rapacious capitalism and its endgame, climate chaos.⁴⁶ Campbell has underlined the globalizing, organizational impetus provoked by the BP disaster:

The explosion and sinking of an oil rig in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico in April has created another base for cooperation and coordination among environmental activists in all parts of the world. For every day that thousands of tons of oil gush from the ocean floor, activists on all continents must push the opposition to the oil companies so that citizens of the world understand that the best course of action is to leave the oil in the ground and beneath the ocean floor.⁴⁷

The Cochabamba Peoples' Agreement is a powerful weapon for accomplishing these tasks.

⁴⁵ Working Groups, People's Agreement and Final Conclusions of the Working Groups of the People's World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, Cochabamba, Bolivia, April 30, 2010, online at: <http://pwccc.wordpress.com/category/working-groups/>.

⁴⁶ Joel Kovel, *The Enemy of Nature: The End of Capitalism or the End of the World?* (New York: Zed Books, 2002).

⁴⁷ Horace Campbell, "Drilling and Killing: From the Gulf of Guinea to the Gulf of Mexico," May 13, 2010. With respect to ending oil exploitation and keeping fossil fuels (and uranium) in the ground, the "People's Agreement," stated that: "Governments should eliminate forest concessions and support the conservation of petroleum deposits in the ground and urgently stop the exploitation of hydrocarbons in forestlands." The report of Working Group 14 on Forests demanded universal "Support [for] initiatives like that of the Yasuni IIT, Ecuador, to leave petroleum under the earth, forgo the exploitation of hydrocarbons in native forests and jungles, and seek biodiversity preservation and respect for life." Working Groups, People's Agreement and Final Conclusions of the Working Groups of the People's World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, Cochabamba, Bolivia, April 30, 2010. On the Ecuador Yasuni campaign to keep the oil under the soil, see Vanessa Baird, "Endgame in the Amazon," *New Internationalist*, Issue 413, July 2008, online at: <http://www.newint.org/features/2008/07/01/yasuni-keynote/>. Among the "autonomously organized" sessions at Cochabamba was a panel entitled "Join the International Movement against the tar sands in Canada," organized by the Council of Canadians and the Indigenous Environmental Network. On April 20, 2010 at the opening ceremony of the World People's Climate Conference Summit, Nigerian activist Nnimmo Bassey, who heads Friends of the Earth International, recited his poem, "I will not dance to your beat," that included the following lines: "I will expose your evil greed/ If you don't leave crude oil in the soil/ Coal in the hole and tar sands in the land/." The complete poem is in this issue.

At the same time that the world embraced, as never before, the imperative to stop Big Oil, more than 35,000 popular delegates in Cochabamba devised ways to do it that take humanity into a post-fossil-fuel, post-capitalist era. A climate crimes tribunal with enforcement capabilities is in formation. The rights of nature are affirmed in a new Earth jurisprudence that has at its center the payment of the climate debt and restorative justice. Specifically, the text of the conclusions from Working Group 8 on Climate Debt stated:

The way to solve the climate crisis in a fair, effective and scientifically sound way is to honor climate debts. This approach provides a methodology for assigning and sharing responsibilities to address climate change based on principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities established in the UN Climate Convention. It focuses not merely on financial compensation, but on restorative justice—on “making whole” those people and members of the community of life on Earth that are adversely affected by climate change, and by restoring the balance, integrity and harmony of the Earth and its climate system.”⁴⁸

The Peoples’ Agreement along with the reports from the 18 working groups provide for the first time a “Commoners’ Manifesto,”—a draft global program of action to move out of capitalism to a new just way of organizing society and “living well.” The Peoples’ Agreement and Movement are open-ended, democratic, and morally inspired. They include progressive governments, indigenous peoples, workers and farmers, youth, women, and all sectors of the dispossessed. They are the best chance we have for preserving human life on Mother Earth.

⁴⁸ Working Groups, People’s Agreement and Final Conclusions of the Working Groups of the People’s World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, Cochabamba, Bolivia, April 30, 2010.