

# QUEBEC CANADA 2015

# WORLD SOCIAL FORUM



ANOTHER WORLD  
IS POSSIBLE!!

## ARE WE READY FOR THE CHALLENGE ?

Since the last World Social Forum (WSF) in Tunis in 2013, many Canadians heard of the international enthusiasm of the idea of holding the next forum in 2015 in Quebec, Canada.

This is not a new idea. It's in Dakar in February 2011 that holding the

forum in the North was first suggested and the candidacy of Québec was seriously considered.

However the decision to hold the forum in the Maghreb region was unanimously approved following the whirlwind of events around the Arab

Spring. Now this debate is open for discussion in the aftermath of the 2013 WSF.



## BE INVOLVED!



This document introduces the context of this initiative towards a 2015 World Social Forum in Québec and provides for the project outline. Its aims are to provide information on the initiative and to rally the maximum support for the candidacy of Québec to the International Committee of the World Social Forum expected to meet in December in Morocco.

## A new world is required... with you, it's possible!

The World Social Forum was created in Brazil following vast collective mobilizations in the North and in the South against the structural adjustments imposed by the globalized neoliberalism system (commercial agreements similar to NAFTA, World Trade Organization, World bank, International Monetary Fund). It opened space for the convergence of social movements and civil society organizations with a view to build concrete alternatives to neoliberalism. It allowed the developments of big campaigns to fight the imperialism of the big powers of this world. It brought forth the discovery of a clear cleavage between the global oligarchy taking the

richness of our planet with no social and environmental consideration, but also identified the resiliency and the strength of the populations subjected to the disastrous consequences of these actions.

For more than 10 years, the WSF has traveled the world from Latin America to Africa, through Asia, gathering between 50,000 and 1000,000 persons every time. It allowed for better structure and reinforcement of social concerns, for organizations to share and organize and for citizens to become aware of what is at stake so that they in turn become involved as a new actor in social transformation.



## From neoliberalism to neoconservatism

The challenges are enormous because the neoliberalism crisis, obvious since 2008, has forced the global oligarchy towards a dangerous stand towards neo-conservatism. For them, it's not a question anymore to build a global market but instead their goal is to secure their strategic interests. The security discourse is ahead of free trade with drastic increases in military expenses to fight the endless war on terrorism allowing them to override the most basic rights and to criminalize all forms of contestation, while they exploit the natural resources.

This trend became visible in 2001 with the beginning of the war in Afghanistan and with Iraq. It continued to increase with the arrival of neo-conservatist governments in Europe and in North America and the financial crisis in 2008 has allowed them in part to impose radical austere plans to fight deficits. Once more, the populations have to pay for the oligarchic excesses, but this time there is no dissidence tolerated in the name of security. This radicalization in the North is dangerous for the whole of the world and the alterglobalization's circle of

**The WSF is a space to speak, to share, to dialogue, to provide for popular education, and the practice of citizenship, to network and to elaborate programs of concerted efforts. It stimulates the dynamics of social mobilizations and democratic lives to move together towards a democratic, fair and sustainable society in solidarity.**

influence must be ready to tackle it.

Canada illustrated perfectly this neo-conservatist radicalization that is moving through the dominating world. The conservative government since its election in 2006 has neglected culture, feminine affairs, support to unemployed, international aid, and many other civil society sectors... while increasing drastically its military expenses (increase of 53% over 10 years). It has reinforced its immigration policies, particularly towards refugees

and its control at the borders. It has fought fiercely against the international negotiations for climate changes and is the only country to retract from the Kyoto protocol while subsidizing the exploitation of the highly polluting tar sands in Alberta. It continues to promote free trade, fight any financial reforms and doesn't hesitate to ridicule its citizens' basic human rights and to silence all forms of social contestation. For three years it resisted signing the United Nations Declaration of the rights of Indigenous rights and actually led a campaign of sanctions

towards civil society organizations criticizing its policies.

Canada has become a symbol of this radicalization affecting other countries of the North.



***The fight must be reinforced in the heart of the Empire and must support the social movements to reverse the test of strength to advance and move forward the political and social progress initiated by the majority of the countries of this world. The North needs the South in this fundamental fight. The social movements of the North need the WSF.***

## Mobilization for the real change

The social movements and civil society organizations have mobilized from the first hour to affect a change of direction while facing this Canadian government's radicalization. The Québec feminists started the first World Women March in 2000 gathering over 40,000 persons in all of Québec to condemn poverty and violence against women in a world favoring the Market and neglecting human rights. While 34 country leaders were secretly negotiating the Free Trade Area of the Americas, more than 50,000 people were participating in the Summit of the Americas in Québec in April 2001. There were more than 200,000 in the street so Montréal in February 2003 for the March against the war in Iraq. There were thousands to confront the draconian measures put in place during the G20 Summit in Toronto in June 2010, with over 1000 arrests creating therefore a sad precedence in the history of our country. There were thousand of hundred to mobilize in Québec in the spring of 2012, our "Printemps Érablé", against the increase of student fees and more largely against the neoliberal policies of the Québec government. Then the pan-Canadian movement of the aboriginal claims of Idle no More as early as summer 2012 took the reins. The sectorial mobilizations against the Harper government are continuing today (against the financial cuts in the unemployment insurance, the international cooperation, culture ...)

All these mobilizations are within a larger context that bears witness of a clear willingness of the populations to stand against the oligarchic dictatorship. The

year 2011 started with a wind of hope and freedom that sweeps through the Arab world. Inspired by the Jasmine Revolution of Tunisia, the populations of the Maghreb-Machrek stood up to put an end to authoritarian regimes that, for too many years, bullied their rights while spoiling the natural resources of their country with international complicity. The contestation movements in Europe manifested in Spain, Greece, Italy, France, United Kingdom, Portugal... to condemn the austere plans imposed by their governments to satisfy the international financial Market requirements. The indignation is rising in North America. The Occupy Wall Street initiative of the fall of 2011 took over hundreds of cities in the United States and Canada. The anger is mounting and is calling forth the merging of progressive strengths.

This process of converging the fights and the organizations is required against the neoconservatist power. United we Stand. However the general ignorance of the ongoing big stakes and fights of this world feeds apathy and resignation of the north-American populations. The media's stranglehold saps critical judgment. The need to open a large space for debate, exchange and construction of alternatives is becoming crucial because the populations are not fooled.

We propose to organize the next WSF in North America on behalf of the populations of the North to join those of the South in their emancipation from the dictatorship of the banks and the markets.

**TO RESIST,  
IS TO CREATE**



## Face Hope

***We must learn from the Arab rebellions, the Indignant and from the Occupy to let the odor of jasmine flow through the fortress so that hope can follow resignation in North America.***



*Over and above all these events, the social forums are a larger process of social transformation moving from the global to the local level. Each forum in its different cultural, social and geographic context is not an end in itself, but is a step in the collective work of a new world. Because a new world starts by changing oneself, and our network, our environment, our neighborhood, our organizations, our city, our country, our planet... while meeting to talk, understand and act.*

### Social Forums in Quebec and Canada

The Québec and Canadian civil society organizations have participated in the alter globalization's circle of influence and in the dynamics of the world social forums from the beginning of this phenomenon. Thousand of Québécois and Canadian participated in the World Social Forums each year. The youth component is important with numerous international solidarity, social economy, unions, feminist movements, community movements, and indigenous groups...

It's stemming from this participation to the WSF that the dynamics of the social forums took its roots in Québec and Canada. It is as early as 2002 that local initiatives were born. From 2005 on, a

large process of merging was implemented to organize the first Québécois social forum that gathered 5000 participants and 240 organizations. A second forum was organized in 2009 where 3500 persons self-managed over 350 workshops.

A new trend in regional social forums was founded in Québec from these first events. More than ten regional social forums have since been created. This trend is being maintained as many social forums are in the planning stage in neighborhoods, cities and regions and for the first time also for the whole of Canada in 2014.

C'est à notre tour...  
de penser le Québec !



	2002	2003	2006	2007	2008
	Forum social Québec-Chaudière Appalaches	Forum social Toronto	1er Forum social Saguenay-Lac St-Jean (FSSLSJ)	1er Forum social québécois (FSQ)	2ème FSSLSJ Forum social Mauricie Forum social Outaouais
2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
2ème FSQ Forum social Lanaudière 1er Forum social Laval (FSL) Forum social Montréal 1er Forum social Montréal-Nord (FSMN)	3ème FSSLSJ 2ème FSMN	1er Forum social Bas-Saint-Laurent (FSBSL)	4ème FSSLSJ 2ème FSL	Forum social Anjou Forum social Québec	Forum social des peuples : Québec, Canada, Premières Nations 2ème FSBSL

# SOLIDARITY



## objectives of the WSF

- Favor an inclusive and mobilizing social debate;
- Encourage citizen's participation;
- Share initiatives and alternative projects;
- Stimulate the merging of social issues;
- Promote sustainability, solidarity, justice, equality and harmony.

## The purpose of the WSF in Québec/Canada ?

One of the major objectives of the WSF is to galvanize local social struggles with an international resonance by providing new opportunities to build new solidarities at the local and international levels. A WSF in Québec will support our search for a North American and Canadian convergence in this important and required fight against the radicalization and the global imposition of austere policies imposed by the political right in our country. Hosting the WSF in Québec will more specifically unite the movements of North America with the struggles of security, the conquest of the North Pole, the energy question, the aboriginal claims, the students' demands, the union revival, the environment, the agriculture, the natural resources management, the feminists claims, the political education, etc..

A WSF in Québec will contribute to rekindle the continental social dynamics that have allowed important political success in the past, like the victory against the Free Trade Area of the Americas, more than ten years after Québec 2001. It will allow the foundation of this alter globalization's circle of influence in North America and will provide for more visibility.

We have much to learn from the approaches of the organizations of the South and what they are

ready to do in supporting a WSF in the North. The Latin American populations were hit right in the face by the neocolonialism and neoliberal and they have since been demanding and have mobilized for the nationalization of the resources, for food sovereignty, climate justice, ecosystems protection, social justice and many more issues that are also ours to stand up for. There is much to be learned from this dynamic in Québec, in Canada and everywhere else in North America.

Finally, let's mention that the WSF always attracts ten of thousands of persons living in the hosting region. This provides a great opportunity, indeed second to none, to the general population for popular education and mobilization on issues that we are defending every day. It's hard to believe that a better mean could be found for collective action for building convergences. The WSF is therefore an opportunity to reinforce our actions and our test of strength.

**THE WSF IS AN  
OPPORTUNITY TO  
REINFORCE OUR ACTIONS,  
TO PROMOTE THEM AND  
TO BUILD A REAL TEST  
OF STRENGTH.**

# THE INNOVATIVE WSF 2015

## How to contribute to a global

Quebec-Canada 2015 will be the first WSF in the North. This move will stimulate innovation.

### Occupy the WSF !

To galvanize the social struggles of the North and elsewhere, the 2015 WSF must become the junction between the spontaneous large movements of indignation et occupation that are emerging everywhere on the planet since the Arab Spring, and the alter globalization's circle of influence gathered in the WSF. These multiple social and political mobilization spaces must interact and reinforce each other.

### A pivot Forum

With the aim to overcome the challenge of accessibility (visas), WSF 2015 could use the massive potential of the Internet to facilitate the holding of activities remotely, and simultaneously around the world. WSF 2015 in Quebec would be home to a 1000 Local Social Forums occurring remotely, but in dialogue with each other. We already need to start calling on the international networks to develop a user-friendly, collaborative, open and

progressive communication interface.

### A polycentric Forum

In the same spirit of convergence and closeness of peoples of the world, we consider essential to support other World Social Forums in 2015. As per the 2006 edition of the WSF when three WSF (Mali, Venezuela and Pakistan) were held together, we could have a WSF in the South (Africa and Asia) in the spring, and one WSF in Northern Quebec in the summer of 2015.

### An artistic Forum

We wish to emphasize the importance of artistic expression as a tool for bringing people and cultures together. WSF 2015 could promote and encourage the participation of creative expressions in all its forms, both at the organizational level and at the level of the content of the WSF 2015. The WSF would have creative spaces where participants from different cultural and social backgrounds could come together and express their ideas



in an alternative fashion and artistic expression.

### Basic Values of WSF 2015

A popular space

A forum based on grassroots group's involvement

A forum of local and international solidarities

An organizational process limiting the power of money

A forum where everyone can contribute to his capacity

A forum of self-managed spaces for organizations and movements

### Join the Movement!

*The Initiative For a World Social Forum in Quebec-Canada 2015* is an open collective initiated by dozen people involved in various activist groups, community, cultural and

academic networks. We are inspired by the desire to multiply spaces that promote horizontality, transparency and openness, perceiving them as leverage in the fight for people and environmental respect. We are very excited to see Quebec-

Canada civil society engaged in a dialogue and get closer to each other through the WSF process, and we believe in the contribution of Quebecois and Canadians to this process of global struggles for social and environmental justice.

**CONTACT US!** [FSM2015.QUEBEC@GMAIL.COM](mailto:FSM2015.QUEBEC@GMAIL.COM)

[HTTP://FSM2015QUEBEC.WORDPRESS.COM](http://FSM2015QUEBEC.WORDPRESS.COM)