

“The WSF as Open space”

The world of today is facing multiple crises related to the neoliberal global hegemony. In this situation, we, the signatories of this Declaration, participants in the process of the World Social Forum (WSF), consider that the WSF is more necessary than ever. At the same time WSF is in a crisis, that to a great extent must be ascribed to major disagreements between members of its international council (IC) in the last decade on the character and future of the WSF.

In order to contribute to a positive overcome of the current crisis in the IC, we want to confirm the consensus on WSF being an open space, and invigorate IC as a facilitating body for the WSF.

I/ In order to respect everyone's voices and self-determination, the WSF must remain an open and horizontal space of articulation.

We consider that, in the mutual respect and solidarity of the initiatives struggling for the effective construction of another possible world, **we must preserve the character of “open space” of the World Social Forum, as affirmed in the first principle of the current WSF Charter of Principles.** We consider it necessary to reaffirm the sixth principle according to which no one is allowed to express positions in the name of the Forum, and in a coherent extension of this principle, positions on behalf of its International Council.

We further consider that the **decisions of the International Council must continue to be taken by consensus.** This should be understood as the acceptance by all its members of every decision to be taken. This does not mean unanimity: a minority not agreeing can very well accept to give in because it does not feel deeply aggrieved. If it refuses, it is because something fundamental for it is at stake and the sensitivity of all the stakeholders must be respected, this is the very principle of consensus. If no formulation "acceptable to all" is found, no decision can be taken and the IC needs to proceed with the discussion.

II/ In order to shape a mobilizing WSF process, let's all put the IC back to work!

We welcome initiatives by individuals, organizations and social movements, aiming at enhancing dynamics in the WSF process through the building of new assembly processes, deliberative and action oriented, parallel to the World Social Forum - as new World Political Subjects that could take political positions, and propose planetary actions - Like for example the idea of World Social Assemblies. We consider that the facilitating committees of such Social Assembly processes and the IC may maintain a cooperative and constructive relation which they determine together.

We consider that the key point is to reinforce the process of WSF as an Open Space, and we assess that it is possible and necessary to do so with the IC, leaving behind the discussions on taking positions on behalf of the WSF or the IC. For the IC to once again fulfill its role, we should prepare it to receive contributions about facilitation from many organizations via commissions and working groups, assisted by an efficient secretariat, and other possibilities.

Some of the tasks in this IC getting back to work could be: To invite to make proposals for the next events of the WSF and discuss those with the potential facilitators; to support the facilitation of future events, securing the transfer of experiences and knowledge from past events; to strengthen the WSF as a permanent process connecting participants between the events; to reflect and cooperate for better implementation of the various functions of WSF, and the mutual horizontal visibility of announcements made by participants; and to deepen decolonial and feminist practices in the WSF process.

We think that with the effective resumption of IC facilitation work, many perspectives will open and new possibilities will appear.