



3rd AMERICAS SOCIAL FORUM

Guatemala, October 2008

LET'S BE THERE!
Another America is Possible!

The 3rd ASF will take place on a continent which is facing a two-pronged challenge today: to broaden and consolidate the move toward change that has opened up in the last few years, and to resist the ongoing forms of domination that are striving to persist and to extend their reach, while seeking to recover lost ground so as to impede this transformative stream.

The changes range widely, with varied manifestations: from the clear break with neoliberalism and the commitment to build a different model for the economy and society taking place in several countries, to the visibility achieved by forms of resistance, popular movements and critical thought evolving within the heart of the Empire: between 2006 and 2007, the 1st Border Social Forum took place (at the border between Mexico and the United States), as well as the 1st Puerto Rico Social Forum and the 1st United States Social Forum; events which are both a point of arrival and departure for unprecedented processes. Also, national and subregional fora have mushroomed throughout the Americas. Meanwhile, the aim for an alternative form of integration is a powerful reaffirmation of

sovereignty, in which ever more movements and governments are coming together.

Yet the neoliberal project is managing by various means to persist and extend its tentacles. Bilateral Free Trade Agreements with the United States, along with military bases and various forms of violence are being put in place; similar agreements with the European Union share the same all-out market orientation. Instruments such as Plan Puebla Panama and Plan Colombia remain in force; the Wall "of Shame" is erected. Transnational corporations have not stopped taking over and controlling strategic resources and public goods, with the privatization of water being a particular threat.

Within this context, Mesoamerica forms a geopolitical bridge. It is currently characterized by the convergence among various forms of resistance and efforts to create alternatives, alongside initiatives for imperialist expansion and maintenance of the neoliberal agenda.

The 3rd Forum will allow peoples from across the continent to come together in this region, which has lived through heroic struggles throughout its past and recent

history, so as to demonstrate solidarity, and to better understand the alternatives that have arisen here in the face of war, destruction, fear, and the perverse legacy of forms of violence displaying the most ferocious examples of militarized neoliberalism, including femicide.

The need to change the dominant way of life has already become urgent, given the recognition of global warming. This universal “consensus,” which is arriving when we are on the threshold of the destruction of life on earth, must result in renewed value for and recovery of the legacy from indigenous peoples “to live well,” and of their related knowledge and practices, which are more relevant than ever. Opposing this urgent need for change, “green businesses” are emerging, along with the false alternative of agro-fuels that threatens people and biodiversity along with the impacts of mining against which so many are struggling at this time.

Another America is already on its way. In order to advance, it is necessary to tease apart and fully understand the current intertwined forms of domination and those that loom ahead, a task only possible through independent critical thought, grounded in perspectives gained through experience. It is also crucial to make headway in developing new ideas and strategic explanations for paths toward change, regarding the future opening up ahead of us and where we would like to end up. It is essential as well to broaden the spaces for dialogue between diverse actors for change, including: social movements, alternative groups and organizations, governments, political parties, universities, churches, and others.

The 3rd ASF will embrace the range of struggles, proposals, and experiences that have been strengthened, renewed or emerging over this rich period of common searching that has been taking place across the continent. It will stimulate stronger interconnections and aim to create more effective spaces for self-guided construction of shared platforms for emancipation.

The 3rd ASF will take place in Guatemala with the collaboration of social movements, indigenous peoples, academic groups and a range of committed sectors from this country and from across Mesoamerica. At the same time the presence of groups from across the continent will further stimulate and enrich these alliances.

Overcoming geopolitical divides, peoples of the continent are moving toward an ever more shared identity between South and North, and between the different regions of the Americas. The struggles are growing closer and stronger in solidarity, as peoples who are confronting capitalism, imperialism and patriarchy.

Objectives:

- To further strengthen interconnections between struggles, experiences and critical perspectives across regions of the Americas, among collective subjects that are resisting the neoliberal order and making change.
- To foster the knowledge and practices, ancestral and new, that support alternatives; and independent critical thought in order to comprehend the strategies of domination as well as those for change.
- To build greater solidarity with expressions of resistance in Mesoamerica.
- To provide a broad space for building a shared agenda and platforms for emancipation among peoples of the continent and of the world.

Cross-cutting Themes:

- Gender equality and diversities

Coordinating Groups:

- The ASF Hemispheric Council
- The ASF Assembly and Facilitation Team - Guatemala

Information and contacts:

- www.forosocialamericas.org
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THE UNITED STATES SOCIAL FORUM- NATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE IN ITS MARCH 2008 MEETING DECIDED TO SUPPORT, ORGANIZE AND MOBILIZE FOR THE SOCIAL FORUM OF THE AMERICAS.

Guatemala Committee has been set up at the NPC-USSF level for organizations to join the movement to get US grassroots organizations and movements to participate in the SFA III in Guatemala.

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