

The Politics of Sustainable

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Cet article fait le lien entre le sommet de Rio de 1992 et à celui de Johannesburg de 2002 en notant que dans les deux cas, le développement durable a été présenté comme un remède

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aux crises sociales et environnementales. A Rio, l'État se disait responsable du développement durable alors qu'à Johannesburg, les corporations cherchaient à privatiser. Pendant que les gouvernements et les corporations tentent d'accélérer la croissance économique d'un capitalisme mondialisé en s'appropriant la sphère vitale des femmes, des foyers, des paysans et des indigènes, on note qu'un nouveau combat écolo-genré, de classe et ethnique se met en place pour assurer l'existence au lieu d'utiliser les ressources écologiques.

Over the past ten years sustainable development has been proposed as a means to confront the environmental and social crises that we are currently experiencing around the world. The environmental crisis is evidenced by, among other things, the effects of green house gas emissions, acid rain, and global warming; oceans rising and hurricanes; higher temperatures; toxic chemicals, soil erosion and depletion; decertification, acidification, and the depletion of ground water. The social crisis has resulted in increased poverty and destitution; sexism; ethnicism, and racism; environmental and economic refugees; terrorism, trafficking, imperialism, neo-colonialism and the spread of violence.

This paper links the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), or the Earth Summit, held Rio de Janeiro in 1992 with the Johannesburg Summit in 2002. At both conferences, sustainable development was offered as a cure for social and environmental crises.

In Rio, development and environment were linked together as sustainable development under *Agenda 21*, a plan of action negotiated during the Summit. Sustainable development was defined as "development that meets the

needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 8). The discourse of sustainable development was thus equated with economic growth and promised that globalization of the economy would rescue poor countries from their poverty, even in the most remote areas of the world (Pearce and Warford). Since then, the WB's Global Environmental Facility (GEF), established in 1991 to fund projects and programs in developing countries that protect the environment, has been financing the Global Resource Managers (GRM), a special category of functionaries who broker the industry involved in corporate globalization and economic restructuring.

The Earth Summit held in Johannesburg in 2002 marked the ten-year anniversary of the original Earth Summit in Rio. While at the Rio conference, government/states were seen as responsible for organizing sustainable development, in Johannesburg, responsibility for sustainable development was transferred to corporations and their shareholders. According to the United Nations, the Summit in Johannesburg

will be remembered not for the treaties, the commitments, or the declarations it produced, but for the first stirring of a new way of governing the global commons ... [by] oriented partnerships that may include non-government organizations, willing governments and other stakeholders. ("The Johannesburg Summit Test: What Will Change?")

As industrial production is led by transnational corporations (TNCs), their impact on the environment was disregarded throughout the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) process although a voluntary code of conduct was adopted. Instead, proponents of economic growth portrayed the poor of the world, *campesinos*/peasants and Indigenous populations as the prime enemies of the rainforest in order to legitimize the expropriation of their commons and their exclusion from those commons (Hecht and Cockburn). Michael Goldman states:

As long as the commons is perceived as only existing within a particular mode of knowing, called development, with its unacknowledged structures of dominance, this community [GRM] will continue to serve

Development

A Subsistence View

the institution of development, whose *raison d'être* is restructuring Third World capacities and social-natural relations to accommodate transnational capital expansion. (47)

The ten years between Rio and Johannesburg have thus been a triumph of corporate-driven globalization that resulted in the imposition of global control on the commons—land, water, biodiversity, rivers, lakes, oceans, atmosphere, forest, and mountains—at the national, regional, and municipal levels. For women and men who depend on the local commons, the assault on their surroundings means loss of dignity and independence, security, livelihood, health, and, sometimes, loss of their lives. Nevertheless, as governments and corporations seek to expand the economic growth of globalized capitalist accumulation by appropriating the everyday commons of women, households, Indigenous people and peasants, a new ecological-gendered-class-ethnic-struggle is emerging over the use of ecological resources for livelihood.

This paper will apply a socialist ecofeminist perspective to review the social practice of sustainable development and the social responses to it during the ten years between Rio and Johannesburg. Ecofeminists, in coming to terms with the causes and consequences of the social and environmental crises, delegitimized and contested the dominant concepts of sustainable development. Eco-feminists value nature and the knowledge and experience of women as sources of the reproduction and sustenance of individual and community life. They note the intimate connection between the ways women, peasants, Indigenous people, and nature are treated, and argue that it has been possible to sustain the illusion that economic growth is a positive and benign process only because the costs have been borne by Third World peasants, Indigenous peoples, nature, and women (Mies; Shiva; Merchant; Salleh 1994, 1997; Agarwal).

Divided into two sections, this paper also examines local-resistance to the discourse/project that has revived colonization and sees the environment as an adjunct to economic growth. In the first section, I illustrate the politics of the state-based sustainable development advocated at UNCED in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 through a critical examination of Plan Puebla Panama (PPP) project. In the second section, I illustrate the logic and consequences of the private-side of sustainable development

advocated at the Summit in Johannesburg in 2002 through an examination of the struggles that have emerged around private mining initiatives in Tambogrande, Peru.

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Rio's State-Based Development and the Politics of the Global Commons

At the Earth Summit in Rio, economists proposed that the ecology must be embedded in the economic system through the price system, that is, the economy requires a fully monetized world in order to be protected. This meant that atmosphere, oceans and seas, land, forest, mountains, biological diversity, ecosystems, fresh water etc. need to be priced. Following this logic, the WB developed “genuine” saving measures that “broaden the usual national accounts definitions of assets to include human capital, minerals, energy, forest resources and the stock of atmospheric CO₂” (Hamilton), thus legitimizing the enclosure of the common. Robert Smith and Claude Simard subsequently expanded the concept of natural capital into three categories: *natural resource stocks*, the sources of raw materials (priced or unpriced) used in the production of manufactured goods; *land*, essential for the provision of space for economic activity to take place; and *environment systems* (or ecosystems), necessary for the services that they provide directly and indirectly to the economy, including purifying the air and water, providing biodiversity, stabilizing climate, providing protection from solar radiation, and providing stable flows of renewable natural resources. However, using an ecological economics perspective, Juan Martinez-Alier questions translating environmental values into monetary values, because there is no common unit of measurement. He argues that economic incommensurability arises not only from the fact that prices depend on the endowment of property rights and on the distribution of income; or on how to give present values to future uncertain and irreversible changes,

but the fact that most environmental resources and services are not and cannot be in the market. Further, money is not the relevant standard of comparison for people who are not yet wholly immersed in the generalized market system.

At the NGO Global Forum that was taking place at the same time as the official conference in Rio, women's organizations, however, were proposing to work for cancellation of Third World countries' foreign debt and advocated reparation for the damage caused by 500 years of colonization, despite the fact that it was clear that cancellation of the debt itself would not solve the problems of inequality and injustice unless the systematic and

Sustainable development claims to increase the equality of women by providing low-waged labour for labour-intensive *maquiladora* (sweatshop) production.

institutional patterns of inequality are also changed. The suffering of subsistence producers, women, peasants, and Indigenous people in the indebted world at the hands of commercial banks, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), and their stabilization and Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) activated women's solidarity from all corners. A proposal was approved by the NGOs that put pressure on the UN to:

work for the international recognition of ecological debt and commit to the recognition of the ecological creditors (ethnic groups, communities, countries and regions affected by the exhaustion of resources), the ecological debtors (responsible for environmental and social deterioration) and the necessity of applying measures of ecological adjustment (modifications and changes in the present patterns of production and consumption) so that actions of devastation and contamination do not continue to be taken (Debt Treaty).

However, despite the Debt Treaty signed in 1992, and the subsequent Debt Treaty Movement (DTM)¹ which raised the profile of the debt and the problems arising from development, and which by the end of the 1990s were identified with sustainable development in particular, indebtedness, rather than being reduced has expanded and has led to ecological destruction and legitimated ecological appropriation of indebted countries' nature, particularly in Latin America.

Since the late 1980s, the commercial banks and the multilateral institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), who

previously made loans to Third World countries, have been replaced by an inflow of private portfolio funds and debt-for-nature investments or "debt swaps."² Debt swaps are financial mechanisms that offer repayment of loans held by creditors (commercial banks, governments) in return for handing over ownership of national industries, public enterprises, bank assets, and natural resources. Particularly since 1988, capital accumulation relies on debt-for-nature investments. Debt-for-nature investments, one of the major outcomes of the UNCED, are the core sustainable development mechanisms of choice for the WB, the IMF, UNESCO, and large environmental corporations. Since UNCED, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) under World Bank management has established funding for numerous NGOs involved in debt-for-nature swaps to "protect" the global environment. The sustainable development framework is thus not different from economic development (Isla 2002a, 2002b).

As the price mechanism becomes over-extended with respect to the natural environment, and economic growth has as an inherent objective the capture of the local commons, locality has become a site of confrontations, where the new forms of domination, exploitation, and oppression encounter responses (Escobar). However, resistance is no longer only at the local level, it has brought international political mobilization and solidarity, particularly among women.

Plan Puebla Panama

The Plan Puebla Panama (PPP), also called the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, has been regarded as the principal initiative of sustainable development of the Central American region arising from *Agenda 21* (WB). Proposed and accepted by eight countries of Central America (Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama), PPP, involving an area of 1,026,117 square kms and 62,830,000 inhabitants, is aimed at poverty reduction and environmental reparation. As a development project, PPP comprises eight initiatives: a) roads and highways integration; b) human development; c) hydro-electric production; d) promotion of eco-tourism; e) partnership for sustainable development; f) prevention and mitigation of disasters; g) building of functional customs houses; and, h) development of a telecommunications network. As it is presented, PPP complements the neo-liberal programs of privatization of public resources, such as water, energy, and public services with the expansion of commercial markets, highways and transport infrastructures, direct investments in *maquiladoras* (sweatshops) and transnational businesses, wage work, and electricity (Ornelas). As an environment project, the World Bank presents the PPP as a project aimed at identifying and quantifying the biodiversity of the area. WB Director of Environment, Kristalina Georgieva, declared that the PPP was necessary as "there are over 45

million people in the region, of which 60 per cent live on less than \$2 a day" (WB). Poverty defined as the absence of western consumption patterns, cash incomes and industrialization (Mies and Shiva), is thus the excuse for the new assault on Central America commoners.

Despite capital's global reach, corporations still depend on nation states and ruling elites. They expect PPP to benefit them by extending the boundaries of their economic activity by bringing more land into development and evicting the locals. None of the inhabitants living in these eight countries involved were consulted about PPP (Ornelas). Eucebio Figueroa belongs to an organization called "Por la Vida y por la Gente" (For Life Itself and People's Livelihood) that represents a large network opposing PPP. In the words of Figueroa, the main goal of PPP is to use what is left of Indigenous peoples' land and cultural domains as the new frontiers for global capital's colonization project. In this way, Indigenous communities are targeted for disintegration. To the resisters, which include Indigenous people, local poor and rural women, PPP is a war against "our culture and ways of life, because we live from subsistence agriculture" (Figueroa). To defend the threatened commons, in 2001 more than 300 organizations of local communities and thousands of Indigenous people met in Xelaju Forum, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala and wrote a document in which participants

reject this "forced globalization" ... and denounced the fact that PPP's main goal is to create an infrastructure to facilitate the export of goods, the exploitation of our natural resources, biodiversity and labour of our people; but which does not answer in any way [our] social problems ... [further] we were not consulted ... as a result it violates the autonomy of our countries. (Bartra cited in Saldivar 80)

Since the arrival of "development" in the 1950s, millions of peasants and Indigenous families have been impoverished as calculated acts of developmenty policy havedismantled, degraded, and corrupted their cultures (*The Ecologist*). This is clearly evident in Central America.

In Mexico, roads and highways have been built as part of the PPP project in order to increase industrial transportation and mobilize commodities produced in the area. PPP makes Oaxaca and Chiapas central areas of development by building the Trans-Isthmus Megaproject and superhighways along the Pacific and Gulf coasts of the country, through the lands of the Indigenous peoples, the Choles, Zoques, Tojolabales, Tzotziles, Mames and Tzeltales. The human development component of sustainable development is reduced to people's value as labour. Peasants and Indigenous peoples' "integration" into the global market system underlies the break-up of rural families and the forced mobility of women. Sustainable development claims to increase the equality of women

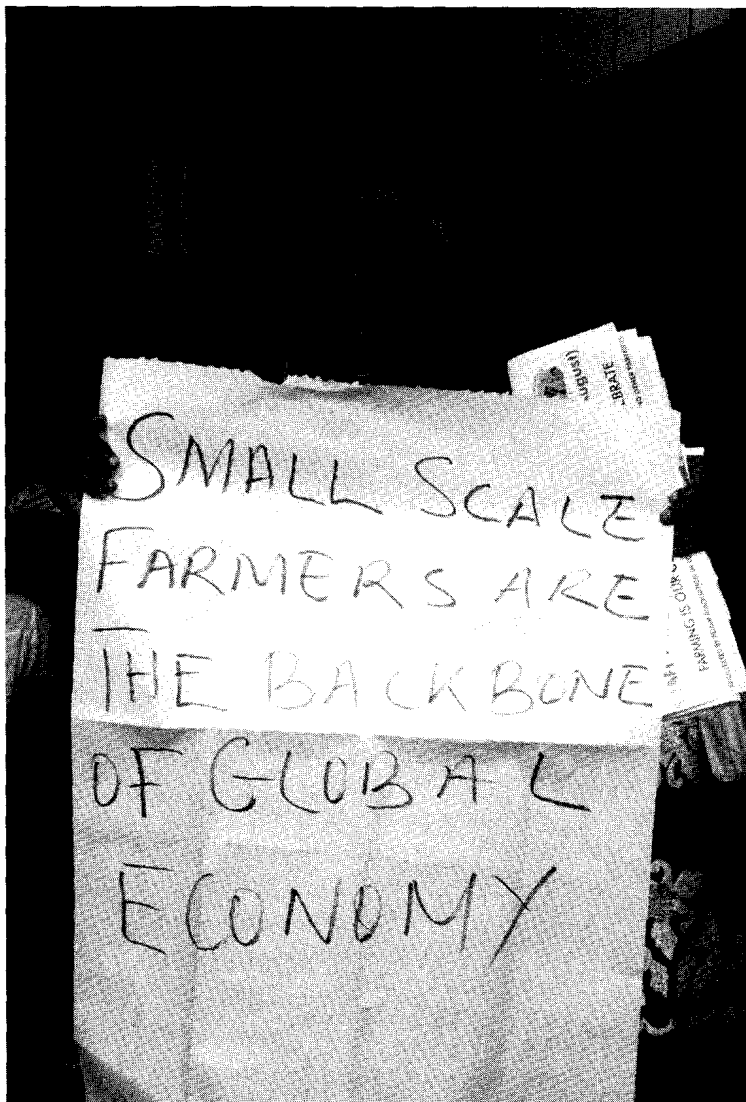


Poster produced by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) claiming justice for women in maquiladoras who lost their lives in Ciudad Juárez (border of U.S. and Mexico).

Photo: José López Vázquez

by providing low-waged labour for labour-intensive maquiladora (sweatshop) production.³

In Guatemala, to produce hydro-electricity for maquiladoras and for U.S. consumption, PPP proposes to build 72 dams, 38 between Chiapas in Mexico and Peten in Guatemala over Rio Usumacinta. The building of the dams will displace more than 100 communities and cooperatives that belong to these Indigenous communities by flooding approximately 400 square kms in southern Mexico and 300 square kms in Peten (in northern Guatemala). Indigenous communities of Chole, Chontales and Lacandones have shared this river for millennia. They are campaigning against dams based on their experience. In 1985, Chixoy dam in Baja Veracruz displaced around 5,000 people, killing 900 Indigenous women and children in the surrounding area of Cano Negro, and flooding sacred Mayan land (*Usumacinta, lugar del mono sagrado-video*). The communities that will be affected by the



Participant at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, 2002.
Photo: Brenda Cranney

proposed new dams are *Piedras Negras* (Mayan sacred temple, *El Cayo* and *Macabillero* (land of the Lacandon people), *La Pasadita* (Mayan ceremonial centre) and others (Figueroa).

In Costa Rica, eco-tourism has had a significant impact on vulnerable species and their habitats as increased deforestation to build cabins and resorts has resulted in an irreparable loss of diversity in species, and endangered wildlife habitat by provoking mudslides, biotic impoverishment, and species-forced migration. Ecotourism can also radically alter ownership claims. Around the Arenal Volcano in La Fortuna de San Carlos, entire communities have been forcibly evicted. While the majority of the land around the volcano is not arable or adequate for cattle ranching, small farms had existed in the area. In 1994, this land was expropriated by the government Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE) to expand the National Park. Peasants who had organized their lives by clearing land for agricultural production and pasture around the Arenal Basin were thrown off the land. Former

property owners have become hut renters (*ranchos*) or slum inhabitants (*tugurios*). The personal effects of the *campesinas/os*, such as cars and small electrical appliances, were taken by the commercial banks when they could not afford to repay their loans acquired for economic development. When in desperation some of them returned to their land to plant yucca, beans, corn, and other subsistence foods, they were declared to have broken the law and some were thrown in jail. Their lands, pastures, homes and roads have been converted into expensive resorts with access limited to tourists who can afford recreational activities (Isla 2003c).

As the commons are "enclosed" and commoners access to nature is curtailed, it becomes a "national security" issue. Land enclosure legitimizes a military presence and assaults on any groups who want to reclaim their right to use nature for their livelihood or differently than capital circumscribes.

In Mexico, for example, an intensive militarization of the South of Mexico started with the Zapatista uprising. On January 1, 1994, the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (EZLN),⁴ declared war on the Mexican federal government by occupying seven municipalities/cities in Chiapas. On that day, *Zapatistas* demanded:

- a new pact between Indigenous Peoples and the national society in search for a new state project and a new constitution that includes ethnic diversity and recognition of Indigenous Peoples as part of the nation;
- land restitution, because lands were commons rather than state property; and
- expulsion of the municipal officers that have been deepening poverty by enforcing neo-liberal social and economic policies expressed in the Free Trade Agreement (FTA). (Munoz 3)

Indigenous people know that they have no other recourse to resist state and international development except direct action. The Zapatistas, therefore, argued that "This [war declaration of war] was a last resort against misery, exploitation and racism, basically, it was a last resort from oblivion" (Munoz 3).

To break their courage, Indigenous communities that resist are confronted with paramilitary organizations in alliance with the regular army, rich landowners, and *narcotráfico* (Salazar Perez). The Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in Guatemala and El Salvador has reported that since the arrival of development in the 1950s, more than 200,000 Guatemalans and 65,000 Salvadoreans have been murdered.

Further, the Central America PPP is connected to Plan Colombia in Colombia, and Plan Dignity in Chapare, Bolivia.⁵ The three Plans justify their interventions using the same objectives: strengthening of democracy, poverty reduction, anti-drug efforts, elimination of drug traffick-

ing, sustainable development, and support of the U.S. anti-terrorism struggle. In each of the plans, important members of society have been implicated in counter-insurgency practices, stirring up paramilitaries that attack civilians. The impact on the lives of rural women is significant. Women in the South of Mexico, for example, are unable to work and forced to remain in their homes in order to avoid being raped by soldiers (AWID 2002a). In the northern part of Mexico, women's transition from farm woman to an "independent *maquila*" worker continues to exact a high-price. In Ciudad Juarez, on the Mexican-U.S. border, over 800 women working in *maquiladoras* have been kidnapped, raped and murdered with seeming impunity (AWID 2002b; Amnistía Internacional-Uruguay).

Indigenous people, peasants, and all women in these communities want to continue with the time-tested ways of life that depend on them keeping their land. As a consequence, in association with environmentalists, they are fighting each of these projects embedded in PPP and are building international solidarities. They are forging an international campaign of *hermanamiento* (in Spanish this means accompaniment by sisterhood and brotherhood) of individuals, organizations and universities, by making permanent their physical presence in the areas threatened by sustainable development. They believe that an international presence will force the democratization of their societies, and will support their collective rights to land integrity, where impunity of women's rape and leadership assassination is expanding and the threat of social and environmental collapse by development as enclosure is daunting.

Ten Years Later in Johannesburg : The Private Side of Sustainable Development

The Earth Summit in Johannesburg resulted in the launch of 60 voluntary partnerships to support efforts to implement sustainable development, reflecting the success of neo-liberal corporate campaigns for a voluntary approach instead of government regulation. These voluntary, non-negotiated partnerships, were an outcome of this Summit. This voluntary approach actually means the privatization of the implementation of jobs that are under the category of sustainable development. The justification for this approach was that state/government actions during the last ten years have been so inadequate that by encouraging voluntary partnership initiatives "Type-II outcomes"⁶ might bring new impetus to the implementation of the various commitments. The logic behind the multi-stakeholder model is that by bringing together the "Major Groups"⁷ identified by the UN, consensus can be reached on certain outcomes, which are in turn easier to implement and more legitimate. Behind this approach were: The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the World Business Control for Sustainable Development

(WBCSD), and Business Action for Sustainable Development (BASD).

BASD submitted for formal consideration as sustainable development various initiatives, among which were the Energy and Biodiversity Initiative, the Marine Stewardship Council, the Chemical Industry Responsible Care Program, and the Global Mining Initiative. One result of such initiatives was the official acceptance of "Mining and Minerals as Sustainable Development,"⁸ at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg. The actual outcome of the politics of partnership promoted in Johannesburg can be seen in the case of Tambogrande, in Peru and its struggle against Manhattan Minerals Inc. of Canada.

Farmers fear a mining operation would compete with the water needed for agriculture, contaminate the fruit with cyanide and mercury, and destroy the forested and mountainous ecosystem.

Tambogrande and the Politics of Partnership

Mining is a fundamentally unsustainable activity because it is based on extraction of non-renewable concentrations created during millions of years. Once extracted, the destruction is permanent and the costs are always assumed by the locals. As mining and mineral extraction have been declared sustainable development, and as economic growth plans its entrance into local commons through the front door, Tambogrande has become a site of encounters where the new forms of domination, exploitation, and oppression meet resistance.

Tambogrande is an agricultural area located in San Lorenzo Valley in Piura, Peru. The San Lorenzo valley region produces 25,000 tons of mangoes, and many more in limes. Its products are sold nationally and internationally. In the past, the area was owned by cotton plantation landowners, but since the early 1970s, land reform turned peasants into landowners of small and medium size plots. As Peru is one of the most indebted countries, in order to pay its debt many corporations were given concessions by the Fujimori government from 1990 to 2001.⁹ Fujimori, following IMF and WB policies, intended to make mining a top priority in the country as mining in Peru provides about 40 per cent of export revenues. Manhattan Minerals, a Vancouver-based corporation, is one of ten mining companies with concessions in and around Tambogrande. Under Tambogrande lies a deposit of a million ounces of gold and silver, and 64 million tonnes of rock rich in copper and zinc that the company wants to excavate. To extract these ores and minerals would affect 180 villages, demolish 80 per cent of the houses, displace more than 100,000

inhabitants, and eliminate the production of limes, mangoes and avocados that sustain their life. According to the partnership initiative, once the Manhattan mine opened for business, CENTROMIN—the national mining centre—would own 25 per cent of the operation, making it both a regulator and stakeholder (Boyd). Fujimori granted Manhattan ten concessions in the region totaling 89,000 ha. for an open pit. The Global Aware Cooperative, a Canadian NGO, made it known that the first mine, TG-1, will require the relocation of 8,000 people, while the second pit, TG-3, will require the deviation of the Piura River. Further, the tailings pond will occupy 200 hectares and various stages of

As economic growth of capitalist priorities are emphasized, not only are women's livelihoods jeopardized, but the natural world is equally externalized and annihilated.

mining will require the use of deadly poisons like cyanide and involve the disposal of heavy sulphide contaminated tailings.

The Peruvian government and the mining company, using the concept of sustainable development, claim that agriculture and mining can harmoniously coexist. But the affected communities understand that minerals are located deep beneath the earth's surface, and to get them forests, rivers, landscapes, wildlife, and people's homes, farms, livelihood, health and heritage are inevitably destroyed. Farmers who prefer working the land of their family homes to the lure of gold (Boyd) fear that a mining operation would compete with the water needed for agriculture, consume farm land, contaminate the fruit with cyanide and mercury, destroy the forested and mountainous ecosystem with the use of explosives and heavy machinery, and force them into mining jobs they know nothing about.

The community in Tambogrande has actively campaigned against open pit mining arguing that it could damage the homes of 8,000 inhabitants; destroy the fertile valley of San Lorenzo, the heart of Peru's mango and lime production, valued at US\$110 million a year; contaminate the San Lorenzo Irrigation Project with cyanide, mercury and other heavy metals; and break their spirit, hopes, and customs. Over 70,000 people in the area earn their living from agriculture. In contrast, the mine would provide a maximum of 500 jobs. An open-pit mine would compete for scarce water reserves or contaminate the groundwater; alter flora and fauna, in particular the quality of *cortarrama*, one of the most important medicinal plants of the area; pose health risks; legitimize undemocratic takeovers of peasant lands; and exterminate the

algarrobo forest as it will be exposed to toxic, acid rain and suffocation due to the dust produced by plant processors.

When disagreements, between the locals and the mining corporation began, Mayor Alfredo Rengifo collected 28,000 signatures from Tambogrande's 36,000 eligible voters on a petition calling for Manhattan's immediate departure. This petition was presented to Peru's Congress. Manhattan accused him of using improper methods and the government refused to act (Boyd). Despite the multiple ways that women, men, and children of Tambogrande have said "no" to the project, the company has embarked on a confrontational path.

In 1999, a local coalition of mango producers and concerned citizens opposing the mine—the Tambogrande Defence Front—was organized. The movement includes peasants, Indigenous communities, small landowners, the Catholic Church, local politicians, environmental activists, and artists. Soon after, in November 1999, a group of unidentified persons set fire to Manhattan's machines.

The climate of hostility erupted into full-scale battle on February 27 and 28, 2001, when a peaceful two-day strike turned violent:

About 150 protestors stormed Manhattan's walled, high-tech compound at the edge of town, burning and sacking offices, trucks and machinery and wounding 30 police officers. (Boyd 1)

The collective protest also torched the first section of "model homes" that the company planned to give to 1,600 families displaced by the first phase of its project (Munoz).

On March 31, 2001, one month after the expulsion of the mining company from Tambogrande, the main leader of the Defence Front, Godofredo Garcia, was killed in his organic lime grove farm by two hooded men. The killer was taken into custody and then released. "Up until now the murderer has not been caught, in spite of being completely identified" (Garcia). Since then, persecution has increased against the leadership of the Defence Front and their families. In 2002, the daughter of Francisco Ojeda, President of the Tambogrande Defence Front, was kidnapped by five individuals and paraded through the streets of Tambogrande's with a knife stuck in her back. Further, she was threatened with the death of her two-year-old nephew, Ojeda's grandson, if her father continued in the Front before she was released. This human rights violation was taken to London Amnesty International which sought a government guarantee for her life. The Peruvian government has ignored this request (Ojeda).

The confrontation attracted activist supporters from Piura and Lima. Later, anti-globalization and solidarity NGOs from Canada, U.S. and Europe went to advise the people of Tambogrande in their fight. For instance, Oxfam (America) spent an estimated US\$20,000 in the community studying environmental consequences and

legal costs for several people facing charges for destroying Manhattan's property.

Supported by Oxfam (UK), Mayor Alfredo Rengifo, again hoping to channel local tensions and frustrations, proposed a referendum on the mine. On June 2, 2002, despite the Peruvian government's objection, the Tambogrande municipality held the referendum on whether or not to allow mining in the area. It was the first referendum of its kind on the continent. About 36,936 people on a municipal voters' list cast ballots in the referendum. Of those who voted, 25,381, or 94 per cent said "No" to the mine proposal.¹⁰ Nine in ten voters made it known that the mining company, Manhattan Minerals, was not welcome (Munoz).

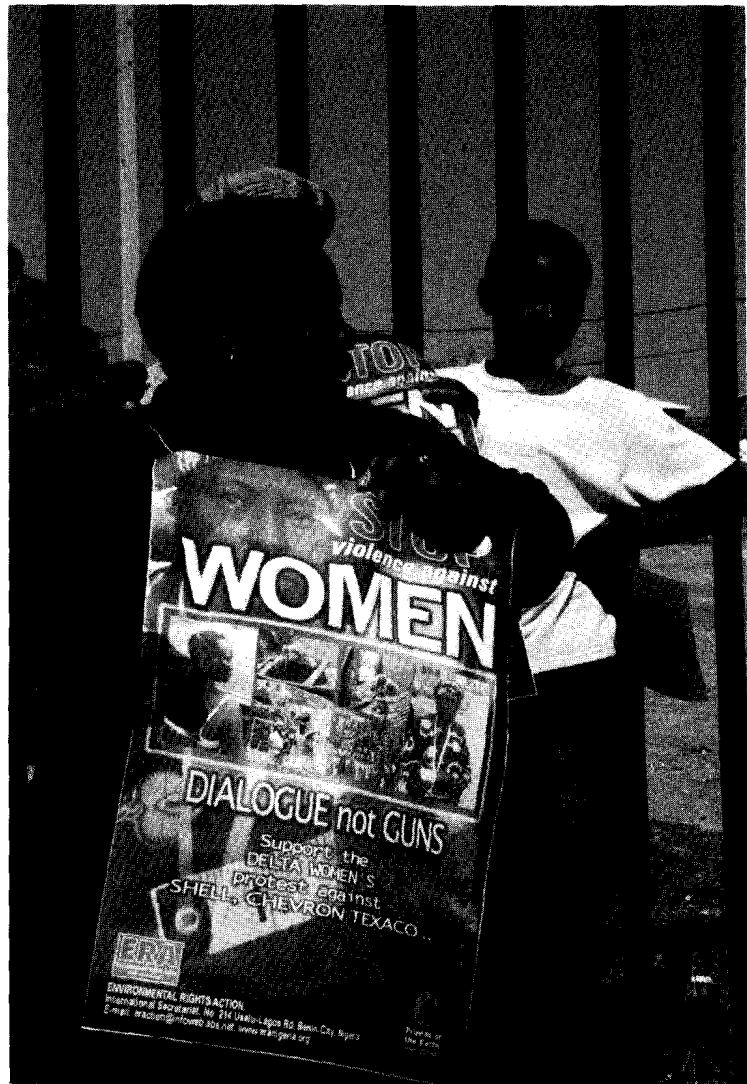
Peru's Ministry of Energy and Mines has said that the referendum was held without appropriate information on mitigation measures and compensation or benefits. Further, the Peruvian president, Alejandro Toledo, made clear that a municipal referendum does not have legal weight in any decision of the central government. In response to government intransigence, the people of Tambogrande in an act of self-determination elected as mayor of the city Francisco Ojeda, President of the Tambogrande Defence Front.

In October 2003, Manhattan presented its first Environmental Impact Study (EIS). Manhattan's previous EIS was criticized by hydrologist and geochemist Dr. Robert Moran, in a report sponsored by Oxfam America.¹¹ In addition, another independent study produced 119 cases against Manhattan's EIS which Peru's Ministry of Energy later declared were satisfactorily resolved by the corporation (Huilca).

On November 5, 6 and 7, 2003, the Ministry of Environment convoked three public hearings in Tambogrande, Piura and Lima intending to publicize positive findings of Manhattan's EIS which concluded that mining would not adversely affect agriculture in the area. But, the public hearings were forced to be cancelled due to a national mobilization of communities affected by mining supporting the Tambogrande cause. On the first day of the hearings, members of the Second National Congress of Peruvian Communities affected by Mining (CONACAMI) stood in front of the Engineers College in Piura where the public hearing was scheduled to take place. The Ministry had planned to thwart the protest by staging support for the mine.

Three hundred unemployed young people were taken to an audience where they pretended to be agriculturalists that supported the mining; but the inhabitants who had been alerted to the situation went to the police to request the legal ousting of the impostors. As the police acted indifferent, the inhabitants put the fakers out of the town using stones. (Huilca 4)

Tambogrande responded with a statement position



*Participant at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, 2002.
Photo: Brenda Cranney*

declaring once again its opposition to mining and demanding that Manhattan's EIS not be approved. This call was endorsed nationally and internationally (Ardito Vega). Despite the powerful partners involved, Manhattan and the Ministry of Energy of Peru, Tambogrande's resistance is bolstered by national and the international solidarity from Amnesty International; Rights and Democracy, Canada; Belen Mission, Switzerland; World Campaign for Forestry; Oilwatch; SEEN, USA; Equipo Nizkor, Spain; Friend of Heart, Netherlands; Serpaj Europe; Barcelona Parliament; Oxfam (America); Oxfam (U.K); and Mining Watch of Canada.

On December 11, 2003, it was publicly announced that Manhattan Minerals had lost its main concessions under Tambogrande on a technicality. The Peruvian government looked for a politically viable way out of a highly charged situation and used the fact that the corporation had not yet collected from their shareholders the US\$100 million requested by the government ("Victory in Tambogrande").

Conclusion

Plan Puebla Panama in Central America and the community of Tambogrande in Peru reveal the neo-colonial relations of sustainable development in the politics of the global commons and the politics of partnership respectively. In both cases, there is a clear connection between global capital and nation/states. Sustainable development of the neo-liberal regime cannot be expanded without the direct intervention of the nation/state over local inhabitants and their commons.

What distinguishes these stories is that their local struggles reach across borders, involving activists around the world in a truly “globalized” campaign against the worst aspects of sustainable development and corporate globalization. In the ecological, gendered, ethnic, class struggle, local communities are building resistance. Their struggle is internationalized by democratic forces from Europe, Canada, and the U.S., made up of individuals, grassroots groups and NGOs. This new feature of resistance in this period is the result of the internationalization of productive and financial capital, which is showing clearly its tendency for dispossession of the very means of survival of people who follow the rhythm of nature. The awareness of this new context is developing an international class struggle, drawing massive solidarity and support to local struggles led by women, Indigenous people, and the local poor.

Rural women, Indigenous people and peasants have shown that the politics of sustainable development are not separated from their everyday life. As economic growth of capitalist priorities are emphasized, not only are women’s livelihoods jeopardized, but the natural world is equally externalized and annihilated. Maria Mies and Veronika Bennholt-Thomsen (1996, 1999) proposed subsistence economies for women’s equality and local sustainability, in order to stop the rapacious dependence of developed societies on the resources and labour of the underdeveloped other. This perspective championed by many eco-feminists is a necessary basis to defeat the neo-liberal development pursued by state and corporate “partnerships” in the name of sustainable development.

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¹By 1993, the DTM involved representatives from six regions of the world—South America, Caribbean, North America, Europe, Africa and Asia. Among the members of this international coordinating group were the 50 Years is Enough Campaign from the US; Eurodad, from England, Freedom From the Debt Coalition, from the Philippines, Women for a Just and Healthy Planet, from Toronto; and the Social Justice Committee of Montreal. In 1994, in Spain, more than 300,000 anti-debt members were mo-

bilized, including the churches that later produced Jubilee 2000 Campaign calling for cancellation of the debt (Chomsky).

²Debt-for-nature investments are based on a negative assessment of the debt country’s ability to pay the debt. Debt titles can thus be sold at a fraction of their value in the secondary market. Debt-for-nature investment was proposed by several environmental corporations as a way of capturing some benefits of debt-reduction efforts. For environmental organizations, the main objectives of this type of investment have been to identify and gain access to ecologically-sensitive areas for the purpose of protecting and negotiating them as sites for research and scientific data collection (Dawkins).

³At the Association for Women in Development (AWID) conference in Guadalajara in 2002, Central American women’s advocates as well as peasant daughters working in *maquiladoras* denounced that fact that as the economy of Central America changes from agriculture to assembly plants for *maquiladoras*, women’s low wages in *maquiladoras* and the tax exemptions in the export manufacture zones are yet another advantage that the elites of Latin America can offer to foreign investors (Konojel). According to the presenters, in *maquiladoras* women work an average of 14 hours a day, and are often forced by managers to take amphetamines to work longer hours. They do not receive overtime. The conditions are deplorable and result in countless occupational illnesses that are not recognized in government legislation. Generations of women are becoming ill due to work-related repetitive movements or, worse, chemical hazards, and are returning home poorer than before.

⁴The EZLN was organized as a regular army in 1983 by Indigenous peoples of choles, zoques, tojolabales, tzotziles, mames and tzeltales (Munoz).

⁵Plan Colombia is publicly justified under the “War on Drugs.” Established in July 2000, it is the largest foreign aid package ever sent to a Latin American government, making Colombia the third largest recipient of U.S. aid in the world (only Israel and Egypt surpass this amount) and the number one recipient of military aid (two million dollars per day). Plan Colombia will displace 10,000 rural people, mostly Afro-Colombians and Indigenous populations as a result of military presence. According to Colombians, however, it is a response to more than 50 years of struggle between large landowners and small peasants, between cattle ranching and subsistence agriculture. Plan Dignity, initiated in 1998 to eradicate coca production in Chapare, Bolivia, involves the building three new military bases in the region. To be built with six million dollars in U.S. assistance, the bases will permanently deploy 1,500 troops in the area, a move bitterly opposed by local residents and many human rights groups.

⁶“Type-II outcomes are UN-branded voluntary projects carried out in partnership between different ‘stakeholders’

such as governments, NGOs and business" (CEO 1).

⁷Major groups are identified as women, youth and children, Indigenous people, NGOs, local authorities, workers and trade unions, scientific and technological community, farmers, and business and industry (CEO).

⁸"Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development (MMSD) initiative is a partnership project between the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), the Institute for International Environment and Development, and the Global Mining Initiative (GMI)" (CEO 3). This initiative was sponsored by 30 mining companies and large environmental NGOs, among them the International Union for Nature Conservation (the mother organization of the World Wildlife Fund), Nature Conservancy, the Smithsonian Institution, and Conservation International. All of them have recently joined British Petroleum, Shell and Chevron Texaco in the Energy and Biodiversity Initiative (<http://www.theebi.org/>).

⁹Former president Alberto Fujimori fled to Japan in 2001 and currently faces charges in Peru ranging from corruption to murder.

¹⁰Voting took place in six schools in the area. Canadian observers, such as the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, a Montreal-based group, and Groupe Investissement Responsable, were present. A report on the referendum is available online: <http://www.ichrdd.ca>

¹¹A copy of this report is available online: <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/pdfs/tambo_eng.pdf>

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JOAN BOND

In Our Hands

it is always these
 things we hold
 in the skin of our fingers
 white hairs of the face of a beloved
 tissue of a may petal
 cool nubbles of an antique glass jar
 the perforated edge of a stamp on a
 foreign letter
 or even a duo sepia photograph
 glossy in our palms...
 *Each person enters the world called.**
 these things we as memory
 these things keep us

*James Hillman.

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