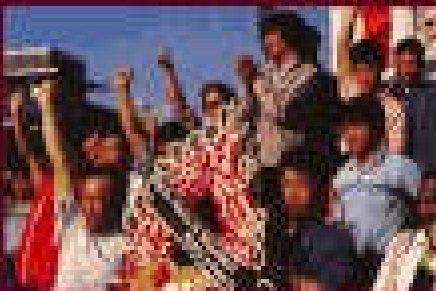
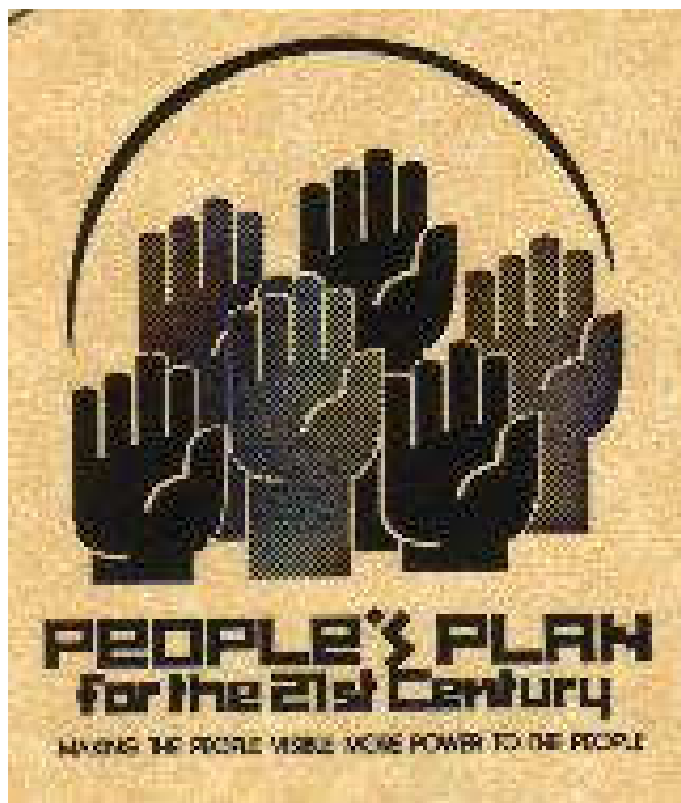


People Participation and Empowerment



*Proceedings of the
People's Plan for the 21st Century
Thailand [1992]*



Making the People Visible

More Power to the People

Re-compilation/ Digitalized by
Asian Cultural Forum on Deevlopment (ACFOD)
Email: acfod.bangkok@gmail.com

@Boonthan T Verawongse / PP21 Thailand 1992 Compilation edited 31052021

Preface

PP21 Thailand 1992 is a second international events following first historic international process converged in Minamata, Japan where the Minamata Declaration had been adopted. It called for the Transborder People's Solidarity under the key word - Alliance of Hope.

PP21 Thailand 1992, participated by over half a thousand participants from Thailand and overseas, highlighted the key message - **Making the People Visible - More Power to the People!** Thus, the call for **Participatory Democracy at local, National and International levels** captured almost the international fora and the main forum in November - December 1992 in Thailand. It is noted that PP21 Thailand was held six months after the popular uprisings opposing the military regime led by the junta who seized power from the democratically elected government in February 1991.

This compilation of materials from various international meetings/ fora held in various parts of Thailand and converged at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok from 6-10 December 1992 might be useful for those who are interested in the People-to-People Collaboration and Transborder Solidarity. The key documents included the adopted '**Ratchadamnern Pledge**' - declared the peoples' wishes in ***Making the People Visible.***



Professor Dr. Sem Pringpuangkaew, a well respected senior citizen and former Minister of Public Health, welcome the overseas participants to the PP21 gatherings at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok in December 1992, 6 months after the bloodshed People Uprisings and Massacre on May 17-21, 1992 in Bangkok.



Panel at the Plenary Session



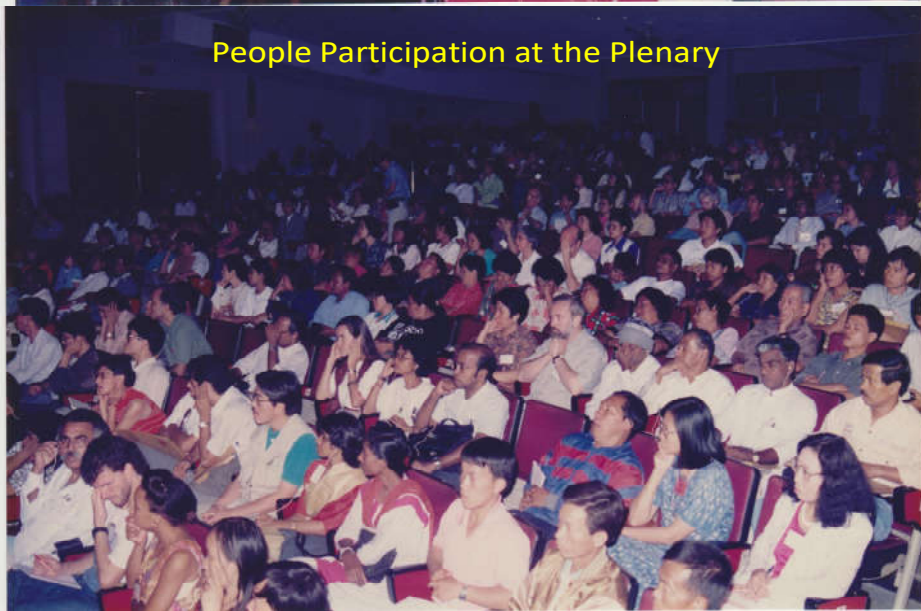
Participants from all over the region



Peoples Voice: A Participatory Democracy



People Participation at the Plenary





Prof. Surichai WunGaeo, represented PP21 Committee and Chulalongkorn University, the Co-host of the events





Part of the Thematic Forum



People in Solidarity



CONTENT

The Ratchadamnern Pledge	12
Peasants Forum Statement	23
Forum of the Urban Poor Statement	28
Workers Statement	32
Statement of Sustaining Democracy and Development	37
Third World Tourism Forum Statement	43
Declaration on Intention of Thai Ethnic Groups	46
International Workshop on Natural Resources Management and Environment Forum Statement	49
Declaration of the Consumers	52
Peace and Human Rights Forum	56
Asia Pacific People`s Tribunal	64

The Ratchadamnoen Pledge

December 10, 1992, Bangkok, Thailand



Preamble

We, over 500 Thai and foreign participants of the People's Plan for the 21st Century meeting in Bangkok between December 6-10 1992, represent people's movements and networks, national, regional and international NGOs and solidarity groups from 46 countries from all regions and continents. We have come together to reiterate and renew our commitment to build transborder alliances of peoples in struggle, solidarity and hope. We gather in the spirit that we pledged ourselves to in the Minamata Declaration (1989) which marked the birth of PP21.

Since Minamata, people-to-people alliances and processes at the local, national, regional and cross-continental levels have been realised across boundaries and cultures. Significant milestones in this process have been the forging of relations with the indigenous, black and people's resistance movements in the Americas and the establishment of a group in Central America.

We have met as women, as workers, as peasants, as youth and students, as indigenous peoples, as urban poor, and as activists and advocates of peace and human rights, participatory democracy, ecologically-sound grassroots destructive tourism-related (or resort) development. The encounters and experiences, the ideas and action plans that emerged from these sectoral and multi-sectoral activities held in various parts of Thailand culminated in the main Forum in Bangkok, where we shared our experiences of life and struggles in various forms — through poems, songs, dances, dramas, and visual exhibits.

PP21: From Minamata to Bangkok: Renewing the Alliance of Hope

PP21 is taking place in Thailand in the midst of momentous global and national changes which challenge the very basis of our existence.

The Soviet Union has collapsed. The international capitalist system has become more dominant. There is unprecedented global concentration of power with the United States and its allies in the Group of 7 exercising a virtual monopoly over political institutions, economic resource, military power, information and technological products and processes. Institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, GATT and the Asian Development Bank work together to enforce the dominance of multinational corporations in the name of the free market, totally irresponsible to the basic needs and survival of the marginalised in society. The United Nations, particularly the Security Council, has become a tool of US foreign policy as demonstrated in the Gulf War and in subsequent events.

Integral to this system of global domination is a whole pattern of national control and domination expressing itself in different facets of life. Most governments in the region are armed to the teeth with wide-ranging powers that are stifling the growth of civil society. Democracy has become a system of symbols and rituals shorn of substance. The

fundamental civil and political rights of our people continue to be denied. This denial of rights is perhaps most blatant as in societies under military rule, but is equally, if not more, destructive in societies where authoritarianism parades with a human mask.

There is mass poverty and blatant exploitation of labour and of the environment. Marginalisation of women continues unabated, and violence against them is on the increase. Elites in many countries in Asia-Pacific emphasize the perpetuation of power and the pursuit of profits at the expense of the basic needs and fundamental rights of the people. The fatal grip of international capital and export-oriented industrialization on our countries, which have been propped up as “economic miracles” (NICs), in itself brings further misery and destitution to the poor.

But we have no reason to despair. We know that unjust structures whether at community, national, or international levels must crumble and collapse. They cannot last. Our confidence is not born of naiveté. Our faith in the just future of humanity is not the product of some utopian dream. In the last three years since Minamata, we have seen our struggles grow and develop.

Seven months ago, unarmed people waged a battle against guns and tanks to establish democracy. The people in this country became visible on the streets of the city and in the towns in the countryside. As they challenged state power the people once again demonstrated the power of non-violent popular struggle. Through blood and tears they displayed their moral courage and through their process they reasserted their inherent dignity and recovered the power that is their own.

While this was perhaps the most dramatic portrayal of people’s power in the region since Minamata, we have experienced ongoing struggles of women against violence and domination; indigenous peoples for their survival and preservation of their cultural and ethnic identity and

harmonious relations between nature and humanity; peasants for their land; workers for more just and human working conditions; urban poor for the right to shelter; youth and students for a just and democratic society; local and indigenous communities against mass and luxury tourism; and people against unsustainable development paradigms and programmes.

Furthermore, democratic struggles were successfully waged in 1990 in Bangladesh and Nepal against authoritarianism and military rule. The ongoing protracted struggle of the Burmese people against the military junta cries out for justice and international support. In the Philippines, the rejection of the RP-US Military Bases Treaty on September 16, 1991, has removed a major threat to peace in the Asia-Pacific region.

Each of these is a witness to the awakening of people's consciousness; a stir in our hearts in response to the injustices and the inequalities of the existing order. Each struggle demonstrates the ability of people to determine their own destiny. This is proof of our confidence in our capacity to alter the course of history, which in turn strengthens that confidence.

The significance of these struggles within the Asia-Pacific reality is that they emphasise a profound commitment to life. It is a commitment that has great meaning since Asia is the continent that has given birth to the world's major spiritual and moral tradition. At the same time these struggles also point out the relevance and significance to the traditions, cultures and values of the indigenous people of the Asia Pacific region. Central to these traditions is a vision of life and the living inspired by justice, love and compassion. Harnessing what is essential in them demands reinterpretation of the traditions. It is this re-interpretation which has a resonance in the struggles of the poor and the oppressed to reassert their humanity.

Reasserting our humanity means destroying those unjust structures at family, community, national and international levels which de-humanise us and hold us in bondage to wealth and power. This demands a concerted effort on our part to create participatory democracy and foster genuine development. It demands strengthening of grassroots initiatives and networks, building alliances of people's organisations. It demands transborder linkages at the regional and international levels in support of people's struggles to create an ecologically sustainable, equitable and gender-just society.

Alliance Building

Alliance building is oriented towards the long-term goals of the PP21 Alliance of Hope, namely, global people's power which will confront and prevail over the powers of this unjust and unequal world, Building such power requires us to work towards the forging of alliances of people's movements at the grassroots, local, national, regional and global levels.

This alliance is based on people-to-people contacts rooted in a culture of friendship and partnership that transcends borders and sectoral and organisational concerns. This demands of us an attitude to learn from each other's struggles and strengthen the relationships and alliances already underway in our own societies. We are challenged to be open to other cultures and experiences in our efforts to link not just ideas but persons; to support and contribute rather than merely expect support; to give meaning to language and communication between peoples; and to be open to initiatives and alternatives coming from all levels.

PP21 is based on the initiatives and participation of peoples and their organizations. This is the essence of our alliance-building, wherein we encourage and endorse the concrete agenda on which people's actions are based.

We, as participants of PP21 Thailand 1992, endorse the proposals and action plans adopted by the participants in the various sectoral and thematic forums that preceded the Main Forum, as an integral part of PP21 Thailand 1992. At the same time, we have adopted for ourselves the following:

Information Exchange and Dissemination

We need to know more about the things happening to and around us and must keep abreast of the fast-changing realities trends and tendencies in all their dimensions, for many reasons. For one, information is increasingly being denied to us, and there is a deliberate tendency to block our access to information. For another, there are dominating processes at work in our localities, societies and regions which can only be fought against in a transborder manner. Furthermore, we need to learn from and build on each other's knowledge, experiences and struggles. All these bring us closer together and point the way towards concerted collaborative action to mutually reinforce our respective struggles.

Information dissemination is not to be seen merely as a process of mechanical transfer, given the complexity of issues that have direct and far-reaching impact on the lives of the people. Ideas emerge from people and we need to be conscious not to impose our own ideas on them. Moreover, we also need to ensure that the ideas and analysis do not remain trapped in academic language. Proper communication strategies need to be implemented so that concerned sectors can utilise their own information base as well obtain such analysis and information in easy, people-oriented language for purposes of action.

During the Main Forum participants expressed the need for information exchange and dissemination on a wide and diverse range of issues. These included, among others:

- the impact of bio-technology on agricultural cash crops, drugs and pharmaceuticals, and the implications for the vast majorities of people in the region;
- an inventory of NGOs in the region, and their respective skills, resources and areas of concern;
- the sex trade and industry; aid, trade, debt and structural adjustment;
- environmental issues directly related to development and sustainability

Lobbying, Advocacy and Solidarity Action

The demand for accountability of multinational corporations and governments to serve the needs and promote the fundamental rights of people was also constantly expressed. Among the issues that need solidarity action are: the demand for the right of free association, protection and promotion of human rights, and the right to self-determination.

South-South, South-North Alliance Building

We need to build transborder sectoral and inter-sectoral alliances from the village to the international levels. Already some processes and initiatives are underway. One such exchange involves fisher folk in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia. Another ongoing transborder initiative is being undertaken by a task force for the survival of Asian agriculture, farmers and peasants. Participants form among students and youth have pledged to link up with farmers and indigenous peoples. Trading links on equitable terms have been forged and are being further developed between consumers in the north (e.g. Japan) and producers in the South (e.g. Sugar workers in Negros, Philippines).

At the Main Forum we learned of many transborder actions and events being organised by groups from different countries which cover various themes and concerns. Among these initiatives that repeatedly found mention are:

- Strengthening mutual support networks for shelter, rescue, legal assistance, counselling, reintegration, etc., for women, particularly Thai women, who fall victim to the international flesh trade (in Japan, etc.) As well as the trade in migrant female labour.
- Women forging alliances across gender, sectoral, cultural and national lines, to strongly condemn, on 25 November 1993, the violence perpetuated against women.
- The mobilization of national and international support for the tribal and indigenous peoples to mark 1993 as the Year of Indigenous Peoples.

International Treaties and Declarations asserting the rights of indigenous people should be translated into the indigenous languages and made available in an easily understandable form.

Intercultural Alliance Building

We must build alliances based on liberative cultures to respect and enrich our diversities amidst growing tendencies towards ethnic chauvinism, communalism and racism.

PP21 Follow-up and Facilitation Work Continuing Mechanisms

We need to reinforce and strengthen the people's organisations' leading role and participation at the local, national and inter-sectoral levels, in collaboration with regional groups and alliances. On the regional level a minimum facilitating mechanism to ensure the follow-up of the PP21 process is proposed. Regional consultations must be

held to decide upon the form and flow of future PP21 events. Some specific proposals include, among others.

- the preparation and dissemination of a directory of participants (including personal profiles) in the Thai PP21 events; and
- translation into local languages of the Thai PP21 materials (it has been suggested that participants themselves undertake this task).

As we pledge our commitment, we are aware that we are creating power – it is a power that is not based on relying on the powerful, but in our capacity to do things despite the existing oppressive structures, a power that is based on our determination to create and maintain our own spaces of action, in our confidence and ability to learn and to build reliable relations and alliances towards the 21st Century.





PP21 Thematic Forum 1992

Declaration of the Peasants Forum

The representatives of peasant and non-governmental organizations as well as individuals from Japan, Philippines, Thailand, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Laos, Nepal, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia attending the Peasant Forum of the People's Plan for the 21st Century held in Khon Kaen, Thailand on November 22 to December 4, 1992 concluded their workshop with the following declaration:

We, the peasants of Asia, declare the following measures to address the grave crisis we are facing today

1. Landlessness: Genuine land reform programs providing ownership of the land we till must be instituted and/or implemented to resolve peasants' landlessness. All forms of land rent such as those in share tenancy and sharecropping must therefore be abolished. And preferential support by the State to the peasants must be adopted.

2. Debt trap: The onerous high interest loans burdening us must be written off, whether such loans are obtained through formal or informal sources, to relieve us of the debt trap. The State must provide soft loans with payment scheme that favors us, and support the establishment of peasants' bank.

3. Unequal trade: A people-to-people trading system at all levels (local, national, regional and global) through existing peasants' network must be supported as an

alternative trading system to counter unequal trade by monopoly groups. We also declare our strong opposition to General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs' (GATT) free -trade policy on agricultural products that prejudices developing countries' national needs and development.

4. Environment and ecology: The State must promote sustainable agriculture, community forest and grassroots peoples' effective participation in the recovery and preservation of the environment and ecosystem. This will thus eliminate the serious problems caused by monocropping and modern chemical farming practices imposed by transnational agribusiness firms with the support of the State.

5. Women peasants: Women among the peasantry must be given equal participation in the decision- making process on matters affecting agrarian issues and equal distribution between women and men of the primary resource must be instituted. This will address the peasant women's disempowerment, marginalization and dehumanization under existing unequal distribution of wealth.

6. Access to information: The State must respect our right to information; facilitate the exchange of information among us; promote alternative means and forms of communication (e.g., community video) among us; and recognize our, and the people at large, spirituality and culture as positive forces in social development work.

7. Rural social and infrastructural services: We demand that the State increase budget allocation for rural social and infrastructural services, and for agricultural development. The National budgets should not be mis-allocated to urban-biased projects and to military expenditures, and instead should be devoted to rural development (including education and information dissemination services);

8. IMF, WB, GATT and official development aid: We oppose the designs of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, official development aid agencies and other multilateral agencies to make inroads into our countries especially through structural adjustments and the GATT provisions. We will campaign against transnational firms' land acquisition scheme. We will campaign for the countries in the north to respect our sovereignty over our resources and environment. We will demand the writing off of our countries' international debts.

We believe that GATT is a new type of neo-colonialism. Its devastating impact is the destruction of our rural society to benefit corporate farming.

We believe that the IMF, WB and ODA have caused severe hardship to the small peasants all over the world. They destroy development projects, plunder rural resources, increase poverty, increase disparity among peasants, increase the marginalization of women, impose planting of cash crops instead of food crops and facilitate the acquisition of community land and forests by transnational agricultural firms;

9. Peasant initiatives: We demand the State to recognize our rights to organize; to recognize and promote initiatives in organizing land occupation projects; to respect our right to be informed of the policies, programs and projects affecting us and to participate in the decision making processes. This will supporting initiatives in establishing cooperatives (such as market, rice bank, production, handicraft cooperatives) and promoting women's participation. This will also help counter the increasing conversion of agricultural lands for industrial use. Lastly, this will address our problem regarding the imposition of non-governmental organizations on peasant development initiatives.

10. Solidarity-building and networking: We undertake to conduct people-to-people exchange and exposure program, develop solidarity movement in support of the struggle of the Asian peasantry, and strengthen the Asian Peasant Conference as measures to respond to the lack of or low level information exchanges and visits, and the need to launch strong peasant movements through a common action program.

In this light, we express our strong support to the Thai peasant movement against eviction and for land entitlement. We also strongly believe that ACFOD-PDP can play a vital role in the Asian Peasant Conference. Lastly, we believe that PP21 should extend to all regions of the globe.

IN CONCLUSION, although the issues presented above are addressed separately, we believe that a holistic approach and an integrated solution to the over-all peasants' problems

are required and that a transborder network of solidarity and actions are indispensable for fulfilling our goal of building a society that is free of exploitation, just, truly democratic and ecologically sustainable.

We appreciate the fact that this forum was actively participated in by more than 1,500 Thai peasants. Thai resulted in an experience of mutual sharing and learning among the Thai peasants and other Asian peasants.

We reaffirm and reinforce our solidarity links and common commitment in our future struggle. A new era in the history of Asian peasants alliance is now declared open.

Statement from the Forum of Urban Poor

In the last two decades, most rapidly-growing Asian cities have become the symbols of unequal development. These islands of prosperity deny the urban poor, in particular, even the basic right to shelter. As a result, they are forced to live in makeshift housing with no security of tenure. As pressure to release urban land for other purposes grows, the response of governments to this growing phenomenon has been varied--from eviction to accommodation.

For most of the urban poor, the possibility of eviction is a constant threat and the guarantee of affordable alternative shelter almost non-existent. As a result, in each city, the poor have had to work out, as part of their survival strategies, ways to deal with their shelter question.

Peoples Processes in housing and in various development activities are not only creative but practical and can be replicated. It is manageable and sustainable, unlike government schemes which are fragmented with the only objective of increasing the housing stock. In order that this process benefits larger numbers. There is a need to build on the people process which is cost beneficial and had qualitative change.

For this purpose, representatives of urban poor communities from Thailand, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Japan, Hong Kong, India, New Zealand and Malaysia met in Bangkok for the Forum on Urban Poor: Settlements and Development by People. In four separate workshops - on community organisations, tackling evictions, housing and infrastructure initiatives and saving and people's credit systems - the participants attempted to analyse and understand the common problems of the urban in the region in order to devise strategies.

They realised that as the process of urbanisation accelerated in the region, and the pressure on urban land increases, the urban poor will continue to be threatened with evictions. Whenever communities have successfully united and organised, they have been able to face the landlord or the government and negotiate alternatives where their interests are safeguarded. In most cases, alternatives where to side with the owners rather than playing the role of protector or arbitrator. Their common experience also revealed the importance of seeking the support of other communities when faced with eviction. While legal recognition of the rights of the urban poor was essential, the urban poor representatives accept that implementation can only be ensured if people are organised. The central role of women in devising and implementing shelter strategies was another common factor that emerged.

The Forum provided the participants with the opportunity to exchange information on housing and infrastructure initiatives as well as savings and credit systems to help the poor. Consultation with the community at every steps of the process of shelter was an essential pre-requisite, the participants felt. Also, as some innovations from one country were already being implemented in another, particularly in the area of savings and credit, they felt that more such avenues for exchange of information and training needed to be provided in the future.

The following is the statement of the representatives of urban poor community organisations:

The urban poor of the Asian region have met for the first time to share ideas on solutions to our problems and common concerns. We felt that the urban poor are an integral part of urban society and that they play a key role in maintaining the informal economy of most cities. Decision-makers need to recognise the contribution and the needs of the urban poor.

On the issue of eviction, we demand that all evictions of urban slum dwellers be halted.

If land is required for a specific community purpose, the authorities should initiate a dialogue with the affected community and the people should be given the right to make their own choice.

We call on the PP 21 Forum and its participants to immediately intervene and use their good offices to persuade the various relevant local authorities and governments to stop the on-going evictions of the poorest of the poor from the pavement of Bombay, India, from the slums of the Philippines, from Kaoseap in Songkhla region and in Bangkok in Thailand and the imminent threat of eviction in Sri Lanka.

We demand that the land rights of the urban poor be secured so that they may continue to live in the land they occupy.

We support legislation for the forcible acquisition of private land where it is occupied by the urban poor.

In urban planning, land should be reserved for the urban poor, and made available to them. Secure land tenure should be provided. The right of the urban poor to live in cities should be accepted by all governments.

Basic amenities, such as water, sewerage, road, sanitation, health and childcare facilities should be provided to the urban poor without any preconditions.

We demand people's participation in the process of urban planning and in the implementation of these plans, both at the macro and the micro levels.

The role of the NGOs should be a supportive and grow with community processes so that research, documentation and information sharing should be people centered.

The community should actively participate in the planning of alternative housing. The process of community self-organisation should be recognised and funded by the respective local authorities and governments, without strings attached.

Urban poor communities should have access to special housing finance at minimum interest rates should be made available to the urban poor.

The effort of women-centred savings and credit schemes needs to be supported with funding, and with training to enable women to carry out effective management of funds.

We need to encourage and develop the interlinking and sharing of information between people's organisations running saving and credit schemes.

Nationally and internationally, we should facilitate direct access to information about each other's experiences.

*December 6, 1992
Bangkok, Thailand*

Synthesis of Workers Forum PP21

We saw poverty
We saw oppression
But we also saw pickets, struggle and determination
And we experienced friendship
As we were invited into workers homes

Thank you brave, fighting, Thai workers
We came to your rally
Demanding: 90 days paid maternity leave
Abolition of Decree 54
Rights for State Enterprise Unions
The police came as well
Watched and questioned us

We marched
We shouted
Then we sang,
And enjoyed each others culture

We discussed our problems as workers
We are underpaid !
Our work is hazardous !
Our work dehumanises us

We are treated less than human just
because we are women
We are treated less than human just
because we are black or brown.

Labour rights are suppressed, repressed.
Denied (like the migrant worker
Disregarded (to make us look pretty for the TNCs)
Our rights are postponed because of our youth.
We are marginalised in politics.
For bonded labour, rights are mortgaged
to pay for our parents debts

Our future is clouded by a militarising Japan.
Many of our unions are not doing it right.
We don't know how to organise ourselves,
let alone others.
We are a little slow.

We have a narrow view and cannot look
too far ahead.
Our in-house unions cannot fight the capitalists
who are outdoors.
We maltreat other workers just because
they are women.

We cannot provide for the needs of our organisers.
In order to earn a wage to live, we destroy the
environment
We are always looking for a good leader who can do
most of the work.
We still have a lot to learn.

How to win victories.
How to gain inspiration from the victories of
other workers.

TNCs have become more devious and intractable.
They have become more powerful, fashionable,
respectable.

They force workers to compete for morsels.
They make workers accept the lower wages
of others,
because they are under another flag.

We buy chocolates and anything else that theTNCs sell.
They are destroying us wholesale.
Governments sing praises to democracy while they:
Lay us off,
Reduce our wages,
Reduce the value of our wages,
Raise the prices of goods,
Raise taxes on the poor.

Governments sign as they arrest us, torture us and kill us.
They send us to wars to secure access to oil for the U.S.
They send us to keep peace in Cambodia,
In order to appease the gatekeepers,
To keep the U.S. and European markets open to our
products.

On top of this, the Japanese Imperial Army is
marching again,
under the U.N. flag or the stars and stripes.
We want fair wages.
We want to live and work decently.
We want workers to be treated equally,
Whether they are black, white, brown,
male or female.

We want workers to respect other workers,
We want the oppression and discrimination of
women by male workers or husbands to stop.
We want women workers reproductive rights
protected.

We want male unionists and activists to share responsibilities in house keeping and child-rearing.

We want workers to be able to organise themselves in order to gain what is due to them.
We want workers to support other workers.
We want workers to learn from each others experiences.

At our forum we resolved:
Not to forget the forgotten workers:
Women, youth, migrants and bonded labour

To develop concrete strategies to confront the TNCs, beginning in one industry.
To build democratic, genuine and independent trade unions, and to call a conference of such unions in 1994.
To work across borders to challenge repressive governments and brutal employers.
Workers of all countries unite !

A slogan from last century.
Often forgotten this century.
Our beacon for next century

Worker of all countries unite !
Now no longer just a wish,
But essential,

As the TNCs grow and dominate the world.
Workers of the world unite !
We have the twenty - first century to gain.

Nyla Alfred, Fiji.

**Synthesis of Workers Forum PP21
December 1992**

Statement

Sustaining Democracy and Development

The seminar is set out to capture the trend of development thinking and people's movements toward the next decade. The inherent objective, however, is to mobilize ideas in searching for a new dimension of political participation in the changing economic and political realities in order to improve people's well-being in the future. It therefore pays particular attention to democratization and a relationship with the process of sustainable development. In reviewing the trends, there were discussions on two concerns: a need for a paradigm shift and social movements in search of development alternatives. The discussions were based on broad conceptual framework on development, democracy, authoritarianism and social analysis; specific cases of Thai experiences on ecological movement, urban poor political participation, NGOs in new situations; and critical analysis of official development assistance such as the Japanese ODA. Participants are from different sectors of academics, NGOs, mass media and government officials. The exchange of ideas described extensively on the following aspects.

Development Critique

1. There are two major factors leading to development rethink. *First*, after several decades of developmentalism there is no proof that the livelihood of the world's population is better; and on top of it, environmental conditions and natural resources are tremendously and constantly degrading. The limits to growth premise is not yet appreciated at the practical level. *Second*, the world is changing rapidly. However, the change becomes bad when it is accelerated. Life is controlled by the economy. Moreover, the political sphere is dominated by economic rationality, overlooking the

significance of people as the center in development and decision-making process

2. The world is viewed from only the eyes of the expert, and this top-down learning is not perceptive of diversity in society and nature. Often the decision-making process is misled by misinformation and experts-only criteria; and development ideology is imposed through the mechanism of the present world economic order.

3. Development in most Third World countries is officially operated by an established institution like government bureaucracy which runs on certain rules such as standardization, centralization and control/enforcement.

These are fundamental reasons why development as such becomes less successful.

A Paradigm shift

4. The prolonged situation of over-development as such calls on a shift in the way of thinking, learning and behaving--a paradigm shift. It is proposed that a reversal of thinking and learning is a must to achieve sustainable development. This reversal of thinking and learning will only come into practice in a democratic environment; thus, democratization is both a contributing factor to and a result of the paradigm shift toward a more sustainable society.

5. A ready-made answer and a reference model may not be offered at hand but one important element that should not be missed is the recognition of diversity of society and nature. Establishing an alternative development can be done through a departure from the problematic nature of the

current development model. That is, move away from, for instance 'things' as point of reference, blueprint mode of development, preset goals, centralized decision-making, reductionist analytical assumption, standardized rules and top-down action toward more people-oriented, process mode of development, open goals, holistic analytical assumption, decentralized decision-making, diversity and bottom-up action.

6. It should be recognized that new concepts will be meaningful only when the people are actively involved in the process; in other words concepts are best built up by working with the grassroots at their level.

7. A paradigm shift might still be uncertain, however, because of the persistence of authoritarianism at all levels, starting from the international organizations down to national and local government, and in various degree from the abuse of power of the military to the parliamentarian, constituted, eco-elitist, bureaucratic, substratum, racial and sectorial authoritarianism, and even within oneself in seeking to depend on the powers-that-be.

8. A paradigm shift will not take place from the superstructure, it will begin with people's empowerment. This process can start from individuals. A reversal of learning is not to be confused with complicated methodology and institution because it should start from a personal attitude to trust the people in the first place. People's empowerment from the perspective of reversal of learning is to allow people to generate their own information that will be used to negotiate their demand with the government.

Social Movements

9. Although the movement of the society at large toward a paradigm shift is doubtful to many, a part of the people everywhere is moving toward life in harmony with nature. The worsening situation is in fact a pressing factor on people to unite and expand their networking.

10. Social movements begin from the issues pertaining to the immediate impacts of development on the livelihood of the people. In the recent years, people have learned to connect their immediate problems with political issues such as the State and power structure. The development of this trend shows higher political consciousness of the lower income group. People are quite often underestimated in their political awareness and commitment to the movements. Many times, this perception leads to the use of violence on the people.

11. Among others, ecological movements, borne out of many disastrous incidents, indicate the inter-relationship of maldevelopment, ecological deterioration, and shortfalls of political process. Yet, the environmental issues are not politicized as much as it is being bureaucratized by the State.

12. NGOs are important catalysts in social mobilization process. They have gained higher recognition from the government over the past decade with the change in the strategy toward more policy advocacy. However, NGOs are undergoing scepticism in their ideologies, role in people's empowerment, sustainability and self-criticism.

13. The prevailing movements here and there are important inputs for social conceptualization toward a paradigm shift.

Strategies for Actions

14. Democracy and people's empowerment are still the key to counterbalance doings wrong in the current development model.

15. A new reality, where the people have gained more experience in dealing with politics and a socially conscious new middle class have emerged, may change the scenario of alliance in democratization in some cases like Thailand. An optimistic view would tend to lean on synergistic approach calling for four parties, namely, the people, the business sector, the academics and the government working in a democratic manner. Yet, a call for more appropriate consumerist values of all parties concerned, especially those of the new middle class, must be reflected upon.

16. A more direct approach would opt for non-party and informal political movement. It was learned particularly from the case of Thailand that parliamentary democracy is also much of an illusion at times. The grassroots work and networking is the core of counterbalancing forces. The task, therefore, is to get the grassroots sector strong and to build up people-to-people relationship at all levels, international, national and local.

17. In reality, the optimistic viewpoint as such and the more direct approach of non-parliamentarian politics are applied in concert.

18. A concern on how much we need to sacrifice before the society will learn a lesson. led to a need to establish a place and a way to generate dialogue among people so that lesson can be learned and passed on without, or less, sufferings. A better and regular communication among members of the alliance of alternative thinking is needed.

19. A practice of reversal of learning can be promoted to enhance indigenous and grassroots participation in development process. Information generated by the grassroots should be widely publicized to pave a new way for understanding reality. A reversal of learning is also an indispensable means for changes at the professional and institutional levels.

20. The seminar in a way demonstrates that the learning process is as much important as the goals. A grand strategy, although needed for a coherent action, would be less meaningful if simply offered. It is the feeling of solidarity that gives the alternative movements a confidence.

***PP21 Seminar
Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
21 - 22 November 1992***

Third World Tourism Forum Statement

Thirty eight participants from Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, India, Sri Lanka, Japan, the USA, Italy, Germany and the UK, took part in the Third World Tourism Forum of the Peoples' Plan for the 21st Century, held at the Phuket Teachers Training College, November 29 to December 4, 1992. The Forum was organised and hosted by the Phuket Environmental Protection Group (PEP), the Thai Network on Tourism (NT) and the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism (ECTWT).

The forum brought together tourism activists, some 'victims' of tourism from Asian nations and other concerned people to share their situations, views and insights, based on personal experiences and common struggles, to expose the consequences of tourism, and raise global awareness and concern through this forum. Case studies were presented, and issues relating to the impacts and causes of tourism analysed and discussed. The purposes of the forum were to strengthen the networks of concern, to support popular action at various levels, and to initiate a critical dialogue with policy makers.

On the first day, we were exposed to the reality of tourism in Phuket, with one group examining issues relating to golf course and resort development, and another visiting various luxury beach resorts.

The next day, we met with local activists, teacher a woman caddy, who shared first-hand experiences on the impact of mass tourism on people and the environment of Phuket. We also heard from a village headman from Koh Samui (island) on the effect of tourism on his island and marine resources. Their presentations highlighted land encroachment, water resources depletion, problems related to garbage and sewage disposal, sea turtle extinction, coral and mangrove forest destruction.

The social effects were seen in the exploitation of Chao Lae (Sea People) as tourist attractions, the increase of prostitution, and the adoption of materialistic lifestyles. In addition, big multinational hotels have denied people access to beaches, public land and even public roads.

In terms of response to the problems created by tourism in Phuket, the Phuket Environmental Protection Group (PEP) works to create awareness and identify priorities for urgent action, and calls for international support and solidarity.

We were enriched by presentations made by participants from Malaysia, Taiwan, Sri Lanka, Goa, India, Thailand and Japan. Reports were also heard from existing networks on tourism such as the Third World Tourism European Network (TEN), and the Asian Tourism Action Network (ANTENNA).

Common issues affecting Asian tourist destinations include the development of luxury golf courses and resorts, tourism prostitution, commercialisation of indigenous cultures, acquisition of land and other natural resources, violation of human rights, insensitive government policies and plans, and the hegemonic role played by international multilateral and bilateral aid agencies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

We concluded that the local people have been left out of the development process, and deprived of their rights. Social and cultural values have been undermined, natural resources depleted, and the environment ravaged. While tourism claims to promote understanding and harmony between people and cultures, its present form does not generally allow a humane relationship between tourists and local people. The relationship between golfers and caddies is a clear example of neo-colonialism.

Tourism has economically benefited just a minority of already affluent people, while the majority of the population have to suffer the effects of inflation and the indignity of servile, low-paid forms of employment.

We realise that there is a close collusion between the real estate developers, the tourism industry, local and national governments, often including the police and even the judiciary. When local people have sought to assert their rights, they have faced harassment, and even repression. The co-existence of islands of affluence in a sea of impoverishment is an assault on the dignity of human beings, a combination of racism injustice and exploitation.

As we close our forum, we resolve to oppose and act upon tourism's destructive impact on society, economy, culture and environment.

We support all initiatives that aim to liberate our peoples from the shackles of this global phenomenon, and will endeavour to coordinate and integrate these efforts, and continue to place tourism on the agenda of other social movement.

Declaration Intention of the Thai Ethnic Groups

Background

We desire to request the King and Queen of Thailand and the country as a whole to make possible our intention to live happily in this country. This is what we hope to do for the rest of our lives.

We are willing to cooperate with the government and the rest of the Thai people in order to maintain peace in the country and help it develop further.

We would like the government to assure us that we will be allowed to have representatives in the development committees at each administration level so that we can have the opportunity to share our traditions and environment.

Specific Requests

Following are our requests as ethnic Thai groups:

1. We would like to obtain Thai citizenship and exercise the same rights as other Thais so that there will not be any division among the people.

2. We want land rights to make our living on the land that we inhabit. We are determined to live in peace and happiness based on an appropriate occupation, i.e., natural agricultural conservation, to make the natural resources last longer and ensure our cultural lineage.

We will suggest plans for equal distribution of the land. We are ready to cooperate with the government and form a committee to

control the use of the land in accordance with the government policy of preserving natural agriculture in order improve and balance the use of land and the environment;

3. We are willing to help in improving and developing the forest and natural resources by supporting the government officials and the community.

Our organization is willing to cooperate in determining the boundaries of the reserved forest, to take responsibility in planting trees and to improve the usefulness of the forests, the watersheds and the mangrove forests.

4. Our women would like respect for their actions and cooperation from others, so that they will have the same rights as the men in a society that has difficulty in understanding about sex, by upholding our traditions on marriage and family life. Lack of understanding about sex results in prostitution and the spread of AIDS among our women. Our women wish to have the opportunity to develop their own character in order to participate in the development and decision-making processes in the family, community and society. In this manner,they can set their life-style in a self-determined way which is long-lasting, balanced and in harmony with nature.

Thus our women state that:

- We wish to get together as different groups at the village and community levels to increase our knowledge; encourage each other and share our resources;
- We want to build understanding and acceptance of our husbands and groups leaders so that they will support our intentions;

- We would like more education and practical experience in various forms;

5. We want our unique traditions handed down to our next generations. We would like the government to adjust its method of teaching. We want to be involved in the education of our distinct groups so that we can harmonise such education with our tradition and lifestyle;

6. We will cooperate with the government in solving the problem with opium by decreasing its planting. This measure, though, will not be sufficient to solve the heroin problem. We suggest that the government find a way of controlling the heroin dealers and provide help to the heroin addicts as soon as possible before this problem becomes too big to handle.

We resolve to help each other control the drug addiction problem. We want to use our own traditions and religion in restoring the mind body of our addicted members.

International Workshop on Natural Resources Management and Environment

Forum statement

29th November 1992 at Songkhla, Thailand

We, participants of the International Workshop on Natural Resources Management and Environment under the People's Plan for the Twenty - first Century Forum, representing the concern of peoples around the world, wish to proclaim the following declaration as proposals cum conclusions of our solemn common path - finding for a better world.

Bearing in mind the powerfulness of the ever growing market economy, the harms done by conventional development strategies and the necessity to look for better alternative development strategies and lifestyles congenial to the nature and mankind.

Having considered the Declaration of the Victims of Development or Natural Resource Management done under the Environment Forum: Natural Resources and Democratic Movement, on the 29th November 1992 at Songkla, Thailand; and having shared other experiences from several parts of the world.

Request the world community to consider the below listed action-oriented measures towards a better future for mankind.

....

....

6. Any socialization process towards a better resource management should be allowed. All negative deterrent prerequisites to such a process such as, registration or self denial of rights to politicize should be abolished.

7. The government must reorientate its development policies to generate human prosperity and betterment and to abandon all those destructive policies which have been harming both urban and rural communities.

8. Political parties and members of the parliament must attend the plights of the people and actively help to solve them.

9. The fundamental rights of the people to make choice in settlement and occupation and to conserve their community cultural heritage should be recognized and entrenched in the constitution. No violation of such rights can be allowed (the one done on the pretext of development included).

10. A summit forum should be held to allow the representatives of the people's organizations and the government to discuss and formulate a national policy on the rights to and the process for resource management.

11. All measures for all levels (I) should be followed.

IV. Measures to be implemented at the community level.

1. All natural resources belong to both the national government and the community, the approval of the community is needed in order to implement any project which may affect it. The government in exercising its power in the utilization of the natural resources must fulfil its duty as a trustee for the community, nation and mankind.

2. The right to information on any development project activity which may affect a community including the process to gain access to such information should be enacted in a legislation.

3. Law enforcement in environment related matters should include local community's participation in order to guarantee a better surveillance and a prompt remedy to any harm to the environment.

4. All measures for all levels (I) should followed.

Declaration of the Consumers:

CONSUMERS IN UNITY TO PROTECT ENVIRONMENT

We, 200 community leaders from 20 provinces all over Thailand, academics, teachers, students, mass media and NGO workers together with fellow consumers from Japan and Malaysia, issue this Declaration of the Consumers from the Consumers Forum, "Consumers in Unity to Protect, Environment", during 2-4 December 1992 at Suan Sunanda Teachers College, Bangkok, as follows:

1. Chemical Pesticides and Hervicides: Life and Environment Destroying Substances

As chemical pesticides and herbicides are dangerous to farmers, consumers, domestic and wild animals, environment and agricultural products, therefore:

1.1 The government must have effective mechanism to control the highly dangerous chemicals as follows:

- The chemicals which the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives imposes import ban should be immediately withdrawn from the market as it is found that some of these chemicals which have been banned from import for several years can still be bought in their present market, such as Heptachlor.
- While there has been a worldwide campaign to stop using 12 highly dangerous chemicals, the so-called "Dirty Dozen", Thailand still allows some of them to be used in the country, such as PARAQUAT and METHYL PARATHION.
- Incompatibility exists between the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives in case of DDT. While the Ministry of

Agriculture bans using of DDT in agriculture, the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives in case of DDT. While the Ministry of Agriculture bans using of DDT in agriculture, the Ministry of Public Health still uses it to prevent spread of Malaria. In practice, DDT has been very much , causing eternal dangers to both human health and environment as it takes no less than 30 years for it to misused dissolve.

1.2 The government should have measures to make chemical companies responsible for any damage caused by its products, whether it is damage on farmers and consumers' health or on ecosystems, and pay compensation.

1.3 The government should actively and continuously promote and support use of organic/ herbal pesticides, such as neem, to replace chemicals.

1.4 Farmers must themselves be responsible for consumers and environment by reducing and eventually stopping uses of chemicals.

1.5 Consumers must help create demand for chemical-free agricultural products.

2. Toxic Substances in Food: Death at Your Tongue

From random sampling all over the country, it is found that there is various kind of food contaminated by toxic substances being sold in general market, threatening life and health of consumers. These toxic substances include cloth dyes, Borax, disinfectants, gunpowder, Formalin, fake vinegar and some pesticides.

2.1 The government should have measures that can be immediately used to deal with both producers and consumers who commit a clear offence. For example, Acetic acid which is used in

leather factories is produced and sold for consumption in place of vinegar. Another case is colouring of dry shrimps or crispy fried fish cake which is strictly forbidden by the Food and Medicine Commission.

2.2 The government should conduct random sampling of food to test for toxic substances as a way to strictly enforce the law.

2.3 Consumers must constantly seek information and use their intellect to judge whether to consume or even to buy it. They should not consume any products suspected to be contaminated.

3. Detergent: Danger in Household

3.1 The government should ban using phosphate as a component of detergent as it is a key substance that destroys oxygen in water and in turn causes water pollution.

3.2 The government should control detergent advertisement which is not factual. For example, "Zeolite formula to forever keeps water clean", or "Washing (with the detergent) makes cloth extremely white and protect your hands", or "only on spoonful will make cloth clean without using hands". Apart from controlling measures on advertisement, there must be measures to penalize producers who abuse them.

3.3 Label of detergent produced for sale in Thailand lacks information necessary for consumers, that are the ingredients, date of production, price, clear instruction for use and first aid methods as there may be cases of allergies or accidents caused by the detergent. The government should order the producers to print them on the label to protect consumers' right to information.

3.4 The government should ban selling of detergent in small lots as the small lots normally don't have proper label. Consequently, if damage arises from using it, the consumers would not be able to demand

for compensation from producers. Moreover, selling in small lots is also a violation against Industrial Products Standards.

3.5 Consumers must be aware of danger from detergent, not easily believing the advertisement, not buying in small lots, learn how to use it properly and join hands to demand for not using phosphate as a component in detergent, for control of advertisement and for proper labelling.

*Presentation to the Main Forum, PP21
Chulalongkorn University,
Bangkok, 6 December 1992*

PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM



Representatives and activists of the grassroots and people's movements, human rights organisations, movements demanding the rights of self-determination for ethnic, religious and other minorities of Asia-Pacific region met and discussed violation of human rights and form of struggles in the **"Peace and Human Rights Forum"** of the People's Plan for the Twenty-First Century during 2-5 December, 1992 in Bangkok, Thailand.

From the presentations, it was clear that the Asia-Pacific with its wide variety of nation states, so different from one another in forms of government, size, population, histories, religion, culture, language and economy, are linked by one common feature - All the governments of this region are guilty in one way or another of violations of the basic human rights of their citizens.

In these countries where the military is the ruling class, or where the power and influence of the military over governments is only too apparent, there is no public accountability at all. Ruling elite, like the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in Burma, are entrenched in power and have no qualm about crushing any form of dissent in the most brutal manner. There, are besides, absolutist monarchical regime in the region, like in Bhutan, which are also totally repressive.

However, civilian governments elected by the people, have also proved to be very authoritarian. So called democratic governments like India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Singapore, Philippines and Malaysia actually serve the interests of the elites in their societies. The vast majority of the people have no effective role in the decision-making process. Nonetheless, civilian rule even if its commitment to meaningful democracy is weak, is certainly preferable to military rule. Military rule and militarisation should opposed at all costs.

Whether a government is military or civilian, blatantly authoritarian or subtly repressive, the dominant mode of economic development in the Asia-Pacific region today glorifies and sanctifies profits at the expenses of human beings. It encourages the accumulation of wealth and fosters an acquisitive mentality with very little regard for ethical values and moral principles.

Some large scale projects like mega dams displacing huge number of people, often threatening the very existence of local communities and causing massive environmental disorder are being implemented with the World Bank loans and assistance from other industrialised countries of the West for generating electricity for industries and big cities. Rich farmlands and forests and the environment as a whole are being destroyed. People are being

uprooted from traditional habitat. Their livelihood is being destroyed. At the same time, conditionality imposed by the International Monetary Fund wreck havoc on fragile Asian economies where the majority of the people live below the poverty line.

In order to attract foreign capital, many governments in the region have imposed severe restrictions on the rights of the workers. As a result, multi-national corporations have unrestricted freedom to exploit the workers.

In many countries of the Asia-Pacific region, process of industrial development has reinforced discrimination based on caste, class, ethnicity, region and sex. In the region as a whole, women continue to bear the brunt of oppressive social and cultural structures, some of which have been inherited from the past. The so-called economic development, instead of empowering the women, has further weakened her position by turning her into cheap industrial labour, often discriminated in job position and wage.

Violation of civil and political rights of the people is being justified in the name of economic development. The issue of development is being presented as an option which is incompatible with the rights of people.

Most governments of the region, irrespective of their political orientation, have enacted repressive laws in flagrant disregard of their own constitutions and their commitment to uphold the principles of human rights enshrined in the UN Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These laws empower the security forces to arrest without warrant and detain citizens without trial for long periods. Torture, custodial rape and extra-judicial killings have become common occurrences in certain countries in the region. False

disappearance and forced eviction of entire communities in the name of national security constitute some of the grossest violation of human rights. Sometimes Martial Law Dictates and Emergency Regulation are used to crush legitimate political dissent.

Very often, the State resorts to the fallacious argument that in the interest of national sovereignty and security, it has the duty to curb the legitimate rights of the people. The experience of most societies of the region reveals that this tactic used by the State to homogenize inherent political, cultural and linguistic diversities and to force the society into a submission. Similarly the State sometimes argues that cultural particularities of the mainstream demand the restriction of certain essential freedom. The freedom which are thus curtailed very often are the ones which enable the people to articulate the cause of the oppressed. In the end, these false arguments about national security and national security class which are invariably projected as the interest of the entire nation.

Violations of the rights of the minorities in the countries of the region and the emerging struggle of the right of self-determination was discussed at great length. It was felt that certain governments are exploiting these situations for further militarisation of the polity. The Forum felt that the major communities of the countries of this region need to be made aware of the situation. This is a question that cannot be avoided any longer. People of different communities should face each other across the table, and try to resolve their conflict through dialogue.

Ethnic conflicts and ethnic violence today, apart from the enormous problems of mass poverty and political expression, prove beyond any doubt that the existing mode of development is against human dignity and social justice. People's organizations should have

the rights to be educated and conscientized on the lop-sided character of this development and the need to evolve an alternative vision of development and democracy.

This is the best time to articulate an alternative vision of society. After the collapse of communist regimes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the dominant capitalist order is under scrutiny. Even now with economic recession in the United States and in certain European countries, the weaknesses of the capitalist system are becoming obvious to a lot of people. Besides this system is integral to the whole tradition, tradition of economic, political, cultural and psychological oppression and subjugation which has marginalised and pauperised the people of Asia. The human right struggle in Asia must incorporate an earnest effort to liberate the people's alternative vision from these inner and outer shackles of bondage.

Our alternative social order will promote genuine development and meaningful democracy which will be compatible with human rights and human dignity. This will lead to the empowerment of the people. Empowerment will demand, among other things, economic security, political space, health services, education, access to information and knowledge.

The participants examined their own movements and other forms of on-going struggles of the people in search of methods and processes which will lead to effective empowerment of the people. Democracy to be meaningful has to be participatory. They felt that the right to organize which is a pre-condition for participatory democracy should not be curbed and curtailed in the interest of preserving the power of the ruling elites.

The control over media, direct and indirect censorship and other forms of restrictions prevalent in the countries of Asia-Pacific region should be removed to ensure the freedom of expression. People must have access to information. The people need to be educated about their rights. Peace and human right education should be at the popular level and should have as its audience the younger generation and the middle classes.

The participants expressed their solidarity with people struggling for genuine development and meaningful democracy. In particular, they acknowledge the just aspiration of communities in the region seeking to achieve autonomy or independence, through the legitimate exercise of their right of self-determination. The Forum felt that people fleeing oppression and seeking sanctuary in other countries in the region should be accorded refugee status as a matter of rule. There should not be any forced repatriation. UNHCR should extend all help to the refugees in the region.

The forum was also of the view that any and every action which contribute towards the empowerment of people be it education, training research, information dissemination, campaigning or networking should be given active support and encouragement by all those who are cherished human dignity and social justice. Activists, it was also felt, should devise newer and more effective methods of communication and conscientization in fighting the forces of domination and control at national, regional and international level.

Empowering the people would also required the creation of certain new structure. An Information Coordination centre could be of great help to communication involved in the struggle for self-determination. In a number of the countries in this region there may also be case for establishing Minorities Commission.

The Forum resolved to explore the idea of establishing an **Asian Peoples Assembly**. The proposed assembly will serve as the voice of the people expressed through people movement, grassroots organization, NGOs, etc., seeking justice and equality in a world dominated by nation states. The Asian People Assembly will be part of a larger endeavour leading through the formation of a **World Peoples Assembly**.

The Forum resolved that a Task Force be set up with would study the feasibility of establishing an Asian Peoples Assembly (a proposal for setting up a Task Force for the Asian Peoples Assembly is annexed for consideration of the Main Forum).

Empowering the people would also required the creation of certain new structure. An **Information Coordination Centre** could be of great help to communication involved in the struggle for self-determination. In a number of the countries in this region there may also be case for establishing Minorities Commission.

The Forum resolved to explore the idea of establishing an Asian Peoples Assembly. The proposed assembly will serve as the voice of the people expressed through people movement, grassroots organization, NGOs, etc., seeking justice and equality in a world dominated by nation states. The Asian People Assembly will be part of a larger endeavour leading through the formation of a World Peoples Assembly. The Forum resolved that a Task Force be set up with would study the feasibility of establishing an Asian Peoples Assembly (a proposal for setting up a Task Force for the Asian Peoples Assembly is annexed for consideration of the Main Forum).

The forum endorsed in principle the Asian NGOs document entitled the "Human Rights in Asia: the Struggles for Human Dignity".

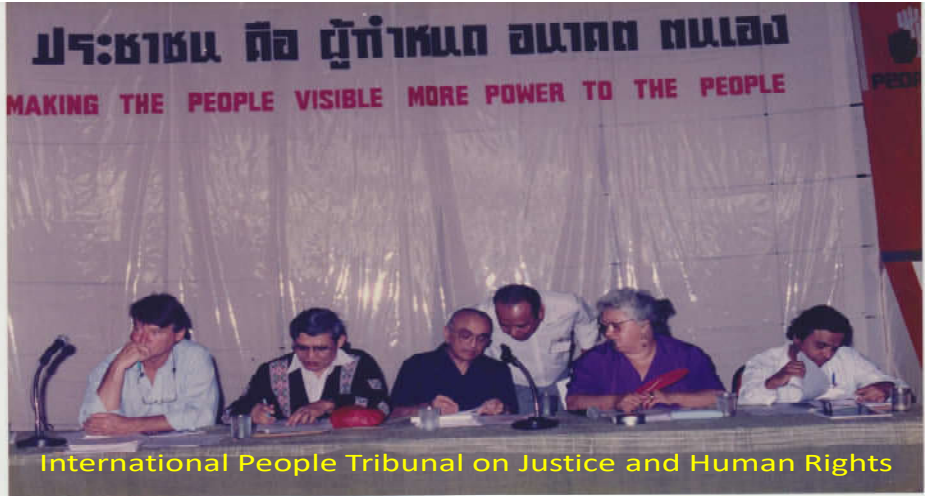
The document which seeks to establish a common Asian citizens' position on the human rights situation in the region will be submitted to the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in June 1993. It will also be used as a basic for dialogue in Asian governments at the conference's Asian Regional Preparatory Meeting in Bangkok in March 1993. The forum urges NGOs in the region which have not endorsed the document to do so immediately. NGOs should take the initiative to make the document widely know throughout the region after the document is presented to the public on 10 December 1992.

5 December 1992
Bangkok, Thailand



The Asia-Pacific People's Tribunal

The Issues of Burma, East Timor and Thailand



The Tribunal

The Tribunal is not a Court set up by any State or any regionally or internationally constituted authority. It is a People's Tribunal - Tribunal set up by concerned citizens and drawing its sustenance from a commitment to human rights and social justice. It consists of persons who do not hold office under any Government and who are chosen to be members of the Tribunal because of their human rights record. The members of the Tribunal are drawn from different parts of the Asia-Pacific region with a view to ensuring that the Tribunal is representative of the entire region.

The Tribunal's mandate is to enquire into the human rights violations in Burma, East Timor, The Tribunal has also been requested to address certain specific human rights issues relating to Thailand. A

question may be asked: why should the people of the Asia-Pacific region be concerned about human rights violations taking place in Burma and East Timor? Should it not be the concern only of the people of these countries? It has a deep and profound impact over other countries as well. Its international ripples impair and jeopardise peace in the entire region. Human Rights have now become a major concern of the entire community in the region. Moreover, humanity is one and indivisible and wherever there is suffering and wherever there is denial of basic human rights the entire humanity must feel concerned regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or national boundaries. That is why this Tribunal is set up as part of People's Plan for 21st Century to probe into the human rights violations which have occurred in two of the countries of the region.

Testimonies on Burma

The Tribunal first took up the case of Burma where large scale violations of human rights are said to have occurred. Several witness, most of whom being themselves victims of human rights violations, gave testimony before the Tribunal, setting out their experiences. The first witness was Patrick Sam Hoo who spoke about the conditions of civil war a man prevailing in Burma and how human rights were being gravely violated. Two monks gave testimony, one was Amkyla and the other was U Khe Mar Sara. They broadly gave testimony about the total denial of democracy under the military dictatorship and how the monks were being treated, their human rights violated and there was a regime of terror. They state that villagers were forced into porter service for carrying heavy loads of supplies and ammunition for the army and often they were forced to walk ahead of the army as human minesweepers or to trigger ambushes and their women were raped. The Mon language was forbidden to be taught in schools and even Pali was not permitted to be taught. They testified that there was a

systematic attempt to eliminate Mon as a people with distinct culture and history of their own. Another witness, Nural Islam, narrated how the cultural and religious identity of 1-2 million Muslims in northern Arakan was to be wiped out by the military regime and they were being forced to flee from Burma into Bangladesh. U Win Khet, a crusader in the struggle for liberation testified how the election results were nullified by the military regime some of the elected member of Parliament were placed behind bars and a farcical National Convention of nominated members was sought to be convened which was a total negation of democracy. Two other witnesses, namely, Khun Okker and Khun Kyar Oo gave testimony as to how civilian population was made to provide forced labour and compelled to work as porters Dr. A. H. Karmal gave evidence about the brutal torture to which prisoners were subjected. Three students, namely Aung Naing Oo, Yar Zar and Kyaw Kyaw testified the killings of students by the military. Kyaw Kyaw gave evidence that he was taken to the prison in Prom for interrogations and when he refused to answer the questions asked to him, he was subjected to torture and then kept in a very small dark cell and his father was harassed and dismissed from service and arrested for no reason. He also stated that such illegal arrested and tortures were taking place in other town and cities of Burma. Aye Saung, representative of the Democratic Alliance of Burma, testified that in 1989 seven monks were shot dead and 200 more were arrested and one of them who was a senior monk, was forcibly disrobed and died in prison sometime ago. He also deposed about the detention of Aung San Sue Kyi, who won the Nobel Peace Prize, and how on 10th December 1991 over 200 students of Rangoon University were arrested for demonstrating in support of Aung San Sue Kyi. Saw Arthur Shwe, who is a member of the Karen National Union, stated that the Karen people suffered grave atrocities at the hands of the military

rulers and more particularly so after the popular uprising was crushed. He gave details of the atrocities in his testimony and pointed out that the atrocities such as rape, murder, forced labour, looting and killing have forced the Karen people to flee and there are now more than 400,000 Karen refugees taking refuge along the Thai - Burmese border and 200,000 to 300,000 have been displaced internally. The last witness was Thaw Thai who spoke about severe damage to the environment as a result of flawed development policies adopted by SLORC in regards to lumber trading fishing grants, petroleum cooperation and production, and power projects.





Testimonies on East Timor

The Tribunal heard two representations on East Timor. The first one from His Excellency Dom Sebastiao De Castello-Branco, the Portuguese Ambassador to Thailand. The second from Professor Jose Ramos-Horta the Special Representative of the National Council of Maubere Resistance.

The Portuguese Ambassador testified that the occupation of East Timor was clearly illegitimate. This was supported by the immediate response of the United Nations Security Council following the 1975 invasion demanding immediate Indonesian withdrawal from East Timor and respect for the East Timorese's right to self-determination. The illegal occupation has continued.

He also testified that in his view the recent statement from Xanana Gusmao was clearly obtained under "extreme duress" and that he found it intolerable to conceive that a man of such proven commitment as Xanana would "abandon his brothers.

He stated the importance of the involvement of East Timorese representatives at the upcoming United Nations - sponsored talks between Portugal and Indonesia.

The second testimony put the case the East Timor has never been part of any other entity before the Portuguese colonization. Until, 1978, Indonesia has never made any claims on East Timor.

There is clear case of illegal occupation.

The United Nations acknowledged this in 1972 with a unanimous demand for Indonesian withdrawal from East Timor. this has never happened.

Professor Horta also accused Indonesia of genocide and stated that since occupation in excess of 200,000 East Timorese have been exterminated.

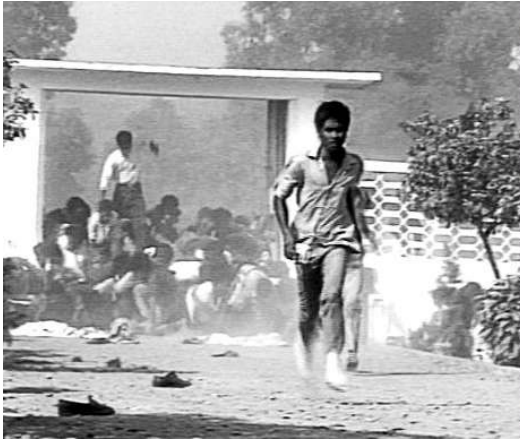
He demands of the Tribunal:

1. That the Tribunal affirm the right of self-determination in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution Number 15/44 and 15/45;
2. That Indonesia withdraw from East Timor in accordance with the UN Resolution Number 384 (1975) and 385 (1976);
3. That the Tribunal find Indonesia guilty of genocide.

Finally, vivid televised evidence was submitted of the November 1991 Dili massacre. This was shown on United Kingdom Channel 4 television from a Yorkshire television documentary - In Cold Blood. Up to two hundred unarmed East Timorese demonstrators were killed.

The evidence was clear and unmistakable. We saw an excited, jubilant gathering of predominantly young people marching through the streets of Dili. These people were indiscriminately shot.





Tribunal Findings

Common findings on Burma and East Timor

The Tribunal undertook a review of international human rights principles and standards relevant to the testimonies placed before us.

The Tribunal is appalled by the enormous toll, in terms of human suffering, that the ongoing struggles for self-determination, democracy and liberation in Burma and East Timor have entailed: ***as a result of failure to respect and adhere to basic international human rights standards.***

A. The right to self-determination

The Tribunal feels it important to reiterate that self-determination is not primarily about territory but is primarily about people - a right of peoples. Specifically, Article 1 of both the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights proclaims and seeks to safeguard for **ALL PEOPLES**:

- I. the right to 'freely determine their political status';
- II. the right to "freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development"; and
- III. the right to "freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources".

Moreover, Common Article 1 of both Covenants indicates that: "In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence".

From the testimonies presented, it is clear that such "deprivation" continue unabated and that every one of the above 3 rights continues to be violated in Burma and in East Timor. Moreover, the Tribunal finds that violation of the above mentioned rights by the government of Burma and the regime in East Timor has resulted in their resorting to massive violations also of a wide range of related human rights such as:

- freedom of speech, expression, association and organization

- rights to due process, rule of law and equal protection of laws,
- rights to participation,
- rights to life, family, livelihood, land, resources, environment, community and to religious and cultural identity,
- rights to physical integrity and dignity of person
- rights of domicile, nationality, citizenship and freedom of movement,
- freedom from slavery and bondage

In sum, both in Burma and East Timor the Tribunal finds grave and continuous mass violations of people's rights of freedom, peace and justice.

The Tribunal therefore urges the government of Burma and the illegal regime in East Timor to respect, protect and promote the rights of self-determination of the peoples of Burma and East Timor as an essential precondition to bringing to an end the massive violations of the wide range of human rights enumerated above.

B. The Right to Democracy

As with the right to self-determination elaborated above, the Tribunal feels it important to drawn upon international human rights instruments to outline the content of a people's right to democracy. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (**UDHR**) clearly and unequivocally states that, "the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government". Thus, a government that fails to acknowledge, respect and implement the will for its peoples **HAS NO BASIS:** politically, legally and morally.

Article 21 of **UDHR** also goes on to affirm that "everyone has the right to take part in the government of his/her" country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. Hence, the concept of

democracy envisages not only representative but participatory democracy as well. The testimonies from Burma and East Timor alike, make it clear to the Tribunal that the present government in Burma and the illegal regime in East Timor are neither representative, nor participatory.

Moreover, the UDHR also enumerated several essential principles and criteria for evaluating the democratic nature of governments:

- i. Equality before the law and equal protection of laws;
- ii. Security of persons: against arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, violence, disappearances and extra-judicial executions;
- iii. Preservation and promotion of the dignity of human person: individual and collective;
- iv. Realization of the right to effective remedies.

In sum, the Tribunal finds that an utter negation of the rule of law prevails in Burma and East Timor.

This Tribunal is of the view that present international human rights law demands that all peoples have a right to democracy (the content of which right has been demarcated above). Such a right of peoples to participate in self-governance by representatives freely chosen continues to be denied to the peoples of Burma and East Timor.

C. The right to Liberation

In view of the pattern of persistent and systematic denial and violation of the rights to self-determination and democracy presented in the testimonies from Burma and East Timor, this Tribunal has been prompted to restate well-established principles and standards of

international human rights laws in addressing two questions basic to the present situation in Burma and East Timor:

- i. Does present day international human rights law recognise a people's right to liberation if so, what is the content of such a people's right to liberation:
- ii. Does present day international human rights law recognize a people's right to struggle for liberation?

This Tribunal finds in favour of the existence of a people's right to liberation. The content of such a ***people's right to liberation*** is clearly spelled out in international human rights instruments to include:

- i. the attainment of self-determination;
- ii. the realization of both representative and participatory democracy;
- iii. freedom of all peoples from fear and from want and from exploitation;
- iv. attainment of plural society in which **all** individuals, **all** communities, and all sectors of society can truly enjoy and realize that most precious of all human rights: the **RIGHT TO BE HUMAN** of which the **RIGHT TO BE WOMEN** must be accepted as an essential and integral component.

Turning to the question as to whether people have a right to struggle for liberation when it is denied to them (as the Burma and East Timor testimonies indicate), the Tribunal refers to the Preamble of UDHR which states, "It is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse -- as a last resort -- to rebellion against tyranny and oppression that human rights should be protected by the rule of law". Where, as in Burma and East Timor, human rights are not protected by the tyranny of authoritarian laws, this Tribunal affirms that the affected peoples have a right (and perhaps a duty as well) to resort to rebellion against such "tyranny and oppression.

This Tribunal, therefore, reaffirms that where a people's right to liberation (as demarcated above with reference to international human rights instruments) is being denied and violated, the affected people have a **right** to struggle for liberation. The Tribunal also **reiterates** that the international human rights values, principles and standards **MUST** be complied with by **all parties** and in all aspects of such struggles of peoples denied of liberation.

D. From Rights of Peoples to Duties of Governments

This Tribunal recognizes, on the basis of the testimonies it has received, that realisation of the rights of peoples involves enforcement of the duties owed to such peoples by their governments. A review of international human rights instruments relevant to the issues presented to this Tribunal indicated five fundamental duties which Asian and Pacific governments owe to their peoples in respect of fulfilment of their human rights obligations:

- i. the **BASIC DUTY OF GOVERNMENTS TO PROTECT THEIR PEOPLES FROM VIOLATIONS AND ABUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS:**
- ii. The duty of government officials and functionaries (who are supposedly the protectors of the rights of their peoples) to refrain from governmental lawlessness and abuse of authority and position;
- iii. the duty of governments to correct such human rights abuses by securing the accountability of human rights violators within the government;
- iv. the duty to promote the progressive realization of all human rights, of all its peoples: especially the poor, disadvantaged and the oppressed;
- v. the duty to desist from damaging and destroying peoples' lives, livelihoods, lands resources, communities, and environment.

E. The Right to Justice: The Thai Case

The Thai testimony presented before the Tribunal raises two issues, both relating to justice for the victims of human rights violations. The first issue relates to the (disappeared) people missing since May of this year (1992). For them, as well as for the disappeared in Burma, East Timor and elsewhere, it is vital that justice be done. Failure to render such justice would be tantamount to denial of their very existence and negation of the supreme sacrifice they have made. The Tribunal urges that appropriate measures be taken to ensure that they shall not have died in vain.

So far as the issue of granting impunity (through an amnesty bill or otherwise) to those guilty of human rights violations is concerned, the Tribunal is of the view that grant of such impunity by any government, anywhere in the world, would be in contravention of international human rights law, would in fact constitute a fresh and callous violation of human rights, would be a cruel denial of the victims' right to justice, and would in many contexts impede the process of national reconciliation and healing.

The Tribunal finds two propositions set out in the Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to be especially relevant to the testimonies heard:

- i. "Disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind". The barbarous acts described in the testimonies presented to us demand that the conscience of the Asia-Pacific peoples be outraged and that such outrage translate itself into effective action responses;
- ii. "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human

family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world". The Tribunal is of the view that freedom, justice and peace cannot be achieved in the Asia-Pacific region so long as gross human rights violations such as those presented to us regarding Burma and East Timor are allowed to continue unchecked and unabated.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Tribunal recommends the following measures as means of giving redress to the victims of human rights violations in Burma, East Timor and Thailand as well as of preventing the same violations from recurring:

A. To the inter-governmental community

- (i) On government lawlessness
Pressure the governments of Burma, Indonesia and Thailand
 - initiate judicial action against government personnel found violating human rights;
 - provide compensation to the victims of human rights violations and/or their families;
 - withdraw military units in civilian communities;
 - repeal inhuman and oppressive prison laws and improve prison/detention facilities;
 - provide a program for educating government personnel (including members of the internal security forces) on the values and principles of human rights

(ii) On democracy

Pressure the governments of Burma and Indonesia to

- initiate dialogue with the concerned peoples toward peaceful co-existence;
- initiate legislations that respect the religion, culture and language of the people;
- institute mechanisms for getting informed consent of the people on the use, development and management of the natural resources in their respective areas.

The Tribunal urges those countries which have active economic relationship with Burma, and in particular China, Japan and Thailand, to intensify diplomatic pressure with the aim of compelling the government of Burma to cease human rights violations and hand over power to the freely elected representatives of the people. And as part of the diplomatic pressure, the Burmese government should be told that if within certain specified time the above demands are not met, economic sanctions would be applied.

In the case of East Timor, the Tribunal urges those countries which provide economic or military assistance to the government of Indonesia to consider sanctions if within a certain specified time the Indonesian government fails to take steps which would enable the people of East Timor to exercise their right to self-determination and also to cease human rights violations against the people of East Timor.

The Tribunal urges the United Nations to monitor closely the human rights situation in Burma and East Timor, and to review the continued membership of Burma and Indonesia in the world body.

B. To the non-governmental organizations

The Tribunal urges the non-governmental organizations involved in human rights work to

- continue monitoring the human rights situation in Burma and East Timor;
- provide more humanitarian assistance to the victims of human rights violations;
- provide support to non-governmental organizations in Burma, East Timor and Thailand regarding their human rights work;
- **send a People's Plan for the 21st Century (PP 21) representative to the session of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations in February 1993 in Geneva, Switzerland to present the findings of this Tribunal.**

Members of the Tribunal Judges:

Justice P.N. Bhagwati, Supreme Court of India

Thongbai Thongpao, Human Rights Lawyer Thailand

Hinewirangi Kohu-Morgan, Aotearoa Women Advocate

Chandra Muzaffa, Scholar/ academic of Malaysia

...

Movement

On Street Public Action





Alliance of Hope





Call for the
Right to
Maternity Leave
is the Basic
Human Rights
and Access to
Social Welfare !



In Commemoration with the Heroic Struggle of the
Popular Uprising against military forces in Thailand.
May 17-21, 1992

Re-compilation/ Digitalized by
Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD)
Email: acfod.bangkok@gmail.com

@Boonthan T Verawongse / PP21 Thailand 1992 Compilation edited 31052021