

Platform of the international movement ATTAC

International movement for democratic control of financial markets and their institutions

Financial globalization increases economic insecurity and social inequalities. It bypasses and undermines popular decision-making, democratic institutions, and sovereign states responsible for the general interest. In their place, it substitutes a purely speculative logic that expresses nothing more than the interests of multinational corporations and financial markets.

In the name of a transformation of the world depicted as a natural law, citizens and their representatives find their decision-making power contested. Such a humiliating proof of impotence encourages the growth of anti-democratic parties. It is urgent to block this process by creating new instruments of regulation and control, at the national, European, and international levels. Experience clearly shows that governments will not do so without encouragement. Taking up the double challenge of social implosion and political desperation thus requires a dramatic increase in civic activism.

The total freedom of capital circulation, the existence of tax havens, and the explosion of the volume of speculative transactions have forced governments into a frantic race to win the favor of big investors. Every day, one hundred billion dollars pass through the currency markets in search of instant profits, with no relation to the state of production or to trade in goods and services. The consequences of this state of affairs are the permanent increase of income on capital at the expense of labor, a pervasive economic insecurity, and the growth of poverty.

The social consequences of these developments are even more severe for dependent countries that are directly affected by the financial crisis and are subjected to the dictates of the IMF's adjustment plans. Debt service requires governments to lower social service budgets to a minimum and condemn societies to underdevelopment. Interest rates much higher than in the countries of the North contribute to the destruction of national producers; uncontrolled privatization and denationalization develop in the search for the resources demanded by investors.

Everywhere social rights are called into question. Where there are public retirement systems, workers are asked to replace them by a pension fund mechanism that subjects their own employers to the sole imperatives of immediate profitability, extends the sphere of influence of finance, and persuades citizens of the obsolescence of institutions of solidarity between nations, peoples, and generations. Deregulation affects the labor market as a whole, and the results include degradation of working conditions, the growth of workplace insecurity and unemployment, and the dismantling of systems of social protection.

Using economic development and job creation as a pretext, the major powers have not given up plans for a Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI) which would give the investors all the rights and leave national governments with all the responsibilities. Under the pressure of public opinion and mobilization of activists, they had to abandon plans to negotiate this agreement in the framework of the OECD, but discussions will resume in the framework of the World Trade Organization. At the same time the USA as well as the European Commission continue their free trade crusade, pushing for the creation of new zones of deregulation at the continental or intercontinental level (the PET project between Europe and North America, the extension of NAFTA into Latin America, etc.)



There is still time to put the brakes on most of these machines for creating inequalities between North and South as well as in the heart of the developed countries themselves. Too often, the argument of inevitability is reinforced by censorship of information about alternatives. Thus international financial institutions and the major media (whose owners are often beneficiaries of globalization) have been silent about the proposal of the American economist and Nobel Laureate James Tobin, to tax speculative transactions on currency markets. Even at the particularly low rate of 0.1%, the Tobin Tax would bring in close to \$100 billion every year. Collected for the most part by industrialized countries, where the principal financial markets are located, this money could be used to help struggle against inequalities, to promote education and public health in poor countries, and for food security and sustainable development. Such a measure fits with a clearly antispeculative perspective. It would sustain a logic of resistance, restore maneuvering room to citizens and national governments, and, most of all, would mean that political, rather than financial considerations are returning to the fore.

To this end, signatories propose to participate or to cooperate with the international movement ATTAC to debate, produce and disseminate information, and act together, in their respective countries as well as on the continental and international levels. This joint actions have the following goals:

- to hamper international speculation;
- to tax income on capital;
- to penalize tax havens;
- to prevent the generalization of pension funds;
- to promote transparency in investments in dependant countries;
- to establish a legal framework for banking and financial operations, in order not to penalize further consumers and citizens; the employees of banking institutions can play an important role in overseeing these operations;
- to support the demand for the general annulment of the public debt of dependent countries, and the use of the resources thus freed in behalf of populations and sustainable development, which many call paying off the "social and ecological debt."

More generally, the goals are:

- to reconquer space lost by democracy to the sphere of finance,
- to oppose any new abandonment of national sovereignty on the pretext of the "rights" of investors and merchants,
- to create a democratic space at the global level.

It is simply a question of taking back, together, the future of our world.



An international movement for democratic control of financial markets and their institutions

For a convergence of resistance to neo-liberalism

The *Mouvement International ATTAC* was created at an international meeting in Paris, on December 11-12, 1998, instigated by an invitation of the French association ATTAC (1). About ten countries from Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe were represented, together with several networks or coordination groups (2). This was only a preliminary work meeting, with determined objectives: testing the prospects of collaboration and common actions for 1999, so as to be able to submit accurate proposals to all the concerned movements.

This meeting offered the opportunity of a collective initial contact, which revealed itself to be very positive. Exchanges between delegations were rich and actually allowed us to specify the general framework of our action and to define a number of concrete proposals. The delegations involved in the December 1998 meeting, - on return to their own countries, - were given the opportunity to discuss and to confirm their commitment. Those commitments are what we would like to present in this text, which is being sent to all the organizations, networks and individuals with whom we have been in contact since the foundation of our association.

I. Three objectives

The December 1998 meeting permitted the definition of three major objectives:

1. Launching of the international ATTAC movement - " international movement for democratic control of financial markets and their institutions ".

The platform project of the international movement was examined and improved during the meeting itself, and then finalized by a working group in writing during December 1998. Please note that this platform may be signed either by organizations deciding to join this movement, or by those wishing to collaborate on a regular basis with it, but without belonging to it.

2. Extension of pre-engaged political action, that will favor convergence of networks activities, each in its own domain, against neo-liberal politics and their consequences.

Thus, each initiative should give rise to a reinforcement of links between these networks, creating unified and cumulative dynamics in a long term perspective. This was the case at the end of January, 1999, when several networks shared the preparation of "Alter Davos". This dynamic should be strengthened at the international conference to be held in Paris from 24 to 26 June, 1999. We will be actively involved in this conference.

3. The strongly felt need, by everybody present, for more collective discussions and more efficient circulation of information.

This is both the question of making progress in our own understanding of quickly evolving international situations, as well as specifying the alternatives informing and supplying social movements with some tools.



II. The international movement

The December 1998 meeting noted the current international dynamics. In several different countries (3), organizations similar to ATTAC-France are being set up, each of them with its own national characteristics. A regular collaboration is also being looked into with other movements which fight neo-liberal politics and their social and environmental consequences.

The creation of the **"international movement for democratic control of financial markets and their institutions"** wants to respond to that dynamic. Referring to the PLATFORM, it forms a network, with neither "hierarchical" structures nor a geographical "center". Pluralist, it is enriched by the variety of its components and makes the common action easier without limiting it in any way, nor dictating their freedom of contribution. It aims to reinforce, to link and to coordinate, at an international level, the contribution of all of its partners who see themselves as fitting within the structure of its platform. In the same way, it wishes to reinforce its cooperation with all the other networks whose objectives converge with its own.

Our international movement must be able to join numerous and various partners, in a number of countries and regions in the world: leagues and coalitions, unions, solidarity committees, associations and NGOs, networks of organizations and people, press and research institutes... Such a task cannot be taken over by a central secretariat (which would require heavy financial resources and would also be opposed to our democratic logic) nor by usual communication means (which require too much time and cost too much).

Therefore, for these practical reasons, we must turn to the electronic mail and the InterNet. We do know that some of our partners are not directly connected to the InterNet. We will do our best to send them standard postal mails; but in the present state of things, those dispatches cannot be made on a regular basis. A solution would be that in every participating country, our partners who are connected to the InterNet share with those who are not the benefit of their communication abilities.

III. The convergence of networks.

The question of taxation of capital and of democratic control of financial markets is of new importance since the crisis began in July, 1997. But, as a survey of the situation confirmed during the December meeting, the oppositions to neo-liberal politics are concentrated on different targets, and different countries and regions of the world often do not share the same priorities,: IMF structural adjustment plan, weight of public or private debt, international agreements like NAFTA or IMA, WTO, unequal North-South exchanges, etc...

It is not the ambition of our international movement to replace that diversity. We wish to collaborate with existing networks in order to favor the convergence of popular and democratic mobilizations. Indeed, thanks to such a convergence, we will be able to show a capacity of resistance and of alternatives to the neo-liberal "globalization". The 24-25-26 June conference appears to be an important step in that direction.

IV. Collective reflection and active information.

To inform more widely and to elaborate more collectively: that double requirement became strongly evident during the December 1998 meeting. We must indeed make progress in analysis (for example, on the evolution of international financial structures) as well as in the definition of alternatives. We must also contribute to a better information for the public and to give better tools to social movements. During the meeting, a whole series of themes were



attac

mentioned which would be worth discussing in the near future, and to which we will come back later.

Information and elaboration of goals : ATTAC-France is all the more sensitive to these fields of activity, given that several newspapers took part in its foundation and that it created a scientific committee. There is also a question of stating a capacity of counter-evaluation, in face of the prevailing rhetoric.

In this perspective, links are now being established in different countries, with publications, academics or non-academic institutions that want to help social movements through research and knowledge. The international network that we are setting up and the use of the Internet should make that task easier.

We will return to the themes that have been discussed during the December, 1998 meeting. You will find attached a summary of the work already done by ATTAC-France's scientific committee.

The December 1998 meeting opened some perspectives. From now on, the future of the **"international movement for democratic control of financial markets and their institutions"** depends on all of us.

The international ATTAC Group from France

(1) The Association for a Taxation of Financial Transactions and for Assistance to Citizens. ATTAC was created in June, 1998 by press media, unions, associations and individuals. You may also consult our web site: <<http://attac.org>>.

(2) Present at the 11-12 December 1998 meeting were delegations from Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, Philippines, Senegal, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Finland, and France,...as well as "Action Mondiale des Peuples", "Coordination against IMA", "Forum pour les alternatives", "Reseau Saprin". As a result of communication delays or logistical hitches, Malaya, Morocco, Russia, and one of the Philippine representatives could not take part as planned in the meeting.

(3). This is more particularly the case in Belgium, in Brazil, in Canada and in Quebec, in South Korea, in Spain, in Italy, in Switzerland....

This document includes two appendix:

- the e-mail <transattac@attac.org>
- the Attac's scientific committee <cs@attac.org>

APPENDIX 'A': **transattac@attac.org**

A specific e-mail address has been established for the global communications of our international movement.

This address will permit us to work together, yet it is not accessible to everyone; only those who have registered will be able to send to, or receive mail from <**transattac@attac.org**>. All mail received at this address is immediately forwarded to all registered users. Intended for the network as a whole, this address will ensure rapid and economical delivery. Moreover, it assures that our communications remain democratically and transparently visible.

In addition, e-mail addresses of those in partnership with the movement can be provided via our address. Dialogue between two or more targeted groups can thus be arranged while mail to those not concerned, avoided.

To facilitate the operation of this means of communication, it would be helpful if, in each country (or at the international networks associated with ATTAC), there was a dedicated e-mail address which could serve to collectively relay mail.

For example, in France, ATTAC's international working group's collective address is <**interattac@attac.org**>. This address receives mail from anyone (it is not necessary to be a registered member) and can distribute it automatically to all members of a working group (providing, of course, they have electronic mail), as well as to ATTAC's Secretariat in the organization's office. Besides its practical effectiveness, this system has the advantage of making information available directly, and democratically, to all those concerned.

Furthermore, members of the international working group, in executing their particular responsibilities (notably, in connection with a certain group of countries...), each have their own e-mail address to facilitate contact with only those directly affiliated.

And finally, a wide spectrum of information and communication networks has been put in place by ATTAC-France. Certain electronic addresses are intended to allow an open exchange of information (in distinction to <**transattac@attac.org**> which is reserved for internal communication in the effective performance of our work). Web sites in several different languages exist on the Internet site with hyperlinks being created between different national sites of members of the international ATTAC movement. More information on this subject will be made available at a later date.

APPENDIX 'B': The Scientific Council Cs@attac.org

The purpose of the scientific council is to produce and disseminate information on the nature of financial transactions in order to promote and direct all levels of action with the view to reclaiming, by citizens, the power that finance exercises over world politics, economics, and society and culture.

The scientific council is a positive feeding ground for individuals who intervene in their role as participants at public meetings and other demonstrations. Files on a particular theme can be built on the basis of a particular demonstration. Their accumulation would eventually constitute an important documentary account.

Long-term, in-depth studies will focus on the clarification and establishment of positions, and foster efforts that bring together the organizations that constitute the platform of convergence. This is a concerted and permanent process and an international action.co-ordination.

The task forces are in place. They have begun their work from an intellectual perspective which must now be developed into concrete proposals for action in the field and their eventual presentation, in the form of draft legislation, to Parliament.

The synergy of the task forces is their ability to join together to achieve more, as a group, than each can do on its own. The local committees are directly related to their own work.

To date, the following groups have been formed:

- Taxation of the currency markets
- Laundering of money and fiscal heavens
- Pension funds
- Appropriation of life by private interests

This list is not exhaustive and other groups are in formation.



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Prospects of Common Struggle and Action

1- The aim of the International meetings of June 1999 organised by ATTAC, in cooperation with CADTM, the Coordination against the clones of MAI, World Forum of Alternatives and DAWN was to contribute to the coordination of networks acting on an international level against market dictatorship. Networks which produce tools for analysis and which favour the exchanges and common action between the citizen movements, Human rights, social and cultural movements, Feminist movements and trade unions from different continents.

2- This aim is not utopian. Opposing the increasingly liberal globalisation, backed by governments, who are often the first to oppose the globalisation of democracy and human rights, it is now question of developing and coordinating counter-attacks and of making the connection with forces containing a different logic. The success of the meetings in Paris, after the success of initiatives like the campaign against the MAI or for the cancellation of the Third World debt, is in itself a sign of this expectation : more than 1200 participants coming from approximately 80 countries and representing movements of very different natures.

3- We will have to recognize and support the main national and

international struggles and actions of resistance against the dictatorship of the financial markets, notably by urgent campaigns to back social movements and movements for the defence of Human rights. Against these markets, the international financial institutions, multinational companies and governments which act as relays, it is important to support the desires of the people and to connect the forces and movements that express it in numerous countries.

We will cooperate, whenever possible, with the networks and the social movements opposed to globalisation on both national and international levels.

These connections and cooperation will be based on democracy and solidarity. We will especially encourage the links with the feminist movements, in order that our analysis and alternatives can be reformulated in a feminist perspective and from a women's point of view, wherever they may be.

4- The first deadline is the starting of a new cycle of multilateral commercial negotiations – the millenium round – under the framework of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) whose ministerial conference is convoked at Seattle (United States) from 30th November to 3rd December 1999.





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These negotiations will not only be about the increased liberalisation of international trade, but also about investment, public markets and competition, services (health, education, transport,...), the patenting of the living. What is emerging is therefore much more than simply a " clone of the MAI " : it is nothing less than the control of human activities by multinational companies. This is also the case for other clones such as bilateral free-trade agreements: Mediterrean countries-European Union ; Corea- Japan- United States ; European Union-Mexico, which establish the subordination of political power to the interests of " investors " and merchants.

It is appropriate to launch an international campaign of information and mobilisation in order to counter all agreements which impinge on Human rights, the rights of the peoples and the sustainable development of the planet

With the movements engaged against the MAI and the WTO, we are already mobilising from summer 1999 , to demand a moratorium on the millenium round and to replace it with an (Assessment Round) of the WTO. In every country, the organisations of the civil society will undertake this assessment through democratic debate and an opinion poll which must be closely associated with the workers unions and with small and medium sized businesses. Attached to the principle of power separation, we also demand the suppression of the Organism for the Settlement of Disputes of the WTO in which the

latter is both judge and accused. A reflexion should also be started on the creation of an independant court for international economic justice.

Throughout the world, we will participate in the International Mobilisation Week planned from 12th October (Anti-colonization and libral neo-colonization day) to 17th October 1999 (International day against poverty). Governments and members of parliament will be questioned, with the principal aim of denouncing the strategies of the multinationals. An International day of mobilisation and public initiatives will take place at the opening of the Seattle conference. Our watchfulness will not weaken as long as the negotiations of the WTO last.



5- A second theme which will serve to join us : the fight for the taxation of financial transactions and the outlawing of tax-havens. An opportunity

is provided for us in Europe : Finland, which has the presidency of the European Union during the second half of 1999 is one of only two countries, with Canada, whose political authorities have declared to be in favour of the Tobin tax.

In this perspective, a world petition will be circulated on the different continents, and, particularly in the European Union where the critical size necessary to allow the taxation of speculation exists. If, at the end of this campaign, concrete measures are not planned by the governments, we will prepare more visible mobilisations, wherever possible. In Europe, it could take the



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form of a mass demonstration in Bruxelles or Luxembourg in the spring of 2000, in order to demand the suppression of tax-havens: to remove bank secrecy, judiciary space or the implementation of an international penal tribunal.

6- A third theme for mobilisation : the debt of countries from the South and East. During the Cologne G7-G8 in June 1999, the measures taken only concern a small part of the debt of the poorest countries, and are dependant on a reinforcement in the structural adjustment plan imposed by the IMF and World Bank. We oppose these conditions, which imply both the abandon of national sovereignty and a supplementary degradation in the living conditions of the concerned populations. In order to return what was stolen from the people, we will support judicial proceedings against profiteers, dictators and corrupt heads of state as well as those responsible for the debt. We will push for the organisation of a front of indebted countries to insist on non-payment of the debt.

We enthusiastically greet the organization of a South-South meeting for the cancellation of the debt, that will be held in Johannesburg from 18th to 20th November 1999. We must be prepared for new international mobilisations, particularly for the Okinawa G7 summit in July 2000, so that this last year of the millenium be that of the cancellation of the

debt of the countries of the South and East.

7- A fourth theme for mobilisation : Genetically modified organisms (GMO). The social movements, trade unions, NGOs and citizens participating in the International Meeting decided to start a campaign to question governments and members of parliament and to demand:

- the creation of democratic instruments of control in order to ensure the tools of biotechnological research will serve society and not be for the exclusive benefit of multinational companies .

- To instigate a moratorium on genetically modified organisms in order to free peasants from the relationship of subordination developed by the multinational seed producers, to allow the development of alternative agricultures and scientific research for the good of humanity.

- in Europe, we support the demand for the cancellation of the community directive concerning the " legal protection of biotechnologic inventions " formulated by the Netherlands, Italy and Norway ;

- The immediate end to all negotiations by governments on the patenting of the living and the inclusion in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of a clause for the inalienable nature of the genetic patrimony.

8- The harmful action of the international financial institutions





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was again evident during the Asian, Russian and Brazilian crisis. By their liberal measures, they have worsened the national economic situation and of course it is the weakest, the women, unemployed, peasants, small businesses and workers who have had to pay the price for the financial speculation and their plans of adjustment. It is necessary to analyse the actions of these financial institutions, to publicize them, to support the movements of resistance against these adjustment plans and to demand citizens control and an unbiased evaluation of their actions. We must look for the responsibilities and fight the impunity of the "experts" including before the courts, and must elaborate and promote on the international stage alternative propositions.

struggles and actions of the different movements. The Internet network, is, from this point of view the most economical and efficient method. The Internet list ²transattac² must again function as the place of exchange for the international ATTAC movement. Specific and selective lists will be set up to share the information on the different actions engaged : Millenium Round, Capital taxation, fight against tax-havens, GMO's, etc.....

Translation: Graham Mitchell



9- Women are strongly affected by the consequences of globalisation ; they are the first to be affected by poverty and violence. The participants aim at obtaining equality of rights and their application throughout the planet. It is for this reason that we will support the World Walk of Women in 2000 and also all initiatives with the same goal.

10- Future meetings will allow us to reunite. We have decided to take stock of the actions in progress within 2 years. Now, we must develop networks on an international scale in order to facilitate exchange and to make the information circulate on the