



## SOCIAL WATCH E-NEWSLETTER

Issue 27 - March 11, 2011

### [Call for a Broad Change of Mindset at Rio 2012](#)



The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development - Rio 2012, must change the dominant mindset by: restoring public rights over corporate privileges, taking equity seriously and rescuing nature, warned at least 16 representatives of civil society organisations from all over the world, included Social Watch. The statement says that the Rio 2012 Summit must re-affirm the State as the indispensable actor setting the legal frame, enforcing standards of equity and human rights, and fostering long-term ecological thinking, based on democratic legitimacy.

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### [EU Must Protect Arab People, Not its Borders](#)

The National Centre for Development Cooperation (Centre national de coopération au développement, CNCD-11.11.11), focal point of Social Watch in Belgium, has signed this week with dozens of European, Arab and African NGOs, labour unions and political parties a call on the European Union for a support intervention in the Mediterranean area. "While major changes bringing an end to authoritarian regimes began" in the Arab world, European "governments and institutions are first concerned with the control of "uncontrollable migration flows", warns the statement.

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### [Turkish Opposition Party Promotes Gender Equality](#)

Turkey's opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) claimed for strong measures for women in education, family planning and political representation in that country, based on the Gender Equity Index (GEI) designed by Social Watch, in severe regression since 2004. Only five muslim countries (Yemen, Sudan, Pakistan, Morocco and Oman) are in worst condition than Turkey, according to the GEI.

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### [US: Conservative Campaign against Environmental Laws](#)

The environmental crisis is rapidly worsening, and recent moves by conservatives in the US Congress are dampening the ability of the US and other countries to take strong global action.

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### [Canada: Outsourcing Costs at Least \\$ 1 Billion](#)

The growing and concentrated nature of outsourcing has created in Canada a shadow public service that works alongside the real public service —but without the same hiring practices or transparency requirements, according to Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) Research Associate David Macdonald. "Over the past five years, personnel outsourcing costs have risen 79%, while federal departments have had their budgets capped," said Macdonald.

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### [Repression in Azerbaijan](#)

Azerbaijani youth activist Bakhtiyar Hajiyev (alumnus of Harvard University) has been arrested and jailed for at least one month because of his involvement with a Facebook page calling for protests on March 11. The event page is called "11 March - Great People's Day in Azerbaijan / 11 Mart - Böyük Xalq Günü."

Azerbaijani government's secret police also arrested youth activist Rashadat Akhundov is an alumnus of prestigious Central European University, participant of a special Honors program at the Azerbaijan State Economic University and graduate of elite Private Turkish Lyceums.

Total number of arrested youth activists is growing rapidly which cause huge public disturbance. In the beginning of this week, another 5 guys have been kidnapped from their home, universities and workplaces.

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### [Change the mindset to save the planet](#)

*By Roberto Bissio*

Environmentalists, economists, feminists and social activists from all over the world, after many years of criticizing governments are now calling for States to be strengthened as the only way to save the planet, threatened by a whole series of crises in climate, water, food and finances. On Monday, March 7th, sixteen members of the self-appointed Reflection Group on global development perspectives formulated a call to "change the mindset" about environmental

and economic problems.

This call is aimed primarily at the negotiators who are preparing the United Nations Summit for Sustainable Development, which will be held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012, twenty years after the "Earth Summit", where the concept of sustainable development was endorsed and the foundations were laid for conventions on climate change, desertification and deforestation. The changed mindset they are now demanding begins with "restoring public rights over corporate privileges".

The signatories assert that "after thirty years of strengthening the power of investors and big corporations through deregulation, trade and financial liberalization, tax cuts and exemptions, and weakening the role of the State; and after the market-driven financial meltdown, the principles and values of the Rio Declaration and the UN Millennium Declaration, adopted by heads of States and governments, are threatened and urgently need to be re-established". These principles include human rights, liberty, equality, solidarity, diversity, respect for nature and the common but differentiated responsibility of States, rich or poor. "Corporate interests do not uphold these principles and values".

The second point in the statement recommends "taking equity seriously" since the policies of the last thirty years –that is to say since the conservative revolution of Reagan and Thatcher- "further widened the gap between rich and poor and have exacerbated inequities and inequalities, not least regarding access to resources".

The statement asserts that "unbridled market forces have favoured the strong, thereby widening the economic divide. This requires the State to redress the imbalance, eliminate discrimination, and ensure sustainable livelihoods, decent work and social inclusion. Intergenerational justice requires restraint and responsibility of the present generation. It is urgent to establish more equitable per capita rights towards the global commons and to the emission of greenhouse gases, taking fully into account historical responsibility". The more developed countries have not accepted these last two principles, and this is what has blocked progress in negotiations about climate change.

The third and last demand in this brief statement is a call for environmental protection, which is urgently needed "after more than sixty years of global warming, loss of biodiversity, desertification, depletion of marine life and of forests, a spiraling water crisis and many other ecological catastrophes". This process started in the 1950s, when the baby boom generation triggered mass consumption of the planet's non-renewable resources. The environmental crisis unleashed by this unrestrained consumption by the rich "is hitting the poor much more than the affluent".

The signatories do not adhere to Malthusian ideas about the exhaustion of resources and maintain instead that "knowledge-intensive solutions including technologies are available to restore natural systems, and dramatically reduce pressures on climate and the environment while improving human well-being". They argue that a "green economy" is possible, but insist that this must be integrated into "a holistic concept of sustainability". They conclude that what we need "a change of lifestyles".

To achieve this, "The Rio 2012 Summit must re-affirm the State as the indispensable actor setting the legal frame, enforcing standards of equity and human rights, and fostering long-term ecological thinking, based on democratic legitimacy".

#### *Signatories of the call*

*Albert Recknagel, terre des hommes Alemania; Alejandro Chanona, National Autonomous University of Mexico; Barbara Adams, Global Policy Forum; Beryl d'Almeida, Abandoned Babies Committee Zimbabwe; Chee Yoke Ling, Third World Network (TWN); Ernst-Ulrich von Weizsäcker, International Panel for the Sustainable Management of Resources; Filomeno St. Ana III, Action for Economic Reform; George Chira, terre des hommes India; Gigi Francisco, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era; Henning Melber, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation; Hubert Schillinger, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung; Jens Martens, Forum of World-Europe Policy; Jorge Ishizawa, Andean Project of Peasant Technologies; Roberto Bissio, Social Watch; Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, Tebtebba Foundation; Yao Graham, TWN-Africa.*

*The complete text of the call is available at [www.choike.org](http://www.choike.org)*

*\* Director of the Third World Institute (ITeM)*

#### **EU: Fears for an Arab "Invasion" Should Stop**

While major political changes, heralding the end of the authoritarian regimes, are processing in the south of the Mediterranean area, governments and instances in the European Union are especially concerned about how to protect themselves from "uncontrollable migration flows" potentially brought about by these upheavals. Experts and diplomatic services, which were unable to see the current political movements looming ahead, aren't afraid to assert that thousands of migrants are likely to literally flood into European territories.

In 2001, the EU adopted a "temporary protection" mechanism for country nationals who are victims of a natural catastrophe, of political turmoil in their country, or of an armed conflict, and who are in urgent need of a shelter in Europe. Yet, the European Commission hastened to tell that "there was, for now, no refugee flows arriving from Libya". Meanwhile, the Commission sent patrols on its sea borders, via Frontex, to prevent potential refugees, considered as irregular migrants, from crossing the Mediterranean Sea!

At the same time, the situation is worsening every day more in Libya and at its borders. In Tunisia, where dozens of thousands of refugees are arriving, the system is overloaded, despite all the efforts of the local authorities. Europe cannot pretend the plight of dozens or hundreds of thousands of people in need of protection in unstable countries, or of that of resident migrants from various Arab, Africa, Asian countries residing there, was none of its business.

Not so long ago, Europe was proud of deploying "a Euro-Mediterranean policy". Would this ambition have blow up into pieces, at the very moment when many potential partner nations of this "Euro-Mediterranean area" are in the process of turning to democracies?

We call solemnly to all European governments, to EU instances, to all political parties to take emergency measures, in cooperation with partners in the Mediterranean area, so that :

- Planes are available to allow for a quick repatriation of not only European nationals, but also of all who can and want to come back to their country, such as Egyptians who are currently in Tunisia ;
- The evacuation by air or by sea, from places of the Libyan territory which are not under the control of Gaddafi, is made possible for foreigners stuck in Libya and whose governments are unable to evacuate;
- Reception schemes, on European territory, of refugees who can't return to their country, are set up;
- A temporary protection scheme is implemented as soon as possible to grant protection to those who, in the current emergency situation, are legitimate to ask for it;
- Frontex patrols stop stopping the refugees on the sea;

The systematic ghost of "invasion" which feeds European populations' fears should stop. The consideration that stopping emigration from unstable countries is an utmost priority should stop.

We refuse this criminal selfishness. We want a welcoming Europe of solidarity.

*\*Read the list of signatories at [www.migreurop.org/article1828.html](http://www.migreurop.org/article1828.html)*

### Gender Equality in Turkey: Policy Proposals by Opposition Party

"Turkey's record on gender equality remains inadequate and has substantially worsened under the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). However, strong measures for women in education, family planning and political representation can reverse the trend", writes the Brussels representative of Turkey's opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), Kader Sevinç.

This commentary was sent to EurActiv, an independent specialised European Union affairs portal for EU policy professionals, by Kader Sevinç, representative in Brussels of Turkey's largest opposition party, the Republican People's Party (Turkish: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi or CHP), and a member of the Party of European Socialists' Presidency Committee. Excerpts:

"The Turkish people's deep civilisational roots and aspirations to live in an advanced information society and democracy in the 21st Century justify the highest political focus on gender equality. This is why the Turkish government, parliament and all the political parties have an ever more important responsibility to improve Turkish society's performance on gender equality to above the European average.

"Turkey is an interesting case from this point of view. On the one hand, women's rights have been recognised since the beginning of the Republic in 1923. By 1930, women had acquired the right to vote at the municipal elections. Since

1935, Turkish women have been elected to the national parliament. Turkey has had women as prime minister and as president of the Constitutional Court, and as ministers of the interior, economy, education and so on. However, the representativeness of Turkish politics in terms of gender is still far from impressive.

"Turkish women have also emerged in professional life, reaching the highest levels of management of large companies. Among professionals such as engineers, lawyers and bankers the proportion of women is among the highest in Europe.

"Turkey's leading business organisation, TUSIAD, currently has its second female president in a row whereas another association, Kagider, has been successfully promoting women's entrepreneurship. Ka-Der promotes women to elected offices. Mor Çatı provides shelter to victims of family violence, a problem against which 'Hürriyet' newspaper is mobilising significant resources as well. The newspaper 'Milliyet', for its part, is managing a broad campaign for young girls' schooling. ÇYDD helps young girls at university. Many other NGOs work successfully in the field of gender equality, sometimes supported by EU programmes.

"On the other hand, serious problems persist in rural areas, which constitute around 25% of the active population, as well as in terms of women's participation in the work force, including in urban Turkey.

"According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report on the gender empowerment measure of the human development index, which was released in October 2010, Turkey is ranked 101st out of 109 countries. A World Economic Forum (WEF) report in 2010 indicates that Turkey ranks 129th out of 134 countries in terms of dividing its resources and opportunities among men and women. And according to the organisation Social Watch, Turkey has been in severe regression since 2004 in terms of gender equality.

"The women's employment rate is 22.8%, down from over 40% a few years ago. This is the lowest level among the OECD [Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development] countries. On top of that, even this figure has been in steady decline for years. Overall, the ruling AKP government's record on women's rights and gender equality, despite some dispersed efforts, is strikingly negative.

"But Turkey's performance on gender equality can recover. In this respect, the CHP, as Turkey's social democratic party, proposes the following:

"\*To create a National Women's Rights Charter and National Women Rights Council to improve women's rights and opportunities and to promote mechanisms to achieve gender equality in all aspects of social, economic and political life.

"\*A campaign for equal political representation of women and men in all decision-making bodies at local, national and international level.

"\* To create effective 'vocational education centres' focused on women. Vocational education is a key element of women's empowerment.

"\* To ensure and promote women's sexual and reproductive health rights throughout Turkey. Family planning needs to be taken more seriously in Turkey. The Turkish government's 'at least three children' policy may lead to shifts in women's role in society. Moreover, politicians should not interfere with the private life choices of Turkish women.

"\* To encourage and support efforts and projects to stop domestic and gender-specific violence by allocating a share of municipal budgets. There are only 26 women's shelters in the whole of Turkey, for 81 provinces.

"\* The rate of early marriages is 35% in Turkey. CHP proposed a motion to the Turkish parliament and requested research into the reasons for early marriages and possible preventive measures.

"\* Role models are important: Unfortunately, the spouses of many politicians holding high-level posts got married at a very early ages and left school. Or even if they have a university degree, they are out of professional life. The CHP government will attach importance to positive role models and public opinion campaigns.

"\*To create a National Women's Data Centre in Ankara, Women's Info Centres, and a National Women's Rights Council. Gender equality issues should be solved within the framework of participatory approach. These establishments will pave the way for women's direct participation in the policymaking process.

"\* As emphasised by Ms. Gulsun Bilgehan, CHP vice-president in charge of women's rights and organisations, a focal area for CHP is 'gender mainstreaming'. CHP defends the integration of the gender equality dimension into every phase of the policymaking process: design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This involves a comprehensive impact analysis methodology that CHP is proposing to introduce into Turkish political culture.

"\* A very significant policy proposal was announced by CHP President Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu in February 2011: 'the Family Insurance'. This scheme, based on a detailed social and financial analysis, foresees monthly financial aid to 12.7 million poor people in the country. According to data published by the Turkish Statistical Institute, the number of poor has considerably increased during the AKP's term in government compared to previous years. By improving the welfare state and social cohesion in Turkey, the CHP's proposal also projects direct benefits for gender equality in education, family life and the work place.

"\* The CHP has also launched the 'GenceArtı' (A Plus for Youth) project to create jobs for young people. The project is being conducted by a leading businesswoman and CHP Party Assembly member Aylin Nazlıaka. 'Personal development' seminars are organised for job-seeking young people in 30 cities. The 'GenceArtı' project supports our education system in raising the next generations [of Turks] with self-confidence and tangible results for Turkey's gender equality objectives.

"The CHP will continue to fight gender stereotypes and believes that strengthening women's rights and opportunities will bring significant economic, social and democratic benefits for all citizens of Turkey and Europe.

"In the CHP's social democratic vision of Turkey's future, the EU membership process plays a crucial role. Gender equality is in this respect a key issue which transcends all other fields of integration, such as democracy, economic growth, employment, education, information society, rural development and regional development.

"In fact, gender equality is at the core of genuine interaction between Turkey's EU process, its social and economic development, and its contribution to Europe's global competitiveness."

Source: EurActiv

## [US Blow to green agenda](#)

*By Martin Khor*

Just when the world needs a boost to pro-environment action, there is activism of the opposite kind – conservatives in Congress rolling back the green agenda in the United States.

Last week, Republicans introduced Bills in Congress to prevent the Environment Protection Agency from using air pollution laws to reduce carbon dioxide.

If the Bills are passed, the EPA would not be able to regulate carbon emissions from factories and power plants.

This would strike at the heart of the US administration's efforts to combat climate change.

It is now clear that Congress will not adopt climate action laws, since the Republicans – who are generally skeptical about climate change – now control one branch of Congress, the House of Representatives.

However, the US President still has powers to take his own action, through the EPA and other agencies. And state governments can also have their own initiatives.

But the Republicans, backed by some big industries and companies, are making a concerted effort to stop such environmental initiatives. So, Congress is more likely to adopt anti-environment rather than pro-environment Bills.

In fact the new Energy Tax Prevention Act is designed to counter the existing Clean Air Act which empowers the EPA to act.

The London-based Guardian newspaper – in its March 5 issue – describes it as the greatest assault on environmental protection ever seen in the US.

“This is almost unprecedented in environmental history, in that they are moving in so many directions and in so many ways to effect the same results,” commented Bill Becker, secretary of the National Association of Clean Air Agencies.

James Goldstene, of the California Air Resources Board (which is in charge of protecting air quality in California), testified in Congress against the new Bill.

“For firms that accept the overwhelming scientific evidence of climate change and policy imperative for emission reductions, the failure of Congress to pass climate legislation is itself increasing the uncertainty for investors,” he said.

“By going further, and gutting the Clean Air Act to remove sensible EPA regulations, the proposed legislation will send the stark message that the US is not serious about creating a stable or predictable regulatory environment, not serious about attracting investment, and not serious about being a leader in the future economy.”

Besides the new Bill, the Republicans have also proposed to cut the budget of the EPA by 30% – deeper than any other agency – as part of their overall budget proposal.

This would starve the EPA of the funds needed to regulate carbon dioxide, and remove funds for other activities, such as to protect salmon in San Francisco Bay and treat sewage going to Florida's lakes.

It would also weaken rules for mercury poisoning, according to the Guardian article.

The Republican proposal also includes cutting off funds for the post of President Barack Obama's energy and climate advisor and the State Department's envoy to the UN climate negotiations, the article adds.

This bad news from the US could not come at a worse time.

The United Nations this week will be negotiating the terms of the Rio Plus 20 Summit, to be held in 2012 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the landmark UN Conference on Environment and Development.

Since the 1992 Rio Summit the global environment has deteriorated significantly.

There are multiple environment crises including climate change, extinction of species, decline of fish stocks, loss of fertile land through degradation, unsustainable pressure on resources and dwindling amount of fresh water.

*\*Executive Director of South Centre*

*Source: Agenda Global*

### [Canada: Federal outsourcing costs untouched despite budget caps](#)

If the Canadian federal government wants to get serious about spending controls, it needs to look critically at its ballooning outsourcing costs, says a new study released today by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA).

According to the study, by CCPA Research Associate David Macdonald, the growing and concentrated nature of outsourcing has created a shadow public service that works alongside the real public service—but without the same hiring practices or transparency requirements.

“Over the past five years, personnel outsourcing costs have risen 79%. While federal departments have had their budgets capped, expenditures on outside consultants have not been touched and remain above \$1 billion a year,” says Macdonald.

“Outsourcing isn't what it used to be. Contractors aren't coming in for a week to do some filing, they are now being hired on contract for years at a time to work beside regular employees,” Macdonald says. “This system of parallel HR is where government managers are turning after last year's departmental caps.”

Four large departments—Public Works and Government Services Canada, National Defence and Canadian Forces, Human Resources and Skills Development, and Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness—make up half of all federal government outsourcing. Their payrolls increased by only 9% since 2005-06, but their personnel outsourcing costs exploded, rising by 100%.

"Without prompt corrective action, escalating costs will continue to soar," Macdonald says. "With the federal government running a significant deficit, it is more important than ever to examine measures that offer potential savings while maintaining services."

The study makes specific recommendations to help curb rising costs and make better use of the resources the government already has.

### Azerbaijan: Youth Activists Targeted

Member organisations of the International Partnership Group for Azerbaijan condemn the recent wave of arrests of youth activists and bloggers in connection with planned pro-democracy protests in the country, and call for their immediate release. Reports of restrictions on freedom of expression and pressure by the Azerbaijani authorities have escalated in recent weeks, as calls for pro-democracy protests – inspired by the events in the Middle East and North Africa – have gained momentum in the country.

The undersigned organisations are calling on the Azerbaijani authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the five youth activists currently being detained and to cease restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

The detained youth activists are:

\* Jabbar Savalan, an opposition political activist who was arrested on 5 February 2011 after posting on Facebook calls for pro-democracy protests. He was charged with possessing drugs with intent to resell after police allegedly found 0.74 grams of marijuana in his pocket. Savalan has no history of drug use or drug possession, and his supporters claim the marijuana was planted. He remains in pre-trial detention and faces up to three years of imprisonment.

\* Bakhtiyar Hajiyev, a blogger and civic activist involved in organising the planned 11 March 2011 mass protest, who was arrested on 4 March 2011 on charges of evading military service. Although military service is compulsory, the Azerbaijani Constitution provides for alternative military service, which Hajiyev has requested. In a letter sent from detention in the city of Ganja, Hajiyev reported being beaten and threatened with rape by police. He remains in pre-trial detention and faces up to two years of imprisonment.

\* Dayanat Babayev, an opposition political activist, who was arrested on 4 March 2011 whilst talking on his mobile phone in public. He was given an administrative sentence of 10 days' detention for "violating public order". Babayev, who was held incommunicado for two days, reported that police told him his detention was connected with the planned 12 March 2011 opposition protest.

\* Youth activist Rashadat Akhundov and opposition political activist Sakhavat Soltanli, who were both arrested on 8 March 2011. Akhundov was charged with defying police orders, and Soltanli was charged with "auto hooliganism", for which they were each sentenced to five days of detention. Both maintain that the charges are false.

These arrests took place against a broader backdrop of intimidation, harassment, violence, and imprisonment of individuals who express opinions critical of the Azerbaijani authorities. In addition to the arrests, police have recently shut down three non-governmental organisations in the city of Ganja and detained and questioned employees of the Baku-based Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety. A number of online activists have reported being harassed and questioned by police in connection with their Facebook activities.

The Azerbaijani authorities are bound by international law to respect and protect the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, which are fundamental to democratic society. The undersigned organisations call on the Azerbaijani authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the detained youth activists and to cease practices which restrict freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

*The following organisations support this statement:*

- ARTICLE 19: Global Campaign for Free Expression
- Freedom House
- Human Rights House Foundation
- Index on Censorship
- Media Diversity Institute
- Norwegian Helsinki Committee
- Reporters Without Borders

*The International Partnership Group for Azerbaijan is a coalition of 20 international NGOs working to promote and protect freedom of expression in Azerbaijan.*

*ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works globally to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.(Article 19)*

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