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Unmask the W\$\$D in Johannesburg and around the world!

(A Call To Action from the Social Movements Indaba
in South Africa)

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August 2002

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On the 31st of August, tens of thousands of South Africans will swarm the World Summit on Sustainable Development (W\$\$D) in Johannesburg. We call on all people concerned about our planet and its people to join us in saying “Enough!” – enough empty promises and lies, enough neo-liberal destruction of the commons, enough impoverishment of people for profit! Join us for international days of action from August 28 through September 2! Show solidarity by organising local actions in your town or city and roar to the “leaders” of the globe:

“OUR WORLD IS NOT FOR SALE!”

The “World Summit” on “Sustainable Development”: we will not be fooled!

The world plunges into an abyss of economic desperation and environmental catastrophe. In response, as in Rio ten years ago,

the global caretakers of the status quo clamour for “sustainable development.” The W\$\$D is a grand spectacle of promising ideas and powerful rhetoric, designed to manufacture an image of positive, dynamic action. Yet the dry details and technical implementations of the pretty words have revealed the rotten core behind the mask: the same old neo-liberal prescription for a world dominated by corporate capital and ruled by an unaccountable elite. This is the uncomfortable truth: a world devoted to profit can’t sustain people and the planet. The international financial institutions (like the WTO, IMF, World Bank) enforce a world order of the bottom line while the “war on terrorism” justifies growing US aggression against dissent. The W\$\$D will only reinforce this system. It cannot be rehabilitated. Its logic is clear. If we don’t oppose it, we legitimise its power.

South Africans, host to this year’s summit, experience directly the ugly truth behind the lies. The ANC (and our increasingly despised president, Thabo Mbeki) have maintained a stranglehold on power by conjuring the image of liberation and socialism in every popular campaign, while reassuring the financial sectors with their single-minded pursuit of neo-liberalism, privatisation, and popular demobilisation. Despite its nominal commitment to “redistribution,” GEAR, the neo-liberal macroeconomic policy unilaterally implemented in 1996, has resulted in a million jobs lost, massive social dislocation, water and electricity cut-offs, home evictions and demolitions. In fact, the government is explicit (to the financial press) that it is sacrificing the masses to build a black capitalist class. Eight years after apartheid’s official end, South Africa has moved from third to first on the list of the world’s most unequal societies. This is Mbeki’s “African Renaissance.” This is the “better life for all” he promises with a continent-wide plan called NEPAD (to be consolidated at the W\$\$D), which is more GEAR for Africa, NAFTA Africanised, subservient to the G8 big boys, neo-liberalism run amuck.

This ideological doublespeak extends to the W\$\$D itself. Not only has the official decision-making body been dominated by power players behind the scenes, but forces aligned with the South African state have attempted to co-opt the parallel NGO “Global Peoples Forum,” silencing dissent and maintaining the illusion. But the spectacle cannot hold. Here, in South Africa, the lies become obvious. As the government and the banks invade communities, destroying the infrastructure of bare life, the poors of South Africa have arisen in defiance. From the Concerned Citizens Forum in Durban and the Anti-Eviction Campaign in Cape Town, to the Anti-Privatisation Forum in Jo’burg and the Landless Peoples Movement around the country, communities have militantly defended their lives and exposed the deception and repression beneath the pretty words. In the face of police dogs and bullets, so reminiscent of the Apartheid era, peoples power and self-organisation has withstood the might of the state, beginning the difficult process of building a new liberation movement to catalyse the boiling frustration of the country’s majority into active seizure of control of our lives.

Now, we’re going on the offensive. As the NGO globetrotters descend on the glitziest rich suburb of our most unsustainable city, tens of thousands of the usually ignored will seize the moment to express our outrage, propose truly democratic alternatives, and to place our bodies in the way of business as usual. We call on the people of the world to join us: in Johannesburg if you can, or in the streets of your own city in solidarity. Let us make these days of international action!

Moreover, as poor people we have few resources to co-ordinate action and transport even a fraction of those who wish to come. For thousands the inability to raise one euro or one dollar for bus fare will prevent attendance. Fundraising and pledges of support from our comrades around the world will help our young movement in struggle.

Join us in our fight against a world of lies and despair.
We need you. Join us!

Our World is Not For Sale!
Rise up! Resist! Revolt!

Social Movements Indaba
www.globalindaba.org.za

including:

- Bikisha Media Collective
- Anti-Privatisation Forum
- Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee
- Kathorus Concerned Residents
- Working Class Communities Co-ordinating Committee (Vaal)
- Ikageng Community Crisis Committee
- Themelihle Crisis Committee
- Mandelaville displacees / Durban Roodepoort Deeps
- United Civic Organisation of South Africa
- Soldiers Forum
- Vaal Community Forum
- Far East Bank Forum
- Riverpark Forum
- Braam Fischer Forum
- Inner City Community Forum

- Keep Left
- Democratic Socialist Movement
- Palestinian Solidarity Group
- Environmental Justice Networking Forum
- Rural Development Services Network
- Jubilee 2000
- Youth Against Crime and Poverty
- Landless Access Movement of South Africa
- First People
- Friends of the Earth
- Trust for Community Outreach and Education
- Municipal Services Project