

# An Agenda for Progressive Globalisation

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In this pamphlet the authors argue that globalisation, as it is currently conceived and operated is producing increasing economic inequality, exploitation and instability. This is viewed as having serious political implications which threaten the security and future of the world. However, they do not believe this is an automatic product of globalisation but the results of the particular brand of *free market globalisation* which is being imposed by an elite group of free market ideologues, the key institutions of economic governance (International Monetary Fund, World Bank Group and the World Trade Organisation), self-interested rich nation governments and their associated transnational business corporations.

The authors view the concept of globalisation as a positive phenomenon which holds out new opportunities for human co-operation, peace, shared wealth and social solidarity. Towards this end they advance the concept of *progressive globalisation* and an agenda that seeks to strike a balance between commercial self-interest and the ideals of equality and social and environmental justice. The pamphlet's inspiration and sources of many of the ingredients for both the concept and the agenda draw heavily upon social democratic principles and policies that re-shaped Western Europe after 1945.

The four key demands of the *Progressive Globalisation agenda* are as follows:

- An equitable system of global trade;
- The regulation of economic activity for economic stability and for the protection of workers, consumers and the environment;
- The establishment of global mechanisms for the redistribution of income and wealth from rich nations and actors to poorer ones; and
- The introduction of democratic legitimacy into the system of global governance.

The detailed components of each of these demands are as follows:

## **An equitable system of global trade**

- The end to the domination of the neo-liberal or *market fundamentalism* agenda of rapid liberalisation in the key institutions of global economic governance. Its replacement by a policy which recognises that the lowering of national barriers to trade in developing countries should only occur after individual commercial sectors have developed sufficiently to be able to compete effectively in the global economy.
- A rapid expansion of the access to the markets of developed economies for producers in the developing and least developed countries.
- An end to the system that subsidises, protects and favours the largest agricultural producers in developed economies.
- The establishment of global negotiations on how to ease the crises in the primary commodities market in the developing world.
- The re-writing of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules on intellectual property rights to allow developing countries to address their health needs and economic development.
- No expansion of the remit of the WTO beyond core commercial trade issues and no further attempt to expand the principle of liberalisation into publicly-owned utilities and public services.

## **The regulation of economic activity for economic stability and for the protection of workers, consumers and the environment**

- The universal right to trade union membership for employees and the right to free association by workers and enterprises operating in the rural and informal sectors requires to be built into the conditions for governments to receive development aid and financial support and, ultimately, to be enshrined in an international treaty.
- Economic incentives for governments to uphold and enhance standards for workers, consumers and the environment to be built into international agreements and treaties.
- Legislation to be passed in the home countries of transnational corporations forbidding them breaking codes of practice, on workers, consumers and environmental protection in foreign countries.
- The establishment of a World Financial Authority to undertake proper supervision of international financial markets and capital flows.
- National governments to remain free to impose capital controls or use taxation and cash reserves to dampen speculative capital flows.

- The establishment of an international lender of last resort.
- A fundamental review of the conditions attached to International Monetary Fund (IMF) financial support.

### **The establishment of global mechanisms for the redistribution of income and wealth from rich nations and actors to poorer ones**

- In the short term, a considerable increase in levels of development aid from the rich OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) nations possibly through the establishment of an International Finance Facility.
- In the longer term, the replacement of discretionary aid donations by a non-discretionary global development tax probably levied in proportion to national income and disbursed through national governments and or non-governmental organisations.
- The establishment of a planned migration policy based on international cooperation which allows agreed levels of economic migration to developed countries for those with and without specialised skills.

### **The introduction of democratic legitimacy into the system of global governance**

- The United Nations to play a stronger co-ordinating role over the key institutions of global governance.
- The UN Security Council to be expanded to include new permanent members from Asia, Africa and Latin America. There should also be a reduction in the power of the national veto and an expansion of its remit to include consideration of non-military security threats such as poverty and environmental degradation.
- Representation in institutions of global governance should be expanded to include key stakeholders affected by decisions. This would include representation from local, regional and supra-national government, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, the cooperative movement and business.
- Ultimately, all major international economic institutions to be based on the principle of one-member, one-vote.
- Institutions of global governance to face much tougher scrutiny by national parliaments and the European Parliament and ultimately by a global assembly attached to the UN and made up of national and supra-national parliamentarians.
- International law to be expanded to allow national sovereignty to be over-riden in cases of severe abuse of human rights.

## **Further Information**

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