

Disarmament to combat poverty

An international campaign to mobilize citizens

Newsletter - n° 1 - May 2007

ASIA

India

The campaign has been launched

In New Delhi in 2006, during the event of the Indian Social Forum, Ekta Parishad (India) PILER (Pakistan) and Frères des Hommes (France) presented the campaign in the context of a meet-and-debate with the Indian social actors, followed by a press conference.

South India

Field actors are getting involved

At the initiative of FEDINA, a hundred of social actors from both rural and urban areas in the four southern states of India (Andhra-Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil-Nadu) that are involved in the Dalit movement - met for two days in Bangalore to formulate concrete proposals in preparation for the expansion of the campaign to the poor populations in the region: pedagogical tools to present the Indian federal budget; individual subscription to finance the common fund for the campaign... Also, a debate was organized regarding the

social security law that concerns workers from the unorganized sector in India.

Nepal

Southern Asian networks relay the campaign

The campaign was presented during the People's SAARC meeting of 2007 that took place at the end of March in Katmandu.

For this occasion, the Southern Asian Forum's Parliamentarian Platform and People's Movements adopted a declaration to relay to the regional state governments the demand formulated by the campaign : firstly, to require the reduction of at least 10 % on arms expenditures, and secondly to require that this sum be converted into investment in social development.

AFRICA

Kenya

The campaign participated in the WSF

In January 2007, the World Social Forum in Nairobi facilitated the expansion of the coalition of actors interested in the campaign. Colin Archer, of the International Peace Bureau, and Peter Custers (economist and author of *Questioning Globalized Militarism*) participated in the seminar that presented the campaign.

A number of contacts were made, notably with African labor-unionists (from Togo, Burkina, South Africa) and activists from movements supporting peace and justice in Spain and Portugal. The campaign was presented and recorded as an action inscribed in the "memory of the WSF."

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EUROPA

France *Intervention in the electoral campaign*

The campaign addressed a letter of request calling on all candidates and all political groups participating in the presidential elections. Several candidates (from the Green party, the Communist party, the altermondialists' candidate) expressed their agreement with the content. The polemic surrounding the proposal formulated by the Socialist party's candidate to abandon the construction of a new aircraft carrier in order to expand the education budget has confirmed that the idea to convert arms expenditures to social investment is truly keeping with the atmosphere of the times, even in the midst of a military power!

This letter informs you regularly of public debate and the advancement of international citizen mobilization involved in the campaign for **Disarmament to combat poverty.**

Objective: To facilitate the link with local actors, national networks, and international interests.

The letter is edited in French, English, German, and Spanish. To expand readership, proposals for translation into other languages are welcome!

France *Social actors interested in taking the initiative*

An exchange meeting was held in Paris at the FDH office in December 2006 with activists from labor movements, small farmers' organizations, youth movements, and networks for urban community development

Also in attendance were representatives from coalitions in India and Pakistan.

All the participants confirmed their interest in linking the peace and social justice movements, and to focus primarily on the extension of social protection and the development of youth mobilization programs for non-violence and social action.

Following this meeting, *les Régies de Quartier* (urban community development network) confirmed its participation in the campaign. Notably in preparation are informational activities and debates with the inhabitants of 130 neighborhoods in which the committees are established.

Italy *Meeting with the European network against the arms trade*

At the occasion of the ENAAT meeting, which took place in Florence at the end of April 2007; contacts were made with activists from different European countries (Sweden, the Netherlands, Italy, Belgium...)

INTERNATIONAL

Towards an International Citizens Conference in 2010

The coordination for the campaign is establishing contacts so as to promote the holding of an International Citizens Conference in 2010 on disarmament and social development as a point of convergence for actors mobilized in the field of justice, the struggle against poverty, and the promotion of peace.

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