

## STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PROTEST AGAINST 60 YEARS OF THE WORLD BANK.

In its 60 year history the World Bank's model of 'Development' has led to the forcible eviction of hundreds of thousands of people in Developing countries, to the destruction of their lives and livelihoods, and access to resources.

The recent shifts in the Bank's policies and its stated commitment to sustainable development will not be worth the paper it's written on unless the Bank is willing to demonstrate its this commitment with action on the ground. This would mean accepting responsibility for past mistakes, paying reparations for the destruction it has caused and continues to cause. It would mean placing a moratorium on lending money to future projects that lead to involuntary displacement and environmental degradation until those displaced by its past projects have been resettled and rehabilitated.

Take the case of the Sardar Sarovar Dam in the Narmada Valley. The Bank gave the government of India a \$450 million dollar loan in 1985. This, before any studies had been done, before any cost had been computed, before anybody had any idea what the human costs or the environmental impact would be. The Ministry of Environment in India cleared the project only in 1987. In June 1992 after the Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save the Narmada Movement) fought a heroic battle, the Bank was forced to review the project. The now legendary Morse Report said: We think the Sardar Sarovar Projects as they stand are flawed, that resettlement and rehabilitation of all those displaced by the Projects is not possible, and that the environmental impacts of the Projects have not been properly conducted or adequately addressed. For the first time in its history, the Bank was forced to withdraw from a project.

However, that has not helped the tens of thousands of people whose lives it has destroyed. The Indian government continues to pursue the project. The dam wall continues to go up. To date, the Madhya Pradesh government, the state to which 80% of the oustees belong, has not given a single hectare of agricultural land to those that are being displaced.

Yet the Bank does not acknowledge any responsibility. It continues to lend money to the Indian Government for other projects. It is considering funding the Omkareshwar Dam, upstream from the Sardar Sarovar ñ a project that will cause the forcible eviction of an estimated 50,000 people.

Examples such as these are scattered across the world. Altogether, it amounts to a truly iniquitous legacy.

When World Bank President James Wolfensohn recently referred to those criticizing these policies as 'Globalization's Luddites' he presumably meant those who are protesting their own impoverishment by the project of neo-liberalism. In a recent address to the UN he displayed a lack of vision that completely belies the World Bank's compassionate new avatar as the Friend of the Poor. He insulted the poor of developing countries in words that are untrue and disgraceful. He said unemployment, hopelessness and despair in the developing world were a source of instability for everyone because "If they don't have work and they're frustrated, their immediate instinct is not to go out and create a war, but they are subject to influences from people from the outside who are malicious."

It should be pointed out to him that in this century and the last, it is the richest country in the world has waged the most wars. And in order to enrich themselves further, the richest countries in the world, taken together, have been responsible for slavery, ethnic cleansing, and genocide on an unimaginable scale. It should also be pointed out to him that the World Bank has played no small

part in further impoverishing the poor for whom he has so little regard. If frustration caused by poverty and unemployment leads poor people from developing countries to 'go out and create a war' against the rich, it would be called a revolution.

Honestly, sixty years is enough!

To those gathered in Washington to protest against this legacy, and to demand reparations, and in particular to those who are on a fast, I send my support and solidarity.

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