14 October 2020

Dear Leaders of Governments, International Institutions and Lender Institutions,

COVID19 has turned our world upside down.

The Covid19 pandemic has severely impacted on the health, safety and survival of hundreds of millions of people. Communities worldwide are being pushed deeper into poverty, precarious existence and inequality – with the massive loss of paid and self-employment and livelihoods and further limiting of access to food, water and sanitation, adequate housing, education, health service and other basic needs. It is estimated that 500 million more people could be pushed into poverty as a result of the pandemic and the economic downturn that it has exceedingly exacerbated. In all the regions of the world, violence against women, girls and LGTBI+ people has escalated in number and severity.

This is an unprecedented moment of intense multiple crises with Covid-19, the global economic recession, the care crisis and the escalating climate and ecological emergency. Despite the urgency and scale of human suffering, governments and the international community are failing to move into emergency mode for people and communities.

These conditions shine a strong light on the continuing debt problem that stands in the way of people’s survival, the fight against inequality, the realization of their human rights, sovereignty and the self-determination of peoples, economic, gender and ecological justice, and the pursuit of a dignified life.

Over $300 billion is being spent annually by the global south for Public External Debt payments to bilateral and multilateral lenders such as the World Bank and IMF, private banks, speculators and investors in government bonds and securities. The debt problem is compounded by illicit financial flows also in the billions of dollars. This is money that is vitally needed for public investment on vital healthcare to fight Covid-19, economic and structural assistance to affected, vulnerable and marginalized individuals, families and communities, and building economies towards more just, equitable, climate resilient and sustainable systems.

Given the urgency and severity of the crisis we face, the responses to the debt problem have been severely insufficient in the best case, and in many occasions counterproductive.

The IMF announced a Covid-19 debt relief package in April 2020 and said it will use $500 million to cover several months of debt payments being made to the IMF by 28 countries. The IMF says it eventually aims to cover two years’ worth of payments, but this would depend on whether it receives additional pledges from member governments for its Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT). In fact, the IMF did not write off its claims. The contributions of several rich countries to CCRT were used to repay IMF claims from these 28 countries.

In the same month, G20 governments introduced the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) - not a cancelation but merely an eight-month delay of up to $12 billion worth of payments for public debts, and only 73 countries were considered eligible. Of this, just $5.3 billion of bilateral debt has actually been suspended to 43 countries, all of which is now due to be paid between 2022 and 2024.

Private lenders have so far refused to cancel or suspend any of the debt they claim. Similarly, multilateral development banks, such as the World Bank, have also failed to cancel debt.

Meantime, the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Asian Development Bank are making available a combined total of $205.5 billion of loans for Covid-19 response measures. The IMF has approved more than $88 billion in emergency loans in the last 6 months to 81 countries. It is a travesty of justice that countries in the Global South will end up with even more debts in the face of the multiple crises.

The staggering problem of debt is beyond the bleeding of public coffers in the face of great need and vulnerabilities.

Much of this debt is illegitimate, lent irresponsibly and unfairly, driven by predatory lending, used to finance harmful projects and policies,
failing to comply with legal and democratic requirements, saddled with onerous and unjust terms, incurred by private corporations but assumed by governments or incurred through public guarantees of private profits, wasted or stolen.

Policy conditions attached to loans, including cuts in public services and social protection, privatization and severe austerity programs, have also caused as great if not greater harm than debt servicing, especially on women and girls, indigenous peoples and most impoverished and vulnerable people and communities. These conditions have exacerbated social conflict, criminalization of poverty, and militarization and repression.

Moreover, debt and the "indebtedness" of countries of the South is both a consequence and a tool for domination - subverting the ability of countries and peoples to shape their own economic programs and undermining sovereign institutions and democratic processes.

All these are in stark contrast to the fact that peoples of countries in the Global South have paid for the debts incurred in their name so many times over - with their money, their livelihoods, their safety, well-being, their lives, and the health of the planet. And all these in contrast to the much greater social, historical and ecological debt owed to the people of the South through centuries of colonial and post-colonial plunder and extraction of their natural resources and exploitation of their labor, including women’s unpaid domestic and care work.

We demand for much more than "debt relief," we demand debt justice.

We call on world leaders, national governments, financial institutions, public and private, to take urgent, just, ambitious action, in compliance of their obligations and responsibilities and commit to the following:

1. Unconditional cancellation of public external debt payments by all lenders - bilateral, multilateral and private lenders - for all countries in need for at least the next four years as an immediate step and a clear program towards the unconditional cancellation of outstanding debt; In addition, borrowing governments have it within their power to stop making debt payments but they should not suffer any form of penalties for doing so;

2. Use of resources freed from debt to address immediate needs for vital and universal healthcare, social protection, and other essential services and rights, secure the safety and well being of people and communities, provide economic and structural assistance to affected, vulnerable and marginalized individuals, families and communities, undertake urgent climate action, and build economies that are equitable, uphold human rights, promote gender, race and ecological justice, are climate resilient and compatible with the health of the planet

3. National debt audits - both government audits and independent citizens’ audits - that will critically examine the nature, purpose, terms and conditions, actual use of loans, and the impacts of loan-supported policies and programs, and thorough-going review and changes in lending, borrowing and payment policies to prevent the re-accumulation of unsustainable and illegitimate debt

4. A fair, transparent, binding and multilateral framework for debt crisis resolution (under the auspices of the UN and not in lender-dominated arenas) that addresses unsustainable and illegitimate debt

5. Thorough-going national and global review and changes in lending, borrowing and payment policies and practices aimed at preventing the re-accumulation of unsustainable and illegitimate debt, strengthening democratic institutions and processes, and upholding human rights and peoples’ self determination

6. Recognition and application of the primacy of human rights and the corresponding obligations of the States, the international community and private actors, including the extraterritorial responsibility of each State for the impacts of the action or omission of companies, speculators and investors under its jurisdiction.

7. Reparations for the damages caused to countries, peoples and nature, due to the contracting, use and payment of unsustainable and illegitimate debts and the conditions imposed to guarantee their collection.

We seek the decisive and full solution to the debt problem as part of the profound transformation of economic and financial systems that the present crises so urgently demand.
Amis de l'Afrique Francophone (AMAF-Benin)

BOLIVIA
Fundación Interamericana del Corazón (IFIC-Bolivia)
Plataforma por los Derechos Humanos Santa Cruz Bolivia

BOTSWANA
Success Capital Organisation

BRAZIL
Centro Dandara de Promotoras Legais Populares
Fórum Mudanças Climáticas e Justiça socioambiental (FMCJS)
Gestos (soropositividad, comunicación, género)
Institute for Social and Economic Studies- INESC
Instituto Maíra
Instituto Políticas Alternativas para o Cone Sul (Instituto Pacs)
Pastoral Operária Nacional
Rede Jubileu Sul Brasil
Servicio Franciscano De Solidariedade (SEFRAS)
SOS Amazonia Fridays For Future

BULGARIA
International Youth Alliance

BURUNDI
Civic Initiative for Environment and Sustainable Development

CABO VERDE
Ecofeminism Movement

CAMEROON
Africa Development Interchange Network (ADIN)
Alternatives Durables pour le Développement (ADD)
Association de femmes Elat-Meyong
Association Actions Vitales pour le Développement Durable [AVD]
Cadire Cameroon Association

CANADA
Grandmothers Advocacy Network
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
ReFocus Consulting

CHAD
Organisation Tchadienne Anti-Corruption (OTAC)

COLOMBIA
Alianza Colombiana por la Salud Alimentaria
Asociación Colombiana de Economistas Negras- Asoman
Cambiada
Asociación Colombiana de Educación al Consumidor
Corporación de Educación de investigación Intercultural para los Pueblos (CEIP)
Enda Colombia
Hortiroma Chiguata
Proceso de Comunidades Negras
REPEM Colombia

COTE d’IVOIRE
L’initiative de la Société Civile pour les Objectifs du Développement Durable (ISC/ODD-CI)

CUBA
Centro Martin Luther King

CZECH REPUBLIC
Česko proti chudobě a nerovnostem (Czechia Against Poverty and Inequality)
Ekumenická akademie (Ecumenical Academy)
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
Instituto de Desarrollo de la Economía Asociativa (IDEAC)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
Actions pour la Réinsertion Sociale de la Femme (ARSF)
ATTAC-Congo
CADTM - Labumbashi
CARITAS Congo
Centre D’etudes Et D’initiatives Pour Un Developpement Integral "CEIDE"
Coalition Congolaise Pour La Promotion Des Nouvelles Technologie De
L’Information Et De La Communication (CPNTICS)
Conseil des Facilita tueurs des Pays des Grands Lacs (CFGL)
Construisons Ensemble le Monde
Initiatives des Femmes en Situations Difficiles pour le Développement Durable et Intégré (IFESIDDI)

EGYPT
Gatef

ECUADOR
Accion Ecologica
Agencia Bolivariana de Prensa (ABP)
Centro de Documentación en Derechos Humanos "Segundo Montes Mozo S.J." (CSMM)
Instituto de Estudios Ecologistas del Tercer Mundo
Opción Humanista

EL SALVADOR
CESTA Amigos de la Tierra
Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho (FESPAD)
RACDES
Servicios Ecumenicos Para Reconciliacion Y Reconstruccion Y SIGLO XXIII
HAITI
PAPDA
Plataforma Haitiana para un Desarrollo Alternativo
RASIN Kán Pèp La

HONDURAS
Totalmente en Apoyo a Esta Iniciativa

HUNGARY
DemNet Hungary
Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation
National Society of Conservationists - Friends of the Earth Hungary

FIJI
Alliance for Future Generations
Diverse Voices and Action (DIVA) for Equality
Rainbow Pride Foundation
Talanoa Consulting

FRANCE
Adéquations
Attac France
CADTM France
Plateforme Française Dette & Développement (PFDD)

GAMBIA
Worldview The Gambia

GERMANY
erlassjahr.de (Jubilee Germany)

Fridays for Future (FFF- Germany)
urgewald

GHANA
Abibinsroma Foundation
Apostolic Ministerial International Network
Centre for Muslim Youth In Peace And Development
Vivian Akori Foundation

GREECE
Debt Free / Advanced Media Organization
Hellenic Platform for Development
Organization Earth

GUATEMALA
ACONAPAMG

GUINÉE
Organisation Guinéenne des Droits et Devoirs du Citoyen - OGDDC
Plateforme d’information et d’Action sur la Dette et le Développement (PIADD- Guinée)
Plateforme Nationale des Citoyens Unis pour le Développement (PCUD)
Réseau National des Acteurs du Développement Durable (RENADE)

INDIA
All-India Women Hawkers Federation (AIWHF)
Association For Promotion Sustainable Development
Citizens Forum for Mangalore Development
Collective for Economic Justice
Emigrants Welfare Forum (EWF)
Environics Trust
Forum for Justice and Peace
Foundation for Sustainable Development and Climate Action
Growthwatch
Himalaya Niti Abhiyan (HNA)
Holy Spirit Foundation Trust
Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF)
Indian Women Theologians’ Forum
Karavali Karnataka Janabhivridhi Vedike
Migrant Forum
mines,minerals & PEOPLE (mm&P)
Nadi Ghati Morcha
National Domestic Workers Movement
National Hawkers Federation (NHF)
People for Himalayan Development
Prantajan
Pravasi Mithra Labour Union (PMLU)
Progressive Plantation Workers Union (PPWU)
Samsya Kya Hai
Tamilnadu Domestic Workers Welfare Trust
Tripla Difesa Onlus International No Violence -India
Van Adhikar evam Vikas Sangthan
Vindhya Hawkers Union

INDONESIA
Aksi for Gender, Social and Ecological Justice (AKSII)
Alghifari Law Office and Research
debtWATCH Indonesia
Encep Sopian (Sapar)
H.doif
Indonesia for Global Justice (IGJ)
Indowater Cop
Institute for Essential Services Reform (IESR)
Koalisi Rakyat Untuk Hak Atas Air (KRuHA) / People’s Coalition to the Right to Water
Labuhan Batu, North Sumatra
Lembaga Informasi Perburuhan Sedane
Perkumpulan Inisiatif
Persatuhan Perjuangan Nelayan (PPN)
Perhimpunan Hanjuang Mahardika Nusantara (PHMN)
Sawit Watch
Serikat Nelayan Indonesia (SNI-Indonesia Fisherfolk Union)
Serikat Perempuan Sunggal (SPS)
Solidaritas Perempuan (Women’s Solidarity for Human Rights)
Suluh Muda Indonesia - North Sumatra
Trend Asia
Women Solidarity
Yayasan Bintang Gana, Bali
Yayasan Perlindungan Insani Indonesia
Yayasan Satu Keadilan

IRAQ
@gayofiraq

IRELAND
Centre for Global Education
Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, Dublin

ISRAEL
Yedidia Consulting Services

ITALY
Effo Rivista Femminista
Federation Italian Catholic Organisations for International Volunteering Service (FOCSIV)
GCAP Italy
Link 2007
Tripla Difesa Onlus international no violence -Italy

JAMAICA
Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers

JAPAN
Fridays For Future (FFF-Dazaifu)
Friends of the Earth (FOE-Japan)
350.org Japan

JORDAN
North Star NGO

KENYA
Daughters of Mumbi Global Resource Center
Emonyo Yefwe International
Forum for Women in Development, Democracy and Justice
Haki Jamii Rights Centre

LEBANON
Fridays For Future (FFF-Lebanon)
Friends of the Disabled Association
National Union on Intellectual Disability

LESOTHO
Policy Analysis And Research Institute of Lesotho

LIBERIA
Center for Peace Building and Democracy in Liberia
National Coalition of Civil Society Organizations of Liberia (NACCSO1)

MADAGASCAR
Liberty 32

MALAYSIA
Charles Santiago, MP
Monitoring Sustainability of Globalization
Sahabat Alam Malaysia - Friends of the Earth Malaysia

MALAWI
Actionaid Malawi

MALI
CAD MALI
Coalition Malienne Gouvernance Inclusive et Développement Durables (CMGIID)
Association des Jeunes pour le Développement des Communes (AJDC-Mali)

MEXICO
Dinamismo Juvenil A.C
Fundación Mexicana para la Planeación Familiar, A.C (MEXFAM)
Ninguna
Otros Mundos AC/Chiapas
La Asamblea Veracruzana de Iniciativas y Defensa Ambiental (LAVIDA - México)

MONGOLIA
Mongolian Institute of Sustainable Development Strategy
Oyu Tolgoi Watch

MOZAMBIQUE
Centro para Democracia e Desenvolvimento
Fórum de Monitoria do Orcamento (FMO)
Center For Public Integrity

MYANMAR
Change Maker
Justice for All Law Firm
Myanmar Human Rights Alliances Network (MHRAN)

NEPAL
All Nepal Peasants Federation (ANPFa)
Alliance of Foreign Aid Network , Nepal
ANWA
Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC) Nepal
Campaign for Climate Justice Network, Nepal (CCJN)
Digo Bikas Institute
Fight Inequality Nepal
Food Sovereignty and Climate Justice Network, Nepal
Human Rights Alliance Nepal
Jagaran nepal
Krishna M. Gautam
National Alliance for Human Rights And Social Justice Nepal
National Campaign for Sustainable Development Nepal
Nepal Agriculture Labour Organization
Nepal Dalit and Landless Peasants’ Association
Nepal Development Initiative
Nepal Development Initiative
Nepal Development Initiative
Nepal Development Initiative
Nepal Development Initiative
Nepal Youth Peasants Organization
NGO Federation of Nepal
Power Shift Nepal
Pravasi Nepali Coordination Committee
Right to Food National Network, Nepal
Rural Area Development Programme (RADP)
Rural Reconstruction Nepal
Tax and Fiscal Justice Alliance-Nepal
Women Empowerment Against Poverty of Nepal (WEAPoN)
Women Network for Energy and Environment
Women Peasants' Association, Nepal
Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC)

NETHERLANDS
Wemos
Recourse

NICARAGUA
Asociación para el Desarrollo Inti Pachamama
Cedecam/Latindadd
Centro de los Derechos del Campesino
Intipachamama
Red Nicaragüense de Comercio Comunitario (RENICC)

NIger
CCOAD
Réseau des Organisations du Secteur Educatif du Niger (ROSEN)

NIGERIA
Africa Intercultural Development Support Trust -Nigeria
Africa Youth Empowerment in Agriculture and Industrial Development Initiatives
Centre for Human Rights and Climate Change Research
Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre
Community Emergency Response Initiative (CERI)
Noble Delta Women for Peace and Development
Murna Foundation

NORWAY
Changemaker
Debt Justice Norway
FOKUS-Forum for Women and Development
Norwegian Church Aid
Y Global

PAKISTAN
Aurat Foundation - Karachi
Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt (CADTM-Pakistan)
Haqooq Khalq Movement (Peoples Rights Movement) Pakistan
Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. Media Freedom Forum
Institute for Social and Economic Justice
National Trade union Federation
Pakistan Development Alliance
Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF)
Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee
Pakistan Rural Workers Social Welfare Organization
Social Uplift of Nowshera –Pakistan

PALESTINE
Al-Haq
Youth Vision Society

PANAMA
Centro de la Mujer Panameña (CEMP)
Red de Mujeres Afrodescendientes de Panamá (REMAP)
Colectivo Voces Ecológicas COVEC

PERU
Cedro
Chirapaq, Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú
Marcha Mundial de las Mujeres Macro Norte Perú
Red de Economía Solidaria de la Macro Región Nor Oriental (RESNOR)
Red Internacional de Estudiantes por la Paz
Zero Hour Peru

PHILIPPINES
Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM)
Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines. for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission (AMRSP-JPICC)
Association of Transgender People in the Philippines (ATP)
Bohol Association of Non-Government Organizations, Inc. (BANGON)
Bohol Integrated Development Foundation, Inc
Bukluran Students’ Alliance- Integrated Students’ Organization
Cebuano Youth Ambassadors Inc (Gayinitiative.Ph)
Eastern Visayas Network of NGOs and POs
Ecological Justice Interfaith Movement (ECOJIM)
Fellowship for the Care of Creation Association Inc. (FCCAI)
Franciscans Solidarity Movement for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (FSM – JPIC)
Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC)
Freedom from Debt Coalition-Southern Mindanao
Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM -Pilipinas)
Gitib, Inc.
Iloilo Pride Team
Kabataan San Sidlangan, Inc.
Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment (Kalikasan PNE)
Kanlungan Center Foundation Inc.
Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya (KILUSAN)
Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center-FoE Philippines
LP-MAGAYÓN ILOILO
Makabayan Pilipinas
MARCELA
Medical Action Group, Inc.
Mujer-LGBT Organization, Inc.
Order of Friars Minor for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (OFM-JPIC)
Oriang Women’s Movement
Oriang Women's Movement - Tacloban
Pagkakaisa ng Kababaihan para sa Kalayaan (Kaisa Ka)
Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA)
Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCI)
Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM)
Partnership Mission for People's Initiatives/PMPI (former Phil. Misereor Partnership Inc.)
Samahan ng Progresibong Kabataan
SANLAKAS
Society of Transsexual Women of the Philippines (STRAP)
Stewards and Volunteers for the Earth (SAVE Philippines!)
Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP)
TFHI, Inc
Unlad Kabayan Migrant Services Fdn.
Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines (YACAP)
Youth Against Debt - Eastern Visayas Chapter
Youth for Climate Justice (Y4CJ)
Youth Voices Count, Inc.
Weform
Women’s Development Center (WDC)
350.org Pilipinas

POLAND
Institute of Global Responsibility (IGO)

PORTUGAL
Oikos - Cooperação e Desenvolvimento
Plataforma Portuguesa das ONGD

PUERTO Rico
Comuna Caribe
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
Gender-Centru

ROMANIA
Fridays For Future (FFF-Romania)

RUSSIA
Friends of the Siberian Forests

RWANDA
GCAP Rwanda Coalition

SAMOA
Samoa Family Health Association

SENEGAL
GRAP Senegal
ONG HELP AFRIQUE: Horizon d’Échange et de Lutte contre la Pauvreté en Afrique
OXFAM Sénéga

SLOVENIA
EnaBanda Association
Društvo Bodi svetloba
Povod Institute for Culture and Development of International Relations in Culture

SOUTH AFRICA
Alternative Information & Development Centre (AIDC)
groundWork, Friends of the Earth, South Africa
Division for Lifelong Learning Department - University of West Cape

SPAIN
Asociación Por Ti Mujer
Auditoría Ciudadana de la Deuda en Sanidad (Audita Sanidad)
Cooperativa La Fabrica Catalunya (Peninsula Iberica)
Coordinadora de ONG para el Desarrollo-España
ELA (Euskal Langileen Alkartasuna/Basque Workers Solidarity)
Medicusmundi
Observatori del deute en la Globalització (ODG Catalonia)
Plataforma Auditoría Ciudadana de la Deuda

SRI LANKA
Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ)
Free Trade Union Development Center - Sri Lanka
Nalini Ratnarajah
Sri Lanka UN Friendship Organisation (SUNFO)
Sustainable Development Goals Women’s Platform of Sri Lanka (SDGWFSL)
Women Development Innovators

SWITZERLAND
Swiss Apartheid Debt and Reparations Campaign (KEESA)

TANZANIA
ActionAid Tanzania

THAILAND
BUKU Thailand

TOGO
Amis des Étrangers au Togo (ADET)

TONGA
Tonga Leitis Association

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
Network of Rural Women Producers Trinidad and Tobago

TUNISIA
Al Warcha Mediatic for Economic and Social Rights Association Jeunes Actifs et Positifs

UGANDA
Africa Intercultural Development Support Trust -Uganda
Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO)
Centre for citizens Conserving (CECIC)
Hesawa Foundation (HEFO)
Queer Youth Uganda
Regional Center for International Development Cooperation (RCIDC)
SEATINI-Uganda
Sugur Development Agency (SUDA)
Support for Women in Agriculture and Environment (SWAGEN)
Uganda Debt Network

UNITED KINGDOM
Church Action for Tax Justice
Commission for a Gender Equal Economy
Divest Strathclyde Scotland
Fresh Eyes
Glasgow Calls Out Polluters
Global Justice Manchester
Global Justice Now
Heartpolitics
Jubilee Debt Campaign
Jubilee Debt Campaign, Manchester
Jubilee Scotland
LiveSimply, Harpenden
Social Justice Group, Holy Innocents’ Church, Fallowfield, Diocese of Manchester
Stamp Out Poverty
War on Want

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
ActionAid USA
Action Corps
Amazon Watch
American TelePhysicians
Blue Ridge Impact Consulting
FracTracker Alliance
Rainforest Action Network (RAN)
Rocky Mountain Public Banking Institute
Sierra Club
Sisters of Charity Federation
Small Planet Institute

VENEZUELA
Coalición de Tendencias Clasistas (CTC-VZLA)
MPI
SERDEMCA
UPF AGROPECUARIA SAN JOSE RYG

ZAMBIA
ActionAid Zambia
Civil Society SDGs Campaign/GCAP Zambia
Oxfam Zambia
Planned Governance Network
Senior Citizens Association of Zambia

ZIMBABWE
Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development