



Document on the Popular Movements

The Economy of Francis

We who are active in the popular movements and organizations want to present this document to Pope Francis and to all the participants of the meeting in Assisi. We believe that the socio environmental crisis cannot be overcome within the framework of the globally hegemonic capitalist system. Our intention here is to provide elements for imagining an alternative system that will overcome and eradicate the worldwide idolatry of money that structures the global economy and our lives. We need an economy centered on nature, on men and women.

Many of us have already participated in one of the three previous meetings of the World Encounter of Popular Movements that have been called by Francis. Under the motto of *land, shelter, and labor*, we united together to denounce the disgraceful situation of exclusion that we suffer as peasants, indigenous peoples, migrants, laborers, women, residents of poor neighborhoods and urban peripheries, and victims of violence, wars and climatic disasters. In this unprecedented dialogue we were able to hear and to feel the revolutionary preaching of a shepherd of peoples who summons the poorest folk to be protagonists of their own destiny and who calls them to lead the *process of change* that the whole of humanity needs.

We are aware that certain sectors seek to domesticate his thinking and confine it within the narrow margins of administering what already exists. They want only small reforms, small projects, and small utopias within the horizon of what is possible. Among them are found perpetrators of the most heinous environmental and social crimes, who would seek to wash their hands clean by financing events in his name.

Without failing to acknowledge the breadth of Francis's thought or claiming to have the only correct interpretation of it, we want to propose a vision that we consider in tune with the radical nature of his teachings and the revolutionary nature of Christian faith. We also want to collaborate in creating and demonstrating alternative experiences of living and working that allow us to make use of the goods of nature in ways that respond, not to the logic of the god money, but to our people's need to *live well*.

We therefore group our proposals along five main lines.

1.- Integral ecology and common goods

2.- Economic democracy



3.- Land, shelter, and labor

4.- Education, health, communication, and technology

5.- Sovereignty, human mobility, and peace

Our proposals have as antecedents the documents produced at the three world encounters of popular movements, the proceedings of the various national and regional meetings held by community organizations, and the inspiring interventions and elaborations of Pope Francis.

We know that none of what we propose is possible with the current balance of power that is determining relations between nations and within them. We know the power that money possesses to subordinate governments, maintain the status quo, expand the privileges of elites, and reduce the rights of the majority. We also have confidence in the ability of the peoples to resist injustice and transform reality. We therefore take on the task of building popular power so that workers and poor people become protagonists of the change that the world needs, because, as Francis has stated, *“In your hands, in our hands, lies the future of the humanity.”*

1- Integral ecology and common goods

- Prioritize the use of natural resources such as water, biodiversity, forests, land, minerals, and oil for the common good and human development, not for predatory exploitation and capitalist profit.
- Provide access to clean water as a right of all. Water cannot be treated as a commodity. All governments must ensure that the entire population has access to it.
- Apply a worldwide policy for the decontamination of food, soil, water sources, oceans, and human bodies.
- Develop a serious campaign against carbon emissions and other forms of anti-environmental aggression that alter the climate. Demand that nations and corporations, starting with the most affluent societies, reduce their carbon footprint.
- Plan, at the international level, for the production and fair distribution of all that contributes to the people’s physical, biological and spiritual needs, in accord with a new ethical pattern of life, well-being, and security, and without commercializing human needs. There must also be reform of



the entire pattern of extraction and replacement of nature's goods.

- Implement a People's Agrarian Reform, with the objective of guaranteeing distribution of land to all those who want to work it, imposing a maximum size of agricultural property, prioritizing the production of healthy food, and adopting agro-ecology as the main method of production in order to replace the present pattern of transgenic-based agribusiness.
- Guarantee the food sovereignty of all peoples by implementing policies that create the conditions for each nation to produce all the food it needs to supply its own population.
- Promote through governments and institutions a new energy matrix by establishing policies that encourage the use of alternative and renewable energy sources, such as wind, sun, sea, and water.
- Implement throughout the world a program of planting native trees and fruit trees in order to restore the forest cover of our planet.
- Implement throughout the world programs for differentiated collection and recycling, supported by cooperatives of urban reclaimers and recyclers.
- Drastically reduce the production of single-use containers, and place a heavy tax on all types of unnecessary packaging.
- Radically reduce transportation based on the overuse of automobiles, and promote dignified collective vehicles with zero emissions, at low cost or free.
- Replace systems of biomass combustion by guaranteeing access to safe sources of energy for cooking and heating for the two billion people who do not have access to them.
- Respect the forms of social organization and production, the rights over their territories, and the rights to their culture and beliefs of all native and indigenous peoples, including Quilombolas, Afro descendants, Roma, and others.

2- Economic democracy

- Implement an international minimum income that guarantees the nourishment and well-being of all human beings.
- Establish a new international currency, issued by the United Nations, that is under the control not of any one nation, but of all countries. The dollar and the euro will no longer be able to be used in



international transactions or as a source of speculation, since they create international inequalities and favor speculative attacks against national currencies.

- Forgive the external debts of the poorest countries, and restructure the debts of the middle-income countries so that their weight does not impede the integral human development of the indebted countries.
- Eliminate the Bretton Woods institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, replacing them with other institutions that effectively serve the international community and not the colonial interests of the powerful countries.
- Establish national and international regulation of the financial market, which is more than just the commercial and investment banks, so that every society can control financial capital and use its resources to encourage production and not speculation.
- Immediately eliminate tax havens and other tax evasion mechanisms that allow the world's richest 1% to avoid their obligations to society as a whole.
- Create a universal tax on international merchandise trade, the proceeds of which will go to an international fund to combat inequality and poverty in all countries. Since taxation should serve to correct the inequalities created in the sphere of the market, nations must create tax models in which those who have more pay more, so as to guarantee that those who have less pay less. Capital assets, large inheritances, and large fortunes must be taxed more heavily, so that consumption and low income can be taxed less. In this way inequalities are reduced rather than intensified.
- Establish mechanisms to control prices globally. The contents of the local basket of basic goods should be subsidized and tax-free for the poorest people. The principal foods needed for health and good nutrition should be widely accessible, thus ending hunger and ensuring the nutrients needed for full human development.
- Guarantee a new international monetary standard that limits basic interest rates, discourages the speculative practices of rentiers, favors productive investments, establishes low interest rates for intensive activities of technological development, and stimulates the creation of more satisfying jobs with potential for professional fulfillment.
- Implement international trade control policies that discourage unequal terms of exchange, thus preventing the prices of goods and services from creating an unfair transfer of resources from underdeveloped, labor-intensive economies to industrialized ones.
- Implement a tax policy aimed especially at arms manufacturers, gambling, sugary drinks, fast foods,



alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, and all industries that cause damage to the physical or mental health of the population. The proceeds of the tax should go to a national fund for providing free access to health care at all levels.

3- Land, shelter, and labor

- Implement by government policies the full right of all adults to have a decent job.
- Develop policies aimed at promoting and strengthening the popular economy, understood as all those rural and urban activities that employ extensive labor and are carried out in a self-managed way by individuals, family groups, communities, or workers' cooperatives.
- Establish channels of dialogue and exchange in order to build an economy for the common good, where all rural and urban workers—organized in social and union movements, in enterprises, in cooperatives, etc.—are active and present.
- Promote alternatives to private property, such as state property, cooperative property, or community property.
- Reduce the work week to twenty-four hours (shifts of six hours a day, four days a week), so that a majority of the workforce has access to employment and also has time to perform other activities.
- Create social and environmental jobs, which can be and should be devoted to various forms of collective care, such as caring for people; restoring and maintaining water sources, river banks, and wetlands; and planting trees on public roads and in urban spaces.
- Work for the full social integration of poor urban neighborhoods and marginal settlements, where a quarter of humanity currently lives, by guaranteeing access to basic services and decent housing for all families living there.
- Implement policies for urban decentralization, especially in poor countries where economic development is extremely uneven and is heavily concentrated in large cities.
- Plan for the development of new territories, creating small- and medium-sized cities in the interior of countries and bringing in new infrastructure. In addition to housing, create different types of collective activities—provisions, transportation, sanitation, health, education, cultural and leisure services—in keeping with the technological pattern of the People's Agrarian Reform.
- Plan for the development of new territories in terms of housing, relating it to the productive aspects of the regions or to the implementation of new technological poles that serve the sustainable



production of human well-being.

4- Education, health, communication, and technology

- Guarantee the right of everyone to education and training at all levels.
- Prohibit girls, boys, and adolescents up to 16 years of age from having to work anywhere in the world. Governments must guarantee all young people access to education, sports, and culture.
- Develop educational programs in accord with the values and idiosyncrasies of each people, without prejudice to universal humanist values such as solidarity and social justice.
- Adopt an educational process, from infancy to graduate school, with a view to creating a different economic dynamic, one aimed at developing technological patterns that integrate human beings with nature.
- Encourage medical research and production (especially of products that already exist but do not prosper because they are not lucrative), and orient them toward a comprehensive non-profit program of health care.
- Respect the basic right of access to health care for all people. Health services and medicines cannot be considered as merchandise or as means for making profit. Governments are responsible for controlling health services and guaranteeing free and universal access to them for the whole population. They are also responsible for developing prevention policies for everyone.
- Promote the free transfer of technology and knowledge among nations, thus making it possible to reduce international inequalities. We need to overcome the international division and specialization that are tied to comparative advantage. Industries with high added value and sophisticated technology should not be the patrimony only of developed countries, while less developed countries are left with agrarian economies and industries with low added value, which cause them to experience persistent indices of precarious employment as well as structural deficits in their current accounts [with joint ventures or with the Chinese model].
- Promote a broad debate on the principles for establishing a technological matrix at the service of human life and the preservation of the planet. Develop a New Industrial Revolution that is based on this process and that allows broad participation of workers in production and management.
- Guarantee democratic communications whereby all voices are heard, and eliminate



communications monopolies.

- Promote free software throughout the world, starting with governments, educational institutions, and international organizations.
- Prioritize investment of public resources in education, health, culture, and housing construction for the people.
- Declare scientific knowledge to be a patrimony of humanity, and eliminate all types of royalties associated with it.

5- Sovereignty, human mobility, and peace

- Respect the sovereignty and self-determination of all the world's peoples, eliminating all forms of imperialist and neocolonial interference.
- Create a universal passport, so that all persons who have not committed crimes in their countries can travel freely.
- Insure that international organizations, such as the UN, WTO, FAO, UNCTAD, UNESCO, etc., have equal participation of all governments and include representatives from the civil society of each country.
- Eliminate foreign military bases from all countries, since they serve as a form of political and economic domination.
- Eliminate all forms of military aggression and all forms of intervention in the autonomous economic and political sectors of each country.
- Maintain under the control of national governments all services and goods that are considered "essential" for collective life and national economic development, such as water, minerals, oil, electricity, land, sanitation, transportation, and production and distribution of food.