

The

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Upstream Journal



child soldiers

Special feature: Former child soldiers and their communities

Struggles against dam construction in Costa Rica and Guatemala; Changing the World Bank - a focus on environmental and social standards; Attack on the media in Mexico

The Upstream Journal focuses on economic, social and cultural rights, with a perspective of Third World poverty as a human rights issue. We look at the global structures of poverty and oppression, and at the institutions and governments that reinforce that structure. Our goal is to contribute to the struggle for democratic processes that include access to information and transparency, the strengthening of accountability and participation, and the empowerment of the oppressed and impoverished.

The role of the Upstream Journal is being re-examined, probably because of the effectiveness of internet communication as much as any other reason. It is not a newsletter for members, as it once was, but has evolved into another publication altogether.

Our readers are responding positively to the changes, although we are being asked if we can't find some good news to share!

Yes, we can. In fact, in this issue the SJC's Ernie Schibli writes about the importance of keeping ourselves aware of the good news as he begins a new column. (Take a quick peak at it on page 15. For those of you that have met Ernie, the drawing itself is guaranteed to put a smile on your face.)

In this issue, we take a special look at child soldiers, and the difficulties communities face trying to deal with this especially brutal aspect of conflict. Future issues will look at topics like the rights of people with disabilities and food sovereignty. Each issue will have articles on efforts to democratize the global economic system and transform the World Bank and IMF, and we'll continue our focus on Mesoamerica and the struggle of communities in that region that the Social Justice Committee has been part of for almost thirty years.

Let us know what you think of our new direction, and give us your suggestions to make this a better paper. You can write me at editor@upstreamjournal.org, or call 1-514-933-6797 (1-866-RIGHTS-2 toll free in North America).

Derek MacCuish
Editor

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The Upstream Journal is a free publication of the Social Justice Committee. It is one of several educational materials we offer on human rights and development.

Donations to the SJC are welcome, and go to support a range of activities. The SJC is a registered charity in Canada, and donations are tax deductible. We accept Visa and MasterCard.

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Keeping their land and tradition

Indigenous peoples in Costa Rica seek international support in their fight against dam construction

Angel Mota

Dam construction projects have negatively impacted many communities in the developing world. From the Three Gorges in China to the Narmada in India, communities have been uprooted and natural habitats irreversibly changed due to the flooding dams cause.

The Costa Rican government, in cooperation with the Inter-American Development Bank, is planning the massive Boruca Hydroelectric Project, an initiative that would flood approximately 250 square kilometers of indigenous territory at a cost of three million dollars (US).

The initial assessment phase is projected to finish at the end of 2005, to be followed by an Environmental Impact Study.

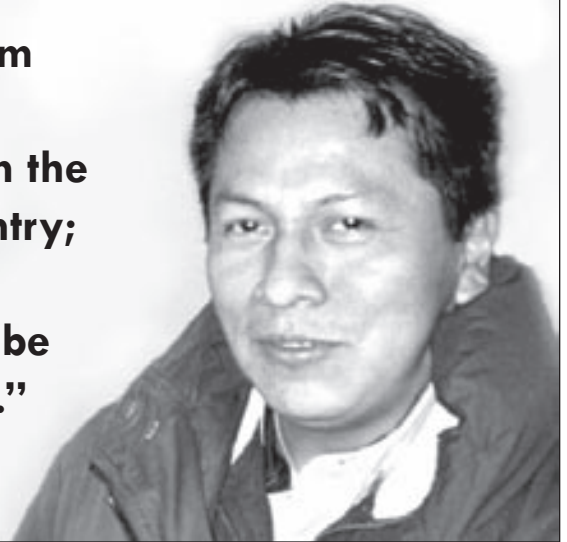
Many indigenous peoples in Costa Rica, including Gilbert Gonzalez Maroto, remain firmly opposed to the project.

A few months ago the Social Justice Committee welcomed Gonzalez Maroto to Montreal to speak to the public on behalf of the Indigenous Regional Association of DIKES (ARIDIKES), an organization working to halt the Boruca project in Costa Rica. As a Brunca indigenous person, he is well aware of the negative local repercussions of the project.

In this interview, he discusses the probable outcomes of the project, as well as the importance of international cooperation in halting its inception.

What is the project exactly?

The proposed dam “would flood an enormous area in the south of the country; three indigenous territories would be covered in water.”



The Social Justice Committee welcomed Gonzalez Maroto to Montreal to speak about his people's struggle. His visit to Canada was organized by Horizons of Friendship, based in Cobourg Ontario.

Photo courtesy of Horizons.

Dam construction is projected in the indigenous territory of Rey Curré. It would flood an enormous area in the south of the country; three indigenous territories would be covered in water and five additional territories would be affected indirectly.

Because of the size of this project, there will be severe environmental impacts, many of which are irreversible. There could be a total climate change in the area, and the indigenous farmers may have to change their means of production. There are a series of other negative impacts of this project. This is one of the main reasons why the indigenous communities in particular have begun a struggle against the construction of this dam.

Can you mention some of the other consequences of this project?

There will be an impact on health. Because of the scale of the construction, some 7,000 people would have to work

on this project for a period of 2-3 years. The concentration of people needed for this project will generate health problems, as we don't have the infrastructure to take care of the enormous amount of people that will come to the region. Logically, this will create sanitary concerns.

Another negative effect is the cultural impact on the indigenous territory. There is talk of relocation. With relocation, you cut off the roots, the cultural traditions of indigenous peoples. A relocated indigenous person is not the same as one that lives on the land where they were born. These impacts are definitely negative. Indigenous communities also consider other factors that will affect them substantially, beginning with the fact that some of the villages will be left 250 meters below water.

There are additional effects that have been investigated, for example, the seismic effects. In 1910, Costa Rica experienced one of its most severe earthquakes and the epicenter of that earthquake is only a few meters from where the dam is being planned. After 1910, we've had

a lot of earth tremors that make building this dam a dangerous thing. As well, a component of the material where the dam is to be built is porous and begins to decompose over time from the pressure of enormous weight. This is already happening in Honduras where concrete is being poured to hold a leaky dam.

If the effects are so negative, why is the government insisting on building this dam?

Economic reasons, for one thing. They argue that there will be economic development created from the sale of energy and, in addition, they claim there will be economic development from tourism. On top of that they argue that the energy in the country is being depleted, and it is necessary to create new ways to meet the energy needs of the country. These are their principal reasons. In terms of the negative affects mentioned earlier, the government simply insists that the majority of the affects will be positive.

What companies will participate in the construction of the dam?

Hydro Quebec participated in the initial phases of the project. The feasibility study is being financed by the Inter-American Development Bank. Eventually other entities such as the World Bank will participate as well as other companies.

Have you spoken to people here about the implication of Hydro Quebec and if so, what was their reaction?

I have spoken about Hydro Quebec's involvement, but unfortunately the response wasn't what I expected. The involvement of Canadian companies doesn't seem to be considered to be very important. But perhaps the most important thing is the solidarity that was expressed among the people and organizations we have met. They are prepared to support the indigenous struggle, and will help to build an even greater level of solidarity, which will serve to eventually stop the construction of this hydroelec-

tric project.

As you know, (indigenous) groups in Canada fought very strongly against a similar kind of project in the James Bay area. Do you have any relationship with them?

Fourteen months ago, a group of these indigenous people came to visit us in Costa Rica and we visited the area where the dam will be constructed. They shared experiences of their struggle against hydroelectric dams, they told us about their negotiation process and the kinds of economic benefits they are receiving.

But all things considered, they said that the economic benefits are secondary because of the irreversible environmental impacts. As you know, the relationship

"The relationship indigenous people have with the environment is a constant and continuous one, and normally indigenous people don't want this relationship to be severed at any cost."



indigenous people have with the environment is a constant and continuous one, and normally indigenous people don't want this relationship to be severed at any cost.

In this context, do you hold any hope? Do you think the project can be stopped?

Yes, I think it can be stopped. This won't happen through legal channels even though we have an abundance of legislation. We have an indigenous law, Convention 179 that has been approved 12 years ago in Costa Rica, but it is unlikely that these laws would stop the project. Public protests, however, could make a

difference. Costa Rica has an image of being peaceful and tranquil so the government is very afraid of public protests on a national level. And, clearly, protests on an international level would also help create pressure to stop this project.

In this respect, in your opinion, is the support of the Canadian and international population necessary in this movement?

It really is. We are at the organizing stage at local and regional levels. We think that we can organize national solidarity initiatives and then international initiatives. Solidarity is important for us not just from Canada but other countries around the world in order to help create a large, strong and solid movement that will expose the fact that indigenous rights and legislation in Costa Rica are clearly not being respected.

Would you like to send a message to Latin Americans that live in Canada and to Canadians in general?

First of all, people must support the indigenous movement that we are presenting to Canadians and find mechanisms to connect to the movement in Costa Rica. For more information, people can visit a web site (www.cedincr.org) that talks about the hydroelectric project in Costa Rica. You will also find information about the indigenous people of Rey Curré, the community that will be affected. The hope is that little by little we can create a snowball effect that grows much wider and much bigger day-by-day.

This interview was conducted in Spanish by Angel Mota for enfasis.ca and the Social Justice Committee.

Translation into English by Elvira Truglia, a member of the SJC Board and the SJC Central America Committee, and of the enfasis.ca collective.



Child soldiers in Uganda: One woman's effort to bring about change

Rehabilitation of child soldiers a mission for Ugandan woman now in Canada studying education

Lindsay Jones

Two years ago, a woman boarded a plane to Montreal from Uganda's international airport. This soft-spoken woman is presently a graduate student in education at McGill University. Soon she will return to the tumultuous life that awaits her. Her story is one national love and sorrow over the exploitation of its children. She agreed to a lengthy discussion of her personal experiences, but must remain anonymous.

She is one of thirteen volunteers at a rehabilitation centre for former child soldiers. These are boys and girls as young as six years old who were taken from their homes and schools, and recruited as soldiers and exploited as sexual slaves. They were trained to use firearms and ordered to commit theft, murder and rape. If they did not comply, they are killed instantly, or mutilated and left to die.

For these children, she is their only hope. When the children asked why she was going to Canada, she explained, "No one will listen to our stories here. Where I am going, they will want to know what has happened to you, and I will tell them."

Demobilized child soldiers are often left to face the world alone. Violent confrontations between government and rebel troops cause the displacement of entire communities, leaving many children unable to find their families once they have

escaped military slavery.

Those that make their way home can be faced with harsh rejection. It is common practice for abductors to take the children back to their villages and force them to rob, mutilate and murder their own family and friends. It can be difficult for communities to see past their own suffering and acknowledge the pain of the recruited children. They see the children as criminals, not victims.

The ultimate goal of the centre is to facilitate the children's successful reintegration into society. Before this can happen, both the children and their communities need time to heal.

When the children first arrive at the centre, they are full of anger, fear, mistrust, and above all guilt. The memories of the crimes they were forced to commit monopolize their thoughts. During the day, arts and crafts, sports and games provide a healthy distraction for the children.

"It's the nights that are the hardest," she says. "They hear voices and see faces of the people they've killed, and fear they will be taken again."

The workers at the centre try to lessen the children's heavy burden of guilt. Us-

ing conventional methods of counseling in conjunction with traditional cleansing rituals helps the children come to terms with what they have experienced.

The children are also encouraged to recount their personal experiences to their community members. This can be an effective way to gain forgiveness and understanding, and ultimately to improve the likelihood of the children's acceptance.

For nearly two decades, President Museveni's government has battled vio-

David's story

"David was only six years old when he was recruited by the LRA. He was forced to operate a firearm that was as tall he was.

After his abduction, he was forced to go back to his community and kill his parents, two brothers, and sister while they sat at the dinner table. His parents were brave and told him to do what he was told. They knew that was his only chance of survival.

Three years later, David was discharged and taken in by our centre. It was months before he spoke a single word. Over time, he began to feel more comfortable and finally told me his story.

When I learned that I would be leaving for Montreal, I worried about the effect it would have on David. He had taken a particular liking to me and I was afraid he would think I was abandoning him.

When I finally told him, he said, "Tell our story so the people of the world can help us. Tell as many people as you can."



lent opposition from insurgent groups in the North and Southwest of Uganda. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is the prominent rebel group in the north. In opposition of Museveni's government, the LRA has resorted to almost exclusive recruitment of children. Amnesty International has estimated that 90% of its soldiers are under the age of sixteen.

Although the government claims to defend children working as soldiers for rebel groups, children have been discovered fighting on both sides of this conflict. Government and rebels forces abducted more than 10,000 Ugandan children over the past 18 months, according to a United Nations estimate.

Despite national and international legislative efforts to address the global issue of child soldiers, the government of Uganda and the international community have failed to protect the basic human rights of Uganda's children. The government's reluctance to pursue peaceful negotiations with insurgent groups, paired with the international community's refusal to acknowledge this as a human atrocity worthy of its attention, has rendered all children in Uganda vulnerable to further abuse.

One courageous Ugandan woman and her centre are doing what they can to give these children a chance at a new life. Her story should be an inspiration to all that feel that as individuals we are powerless. Without support from her government, she has made a decision to act on behalf of the exploited children in her country, and to give them a voice.

"We are their only hope," she admits. "If we don't help them, who will?"

Lindsay Jones is a recent graduate of Concordia University, with a degree in Psychology and Political Science. She hopes to work in international human rights law and problems of exploitation of children in war and conflict circumstances.



Child soldier facts:

- More than 300,000 children are presently working as child soldiers for government and rebel forces, in more than thirty conflict zones worldwide. These include Columbia, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- One third of all abducted children are reportedly girls. Nearly 100% of demobilized girls are infected with sexually transmitted diseases.
- Children most vulnerable to recruitment are those living in conflict zones, separated from their families, and living in poverty. Child soldiers that have been demobilized are at a particularly high risk for re-recruitment.



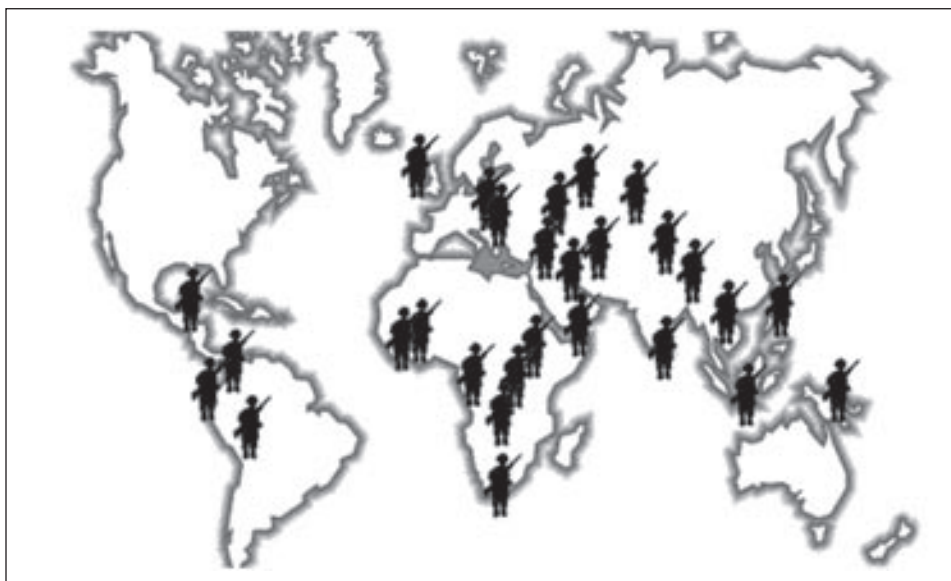
Africa's poverty rose by 43 percent in last decade - UN Economic Commission for Africa

The UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) recently announced that poverty levels on the continent had increased by 43 percent over the last 10 years, with women making up to 80 percent of the people living on less than a dollar a day.

Josephine Ouedraogo, director of the ECA's African Centre for Gender and Development, told a news conference at a meeting of economic experts and academicians in the Ugandan capital, Kampala, that the situation was being compounded by high rates of maternal mortality, which, she said, stood at 940 deaths per 100,000 births.

The poverty situation, Ouedraogo added, has been exacerbated by the unequal distribution of resources between men and women and the rising HIV/AIDS infection rates, especially among women and girls.

"The situation is becoming a big concern, not only to women but also to African leaders, who should recognise that rising poverty and the rising number of poor women as the majority of the poorest, are systematic problems," she said.



Children at war, in 33 conflicts around the world

Source: Swedish Save the Children

Improving programs to demobilize and reintegrate child soldiers

International community
is gaining experience
treating children
in post-conflict
communities

Laura Johnson

The end of the cold war and the subsequent rise in non-traditional civil conflict has brought about a rapid increase in the use of child soldiers. While this is clearly a tragedy to be lamented, the international community's growing experience in dealing with the problems associated with child soldiers has led to an increased awareness of how child soldiers can be successfully

Girls Suffer the Most

"Boys are not the only ones recruited as soldiers in this war. Girls are abducted as young as six years old. Actually, I think it's the girls who suffer the most at this age. They do combat work too, but they are also given away as mistresses.

Before I left Uganda, I worked with a girl that was abducted when she was seven. When she was finally discharged, she was thirteen and had three children. She and two of her children were infected with AIDS.

She told me, "If only you knew what I went through. The very day I was taken, I was given to a commander who was fit to be my grandfather. If I tried to say no, I knew I would be killed."

demobilized and reintegrated. There is a growing awareness of the particular needs of child soldiers, and how to go about meeting them.

A major problem that has faced most demobilization programs for child soldiers is the size of the programs. Many programs are able to treat only a fraction of those children serving as combatants. This is largely a function of funding and donor interest, and as the problem of child soldiers has received an increasing amount of attention, this issue is becoming less significant. However it will always be problematic to sustain donor interest in programs that operate in the long term, as do many child soldier rehabilitation programs.

The specific needs of girl combatants, who may serve as soldiers, servants, or sex slaves, are often overlooked. For instance, in Mozambique, girls and women involved in the conflict were generally ignored. However, more recent cases show an increased focus on the needs of girl combatants and programs have been developed specifically for them.

During the demobilization phases of the Sierra Leone and Liberia conflicts, the international community used the lessons learnt in past conflicts, such as Mozambique, to increase the quality of the programs that were developed. Programs were more widely available, more emphasis was placed on the needs of girls, tracking programs were established to ensure that children were not remobilized into the conflict, and special educational programs geared specifically to child soldiers were established. Unfortunately, because of the failure of the peace processes, both Sierra Leone and Liberia were in the end largely unsuccessful in demobilizing child soldiers.



As child soldiers have been fighting from such an early age, their educational and skill levels are often much lower than their peers who have not been involved in the conflict. Thus, in recent years, increased focus has been placed on the need to develop educational and skill training programs that are focused on the needs of child soldiers, and allow them to develop marketable skills other than soldiering.

While these, and other issues specific to the demobilization of child soldiers have been increasingly taken into account in the development of treatment programs for child soldiers, and rightly so, it must be remembered that these factors are not enough. Rather, aspects relevant to the peace process at large, such as the political situation, infrastructure, economic reconstruction, demilitarization, and disarmament, are hugely important to the successful demobilization of child soldiers. Without a stable peace, the best programs and intentions will not be able to help child soldiers.

Laura Johnson is political science student at McGill university, in her final year of BA studies.



Community groups fight water privatization, dams

Usumacinta River megaprojects will bring flooding, destruction of forest environment and archeological sites, with no benefit to locals

Xania Keane

Homes, land and ancient architecture in Mexico and Guatemala may soon be underwater because of plans to build dams on the Usumacinta River.

"If we leave our homes, we'll die. If we stay, quite likely the result will be the same," said Eusebio Figueroa Santos, Vice President of the Alliance for Life and Peace (Alianza por la Vida y la Paz) in the Petén region of northern Guatemala.

Santos talked about the concern that network of community groups has about the planned privatization of water and building of dams on the Usumacinta

when he spoke with Social Justice Committee members and others in Montreal this winter. One concern is that once a dam is erected, the water will become the property of the company that built it.

The Usumacinta River, between Guatemala and Mexico, is the largest in Mesoamerica and seventh largest in the world, with one of the strongest currents.

"It has enough energy potential to light all of Central America," said Santos.

"In many countries such as mine, water has been privatized," said Santos. "Fresh water is becoming one of the main commodities in the world wide market."

According to Santos, five main dams are planned to be constructed in the area of Guatemala bordering Chiapas, Mexico, as part of the Plan Puebla Panama (PPP). The PPP is a multi-billion dollar project extending from the southern state of Puebla, Mexico, through Central America to Panama. The plan is directed towards improving the physical infrastructure of the area, making it more appealing for foreign investment. The plan has little regard for the negative impact this will cause for the people and the environment of the region.



Eusebio Figueroa Santos visited Canada on a tour sponsored by Development and Peace
Photo Xania Kane



Boats along the Usumacinta River
Photo Sebastiaan Wassenaar

"If these dams are built, three hundred square kilometres will be flooded in Mexico, and four hundred square kilometres in Central America - a total of seven hundred square kilometres," he says. "The area that may be flooded holds human settlements with mainly indigenous populations, a virgin rainforest with bio-diversity that has still to be explored, and renowned ancient Mayan temples."

"What is the big offer made to the third world? We are countries that need improvement.... This is where we are presented a nice development package."

Most of the energy from the large dams will not go to the people of Central America.

"To give power to our communities we do not need a project of this type, you can use solar, or other types of energy" said Santos. "A solar panel will provide enough energy for a whole house; but

not enough to light up highways.”

“These big construction plans come into play so the US can compete with the two other powers: Japan and Europe. Assembly plants will be moved from the US, to Mexico, to Central America... The employment laws in Central America don't include vacation, unemployment insurance and pension plans. We work in subhuman conditions that are hard to believe unless you see them. The wages are only five dollars a day.”

Much of the budget for the Plan Puebla Panama is planned to go to the construction of major highway systems. Because of the size and demography of the US, it is difficult to ship products from the East, where many industries are located, to the West, where many products are shipped out for export.

“In order to shorten the route, mega projects are planned to build roads from Puebla to Panama. They go from East to West. But the PPP argument is that this is to help the Central American people.” Santos said.

The PPP is promoted as an alternative to shipping via the Panama Canal. By setting up assembly plants in Central America and transporting the products through rail and highway systems for exported to other countries, industries would save time and shipping costs.

The future of many Central American people is uncertain because free trade agreements and plans for the construction of dams and highways are discussed behind closed doors.

“It's like looking through a smoke screen. We cannot see the true motives for the construction plans. We believe that none of these projects are designed to promote the people, but to promote the corporations.” said Santos.

Eusebio Santos is ultimately hoping for support from the Canadian and American people.

“We are looking for a worldwide awareness.”

Xania Keane is a Montreal student in communications and journalism. Her career objective is photojournalism.

New booklet: “Plan Puebla Panama – Battle over the future of Mesoamerica” (2nd edition)

The Plan Puebla Panama is a corporate-driven development plan for Southern Mexico and Central America, an area also known as Mesoamerica, home to 64 million people.

In this 40-page booklet you will learn that:

- in Guatemala, almost half of the rainforest left in the country is threatened by this plan;
 - in Honduras, the proposed dam on the Honduras-El Salvador border will force more than 40,000 people to abandon their lands and their ancestors graves;
 - in Nicaragua, dry canal investors are willing to flaunt the Constitution and the rights of local people
- ...and much more

It includes

- a map of Mesoamerica with the PPP highway and electricity network projects,
- an extensive list of websites of organizations working against different aspects of the PPP,
- the Declaration of the IV Mesoamerican Forum “For self determination and peoples' resistance”, that took place in Tegucigalpa, Honduras in July 2003.

Price: \$5 each when mailed anywhere in Canada. Only \$3.50 each when you buy 10 booklets, mailed anywhere in Canada

To obtain “Plan Puebla Panama – Battle over the future of Mesoamerica” please contact:

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1857 Maisonneuve West, Montreal QC H3H 1J9

Email: sjc@web.ca Call toll free: 1-866-RIGHTS-2

This collection of articles was edited by the Network Opposed to the Plan Puebla Panama (NO-PPP). The Social Justice Committee is a member of the Network Opposed to Plan Puebla Panama (NO-PPP), a network of Northern organizations working to stop Plan Puebla Panama (PPP) and the model of corporate globalization behind it. The members of NO-PPP seek direction from grassroots organizations and anti-PPP movements in the region of Mexico and Central America. The goals of the network include building strategic alliances to support movements in the region and taking actions in the North (U.S./Canada/Europe) to stop the PPP.

World Bank makes landmark decision that weakens environmental standards

On June 8, the World Bank approved an infrastructure project in Mexico that marks a watershed in weakening the Bank's social and environmental standards. The International Rivers Network and the Bank Information Center (US NGOs) explain:

The World Bank has approved a \$108 million investment loan that will finance a series of infrastructure projects in the Mexican state of Guanajuato. For this project the Bank has agreed to set aside its own environmental and social safeguard policies and will instead rely on Mexican laws and procedures, many of which do not meet the Bank's existing standards. The project is the first major pilot of a new World Bank "middle income country strategy."

In June, 186 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from 60 countries sent a letter to the World Bank protesting the weakening of social and environmental standards in Bank projects. NGOs point out that unlike the World Bank, Mexico does not have a law on the involuntary resettlement of project-affected people, and the Mexican law on environmental assessments is much weaker than current Bank policy in critical aspects.

Arturo Morales Tirado, President of the Mexican Audubon Society in Guanajuato, says: "The environment has been seriously degraded in Mexico, and more than half of Guanajuato's popu-

lation lives in poverty. This requires that the World Bank comply with its strictest social and environmental standards in its new infrastructure project."

The Mexico pilot project confirms civil society concerns that the World Bank's new strategy will indeed weaken social and environmental standards in order to increase lending to middle income countries. There is concern that, contrary to international trends, the World Bank seems to consider environmental standards an obstacle rather than an added value of its lending.

By relying primarily on national standards rather than its own safeguard policies, the World Bank will dramatically reduce its accountability, particularly since the mandate of the Bank's independent investigative body, the Inspection Panel, does not extend to reviewing national policies and procedures.

The World Bank's safeguard policies have been developed over the past two decades in order to mitigate environmental and social destruction in Bank-financed projects. Many NGOs have been actively involved in the development of current standards, which are widely referenced by other financial institutions. The Bank's proposal to turn away from current Bank standards represents a profound shift in the development assistance framework.



Renewables: World Bank offers more, but not enough

Sanjay Suri, Bonn IPS

The World Bank says it will double its loans for renewable energy projects over the next five years, but falls short of the total proposed by the Extractive Industries Review, a study that Bank president James Wolfensohn himself commissioned in 2000.

Under the proposal, the World Bank will increase lending by around 20 percent every year until the loans reach about twice the figure by 2009. That falls considerably short of proposals in the Extractive Industries Review that World Bank president James Wolfensohn had commissioned in 2000.

That review had said that the World Bank should "phase out investments in oil production by 2008 and devote its scarce resources to investments in renewable energy resource development, emissions-reducing projects, clean energy technology, energy efficiency and conservation, and other efforts that delink energy use from greenhouse gas emissions."

Peter Woicke, World Bank managing director and executive vice-president of the International Finance Corporation told media representatives at the end of proceedings at the International Conference for Renewable Energies in Bonn Thursday that "there are certain things in that report we have problems with that will be debated later this month".

Essentially, Woicke indicated that the World Bank was not turning its back on coal and oil as the EIR had recommended. "The World Bank shall not exit

coal now and oil by 2008," Woicke said. "As much as I would personally love to see more finance for renewables, but oil, coal and gas are a major major energy source for a lot of people," he said.

About 1.6 billion people have no energy supply and they are cutting down forests to get some energy, Woicke said. "As long as we are adding value to the extractive industries (meaning mostly coal and oil) by way of cutting emissions and increasing social knowledge, the World Bank will remain strongly involved in these projects."

The World Bank commitment to extractive projects is currently about 400 million dollars a year, he said.

Woicke made it clear that renewables cannot be supported on principle alone. "Eventually, and we are not saying just now, renewables do have to meet market criteria, otherwise they will not be sustainable," he said.

"Developing countries cannot for ever depend on donors' aid," he said. Woicke added, however, that developed countries should increase their aid commitments to raise total aid from the present 55 billion dollars a year to meet immediate needs of developing countries. Very few have met their obligation of giving 0.7 percent of their gross national income (GNI) in overseas aid, he said.

Friends of the Earth International, Greenpeace, the International Rivers Network and WWF International that were among a group of NGOs said the World Bank proposal was "marginal at best and does nothing to address the bank's ongoing bias towards fossil fuels".

"They're not even close to the EIR recommendation," Steve Kretzmann of the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) was quoted by the groups as saying. "They're pledging 20 percent of a cent when they were asked to give 20 percent of a dollar."

The NGO group said 82 percent of all oil extractive projects funded by the World Bank since 1992 are for export to the north, and do not meet the energy needs of the poor.

Assessing the impacts of World Bank and IMF actions

The institutions' new program may be a tool for changing policy, or it may be an empty exercise.

A new approach called Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA) is being used increasingly by the World Bank to examine the distributional impacts of adjustment policies. PSIA is one of the World Bank's central responses to NGO calls that its resources effectively contribute to poverty reduction. The Social Justice Committee is engaging with the Bank on the issue in an effort to make the process transparent and participatory, and to ensure that it influences policy decisions, rather than another public relations exercise without positive impact.

In 1999, largely in response to calls for greater debt relief for the world's poorest countries, the World Bank and IMF made a public commitment to poverty reduction. Their new way of working would be embodied in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Process, which was linked to the delivery of debt relief through the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative.

Both institutions launched new lending instruments to signal this change in approach to development lending. The World Bank created the "Poverty Reduction Support Credit" (PRSC) and the IMF renamed its Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility the "Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility"

However, nomenclature aside, these powerful institutions are not ready to meet a commitment to poverty reduction. Their staff and management do not have the expertise or employ ways of

working that ensures that their policy advice complements poverty reduction efforts, or that encourage alternative development paths that are country-owned.

PSIAs are to analyze the possible distributional impacts of a proposed policy reform on different stakeholders, with a special focus on the poor and vulnerable. They could be conducted ex-ante, ex-post, or during reform implementation. The outcomes could inform policy design and sequencing, or point to mitigation measures needed to protect certain stakeholders.

Many of the tools and approaches to be used in PSIA are not new. What is new is the focus on policy reforms, rather than projects, the multidisciplinary approach, and the link proposed between PSIA and PRSP.

The SJC felt it was time for Canadian NGOs and government to weigh in on these issues. We approached staff at CIDA's Policy Branch in September 2003, and in November CIDA produced a policy note to inform staffs of the history of PSIA. On May 27th CIDA held a learning event in Ottawa, which the SJC assisted in organizing. A World Bank representative provided an introduction to PSIA and the tools it employs, and a CIDA representative presented related work CIDA is supporting in West Africa. Derek MacCuish and Karen Joyner of the SJC drew attention to the importance of promoting best practice in PSIA. We presented a review of recent and current PSIA conducted by the World Bank and DFID in CIDA's nine countries of focus that highlights the lack of transparency and inclusion in this work.

For more information on PSIA, visit the SJC web site at www.s-j-c.net/psia.html.

Journalists condemn “indifference” to crisis of media safety after editor is shot dead in Mexico

International Federation of Journalists

Francisco Ortiz Franco, a managing editor of the Tijuana weekly newspaper *Zeta*, was shot dead on June 23 by unidentified assailants in broad daylight as he left a physical therapy session with his two sons in downtown Tijuana. Ortiz had been renowned for his investigative reporting on government corruption and drug trafficking.

“Francisco was gunned down simply because he continued to expose the corruption, scandal and horrifying reality of Mexico’s criminal underworld,” said Aidan White, General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists.

“He is the latest victim of culture of indifference and ignorance within the country to the dangers facing journalists who dare to challenge the criminal and undemocratic forces in society.”

The newspaper’s co-founder Hector Felix Miranda was ambushed and killed April 20, 1988. Two men were convicted in the shooting. In 1997, the newspaper’s publisher, Jesus Blancornelas, was badly wounded in a gangland-style attack that killed his bodyguard and driver.

“There is a pattern of violence which should have led to more effective protection being provided,” said White. “Tragically, it appears that this never happened.”

The IFJ says that the Government of Mexico must respond rapidly to this latest attack. This latest killing puts a new spotlight on the Mexican government’s response to attacks on media professionals. The IFJ says the Mexican authorities have failed to investigate the killing of Roberto Javier Mora Garcia, an editor for the newspaper, *El Mañana* on March 19 this year.

At least 62 journalists and media staff have now been killed across the globe since the beginning of this year, with 10 killed in Latin America alone. “This is one of the worst years on record for the killing of journalists,” said White. “And it is just getting worse and worse.”

The Upstream Journal

on economic, social, and cultural rights.

The Upstream Journal, a publication of the Social Justice Committee, reflects the perspective of Third World poverty as a human rights issue.

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Mystery novel gives women a new voice

Suvendrini Kakuchi, Tokyo IPS

The stunning success in Japan, and recently in the United States, of a mystery writer's novel, about a husband-killer and psychopath gangsters, has injected new life into the conservative Japanese publishing world that previously only carried works depicting women as loyal housewives devoted to their husbands.

The English translation of Natsuo Kirino's *Out*, published last year, was nominated for best novel in the prestigious 2004 Edgar Allen Poe Awards, handed out by the New York-based Mystery Writers of America Organisation.

Kirino's nomination signifies the emergence of a new literary genre in Japan, a style that is far more universal in story, characterization and reality," says Kenichi Sato, book editor of the *Yomiuri Shimbun* daily.

"*Out* features the story and emotions of ordinary housewives who lead lives that are similar to women living in other urban societies," Sato told IPS.

Sato points out that Kirino's style is a far cry from the past where Japanese writers, like Nobel prize winner Yasunari Kawabata and the country's best post-war novelist Yukio Mishima, gained international limelight for writing hauntingly elegant prose depicting the uniqueness of Japanese culture and portraying women as innocent beauties devoted to men.

While Kirino, 53, a former jazz club waitress, might have failed to clinch the prestigious American literary award for mystery writing, experts say her entrance as the first Japanese writer to be nominated in that field marks a significant development in the domestic literary scene.

"Kirino's international popularity has raised the profile of Japanese thrillers in the world. She represents a new genre of writers and writing in Japan," Kazuki Onodera, a literary agent at the major Kawade-

shobo Publishing Company told IPS.

In a recent press conference, Kirino said she was inspired to write *Out* because of her frustration at the lack of novels in Japan focusing on middle-aged women.

"I wanted to read a novel about an ordinary middle-aged housewife but there weren't any," said Kirino. "The only ones I could find were about wives in rather well-off families or housewives fretting about their husbands' infidelities. So I decided to write one myself," she told reporters.

In *Out*, Kirino sets out to do just that. The story is centered around four middle-aged women from poor families who work the gruelling night shift in a factory churning out thousands of boxed lunches. After one of them kills her husband, the women get together to dispose the body by cutting it into pieces in a bathtub. They later get embroiled with the police and psychopath gangsters.

Out, published by Kodansha Limited, Japan's largest publishing house, won the Mystery Writers of Japan Award in 1998. The first release was 290,000 prints in Japan followed by 20,000 of the English translation in the United States last year.

It comes as no surprise that Kirino's

novel is a best-seller among women who see it as a spicy piece of work in an otherwise dull literary world dominated by conservative male values.

In a fan website, fledgling young mystery writer Tomoko Kano writes: "Kirino seduces women readers by her powerful female characters in *Out*. Her characterization breaks the stereo-types of women and poses a threat to older men who prefer reading about the fairer sex depicted as elegant objects, a feature of male fantasy."

On a recent trip to the United States to promote Kirino's book, Akihiro Miyata, head of Kodansha's literary section, told reporters that Japanese authors are now breaking into the international market by not relying "on Japanese sentimentality and orientalism but rather on straightforward entertainment."

Kawadeshobo's Onodera explains Kirino's deft portrayal of ordinary women in Japanese society, as those who have part-time jobs, face abuse from their husbands and financial hardship, touches the hearts of the younger generation.

"Many of them consider such issues important and so can relate to her work," he points out. "Writers such as Kirino represent a new trend in fiction that has emerged during the past two decades in Japan where social issues, now, are quite different compared to the past."

The new novels are classified as entertainment writing and publishers predict these Japanese authors will soon be making inroads internationally for their high quality writing in line with the growing reputation of Japanese animation and pop culture.

"The days when fiction was dominated by uniquely Japanese themes and ethics are over," says book editor Sato. "New trends are emerging with the birth of a new generation of Japanese who want to write on pertinent things and address sexual inequality in the country."

a best-seller among women who see it as a spicy piece of work in an otherwise dull literary world dominated by conservative male values

Québecers push for Third World debt cancellation

When it comes to the issue of debt cancellation, Bono has not been the only one getting the attention of Prime Minister Paul Martin. Nearly eight hundred people have mailed postcards to local members of parliament and to the Prime Minister as part of the SJC's "Drop the Debt - Scrap the SAPs!" campaign. They not have been getting the media attention that the Irish rock star gets when he meets with the Prime Minister but, like Bono, they are saying that the debts of the world's poorest countries should be cancelled.

This year, more than forty groups from across Quebec have supported the "Drop the Debt" campaign and invited the SJC to host presentations in their communities. In turn, the SJC invited participants to send postcards to their MPs or to the PM demanding positive action.

The campaign carries on from the global Jubilee 2000 campaign of the 1990s, which convinced several governments, including Canada, to cancel debt. The objective now is to build on the support the "Drop the Debt" campaign received in Québec in its first year debts owed to the IMF and World Bank.

For more information on the "Drop the Debt - Scrap the SAPs!" campaign and how to get involved, contact Eric Lamoureux at the SJC, 514-933-6797 or eric@s-j-c.net

Report from Whitehorse

In 1991 Bishop Thomas Lobsinger of the Diocese of Whitehorse called a meeting of people involved in the diocesan work of Development and Peace. Recognizing a need in the Yukon to address local as well as global social justice issues, he challenged us to make this dual focus an on-going aspect of life in our community. The Social Justice Committee at Sacred Heart Cathedral was born.

Among its globally focused activities, the SJC organizes the annual Global Village Craft Fair. This craft sale has brought the solidarity community together for more than a decade. Its proceeds support the annual Solidarity Speaker programme. Ernie Schibli's participation in 2001 cementing the relationship between our group and the team based in Montreal.

In the past year the SJC helped host other speakers, in partnership with the Halifax Initiative Coalition, Rights Action, and Development and Peace. Three speakers from Chiapas helped spark a solidarity partnership with a Mexican development group.

Locally, the Social Justice Committee created the Weekend Soup Kitchen. This evolved into an ecumenical structure providing needy Yukoners with tens of thousands of warm meals over the last decade. It continues to work with the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition on a wide range of initiatives.

A weekly column in the *Yukon News* provides a voice for the SJC linking the local and the global, as does assistance to youth initiatives ranging from the "Think Fasts" to the "YES God!" Youth Social Justice Pilgrimages.

A plane crash during a white-out in 2000 claimed Bishop Lobsinger, but before he died he saw the Social Justice Committee grow to be an integral part of the Whitehorse and Yukon community.

- Michael Dougherty. Michael is also the production manager of the SJC's *Latin America Agenda*

Letter to the editor

The article "Coffee crisis worsened by agricultural subsidies in rich countries" (a World Bank report summary) names protectionism and the high levels of subsidy in industrial countries as factors that make it difficult for coffee producers to switch to other export crops.

The World Bank once more appears to assume that exports are the answer to the problems of Southern agriculture.

In sharp contrast to the Bank's approach, peasant organizations in the South have pointed out that it is not protectionism that is the problem. It is rather the fact that industrial countries subsidize major agricultural crops at levels enabling them to be exported below the cost of production, despite the destructive effects on the domestic agriculture of the importing countries.

Associations of small producers such as Via Campesina are strongly in favour of protection for domestic agriculture. They believe that the survival of rural communities and cultures and the availability of healthy food depend upon re-orienting agricultural production towards domestic markets.

The work of social organizations involved in the promotion of fair trade enables cooperatives to receive a decent price for their coffee. Some cooperatives in Mexico encourage their members to extend the organic methods used for their coffee production to the milpas (corn fields) where they grow food staples.

Under some conditions exports can be an important source of revenue for small farmers, but too often export crops are a source of misery for agricultural workers and peasants and of insecurity and indebtedness for small farmers. The continued expansion of export crops can only lead to the disenfranchisement and displacement of peasants, the loss of family farms, and the increased exploitation of agricultural workers.

Karen Rothschild
Coordinator, SJC Mexico programs



A new column by the SJC's public outreach and education coordinator. In this issue, Ernie writes about the hopes of Central American people, the challenges they face, and our role in solidarity with their struggle.

Ernie Schibli

One of the constants of Central America society, through the wars and the peace, is the undying hope for and determination to build a new more just society, "if not for ourselves and our children, then for our grand-children and their children," as one Guatemalan woman told me.

Sometimes the good news gets lost in all the negativity that comes from the region. The theologian Jon Sobrino might refer to Central Americans as victims but they are much more. They are doers. Through thick and thin, they struggle and continue to work for a better society.

I remember a day at my parish when I announced that I was heading off to Central America. A woman came up to me and said, "Don't you get discouraged going down there and seeing all that suffering?" I replied, "Yes, there is much suffering but I go to get my batteries recharged. There is also so much hope and determination."

Back in the 1970s and 1980s, Central America appeared on our television newscasts almost as often as the Middle East does today. War and repression in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala provided us with stories and pictures of atrocities and massacres, very similar to what we see emanating from too many places today.

That visibility had two important effects. First, it galvanized many of us into action. Second, when we went out into our communities seeking help and support, people were aware of what was happening. They had been watching their television sets too!

All of this changed in the 1990s. Thankfully, the peace accords between governments and opposition forces throughout the region brought about a large reduction in the number of atrocities. Moreover, the terms of these accords looked good and there was hope that life would improve for the majority of Central Americans. Meanwhile, events in other parts of the world drew the attention of our news media elsewhere.

Unfortunately, many of the promises of the Central

American Peace Accords have gone unfulfilled. The massacres may have stopped but the impoverishment of the people is just as bad, perhaps even worse, than it was before the wars. Land reform is a cruel joke. Even basic salaries and adequate housing are beyond the reach of many, while decent health care and education remain elusive dreams.

As if that were not bad enough, recent years have witnessed an increase in exploitation as a result of globalization. A recent visitor from Guatemala told us about a Canadian mining company opening a gold mine in the San Marcos region. He expressed the people's concern about how it will affect their communities. They worry about the destruction of the environment, dangerous chemicals in the soil, and the loss of their land, all for a pittance. Foreign debts have led to the forced privatization of public services, often making life harder for the poor majority.

The map of Central America is dotted by *maquilas* - low-wage, anti-union assembly plants known for their tough working conditions. The Plan Puebla Panama (PPP) regional industrial development program is under way, and free trade agreements with Canada and the U.S. are being negotiated, all of which are likely to affect the common people in a negative way.

But little attention is now paid to the problems of the region, and many Central Americans feel they are forgotten.

Organizations like the Social Justice Committee have to change strategies. We have to continue to show the challenges that come from the region, but also to tell the stories of what people are accomplishing. Solidarity with Central Americans, indeed with any people, is never a one-way street - us helping others. Central Americans have as much to give as to receive. And we Canadians have just as much to receive as we have to give.

I invite you to join us.



The *Upstream Journal* is published by the Social Justice Committee, Montreal. Reflecting the SJC perspective of Third World poverty as a human rights issue, the *Upstream Journal* focuses on economic, social and cultural rights.

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Views expressed in the *Upstream Journal* are the writers' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Social Justice Committee. We welcome the submission of illustrations and articles on aspects of international development and human rights. Contact editor Derek MacCuish at editor@upstream.org or 1-514-933-6797

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The Social Justice Committee depends on financial support from its members and the general public. It is a registered charitable organization; donations are tax deductible.

We invite you to donate and become a member, by supporting the mission of the Social Justice Committee to:

- Analyze the underlying structural and global causes of poverty, human rights violations and other social injustices
- Contribute to informed popular participation in eliminating these injustices
- Work in solidarity to transform our world into a just society

The Social Justice Committee believes that social and economic change is essential for the creation of a sustainable world, and that each person has the right and the responsibility to participate in the process.

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