

FOREWORD

From the extraction of tar sands in North America and in Congo to large-scale land purchases in Asia and Africa and from China's investment in the Mekong region to mining and soya production in Latin America – the global resources bonanza is a fact. The Heinrich Böll Foundation, in common with many partners, does not acquiesce to it, because it is not resulting in a fair distribution of the profits – as was widely hoped for – or any reduction in poverty. On the contrary, we observe all the phenomena of the resource curse: the concentration of economic and market power, the degradation of ecosystems and rising social inequality. We therefore support very different ideas and conceptions of an equitable and ecological future – a global overhaul of energy and agricultural policies fundamentally new resource politics. We stand in solidarity with people defending themselves against suppression of their democratic rights and destruction of their livelihoods. We support social and ecological transformation everywhere, at home in Germany and Europe to Nigeria, the Czech Republic and the Western Balkans. We campaign for a strong reduction of resource use, for binding standards of transparency and accountability for European corporations. In our view, ecology, democracy and equity are inseparable parts of a whole.

The central question for us, therefore, is how the use of natural resources needs to be organized so as to respect the ecological limits of our world and, at the same time, strengthen human rights and democracy. In order to capture the diversity of regional perspectives on this question, we have conducted an international dialogue process entitled «Resource Equity in a Finite World» which sought to harness the knowledge and experience of young people in particular, both in our partner countries and in Germany and Europe.

One outcome of this dialogue process is this Memorandum, which articulates a normative framework for our Resource Politics work and sets out fields of action and options for intervention. These now merit attention, discussion and further development in the relevant regions and countries. The Memorandum is to be thought of as one possible component in a Resource Politics strategy. The dialogue process in our foreign offices and partner networks is the start of an intensive engagement with the challenges of resource politics which gives pivotal significance to democratic participation, human rights, resource protection and equity. I would like to thank those colleagues in the foreign offices who have organized regional future workshops and thus played a crucial role for the overall success of this project.

I am excited by the great number of people who have taken part over the last two years in the overall process and the ten future workshops, involving participants from 29 countries, in order to share their ideas, perspectives and analyses with us. My thanks go to the Advisory Board for its support in distilling and helping to structure

the many ideas. I owe the utmost appreciation to Christine Chemnitz and Lili Fuhr. They hatched the idea for this process and coordinated and took responsibility for it from the outset. They engaged in countless rounds of feedback on the Memorandum with the many participants. I am convinced that the final text will inspire reflection and action. My special thanks go to Ralph Griese and Annette Kraus. As the moderator of the overall process, the future workshops and the resources summit, Ralph Griese made a key contribution to their success and, especially, to the motivation and enjoyment of the participants. Annette Kraus kept a confident hold on the administrative, organizational and financial reins. I would also like to thank the following people for their active participation and contributions: Janine Korduan, Inka Dewitz, Abby D'Arcy, Ramona Simon, Lara Cahal and Inka Bosch.

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Barbara Unmüßig
President Heinrich Böll Foundation

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THE STORY OF THIS MEMORANDUM

«Through an alternative vision we point out different views of the world from the indigenous people of our lands, for whom the forests, the sun, wind and water are not resources but essential elements of nature and common goods that give life to the complex web we belong to. This is why we emphasize the need to reinvent our words, in order to deconstruct the dominant discourse by remodeling our relationships towards the world surrounding us.»

Edgardo García, Mariana Reyes and Rosalía Soley,
delegates from the future workshop Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean

This Memorandum is the outcome of a two-year process. With the dialogue project «Resource Equity in a Finite World» the Heinrich Böll Foundation brought together young people from 29 countries who have examined resource issues in their respective regions in ten «future workshops» in Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa (including Turkey), sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Delegates of each future workshop brought their experiences, ideas and visions to Berlin, where they spent two days with the German and international Heinrich Böll Foundation team, discussing and developing these ideas further. The process was supported by an advisory board consisting of eleven internationally renowned environmentalists and human rights experts.

This Memorandum aims to pull together the very different strands of the debate. It cannot aspire to fully represent the great complexity and diversity of the regional debates. However, it is deeply inspired by the outcomes of the regional future workshops, the very different perspectives of the delegates and the views of the advisory board members. It is a subjective selection and conclusion by the two lead authors and by no means attempts to portray a global consensus – which does not in fact exist! The Memorandum seeks to be a first step in exploring a new perspective – one of many possible perspectives and one that is strongly characterized by the European background of the lead authors. It does not proffer a conclusive outlook, nor does it provide a blueprint for every country, region and community. But it lays out a set of principles and ideas for Resource Politics in the triangle of socio-economic, environmental and democratic justice with an international perspective – one that now urgently needs to be translated, processed and debated in the different countries and regions.