

Introduction

THIS BOOK, *Alternatives to Economic Globalization*, is an offshoot of an ongoing dialogue among associates of the International Forum on Globalization (IFG). IFG is best known for its contribution to building public awareness about the nature and consequences of corporate globalization, and for its resistance against the forces of global corporate rule. The authors of this volume believe that the ultimate success of citizen movements depends on their becoming more proactive in creating the world that can be.

The immediate priority is to frame the issues, recognizing that to arrive at a consensus among even a few people—let alone millions—is a far more complex and difficult task than building agreement on what we oppose. That which we oppose is immediate and concrete. Along with billions of our fellow humans, we live and breathe the consequences of corporate globalization and share the great pain it inflicts on humanity and the earth.

Any vision we may craft of an alternative future is less certain. It holds many possibilities and is always a work in progress. Citizen movements that are addressing globalization have no governing body, official ideology, or charismatic leader with a mandate to speak for the whole. We are brought together by our shared belief that there is a human capacity for cooperation, compassion, creativity, and responsible choice that will make a better world possible, even though it is all too often suppressed by the culture and institutions of corporate globalization. We are learning together as we join in common cause to turn possibility into reality.

In preparing this report, we have tried to remain true to what we sense to be the larger consensus unfolding within these movements. Yet we are aware that any effort to articulate positions for a movement so diverse is necessarily subject to discussion and debate. Therefore, we have sought patterns and points of convergence in the movement. But in the end the observations and conclusions we offer here represent mainly our personal views at this particular moment in history and in our own evolving understanding.

Global Resistance

Over the past decade, millions of people have taken to the streets in India, the Philippines, Indonesia, Brazil, Bolivia, the United States, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, France, Germany, Italy, the Czech Republic, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, Kenya, South Africa, Thailand, Malaysia, and elsewhere, in massive demonstrations against the institutions and policies of corporate globalization. Often the mainstream media has done more to mislead than to inform the public on the issues behind the protests. Thomas Friedman, foreign affairs columnist for the *New York Times*, is typical of pundits who characterize the demonstrators as “ignorant protectionists” who offer no alternatives and do not merit serious attention. Many in the media have tried to reduce the complex issues involved to a simplistic contest between “protectionism” and “openness,” or between “anarchy” and “an orderly democratic process.” In North America and Europe, those involved in the protests are dismissed as spoiled children of privilege—selfish, ill-informed malcontents who would end trade and international cooperation.

Anyone who makes even the smallest effort to find out why millions of people from virtually every nation and walk of life have taken to the streets finds these simplistic characterizations to be untrue. As for the charge of being anti-poor, the largest protests are in low-income countries, and most of those involved are themselves poor. The charges of isolation and xenophobia are equally uninformed; the resistance against corporate globalization is global in scope and is dedicated to international cooperation to achieve economic justice for every person on the planet. As for the charge of being anti-trade, many of the movement’s leaders are actively involved in the promotion of *fair* trade—in contrast to the often exploitative *free*

trade they oppose—as a means of improving the economic conditions of poor people and their communities.

In fact, the resistance is grounded in a sophisticated, well-developed critique set forth in countless publications and public presentations, including, among many others, documents available from the International Forum on Globalization (IFG) and numerous books and articles by IFG associates. The critique is also available in the publications of a thriving independent media that tells the stories and communicates the opinions that the mainstream media so often ignores or dismisses. These independent information sources are gradually expanding public awareness and enlarging the constituency for transformational change, but they have not yet reached sufficient critical mass to force a reframing of the terms of the political debate still dominated by corporate media and interests.

The claim that the protestors offer no alternatives is as false as the other claims. In addition to the alternatives described in books, periodicals, conferences, and individual articles and presentations, numerous consensus statements have been carefully crafted by civil society groups over the past two decades that set forth a wealth of alternatives with a striking convergence in their beliefs about the underlying values human society should serve. In 2001 and 2002, tens of thousands gathered in Porto Alegre, Brazil, for the first and second annual World Social Forum, titled “Another World Is Possible,” to carry forward this process of popular consensus building toward a world that works for all.

Perhaps the most obvious and straightforward alternative advocated by civil society is simply to place a moratorium on the negotiation of new trade agreements. More ambitious proposals—such as those presented in this volume—center on redirecting global, national, and local priorities toward the task of creating healthy, sustainable human societies that work for all.

Although many of the protests have centered on opposition to trade agreements, global civil society does not oppose trade. Humans have engaged in trade since the beginning of time and as long as two or more members of the species survive will surely continue to do so. What the protestors reject is the use by corporate interests of international trade *agreements* to circumvent democracy in their global campaign to strip away social and environmental protections that ordinary people have struggled for decades—even centuries—to put in place.

The issue is governance. Will ordinary people have a democratic voice in deciding what rules are in the best interests of society? Or will a small ruling elite, meeting in secret and far from public view, be allowed to set the rules that shape the human future? If the concern of the decision makers is only for next quarter's corporate profits, who will care for the health and well-being of people and the planet?

These are increasingly serious questions for a great many people who live with the violence and insecurity that spreads through the world in tandem with growing inequality, an unraveling social fabric, and the collapse of critical environmental systems. It is this reality of social and environmental disintegration that has brought millions of people together in a loose global alliance that spans national borders to forge what may be considered the most truly global and inclusive social movement in human history.

Different Worlds

The corporate globalists who meet in posh gatherings to chart the course of corporate globalization in the name of private profits, and the citizen movements that organize to thwart them in the name of democracy, are separated by deep differences in values, worldview, and definitions of progress. At times it seems they must be living in wholly different worlds—which, in fact, in many respects they are. Understanding their differences is key to understanding the nature and implications of the profound choices humanity currently faces.

Corporate globalists inhabit a world of power and privilege. They see progress at hand everywhere, because from their vantage point the drive to privatize public assets and free the market from governmental interference spreads freedom and prosperity around the world, improving the lives of people everywhere and creating the financial and material wealth necessary to end poverty and protect the environment. They see themselves as champions of an inexorable and beneficial historical process toward erasing the economic and political borders that hinder corporate expansion, eliminating the tyranny of inefficient and meddlesome public bureaucracies, and unleashing the enormous innovation and wealth-creating power of competition and private enterprise.

Corporate globalists undertake to accelerate these trends as a great mis-

sion. They seek public policies and international agreements that provide greater safeguards for investors and private property while removing restraints to the free movement of goods, money, and corporations in search of economic opportunity wherever it may be found. They embrace global corporations as the greatest and most efficient human institutions, powerful engines of innovation and wealth creation that are peeling away the barriers to human progress and accomplishment everywhere. They celebrate the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization as essential and beneficial institutions for global governance engaged in the great work of rewriting the rules of commerce to free the market and create conditions essential to economic growth.

Corporate globalists subscribe to this worldview like a catechism. They differ among themselves mainly in their views of the extent to which it is appropriate for government to subsidize private corporations or provide safety nets to cushion the fall of the losers in the market's relentless competition.

Citizen movements see a very different reality. Focused on people and the environment, they see a world in a crisis of such magnitude that it threatens the fabric of civilization and the survival of the species—a world of rapidly growing inequality, erosion of relationships of trust and caring, and failing planetary life support systems. Where corporate globalists see the spread of democracy and vibrant market economies, citizen movements see the power to govern shifting away from people and communities to financial speculators and global corporations dedicated to the pursuit of short-term profit in disregard of all human and natural concerns. They see corporations replacing democracies of people with democracies of money, replacing self-organizing markets with centrally planned corporate economies, and replacing diverse cultures with cultures of greed and materialism.

In the eyes of citizen movements, these trends are not the result of some inexorable historical force but rather of the intentional actions of a corrupted political system awash in corporate money. They see the World Bank, the IMF, and the World Trade Organization as leading instruments of this assault against people and the environment.

Ironically, the citizen movements seek many of the things the corporate globalists claim to offer but in fact fail to deliver: democratic participation, economies comprising enterprises that provide good jobs and respond to the

real needs and preferences of their customers, a healthy environment, an end to poverty. However, where the corporate globalists seek a competitive global economy ruled by megacorporations that owe no loyalty to place or person, citizen movements seek a planetary system of economies made up of locally owned enterprises accountable to all their stakeholders. Citizen movements work for economic justice for all, international cooperation, vibrant cultural diversity, and healthy, sustainable societies that value life more than money.

Citizen movements recognize that corporate globalists *cannot* deliver on their promises because the narrow and shortsighted financial imperatives that drive their institutions are antithetical to them. Many corporate globalists may act with the best intentions, but they are blinded by their own financial success to the costs of this success for those who have no place at the table, including future generations.

Corporate globalists generally measure progress by indicators of their own financial wealth, such as rising stock prices and indicators of the total output of goods and services available to those who have the money to pay. With the exception of occasional cyclical setbacks in Latin America and elsewhere and declining per capita incomes in the poorest African countries, these indicators generally perform well, confirming in the eyes of corporate globalists their premise that their program is enriching the world. (We do note that in July 2002, as this book was about to go to press, the main U.S. stock market indexes fell by over 5 percent in a week.)

In contrast, citizen movements measure progress by indicators of the well-being of people and nature, with particular concern for the lives of those most in need. With the exception of the highly visible pockets of privilege enjoyed by corporate globalists, these indicators are deteriorating at a frightening pace, suggesting that in terms of what really matters, the world is rapidly growing poorer.



The U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) reports that the number of chronically hungry people in the world declined steadily during the 1970s and 1980s but has been increasing since the early 1990s. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that by 2008 two-thirds of the people of sub-Saharan Africa will be undernourished, and 40 percent will be undernourished in Asia.

In a world in which a few enjoy unimaginable wealth, two hundred million children under age five are underweight because of a lack of food. Some fourteen million children die each year from hunger-related disease. A hundred million children are living or working on the streets. Three hundred thousand children were conscripted as soldiers during the 1990s, and six million were injured in armed conflicts. Eight hundred million people go to bed hungry each night.

This human tragedy is not confined to poor countries. Even in a country as wealthy as the United States, 6.1 million adults and 3.3 million children experience outright hunger. Some 10 percent of U.S. households, accounting for 31 million people, do not have access to enough food to meet their basic needs. These are some of the many indicators of a deepening global social crisis.

On the environmental side, a joint study released in September 2000 by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the World Bank, and the World Resources Institute assessed five ecosystem types—agricultural, coastal, forest, freshwater, and grassland—in relation to five ecosystem services—food and fiber production, water quantity, air quality, biodiversity, and carbon storage. It found that of these twenty-five ecosystem-service combinations, sixteen had declining trends. The only positive trend was in food and fiber production by forest ecosystems, which has been achieved by an expansion of industrial forest monocropping at the expense of species diversity.

Human activity—in particular, fossil fuel combustion—is estimated to have increased atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide to their highest levels in twenty million years. According to the Worldwatch Institute, an environmental think tank, natural disasters, including weather-related disasters such as storms, floods, and fires, affected more than two billion people and caused in excess of \$608 billion in economic losses worldwide during the decade of the 1990s—more than the previous four decades combined. Three hundred million people were displaced from their homes or forced to resettle because of extreme weather events in 1998 alone.

It becomes more imperative to rethink human priorities and institutions by the day. Yet most corporate globalists, in deep denial, reiterate their mantra that with time and patience corporate globalization will create the wealth needed to end poverty and protect the environment.

Citizen movements counter that the policies and processes of corporate globalization are destroying the real wealth of the planet while advancing a primitive winner-takes-all competition that inexorably widens the gap between rich and poor. They reject as absurd the argument that the poor must be exploited and the environment destroyed to make the money necessary to end poverty and save the planet.

Many citizen movements embrace the present imperative for transformational change as an opportunity to lift humanity to a new level of possibility—the greatest creative challenge in the history of the species. Yet experience leads them to conclude that the institutions with the power to provide the leadership are neither inclined nor suited to doing so. Nor is there realistic cause for hope that leaders who are lavishly rewarded by the status quo and hold steadfastly to the view that there is no alternative will suddenly experience an epiphany.

The challenge of providing leadership to create a just and sustainable world thus falls by default to the hundreds of millions of extraordinary people in an emerging global civil society who believe a better world is possible—and who are forging global alliances that seek to shift the powers of governance to democratic, locally rooted, human-scale institutions that value life more than money. Although the most visible among them are those who have taken to the streets in protest, equally important and even more numerous are those struggling to rebuild their local communities and economies in the face of the institutional forces aligned against them.

Economic Democracy

The current and future well-being of humanity depends on transforming the relationships of power within and between societies toward more democratic and mutually accountable modes of managing human affairs that are self-organizing, power-sharing, and minimize the need for coercive central authority. *Economic* democracy, which involves the equitable participation of all people in the ownership of the productive assets on which their livelihood depends, is essential to such a transformation because the concentration of economic power is the Achilles heel of *political* democracy, as the experience of corporate globalization demonstrates.

The defining political struggles of the twentieth century centered on a choice between socialism and capitalism. Both centralized the power of ownership in unaccountable institutions, the state in the case of socialism and the corporation in the case of capitalism. Both worked against the classic liberal economic ideal of self-organizing markets—markets in which communities organize themselves to respond to local needs within a framework of democratically determined rules.

Although rarely noted, economic democracy is as essential to the efficient function of economies as sound public regulation. Because today's markets respond only to money, they are overly attentive to the wants of the rich and neglect the most basic needs of the poor. Economic democracy is also a necessary foundation of individual, community, and national economic self-determination—the right to determine one's own economic priorities and the rules of one's economic life—because it helps secure a political voice for each person.

At the same time, there are real and often difficult trade-offs to be considered in the choice between local, national, and global rule making. For example, civil society has a strong commitment to raising social and environmental standards everywhere. To this end, some activists call for setting universal labor, health and safety, and environmental standards, possibly enforced with trade sanctions. They correctly point out that allowing different standards in an open, competitive global economy inevitably puts competitive pressure on everyone to lower their standards.

But others note that it is invariably the strong nations who advocate for uniform standards because they hold the power to impose self-serving rules of their own choosing on weaker nations. Furthermore, uniform international standards not only violate the democratic right to self-determination but also fail to take into account differing local conditions and preferences. Those on this side of the argument call for measures to secure the right of nations and even localities to adopt standards of their choosing appropriate to their circumstances, as long as they do not shift the burden of their decisions onto others.

Both positions reflect valid concerns. The differences relate in part to the extent of the priority given to economic self-reliance. The less the self-reliance of a community or nation, the greater its external dependence and

the greater the need for globally uniform rules to avoid a downward pressure on standards everywhere. By the same token, the greater the self-reliance of a community or nation, the greater the scope for local flexibility and adaptation to local circumstances. Dialogue on these trade-offs in the IFG has led to a consensus tilt in favor of self-reliance and local self-determination.



The concern for local self-reliance and self-determination has important implications for global governance. For example, in a self-reliant and localized system, the primary authority to set and enforce rules rests with the national and local governments of the jurisdictions to which they apply. The proper role of international institutions is to facilitate the coordination of national policies on matters where the interests of nations are inherently intertwined—global warming, for example.

Of course, a democratic commitment to self-determination means that ultimately it is left up to the people of every nation—if not every indigenous group or local community—to decide the extent to which they will integrate their own economy with the economies of other nations. The people of different countries will likely reach different decisions. The international interest is properly confined to assuring that these decisions are made democratically, that economic relationships among countries are just and balanced, that no country builds up unpayable debts to the rest of the system, and that each national economy is secure against predatory interventions from foreign nations and corporations.

There is certainly a need for international institutions to facilitate cooperative exchange and the working through of inevitable competing national interests toward solutions to global problems. These institutions must, however, be transparent and democratic and support the rights of people, communities, and nations to self-determination. The World Bank, the IMF, and the World Trade Organization violate each of these conditions to such an extent that the authors of this book recommend that they be decommissioned and new institutions built under the authority of a strengthened and reformed United Nations. These new institutions would be responsible for freeing Third World nations from the burden of unpayable international debts, helping all nations bring their international trade and investment accounts into balance with the global system, and working with national

governments to establish the public accountability of corporations with operations that span national borders.

Momentum for Change

Less than a decade ago, the claims of corporate globalists of the inevitability of their cause were credible to many. Talk of economic alternatives seemed little more than bravado. Today, although corporate globalization remains a formidable force, it no longer seems quite as invincible, nor discussion of alternatives quite as fanciful. Public consciousness of the pervasive abuse of corporate power has fueled the growth of a powerful opposition movement.

For example, secret negotiations toward a multilateral agreement on investment (MAI) under the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) were exposed and ultimately ended. U.S. president Clinton was twice denied the “fast track” authority he sought, which would have allowed him a free hand in negotiating trade agreements with minimal congressional debate and no amendment. (A Republican Congress finally did grant this authority to President George W. Bush in 2002, by three votes.) Efforts to launch a new round of trade negotiations at the 1999 WTO ministerial meeting in Seattle were disrupted, and the WTO was forced to expose its undemocratic nature by moving its 2001 ministerial meeting to Qatar, a remote monarchy where public protest is ruthlessly suppressed. In April 2000, police shut down much of Washington, D.C., to secure a World Bank–IMF meeting from protestors demanding the decommissioning of these institutions and the cancellation of Third World debt. A subsequent meeting of IMF and World Bank directors in Prague closed a day early, and a planned meeting in Barcelona was canceled. In 2001, pharmaceutical corporations were forced to make concessions allowing greater use of low-cost generic drugs in poor countries. Increasingly, protestors and members of the Group of 77—a formal intergovernmental body of over 130 of the world’s poorest countries—find themselves aligned in a common cause.

The evolving alliance of civil society organizations brings together union members, farmers, landless peasants, people of faith, women’s organizations, youth organizations, small business owners, artisanal producers, economic justice organizers, prison reform advocates, environmentalists, AIDS and other health activists, politicians, independent media organiza-

tions, civil servants, the homeless, peace and human rights organizations, gay and lesbian groups, intellectuals, consumer advocates, and even a few corporate CEOs of every age, religion, race, and nationality. It is the product of a largely spontaneous awakening of millions of people to the reality that their future and the future of their children depends on exercising their democratic right to participate in the decisions that shape their future.

Unified by a deep commitment to universal values of democracy, justice, and respect for life, this alliance functions with growing effectiveness without a central organization, leadership, or defining ideology. It also takes different forms in different settings.

In India, activists seek to empower local people through the democratic community control of resources under the banner of a millions-strong Living Democracy movement. In Canada, hundreds of organizations have joined together to articulate a citizens' agenda that seeks to wrest control of governmental institutions back from corporations. In Chile, coalitions of environmental groups have created a powerful Sustainable Chile proposal that seeks to reverse that country's drift toward free markets and reassert popular democratic control over national priorities and resources. The focus in Brazil is on the rights of workers, the poor, and the landless. In Bolivia, a mass movement of peasants and workers has successfully blocked the privatization of water. In Mexico, the Mayan people have reignited the spirit of Zapata in a movement to confirm the rights of indigenous people to land and resources. French farmers have risen up in revolt against trade rules that threaten to destroy small farms. The construction of new highways in the United Kingdom has brought out hundreds of thousands of people who oppose this desecration of the countryside to meet globalization's relentless demand for ever more high-speed transport.

These are only a few examples of the initiatives and actions in defense of democratic rights that are occurring around the world. Some are purely local; others are national or international. All are linked together in common rejection of the illegitimate power and false promises of global corporations and a proactive commitment to revitalize democracy at local, regional, national, and global levels. Each contributes to an emerging vision of the healthy, just, and sustainable society that humanity has the means to create. Each adds its voice to a growing global chorus proclaiming the right of "We the people of planet earth" to create such a society.

This volume discusses many of these alternative proposals as well as initiatives on the ground. Some are short-term and address the debates of the moment; others are long-term and spell out new rules and institutions to advance sustainable societies. Martin Khor of the Malaysia-based Third World Network offers an excellent framework for understanding the interactions of these different kinds of alternatives work (in Box A).

BOX A: COMMENTARY—CONFLICTING PARADIGMS

By Martin Khor, Third World Network

Let me put forward two conflicting paradigms that civil society is now facing and which require that we make some difficult choices about how we advance our work. The first paradigm involves the choice to work in the system of globalization, which we feel we are trapped in. If we do work within that system, we begin by asking: "Are the rules of the game fair, particularly to the weaker partners, or are they being twisted and manipulated by the strong partners in order to keep the weaker countries down?" If the latter, then we should fight for the reform of the rules of the game so that they can be more fair. We should monitor and be aware where the rules of the game go against the weak and the poor. In this first paradigm, we will be working and arguing within the parameters of the system and trying to tinker with it, because we may conclude that there is no choice, at least in the short run. And this may be an approach pragmatic people will take who are involved in, say, survival for the next five years or ten years.

But we realize that even as we work in that system and make it more fair for

all the participants, that system may not last very long because of ecological limits. In other words, if we continue to emphasize high growth, but the growth is more equitably shared and the poor are made to come out better, still the whole system of industrialism goes on. So the debate is whether the textile mills should continue to be in London and provide jobs for British workers with high standards of living and security or whether they should be transferred to Bangladesh where child labor is exploited. But maybe it's better for the child laborer to be exploited than to be out of a job, and dead. It's that kind of debate that we may be entering into within this first paradigm. Is it fair for the Bangladeshi to be exploited in a factory or should he remain unexploited; should his labor standard go up? If his labor standard goes up he may lose his job because the factory may move back to London and the London worker will have the job.

So then the issue becomes this: maybe the factory shouldn't exist in London or Bangladesh either because industrialism is bad, perhaps industrial-

CONTINUED

BOX A: CONTINUED

ism is incompatible with the long-term survival of the world. This is the basis of the second paradigm—that this debate over North-South is irrelevant because in twenty or thirty years the whole system will blow up anyway. So, in the second paradigm, we work for Gandhi-style, community-based, self-reliant family units of production, trading mainly within the community and the region and only making occasional exchanges with the rest of the world, as needed.

Now if you are working within this second paradigm, you might say, “I don’t want transnational corporations. I will use any methods to kick them out, and I will go back to emphasizing local production.” So, if we are working from this second paradigm we would certainly come out with different policy conclusions than if we were working from the first paradigm, which is for fairer trade, fairer economic relations.

The debate on whether worker rights and environmental rights should be addressed in trade agreements is really contained in that first paradigm, while at the same time we must remember there is that second paradigm. But sometimes we borrow ideas from that second paradigm to buttress our arguments for the first paradigm, and vice versa, and we get confused. So as we work and debate which initiatives make sense, we should be explicit as to whether we are arguing from the first or the second paradigm.

Let us be clear that the real world is moving ahead in the first paradigm. Some of us may be fighting from within that paradigm to point out where

there are inequities, where there are double standards, and where there must be fairer terms of exchange, and so forth. I personally often work in the context of the first paradigm, whereas emotionally I really belong to the second one. So if we ask if we should trade with the rest of the world, we must make it very clear what our assumptions are and which paradigm we are proceeding from. Because at the end of the day, it is better if we can infuse the second paradigm into the first paradigm as a kind of transition.

For example, as we grapple with trade and environment under the first paradigm, we would do well to ask how we make the globalized system more environmentally sustainable as a transition toward the second paradigm. And to do it in such a way that the poor do not suffer and the costs of adjusting are borne by the rich.

I believe that for now we must always try to work in both paradigms. In this sense, we can devise a system that moves toward environmental sustainability in a socially equitable manner that will reduce income inequalities, resolve the poverty problem, but at the same time solve the environmental problem. Can trade mechanisms, systems of prices and products, and other things be devised so that we have this transition toward Paradigm Two? This is one of our greatest challenges.

SOURCE: Martin Khor, “Commentary.” In John Cavanagh, ed., *South-North: Citizen Strategies to Transform a Divided World*. San Francisco: International Forum on Globalization, November 1995.

IFG Alternatives Process

The International Forum on Globalization's inquiry into alternatives to corporate globalization was initiated in January 1999, nearly a year before the Seattle confrontation between global civil society and the World Trade Organization. Some thirty IFG Board members and key associate members have since been writing papers and holding regular meetings to develop consensus on a framework for positive change. This volume is our interim report.

Chapter 1 presents a critique of the institutions, theory, and practice of corporate globalization and the argument for why they must be replaced by institutions, theory, and practice that serve and nurture life and democracy.

Chapter 2 outlines ten organizing principles for healthy, just, democratic, and sustainable societies. They provide a guiding framework for the creative work of institutional restructuring and rule making that lies ahead.

Chapter 3 discusses the special nature of common resources like water, which are an inheritance essential to life, and explains why allowing them to be privatized, monopolized, and allocated solely on the basis of ability to pay and without regard to equity and the public interest is morally and environmentally unacceptable.

Chapter 4 makes the case for shifting decision-making power from the global to the local and outlines some of the ways in which that can be accomplished.

Chapter 5 examines the processes by which global corporations have established themselves as the dominant ruling institutions of the planet and outlines specific steps to alter corporate structure, limit their power, and hold them accountable to the public interest.

Chapter 6 draws lessons from exploratory initiatives in the practice of living democracy being advanced by a variety of movements in both the North and the South. In particular, it outlines alternative operating systems in energy, transportation, agriculture, and manufacturing.

Chapter 7 argues for replacing the triumvirate of the World Bank, the IMF, and the World Trade Organization with new institutions to be created under the authority of the United Nations. These institutions would have mandates to support and assist the transition to a cooperative planetary system of local economies that exchange information, technology, culture, and goods in a framework of mutual, democratic accountability.

Chapter 8 offers some concluding reflections.

We present this report with an awareness of the complexity of the issues and the trade-offs involved. We also recognize that the serious discussion of alternatives and practical proposals is a relatively new undertaking in civil society. Thoughtful and intelligent people may disagree on many points—just as many of us who shared in the authorship of this volume disagree in some ways. Our purpose is to stimulate further dialogue and debate toward a more refined vision and statement. We plan to distribute this volume among many thousands of citizen and policy groups engaged with these issues on all continents to invite their input. We envision a three-year process that will include meetings in every region among interested groups to advance dialogue and consensus building toward a revised and expanded report that we hope will take the discussion to a new level of sophistication and concreteness.

We invite your participation as well.