

INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON GLOBALIZATION

Inaugural Convening of the IFG Plutonomy Project

October 13, 2011

DRAFT AGENDA

PREMISE AND PURPOSE

Plutonomy is a term taken from Citigroup analysts that explains how today's global economy is run by the super-rich (plutocracy + economy = plutonomy). They see no end to the trend, that is, until the most marginalized populations unite in opposition. *We think they have a point, since so much wealth has never been held in so few hands, and activism today is terribly atomized into single-issue campaigns operating in separate silos. Peoples' collective power must be recreated.*

We see attacks against our right to regulate clean air, our right to collectively bargain, and even our right to vote, all financed by billionaires like the Koch Brothers. Grassroots groups grapple with the tentacles of these billionaires' "influence networks," but there is little attention given to going after the sources of their power. In fact, most groups battling billionaires' undue influence are not connected, and no space exists for them to learn from each other, let alone collaborate. We must change that now.

Over a decade ago, IFG helped—via a series of convenings and other joint activities—to unify multiple movements against the WTO, which has successfully stopped it from expanding its powers until now. However, today's global deadlock in dealing with converging economic and ecological crises now compels us to focus on the *new* powers who have been fabulously enriched by corporate globalization, especially in the US.

The purpose of IFG's new "plutonomy project" is to align global activist attention around a small group of the super-rich who benefit most from—and therefore are most responsible for—today's economic paradigm that is plundering our planet and marginalizing the vast majority of people. Our interest is exposing those who are actively destroying democratic decision-making.

IFG's role is to help create a common framework among groups—Wisconsin workers, climate campaigners, immigrant rights advocates, billionaire-tracking bloggers, as well as oligarchy researchers and scholars—that recognizes we are all fighting against the same thing, while also building an ambitious counter-offensive to subordinate private corporations to the rights of communities, as well as our natural commons. Our world can wait no longer; the situation is desperate now.

As an initial step, we are bringing groups together, some meeting for the first time, to assess what can be done collectively to increase public attention—and political pressure—on today's oligarchs who are financing opposition to economic transition. IFG sees this meeting as only a first step. We are here to learn from one another, since it seems that each of us holds a piece of the puzzle, but we need each other to see the full picture of what we are all fighting. Creating a collective analysis that gives a common framing our fights would also be wise and welcome outcome. If collective actions can be agreed, then we would all be helping to find a way forward in these turbulent times.

It is our hope to orient our diverse movement's organizing energies around a collectively agreed, select few set of strategic targets that can unify constituencies' to build collective power that challenges today's corporate corruption over democratic decision-making, and accelerates the much-needed global economic transition.

9:00am WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS: Who's in the room, and why: Go-around

9:45am Victor Menotti, IFG Executive Director: Why the Plutonomy Project?

10am PANEL I: REPORTS FROM THE PLANET: Plutonomy as a Global Phenomenon

Vandana Shiva, Navdanya: India's Great Oligarchs

Tony Clarke, Polaris Institute: The World's Richest Man- Mexico's Carlos Slim

Anuradha Mittal, Oakland Institute: African Land Grabs and the Role of the Super-Rich

Robert Collier, UC Berkeley: The Planet's Worst 50

Open Discussion

11am PANEL II: OLIGARCHY'S OFFENSIVE ON THE U.S.: The Case of "Koch-Cash"

Lisa Hoyos, Blue-Green Alliance: The Attack Against Workers' Rights

Rose Braz, Center for Biological Diversity: Defending the Right to Regulate Clean Air

Cathi Tactaquin, National Network on Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Impacts on Immigrants

Jeff Winters, Northwestern University, author: *Oligarchy: What History Tells Us About Today*

Open Discussion

12pm PANEL III: METHODS OF CONTROL: Billionaire's "Full-Spectrum Dominance"

Lisa Graves, PR Watch: The Role of Think Tanks

Angelo Carusone, Media Matters: Manipulating the Media

Tom Swan, Health Care America Now: AstroTurf and the Billionaire's Tea Party

Helen Grieco, Common Cause: Corrupting Congress and Our Courts

Open Discussion

1pm LUNCH BREAK:

2pm PANEL IV: WHAT TO DO DIFFERENTLY: Where to Aim our Energies?

Mike Brune, Sierra Club: Ways of Working with Wealthy Individuals

Linda Sheehan, Earth Law Center: Are "The Rights of Nature" an Antidote?

Jim Tarbell, Alliance for Democracy- Challenging Corporate Personhood

Jerry Mander, IFG Founder: Lessons Learned on "Naming the Problem" Effectively

Open Discussion

3pm PANEL V: POTENTIAL AREAS OF COLLABORATION: Creating Collective Power

Brendan DeMelle, Eco-Accountability Project: Opposition Management

Allison Cook, Story of Stuff- Reversing the Citizen's United Ruling

Steve Kretzmann, Dirty Energy Money Campaign: Cleaning-up Congress

Derek Cressman, Common Cause- Campaign Contributions and Clean Elections

Open Discussion

4:00pm Summary of Conclusions, and Ways Forward

4:30pm End of meeting