

**TERRA VIVA, EARTH DEMOCRACY:
ONE PLANET, ONE HUMANITY**
A people's pact to protect the planet & each other

For the first time in human history our common future as a species is no longer certain. In just 200 years of a fossil fuel age, humanity has done enough damage to the Earth to ensure its own extinction. Our only option is to heal the earth and in so doing, create hope for our future - as one humanity and as part of one Earth community.

Transgressing Ecological Limits and Planetary Boundaries

The ecological processes that support life on earth are being disrupted and planetary boundaries are being transgressed. The dominant technological and economic model, based on fossil fuels, does not take into account the finitude of resources and is devastating the planet by seeing itself separate from the Earth's cycles of renewal and from the laws of ecological return. We have transformed the biosphere by clearing 70% of the grassland, 50% of the savannah, 45% of the temperate deciduous forest, and 27% of the tropical forest biome, for industrial agriculture¹. We have destroyed forests for palm oil plantations, for soya and corn cultivation - in the name of 'green' fuel.

Continuing on this linear path of ecological, economic and political crises has put humanity on red alert. Climate catastrophes, hunger, poverty, unemployment, crime, conflicts, wars, forced migrations and refugee crises are robbing people of their lives, livelihoods and their land. The soil, the very basis of our life on Earth and our humanity, is under threat.

Unsustainable fossil fuel-based industrial farming systems have resulted in 2 billion hectares of abandoned land (more than the total global cultivated area of land)² and seriously eroded and degraded 80% of Africa's pasture and rangeland.³ Industrial agriculture is not the touted 'Climate Smart' in any way - whether GMOs or conventional fossil fuel based chemical agriculture. It is in fact preventing us from effectively mitigating the climate crisis, and is only making it worse.

Since 2000 the world has pumped almost 100 billion tons of carbon into the atmosphere.⁴ Current rates of global warming will induce large scale desertification, crop failure, inundation of coastal cities, melting of glaciers and polar ice caps, mass migration, widespread extinctions of flora and fauna, proliferating disease, and probable social collapse. Violent conflicts related to food and water shortages due to global carbon emissions are a predictable outcome.

Fossilized carbon has taken over our lives

Fossilized carbon has entered in every aspect of our lives, our air, water, food, medicine, fuel and agriculture - polluting the health of every eco-system, every species, every child, through atmospheric emissions and plastics, and the destruction of nature's ecological processes, the very processes which would help check the devastation. Fossil fuels are destroying our air and atmosphere and have become the basis of our food, energy, and transport systems. Our water - a commons - has been privatized and commodified by corporations that sell it back to us in plastics, which further destroy our waters and oceans, and the life contained therein. Our soils have been ravaged by petrochemicals labeled as 'fertilisers' that are killing all life in the soil, robbing us of life-sustaining nutrients that the soil would give back to us. Our dependence on fossilized carbon has changed the way we think, live, drink, eat, and work at the expense of economies based on biodiversity and green living carbon. Our addiction to Crude Oil has infiltrated our economic activity and has even led to wars, killing millions and displacing millions more.

¹ FAO, The State of the World's Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture (SOLAW), 2011

² Pimentel D. & Burgess M., Soil Erosion Threatens Food Production, Agriculture 2013 3, 443-463.

³ FAO, Land and Environmental degradation and desertification in Africa, 1995

⁴ PCC, Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability, 2014.

Separation as a way of seeing and being

Seeing ourselves and life as separate and insular, and not part of the whole is the innate characteristic of today's dominant paradigm. Three illusory perceptions of separation prevent the correction and transformation of how we perceive soil and land, food and work, the economy and democracy. First that humans are separate from the Earth, second that the creation of wealth in the market is separate from the contribution of others – nature, workers, women, ancestors, and third, that actions are separate from consequences and rights are separate from responsibilities.

Enclosures of the Commons

The commons have been hijacked from citizens in the interests of market forces. Land grabbing and the subsequent industrialized agricultural practices, whether it's soya plantations for animal feed or corn for biofuels, have a direct connection to climate change. Land use is systematically being shifted from climate-mitigating forests and small farms, to large-scale industrial monocultures which actually only contribute to climate change and to the forced migration of people.

Brutal inequality

Despite widespread protests, global economic inequality has continued to increase. The share of the world's wealth owned by the richest is on the increase⁵. The 300 richest individuals in the world increased their wealth by 524 billion dollars last year, more than the combined incomes of the world's 29 poorest countries⁶. Economic inequality feeds violence. The more unequal a society is, the higher the rates of violence⁷.

The rise of conflicts, wars and forced migration

Across the world, we witness new violent conflicts emerging as ecological consequences of the predatory economic model. According to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification 40% of the intrastate conflicts over a 60 year period were associated with land and natural resources.⁸

Whether from Punjab in 1984, or to Syria and Nigeria today, the conflicts originate in the destruction of soil and water, and the inability of land to sustain livelihoods and identity. Historically, cultures have been shaped by the land, and cultural diversity has co-evolved with biological diversity. But the conflicts are not seen in their ecological contexts and are instead presented as religious conflicts, with violence and militarization offered as solutions. Aggressive economies and anti-democratic politics feed on and fuel vulnerable cultures and identities. People are being driven out of their homelands, in the millions, as ecological and war refugees. Among these vulnerable cultures and identities, terrorism, extremism, and xenophobia take virulent form. Vicious cycles of violence and exclusion – cultural, political, economic – predominate.

The lack of ethical and ecological regulation of economic activities, unleashes the worst of greed, irresponsibility and violence. The economy based on free trade becomes more and more like war, and less and less like the road to the wellbeing of people.

The Erosion of Democracy and the Rise of the Politics of Fear and Hate

Under corporate influence, governments increasingly act on behalf of corporations extinguishing a democracy "of the people, by the people, for the people". Political power is reflecting the top 1% of the economic pyramid, crushing the 99% and with them the Earth and her species. Our challenge is how to shift the dominant political system away from the exploitative and non-sustainable economic model. The state is mutating into a corporate entity leaving the people of the world and the planet to suffer the consequences of Climate Change with no penalties for the corporations that have brought us to the crises.

⁵ OXFAM, Wealth: having it all and wanting more, 2015.

⁶ Savio R., Inequality and Democracy, IPS, 2011.

⁷ Wilkinson R. & Pickett K., The Spirit Level, The Equality Trust, 2015.

⁸ UNCCD, Desertification. The Invisible Frontline, 2014

Across the countries of the South, this transformation has occurred under the aegis of “Structural Adjustment” and “Trade Liberalisation”, while in Europe it goes by the name of “Austerity”. It is a one way extraction of power from the people, increasingly leaving them powerless, unable to protect their land, lives, and livelihoods. It is a system that creates economic insecurity and makes “fear” of the “other” the primary political currency for electoral gains.

Thinking and acting as one humanity is now an economic and political imperative to transcend the separations, divisions, and conflicts on which the dominant paradigm is based.

Industrial Agriculture - The Elephant in the Climate Room

We cannot address Climate Change, and its very real consequences, without recognizing the central role of the industrial and globalised food system, which contributes more than 40% to green house gas emissions through deforestation, animals in concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), plastics and aluminum packaging, long distance transport and food waste. We cannot solve climate change without small scale, ecological agriculture, based on biodiversity, living seeds and living soils and local food systems, with minimal food miles and devoid of plastic packaging. Small scale ecological agriculture has an essential role in helping to mitigate, adapt and build resilience to climatic changes.

The imposition of fossil fuel-intensive industrial agriculture, through globalization and “free trade agreements”, is responsible for most of the social and ecological damage on the earth today. This commodity-based agriculture has caused 75% of the destruction of soils, 75% of the destruction of water resources, and pollution of our lakes, rivers and oceans, 93% of crop diversity has been pushed to extinction through industrial agriculture, through so-called “improved seeds” which are nutritionally empty and full of toxics. Simply naming something “improved” does not mean it is improved. Similarly “Climate Smart” is neither smart nor is it a strategy to combat Climate Change.

Intensive industrial agriculture is also creating a health crisis, by producing nutritionally empty toxic commodities. A billion people are permanently hungry in this system, more than 2 billion suffer from food related diseases. While pretending to feed the world, industrial agriculture diverts large tracts of land to produce commodities which go towards biofuel and animal feed. We are using fossil fuels to produce these toxic commodities, on land stolen from the people, fertilised by fossil fuels, packaged in fossil fuel based plastics, and transported around the world using fossil fuels, only to poison people. A lot of damage, with absolutely no benefit to humanity and only profits for the 1%.

The poor, who have not contributed to the climate change crisis, are bearing the brunt of climate catastrophes. Hundreds of thousands have lost their lives. Millions are losing their homes, being uprooted and displaced, becoming refugees of these neoliberal policies. Wealth and nature’s resources concentrated in the hands of 1% at the exclusion of the 99% is a violation of the rights of mother earth and human rights and is leading to conflicts, violence and brutalisation of humanity.

Ecological Agriculture - the Alternative that protects the Earth and People

Ecological organic agriculture and local food systems are the answer to the food, nutrition and health crisis, water and climate crisis, and will prevent the creation of millions of climate refugees. The only way to lower the ecological footprint and increase human health and wellbeing is through building local food economies. For local food economies we need local food, and for local food we need local seed, seeds in the hands of farmers.

Every seed is an embodiment of millennia of nature’s evolution and centuries of farmers’ breeding. It is the distilled expression of the intelligence of the earth and intelligence of farming communities. Farmers have always bred seeds for diversity, resilience, taste, nutrition, health, and adaptation to local agro-ecosystems. In times of climate change we need the biodiversity of farmers varieties to adapt and evolve. Small farmers are providing 70% of global food using 30% of the resources that go into agriculture. Industrial agriculture is using 70% of the resources to create 40% of the greenhouse gas emissions while providing only 30% of our food.

Organic farming takes excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, where it doesn’t belong, and through photosynthesis puts it back in the soil, where it does belong. It also increases the water holding capacity of soil, contributing to resilience in times of droughts, floods and other climate extremes. Organic farming has the poten-

tial of sequestering 10 Gigatons of carbon dioxide, equivalent to the amount needed to be removed from the atmosphere to keep atmospheric carbon below 350 parts per million, and an average temperature increase of 2 degrees centigrade. We can bridge the emissions gap through ecological agriculture now, not at some point in the future.

All over the world, small farmers and gardeners are already implementing this agriculture, preserving and developing their soils, their seeds, their traditional knowledge. They are feeding their communities with healthy and nutritious food while preserving the planet. They are thus sowing the seeds of food democracy - a food system in the hands of farmers and consumers, devoid of food miles and plastics.

A new Pact with the Earth and Each Other

Our survival demands that we make a new Pact with the Earth and between diverse peoples, based on a new vision of planetary citizenship. A pact based on reciprocity, caring and respect, on taking and giving back, on sharing the resources of the world equitably among all living species. It begins by seeing and cherishing the soil as a living entity, a Terra Viva, whose survival is essential to our own.

The future will be cultivated from the soil and grow out of the land, and no longer from the skewed global market of fictitious finance, corporate personhood and consumerism. We have stopped seeing ourselves as part of the soil – eco-centrism gave way to anthropocentrism and is now giving way to corporate-centrism. We need to move from this corporate-centered worldview to one centered on the Earth Family. Wherever we are on this planet, in all our diversity, the soil is our bedrock. The Earth is our home. We must, as Earth citizens, reclaim it from corporate manipulation and greed, and care for it, together, in recognition of our common humanity and common responsibility.

We stand at the threshold of a transition from the anthropocentric paradigm that sees powerful individuals and corporations as masters, conquerors and owners of the Earth, a paradigm based on colonialism and industrialism based on fossil carbon, to a paradigm of Earth Democracy which recognizes that we are all members of the Earth Community. As Earth citizens we have a duty to care for all beings, and share the earth's gifts with all people. By shifting from a culture of greed and grabbing and the vicious cycles of violence it has unleashed, we can start creating virtuous cycles of nonviolence; we move from negative economies of death and destruction, to living economies that sustain life on earth and our lives; we transform negative politics and cultures that are leading to mutual annihilation, to living democracies which include concern for and participation of all life.

On the eve of the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, the entire world looks towards Paris. This historic meeting must be an invitation to all the peoples in the world to boldly make the shift from the paradigm of exploitation to one of gratitude and giving back, from privatization and enclosures of the commons to defending our commons of soil, seed, food, water and air. The climate crisis, food crisis, water crisis, are interconnected, and so are the solutions. They cannot be seen as separate.

A People's Pact to Protect the Planet and Each Other

Life is at stake, Earth's life as well as ours.

The governments under corporate influence may fail in Paris – but we as citizens cannot.

As citizens of this beautiful and bountiful planet, we make a pact with the Earth, to protect her, care for her, and give back to her the gifts she provides us with, in gratitude and love.

- 1. In living soil lies the prosperity and security of civilization. In the destruction of soil is the destruction of civilization.**

Our future is inseparable from the future of the Earth.

We commit ourselves to protect our soils and biodiversity. Our living soils will become reservoirs of water and sinks for carbon. Ecological and regenerative agriculture is based on recycling organic matter, and hence recycling nutrients. We will give back living carbon, as organic matter, to the earth, in gratitude and responsibility, based on the Law of Return, and thus help mitigate, adapt and build resilience to climate change. As Sir Albert Howard said, “Taking without giving is a robbery of the soil, a particularly mean form of banditry, because it involves the robbing of future generations which are not here to defend themselves.”

2. **Our seeds and biodiversity, our soils and water, our air, atmosphere and climate are a commons.**

The gifts of the earth vital to life have always been held in the commons with common duties to protect, and common rights to draw sustenance. Our seeds and biodiversity are a commons. Their enclosure through patenting is pushing diversity to extinction and farmers into a debt trap. Soil is the very basis of our life and our food. Water is a commons. It is not a commodity. It sustains our life. The air and atmosphere is a commons which give us clean air to breath and gives Gaia the capacity to regulate the climate. Polluting the air and atmosphere with greenhouse gases and emissions trading is a privatization of this commons. We do not accept the enclosure and privatization of our commons. We will defend and reclaim them through care, cooperation and solidarity.

3. **Seed Freedom and Biodiversity is the Foundation of Food Freedom and Climate Resilience**

We commit ourselves to defending seed freedom as the freedom of diverse species to evolve, in integrity, self-organisation, and diversity, and the freedom of communities everywhere to reclaim open source seed as a commons. The saving and exchange of open pollinated, non-GMO, non-patented seed is an inalienable right. Farmers rights are non-negotiable. We will resist every law and technology that attempts to undermine the freedom of the seed, which is intimately linked to the freedom of Mother Earth so that the generations to come are as fortunate as we have been in receiving her gifts of diversity, nourishment and livelihoods. We join and stand together for our seeds and say no to GMOs, no to patents.

4. **Industrial Globalised Agriculture is a major contributor to the Climate Crisis**

Industrial Globalised agriculture contributes more than 40% of the greenhouse gases that are destabilizing the climate through deforestation, fossil fuel based fertilisers, packaging, processing , refrigeration, and long distance transport . Knowing that it is one of the causes of climate change, we do not accept Industrial Agriculture as a solution to the climate crisis and hunger. We do not recognize false solutions to climate change such as geo engineering, “climate smart” agriculture, genetic engineered “improved” seeds, or “sustainable intensification”.

5. **Ecological, small-scale agriculture and local food systems can feed the people and cool the planet**

We commit ourselves to practice and protect small-scale ecological agriculture which produces more health and nutrition per acre and provides 70% of the food we eat, while it rejuvenates our soils, biodiversity and water systems, and stabilizes the climate. We will support and create local food systems which provide the answer to the food, nutrition and health crises, as well as to the climate crisis. Organic ecological small-scale agriculture and local food systems can feed the world while cooling the planet.

6. “Free Trade” as Corporate Freedom is a threat to the planet and our freedoms

“Freedom” has been hijacked through “free trade” which has substituted the freedom of people and freedom of life of the planet and its diverse species to freely evolve and nourish, with freedom of corporations to destroy the planet and the living economies which sustain the people. The ecological and social destabilization of the world in the last two decades is a result of the deregulation of commerce through the “free trade” agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO), engineered and written by corporations, for the benefit of corporations.

We commit ourselves to resisting the attempts to push new ‘free’ trade agreements such as TTIP, TPP and regional and bilateral trade agreements which are based on corporate rights and corporate personhood and which in fact dismantle human rights and our democracies and constitutions. We do not recognize corporations as persons. They are legal entities to whom society gives permission to exist within limits of social, ecological, and ethical responsibility; corporations having responsibility for climate change are subject to the Polluter Pays Principle.

7. Local living economies protect the earth, create meaningful work, and provide for our needs and wellbeing.

Local living economies based on the law of return and regeneration of the natural world and society, nourish all life. Nature’s gifts and people cannot be reduced to ‘inputs’. Economies which focus on life and the wellbeing of people instead of corporate profits, rejuvenate and regenerate resources and work for all and for future generations. We will not participate in production and consumption systems, including industrial food and agriculture, that destroy the Earth’s ecological processes, her soils and biodiversity and displace and uproot millions from the land. In living economies there is no waste, and there are no wasted or disposable people.

8. Participatory, living Democracies are the foundation of Earth Democracy

We commit ourselves to creating participatory, living democracies, and resist all attempts to hijack our democracies through powerful interests. We will organise on the principles of sharing, inclusion, diversity, and the duty to care for the planet and each other. We commit ourselves to breaking out of the vicious cycle of violence and degeneration, and creating virtuous cycles based on non-violence and regeneration for the wellbeing of all people and all species. We will not be divided by fear or hate, but will stay united as members of one Planet and one Humanity. And, in keeping with Gandhi’s principle, when rules and laws interfere in the higher laws that flow from the earth and our humanity, we will collectively draw the courage to not cooperate.

9. We are members of the Earth Community in which all species, peoples, cultures have intrinsic worth and rights to sustenance

We will create an Earth Democracy in a vibrant and bountiful Earth – Terra Viva – which recognizes the intrinsic worth of all species and all people. Because all people and all species are by their very nature diverse, it recognizes diversity as not something to be tolerated, but something to be celebrated as the essential condition of our existence. And all life, including all human beings, have a natural right to share in nature’s wealth to ensure sustenance – soil, food, water, ecological space and evolutionary freedom.

We make a pact to live consciously as Earth Citizens recognizing that the Earth Community includes all species and all peoples in their rich and vibrant diversity. The rights of Mother Earth and human rights are not separate from each other and are one indivisible continuum. The violence

to the earth and injustice to humanity are part of the same process. Sustainability cannot be separated from justice, human rights and peace.

10. Gardens of Hope Everywhere

We will grow organic food on our farms, our gardens, our balconies, our terraces. We will plant Gardens of Hope everywhere as a concrete symbol of our pact with the earth for her rejuvenation. Through small steps with significant impact, undertaken by millions of people aware of their power by acting in resonance, harmony and unity, we will sow the seeds of change towards a new planetary citizenship, taking care of the Planet and each other by building living economies and living democracies.

We start by planting a Garden of Hope today, 9 November 2015 in the Jardin Marcotte in Paris, together with the AMAP Ile de France Network and the Cultures en Herbes, as a first concrete step towards a new planetary citizenship.

We will continue to plant gardens of hope everywhere, and sow the seeds of change that will lead to a new Earth Democracy based on justice, dignity, sustainability and peace.