

CAF

Report Annual Forum 2023

Together, for the world





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CAF

Report Annual Forum 2023

Together, for the world

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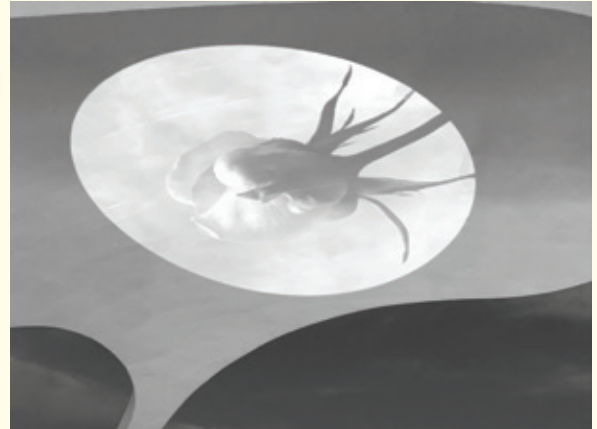
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"The emergence of populism and the social fragmentation it feeds off are symptoms and factors speeding up this process, exposing the failure of the international order in protecting life and peace".

Rafael Heiber

"Torn between abundance and waste, the planet is approaching its pollution and warming limits, increasing the vulnerability of a demographic majority already battered by various kinds of extractivism".

Rafael Heiber

Preface

Rafael Heiber

Ever since the completion of Brazil's democratic transition in the late 1980s, the country has consolidated as an essential actor in a multilateral, multipolar and peaceful world order. Not even the political instability —experienced since 2013, including a political coup in 2016, the victory of the far right in 2018 and the attempt of another coup d'état on 8 January 2023— were enough to return the country to its darkest hours of dictatorship. After ten years of lawfare, the nation chose the civilisational path, backing the return of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva for a third presidential term. It will prove to be the most challenging of them, given the internal reactionary situation and the international economic crises bequeathed by the Covid-19 pandemic, in addition to the ecological degradation and the effects of military conflicts such as the war between Russia and Ukraine, which entail nuclear risks.

The Common Action Forum Foundation (CAF), conscious of these threats and simultaneously committed to this new phase of reconstruction and strengthening of democracy, did not hesitate to stage in Brasilia its ninth annual forum, entitled *Juntos pelo Mundo* ("Together for the World"). Held for the first time in South America after several editions in Spain, South Africa and Mexico, CAF2023 reasserted its commitment to promoting thought and practices that address the spoils of almost half a century of neoliberalism. From geopolitics to economics, all governance and participation models are in crisis. The emergence of populism and the social fragmentation it feeds off are symptoms and factors speeding up this process. Combined with the environmental collapse that sweeps us, these phenomena expose the failure of the international order in protecting life and peace. This is especially true for the people of the Global South, who are most vulnerable at this juncture.

For over two days, the Juscelino Kubitschek Memorial and the Indigenous Peoples Memorial hosted nine thematic sessions in which CAF2023 was privileged to count on the most prestigious participants, mostly from abroad, to support and promote a global agenda of progress and justice. In the following pages, we share with our dear reader the primary reflections of these distinguished interventions, which were broadcast live and in full on the ICL Channel (Instituto Conhecimento Liberta).

It is worth noting that the programme's overall approach sought to explore the contradictions of contemporaneity in a cross-cutting manner and to point out the urgent paths towards new social pacts. The starting point was the sheer fragility of modern democracy and the traps created by the fragmentation of political bodies, functional to a cynical, individualistic, hegemonic ideology. An ideology that drains institutional trust and replaces the ethos of citizenship with promises that update and deepen unequal power relations. In this respect, the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution take a leading role both as a force for emancipation and as a source of new aesthetics that underpin the prevailing domination logic.

A critical examination of marginalised cosmologies and the end of the future as a point of arrival for a virtuous Western culture set the stage for discussions on the current notion of development. A concept warped by the vices of financialisation, and the failure to sustainably produce and distribute food and energy on a planetary scale. Torn between abundance and waste, the planet is approaching its pollution and warming limits, increasing the vulnerability of a demographic majority already battered by various kinds of extractivism. This vulnerability also translates into different forms of neo-colonialism, such as the Israel-Palestine conflict, which epitomises the failure of traditional international instruments. The growing West versus East and North Atlantic versus Global South tensions illustrate how achieving peace will depend as much on states as on civil society-based arrangements that counterbalance the interests of large corporations.

We would like to reiterate our gratitude for the generosity of all those who participated and made this encounter possible. We wish you a pleasant read and trust that the following pages will encourage reflection and influence the development of public policies that are committed to common causes.

Introduction

Under the title *Juntos pelo Mundo* (“Together, for the world”), the Common Action Forum 2023 was held in Brasilia on 11 and 12 August 2023, at two iconic venues in the Brazilian capital: the Juscelino Kubitschek Memorial and the Indigenous Peoples Memorial. With an intensive programme divided into a total of nine sessions, and with numerous special interventions by major international political figures, this edition of the annual forum, like those before it, brought together activists, journalists, academics and institutional representatives.

Thematically, the forum looked at the main challenges facing humanity from three main axes: *the crisis of democratic institutions*, including disinformation, technological factors and the fragmentation of the social spheres; *the climate crisis*, the challenges of its mitigation and a fair ecological transition; and *the re-foundation of the*

international order, which today more than ever must focus on promoting peace and defining a new form of development for the world. Through a special session, CAF2023 highlighted how much the neglected cosmogonies of indigenous cultures can contribute to transforming hegemonic thinking and redeeming the great mistakes of humanity.

"In Arabic, the word of progress is *taqadum* (تقدم). And it is from the same origin of a word which is *quidam* (قديم), which means the past, antiquity. In such a paradigm you move forward as a result of your attachment to your past, to your heritage, to the collective memory".

Wadah Khanfar

"Brazil seeks to recover its leadership role in multilateral spaces, where it used to set the benchmark in the fight against inequality, and for fair, sustainable development and a responsible foreign policy".

Murilo Kominski

Together, for the world

In his welcoming remarks to the forum, CAF President and renowned international journalist **Wadah Khanfar** emphasised that the goal of the meeting in Brazil was to reach a broad global consensus for the sustainability of human civilisation.

According to his vision, the core values of equality, freedom and justice, once driving forces of the Age of Enlightenment, have become twisted in order to justify human arrogance, to the point where they are now instrumental in the hegemonic narrative that governs our lives. Faced with a planet on the brink of ecological collapse and an international political and financial system that exacerbates inequality in the name of a supervised and arbitrary justice, in Wadah's own words, we must ask ourselves if "our generation might be written in History as humanity's last".

Searching for that consensus capable of saving humanity from itself, CAF2023 looks to the future, but also the past. Advocating the importance and modernity of traditional knowledge and civilisations that understand humans as integrated elements of their own environment (an idea deeply rooted in the indigenous cultures of the Global South), Khanfar reminded us that the past and the future are inextricably linked: "In Arabic, the word of progress is *taqadum* (تَقَدُّم). And it is from the same origin of a word which is *quidam* (قَدِيم), which means the past, antiquity. In such a paradigm you move forward as a result of your attachment to your past, to your heritage, to the collective memory". The legacy of our ancestors, in the end, is also the legacy we too will leave to our children, and we must regard it as the vital and transformative force it really is.

For his part, in his institutional welcome, **Murilo Kominski**, Special Advisor on the International Agenda to the Chief Minister of the General Secretariat of the Republic of Brazil, wanted to highlight the importance, sometimes not as recognised as it should be, of forums such as the CAF, which seek to articulate networks between civil society, academia, and institutions. These networks, he said, were key for Brazil's democratic re-conquest, a process which culminated in the reelection of President Lula da Silva, but also in the global and regional struggle against issues such as lawfare. As Kominski pointed out, it is precisely this cross-cutting, mosaic-like configuration that inspired the recent project of the Council for Sustainable Economic and Social Development, an initiative by the current administration, aimed at identifying areas of urgent social action and promoting consensus-building.

In his speech, the Brazilian diplomat highlighted the need for a vocation of democratic restoration and the recovery of the public policy agenda that had been dismantled by the outgoing administration. He also noted how Brazil seeks to recover its leadership role in multilateral spaces, where it used to set the benchmark in the fight against inequality, and for fair, sustainable development and a responsible foreign policy. The world of today needs that Brazil back.

"The UN is the only institution capable of representing the utopia of a true international political community, but it is essential to overhaul its institutional model and its normative framework".

**José Luis Rodríguez
Zapatero**

Opening Speech: José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

A Political Community Capable of Utopia

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, former Prime Minister of Spain, joined Common Action Forum's annual forum once again, this time with a plea for democratic affirmation.

"Brazil's democracy is Latin America's democracy", he stated, stressing that the restoration of institutionality and good political praxis became even more valuable with the return of President Lula da Silva. Praising him as the president who has most often denounced inequality and who has been most committed in the fight against poverty, the Spaniard underlined the need for someone like Lula to return to the forefront of politics in such uncertain times. For him, the leadership of someone capable of dialogue with all North and South, East and West, and with the vision and will for a truly multilateral world, is simply essential today.

In a cross-cutting reflection on the recent history of social progress, former PM Zapatero reflected on how the 21st century was cut short, too soon. The promises of peace and prosperity of a world leaving the Cold War behind collapsed on September 11, 2001; unleashing the so-called "War on Terror", which would leave hundreds of thousands dead, failed states and an extraordinary rise in global military spending. Successive economic and financial crises and the rise of inequalities would end up plunging the world into a horizon of despair that extends to a present beset by the ravages of a climate disaster that no one has been able to stop in time. The valuable lesson of this collapse of progress, the PM reflected, is hidden in plain sight: all the crises that have broken it are global crises.

"We are already a global society, for better or worse, and there is no de-globalisation possible. But we lack a global political community that's mature enough for the challenge" he said.

As the level of severity and juxtaposition of these crises takes on an existential character, the former PM reminded us that the next great challenge for the world's nations and democracies will be to lay the foundations for such a global community. The fate of each country, no matter how developed, will depend to a large extent on that of its neighbours. There will never be, for example, true welfare Europe with an Africa exploding with crises. And with this mission in mind it is more crucial than ever to undertake a thorough reform of the United Nations (UN). According to Zapatero, the UN is the only institution capable of representing the utopia of a true international political community, but it clings to the normative framework and institutional models of a bygone world, using a paradigm from 1945 to try and cope with a dramatically different present.

In this context, the former PM said, we must aim as high as possible, even aspiring to achieve a constitutional treaty for this international community, without fear of being utopian. Aligning himself with Mr Khanfar's speech, Zapatero stressed the need to recover the civilising spirit of progress, making us aware that we are but a single humanity, with a shared destiny. He too pointed out that the drivers that have bolstered progress over the last 100 years are none other than science, peace and historical restitution.

Armed with knowledge and awareness, the former PM concluded, we can rise up against the denialism and obscurantism that stalk us, and establish a new Age of Enlightenment for all of humanity.

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Common Action Forum

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1st session

Protecting Democracy to Ensure Social Pacts

"We cannot depend on single governments or politicians, because good leaders do not live forever. We need to build democracies that do not depend on individuals".

Heloísa Villela

"Political parties have degenerated into merchandising dynamics and have now become cradles for business careers. But politics is not a career, it is a social responsibility".

Manuela Carmena

The Collapse of Public Confidence

In the first session, *Protecting Democracy to Ensure Social Pacts*, Brazilian journalist **Heloísa Villela** opened the exchange by focusing on the increasing inequality as one of the main factors behind the faltering of the democratic model. Faced with an unfulfilled promise of prosperity and social justice, citizens are turning to the discourses of weariness that characterise the ideology of the extreme right.

The Executive Secretary of the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic of Brazil, **Maria Fernanda Ramos Coelho**, agreed with the idea of inequality as an aggravating factor, but stressed that, in addition to a generalised lack of transparency, this disillusionment is also framed by the absence of candidates and programmes capable of truly representing the yearnings of social majorities. The disinformation feeding this apathy, said the Brazilian government representative, demands both regulation and far-reaching measures to promote digital literacy. Especially with regard to some social media networks that have become channels for the articulation of popular movements.

Asserting the importance of female culture in the political space, **Manuela Carmena**, Spanish magistrate and former Mayor of Madrid, pointed out that democracy must also "be cared for". Caring necessarily involves looking and observing, paying attention to something or someone's state and their needs. In her analysis, the judge claimed that we must review the functioning of our democratic models to determine whether they are ultimately fulfilling their mission, which is none other than to benefit the citizens who endorse them. In this process, we must question the mechanisms that are casting a shadow over the image of politics: in addition to regulating the digital space to combat disinformation, the magistrate went a step further by defending the need to put an end to political lies.

"It is incomprehensible that lying is forbidden in advertising, yet allowed in politics. Information, in all the forms in which it is defined as a human right, demands truthfulness".

Aligning himself with this demand for observation and reflection, Salil Shetty, Vice President for Global Programmes at the Open Society Foundations (OSF), highlighted the multifaceted nature of this crisis of democracy, which is embedded in a complex system of overlapping and interconnected crises. "Virtually every major democracy in the world is facing crises of institutional legitimacy", he said. To resolve the epicentre of this poly-crisis, he believes it is imperative that we understand the socio-technical and economic patterns that are catalysing the reactionary wave, dismantling institutions and poisoning public discourse. According to Shetty, social movements should aim to support frontline activists, but also to achieve unity. That is, to become a kind of open social laboratory, where all can learn from each other and eventually agree on the principles of true democracy.

"The crisis of democracy is the result of the alienation of citizens, who are not reciprocated by governments and therefore lose confidence in institutions. [...] What should be questioned is not democracy, tough, but democratic quality".
María Fernanda Coelho

"Social movements must become a kind of open social laboratory, where all can learn from each other and eventually agree on the principles of true democracy".
Salil Shetty

Participation and Action Versus the Electoral Fallacy

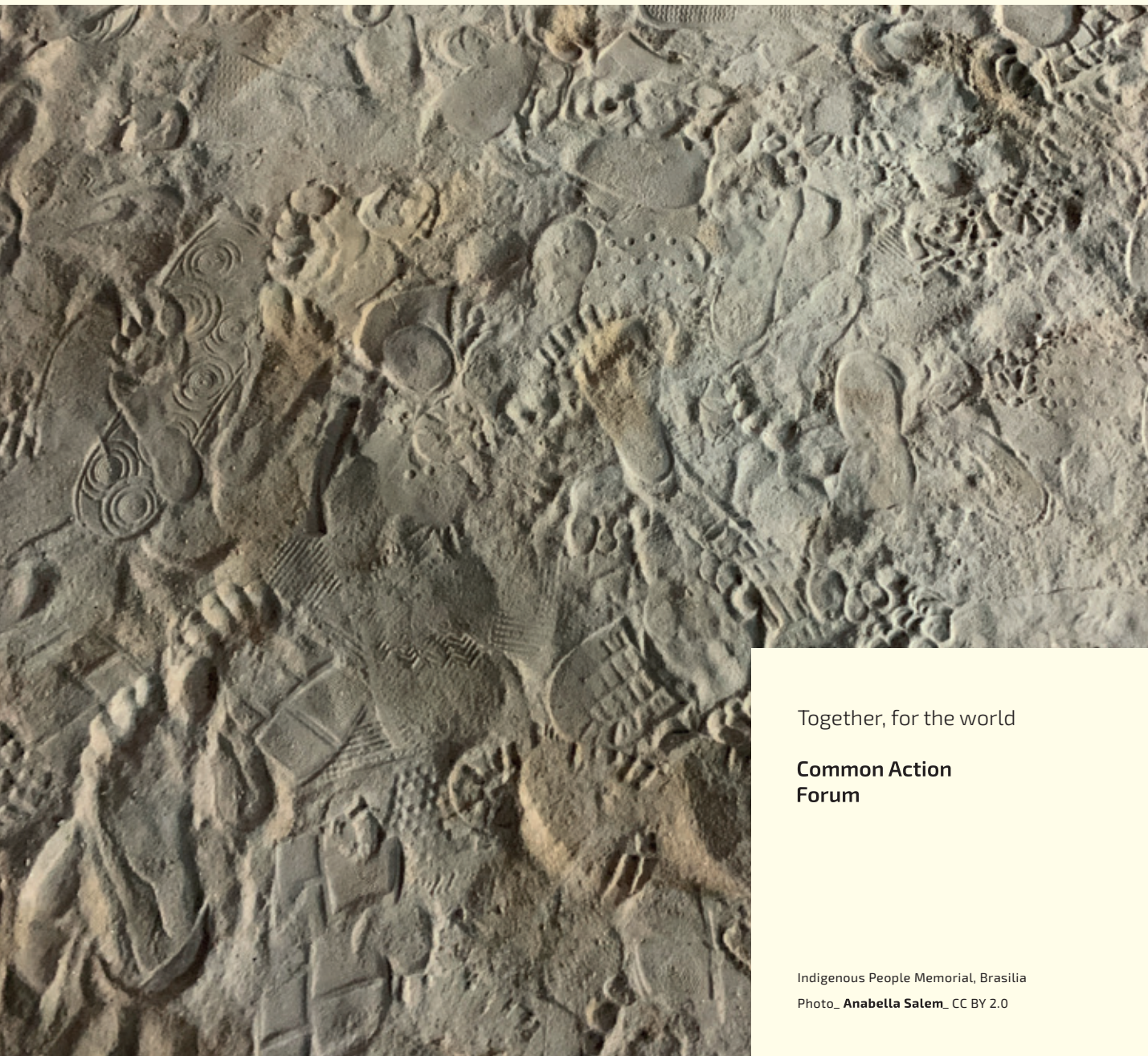
All participants in the session agreed that one of the main fallacies behind the collapse of social trust in the democratic model is the self-serving narrative that has long sought to reduce democracy to a periodic holding of elections. It is ironic, noted host Eloísa Villela, that this discourse has constituted the cornerstone of the violent foreign policy of a country, the United States (US), in which almost half of the population consistently refuses to participate in most presidential elections. In this context, in fact, it is imperative to consider how to reconquer the concept of democracy for the social majorities.

María Fernanda Ramos pointed out that it is essential to create new spaces for cross-cutting interaction that help to define public policy priorities hand in hand with civil society, avoiding the disconnection of citizens with political process. "What should be questioned is not democracy, but the quality of democracy". Electoral processes are not enough, she said, to guarantee respect for fundamental rights, equality before the law, pluralism or popular oversight of elected governments.

It is precisely with regard to the importance of involving citizens in the formulation and monitoring of laws that former Mayor Carmena highlighted the need to implement new forms of political participation. It is vital for a society to understand how it can self-regulate itself, which tools it lacks, which laws it has, and even which ones do not work or are not being complied with. It is vital to reinstate or even imagine new instances of participation via lottery, involving individual citizens. In the face of the merchandising dynamics that professional politics and political parties have degenerated into, the judge stresses that focusing on the evaluation of public policies is not

only a way to promote an involved citizenry, but also to demonstrate by way of example that a true politics of management, based on data and facts, is possible.

Recalling the complexity of the problem, Mr. Shetty also called for a truly comprehensive approach to the situation, capable of understanding the different dimensions of this mistrust, from technological factors, intergenerational relations, inequalities and multilateral challenges. An approach which also involves understanding the level of coordination and response that reactionary forces have to social narratives that progressive forces still distrust; issues such as public security or even national sentiments and religious creeds. But also, an approach which internalises that global challenges require global solutions. This demands the foundation of a new, more democratic and fair international order, in which social majorities, especially those of the Global South, have the weight they deserve.



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**Common Action
Forum**

Indigenous People Memorial, Brasília
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2nd session

From Fragmented Identities to a Political Body

"Diversity agendas have become a practical dilemma for some progressive sectors, who consider they should stay away from them out of mere pragmatism, in order to regain hegemony".

Paulo Abrão

Redistribution and Recognition: the Dichotomy of Diversity

In the second session, *From Fragmented Identities to a Political Body*, Brazilian lawyer **Paulo Abrão** discussed the apparent dichotomy between policies of redistribution and policies of recognition. Starting from the premise that overcoming traditional structures of domination and social exclusion requires a great political, cultural and social mobilisation, the former Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) explained that, until recently, the main driving force behind social struggles around the world had been the class struggle. In recent years, however, we have seen how new forms of mobilisation, activism and political engagement are much more inspired by the so-called "principle of diversity". This, in a context of conservative moral reactionism such as that experienced recently in countries like Brazil, has been the perfect breeding ground for xenophobia, authoritarian discourses and neo-fascism, which have found this diversity agenda to be their perfect enemy of choice. These hate speeches and manipulations have not only managed to discredit the identity agenda and weaken our democracies but, for in Abrão's opinion, they have even pushed "certain more pragmatic progressive sectors to argue that, in order to gain political hegemony within society, a progressive project of social inclusion should refrain from pushing diversity agendas". Thus, this apparent dichotomy between redistribution and recognition has become, in Abrão's view, a sort of "practical dilemma" for progressive movements today.

However, the Brazilian sociologist **Jessé Souza** went on to argue that this supposed contradiction between distribution and recognition, formulated by the great American thinker Nancy Fraser, "does not hold, because there is no redistribution without recognition, nor recognition without distribution".

In the same vein, the French-Peruvian anthropologist and politician **Verónica Mendoza** pointed out that the affirmation of particular identities, be they ethno-national, gender or sexual orientation-based, "can be emancipating and articulating, but sometimes they can also become a logic of withdrawal and fragmentation".

This was agreed by **Petra Stienen**, former Dutch senator and diplomat, who suggested that we should all "recognise our multiple identities, and embrace and celebrate them", but also "be careful" of certain patterns of exclusion that today hide under the identity banner: "For example, what George Lakoff calls "strict father-type politicians": women who present themselves as feminists, but who in reality contribute to maintaining the patriarchal order".

Triple Oppression

Following the same logic, Verónica presented the case of Peru, where currently, thanks to parity policies, there are almost 40% of women MPs (the highest level of female representation in the entire history of Peruvian democracy), "and yet this is when Parliament is at its most conservative and when it is acting most aggressively against women's rights", she explained. In her view, this paradoxical fact exposes not only the limits of "liberal feminism" but also a "triple system of oppression" made up of patriarchy, colonialism and neoliberalism.

Three systems that force us into an integral struggle, as they intersect and feed back into each other, just as racism is "multidimensional", as Jessé Souza explained. "Racism is a symbolic structure, that is, it is realised through ideas. In other words, it is exactly the opposite of what the Marxist vulgate says: it is not matter that determines the spirit, but exactly the other way around", said the Brazilian thinker. In other

"Racism is a symbolic structure that assumes different masks in order to stay alive while pretending to be dead".

Jessé Souza

"Patriarchy, colonialism and neoliberalism intersect and feed back on each other, constituting a system of triple oppression".

Verónica Mendoza

"We need to do more hopeful communication, to talk about our way of doing things and our values, and not just about the mistakes of others".

Petra Stienen

words, human behaviour is always determined by ideas, even if we are often unaware of it.

Racism Fakes its Own Death

Delving into the phenomenon of racial discrimination, Jessé Souza spoke of "the different masks that racism assumes in order to stay alive while pretending to be dead". He explained that after the Second World War, the enormous destructive power of Nazi German racism shamed the whole world and somehow became illegitimate worldwide. But this does not mean that racism disappeared, but rather that it became what Souza defines as a "cordial racism". That is, a form of racism that is implicit in society but not recognised as such: "We know that society is racist, but nobody acknowledges racism in themselves".

By way of example, Professor Souza explained the case of Brazilian separatism, an aspiration camouflaged as regionalism that hides pure racism in its aspirations, since in the south of the country, which received the majority of European immigration between 1880 and 1930, 80% of the population is white and the remaining 20% are people of mixed race or black. In the Brazilian Northeast the proportion is exactly the opposite, which shows that this so-called regionalism is a way of "exercising racism by pretending not to be racist", as Souza put it.

Thus, *cordial racism* makes it difficult for us to perceive xenophobic behaviour as such, because it "transforms black people into criminals" and thus disguises the racist as a "defender of public morality", as the Brazilian theoretician illustrated.

Verónica Mendoza also narrated how in Peru, which was "the centre of the Spanish colony", today the discourses of the ultra-right continue to be impregnated with a colonial nostalgia

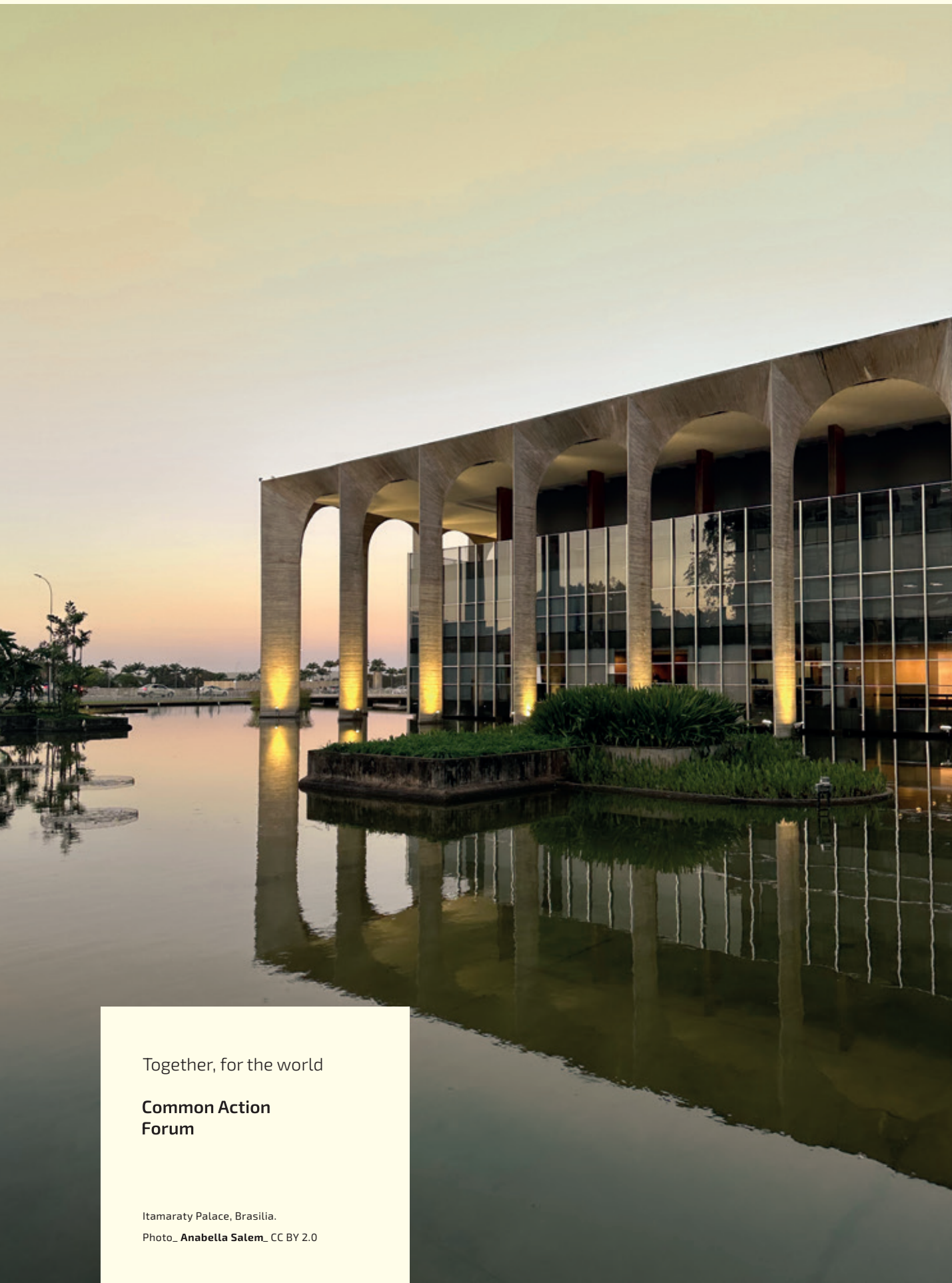
that exacerbates racism and demonstrates that inequalities always have an ethnic bias. Souza concluded by saying that the precondition for these structures of prevailing racism is "the oppression against oneself". That is to say, that racialised people accept, in one way or another, consciously or not, the condition of inferiority that has been imposed on them over the centuries.

Searching for a New Horizon: Hope as a Transformative Skill

Thus, in order to emancipate themselves from these oppressions to which historically marginalised and discriminated collectives fall prey, it is necessary to "clarify the ideas that hide behind the domination of the elites", Souza concluded. And to avoid the fragmentation of struggles that was addressed in the session, it is urgent to "stop compartmentalising our identities and stop softening our agendas", in the words of Verónica Mendoza.

Paulo Abrão, as host of the session, closed the panel by emphasising the importance of speaking from a standpoint of hope, "because it is hope that really drives our capacity for transformation". In the same vein, Petra Stienen pointed out a strategic error on the part of the progressive sectors: "We focus on the mistakes of Bolsonaro, of Trump, of Putin, but we don't put our own values ahead of what we want to achieve, we don't talk about our own way of doing things".

The Dutch politician thus proposed feminist foreign policy as an example, given it "is about human security and human rights, instead of economic gain and militarization", and agreed that we need to do more "hopeful communication". With her sights set on this horizon, Stienen concluded her speech by recalling the Islamic saying that "when you save one person, you save mankind".



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Itamaraty Palace, Brasília.

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3rd session

Beyond the Freedom of Disinformation

"Disinformation is the disorganised expression of the end of the hegemonic truth of the West".
Edil Baisalov

"In the age of fact-checking, what's verified and what isn't sets the information agenda".
Gaspard Estrada

Keynote: Edil Baisalov About Truth and Destiny in a Young Democracy

In his keynote introducing the third session, **Edil Baisalov**, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic, reflected on information and disinformation and their impact on the realities of "young" countries. Referring to his own career as a pro-democracy activist after the collapse of the Soviet Union (USSR), Baisalov recalled the enthusiasm and also the vulnerability of a country-in-the-making beginning its journey without an institutional and political legacy of its own. Faced with the decline of the narrative that sustained the Soviet world, the new Kyrgyzstan became one of the most faithful and advantaged disciples of the Washington Consensus.

Baisalov recounted how the country fashioned itself according to the manuals of the international financial institutions and their myriad conditionalities. In the mid-1990s, Kyrgyz society would sit back and wait for the "invisible hand" and the providence of the free market to replace the battery of social protections they had been told to dismantle, namely their health, education and social security systems. It would not happen. And the discourses that for years were quick to blame corruption or the political culture for this failure were never able to provide explanations beyond finger-pointing. The neoliberal recipe would then fail, as it is failing today in much of the world. Baisalov suggested, in fact, that "the neoliberal recipe turned out to be as dogmatic and as totalitarian as those that collapsed with the fall of the USSR".

Kyrgyzstan and the rest of Central Asia are today plunged into a form of disorientation that is no longer unknown to most in the world. Now that even the West has ceased to apply its own rules for its survival's sake, there are no replacement

models capable of uniting societies, visions and regional projects. On the contrary: even in the face of the decline of the international order, the noise is louder than ever. It is co-opting the attention of the citizenry as much as it lubricates the gears of anti-politics. Vice President Baisalov's account reminds us that disinformation is merely the disorganised expression of the twilight of Western hegemonic truth. Starting from a dogma-free vision to reconstruct our world is, however, an incomparable opportunity.

Carpet Bombing and Explosive Statements: the Military Tactics of the Media

In session 3, *Beyond the freedom of disinformation*, **Gaspard Estrada**, Executive Director of the Political Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean (OPALC) at Sciences Po University in Paris, introduced some issues related to the so-called "surveillance capitalism", the technological correlate of the current capitalist economic system. The Mexican researcher exposed the challenge of achieving a "healthy distance between the public media and media that do not depend on the state", and the dilemma that this causes in "setting agendas". "What is verified and what is not verified, chooses and sets the agenda", he said.

The Argentinean journalist **Pedro Brieger** agreed that it is still "the big newspapers" that determine public opinion, and that they are responsible for demonising certain politicians "to the point of provoking explicit physical violence" against them. The director of Nodal gave as an example the then recent attack against Argentinean Vice-President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, recalling the film 'Taxi Driver' to illustrate "how a certain climate is weaved until a random person, in this case the taxi driver played by Robert de Niro, decides to kill the president".

"Mainstream media are responsible for creating a climate of demonisation and violence towards certain public figures, and this has favoured attacks and even assassination attempts".
Pedro Brieger

"The rise of new technologies has helped to increase the general volume of lies and manipulation, but the main source of hoaxes is still corrupt traditional journalism".
Inna Afinogenova

This role of the mass media in the dissemination of hatred and the exercise of violence borders on warmongering, as exposed by Russian journalist **Inna Afinogenova**, who explained how the military slang "carpet bombing" is also applied in the field of communication. That is, dropping a huge number of bombs to devastate a specific area. A metaphor for the tactic used by the hegemonic media to destroy the reputation and truncate the political careers of progressive leaders in Latin America, such as Rafael Correa and Jorge Glas in Ecuador, Gustavo Petro in Colombia or Lula Da Silva in Brazil. "This *modus operandi* is almost always the same: explosive statements that are based on nothing more than anonymous or questionable testimonies, and the implying accusations as a widespread tactic of "saying without really saying". Examples of this are the use of conditional statements (for example, "he could have financed his campaign with drug money"), and the dissemination of false accusations as irrefutable proof.

These are some of the mechanisms of the so-called mediafare, which, like lawfare, consisting of the weaponisation of the media (or the judiciary) to destroy the political adversary. This phenomenon, together with the extreme militarisation of journalism we are nowadays witnessing as a result of the Russo-Ukrainian war, is resulting in a true information war unleashed by big media corporations, which not only use military techniques to twist a public figure, but also "have managed to install the idea", in Afinogenova's words, "that the humanity of certain countries is measured by the amount of weapons they are sending to the front line". In other words, the climate of warmongering in the mainstream media has led to the terrible nonsense that "support for the war has practically become an ethical issue for Europe and a patriotic issue for Russia", the journalist lamented.

Former Brazilian MP **Jean Wyllys** went a step further

and gave an explanation as to why the mainstream media continues to have "control of what we call the collective imagination or people's perception of the world". To this end, he explained what "cross-ownership" consists of: the concentration of radio, television, newspaper and magazine concessions in the hands of a single company. In other words, the concentration of the entire media ecosystem in a few hands, "in a few families that belong to political oligarchies. Political oligarchies that in turn are the agents of economic powers themselves. Looking in the rear-view mirror of history, we can see that these oligarchic families in control of the country's powers are the same slave-owning families that dominated it even before the proclamation of the Republic", he explained.

Media concentration which, as the journalist also denounced, causes a serious deficit in the guarantee of the human right to information in Brazil, and this is not only limited to the traditional media: "This concentration has migrated to the new information and communication technologies, so that the same powerful people also control and colonise many of the "emerging" media", he denounced.

New Technologies: Resonance Boxes or Scapegoats?

With regard to these new technologies and social networks, Inna Afinogenova questioned the widespread idea that usually blames the proliferation of so-called fake news on the new platforms of the digital environment. For the journalist, "although the rise of technology has served as a sort of powerful resonance box, it has helped to increase the volume of lies and manipulations, to increase the noise... The truth is that the main source of hoaxes and manipulations continues to be the same as always: traditional journalism, corrupt journalism".

"Social networks are being complicit and complacent with the far-right, because both exploit emotional rather than rational thought".

Jean Wyllys

Thus, social networks have become a kind of "scapegoat" that is often blamed for the rise of disinformation, supposedly boosted by toxic users, so-called bots, automated Twitter accounts, troll farms... diverting attention, as the Russian journalist pointed out, from "the big media directly linked to power" and its destabilising role for true democracy.

In the same vein, Pedro Brieger emphasised that, contrary to what is often thought, "disinformation is not new". Throughout history there have been media and propaganda outlets dedicated to spreading false news. As an example, he recalled the famous USSR photograph from which Leon Trotsky was obliterated, falsifying the facts; to which Jean Wyllys replied with a powerful statement: "indeed, politics has a problem with the truth".

Wyllys addressed then another one of the risks stemming from new technologies, digital apps or the increased use of mobile devices: the so-called "data mining". The researcher explained that all the data and information that a user agrees to give up when downloading these types of apps or digital platforms have not only become commodities, but also "a source of direct manipulation of subjectivities, much more effective than the mass media".

In other words, the data given to the technology companies behind apps and digital platforms are helping them to produce specific propaganda, specifically defined for targeted individuals. "Users are not only constantly receiving targeted advertising, but also targeted ideas", Wyllys warned. He finished by explaining the phenomenon of surveillance capitalism with which the session's host had opened the panel: "That feeling you get that you're being watched because you thought of an ice cream shop and suddenly you go on Facebook and the first thing that pops up is an ad

for an ice cream shop... It's not a feeling, it's a fact. We are being watched".

On Censorship and Complicit Silence

Inna Afinogenova also spoke of the so-called fact checkers, "which at one point seemed to be the solution to all those lies, manipulations and hoaxes that run through our social networks", and which nevertheless have proven themselves to behave, in many cases, like any other media actors. In other words, as they are under the control of the big media corporations, these "verifiers" are not neutral when it comes to choosing which information they check and which they don't: "They are selective about the subjects they investigate and always look the same way, because obviously they are not going to shoot themselves in the foot, or their bosses' or those of the people financing them", denounced the journalist. She recalled that, although it is more subtle and therefore more difficult to perceive, "manipulation starts from the very selection of the themes to be checked".

In other words, fact checkers can end up being as biased and partial as the "official media", as Pedro Brieger compared; recalling that "the problem that all progressive governments that have tried to have their own media in Latin America have had" is that they have ended up making the mistake of wanting to control and slant information. In other words, abdicating freedom of expression.

These "complicit silences" are generated, therefore, from the platforms that do not verify certain lies, from the biased media that spread the "official version" of the facts, but also thanks to "the complacency of the aristocracy of mainstream journalism, which systematically sits journalists who are real experts in fabricating evidence on its sets", allowing them to install false messages, as Afinogenova pointed out.

"Knowing how to detect these silences" is key to being able to differentiate truthful information from hoaxes or captious propaganda; since omissions, as Afinogenova demonstrated, can be as effective and damaging a form of lie as open censorship. Censorship that we have seen applied "with impunity" in the wake of the Russian-Ukrainian war, as Afinogenova also denounced. For her, Europe's "undisguised" blockade of the Russian media sets a dangerous precedent and calls into question the freedom of information of which Europe has always considered itself the standard-bearer.

From the mass media to the mass of media

In conclusion, Jean Wyllys explained that the revolution in information and communication technologies caused our society to move, very quickly, "from the mass media to the mass of media". In other words, from a context in which newspapers, television and traditional media were the priority and hegemonic channels of communication, to one in which the proliferation of digital media and social networks exponentially multiplied the amount of information to which citizens are exposed on a daily basis, and also made it difficult to contrast it.

This led to widespread confusion and an environment conducive to disinformation and the propagation of hoaxes, which ended up working for the far right. "The social networks ended up being complicit, indulgent or complacent with the extreme right, because the extreme right exploits the same thing as the so-called *Big Tech*: the emotional aspect, instead of the rational one", explained the Brazilian activist and politician.

The fact that the far right appeals to the most irrational feelings of human beings, and that social networks and the big companies that

support them feed on this, is a problem for the world's progressive movements because, as Pedro Brieger said: "We also know that those on the other side have no limits whatsoever". The Argentinean journalist explained that, while "we have certain ethical codes that we are not prepared to go beyond, we do not want to appeal to sensationalism, we are opposed to everything being a spectacle...", the far-right media have no qualms about using communication as a tool in the service of yellow journalism, violence, profit and private interests.

Thus, in the face of all the challenges presented by the vast ecosystem of media and information technologies with we interact on a daily basis, Jean Wyllys believes that it is necessary to focus on "public communication, which prioritises data and not versions". Inna Afinogenova insisted that there is an urgent need to strengthen education, the ability of users to understand for themselves, to be able to critically analyse any information, "even when it comes from the media that we usually trust, even when that information contradicts what we want to hear".

The Russian journalist closed the session by lamenting that "at the moment, people are being educated in just the opposite: in believing that whatever the textbook says is right without having to look for other sources". She encouraged the promotion of doubt and a critical spirit in order to move towards an aware citizenry that does not allow itself to be deceived by "half-truths".



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4th session

Technologic Promises and the Crossroads of Citizenship

"Our data has become a kind of capital, which flows unevenly and accumulates in private hands".

Patricio Cabello

"Digitisation is not just about providing software and hardware, but about driving a cultural transformation that brings technology closer to people".

Tesh Sidi

"Surveillance capitalism fosters a constant consumption, 24 hours a day, one that does not respect borders, breaks or age, and which feeds on precarious labour".

Jamila Venturini

Digital Sovereignty and 24/7 Capitalism: The Extractivism of Attention

Session 4, *Technological promises and the crossroads of citizenship* was moderated by Chilean researcher **Patricio Cabello**. With a PhD in Social Psychology and an expert in digital citizenship, Cabello opened the panel by stating the fact that our data has today become a form of capital, "that flows unequally, and accumulates in private hands". Digital sovereignty, in this sense, has become a key concept, a term that we should "take hold of before the conservative sector does it and it's then too late", said Big-Data expert **Tesh Sidi**.

The Saharawi-born computer engineer, currently a member of the Spanish Parliament, explained that data sovereignty determines whether technology can be a transformative and democratic factor or, on the contrary, a tool of control; because software sovereignty resides where power resides. Thus, holding digital sovereignty is becoming a key issue with geopolitical repercussions, and showing major differences among global powers. In the United States, Sidi explained, sovereignty resides entirely with companies, while in China, by contrast, it is the government that owns its citizens' data. In her opinion, there should be a middle ground between the two models, which is what the European Union (EU) is pursuing: a model of co-sovereignty for which the EU is promoting governance protocols, "yet without involving citizens in the design of such protocols", she pointed out.

Jamila Venturini, a Brazilian journalist and digital rights expert, pointed out, however, that the hegemonic model is one that leaves data in the hands of large technology companies. The so-called "GAFAMs": Google, Apple, Facebook, (now called Meta) and Microsoft; technological giants that have colonised all areas of social interaction and have given rise to what the author

Jonathan Crary called "24/7 capitalism". This is, in Venturini's words, "a capitalism that allows consumption 24 hours a day. A consumption that does not respect borders, breaks or ages, nor of course does it respect diversity. A consumption that did not stop even during the pandemic and that has been fed by the precarious work of deliverymen, packagers, telemarketers and content moderators".

Thus, the Big Tech companies hosted by Silicon Valley have not only institutionalised the data extractivism discussed by the previous session, but also an "extractivism of attention", as researcher Shoshana Zuboff has put it. A form of exploitation that not only extracts our own data as if it were resources or raw materials, but that also steals our time, imposing made up needs on us, and which seems to be defining the entire field of possibilities.

The most serious aspect, in Venturini's opinion, is that whoever is exercising this power (which is also ideological) is, at the end of the day, "a group of engineers, mostly white men, who from territories outside our countries and our region are trying to define what we should be concerned about and what the solutions are", she denounced.

In other words, digital sovereignty is still mostly in the hands of foreign private companies, it exhibits colonial patterns and "showcases in the digital environment the inequalities and segregation existing in the territory", in the words of Fabio Senne.

On Whose Side Does Tech Play? Biases and Digital Poverty

Senne, a Brazilian researcher and expert in the development of the *knowledge society*, used the Amazon as an example, referencing the rural areas of Brazil and the peripheries of its large cities to argue that inequalities are being transferred to

"Like offline poverty, digital poverty is also multidimensional and intersectional".

Fabio Senne

the digital environment, and that "just like offline poverty, digital poverty is also multidimensional and intersectional".

Asked by the host whether digital technologies can reenact inequality or even amplify it, Senne responded that it is precisely this dilemma that researchers have been discussing for years. It has become the paradox of what was called the "promise of technology". The internet can act as a vector of democratisation and inclusion or, on the contrary, reinforce and increase inequalities, depending on "whose side these technologies play on".

Along these lines, Tesh Sidi stated that "data can indeed be used to improve people's lives" and that "politics can also be made with data"; but also that it's no secret the current digital world "generates disinformation because we are not exercising forms of punishment for those who disinform". And that also generates other dangers, such as digital violence or a lack of safe spaces in the universe of digital applications.

Jamila Venturini noted another one of the risks new technologies pose: many governments have been implementing digital transformation policies "in a way that has reinforced surveillance and control structures over historically dominated populations". Just as an example of this many Brazilian social movements are warning facial recognition tools reproduce colonial and dependency mechanisms that often result in the criminalisation of black people.

Digitalisation Beyond Software: the Necessary Cultural Shift

Tesh also illustrated the awe-inspiring advances in tech through a family experience: "My mother used to record her summer photos on a floppy disk. Then

the digital camera came by and she started taking over 100 photos of her holidays, so they no longer fit on floppy disks. Then came the CD, then the flash drive and now the Cloud. And she hasn't had time, because of the digital divide, to learn about all these different technological shifts of the last five years. It is an abysmal jump in human progress", she stated.

This transformation has not been accompanied, as the data engineer pointed out, by "a cultural transformation bringing technology closer to citizens, a cultural digitalisation for the peoples who constitute this digital society". In Sidi's opinion, it is a mistake to conceive digitisation as just "providing software and hardware, or generating or controlling algorithms": digitisation should go much further. It should also consist of simplifying digital technology, bringing it closer to citizens in a comprehensive way.

In addition to the cultural shifts that should go hand in hand with technological development, more digital literacy is also vital in order to grant users "access to more sources as well as the ability to verify them, to navigate a complex information environment", in Fabio's words.

In her closing statements, Jamila said that we must avoid both "technological pessimism", which always emphasises the negative side of artificial intelligence, the dangers of disinformation, etc.; and "technological optimism", "which sees technology as a magical entity that will provide magical solutions to all of our problems". Moreover, we must also avoid technological determinism, as we cannot lose sight of the fact that technology can (and should) also be defined by citizens.

Patricio Cabello culminated the panel in the same vein, stating that it's been already demonstrated that digital technologies "cannot magically solve problems that the system has not previously

faced" and that this is precisely why it is essential to articulate alternatives with citizens, via participation and social inclusion, also through the use of digital technologies.

Concluding the session, Tesh Sidi warned that "Facebook and other large companies are already developing the *Metaverse*, a whole new dimension that is already quite close to fruition. And before these levels of technological absorption arrive, we must have managed to determine new citizen participation in technology policies". We must have succeeded in involving citizens in defining policies that concern them, and in providing them with the cultural training necessary for a healthy relationship with new technologies.



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Evening session

Lessons from Forgotten Futures

"Indigenous are born poor and die poor, but we live with a great wealth that the rest of the world lack: spirituality".

Cacique Tanoné

"We, the indigenous peoples, have travelled through history and modernity, and today we live mostly in urban contexts, with many paradoxes and challenges. We are not the same as we were 500 years ago".

Paolina Vercoutere

Rituality as Daily Practice

The afternoon session of *Juntos Pelo Mundo* took place at the Indigenous Peoples' Memorial. **Cacique Tanoné**, leader of the Kariri-Xokó people, explained there how her people had migrated to Brasília and how, despite living in this metropolis, they manage to preserve their traditions and rituality. She spoke of the "regime of respect" that the Kariri-Xokó enact before entering their sacred forest, taking the chance to join the singing and dancing with the rest of her community at the venue, teaching with their bodies and voices what she illustrated with words: "Indigenous are born poor and die poor, but we live with a great wealth that the rest of the world lack: spirituality".

Paolina Vercoutere, Vice-Prefect of the Ecuadorian province of Imbabura, reflected on how, for the Kichwa-Otavalo people, to which she belongs, "rituality is also part of our daily practice". The Ecuadorian politician spoke of Inti Raymi, the Andean ritual that celebrates the equinoxes, and how, before holding any social gathering, indigenous peoples "ask permission from the earth, we ask permission from the elements to share the word and for things to flow".

Canadian philosopher **John Ralston Saul** also addressed the issue of rituality stating that "there's often a fear in Western countries of ritual", and that this in itself is nonsense, because "ritual is the very element that gives shape to civilisation". Thus, losing the link with our most spiritual dimensions as human beings is a sign of how the Western world has lost the connection with its own ancestry.

This is the same contemporary Western world that Cacique Tanoné calls "the civilisation of the bowed down head". The "cell-phone civilisation", always looking down, hunched towards a screen, unable to look at each other any more, let alone at the earth

"There's often a fear in Western countries of ritual, but ritual is precisely the basic element that shapes civilisation".

John Ralston Saul

that sustains them. Unable to understand "that the greatest wealth is to dance and sing so that life can flourish".

Indigenous Peoples and Nature: Ties of Reciprocity

Throughout the session, **Éricka 'Coca' Ñanco**, a Chilean MP of the Mapuche people, explained that Mapuche actually means "people of the earth". The very etymology of their name points to their link with nature. "The Mapuche are one with all of nature, yet this is far from something that is exclusively ours", she said. "It is a precept that all the original peoples of the world have deeply ingrained their identity".

This too was sustained by the other indigenous leaders present at the session, as Paolina Vercoutere defined the same link as "a relationship of belonging to the land, a connection with the space that gives us meaning". Cacique Tanoné expressed the same sentiment with other words: "We need to step on the sand, the soil, the earth, the mud. Contact with the universe is what gives us peace".

This is the opposite of what we in the Western world "have been encouraged to embrace for decades, for centuries", said John Ralston Saul: "the European idea of rationality in cutting ourselves off from nature and looking back at nature as something that we can order around".

"Indigenous peoples are here, fully here, with a real role and relationship with the place, with the physical place. Europeans don't have this. They lost it", the Canadian writer lamented.

Éricka Ñanco defined the relationship between indigenous peoples and the environment as one of "reciprocity". Far from Western patterns of exploitation and extractivism, far from the

environmental depredation caused by the frantic industrial rhythm of the planet's big cities... "Our relationship with nature is not one of subjugation", she concluded: "It is a relationship of care".

Taking Indigenous Peoples Out of the Museums: Lessons in Democracy and Decoloniality

Vice-Prefect Vercoutere also questioned the attitudes and treatment still given to indigenous peoples, as somewhat of an element of folklore. The Kichwa leader confessed that she did not feel comfortable with anthropology museums exhibiting the traditional dress of her people, or with so many laws and policies bearing the "intercultural" surname lacking true intercultural aspirations. "I don't like my costume to be in a showcase, because we are living peoples. I feel that this is not the right way to look at us", she said. She provided an example of the use of the traditional dress of the Andean peoples: "for me, using my clothing is a political positioning, a tool for mobilising and disputing imaginaries in the political space, in intellectual spaces, in artistic spaces, in spaces where meaning is discussed and disputed", she explained. And she confessed that while it was a decision full of meaning, it has bare a cost on her as both a woman and a politician.

Éricka Ñanco agreed that it is necessary to demystify, problematise and make the analysis of the question of identity of indigenous peoples more complex: "Identity is not only how I understand myself, but also where I come from, my territory, my roots, where I belong, the meaning I give to common goods", she explained.

For Vercoutere, another ethnocentric mistake that continues to be made is that of "talking about indigenous people as a whole". The Kichwa-Otavalo leader thus called to stop homogenising them, to

"Indigenous peoples have a reciprocal relationship with nature. Our relationship with the environment is one of care, not of subjugation".
Éricka Ñanco

broaden the view and understand the diversity of all indigenous peoples and nationalities, as well as to overcome the static and stereotypical vision of the indigenous individual as "the good savage" who lives in nature: "Many indigenous peoples have gone through history and have gone through modernity, and we face many paradoxes and challenges. We are not the same we were 500 years ago", she said.

To illustrate this, she reflected on the fact that in her country, Ecuador, the largest concentration of the indigenous population finds home in the two largest cities, Quito and Guayaquil. "Indigenous peoples are now living in urban contexts", she said. As John Ralston Saul explained, the model of indigenous reserves as segregated spaces, which prevailed in Canada, is residual and part of the past, as indigenous peoples are nowadays effectively inserted in the epicentre of cities, like the rest of the mestizo, white or black populations. Similarly, indigenous peoples have now achieved high levels of political participation, which, in his opinion, is enriching our democracies.

In regards to the imaginary of political systems, Ralston Saul posed a key question: "What is the difference between democracies and authoritarian regimes? Authoritarian regimes are exciting. They have heroic leaders who pretend they can ride horses into battle. They look like important people, we're supposed to admire them. Democracy is a very different thing. Democracy is slow. It is inefficient as a political system. Terribly inefficient. It's boring because it goes on and on and on and on. And five years go by and you say, we still haven't solved this problem yet?". This, which on the one hand is democracy's flaw, what makes it inefficient, is at the same time its main virtue. "This is the glory of democracy", in the words of Ralston Saul: "In democracy you're endlessly negotiating because it's not clear and nobody has the power to make it clear right away".

And in this respect, indigenous peoples have a myriad of experiences and lessons to offer. Their political organisational practices recreate collective leadership, their forms of management are generally communal and their deliberation systems tend to be assembly-based. "At the first levels of government, re-elections are almost never tolerated, their aim is always to oxygenate political leadership", explained Paolina. Unlike the great, messianic and plenipotentary leaderships, almost always male (so characteristic of urban Latin American and Western societies), the Ecuadorian vice-prefect explained that leadership in the indigenous way "is always shared, and there is a strong desire for it not to be concentrated in one person".

This way of exercising and understanding power, these political practices based on indigenous knowledge, have reached milestones such as the constitution of the Plurinational State in Ecuador, based on the paradigm of *sumak kawsay* and the cosmovisions of the Andean peoples; and they continue to pave the way and raise new struggles in different parts of the world. In Chile, as Congresswoman Ñanco recounted, the Selknam people have recently been recognised. "The Selknam lived in what is known today as Tierra del Fuego, they were canoe people, they lived of the sea", she explained. "These people were massacred in their entirety and at least today we have managed to recognise their memory, to recognise that the Chilean state exterminated them".

Policies of historical and democratic memory, decolonisation, restitution of rights and inclusion are still historical debts in most countries. "We need to make progress on the existence of reserved seats in our parliaments", said Congresswoman Ñanco, "because unfortunately, today in the Chilean Congress, only two of us are of Mapuche origin, out of the 155 seats that exist to represent the Chilean people as a whole".

There are many challenges ahead but also many lessons that indigenous peoples can teach us democracy-wise, as John Ralston Saul reminded us, "democracy is about people talking to each other and trying to work out how they can live together".



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5th session
Food Sovereignty and Energy
Security in a Global Green
Transition

"We cannot allow global trade to be geo-politicised, nor can we allow food and life essentials to be the object of war or sanctions".

Pedro Manuel Moreno

Keynote: Pedro Manuel Moreno Optimism as a Multilateral Value

The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), **Pedro Manuel Moreno**, noted in *Juntos Pelo Mundo* that "it takes a world to feed a world". Very few countries are truly sovereign in terms of food and energy, while the vast majority of the world's nations do not produce enough food or energy for themselves, and therefore depend on world trade.

Moreno recalled that UNCTAD was born in 1964, together with the G77, precisely "as a counterpoint to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), with the founding spirit of becoming a bridge between the South and the North, facilitating the access of less developed countries to the global economy". It is an indisputable fact that under the globalised economic system of today's international society, it would be impossible to feed 8 billion people without world trade.

The international official also mentioned a report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) on the state of food security in the world, which reveals that from 2019 to the present, another 2 million people have become exposed to hunger. With regards to energy, 75 million people who had previously gained access to electricity have now lost it, and 100 million more now resort to burning biofuels for cooking endeavors, which is toxic and often lethal. Food sovereignty and energy security are thus dwindling throughout the world, just as "unforeseen events" (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) have increased in frequency. Noting that "reprisals have also increased", Mr Moreno also pointed to emerging practices such as friendshoring, which consist of actively moving supply chains to "friendly countries".

"A new multilateralism demands incorporating territories and the cities way more actively".
Felipe Llamas

"It is unthinkable that the Developing World should continue to be burdened with foreign debt, after the countries of the North have appropriated its gold and silver and are now coming for its strategic minerals".
Eduardo Barcesat

These dangerous processes are geo-politicising trade, instead of using it as a vehicle for welfare and development. Were it to be truly considered as such, international trade would not possibly be at the mercy of such power struggles, just as "food and life essentials cannot be subject to war or sanctions", warned the UNCTAD Deputy Secretary-General.

To illustrate this, he too recalled that, when war broke out between Russia and Ukraine, both countries, two of the world's leading grain and fertiliser producers, had enormous difficulties in exporting their crops. Crops which, on top of that, "were mostly destined for countries of the South, the poorest on the planet". In this complex context, UNCTAD promoted the Black Sea Grain Initiative, one aimed at recovering food sovereignty through trade sovereignty, and which in the midst of the war among Russia and Ukraine, managed to secure wheat, barley, maize and sunflower oil for impoverished countries around the world.

According to the UN official, this experience shows that "we need to better regulate world trade, quantitatively and qualitatively, fighting against the lack of transparency and against speculation, and encouraging the decarbonisation of logistics chains". In order for grains, basic foodstuffs, raw materials in general or world trade in itself not to become weaponised for war, the international community must reach a consensus, a set of universal rules with development and an ecological transition in perspective.

"And the only way to do this well", Moreno concluded, "is to do so multilaterally". He gazed into the horizon with optimism, since, for him, optimism is a core multilateral value. An essential condition for facing collective challenges. Optimism as a necessary part of the solution.

A Framework of Uncertainty

Under the title *Food sovereignty and energy security in a global green transition*, session 5 was hosted by professor and urban planner **Felipe Llamas**, who introduced the discussion by pointing out that the climate crisis and geopolitical tensions are putting the world in check now it was already facing an unprecedented demographic challenge. He recalled that international trade is the guiding principle articulating how eight billion people produce, eat, consume and live, determining the world's energy and food supply chains. According to all forecasts, we will have reached ten billion by 2050. We have long been accustomed to seeing the seams of these international trade networks burst, strained by pandemics, wars and environmental catastrophes; and while other less relevant industries begin to define their roadmaps for transition, crucial ones such as energy and food production remain in the limbo of a system that refuses to change, risking millions of lives in the process.

Mexican professor **Leticia Merino** took up the baton of that reflection, highlighting that the pressure on the very ecosystems that support not only these modes of production, but also the very possibility of life itself, are in near-collapse. We are losing species at unprecedented rates, crossing thresholds of no return in resources essential to our very survival, such as water. And the rates of inequality that mark the extractive rhythms also in food production, Merino recalled, have their correlate in Latin America's subordinate position in the global supply networks: "In the most biodiverse region, with the greatest natural wealth on the planet, the only one today in which more food is produced than it is consumed, the rates of deterioration are the strongest". The institutionalisation of this inequality and the generalised regulatory weakness not only make

"Environmental degradation has become a question of intergenerational justice, as we are reaching thresholds of no return. This means that the youth of today will have to face very difficult situations tomorrow".

Leticia Merino

its populations the most exposed to the impacts of the climate crisis or pollution from extractive activities, but also prevent them from influencing environmental policies.

Argentinean constitutionalist **Eduardo Barcesat**, well versed in food sovereignty issues, then denounced the enormous rift between the normative world and the real one, noting how human rights are legally held by millions of people who have never seen them fulfilled. Recalling that hunger kills the same number of people every two years as those who perished in World War II, he argued that the main stumbling block for this yet shapeless transition is the very international order that underpins the global system of justice, trade, finance and conflict. "The main requirement for food and energy sovereignty is to preserve peace, understanding it not only as the absence of war, but also as the satisfaction of the needs objectified in our daily existence", Professor Barcesat stated. In his view, there is no greater guarantee of peace than democracy, especially in an international community today struggling between increasingly warring military blocs.

For his part, while remaining optimistic about the objectives of the Paris Agreement, **Achraf Bouali**, head of the Istanbul Regional Centre of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), wanted to highlight the slow but steady progress made by the signatories in fulfilling their obligations. Thinking of a Global South that is all too accustomed to being looked down upon, he also wanted to highlight the need for an ecological transition that does not only take into account given factors such as inequality, but also the commitment to aspects such as the generation of green jobs and energy from renewable sources, in which countries such as Brazil and Colombia have broken records, despite the socio-political and economic challenges they face.

"We need to equip new generations with transversal tools of dialogue, capable of rethinking the entire social pact".

Achraf Bouali

A Horizon of Hope

In shaping a practical vision for this transformation, Professor Merino reminded us that food systems around the world are being held hostage by corporations, state elites and even criminal organisations. With 190 million people suffering from food insecurity and 47 million going hungry while the Global North throws daily away tons of food it will not consume, it is obvious that the problem, according to Merino, is not only what is produced, but how it is distributed. In questioning these policies and the elites that support them, it is essential to challenge the deeply rooted and mistaken idea that promoting extractivism is equivalent to promoting development. If we cultivate the collective critical awareness that the issue demands, stopping water pollution or soil deterioration will also mean stopping the deterioration of our societies.

Bouali, for his part, emphasised the importance of equipping new generations with transversal tools for dialogue, making them capable of rethinking the entire social pact, and involving not only civil society, but also the business world and academia, in a bid to build a completely new economic system.

Thinking of peace and formulas for multilateral utopias capable of tackling hunger, poverty and environmental protection, Felipe Llamas advocated leaving behind the primacy of nation-states as spokesmen of the world's peoples. In an increasingly urban world in which more than half of the population already lives in cities and mega-cities, the former Madrid councillor underlined the importance of cultivating spaces for dialogue between international bodies and local institutions, which remain the closest to the interests of citizenry.

Also along the lines of far-reaching international reform, Eduardo Barcesat focused on the financial system suffocating the Global South, forcing dozens of countries to mortgage their resources and the future of their citizens via debt and tech dependency. Thus, the Argentinean jurist not only called for the suspension of foreign debt claims and the development of effective mechanisms to pursue capital flight, but also for the construction of a true international justice system, fully equipped to defend environmental rights and the ownership of natural resources as belonging to peoples, not to states, individuals or companies.



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Indigenous People Memorial, Brasilia

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6th session
Keeping the World under 1.5°:
A View from the Global South

"Latin America and Africa are ecological powers and must lead multilateral efforts against climate change".
Efraín Guadarrama

"Black, Afro-descendant and indigenous populations have been living in the midst of climate the emergency for a long time".
Sylvia Siqueira

Keynote: Efraín Guadarrama The Next Crisis

Efraín Guadarrama, Director-General for American Regional Organisations and Mechanisms of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, recalled the COVID-19 crisis and how during the pandemic the countries with the most resources showed little solidarity with the Global South. Latin America "paid with death" for the nationalistic management of that crisis, and also the protectionist policies of countries such as the United States, which closed borders and halted exports.

"The next crisis", Guadarrama warned, "is climate change. And it's not something 100 years from now, or 80 years from now. It's something that's going to hit us in five years and that we are not doing anything to face".

The young official also warned in *Juntos Pelo Mundo* that climate change is already altering, as of today, every aspect of human life; but that it also promises to unleash greater migratory flows, damages to food systems, water shortages and increased rates of disease, taht just to name just a few of the threats arising from environmental collapse and climate crisis.

Thus, "if we really want humanity to take its course, we need to take climate change not only as a priority, but as a global emergency, as a real urgency", Guadarrama warned. In his opinion, the roles of Latin America and Africa will be crucial in this respect, as both regions are "ecological powerhouses". Consequently, the Mexican representative considered that both continents should lead multilateral efforts against climate change, and that they should not accept a reality in which "our regions, which damage the environment the least, pay the most for the costs of its effects".

In this sense, he reminded us of the proposal promoted by Colombian President Gustavo Petro to recognise that there are countries in Central America, Latin America and Africa that provide important "environmental services to the world". This pioneering notion aims to recognise that these countries cannot continue to be pressured by foreign debt. Initiatives like it are essential to put an end to the nonsense that the world's poorest countries, in the words of Efraín Guadarrama, "are pushed to destroy their ecosystems in order to survive".

The First Three Kilometres of the Planet

Session 6, entitled *Keeping the world below 1.5°: A vision from the Global South*, was hosted and introduced by Brazilian journalist **Sylvia Siqueira** who, to begin with, questioned the term "climate emergency". She explained that, contrary to what is often misunderstood, the consequences of environmental collapse are not a recent phenomenon for the world's most peripheral peoples, but that "our populations, the black, Afro-descendant and indigenous populations, have been living in a climate emergency for a long time".

Brazilian geographer **João Afonso Zavattini**, professor of Climatology at the Paulista State University, explained that what we call climate is phenomena occurring in the "small, three-kilometre-wide stretch above our heads, where life on the planet is concentrated". In other words, despite the vastness of the atmosphere, human beings "are confined to the first three kilometres of this planet", since almost the entire world's population lives below the threshold of 3,000 metres, and it is in this strip of land that the most relevant meteorological phenomena that affect us are unleashed.

"In terms of climate, we have to work with the usual, but above all, with the extremes, because it is the extremes that affect life".

João Afonso Zavattini

The climatologist explained that, in the face of climate change, "we have to work with the usual, but above all with the extremes, because it is the extremes that matter to life". The unusual heat that plagues cities, the freezing waves that devastate plantations and crops, the suffocated dead fish in the Amazon, the rivers, their cycles, the droughts and floods outside the usual season... These are just a few examples of extreme weather events becoming increasingly common. They are much more tangible than the mere idea of a 1.5 oC increase in average global temperatures and that, as the session host pointed out, "make people uneasy, because they are proof that what we call emergency is already here".

Energy and Natural Resources, the Touchstone of International Relations

Portugal's **Bruno Gonçalves**, Secretary General of the International Union of Socialist Youth, went on to say that "there is nothing more important, more geopolitical, more relevant to international relations than energy". He pointed out that when looking at world energy flows since the last decade of the 19th century and comparing them with population growth and economic growth, it becomes obvious that periods of energy recession coincide with periods of economic recession. In other words, since the first industrial revolution, cycles of higher cost of energy, demand grows higher but supply is lower, coinciding with cycles in which the economy contracts, and this demonstrating the central role of global energy relations in world geopolitics.

Energy thus becomes a kind of touchstone for international relations, currently conditioned by the global objectives of decarbonisation which, although widely shared among the world's

countries, remains a very distant scenario even according to the most optimistic calculations. "Fossil fuels are not all going to disappear by 2050. We can reduce oil or coal consumption", explained Gonçalves, "but in all projections, natural gas consumption increases".

For the Portuguese analyst, these projections have direct geopolitical consequences, as Algeria will probably become a crucial partner for the European Union, just as Nigeria will for the Global South. "All countries with natural gas reserves are going to move to dominant positions", he said. He too pointed to another trend transforming international relations, turning countries which had never really been deemed relevant before into unsuspected protagonists: seabed mining.

"In the last six months we have seen more trips by great leaders, whether secretaries of state, foreign ministers or presidents of different republics, to Asia and the Pacific. Judging by the last 50 years, places like Kiribati, Tuvalu or Papua New Guinea were not important until seabed mining opportunities were discovered", he lamented.

Chilean MEP **Éricka Ñanco** illustrated the case of her country, part of the so-called "lithium triangle" together with Argentina and Bolivia, as an example of the neo-extractivism exercised in Latin American and African countries whose subsoil contains minerals necessary for the development of electronic devices and other technologies in high demand. "Our countries only really export lithium carbonate, which is the main raw material extracted from salt flats such as the Atacama, one of the largest ones in the world with high concentrations of lithium", she explained.

Chilean lithium, DRC cobalt, Mozambican graphite... they all share something in common with oil or

"Global North countries prefer not to exploit their own resources and focus on those of other parts of the world, or even those at the bottom of the ocean".

Bruno Gonçalves

natural gas: they are not present in the Global North. Or, as Bruno Gonçalves denounced, "if they indeed are in the Global North, Global North countries prefer not to exploit their own resources and focus on those of other parts of the world".

Climate Justice as Historical Reparation

The exploitation of these kinds of minerals is consolidating the world's prevailing model of economic development, in which, in the words of Congresswoman Nanco, "clearly it is us the third world countries, the countries of the Global South, that give the most to the economy".

"We give away our society itself, our communities, our way of life", denounced the Mapuche leader, reminding us of the seven plastic islands existing in the world today, one of which borders the island of Rapa Nui, whose inhabitants are directly affected by the presence of microplastics in the products they consume from the sea and, therefore, in their own organisms.

In short, as the moderator Sylvia Siqueira argued, it is the very global development model that has pushed Latin American economies to base themselves "strictly on extraction, primary products and on economics that do not truly generate technology or services; an economy that hardly sustains a country, but which above all generates wealth for the North".

Gonçalves then also denounced not only the hypocrisy of the powers that "now turn to the other side of the world", to countries where they have never even deem worthy of attention, for the sake of exploiting their resources; but also the cynicism of those other ones that "as they tell us all that they want to save the planet, they start extracting from the bottom of the sea what they can no longer extract from the land".

"Limits must be placed on large multinationals, on agribusiness, on mining industries. To those who manage the market and global trade of resources".
Éricka Nanco

In Ms. Siqueira's words, all this makes it crucial for us to speak of climate justice as a form of historical reparation, and as one "ethnic-racial justice, socio-economic justice, environmental justice and so many other forms of justice structuring our society". As several other participants like Mr. Salil Shetty noted throughout the event, we must convey that the crisis we face is multidimensional, and that the emergency is also a compound of several, so we must therefore refer to it in the plural.

Revolution Consolidated in Reform: a Society of Abundance Produces Apathy

In his closing remarks, Mr Gonçalves pointed out that the warnings in relation to the environmental crises today are coming from the youth, underlining one aspect in which he believes these youth movements are failing: "Our mistake is that we do not know how to get this revolution to truly consolidate into reform", he said.

As an example, he pointed out how the French Revolution, had it remained an outburst and not resulted in outcomes such as the Universal Charter of Human Rights, "would have served just to fight a regime, to overthrow a king, but its legacy of equality and freedom would not have reached us". While revolutions are transitory and short-lived, reforms are the ones that manage to consolidate change, win rights and endure the passage of time, as tangible outcomes of social advancement and struggle.

In Ms. Nanco's view, one of the most pressing reforms regarding the management of natural resources and commons is that of the establishment of rules for large multinationals, agribusiness and mining companies. "Limits must be placed on those who manage the market and global trade of these resources", he said.

Sylvia Siqueira concluded the panel by assuring that "black women and indigenous women are the driving force behind the energy and green transition that is so talked about"; with Gonçalves calling to combat apathy. Apathy, according to him, is the result of "a society of comfort and abundance", and is becoming our worst enemy in tackling the multi-level challenge of the environmental crises and climate change.



Juscelino Kubitschek Memorial, Brasília
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7th session

Reclaiming the Global Development Agenda

"The Global South has become indispensable when it comes to defining a new democratic and just multilateral architecture".
Naledi Pandor

Keynote: Naledi Pandor Common Global Challenges Require Common Global Efforts

In her keynote introducing the seventh session, South African Foreign Minister **Naledi Pandor** made a plea to reform the multilateral system, both politically and financially. As she illustrated, "the contrasting ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic crisis was managed are just another example of how our economic model feeds upon asymmetries: while the global North had the autonomy to mobilise capital to save its economy, with mobilisations of around 20-25% of its GDPs, many of the world's poorest nations did not even reach 1% to mitigate financial stress. Developing countries are now drowning in even further debt, with no fiscal space or access to financial resources to invest in recovery.

Highlighting South Africa's long history of calling for the reform of global financial institutions (the IMF, WB, ILO, etc.) and also the BRICS' (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) New Development Bank as an example of better ways forward, Minister Pandor went a step further, advocating the need to restructure global debt and completely overhaul the rules of international trade. In this framework, she specifically advocated for the creation of lending systems with counter-cyclical capacity in times of crisis and special trade regimes for intellectual property, facilitating the universalisation of basic knowledge in order to re-balance development rifts and to contribute to a truly global scientific development.

Also highlighting South Africa's experience of non-alignment in times of military blocs, Ms Pandor stressed that the Global South has become indispensable in defining a new democratic and just multilateral architecture. In her view, its countries should seize the diplomatic opportunities of an increasingly multipolar world, seeking a truly

equipped and representative UN, and balanced multilateral security arrangements that do not drag the world back into a catastrophic full-scale confrontation.

From the Edge of the Abyss

Session 7, entitled *Reclaiming the global development agenda*, was hosted and introduced by Spanish architect **Eduardo Leira**, who brought to the table the inadequacies and biases of the very concept of "development". "Once focused only on indicators of economic growth, the concept of development is structured by numerous neo-colonialist biases that have not yet been corrected", he stated.

Along these lines, the Brazilian economist **Eduardo Moreira** shed light over development myths, establishing "the so-called 'developed countries' are not so because they have a population that works more than that of other countries, nor because they have an intellectually more privileged population than those we call 'underdeveloped' or 'developing'... Developed countries are so because of the accumulated resources they took from the rest". In itself, the very concept of development is cynical, since the prosperity of the highest income countries on the planet has been built by the cost of unequal labour, the overexertion of the populations of the Global South and the exploitation of their resources.

This systemic hypocrisy is very clearly observed in the so-called Official Development Assistance (ODA), as the Indian economist Raj Patel put forth: the main OECD countries provide some 152 billion dollars per year to the ODA, while the external debt of the Global South amounts to 7.8 trillion dollars. The only imaginable re-balance then, as Professor Patel pointed out, is "is a world in which the global South goes on a debt strike. And that \$7.8 trillion is repurposed to invest in basic services for their societies."

"The concept of development is structured by numerous neo-colonialist biases that have not yet been corrected".

Eduardo Leira

"Developed countries, which are the most responsible for the destruction of the planet, have no moral legitimacy to demand that developing countries undertake an energy transition".

Eduardo Moreira

One of the keys to the persistence of global inequality lies precisely in the fact that the same Northern countries that have forcefully kidnapped and plundered the South's natural resources continue to charge them more in terms of interest than what they send back under foreign aid pretenses, supposedly designed to alleviate global inequality.

The height of this cynicism, in Moreira's words, is that today "we see developed countries, which are the ones most responsible for our planet reaching the edge of the abyss, demanding that developing countries also make an energy transition, that they control their greenhouse gas emissions or adopt electric cars". In other words, demanding that the most disadvantaged countries limit their development in the interest of preserving the environment, once they have reached "the pinnacle of development" precisely at the cost of driving the whole of humanity "to the brink of chaos".

It is intolerable that the most privileged countries in the world allow themselves to pontificate about environmentalism while on the very edge of the abyss, now that there is practically no time left to reverse the damage their industries and environmental depredation have generated. Recognising these disparities and demanding common but differentiated responsibilities for the climate crisis and all its consequences must be the starting point for a counter-hegemonic development agenda that takes into account that the development of the Global North has been possible only at the cost of the plundering of the South and the destruction of the planet.

Against the Heart of Capitalism: the Roots of Radical Care

In order to promote a truly counter-hegemonic agenda, "that argues against the heart of

capitalism", Ecuadorian Vice-Prefect Paolina Vercoutere suggests it is necessary to move the discussion "from capitalist accumulation and into radical care".

She denounced that capitalism is sustained by the unpaid work of women, while "women who have the class and racial privileges to outsource the work of other impoverished and/or racialised women". This is why care strikes hit at the very heart of capitalism: care is reproductive work rather than productive work, as it does not generate income, but at the same time is indispensable to sustaining life (and thus economic structures).

"Care can be radically political", argued Professor Patel, arguing that in order to create counter-hegemonic dynamics, it is essential to grant much more importance to care work, often invisible or undervalued. "These little points of community transformation need to articulate with political parties and comrades", he defended, recalling another of the key lessons of the feminist struggle, which is precisely that camaraderie is crucial for social conquest.

This fellowship or solidarity in itself should not be difficult to sow since, as Ms. Vercoutere pointed out, "one of the largest proletariats of humanity is precisely women, who have historically embodied all the care work of humanity, for thousands of years and across all borders". Thus, care appears to be the key to the conceptual discussion on the organisation of work "on a trans-historical global scale", as the Ecuadorian politician put it, because it has to do with the value given to an unpaid, unrecognised labour which, paradoxically, allows societies to function. In short, care is a profoundly economic issue, although it continues to be marginalised from the standpoint of both critical analysis and public policy. Putting care at the centre of the

"Hegemony is an economic project, but also an ideological, philosophical, legal and religious one".
Raj Patel

paradigm and recognising its radical nature is the only way to transform the current system.

Deconstructing universality

Professor Raj Patel then went on to analyse hegemony itself, "which involves not just coercion, but consent". Hegemony is made possible not only by means of a ruling class that benefits directly from its position of privilege, but also "by a working class that can be persuaded that its economic interests will be satisfied at some point" by the same system, he explained.

Thus, the capitalist system feeds on the aspirations of a middle class in need of recognition, one that believes itself to be on the advantageous side of an economic model that is not actually improving their living conditions. From this point of view, "hegemony is an economic project, but also an ideological, philosophical, legal and religious one", the academic pointed out.

As previously stated by professor Leticia Merino in session 5, another of capitalism's great fallacies is that which associates development with progress. Thus, while Mr. Patel called for "getting rid of this idea", the session's host, Eduardo Leira, also recalled that "the very theory of development has always been approached from a Western perspective", and that this carries with it implicit Eurocentric and ethnocentric biases that should always be acknowledged.

"Since the time of the Ancient Greeks, we have been taught that the universalisation of (Western) thought is what must reign over in an "ordered world" Ms. Vercoutere pointed out, "but we the indigenous peoples have come to propose the need to deconstruct the universality of this paradigm and to think differently, from the standpoint of different logics, different languages, different

ways of understanding things as important as health or security".

The Vice-Prefect proposed as examples recent policy advancements achieved in Ecuador as since the constitution of the plurinational state, such as the legal recognition of midwives and of their ancestral knowledge, as opposed to the imposition of "western" obstetrics. This case illustrates the very tangible possibility for adopting the many advances of "hegemonic" sciences like gynaecology, without necessarily disregarding the ancient practices and knowledge like those of indigenous midwives. This approach takes into account that "part of the heritage of Western thought is the great importance we grant to abstract notions", as Vercoutere stressed; contrasting this Cartesian vision with indigenous paradigms or cosmovisions which, as in the case of the Kichwa people, often conceive problems in a more pragmatic way. They therefore offer other types of solutions, deconstructing the singularity of a model that has been imposed throughout history.

An Unprecedented Waiver

Concluding the session with the idea that new realities "demand new theories of development, new analyses of the possibilities and paths to transcend the persistent facts of inequality and social misery", Eduardo Leira encouraged the participants to propose ways of transformation and tools with which to face present challenges.

By way of example, the architect suggested that "developing countries often tend to spend enormous amounts of their precious and often insufficient social wealth on weapons", bringing forth the question of whether it would be possible for a new development agenda to include an international initiative to limit military spending.

"Women have embodied all the care of humanity, on a trans-historical global scale, for thousands of years and across all borders".

Paolina Vercoutere

Professor Patel responded that "one can imagine a kind of politics that takes national wealth and redistributes it in a transformative project that extracts reparations from the global North". That is, even if we start from a pessimistic approach recognising that it is difficult to improve the world in the current, given scenario of global inequality, we can aspire to "give meaning to our lives through a project that reconnects us to nature, to the world around us and to our community", he said. That would be the way to reverse capitalism, to "turn around the humiliation" intrinsic to the system and move towards an international society based on equality, where social welfare is available to all and not just the few.

For his part, the founder of the Instituto Conhecimento Liberta (ICL), Eduardo Moreira, argued that there is a possible path of transformation that has not yet been tested, "something that has never been done in all the previous centuries", a possibility not yet explored. Contrary to the notion that all that could be done has already been tried, Moreira suggested "that those who today dominate resources and power give up something". As simple as that, for the powerful to make an unprecedented renunciation and give up some of their political power or resources would be the only way to rebalance the world. "There will be no other possible world if the developed countries, the big corporations and the richest people on the planet do not give up some of what they have", she said.

Ms. Vercoutere agreed that it is essential to deconcentrate power, in order to move towards a fairer world, and recalled the words of a woman of the Cañari people, one of the indigenous peoples of Ecuador, who once used a metaphor to express the need to prevent power from perpetuating itself in the same hands. "Power, like blood, must circulate".



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8th session

Aiming for Peace Amid Global Tensions

"Palestine is today the only nation in the world that is still subjected to the colonial occupation project of an ethno-state that is also a nuclear power".

Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro

"The division between East and West is one of the great falsehoods of human history".

Arlene Clemesha

"The current competition between superpowers is based more on their desire to extract natural resources than to establish spheres of influence"

Sishuwa Sishuwa

Keynote: Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro Palestine: the Last Moral Battle against Colonialism

Brazilian academic **Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro**, former UN Special Rapporteur for Burundi and Myanmar, dedicated his intervention at *Juntos Pelo Mundo* to the Palestinian issue. "The struggle for Palestinian rights is, morally speaking, the last struggle against colonialism", he stated. Former IACHR Commissioner and Rapporteur on the Rights of the Child, Mr Pinheiro denounced that "Palestine is today the only nation in the world that continues to be subjected to the colonial occupation project of an ethno-state, that is also a nuclear power", and that has institutionalised segregation and repression against the Palestinian people in the face of the apparent indifference of the international community.

Professor Pinheiro, who had chaired the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria since 2011, also mentioned that the conflict ravaging the country was a "super-internationalised war, with five foreign armies involved", but that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is "a spiral that has persisted for 75 years" and that denies the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to exist and to sovereignty in their own land.

The UN Special Adviser endorsed the words of Israeli historian Ilan Pappé, who describes the State of Israel as a "racist ethnocracy" that "bases its actions on military terror and daily atrocities inflicted on the Palestinians". Atrocities ranging from the demolition of their homes, the application of a military jurisdiction that legitimises the annexation of territory, arbitrary arrests, even of children... to outright ethnic cleansing.

"The international community has tolerated or pretended to ignore the forced removal of more than 800,000 Palestinians since the founding of

the State of Israel", Pinheiro denounced, and called on global civil society, intellectuals and academics, international organisations and activists, and all democratic states to condemn once and for all Israel's apartheid over Palestine. "It is time to break the silence, we cannot tolerate one more day that Israel, a member state of the UN, violates all founding norms of international law", he said.

He concluded his speech with a quote from Nobel Prize winner José Saramago, precisely about this complicit silence that has allowed Israel to continue to impose a dehumanising regime against the Palestinians to date: "One day a history of the suffering of the Palestinian people will be compiled, and it will be a monument to the indignity and cowardice of human beings".

The Fictional East-West Divide

Session 8, entitled *Aiming for Peace Amidst Global Tensions*, was moderated by Brazilian historian **Arlene Clemesha**. A professor of Arab History at the University of São Paulo, Clemesha called for a deconstruction of the language and binary models of thought that have historically pitted what we call the East against what we call the West. "This is a fictional division, an unreal divide that does not allow for connection and that does not help us envision a world for all", she regretted, describing this theoretical dilemma as one of the "great falsehoods" in human history.

Zambian writer and historian **Sishuwa Sishuwa** agreed that, in order to guarantee peace at a global scale, it is crucial to put a stop to this supposed rift between East and West, lamenting that there are currently no international actors serving as a counterweight to this dynamic, as the so-called non-aligned movement did back in the 1970s and 1980s.

"Peace is a state of mind and culture and therefore it requires a lot of training, a lot of socialisation".

Emad Shahin

In his view, the group of the so-called BRICS does not seem to constitute an alternative, as it suffers from a calling that seems mostly economy-based. And the Group of 77, as Mr. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro added, limits itself only to a nation-state perspective. Yet professor Pinheiro also referred to the fact that the G77, just as the movement of non-aligned countries, "were state movements", and argued that it would be extremely valuable to promote similar initiatives today, but from the perspective of grassroots movements: going beyond the state-centric framework and articulating global citizens' movements that help strengthen international cooperation, solidarity and dialogue.

Approaching Self-Destruction: a Clash of Superpowers

Professor **Emad Shahin**, Dean of the College of Islamic Studies (CIS) at Hamad bin Khalifa University, began his address by regretting how "states usually care more for war than peace and so prepare more for the former than for the latter". This is not only obvious in the statistics of global military spending, which far exceed the budget needed to end poverty in the world, but also confirms the idea that the nation-state pattern has historically birthed inter-state competition, and thus is an inherent catalyst of violence, which in many cases is escalating globally.

Professor Sishuwa went a step further and argued that it is not only the state as a form of political organisation that is based on violence, but also the capitalist system: "Capitalism, by nature, is underpinned by exploitation and plunder", he said, explaining that the current competition between superpowers is not so much driven by a desire to expand "spheres of influence", as it used to in the past, as by their "desire to extract more and more natural resources, especially minerals".

"A movement like that of the non-aligned countries, driven by civil society and not by nation-states, would be a crucial counterweight to today's global imbalances".

Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro

Thus, looking at the tensions that characterise the world today, it would seem that humanity refuses to learn from its past mistakes: the global North continues to plunder Africa and Latin America, as they did in Imperial times, and we are once again "under an invisible shadow of war, similar to what we witnessed during the Cold War period", in Mr Sishuwa's opinion. The threat of nuclear war and global instability resulting from the ecological crisis mean that we are moving towards our own destruction at an accelerated speed.

Peace as a State of Mind and Culture

Professor Shahin stressed the importance of understanding all elements, structural and non-structural, to which peace is linked. "I am referring to economic values, but also to notions of justice, geography, history, to expectations", he noted, defining peace as a "mental and cultural state".

Understanding peace from this point of view, as something that is not static but dynamic, makes it easier to consider the importance of education in achieving a global coexistence free of conflict. "Peace needs a lot of socialisation training in order to create, to develop a state of mind programmed to accept it and to live in it", Shahin explained.

A UN for the Times

According to Mr. Pinheiro, in addition to peace, education, and building bridges of understanding between the different civilisations of the world, it is essential to reform the political bodies of the UN to achieve global stability.

Professor Sishuwa Sishuwa agreed with him, reflecting on how in recent decades "we have seen that this structural organisation of the UN does not align with the times", and urging, as several other

participants in *Juntos pelo Mundo* had already done before him, to update the UN model: recasting the United Nations to reflect the pluralism and diversity of today's international community to make it truly an instrument that brings us closer to a more just and equitable society.

And of course, such a reform of the UN should ensure that the international institution par excellence really serves the purpose for which it was conceived: that is, to prevent the escalation of violence and armed conflict between countries.

From a realistic standpoint, though, "abolishing war is a noble, yet long-term objective", acknowledged Mr. Shahin, so the first step on this long road to peace has to be working "on a new compelling narrative". One that advocates an approach to human security and social justice that prevents aggression between nations and never loses sight of the dignity of communities and individuals.

"The anthropocentric vision has removed human beings from their place in the world, leading them to be swept away by extractive and visionless paradigms, even when against their own survival".

Adrienne Clarkson

Closing Speech: Adrienne Clarkson

Native Knowledge for Tomorrow: the Power of Femininity and Rootedness

In her closing remarks, former Governor General of Canada and renowned journalist **Adrienne Clarkson** reflected with her own personal story as a backdrop: starting from her experience of exile as a refugee child, and through issues such as the search for a destiny and an identity or the complex history of the country she would get to call to her true home (Canada), Clarkson spoke of the experiences that led her to fight for the integration of migrants. And it was by highlighting her status as an honorary tribal chief of the Kainai Blood Nation of North America and the rich experiences of intercultural coexistence in Canada that she highlighted how much native cosmogonies can contribute to social shifts.

From her own account, Clarkson highlighted belonging and rootedness as key factors in human development, factors that any institution worth its name must take into account. For ancestral wisdom, an inseparable element of this rootedness is the connection not only to human or cultural communities, but to physical territories and their natural cycles. According to her, the anthropocentric vision has removed human beings from their place in the world, leading them to be swept away by extractive and visionless paradigms, even when against their own survival.

In line with the views expressed by other participants like Manuela Carmena or Petra Stienen, instead of celebrating the rise of politicians like Margaret Thatcher as feminist milestones, Clarkson argued for the need to revalue the idea of femininity linked to integrative forms of knowledge. Femininity, she said, is intrinsically opposed to neoliberalism, especially in its extractive facet. It is a force connected with life and with the capacity for creation in the broader sense, not only with manifestations like care or motherhood.

Clarkson reminded us that we will not be able to undertake the urgent transformation of today's world from a traditional and anthropocentric viewpoint, one associated with hegemonic masculine values. Inventing new institutions will be a futile effort as long as it is done from within the confines of this paradigm. "We hold on to our dreams of Athenian democracy as if to the particularly well balanced pieces of a shipwreck. And as we hang onto those pieces, we have to see what are the ones that can really float and work for us".

The Canadian journalist and writer argued, in short, that we must re-evaluate which notions of the past work for us as a species; but also universalise the values of that native, creative and integrating femininity; extending it to men and women alike, rising them the level of global thought, as something inherently human. And in that process, we must give up holding on to all that has pulled us so far away from who we are.

Conclusions

No Fear of Utopia

The CAF2023 forum concluded after two intense days of dialogue and encounters in Brasília, a more than symbolic backdrop for these reflections. This city was born with the calling of building bridges with the future, perhaps as the expression of developmentalism, a fever-dream of Modernity with its own lights and shades, but nonetheless as a bid for transformation and change.

The participants in the event coincided in this effort to seek strategies in building bridges with and for the future, precisely at a time when the promise of development is as much in question as hope itself. With their reflections, they invited all of us to continue to rise against injustice and to recover the spirit of Enlightenment, to restore the meaning of equality, freedom, truth and justice.

All the visions gathered at CAF23, despite their diversity, agreed on the need to fight for a world governed by knowledge and conscience, rejecting the option of surrendering to the denialism and obscurantism that haunt us. In order to do so, paradoxical as it may be, we must find a new humanism that is not anthropocentric, but biocentric, that strives to understand the past in order to reach tomorrow. A new paradigm that, embracing cosmogonies like those of the indigenous peoples of the world, allows us to create without destroying, to re-integrate ourselves into the natural cycles around us and to understand that harnessing resources should not be done through exploitation but through radical care and plenitude.

In this process, it will be crucial not only to understand the mechanisms of the reactionary forces that today undermine our institutions, but also the ideological devices that have turned the democratic dream devoid of meaning. We must understand which parts of this dream we continue to cling to can really be salvaged, and which of those are holding us back in our quest. The question of democratic legitimacy may be just one in an extremely complex system of interconnected crises, but to the extent that it represents the best possible bridge between governance and societies, its resolution will be indispensable for all of the others.

Given the myriad of challenges facing humanity today, real democracy as a condition for the struggle will also need a global correlate. We must undertake the re-founding of the international order without fears of utopia.

- With **multilateral political institutions** free of vetoes that reliably reflect the social majorities of the Global South, capable of promoting true peace and renouncing bloc-based militarism.
- With social and **citizens' movements** that do not compartmentalise their struggles but join forces against all kinds of discrimination, based on a holistic understanding of inequality, poverty and historical asymmetries and oppression.
- With a **digital transformation** that brings new technologies closer to the older generations, making accessible knowledge that is indispensable not only to manage in digital environments but also to critically assess information, sources, and media.
- With a restructuring of global debt that does not neglect historical injustices, including **international financial bodies** capable of overturning the inequality and imbalances implicit in the current development model, providing for special regimes of access to knowledge, funds and technologies for an ecological transition for the nations most vulnerable to climate disaster.
- With true and **effective international justice**, capable of protecting the environmental rights of humanity and the sovereignty of natural resources as belonging to the people, not to states, individuals or corporations.

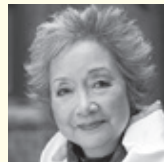
Participants

Once again this year, CAF would like to thank all the people who enriched our forum with their presence, ideas and hopes.



Achraf Bouali
5th SESSION

Achraf Bouali is a former career diplomat with two decades of service to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and a former Member of the Dutch Parliament. He was appointed by the Secretary-General of the OECD in May 2022 as the Head of the OECD Istanbul Centre, the first regional hub of the organisation.



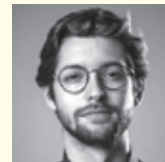
Adrienne Clarkson
CLOSING KEYNOTE

Adrienne Clarkson is a Hong Kong-born Canadian journalist who served as the 26th Governor General of Canada (1999-2005). Praised for her efforts in modernising the institution and with a long career in the media, she is co-founder and co-chair of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, an organisation dedicated to encouraging active immigrant inclusion and participatory citizenship.



Arlene Clemesha
8th SESSION

Arlene Clemesha is a renowned Brazilian historian and media commentator. She is Professor of Arab History at the University of São Paulo and a member of the Executive Board of the Common Action Forum. Arlene has authored several books about the modern history of Palestine and was a member of the Steering Committee of the UN International Coordinating Network on Palestine (ICNP-UN).



Bruno Gonçalves
6th SESSION

Bruno Gonçalves is a Portuguese analyst, currently Secretary General of the International Union of Socialist Youth. He holds a Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering from the Universidade do Minho (Guimarães, Portugal) and is a member of the General Council of that University.



Edil Baisalov
3rd SESSION

Edil Baisalov is a Kyrgyz politician, currently Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic. A former Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to the United Kingdom, he also served as the country's Deputy Minister of Social Development. A prominent human rights activist, between 2008 and 2010 he lived in Sweden as a UNHCR refugee.



Eduardo Barcesat
5th SESSION

Eduardo Barcesat is an Argentinian constitutionalist jurist, UNESCO counsellor, and law Professor at the University of Buenos Aires. He was a member of the Argentinean Constitutional Convention of 1994. As a renowned human rights advocate, Eduardo is deeply involved in promoting jurisdictional approaches to food sovereignty and economic equality.



Eduardo Leira
7th SESSION

Eduardo Leira is a renowned Spanish architect. With a vested interest in the intersection of urbanism and social development. He directed the General Plan for the city of Madrid and led a team selected to design the city of Beijing, among many other works that have been recognised both nationally and internationally with numerous awards.



Eduardo Moreira
7th SESSION

Eduardo Moreira is a renowned Brazilian entrepreneur and lecturer. A multifaceted professional, he is a civil engineer and economist by training, chosen by *Investidor Institucional* magazine as one of the three best economists in Brazil. Eduardo has authored over ten books, including two bestsellers, and is the founder of the Instituto Conhecimento Liberta (ICL).



Efraín Guadarrama
6th SESSION

Efraín Guadarrama is Director General for American Regional Bodies and Mechanisms at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Mexico) and National Coordinator for CELAC. Master in Law and Economics from the Universities of Hamburg and Rotterdam, Efraín also served as Director General of Anti-Corruption Projects at the Mexican Ministry of Public Function.



Emad Shahin
8th SESSION

Emad Shahin is Dean of the College of Islamic Studies (CIS) of the Hamad bin Khalifa University, Qatar Foundation and a Senior Fellow at Georgetown University. Emad's research focuses on general democracy, the relations between Islam and politics, and the political reform of Muslim societies. He formerly served as Editor-in-Chief of *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Politics*.



Ericka Ñanco
6th SESSION

Éricka 'Coca' Ñanco is a Chilean agronomist, activist and politician, member of the Revolución Democrática party. Since 2021, she has been a member of the Chilean National Congress for the Araucanía region, where she is the regional president of her party. As an activist, she is part of various feminist, student, environmental and indigenous collectives.



Fabio Senne
4th SESSION

Fabio Senne is a Project Coordinator at the Regional Center for Studies on the Development of the Information Society (Cetic.br). An expert in digital inequalities, digital inclusion policies and knowledge society development, Senne holds a master's degree in Communication from the University of Brasília and a PhD in Political Science at the University of São Paulo.



Felipe Llamas
5th SESSION

Felipe Llamas is a Spanish academic and politician Professor at the Social and Juridical Sciences Faculty of Carlos III University (Madrid). He served as Councilman of the city of Madrid and Chief of Staff to the Mayor. Felipe is an expert in land policy and urbanism, but also in participatory governance and international collaboration among local governments.



Gaspard Estrada
3rd SESSION

Gaspard Estrada is the Executive Director of the Political Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean at Sciences Po, France. An Op-Ed contributor for several newspapers, Gaspard has also been a lecturer at several European Teaching Institutions and his research focuses on political communication and electoral campaigns. He chairs CAF's cluster of Geopolitics and Demoscopy.



Heloísa Villela
1st SESSION

Heloísa Villela is a Brazilian journalist, currently a commentator on international politics on the independent news program ICL Notícias. She was a correspondent for Rede Globo in New York for 17 years, covering historical events like the attacks on the Twin Towers and Hurricane Katrina, among others. She has also worked for Rede Record and CNN Brazil.



Inna Afinogenova
3rd SESSION

Inna Afinogenova is a Russian journalist. A graduate of M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, Inna is a regular contributor to several digital newspapers and emerging media and the International Relations Secretary of the Madrid Union of Journalists.



Jamila Venturini
4th SESSION

Jamila Venturini is a Brazilian researcher and co-director of *Derechos Digitales*, a Latin American-based non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting and advocating human rights in digital environments. Author of several books, Jamila is an accomplished journalist and a member of the Latin American Network of Surveillance, Technology and Society Studies (Lavits).



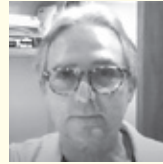
Jean Wyllys
3rd SESSION

Jean Wyllys is a Brazilian journalist, activist and politician. He was a federal MP at Brazil's *Câmara dos Deputados* who resigned and went into exile for years, after having been elected for a third, due to death threats from the far-right. A PhD candidate at the University of Barcelona, his research focuses on Political Science and disinformation.



Jessé Souza
2nd SESSION

Jessé Souza is a Brazilian professor, lawyer, writer and sociologist who formerly served as President of Brazil's Institute of Applied Economic Research (Ipea). He is renowned for his work in social theory, Brazilian social thought and inequalities, particularly around the dynamics between socio-economic tiers and the evolution of classes in contemporary Brazilian society.



João Afonso Zavattini
6th SESSION

João Afonso Zavattini holds a Master's and PhD in Physical Geography from the University of São Paulo (USP). He is a professor of Climatology at the Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP) and a post-doctoral fellow at the Università degli Studi di Torino (Italy). He is also the author of several articles and books, including "Climate Studies in Brazil".



John Ralston Saul
EVENING SESSION

John Ralston Saul is an award-winning Canadian philosopher, novelist, essayist, and author. A staunch advocate of the freedom of expression, he is Co-chair of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship and President Emeritus of PEN International. Saul is most widely known for his writings on the nature of individualism, citizenship and the public good, and the failures of manager-led societies.



José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero
OPENING KEYNOTE

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero served two consecutive terms as Prime Minister of Spain (2005-2011) and was the Spanish Labour Party (PSOE) leader for over 12 years. The milestones of his tenure include the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq and the dismantling of the terrorist organisation ETA. He has dedicated much of his post-premiership activities to promoting international peace.



Leticia Merino
5th SESSION

Leticia Merino is an anthropologist and professor at the Institute for Social Research at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). A pioneer in her field, her expertise is that of the integral and sustainable use of natural resources and the internal handling dynamics of traditional communities: as well as the opportunities and limitations they both hold for public policy.



Manuela Carmena
1st SESSION

Manuela Carmena is a Spanish lawyer and magistrate who served as Mayor of Madrid (2015-2019). She served as a judge for over 30 years, as well as a spokesperson for Spain's General Council of the Judiciary from 1996 to 2001 and Chair-Rapporteur of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. She has authored several books reflecting on the modernising of law and preserving democracy.



Maria Fernanda Ramos Coelho

1ra SESIÓN

Maria Fernanda Ramos Coelho is the current Chief Minister of the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic of Brazil (SGPR) and one of the national Vice-Presidents of the ruling *Partido dos Trabalhadores*. Maria Fernanda was a federal MP at the Brazilian *Câmara dos Deputados* from 2011 to 2014, when he chaired the Climate Change Commission.



Murilo Komniski

INSTITUTIONAL WELCOME

Murilo Komniski is a Brazilian career diplomat and International Relations professor, currently serving as Special Advisor to the Secretariat of Institutional Relations of the Presidency of the Republic of Brazil. With a Bachelor's degree in International Relations from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo and a Master's degree in Diplomacy from the Rio Branco Institute, Murilo has also served as Special Advisor to Permanent Delegation of Brazil to UNESCO.



Naledi Pandor

7th SESSION

Naledi Pandor is a politician, educator and academic, currently serving as South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Cooperation. Naledi has extensive political experience having served as Speaker of the Upper House of the South African Parliament and as Minister of Home Affairs, Minister of Education and Minister of Science and Technology.



Paolina Vercoutere

7th SESSION

Paolina Vercoutere is a French-Ecuadorian politician from the Kichwa Otavalo people and a member of the *Revolución Ciudadana* party. She served as Governor of Imbabura, where she now serves as Vice Prefect. An engineer in Cultural and Social Development from the University of Otavalo, Paolina also served as Vice president of the *Kiwcha Cabildo*.



Patricio Cabello

4th SESSION

Patricio Cabello is a researcher at the Center for Advanced Research in Education at the University of Chile. With a PhD in Social Psychology, Patricio focuses his research on the social development of digital skills and their connection with education, inclusion, community participation and citizenship. Patricio is coordinator of CAF's cluster of Digital Citizenship and has also been a consultant for UNESCO and UNICEF.



Paulo Abrão

2nd SESSION

Paulo Abrão is a Brazilian lawyer and former Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. PhD in Law, he was also Executive Secretary of the Mercosur Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights, as well as National Secretary of Justice. He currently directs the Washington Brazil Office (WBO).



Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro

8th SESSION

Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro is a Brazilian academic and former Minister of the Secretariat of State for Human Rights. A political scientist and professor at USP, Paulo Sérgio has chaired the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria since 2011. He is a former UN Special Rapporteur on Burundi and Myanmar, former Commissioner and former Rapporteur on the Rights of the Child of the IACHR.



Pedro Brieger

3rd SESSION

Pedro Brieger is an Argentinian academic and award-winning journalist. Focusing much of his work on International Politics, Pedro is a professor at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), teaching Sociology of the Middle East. He is the Director of NODAL, a news site analysing the political intricacies of Latin American and Caribbean countries.



Pedro Manuel Moreno
5th SESSION

Pedro Manuel Moreno is Deputy Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). A former researcher at UNESCO and the Complutense University of Madrid, Pedro formerly served as Chief of Staff of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) and Special Adviser to the Associate Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP).



Petra Stienen
2nd SESSION

Petra Stienen is a former Dutch senator. She was head of the Netherlands delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. For 17 years, Petra was a diplomat in charge of bilateral relations with the Middle East, Europe and the USA. Her work on issues such as inclusion and diversity has been recognised with several awards, she is the author of numerous books.



Rafael Heiber
INSTITUTIONAL CLOSING

Rafael Heiber is the Co-Founder and Deputy-Chairman of the Common Action Forum. Geographer and Climatologist with a MSc in Territorial Planning and a PhD in Sociology, his expertise includes the political links between technology, space and citizenship. He participates in academic activities and publishes in the international media.



Raj Patel
7th SESSION

Raj Patel is an English academic, economist, and award-winning author. With a PhD in Philosophy from Cornell University, he wrote *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System*, and several more books on food systems and economics. Raj is a Research Professor in the Lyndon B Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, Austin.



Salil Shetty
1st SESSION

Salil Shetty is an Indian human rights activist who currently serves as Vice President of Global Programs of the Open Society Foundations (OSF). He previously was the Secretary General of Amnesty International (2010-2018), overseeing its leap forward from a predominantly European organisation to a global movement for human rights. He previously also directed the UN Millenium Campaign.



Sishuwa Sishuwa
8th SESSION

Sishuwa Sishuwa is a Zambian writer, historian, and Senior Lecturer at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. Among other focuses, his research addresses the early post-colonial and even late-colonial roots of contemporary democratic politics in Africa. Sishuwa regularly provides political counsel and is a well-known political commentator in several media.



Sylvia Siqueira
6th SESSION

Sylvia Siqueira, journalist, anti-racist ecofeminist, was born in Recife and grew up in the struggle for rights, justice and democracy in the cities of Pernambuco, Brazil and the world. She has been on the board of organizations such as Mirim Brasil, Abong, IFM-SEI, FLAJ and Nossa América Verde. She has acted with Malala Yousafzai for girls' right to education. Sylvia is currently the Program Officer for Democratic Governance for Latin America and the Caribbean at Open Society Foundations.



Tesh Sidi
4th SESSION

Tesh Sidi is a Sahrawi computer engineer and Big Data Lead. Recently elected as a Spanish MP, she was born in the refugee camps in Tindouf (Algeria). Tesh is a renowned expert in Global technologies and has worked in large consulting firms and tech startups. She's a dedicated feminist activist, advocating also for migrant and refugee rights.



Verónica Mendoza
2nd SESSION

Verónica Mendoza is a Peruvian-French anthropologist and politician. With a Master's Degree in Social Sciences from Paris 3-Sorbonne Nouvelle University, she was president of the political movement New Peru from 2017 to 2021. She served as a congresswoman of the Republic of Peru for Cusco, and was twice a candidate for the presidency of the country.



Wadah Khanfar
INSTITUTIONAL WELCOME

Wadah Khanfar is the Co-Founder and Chairman of the Common Action Forum. Former Director-General of the Al Jazeera Network, he was named one of the "Young Global Leaders" in the 2008's World Economic Forum and was first in *Foreign Policy's* Top 100 Global Thinkers of 2011.



Photo gallery





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