

friends of the earth international

annual report 2016

mobilise. resist. transform



Friends of
the Earth
International

Friends of the Earth International is the world's largest grassroots environmental network with 75 member groups and over two million members and supporters around the world.

our vision

Our vision is of a peaceful and sustainable world based on societies living in harmony with nature. We envision a society of interdependent people living in dignity, wholeness and fulfilment in which equity and human and peoples' rights are realised. This will be a society built upon peoples' sovereignty and participation. It will be founded on social, economic, gender and environmental justice and be free from all forms of domination and exploitation, such as neoliberalism, corporate globalisation, neo-colonialism and militarism. We believe that our children's future will be better because of what we do.

our mission

- To collectively ensure environmental and social justice, human dignity, and respect for human rights and peoples' rights so as to secure sustainable societies.
- To halt and reverse environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources, nurture the earth's ecological and cultural diversity, and secure sustainable livelihoods.
- To secure the empowerment of indigenous peoples, local communities, women, groups and individuals, and to ensure public participation in decision-making.
- To bring about transformation towards sustainability and equity between and within societies with creative approaches and solutions.
- To engage in vibrant campaigns, raise awareness, mobilise people and build alliances with diverse movements, linking grassroots, national and global struggles.
- To inspire one another and to harness, strengthen and complement each other's capacities, living the change we wish to see and working together in solidarity.

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Friends of
the Earth
International



letter from

Karin Nansen

Dear Friends,

2016 will be remembered as a year of tumultuous political change. The presidential victory of Macri in Argentina and the *coup d'état* in Brazil were examples of elites destabilising democracy to regain power. At the same time the economic insecurity, rising inequality and social alienation created by neoliberalism are being used to fuel nationalism and racism, resulting in the election of Donald Trump as US President, the rise in extreme rightwing discourse and political parties in many European countries, and the UK referendum vote to exit the EU.

But—for the very same reasons—this was a year that heralded new opportunities for Friends of the Earth International and our allies to reach out with fresh and progressive alternatives, as the old orders are being questioned by many. Our system change focus means we have real and transformative alternatives to offer.

This in turn meant that our highest priority during the year was building an ever stronger environmental movement, with the capacity to push for progressive systemic changes that put people, the planet and justice first. In particular we enhanced our member groups' capacity to advocate nationally, regionally and internationally around key moments, such as United Nations negotiations in Geneva for a treaty to hold transnational corporations accountable for human rights abuses, the UN climate change summit in

Morocco, the Convention on Biological Diversity's COP 13 summit in Mexico, and key meetings of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Committee on World Food Security.

Our efforts, undertaken together with strategic allies, reaped rewards. For example, 15 governments have now expressed their unequivocal support for the proposed binding treaty on transnational corporations. We saw promising signs that FAO policy makers and the public are beginning to recognise that agroecology is the best way to feed the world. And shining the spotlight on dirty energy companies resulted in the Scottish and UK governments banning dirty Underground Coal Gasification (UCG).

We continued exposing the injustices of the current elitist system, presenting a series of examples of recent corporate abuses to UN Treaty negotiators and others in Geneva, alerting them to tragedies such as the BHP Vale mining disaster in Brazil, Israeli water company Mekorot cutting off the water supply to the West Bank in Palestine, and the activities of other transnational corporations including Jindal Africa in Mozambique, Hidralia in Guatemala, PacificRim/OceanaGold against El Salvador, and Wilmar in Indonesia.

Distressingly we also spent much of our year alerting the world to the dangers increasingly experienced by defenders of territories and peoples' collective rights, including the murder of Lenca Indigenous leader Berta Caceres and Nelson García in Honduras in March—they had been fighting the construction of the Agua Zarca dam, which threatens the land and culture of Honduras's Lenca People. We demand justice for all those around the world who have been killed, abused and threatened because they stand up for their communities and environment.

Our work on the dangers that free trade and investment agreements pose moved steadily forward as well. We played an important role in the demise of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the stalling of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), and the Australian parliament passed a motion banning Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) from future trade deals.

Finally, 2016 was a particularly important year for the Friends of the Earth International federation as we extended our rights-based advocacy to include a critical new area, promoting gender justice and dismantling patriarchy, both externally and internally, in collaboration with the women's movement.



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In solidarity,

Karin Nansen, Uruguay

Friends of the Earth International Chair

2016 programme highlights

Fostering economic justice

Economic Justice & Resisting Neoliberalism programme

FoEI intervening at IGWG2. © Victor Barro/FoEI

Challenging corporate impunity

Economic Justice & Resisting Neoliberalism programme

In 2016, together with allies, affected peoples and lawyers, we kept up the pressure on governments around the world to dismantle corporate power and begin formal negotiations on a legally binding UN treaty on transnational corporations and human rights. The fact that 15 countries—led by South Africa and Ecuador—voiced their unequivocal support for legally binding rules set the tone for an ambitious and far reaching negotiation to begin in 2017, ensuring that transnational corporations are held responsible for their crimes wherever they are committed.

We participated in the 31st session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in March and the second session of the ‘Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group’ (IGWG—the intergovernmental group negotiating the new treaty) in October. Collectively we made sure that peoples’ voices were at the forefront of these talks.

Ten Friends of the Earth International participants made formal inputs to the IGWG session, presenting testimonies from communities suffering corporate abuse. During the IGWG, our online radio station, Real World Radio, provided special coverage in two languages, and our radio materials were shared by Friends of the Earth International member groups and community radio stations around the world. We supported our member groups in Mozambique, Guatemala, El Salvador and Indonesia to present cases of corporate abuse—by Vale, Jindal, Hidralia, PacificRim/OceanaGold and Wilmar—to IGWG.

We continued our engagement in the Global Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power and the Treaty Alliance, working with other networks, campaigns and key actors at the international, regional and national levels, and amplifying levels of awareness, participation in and political support for the UN treaty process. In 2016, we saw stronger integration with the women’s movement, and our ally World March of Women (WMW) was present in Geneva to support the Treaty process for the first time. Together with women from JA!/Friends of the Earth Mozambique, WMW organised a workshop on women’s rights and corporate impunity.



Friends of the Earth International member groups have been calling on their national governments to engage in this important process. During the year we strove to build the capacity of member groups, with tools, information and campaign materials. At a regional meeting in Cameroon in August, we held sessions focused on the UN treaty process, where members from Uganda, Cameroon, Nigeria and Liberia highlighted examples of women’s struggles and victories against corporate crimes. This support helped members to mobilise for the UN Treaty. In particular WALHI/Friends of the Earth Indonesia and CESTA/Friends of the Earth El Salvador actively promoted the debate in their own countries, which are playing a key role in supporting the UN Treaty. We also worked with ERA/Friends of the Earth Nigeria to share lessons from the court cases against Royal Dutch Shell, bolstering the case for an International Tribunal on TNCs and Human Rights at UN Treaty negotiations.



Mobilising with allies at IGH32.

Exposing economic crimes

Economic Justice & Resisting Neoliberalism programme

In 2016, in addition to supporting member groups' case studies in El Salvador, Guatemala, Indonesia and Mozambique (see page 5), we brought the following three cases of human rights violations by corporations before member states and experts at the UNHRC.

Brazil: BHP Vale crime

At the end of 2015, the Fundão tailings dam, a joint venture between Vale and BHP Billiton, collapsed, flooding a huge area with mining waste, killing 19 people, displacing hundreds more, poisoning drinking water for hundreds of thousands, and devastating wildlife. Yet Vale and BHP enjoyed the impunity afforded to them by the economic and political power they wield in Brazil, and under investment protection agreements between Brazil and other countries. This enables them to commit systemic and systematic human rights violations without being held to account for them. Friends of the Earth International led the demand for justice, including through media work and events. In April, Amigos da Terra Brasil/Friends of the Earth Brazil and Friends of the Earth Australia spoke at a protest outside the Vale AGM in Rio de Janeiro. In October, Amigos da Terra Brasil/Friends of the Earth Brazil joined a five-day march organised by the Dam Affected Peoples Movement, marking a year of struggle for justice.

Honduras: Agua Zarca funders

March 2016 saw the assassinations of three Honduran activists, Berta Cáceres, Nelson García and Lesbia Janeth Urquía, from community organisation COPINH (see page 20). They had been fighting the construction of the Agua Zarca dam, which threatens the land and culture of Honduras' Lenca people. Gustavo Castro Soto of Otros Mundos/Friends of the Earth Mexico, who witnessed Berta's murder, was injured and illegally detained for three weeks. We mobilised worldwide action, including through a lobby tour with the daughter of Berta Cáceres, plenary interventions and a



side event at the UNHRC meeting (see page 20), as well as extensive coverage on Real World Radio, to demand that Dutch development bank FMO and Finnfund immediately cease funding the dam, and that UNHRC ensure an independent, impartial and effective investigation of the case.

By the end of 2016, FMO and Finnfund had announced they would “seek to exit” Agua Zarca,¹ and the decision to end existing contractual relations was formally announced in July 2017. The investigations into the assassinations have resulted in some arrests, but the investigations have been held in secret, and are plagued with irregularities.

Palestine: Mekorot

In June 2016, the Israeli state-owned water company Mekorot cut off the water supply in the northern West Bank, while guaranteeing the water supply for nearby Israeli settlements. We supported Abu Saker, a Palestinian cattle farmer and social leader representing the Popular Council for the Protection of the Jordan Valley, to present the case against Mekorot to UNHRC and demand action from the international community.



Collecting water, Palestine.

footnotes

¹ <https://www.fmo.nl/agua-zarca>

Revealing the hidden costs of corporate trade deals

Economic Justice & Resisting Neoliberalism programme

Together with our member groups, we contributed to halting socially and environmentally destructive corporate trade and investment agreements, which privilege big business and promote unfettered economic growth.

In 2016 we played an important role in the demise of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the stalling of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations. We also made progress challenging the Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanism (ISDS), which more and more countries are now rejecting.

We challenged the 'New Issues' agenda being pushed by developed countries in the World Trade Organization, during the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) meeting in Geneva in March. New trade rules, in areas such as investment and government procurement, would have significant negative impacts on domestic economies and governments' freedom to make policies in the public interest.

However, the destructive ideology of so-called free trade remains, with new bilateral and multilateral trade agreements emerging. We published a comparative analysis revealing that TPP, TTIP and the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) are not just individual 'mega-regional trade agreements', but part of a broader global strategy driven primarily by the US and the EU, with potentially devastating consequences for people and the environment in many parts of the world.

Over the year, we supported more than 20 groups working on trade issues, sharing learning and expertise between groups, including at a three-day regional civil society training on ISDS in November in the Philippines. Many put this training to good use. For example WALHI/Friends of the Earth Indonesia co-organised a civil society summit at negotiations on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a proposed free trade agreement between 16 Asian nations. At the same time we co-published a new report 'Hidden Costs', which reveals a growing wave of corporate lawsuits against Asian countries that



Stop TISA! IOW32, Geneva, October 2016.

could drain millions of dollars from public budgets. Friends of the Earth Australia succeeded in getting a motion passed in parliament banning ISDS from future trade deals.

Real transformation means more than just blocking destructive free trade and investment agreements. We need to develop progressive alternatives. In 2016, we launched a research project to document ideas and good practice on economic justice solutions from our members and allies, such as sustainable cities, solidarity cooperatives, Community Forest Management, fair trade and local markets.

We produced three videos highlighting economic justice campaigns by our member groups KFEM/Friends of the Earth South Korea, REDES/Friends of the Earth Uruguay and Friends of the Earth Australia. We also supported the publication of two reports 'Transforming Asia: Scaling up the Solutions', which highlights transformative solutions by member groups across Asia, and 'An Energy Revolution is Possible: Tax Havens and Financing for Climate Action', which argues that government revenue lost through tax havens could power half the world with 100% renewable energy by 2030. Real World Radio also covered the 2016 La Jornada Continental por la Democracia y contra el Neoliberalismo in São Paulo, Brazil, a continent-wide day for democracy and against neoliberalism in Latin America.



Strasbourg - Stop CETA mobilisation.

2016 programme highlights

Tackling the energy industry's climate-killing agenda

Climate Justice & Energy Programme

San Juan Generating Station and San Juan Mine.
© San Juan Citizens Alliance/EcoFlight/flickr

Ditching dirty energy, harnessing community power

Climate Justice & Energy Programme

We supported our member groups with their struggles against dirty energy projects, and prepared the foundations for developing our Good Energy solutions model.

For example, we worked with Friends of the Earth Scotland to produce a report on how underground coal gasification (UCG) and coal chemical technologies threaten the global climate and local environments, with case studies from Australia, South Africa and the US. Turning coal into liquid fuels, synthetic natural gas and other chemical products leaves a huge environmental footprint. We demanded a phase out of coal chemicals and no new plants to be built anywhere in the world, and both the Scottish and UK governments banned UCG.

We supported ERA/Friends of the Earth Nigeria to work with local communities who would be affected by planned tar sand extraction projects, which have the potential to impact millions of people in Nigeria, because the bitumen belt in Nigeria spreads across tens of thousands of square kilometres. ERA/Friends of the Earth Nigeria visited communities and led educational sessions and town hall meetings about tar sands and their impacts to enable communities and local authorities to organise in order to resist.

In the run up to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's 22nd Conference of the Parties (COP 22) we developed a two minute animation to illustrate the problem of the current dirty energy system for new audiences, and published a 'Dirty Energy in Africa' fact sheet. Members from six countries attended the International Coal Network's global meeting in the Philippines in October, along with a Friends of the Earth International representative. This meeting resulted in the Bataan Statement opposing all new coal projects, since they would lock us into coal power for decades.



Knitting resistance against gas in Groningen.

At our Biennial General Meeting in Indonesia our workshops about our Good Energy model were met with real positivity and enthusiasm to move ahead with greater emphasis on solutions work. As few of our groups have active community energy projects, we supported and showcased three excellent examples, from Palestine, Cameroon and Scotland, to inspire other groups to develop their own projects.

Friends of the Earth International supported PENGON/Friends of the Earth Palestine to empower civil society organisations to play a constructive role in the clean energy sector. We trained communities to operate and maintain solar units, and PENGON members in legal frameworks and advocacy strategies. The Palestinian authorities have responded positively to PENGON's initiatives and the government is keen on scaling up renewable energy technologies to change the energy mix.



Banning underground coal gasification in Scotland.

Demanding drastic action in 'decade zero'

Climate Justice & Energy Programme

We have entered 'decade zero'—the last few years in which we can still tackle dangerous climate change if we take the necessary drastic action now. The international climate justice movement urgently needs to be strengthened, to challenge the corporate interests that are driving the continued use of fossil fuels and preventing the implementation of real and just solutions.

Floods, storms, droughts, failing agriculture and rising seas are wreaking devastation on communities and ecosystems globally, with the poorest and most vulnerable people hit the hardest. The risk of irreversible climate change draws ever closer, with impacts that could dramatically overshadow anything we see today. There is mounting evidence of climate change fueling the displacement of people. These climate refugees are falling through the cracks of international law and are afforded very little legal protection.

The nations and corporations who have contributed the most to (and benefited from) carbon dioxide emissions have an undeniable moral and legal obligation to play a lead role in drastically reducing their emissions—as well as providing technology and finance for mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage to southern countries to enable them to do the same.

In 2016, we focused on building our federation's capacity and supporting member groups to advocate nationally and internationally. We strengthened coordination, and provided campaign resources and more spaces for groups to come together and discuss common issues. We elaborated the concepts of planetary emergency and climate justice in a concrete way that helped us to further our demand for equity and fairshares.

Climate refugees are falling through the cracks of international law and are afforded very little legal protection.

FoEI/ITUC Just
Transition event.
COP22.

FoEI final press
conference. COP22.

Climate Justice march
to demand justice for
all. COP22.



A key moment in the year was the UNFCCC COP 22, which was held in Morocco in November. Our delegation of 22 people, including 11 women, played an active role, particularly with respect to advocating for the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI) (see page 11). In Morocco, we spoke out on the need for urgent action, and for the voices of people affected by climate change, dirty energy and false solutions to be heard. We were a core signatory to the report 'Setting the Path Towards 1.5°C: a civil society review of pre-2020 ambition'. Since this was an African COP, we prioritised participation by our African member groups and created useful resources such as Africa climate justice t-shirts.

A range of communications materials enabled us to press our case, including three reports 'Energy Sufficiency & Access', 'Dirty Energy in Africa', and 'Decade Zero', and a two-minute animation illustrating the dirty energy system and false solutions to climate change. Our report 'Decade Zero', raised awareness of false solutions to climate change including carbon capture and storage, 'Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation' (REDD), genetically modified organisms, and carbon trading and offsetting. These distract from the real societal change and drastic emissions reductions that are needed—they must be abandoned in favour of true solutions.

We also identified new threats emerging in the climate debate: the concepts of 'net zero' and 'negative emissions technologies', both of which are premised on removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and both of which include damaging practices, like monoculture planting and geo-engineering techniques such as bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS). These would undermine the transition to clean energy by legitimising continued fossil fuel expansion and lead to a further rush of global land grabbing for biofuels.



Dipti Bhatnagar, FOEI, being interviewed by Associated Press about results of COP22.

We actively advocated for the African Union's Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), which calls for a just renewable energy finance model for Africa. AREI gained further support at COP 22, with US\$10 billion pledged by developed countries. However, AREI is being hijacked by corporate and European influences and we need to fight to save it.

Our work together with global climate justice allies continued to be a priority, including with the Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice, the Asian Peoples Movement on Debt and Development, 350.org, and the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice, both at the COP and around the Reclaim Power month of action, which is a collective effort to draw global attention to the climate crisis and the urgency of transforming energy systems. We also support and endorsed the Global Renewable Energy and Energy Access Transformation (GREEAT) programme, which calls for a global transformation towards clean, people-centred energy for everyone, and is closely related to AREI.

We monitored the activities of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) during the year. The GCF is meant to be the premier multilateral fund for financing adaptation and mitigation activities in developing countries, but looks set to fail to deliver what is needed. Its resources risk being captured by corporate-led actors or banking behemoths such as HSBC and Deutsche Bank, who are seeking to finance false solutions. We supported Friends of the Earth US and SAM/Friends of the Earth Malaysia so that they could keep other member groups up to date about developments in the GCF, and we held a webinar on the GCF for 15 Friends of the Earth group representatives, of which 11 were women. We also supported KFEM/Friends of the Earth Korea's demand for the GCF not to accredit the Export-Import Bank of Korea, which is a big coal financier. The bank withdrew its application.

2016 programme highlights

Forging ahead with food sovereignty and agroecology

Food sovereignty programme

Fresh okra on a stall, India. © Shankar S/flickr

Fighting free trade, fostering food sovereignty

Food sovereignty programme



Food Sovereignty programme workshop in Cameroon.

The global industrial food system is responsible for up to 57% of all greenhouse gas emissions, because of the emissions caused by industrial farming methods, deforestation, transportation, processing, packaging and freezing, retail procedures and the disposal of waste food.² Meanwhile, even though there is enough food in the world to feed everyone, over 800 million people across the world go hungry.³ Yet just when countries should be localising their food systems and embracing food sovereignty and agroecology as the best way to feed the world, trade and investment agreements are pushing in the opposite direction.

On World Food Day in October, at the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) meeting in Rome, we launched our report 'Getting into a Bind: How Trade and Investment Agreements block progress on Agroecology and Food Sovereignty'. This report shows how current strategies to increase investment in agriculture are undermining food security and food sovereignty. This is because trade and investment agreements—such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)—focus on opening new markets for agribusinesses and protecting the sector's profits, even when this comes at the cost of states' ability to regulate and peoples' welfare.

The report was widely distributed during the CFS session and the UNHRC working group on human rights and business, the IGWG 2nd session that met in October (see page 5). It was complemented by two related regional factsheets, one from ATALC, and one co-authored by Friends of the Earth Africa and the African Centre for Biodiversity.

We continued to denounce the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in food production. In February, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) convened an international symposium on agricultural biotechnologies in which keynote speakers were known proponents of GMOs. The meeting appeared to be an attempt by multinational agribusiness to redirect the policies of the UN agency toward support for genetically-engineered crops and livestock. We were among more than 100 organisations who issued a statement denouncing both the substance and structure of the meeting.

Fighting land grabbing remains a central concern for many of our member groups. This year we addressed land grabbing and related human rights violations through our work on the UN Treaty on transnational corporations and human rights (see page 5). We produced campaign materials that included examples of land grabbing and the role of corporations and showed that voluntary corporate commitments are not enough to ensure respect for human rights. At the IGWG session in October participants from member groups presented powerful testimonies from communities suffering corporate abuse including land grabbing. For example, WALHI/Friends of the Earth Indonesia spoke against palm oil companies Bunitama and Wilmar International. In 2015, forest fires in palm oil and paper plantations had destroyed three million hectares of land, killing 23 people, and had caused respiratory diseases in more than 500,000 others—despite these companies having voluntary policies against deforestation.



© Jorg Farys/BUND/FoE Germany

Making noise about the dangers of glyphosate.

footnotes

- 2 <https://www.grain.org/es/article/entries/5102-food-sovereignty-five-steps-to-cool-the-planet-and-feed-its-people.pdf>
- 3 <http://www.fao.org/state-of-food-security-nutrition>

Agroecology and food sovereignty work!

Food sovereignty programme

This year we saw promising signs that policy makers and the public are beginning to recognise that agroecology is the best way to feed the world and to realise food sovereignty. Our work to get enough recognition for and investment in agroecology is certainly not done yet, but our advocacy strategies are working.

FAO has started using a framing that had clearly been influenced by civil society organisations and social movements and governments participating in the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) meetings—FAO took the decision to start a process to elaborate policy recommendations to support agroecology, which is precisely what we and others in the food sovereignty movement have been advocating for.

One of our key strategies in this respect is capacity building for our member groups so that they can lobby for agroecology in regional and international policy spaces. In 2016, Friends of the Earth member groups took part in the regional FAO conferences in Asia Pacific and Africa and the regional civil society consultations that were held in those regions and in Latin America and the Caribbean. The consultations were also key spaces for building the food sovereignty movement at the regional level.

We played an active role in both plenaries and side events at the Committee on World Food Security session in Rome in October. Before the session, we organised a workshop for the Friends of the Earth International delegation on the policies and structure of the CFS and its Civil Society Mechanism (CSM), movement building, and investments. This increased our capacity to engage in the CFS political and policy processes as well as in the movement building spaces.

FAO took the decision to start a process to elaborate policy recommendations to support agroecology, which is precisely what we and others in the food sovereignty movement have been advocating for.

Agroecology fair.
Brazil.

Young women peasant
farmers swap seeds.
Colombia.



Our report ‘Getting into a bind’ (see page 13) set out our demands that states implement and finance the policies needed to encourage smallholder food production, such as ensuring land tenure security, creating agricultural banks and wage boards, managing supplies and minimum prices, using public procurement, and providing social protection, infrastructure, and research and technical support for small-scale producers.

We also participated in the CSM Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on smallholders’ access to markets. We argued that small-scale producers do not need to be ‘connected’ to markets, because they are already connected to mainly informal and local markets, where the majority of the food consumed in the world is exchanged. Not all markets are beneficial for smallholders and food security, and specific public policies and programmes are essential to strengthen those that are beneficial and to defend smallholders from the negative impacts of international trade and investment rules and agreements.

Overall, the result of the negotiations at the OEWG was very positive, with the final recommendations from governments containing several of the major political points advocated by civil society. We succeeded in creating a deeper understanding of the fundamental relationship between markets, food security and smallholder agriculture.

Throughout the year we continued playing an active role in the International Planning Committee (IPC), a global platform of small-scale food producers and rural workers’ organisations and community-based social movements, to advance the food sovereignty agenda at the global and regional level. We are facilitating the IPC’s Agroecology Working Group.

We continued creating an interactive map of agroecology solutions to strengthen our regional and international advocacy work. The map brings together positive initiatives from across the federation and demonstrates the evidence that agroecology works. Real World Radio produced stories and interviews based on the case studies that have been mapped, for publication in 2017.



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© Fun Foundation and CENSA/ Agua Via

Fostering food sovereignty champions

Food sovereignty programme

In 2016, one of the ways in which we contributed to strengthening the food sovereignty movement was by building the advocacy capacity of our member groups. Through engagement in key regional and international policy spaces, including those mentioned above, we were able to expose the failure of agribusinesses and increase support for agroecology.

In 2016, we held three regional workshops—in Cameroon, Honduras and Malaysia—at which 30 representatives (17 of them women) from 21 southern members increased their capacity to advocate more effectively for investment in food sovereignty in regional and international spaces. Ten of the participants put their skills into practice at the civil society consultations for the FAO regional conferences and/or at the FAO conferences themselves.

We also worked with allies such as La Via Campesina on collaborative advocacy and mobilisation to resist agribusiness interests and bring about changes in international policies. In 2016, the federation was represented at key events for the global food sovereignty movement including the Annual Meeting of the Global Network for the Right to Food and Nutrition and the linked West African Caravan on Land and Water, La Via Campesina's International Seminar on Agrarian Reform, and the Nyéléni Europe Forum.



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Saving seeds.



© Chau Usilami / WALHI Indonesia

WALHI training, with a group of women from a community living close to the forest in Pesisir Selatan Sub district in West Sumatera Province, Indonesia. The women are learning to make syrup from Pala (mystical fragrances).

2016 programme highlights

Forests, biodiversity and communities

Forests & biodiversity programme

Palm oil kernels.
© Victor Barro/FoEI

Forests are for people, not businesses and banks!

Forests & biodiversity programme

Loss of forests worldwide is having a devastating impact on biodiversity and on the lives and livelihoods of forest-dependent people. It is also a major driver of climate change, accounting for roughly a fifth of global greenhouse gas emissions. Friends of the Earth International and our members are working to conserve forests, by challenging the drivers of destruction, exposing false solutions, and working with local communities and Indigenous Peoples to defend their right to manage their own resources.

This year, we invested in policy analysis to develop our five-year work plan, with inputs from member groups, allies and other programme coordinators. We will continue to work against the financialisation of nature, we are building policy proposals on community forest management, and we are planning a new area of work, aiming to focus on the production of agrocommodities that drive deforestation, such as soya, palm oil, biomass and genetically modified trees. We also worked to build member groups' capacity, creating videos on different biodiversity-related issues and by organising skillshare webinars on 'Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD), synthetic biology, and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and how it functions.

We set up a collaboration with ProNatura/Friends of the Earth Switzerland and Bread for All in Switzerland to strengthen the evidence base for lobbying and advocacy work on palm oil certification. We began research in Honduras, Malaysia and Nigeria to document evidence of the environmental damage and human rights violations caused by oil palm plantations (both certified and non-certified). We will build the capacity of our member groups and the communities they work with in those three countries to expose certification as a false solution and to promote sustainable practices such as agroecology and community forest management.

FoE Japan protest
against military base
project in Okinawa.



Tree plantations in South Africa.

Challenging price tags for nature

Forests & biodiversity programme

Deforestation and the climate emergency are threatening biodiversity at an alarming rate. Species are being wiped out as much as 100 times faster than their natural extinction rate. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) should be leading the way in addressing this complex crisis. Sadly, there is instead a trend towards adopting a business-led approach and championing false solutions—although there is so far no consensus about this.

Instead of looking to change the power dynamics behind the prevailing economic system, which is highly destructive, governments propose a 'green economy' approach that puts an economic value on 'environmental assets', ignoring their inherent, cultural and social values.

Examples of this financialisation of nature include Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD), payment for ecosystem services schemes, and biodiversity offsets. Instead of solving the problem of biodiversity loss, such schemes accelerate it.

This year, we strongly opposed the financialisation of nature at key international fora. We raised the issue at the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) in April, the Committee on World Food Security in October and the CBD's COP 13 in November, both in the official negotiations and at side events and in bilateral meetings. We continuously coordinated with others in the CBD Alliance and joined actions and protests, and Real World Radio covered the event and protests, with support from Real World Radio.

One positive result is that the CBD has re-affirmed its moratorium on climate-related geoengineering, which is especially important since geoengineers are falsely claiming that these high-risk technologies for manipulating the climate are needed to fulfill the UNFCCC's Paris Agreement.

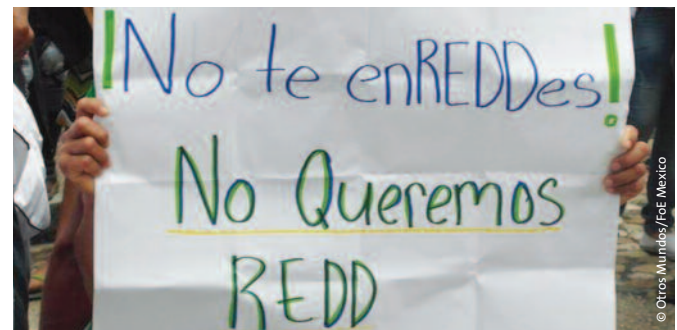
On December 5th, international conservation and environmental leaders, including Friends of the Earth International called on governments at CBD COP 13 to establish a moratorium on the controversial genetic extinction technology called gene drives.



At the end of the year we launched research into the role of the private sector and corporations with respect to the financialisation of nature. Recent analysis has shown that currently, the major impulse for this does not stem from UN spaces but from corporate interests and developments.

REDD is one example of turning nature into a tradable commodity. REDD involves paying owners of tropical forests for maintaining their forests rather than cutting them down. Yet it allows natural forests to be replaced with tree plantations, and, by increasing the monetary value of forests, it is exacerbating tensions around ownership of and access to land.

This year we deepened our understanding of the pitfalls of REDD by conducting a thorough analysis of a REDD agreement between the states of California, Chiapas and Acre. Our research was published in 2017 and used by member groups in the US, Mexico and Brazil. Together with allies we also challenged the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO)'s emerging plan to introduce offsetting for aviation emissions via a global market-based mechanism, instead of actually reducing emissions.



Community Forest Management: identifying the roadblocks

Forests & biodiversity programme

Community Forest Management (CFM) is the opposite of the financialisation of nature. It is a nature- and people-friendly approach that offers a real solution to protecting the world's forests. Indigenous Peoples and local communities have a wealth of knowledge about how to use their local forests and forest resources in a sustainable way—and enabling them to continue to do so should be high on governments' lists of priorities for biodiversity and climate change negotiations.

In 2015 we had compiled and analysed examples of good practice in community forest management; in 2016, the focus was on identifying the obstacles to its spread and the structural changes needed to make it the norm. We focused on policy analysis and strategy work, with inputs from member groups, allies and other programme coordinators.

At key international fora including SBSTTA, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and CBD COP 13 we monitored policy developments with respect to community forest management and its links to food sovereignty, as well as the financialisation of nature and synthetic biology, and considered options for future involvement, discussing opportunities for collaboration with other organisations, such as the CBD alliance (whose board we sit on) and the ICCA Consortium.

We produced a video 'Community management of forests is free from financialisation of nature' to complement our publications on the subject.

During the CBD COP 13 negotiations, we led a civil society sit-in to support the walkout by Indigenous Peoples when the principle of Free Prior and Informed Consent was being deleted from agreed texts on Indigenous Peoples. The requirement for informed consent can be a key element in enabling peoples to manage their own lands and forests.

Women from the Binayi Community Forest User Group collect lantana for green manure.



© Charitha Shekhar/Sangha/ICOF/flickr

We developed relationships with allies on this subject, including the ICCA Consortium, a movement working on Indigenous Peoples' and Community Conserved Territories and Areas, and La Via Campesina. Real World Radio also provided coverage for a National Meeting on Community Forest and Territory Management in Colombia, co-hosted by CENSAT Agua Viva/Friends of the Earth Colombia and allies, which aimed to strengthen the capacities of local communities in terms of territorial biocultural management.

We have built the capacity of our member groups to work on this, by facilitating talks to exchange information and experiences. Through our contacts with Global Greengrants Fund, we were able to recommend support for community forest management initiatives, including in Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, Croatia, Guatemala, Hungary, Indonesia and Mexico.

Mariann Bassey Orowwuje, Friends of the Earth Nigeria/ERA, warned the COP13,

“Gene drives have quickly emerged as an extremely high risk synthetic biology application since the last COP and should therefore be placed under a moratorium.”



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Orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*) hanging on a tree at Sepilok Orangutan rehabilitation Centre, Sabah, Malaysia.

Macleay's Swallowtail. Mount Ellery area, East Gippsland, Australia.

Our federation

Defending the defenders

Berta Cáceres • © Goldman Environmental Prize

Demanding that the Dutch Development Bank (FMO) withdraw from the Agua Zarca dam project in Honduras — at FMO. Anna van Sakselean 71. Den Haag.



Across the world, community organisations are resisting land grabbing, deforestation and threats to their livelihoods—and governments and corporations are increasingly trying to stop them, often through acts of criminalisation, violence and harassment.

Human rights violations are one of the key challenges for most of our member groups in Africa, Latin America and the Asia Pacific region. Attacks against environmental human rights defenders have increased, as extractive industries, agribusiness and infrastructure works spark socio-environmental conflicts. For example, in the Philippines, resistance to development and mining projects has been met with increased repression of defenders, especially those from indigenous communities.

In 2016, we dealt with more than 20 specific cases; some involving more than one person. Two cases required us to deal urgently with the safety of high-profile victims.

In Honduras, three activists from COPINH were murdered during the year, including Goldman Environmental Prize winner Berta Cáceres, and two more received death threats. Friends of the Earth International and Madre Tierra/Friends of the Earth Honduras have worked with COPINH for many years. We witnessed unprecedented solidarity from our member groups for the Honduran communities in their struggle against a systemic problem of corporate impunity relating to the proposed Agua Zarca dam (see page 6). We mobilised worldwide action, including through a lobby tour with the daughter of Berta Cáceres, plenary interventions, and a side event at the UN Human Rights Council meeting (see page 5), as well as through extensive coverage on Real World Radio. A Friends of the Earth International delegation, together with Real World Radio, also participated in and broadcast about international missions to Honduras in March and April.

In February, Justina Ojo (the wife of Godwin Ojo, a Friends of the Earth International Executive Committee member and director of ERA/Friends of the Earth Nigeria) was abducted. This traumatising situation fortunately ended when she was released after a few days.

In some countries, governments are enacting laws that grossly violate people's rights. For example, in Uganda the public order management law (POMA 2015) blocks communities and other organisations working on natural resources from coming together. And in Russia, all civil society organisations that receive foreign funding and engage in 'political' activities are obliged to register as 'foreign agents', which, in the former Soviet context, means 'enemy of the state'.

The killing of activists is just the tip of the iceberg. The trend of shrinking space for civil society takes many different forms, from more demanding funding requirements to restrictive national laws that restrict the operations of civil society organisations. Over the year, we worked with a number of allied organisations, as well as with funders and UN agencies, to challenge this trend, including by taking part in a meeting organised by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, to give input to his report to the UN General Assembly, and through our continuing campaign for a UN treaty to hold transnational corporations accountable for their involvement in human rights abuses (see page 5).



Giving a voice to the voiceless in Guatemala.

Our federation

Gender justice and dismantling patriarchy

Discussing power privilege and patriarchy at ATALC's
2016 School of Sustainability in Honduras. © Amigos da Terra Brasil

Our whole federation has committed to a set of strategies that will contribute to achieving gender justice and weakening patriarchy.

The rights-based approach is at the heart of everything we do, and in 2016 we decided to invest more strongly in achieving gender equality and justice. We were pleased to be able to recruit an extra staff member for the membership development team who is dedicated to this work and has extensive experience with the workings of international networks, including World March of Women, and a strong background in feminist politics and thinking.

With this extra capacity we were able to launch discussions on gender justice and dismantling patriarchy in the various structures of our federation, including our Executive Committee, regional assemblies and Biennial General Meeting. This has led to a commitment from the whole federation to a set of strategies that will contribute to achieving gender justice and weakening patriarchy.

This year, we started to see a stronger integration and collaboration with the women's movement, for example in the fight for the binding UN Treaty on Human Rights and TNCs (see page 5). Our ally World March of Women joined us in Geneva for the first time to support the Treaty process with four activists from Mozambique. Together with women from JA!/Friends of the Earth Mozambique, they organised an outside workshop on women's rights and corporate impunity. They also worked together on cases against coal mining and agribusiness at the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal session in Southern Africa, and World March of Women attended parts of our Biennial General Meeting to discuss alliance building.

Gender equality was identified as a particular priority for the Africa region, so we held a training event for our member groups in Cameroon in August. African women leaders and activists came together to deepen their understanding of gender inequality, based on their own struggles for environmental justice. They shared examples of their struggles and victories against violations of their rights, and united around proposals for challenging discrimination and oppression in their countries and on their continent.

The African regional assembly approved several action points, including to promote women's representation within regional leadership and to create a women's working group to carry forward the gender debate and training in the region. The federation's Executive Committee now has a female Friends of the Earth Africa representative and is working on a policy to integrate gender issues in Friends of the Earth Africa's work.



FOEI at IWG2, Geneva.

Our federation



Our federation

FoEI 2016 BGM in Indonesia.

© Amelia Collins/FoEI

Growing our movement

Our federation

As the world's largest grassroots environmental network, our strength is our 75 national member groups and thousands of local activist groups on every continent. We are working to expand our network, build the capacity of our members, and strengthen regional coordination.

Providing opportunities for groups to meet is an important part of this process, and in 2016, we held two sustainability schools, one in Honduras and one in Indonesia. (Time constraints meant that the Africa region's sustainability school was postponed until January 2017.)

The school for the Latin America and Caribbean region took place in May, and opened with a public event with other Honduran social movement organisations. There were discussions on neoliberalism in Latin America, the displacement and dispossession of Indigenous Peoples and the situation of human rights defenders, and a workshop on 'Power and Privilege: Patriarchy'.

The school for the Asia Pacific region took place in November. It had a focus on trade, forests, and youth leadership and effective campaigning, with the primary aim of building second generation leadership in the region. The school was attended by an enthusiastic group of activists and lawyers from eleven countries, from diverse backgrounds. Immediate outputs included participants' commitment to actively engage in regional work and improved skills in online communications.

As the Asia Pacific sustainability school was held in parallel with the federation's biennial general meeting, the region was able to have a sizeable delegation and a very visible youth profile there.

New members

We continue to seek to expand our network to include new groups in countries where we don't have a presence. This process involves an intensive assessment and is always done in close collaboration with the relevant regional structure.

In 2016 we visited three potential members in India, and wrote a report for the region to review and decide on. A visit to a potential new member group in Jordan was postponed until 2017 due to delays in visa arrangements. We made initial exploratory visits to Peru and Cuba, and received an application from a group in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Remembering our fallen sisters/brothers in the struggle for environmental justice, at the 2016 BGM. "They thought they buried us, but we are seeds."

Strengthening our regions

Our federation

Our regional assemblies are essential for reinforcing regional cohesion and collaboration between groups. In 2016, they provided an opportunity to feed into the federation's five-year work plan, which was adopted at the end of the year.

The 2016 annual assembly of Friends of the Earth Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Honduras in May. It discussed what the region can do in the face of escalating threats and violence against activists. During this period exchange activities included a field visit and a meeting with other Honduran organisations.

All 13 member groups were represented at the Asia Pacific regional meeting in Japan in August. Alongside the meeting, hosts Friends of the Earth Japan ran a Climate Justice Symposium for 40 participants including media, students and business people, and delegates at the regional meeting joined an anti-nuclear rally held close to the Japanese Parliament.

The European regional meeting took place in Ireland in May. Participants analysed emerging and important topics for the region, including refugees, the rise of the right wing, and threats to human rights defenders, and transformational topics such as oppression, privilege, gender, youth, class and ethnicity. Delegates also joined local campaigners at a blockade of a controversial oil and gas exploration site just outside Belfast. Shortly afterwards, the company withdrew from the project.

As well as holding its regional meeting, the African region had several additional initiatives that are starting to strengthen the region, improving its diversity and influence. This included hosting a women's meeting in Cameroon in August, to ensure greater representation of women in Friends of the Earth Africa's activities and structures (see page 23).

A new EU-funded project to link the environmental youth movements in Europe and Africa started in September 2016. This project will build connections among young activists from 15 European and African Friends of the Earth groups, for mutual learning, skill sharing, joint campaign planning and cultural exchange, with the aim of building a more diverse and inclusive international environmental youth movement.



ATAALC Assembly.

Biennial General Meeting in Indonesia

Our federation

A highlight of the year was the five-day Biennial General Meeting (BGM) held in Indonesia in November. 120 participants from some 70 Friends of the Earth International member groups came together to exchange information and ideas, fraternise, build relationships and discuss how to work for a peaceful and sustainable world. The agenda was focused on the draft five-year work plan, which was fine-tuned and adopted following in-depth discussions with all members.

Building alliances is key to achieving the change we want to bring about. We therefore invited representatives of our strategic allies, La Via Campesina and World March of Women to join parts of the meeting.

One of the major threats to our struggle is the increased violence against and criminalisation of our activists. Hearing emotional accounts of the murder of Berta Cáceres in Honduras and of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines reconfirmed the need for solidarity to defend environmental human rights defenders everywhere.

Another major achievement during this BGM was the commitment from the federation to struggle against patriarchy and fight for gender justice. A lot of time was devoted to discussions on how power and privilege are barriers to system change, and reflection on how the structures of our own organisations reinforce patriarchal dynamics. The federation agreed that Friends of the Earth International should support women's leadership, build people's capacity on gender justice and anti-patriarchy, and further develop the Feminism and System Change strategy. A Gender Justice and Dismantling Patriarchy Working Group will begin work in 2017.

FoEI 2016 BGM in Indonesia.



The delegates also voted to welcome Friends of the Earth Russia and Friends of the Earth Bosnia Herzegovina as new members of the federation and Friends of the Earth Slovenia as a new associate member.

Fourteen joint resolutions were adopted on national and international issues, ranging from supporting the peace process in Colombia to asking the Ghanaian government to resist the establishment of a coal-fired power plant, expressing solidarity with evicted Indonesian farmers, and condemning Donald Trump's hateful approaches to public policy in the USA. Finally, the meeting elected a new chair for the next two years: Karin Nansen, founding member of REDES/Friends of Earth Uruguay.

International symposium on Climate Change

In the run up to the BGM, WALHI/ Friends of the Earth Indonesia organised an international symposium on Climate Change and Voices from the World, which attracted 100 participants. Key agenda issues were experiences of community-based forest management and climate change.

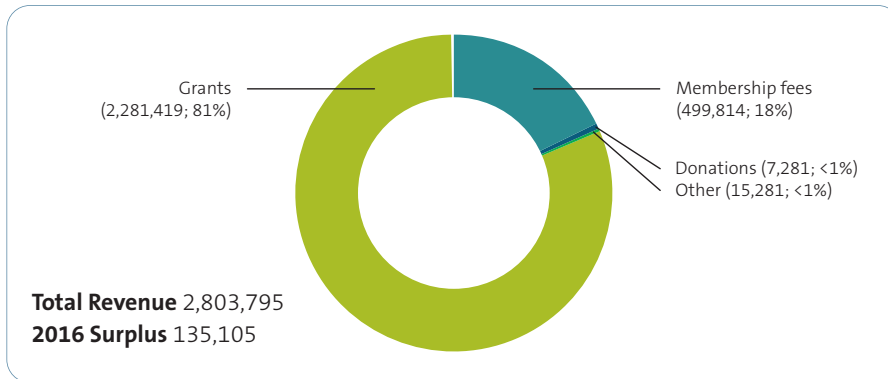
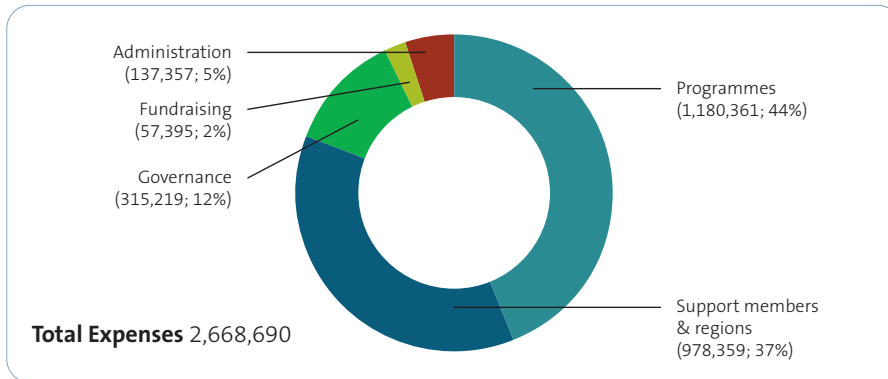


Indonesian Minister of the Environment and Forests speaks about the need for global climate justice at FoE Indonesia/WALHI press conference.

our finances



Amounts in Euro



(Top) International Secretariat.

(Above) FoEI 2016 B&W in Indonesia.

Friends of the Earth International's complete audited financial statement is available at www.foei.org/about-foei/annual-reports

Friends of the Earth International's wishes to thank our generous individual supporters and institutional donors:

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- Isvara Foundation
- Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
- Bread for the World
- European Union (*Europe Aid, Erasmus+*)
- V Kann Rasmussen Foundation
- UN Food & Agriculture Organisation

our 2016

executive committee & team



The new Executive Committee was elected during our Biennial General Meeting at the end of 2016. It consists of:

Chair: **Karin Nansen, ATALC/Friends of the Earth Uruguay**

Vice Chair: **Hemantha Withanage, APac/Friends of the Earth Sri Lanka**

Treasurer: **Kwami Dodzi Kpondzo, Africa/Friends of the Earth Togo**

Luka Tomac, Europe/Friends of the Earth Croatia

Godwin Uyi Ojo, Africa/Friends of the Earth Nigeria

Nora Bowier, Africa/Friends of the Earth Liberia

Choony Kim, APac/Friends of the Earth South Korea

Silvia Quiroa, ATALC/Friends of the Earth El Salvador

Elaine Gilligan, Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Our programme coordinators:

Economic Justice Resisting Neoliberalism

Lúcia Ortiz

Sam Cossar-Gilbert

Climate Justice & Energy

Dipti Bhatnagar

Lucy Cadena

Sara Shaw

Food Sovereignty

Martin Drago

Kirtana Chandrasekaran

Forests & Biodiversity

Isaac Rojas

Nele Marien

Our membership development team: David Heller (Friends of the Earth Europe); Frank Muramuzi (Friends of the Earth Uganda); Theiva Lingam (Friends of the Earth Malaysia); Danilo Urrea (Friends of the Earth Colombia); and Erich Pica (Friends of the Earth United States).



(Top) Excom meeting, March 2015. From left to right: Choony Kim (FoE Korea), Kwami Dodzi Kpondzo (FoE Togo), Hemantha Withanage (FoE Sri Lanka), Karin Nansen (FoE Uruguay), Godwin Uyi Ojo (FoE Nigeria), Jasoda ManiS (FoE Croatia), Asad Kenman (FoE England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Silvia Quiroa (FoE El Salvador), Abetnego Tariyan (FoE Indonesia).

(Above) Top row: Sara Shaw, Isaac Rojas, Dipti Bhatnagar, Martin Drago, Nele Marien. Bottom row: Kirtana Chandrasekaran, Lucia Ortiz, Sam Cossar-Gilbert, Lucy Cadena

Friends of the Earth groups around
the world



Africa

Cameroon
Ghana
Liberia
Mali
Mauritius
Mozambique
Nigeria
Sierra Leone
South Africa
Swaziland
Tanzania
Togo
Tunisia
Uganda

Asia - Pacific

Australia
Bangladesh
East Timor
Indonesia
Japan
Malaysia
Nepal
New Zealand
Palestine
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
South Korea
Sri Lanka

Europe

Austria
Belgium (*Flanders*)
Belgium (*Wallonia & Brussels*)
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
England, Wales and Northern Ireland
Estonia
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany

Hungary
Ireland
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Macedonia (*former Yugoslav Republic of*)
Malta
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Scotland
Slovakia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Ukraine

Latin America and Caribbean

Argentina
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Costa Rica
Curaçao (*Antilles*)
El Salvador
Grenada (*West Indies*)
Guatemala
Haiti
Honduras
Mexico
Paraguay
Uruguay

North America

Canada
United States of America

Russia

Russia

cover image: *Giving a voice to the voiceless in Guatemala.* © FoE Spain

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