

Towards Paris2015, challenges and perspectives

Blockadia and Alternatiba, the two pillars of climate justice

To make sure we have the last word, lets turn Paris 2015 into “Seattle of false solutions” and a “Cochabamba of ecological and social transition

By Maxime Combes 18th November 2014



Introduction

What should we do about the 21st Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Agreement on Climate Change that will take place in Paris – Le Bourget in December 2015? NGOs, social movements and ecologists are asking themselves a series of essential questions that we need to take time to discuss: what should we expect of the negotiations? What can we influence? What can we do to avoid finding ourselves in the same situation as after Copenhagen (2009)? What should we set as our objectives? How can we carry out in-depth work on the need for ecological and social change that people need to undertake? What initiatives can we take to impose the struggle against climate change as at the top of the political agenda, while avoiding giving more power to those who want to impose their

techno-scientific solutions and financial innovations? What basis should we use to build a climate justice movement that will have a broad impact on society that will endure and become stronger over and above the 2015 Paris conference? How can we best build on the demonstrations that were held on 21st September 2014? What place should we give to the increasingly important mobilisations that aim to block the projects that will kill climate, and to the citizens' initiatives that aim to experiment and implement the sustainable, resilient world here and now to meet tomorrow's needs? The list of questions and discussions within the NGOs and social and ecological movements is indeed long.

By explaining why both the shape and the form of the most ambitious agreement that can be expected to be reached in Paris in 2015 are already known (the level of emissions' cuts, funding and legal form), this

text attempts to highlight why the NGOs and social and ecological movements should stand back from the negotiations that are being held within the UN. We need to ensure that we do not repeat the same mistakes as those made in Copenhagen in 2009. In order to do so, we propose that activist and citizens' energies concentrate on an agenda of their own mobilisation, of which the UN Conference CoP21 is just one stage that resonates in the perspective of building a sustainable balance of power in favour of a large-scale ecological and social transition. This therefore implies not just limiting ourselves to defensive battles within the UN, waged in the name of how urgent the climate issue is. On the contrary, the idea is to strengthen all the struggles and offensive and transformational proposals that the Blockadia and Alternatiba dynamics can carry forward and represent. Following the massive demonstrations in New York and elsewhere on September 21st last, we are now proposing that Paris2015 become "a Seattle of false solutions" and "a Cochabamba of ecological and social transition". To start the discussion and follow those already underway, there is a clear perspective: we need to give ourselves the means of not submitting to the UN negotiations. On the contrary, we propose that the NGOs and social and ecological movements become opinion leaders and have the final say.

No legally binding agreement in sight!

For Laurent Fabius, the objective that was announced in September 2013 was to reach "*an ambitious, legally binding agreement that would be to all, that is to say that allowed the 2°C limit to be respected*"¹. Last September in New York, François Hollande even stated that the aim was to achieve "carbon neutrality"². Given what's on the table today, it's an understatement to say that things have gotten off to a bad start. If it proves possible to reach an agreement in 2015, it will not be a legally binding one, nor one that rises to the situation. Barack Obama does not want a legally binding agreement on climate³. He clearly stated this at the end of the summer⁴, stating that he prefers a legally flexible instrument that encourages States to define and announce their own commitments at regular intervals and in unilateral fashion in terms of emissions cuts, funding etc. for any given period. The so-called "name and shame" model would allow all countries to achieve international self-satisfaction if their objectives are considered sufficient and they are reached, and they would be shamed if they fail to do so.

He thus prefers this to the legally binding form, which is the only way of establishing obligations and political commitments, and supports declaration of intent that brings together all States commitments. And we know all too well how lightweight and

inconsistent these can be. This is a turning point in the climate negotiations where the national level will override establishing and achievement of global objectives. For Barack Obama and the American authorities, domestic affairs and international geopolitical balance are more important than climate and the need to reach a binding agreement. Other countries also share this position, especially China. Neither François Hollande nor Laurent Fabius formally contradicted them either in Paris or in New York during the climate summit organized by Ban Ki Moon on the 23rd of September 2014.

No sign of any ambitious agreement!

If an agreement is to live up to the stakes as laid out in the summary⁵ of the IPCC report published on the 2nd of November last, an agreement should impose important greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions cuts by 2020. According to a UNEP⁶ report, if nothing were to change, the countries of this planet would emit 13 gigatonnes of greenhouse gas equivalent of CO₂ in 2020. (57 gigatonnes instead of 44 gigatonnes of CO₂), compared with the acceptable pathways that would allow a reasonable chance of remaining below the 2°C maximum of global warming by the end of the century. However thus far, no country has considered reviewing and increasing their commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. So there nothing indicates that the gap between what is desirable and the reality of the situation will be reduced before 2020, and there is a good chance that it will indeed get worse after 2020.

Effectively, the first commitments made for the post-2020 period are very far indeed from the IPCC recommendations. Thus the European Union⁷ has committed to cutting their emissions by at least 40% by 2030, whereas the IPCC is inviting States to achieve this level by 2020. The United States⁸ have just committed to cutting their emissions by between 26 and 28% by 2025; this barely corresponds to a reduction of 0.4% compared with the baseline of 1990. And as to China, they are committing to reach their maximum level of emissions by 2030. This is the same as saying that they will break all their current records. The commitments made by the Americans and the Chinese would reduce the probably of exceeding the 2°C level by a mere 1% of global warming by the end of the century⁹. The system presented by the United States that is now widely supported, allows all States to set their own objectives. This means that the question of different countries sharing a maximum predefined carbon budget based on scientifically defined recommendations and needs, no longer applies. It even begs the question as to whether governments aren't simply in the process of abandoning the 2°C objective that they themselves set in the course of the

many international meetings (UN negotiations, G8, G20 etc). And beyond the 2°C limit, climate change would become dramatic.

Not much funding in sight!

No “ambitious” agreement is possible without substantial funding on the table. The Green Climate Fund was an outcome of Copenhagen; but it has only just become a reality. And there are almost no dedicated funds paid in as yet. 100 billion dollars were pledged to fund the fight against climate change, adaptation and the consequences of extreme climate events, but only 2 billion dollars were collected in New York. The amounts announced by François Hollande, with much pomp and ceremony, are in fact derisory¹⁰, and the way in which it will be used are highly debatable¹¹. Since then both the United States and Japan have announced that they will pledge three and 1.5 billion dollars respectively, without however stating over how many years they will spread these sums. Other countries, (the UK and Italy etc.) have done likewise, without however reaching the sum of 10 billion dollars. This sum will only be collected over a period of several years. In other words, it will be divided by ten compared with what was initially pledged. To date there is no guarantee that these funds – if they are indeed confirmed – will be public, additional and available as donations and not conditional loans and there is no guarantee either that they will be available as a priority for those populations that most need them.

Should we call upon States to take action?

There is no shortage of data or scientific studies to ring warning bells for heads of States and governments, and request that they take urgent action. The most recent IPCC reports are very alarming. Not a single month goes by without a new record of greenhouse gas emissions or heat being broken, as shown by the most recent figures published by the World Meteorological Organisation¹². The data and the experts’ scientific reports are piling up, but they are not triggering policies that rise to the challenge; this proves that there is no automatic relationship between the accumulation of scientific knowledge on global climate warming and the desire to make it a political priority. Informing political leaders of the most recent data available has just one consequence: they are informed of the latest available data, but are still sadly opposed to committing to changing what is an unsustainable economic system.

There are also many calls that invite the “leaders” to “take action”. The most recent were the demonstrations that were held on the 21st of September. Indeed this was their general slogan, and

a very broad one at that, deliberately chosen by the organisers¹³. These demonstrations, like those in Copenhagen in 2009 were both massive and determined. They were also diverse in terms of the demands of the different organisations that took part, including “*Change the system, not the climate*”. Obviously, if we go beyond their declared intentions the “leaders” who were present at Ban Ki-moon’s summit do not wish to address the deep underlying causes of climate change¹⁴. This results in our heading for + 4°C or even 6°C by the end of the century. Are there any “*climate leaders*” in the UN? The international negotiations began in the early 1990s. Since then, global emissions have increased by over 60% and are continuing to do so, year after year. Is this the fault of China, India and Brazil? Not theirs alone: France’s carbon footprint has increased by 15% in the last 20 years. Should we still be calling these “*climate delinquents*”¹⁵ to “take action”?

Too many false solutions

When heads of State and governments “take action”, they tend to implement an agenda of false solutions. Everything happens as though the ruling classes and business were using the most recent data and reports to justify their decisions and initiatives which, while giving the impression that they are taking action, are contributing to worsening the situation and strengthening the hold of finance and of multinationals on our economies, our lives and nature. The recent climate summit organised by Ban Ki-moon in New York is a striking example of this¹⁶. It turning into a talk-shop of false solutions.

To increase the use of fossil fuel, there is an attempt to put a price on carbon through new market mechanisms and carbon finance; and this at a time when the European market that is a pioneer in this question has proven itself to be ineffectual, dangerous, costly and impossible to reform¹⁷. To optimise carbon capture and storage on the soil and forests, there are proposals to experiment with new agro-forestry practice and techniques – including the development of new genetically modified crops – and fund them through new carbon finance mechanisms¹⁸. To help peasants in the poor countries to be able to face the consequences of climate change, they are being sold sophisticated weather forecasting tools and insurance policies. Vast investment programmes of renewable energies, especially in Africa, are being bestowed upon multinationals and financial markets, and will be launched to achieve mega infrastructures aimed at providing electricity for big mining projects and industries that are often useless and ill adapted to the needs of people. The list is unfortunately all too long.

Should we desert the UN?

Although it looks unlikely¹⁹ that there will be any legally binding agreement that is fair and up to the challenge of what is at stake in Paris in 2015, and that these international conferences are now promoting false solutions, should we not simply abandon the UN arena? Some people believe this to be the case and consider that NGOs and movements should not be involved at that level; or worse still, are misled by continuing to be present at the negotiations. Their presence is just legitimising a space and procedures of government that are institutionalising and softening critical voices, whilst all the while enabling the unsustainable international economic model that is the cause of climate change to persist.

These criticisms are not unjustified, especially as the NGOs and movements have certainly contributed to leading people to think that the UN could really “*save the climate*”, and that we were finally all aboard the same boat. Nevertheless, abandoning the UN would leave free reign to those who wish to extend the power of the multinationals, finance and techno-science on climate? Leaving the UN, and no longer having the possibility of following the negotiations with any degree of precision would imply accepting that States could meet their objectives of cutting greenhouse gas emissions and funding very much above what needs to be done. Withdrawing from the UN would also allow a free hand to the private sector to control the UN bodies and programmes, whereas civil society has been calling for years to take possession of a body that is supposed to represent its interests, that of the “*peoples of the United Nations*”²⁰.

Within the UN, a series of defensive struggles

Although it is no doubt preferable not to withdraw from the UN field, we still need to determine what it is possible to do there and under what conditions, and to be clear and realistic about this. In one way, let us be realistic and pragmatic: let us take the fact that these negotiations are not independent of a geopolitical, economic and financial situation that defines the limits. Let us begin by recognising and accepting that most battles that can be fought within the UN are defensive ones. Battles to limit our losses. Battles so that the objectives for cutting emissions and levels of funding will not be too bad. Battles that aim for the impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable will be taken into consideration. Battles to fight the stranglehold of the private sector interests on the negotiations. All these are essential battles. But they are defensive ones, in as much as they are linked to government-set agendas, and not those that the NGOs, movements and people want to impose on their governments.

These battles are not those that will interest and mobilise people beyond those already in the know; for as well as the fact that they are generally couched in the coded language of the negotiations, they do not enable the societal project that is envisaged, promoted or defended to be easily perceived. On the contrary, given how inter-related the negotiations are with the strong geopolitical balance of power and the inaction of governments, these battles can be discouraging and generate frustration and a feeling of being let down. And these emotions can not be the mottoes of citizens’ commitment. Finally, these battles are defensive as there are no longer any countries or groups of countries where climate justice movements could share a joint strategy and enter into alliances. Obviously there are some countries it is possible to try and block or strengthen specific aspects of the negotiations. But this is something totally different from building a shared strategy. The European Union is now no more legitimate in playing an exemplary role²¹, whereas the ALBA countries (Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela etc.) still pay lip service to strong positions, but are no longer truly determined to change the negotiations in a deep and meaningful way²². This is also true for the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), that includes rich Island States like Singapore that are deeply involved in global capitalism.

From defensive to offensive struggles

So what should we do? What can we do so that we don’t add discouragement and helplessness to astonishment²³? This is a huge question; and it has no easy or final answer. Obviously recent mobilisations on climate, such as the massive demonstrations of 21st September²⁴ last or the success of the Alternatiba²⁵ process are positive dynamics upon which to build. Nevertheless these are not the first successful citizen mobilisations in terms of the fight against climate change. By mixing a successful demonstration (100,000 people), a high quality alternative summit and massive civil disobedience actions, citizen mobilisation at the Copenhagen conference was highly successful. And yet the majority of the NGO representatives and social and ecological movement activists left feeling bad about what happened.

They had come “*to save the climate*”, encouraged by a number of NGOs who had turned Copenhagen into “*the last chance summit*”, so they could only be disappointed by the results of the negotiations. Just like the majority of those people who had stayed home in their own countries, and were keeping a close eye on the conference. Yet the outcomes of the Copenhagen negotiations were foreseeable for anyone who wanted to take global geopolitical

realities into account. And climate will no more be saved in Paris than it was in Copenhagen. No more than it will be possible to achieve an ambitious, binding agreement. Obviously we can remain in denial and call yet again, as some people are doing, for mobilisation to “save the climate” in Paris, without specifying the outlines of the objectives we are setting. As this will not happen – the outlines of a possible future agreement and the commitments made by countries are for the most part already known – people are sure to be left with a bitter taste in their mouths, and there will be fresh mobilisations and citizens involvement in the following months. *Bis repetita* after Copenhagen.

Another option is to not pull the wool over our eyes. Yes, of course we need to “act”. But the movements for climate justice can not wait for governments and the private sector to “do something”. They can’t abide by the limitations of the agenda of the negotiations and the current dynamics that are leading to an agreement that will not rise to the challenge of what is at stake. No, what we want is to change everything! Not just for the fun of it. Not just because we prefer to set ourselves very ambitious objectives rather than to implement a strategy of small steps – a strategy that shows all its limits in terms of fighting climate change. Nor is it because we fooling ourselves from dawn to dusk. We want to “change everything” because it is the climate crisis and climate justice calls for this, when we draw all the conclusions. As Naomi Klein demonstrates in her new book²⁶, it is our development model, neoliberal capitalism that is unsustainable and that needs to be transformed into a system that doesn’t aim for a model of infinite growth but for harmony between human beings and nature, and that meets the needs of the majority²⁷.

“Change the system”, but with the right people!

In terms of climate, if nothing has yet happened that meets the challenge, it is because the real solutions to the climate crisis forcibly clash with the dominant economic model and the ideology it represents. Sobriety and energy efficiency, decentralisation and democratisation of energy systems, food sovereignty and peasant agroecology, relocalisation of production and consumption, more egalitarian life-styles in a framework of political well-being and degrowth of the ecological footprint, economic cooperation and solidarity etc. The solutions to climate change clash full-on with policies of competition and trade liberalisation and investments that generate increased competition between people and territories. Where the first are anchored in the principles of respecting major ecological balance and cooperation between people to build a shared future, the policies of competitiveness and liberalisation place economic

and financial profit before all else, include the needs of climate.

There can be no reasonable compromises with these unsustainable productivist development approaches if we want to “save the climate”. We need to address the structural causes of climate change. And there can be no win-win game with those who defend an economic model based on fossil fuel, starting with the multinational oil companies. We need to take this on board. And block them where their agenda is making progress. This holds true for the free trade agreements and investments that the EU is negotiating respectively with Canada (CETA) and the United States (TAFTA); they both aim to extend the production and sales of unconventional oil (tar sand, shale oil and gas) on both sides of the Atlantic. The free trade and investments policies structure our economies and societies in such a way that they become highly dependent on imports and exports of fossil fuel, while simultaneously limiting the ability to implement energy transition policies²⁸. If we are to impose our solutions, we need to stop contributing to the agenda of “business as usual”. It isn’t in everybody’s interest to change the system. It is not in our interest for everyone to continue acting as they are²⁹.

Change our strategy: from CoP21 to Paris2015

Such deep societal and economic change can not be achieved in the blink of an eye. That is obvious. We will not achieve this and we shall not be able to impose this in a UN conference like the CoP21 of Paris2015. That is also self-evident. Is it enough to make the perspectives less legitimate and hide our ambitions under the blanket of realo-pragmatism that we are being invited by the heads of State to approve, and that is so lacking in ambition and low in its demands? Unlike some people, we do not believe in this. Quite the contrary. NGOs and social and ecological movements should set themselves objectives of re-including the negotiations and policies on climate in a generalised battle that aims to deeply transform productivist and devastating neoliberal capitalism, and that pervades the entire planet. The fact that there is nothing tangible, nothing much to win, and nothing that rises to the level of the challenge in the negotiations changes the hand that has been dealt. Most civil society organisations already expressed this at the Warsaw conference in 2013, by deciding to leave the negotiations³⁰. Certain international institutions, such as the World Bank decided not to wait for an international agreement within the UN to start implementing climate projects³¹; this therefore encourages us not to focus solely on the UN conferences on climate change.

By continuing to act as they are, governments are

telling international public opinion that nothing much can be won in terms of ambitions at CoP21. By so doing, they are providing civil society with the opportunity to leave the “*text in brackets*”³² in the negotiations, and concentrate on a long-term strategy, of which Paris2015 will be just one stage, an echo chamber that aims to bring about lasting change in the balance of power in favour of a large-scale social and ecological transition. To some extent, it is in the name of the urgency of climate action that we desperately need to focus not on the UN Convention on climate, and stop getting lost in the technical aspects of the negotiations. It would thus be possible to find the requisite time and energy, and use Paris2015 as a key moment in the perspective of accumulating the strength and energy that we will absolutely need in the months that will follow. Obviously this doesn't mean that we should totally stop taking any interest in the UN negotiations. On the contrary, it implies that we should use this opportunity to refocus our attention and impose our own agenda and wage a whole series of battles we can win and that are not necessarily played out within the UN. In a way, shifting for CoP21 to Paris2015 implies not lessening our struggles against climate change in the UN negotiations, and on the contrary extending them to include a whole series of existing issues and conflicts that are not systematically included.

From climate justice to Alternatiba and Blockadia

The evaluation carried out by the Climate Justice Action³³ and Climate Justice Now³⁴ already identified that the construction of a global climate justice movement should not depend on the agenda of the global summits: after the success of the non-violent civil disobedience action Reclaim Power³⁵ on 16th December 2009, there was commitment to decentralise and disseminate the organisation of peoples' assemblies at local and regional levels³⁶. The aim is to fight projects that damage climate and implement direct solutions through translocal forms of solidarity - solidarity between struggles or alternatives that are anchored in local initiatives – as a vector of the construction of a global movement. This is a huge challenge and is ever-present: how can we relocalise and anchor our imagination and mobilisation in the experience and concrete realities, including of our daily lives, in a perspective of rediscovering the power of acting together³⁷? The power of these acts will be all the stronger and greater if we are able to move beyond the logic of awareness-building and citizens' mobilisations that are undoubtedly too linked to an heuristic analysis of science and expertise; it's not enough to be aware that climate change exists to actually take action. Although the many experts' reports do not mechanically imply implementing measures and

policies that rise to the challenge, they have not led to generalised citizens' mobilisations either. On the contrary, they have probably led to incredulity more than to commitment to act.

Two citizens' dynamics appear to us to contribute to the process of relocalisation of struggles and imagination; they also include the perspective of a global climate justice movement, as they confront the structural causes of global warming. The first is grounded in the “frontline struggles” that aim to halt the extractive industry from expanding (from shale oil and gas to new mining projects), and the construction of new useless infrastructure that is imposed and ill-adapted (airports, motorways, dams, stadia etc). As a result of the powerful mobilisations in North America against building new pipelines for exporting tar sands oil from Alberta in Canada; this new dynamic of international mobilisation is called Blockadia³⁸. The flip side of this coin is the dynamic of innovation, development, strengthening and highlighting of concrete alternative experiences, be they local or regional or global – that all aim to effect deep change in our production models as well as the consumption patterns that have thus far proven unsustainable. By using the name coined in October 2013 in Bayonne (in the French Basque country) by Bizi! And dozens of Basque, Spanish and French organisations we could, by extension call the citizens' movement that is up and running Alternatiba; it is now taking various forms in the four corners of our planet.

These two dynamics clearly represent an eco-territorial change in social struggles, to use the term coined by the Argentinian sociologist Maristella Svampa³⁹ to characterise the rise in struggles in Latin America that combine the language of ecologists and the practice of resistance and alternatives grounded in territories. Territory is not understood in this sense as confetti to be saved from the damage of productivism, industrialisation or neo-liberal globalisation. On the contrary, it is a space for building resistance and alternatives; in other words the place for imagining and experimenting how to reach beyond existing, unsustainable economic, financial and technological models. Here there is no space for selfish attitudes like “not in my back yard”. Preservation, promotion and resilience of all territories make up the overall picture. To some extent, the mobilisation against shale gas in France and many other countries that are calling for “*Neither here nor anywhere*”⁴⁰, especially when they are combined with the demands for radical energy transition, are all part and parcel of the same logic.

Enlargement and radicalisation for imposing an ecological and social transition

From our point of view, although these two processes have distinctly different points of departure; they open up spaces that both enlarge and radicalise the citizens' dynamics for climate justice. They enlarge it because they are grounded respectively in the opposition to the devastating project that is affecting our daily lives, and the development of experiences that improve them and provide us with a glimpse of tomorrow's world. These two processes therefore make it possible to include fringes of the population that would otherwise not become involved in the classical activist spheres. There is no need to be an expert in climatology to become involved in these dynamics. And these processes both allow the juxtaposition of all kinds of practice, tactics and strategies⁴¹: it is possible to become involved without having to conform to any activist mould – something often perceived and felt as being overly restrictive. This enlargement is al a process of radicalisation, although it doesn't forcibly involve "radical" participants: confronting the power of those who promote climate-destructive projects or the difficulty of rolling out concrete alternatives enables people to feel that the struggle against climate change can not be solved by mere discourse on the unification of humankind, of overcoming our differences.

Shale gas and oil, expanding the borders of extractivism, small and large useless projects, free-trade agreements and investments, projects that financialise nature, agro-industry and GMOS, nuclear power, increased inequalities, the unbridled lobbying of multinationals, banks that kill climate, local struggles and global battles to weaken all those who are fighting against climate change, and the list goes on... As do all the battles to implement concrete alternative experiences: food sovereignty and peasant agroecology, short distribution chains, relocalisation of the economy; job-sharing and fairer distribution of wealth, insulation of housing, social and ecological changes to production that ensure jobs are protected, the re-appropriation of the Commons, repairing and recycling, waste reduction, environmentally-friendly transport and sustainable mobility, eco-renovation, renewable energies etc. In Blockadia and Alteratiba dynamics clearly state that the ecological and social transition require deep structural changes. These changes are rejected by the elite who do not wish to see their political and economic systems changed, or to lose their domination and power. If we are to change the stranglehold of the multinationals and private interests on our lives, nature and our future, we need to build these struggles and alternatives to strengthen them so that they become unavoidable.

Make Paris2015 a "Seattle of false solutions" and a "Cochabamba of our solutions"!

If we want Paris2015 to become a "Seattle of false

solutions" it implies working for it to become a watershed moment for climate justice, just like Seattle and Cochabamba were for the Altermonidalist movement, in order to shake and bury all the techno-scientific and neoliberal promises if we can. These promises continue to state that new technologies and investments made by the multinational as well as market mechanisms can solve the climate crisis. The reference to Seattle is an echo of the civil disobedience actions that we need to demonstrate how illegitimate all the false solutions that are promoted by the UN conferences on climate change really are. The reference to Cochabamba⁴² refers to one of the watershed moments of the struggle against the multinationals who tried to re-appropriate water, and that led to over 180 cases of remunicipalisation of water in the world over the last 15 years⁴³. This all implies making Paris2015 a moment among others of building an international movement of climate justice that will be able to mobilise in the long-term and grow in strength, accumulate small and big victories while telling a story that mobilises people. It is less focussed on "*text in brackets*"⁴⁴, and more on our own agenda, that of building of our "actions and alternatives".

This reference to Seattle is nothing new. In Copenhagen in 2009, we already referred to "a Seattle-like moment" as we were supported by a massive, dynamic citizens' mobilisation that blended classical initiatives (demonstration, people's summit etc.) and large-scale actions of civil disobedience (the Reclaim Power action on 16th December) and a rather successful linkage between what was happening inside and outside the negotiations. Nevertheless, by holding the big demonstration at the weekend between the two weeks of negotiations, and the actions before the end of the summit, be it at Copenhagen or elsewhere, international civil society ends up telling the same story, irrespective of its slogan: "*it's up to you, the governments to act and fight efficiently against the effects of climate change*". This is the same as handing the government the keys, and waiting for them to act. And because they are not acting, or not acting enough, or not taking the right actions, fatigue and disappointment are always the feelings at the end of the day.

Having the last word!

Another option would be to build the different times for mobilising in such a way as to have the last word in Paris. If we decide that Paris2015 will be a stage in the building the mobilisation of climate justice, and that it should resonate in a way that will help our struggles to move forwards and gain strength, why not hold the most important mobilisation at the end of the negotiations? Thus the anger born of the mistakes and limits of the negotiations could feed

into the demonstrations and massive civil disobedience actions that we could organise at the end of the negotiations. We want to stimulate all the energy during the very last days “*you, the governments, are speaking and negotiating for the worst; you, the multinationals are using the negotiations to maintain your stranglehold on our future; we, the people are marching acting to change the system and will never give up!*”. A proposal of this kind implies not giving up any hope of influencing the UN, the States and the negotiations. Firstly because it is possible to organise decentralised mobilisations of this kind throughout 2015, including at the beginning of the negotiations. On the other hand, because situating the massive mobilisations during the final days leaves the possibility open for derailing the negotiations if it is deemed relevant to do so.

But any such proposal tells a totally different story from that of demonstrating during the two weeks of negotiations with a view to bringing pressure to bear on the UN, the States and the negotiations. If it were

enough to demonstrate a few days before the end of the negotiations to influence the outcomes, Copenhagen, which was the biggest demonstration ever organised on climate challenges at the time, would have led to a totally different outcome. Leaving the biggest citizens’ mobilisations to the end of CoP21 in Paris2015 implies giving ourselves the possibility of having the final word, rather than leaving it to others. It means stopping being the spectators and commentators that we have been in the last hours of previous negotiations, and on the contrary, using the uncertainty that surrounds us to become opinion leaders and imposing our ideas, our perspectives on public space. This would mean no disappointment of bitter taste at the end of the negotiations; quite the contrary: energy and determination would be generated and communicated by the successful citizen’s mobilisations. And this would allow us to build the future of the post-Paris2015 in our countries, territories and respective sectors. This is more than disappointment of bitter taste allows us to do. Because “*we will never give up!*”.

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- 1 Speech by Laurent Fabius – Presenting the IPCC report (30th September 2013) - <http://attac.org/l/46h>
- 2 Understood as the level of greenhouse gas emissions “compatible with the capacity of planet to absorb them”
- 3 It is important to note that highly binding agreements are being negotiated in trade and investments
- 4 c.f.: <http://attac.org/l/46g>
- 5 http://report.mitigation2014.org/spm/ipcc_wg3_ar5_summary-for-policymakers_approved.pdf
- 6 <http://www.unep.org/pdf/UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2013.pdf>
- 7 Civil society is demanding between 55 and 80% reduction in emissions by 2030 for the “developed countries”
- 8 c.f.: <http://blogs.mediapart.fr/blog/maxime-combes/121114/climat-lannonce-etats-unis-chine-est-elle-historique-pas-vraiment>
- 9 <http://www.chrisshopepolicy.com/2014/11/the-us-china-climate-deal-dont-get-carried-away/>
- 10 c.f.: <https://france.attac.org/actus-et-medias/salle-de-presse/article/climat-effets-d-annonce-et-vrais>
- 11 “The Green Fund will be a significant opportunity for companies to move towards energy transition. The green fund will also be growth opportunity”.
- 12 c.f.: <http://attac.org/l/46i>
- 13 c.f. the following critical analysis: <http://blogs.mediapart.fr/edition/transition-energetique/article/190914/face-au-changement-climatique-une-necessaire-clarification-strategique>
- 14 c.f. the following analysis: http://www.mediapart.fr/files/Memo_Sommet_Ban_Kimoon.pdf
- 15 In Durban in 2012, Anjali Appadurai, a Canadian student declared: “You’ve been negotiating since I was born” and “You forgot to make commitments, you lacked objectives, and you have broken your promises”
- 16 c.f.: <https://france.attac.org/nos-publications/notes-et-rapports-37/article/nouveaux-mecanismes-financiers>
- 17 c.f.: <https://france.attac.org/actus-et-medias/le-flux/articles/il-est-temps-de-mettre-fin-au-marche-du-carbone-europeen>
- 18 c.f. « climate-smart agriculture »: http://www.mediapart.fr/files/Note_Climate_Smart_Agriculture_vfin.pdf
- 19 Negotiations are going on under the Durban Platform, adopted in late 2011. According to the New York Times, Todd Stern, the chief US negotiator said in Davos in early 2012, “the Durban platform was promising because of what it did not say”. After all, revealed Trevor Houser, “there is no mention of historic responsibility or per capita emissions. There is no mention of economic development as the priority for developing countries. There is no mention of a difference between developed and developing country action”.
- 20 c.f. preamble of the Charter of the United Nations: <http://www.un.org/fr/documents/charter/preamb.shtml>
- 21 Where you criticised it – as was our case – or supported it, the European leadership in the fight against climate change is based on two pillars: the objectives of cutting emissions and the carbon market - the European Emissions Trading System (ETS) – which is considered the key instrument for achieving these cuts. In 2014 the objectives in terms of emissions cuts for 2020 and 2030 are inconsequential and the carbon market doesn’t work and can’t be reformed
- 22 Without even mentioning here the contradictions between their international commitments and national policies.
- 23 Climate issues are often perceived as distant from the daily action capacity of the majority of the population
- 24 c.f.: <https://france.attac.org/se-mobiliser/vers-la-cop21/article/apres-le-succes-de-la-marche-pour>
- 25 c.f.: <http://blogs.mediapart.fr/blog/alternatiba/271014/alternatiba-continue-d-avancer>
- 26 “This Changes Everything : Capitalism vs the Climate” was published in September in the United States and in several English-speaking countries. It will be available in France in Spring 2015
- 27 c.f.: Our statement on www.france.attac.org
- 28 c.f.: https://france.attac.org/IMG/pdf/fiche_ttip_climat_energie.pdf
- 29 c.f. : <http://blogs.mediapart.fr/edition/transition-energetique/article/190914/face-au-changement-climatique-une-necessaire-clarification-strategique>
- 30 c.f.: <http://blogs.mediapart.fr/blog/attac-france/211113/climat-les-mouvements-et-ong-quitent-les-negociations-explications>
- 31 It would mean the implementation of a global carbon price through the connection of local, national and regional carbon markets and carbon taxes experiences.
- 32 Literally “texts in brackets”. In negotiations the proposals of texts where all parties are not in agreement are bracketed. It has become a standard joke to make fun of the “bracketed” text that is often longer than the parts that have been validated.
- 33 Climate Justice Action was an activist network of direct action during the Copenhagen conference: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_Justice_Action
- 34 Climate Justice Now! is, with CAN, one of the two international coalitions of networks and organizations, recognized by the United Nations: CJN highlights the importance of social justice and fights against the “false solutions”, including carbon finance - <http://www.climate-justice-now.org/fr/>
- 35 c.f. this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_3Jh5pyiR30
- 36 c.f. this text of Olivier de Marcellus, CJN and CJA activist: <http://www.commoner.org.uk/?p=88>
- 37 Jade Lindgaard, *Je crise climatique*, Editions LaDécouverte, Paris, 2014
- 38 This is also the term chosen by Naomi Klein in her new book
- 39 Maristella Svampa, *Consenso de los Commodities, Giro Ecoterritorial y Pensamiento crítico en América Latina*, <http://maristellasvampa.net/archivos/ensayo59.pdf>
- 40 c.f. *Let's frack the fracking companies*, <http://www.ejolt.org/2012/09/global-frackdown-on-fracking-companies/>
- 41 The anti-fracking movement could not have achieved such successes if it had not been able to include different tactics and practices: legal actions, political pressure, grassroots mobilisation, national events, disobedience actions.
- 42 c.f. : Franck Poupeau, «La guerre de l'eau. Cochabamba, Bolivie, 1999-2001», *Agone*, n°26-27:133-140, 2002
- 43 c.f. this report of the French transnational observatory : <http://www.tni.org/briefing/here-stay-water-remunicipalisation-global-trend>
- 44 Literally “texts in brackets”. In negotiations the proposals of texts where all parties are not in agreement are bracketed. It has become a standard joke to make fun of the “bracketed” text that is often longer than the parts that have been validated.