



International Seminar on Corporate Power
Panama City, August 2, 2018

Conclusions and Follow up

The main objective of the seminar held in Panama City on the night of August 1 and throughout August 2 was to comprehensively address the mechanisms that strengthen corporate power while connecting them with the global policies of Public Services International – PSI including the struggles in favor of fiscal justice and against privatization and free trade agreements.

The activity sought to analyze how transnationals capture democracy, manipulate public opinion and seek to control personal data to be used in accordance with their own private interests.

Currently, corporations transcend even States in terms of influence on global governance, becoming the strongest instrument of power in terms of attacks on human, labour and union rights.

The objective of the seminar was to coordinate actions to confront this power, in an integrated manner with the guidelines of the PSI World Plan of Action.

The event was held during the meeting of the PSI Inter-American Regional Executive Committee (IAMREC), which took place in Panama City on August 3. Conducting the seminar in preparation for IAMREC allowed the leaders to deepen their understanding of these issues and could contribute directly to the development of the regional action plan including treatment of the key questions of: How to coordinate all the simultaneous fronts against corporate power while establishing alliances with civil society? How, at the very least, to tame this monster?

Panelists from Asia, Europe, Africa, and the United States participated in the activity. The members of IAMREC were present, including several representatives of sectors organized in PSI's sectors. For the first time a regional PSI event was livestreamed, something that will become a normal practice. A video containing video highlights is being edited.

The program of the seminar and the presentations of the panelists are available at the following link: <http://world-psi.org/en/corporate-power-international-seminar>

At the end of the activity, the following conclusions and action proposals were highlighted at the closing table:

- The seminar was very well evaluated by the participants, who commented on the importance of continuing to work on this issue articulating the various fronts of struggles against transnationals, and also the importance of IAMRECON reflecting on the issue.

- The suggestion to build training programs with a comprehensive vision on the subject presented at the opening table of the seminar on the night of August 1.
- It was pointed out that the proposals of ICRICT should be disseminated more among our affiliates, explaining what proposals for international tax reform exist. Considering that it is not effective to fight only for tax reforms at the national level because transnationals would continue to evade paying. The importance of the formation of the intergovernmental committee in the UN to promote an international tax reform was highlighted.
- The need to disseminate the book on tax evasion produced by PSI and Latindadd, with support from the FES, which makes a case study of four countries, was also emphasized.
- It was assessed that in the region priority was given to the intersection between fiscal justice and gender in 2018, and it was suggested that in 2019 the issue of subsidies and exemptions that governments offer to businesses should be addressed: the impacts, consequences, advantages offered etc.
- The need to strengthen the campaign against the Investor State Dispute Settlement mechanisms was highlighted, giving examples of countries in the region harmed by ISDS.
- The importance of including ILO convention 169 in our fight against free trade agreements was highlighted, which guarantees the right of indigenous peoples to be consulted on issues that result in major changes and impacts on territories.
- We should to use the concept of "owners of the world" in the G20 meetings and in the protests in the streets, as some panelists have called the controllers of those companies.
- The importance of analyzing the conditions of the IMF loan to the government of Argentina, which opens the doors to many others, was also highlighted. The ideological character of this measure was underlined and the need to organize protests was raised.
- On the EDF, due to the existence of a framework agreement that defines fiscal transparency, it is necessary to investigate and monitor the possible practice of tax evasion by this transnational present in several countries in Latin America, such as Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, the United States and Canada.
- The need to mainstream the struggles in the various sectors with the fight against corporate power was identified, identifying among the different fronts of this last struggle the one that favors the involvement of each sector.
- The importance of identifying in which countries are currently discussing legislation that enables the adoption of the principle of net neutrality and, consequently, the democratization of the use of the internet, so that support and involvement of affiliates can be requested.
- There was also debate about the foundations that adopt friendly names to the public but are controlled directly by transnationals or millionaires. One of the examples is the Open Society, by tycoon George Soros. It is necessary to look for critical materials on this subject, which clearly show what these foundations represent. At the same time, it is crucial to disseminate the institutes of union origin that support the union struggle, as well as the NGOs with which we

have alliances, including the Center for International Corporate Tax Accountability and Research (CICTAR), a research institute on non-payment of taxes by corporations, which PSI established in May 2018 in coalition with affiliates and allied global organizations.

- We must closely monitor the issue of the income of transnational health companies in the countries of the region.
- It was suggested to support journalists who are defenders of a democratic and free press and who fight against the so-called "fake news" of the mass media, and that, for that reason, they are persecuted.
- Likewise, in the discussions about the future of work, the need to identify transnationals which try to influence the debate according to their interests was underlined.