Where Do We Go from Rio? The Implications of the Third World Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+ 20)

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On 14 September2012, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) adopted the Arusha Declaration on Africa's Post Rio+20 Strategy for Sustainable Development. The Arusha Declaration outlines the commitments, actions and programmes that will facilitate the implementation of the major decisions of the Rio+20 Summit in Africa. *Inter alia*, AMCEN undertakes to initiate an African 'green economy' partnership, to facilitate coordinated support for member-states and implement the global partnership for action on the 'green economy'; review the African 10-Year Framework on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP on SCP); strengthen and consolidate commitments to promote sustainable development. Flagship programmes to be initiated under the Arusha Declaration include: Ecosystem-based Adaptation Programme for Africa; African Programme on Sustainable Energy Development; Integrated Waste Management Programme for Africa; Africa Integrated Environmental Assessment for Sustai-nable Development Planning; a sustainable land management and desertification programme in Africa; African Programme on Biodiversity and Ecosystems; and African Partnership for Capacity Building, Technology Transfer and Skills Development (Mukazi, 2012). The Arusha Declaration on Africa's Post Rio+20 Strategy for Sustainable Development is an unconditional endorse-ment of the outcomes of Rio+20. What does all this mean for sustainable develo-pment and environmental governance in Africa?

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), inaugurated at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, took place at a time which is historically significant for Africa. First is the context, in historical perspective. To resolve the first crisis of industrial capitalism at the end of the 19th century (the great depression from 1873 onwards), European factory owners desperately required new markets for their manufactures, and wealthy entrepreneurs were in search of new enterprises to invest in. The newly created but out-of-work working classes (peasants, having lost their lands in the enclosures movement, and now also unemployed as factory jobs dried up during the crisis) desired new locales to migrate to (Alden Wily 2012). The stage was set for the concentration and globalized expansion of capital, expressed in the first wave of accumulation by dispossession in Africa (Amin 2011), first formalized into the General Act of the Berlin Conference on West Africa (1885) and later culminating in the carving up of the continent in a process designed to create new markets and provide cheap land and labour for the colonizing powers.

Segue to the present. In 2012, the second systemic crisis of capitalist accumulation, starting in the 1970s and leading to the financial meltdown of 2008 (Amin 2011) has left major investors with trillions of dollars on hand and in a desperate search for new ways to make the huge returns that characterized the 1980s and 90s. As with the previous crisis, 'capital responded with a double movement of concentration and globalization' (Amin 2011). This restructuring of capitalism in response to the systemic crises of accumulation has several features: 1) the intensification of the imperialist globalization process, with capital moving out of national markets and uncom-petitive fixed national investments; 2) a growing shift out of productive capital into speculative financial capital; 3) fixed capital investments and acquisitions, including through privatization) in the developing world; and 4) the re-definition of the state to reduce taxes and increase the capacity to push through neo-liberal reforms (Cronin2006). This has seen a shift from an economy based primarily on the production of goods and non-financial services to one characterized by financialisation, and the growth of a shadow industry of hedge funds, private equity firms, and financial innovations such as derivatives (Tabb 2012).

Many investors see increasing scarcity in a number of natural resources as an opportunity to reap those large profits and have begun to take over food, energy and metal markets. Not satisfied with these essential markets, investors are working with national governments and international agencies to create new markets for other aspects of nature. Water, land, carbon, species, habitats and biodiversity markets are being created, not so much to protect natural resources, but to provide new ways for the financial sector to profit (Murombedzi 2012[forthcoming]), and because they are not produced for sale in the first place, they can only be fictitious commodities (Polanyi 1944).

This then is the context in which Rio+20 was convened, after the financial meltdown of September 2008 and at a time when the new wave of appropriation of the resources of the global South to support consumption by the citizens of the North is increasing exponentially. The 'market' is increasingly represented as the solution to contemporary environmental problems and the challenges of 'sustainable development'. Rio+20wastypical of this trend and is representative of a deep seated transformation in international environmental governance favoring 'market forces'. This is in keeping with the established trends in the UNCED. The Rio Earth Summit of 1992 was the culmination of a 1983 UN General Assembly decision to create the World Commission on Environment and Development (The Brundtland Commission) to analyse the planet's environmental situation and its relationships to development goals in response to the global ecological crisis. The Commission's report, "Our Common Future" (Brundtland 1987) provided the basis for negotiations at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Important outcomes of the Rio Earth Summit included the 'Rio Principles', landmark conventions on climate change and biodiversity and commitments on poverty eradication and social justice.

The Brundtland report documents the environmental problems facing the planet and concludes that every single life supporting system – the biosphere – is in decline. 'Our Common Future' recognizes that the neo-liberal context of contemporary development models is the principal cause of unsustainability, but its proposed solutions do not transcend this model, proposing instead a response that emphasizes more growth The report also introduces the concept of sustainable development, a type of development through which it would be possible to maintain and increase growth without placing future generations at risk. Sustainable development would make it possible to eliminate poverty and re-launch economic growth in a sustainable way through technological trans-formations that would enable production with less and less material and energy input (Lander 2012).

Since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, a series of United Nations conventions, aimed at stemming the environmental crisis, were adopted on biodiversity, desertification and climate change. However, none of these purported solutions addressed the root of the problem in the hegemonic model of civilization and its logic of limitless growth. Instead, the solutions proposed through the UNCED process embraced and promoted neoliberal strategies and inexorably led to the commodification of nature with its attendant problems which will be explored below (Amin 2011; The World Rainforest Movement 2012). To be sure, the concept of sustainable development continues to be a major political and ideological success in that it 'provided new legitimacy to neoliberal globalization, which began to present itself as sustainable, despite its overwhelmingly devastating dynamic' (Lander 2012).

Because of the failure to address the structural causes of unsustainability, 20 years after Rio the environmental crisis is more acute, each and every one of the problems described in the Brundtland report is now far more severe. Conservative estimates show that industrial gas emissions have increased by almost 50 per cent; more than 300 million ha of forest have been cleared; many communities in developing countries have lost rights and access to lands and forests to large multinational corporations acting in collaboration with national governments; although poverty has been reduced in a few industrializing countries, nearly 20 per cent of the world's population remains in absolute poverty (Watts and Ford, 2012; Global Race Equality Action Trust, 2012), and more continue to be impoverished through land and resource expropriations Journal of Peasant Studies, 2012).. The commodification and privatization of the environment has accelerated. This is evident from increased 'green grabs', land grabs, new forms of land and resource expropriation through carbon sequestration, water privatization, and the creation of new protected areas on lands expropriated from the poor and marginalized, and the suppression of indigenous forms of production and consumption.

'The economy, the wealth of nations, social services and nature are public goods. Yet the developing world's forests, pastures, and farmlands are being given and sold to private interests – right out from under the feet of the poor. Farmlands are being purchased by industrial economies to ensure their long-term food supply. Forests are being turned into the private carbon storage bins to enable industrial nations to burn away the world's fossil fuels. Our first decade of the new millennium is witnessing a surge in the privatization of nature – under an ideology that the market is the best mechanism for managing the world's natural heritage. These enclosures are expropriating the basis of life and livelihood for Asia's, Africa's and Latin America's poor' (Murombedzi & Ribot 2012).

The Rio+20 Earth Summit was convened to declare a 'pathway for a sustainable century'. At Rio+20,the concept of 'sustainable development' was repackaged as the 'green economy', a concept developed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2008 which advocates switching to renewable fuel while maintaining the same systems of production, trade, finance and consumption (World Rainforest Movement 2012).The main issues under negotiation at Rio+20 included the mechanisms of transition to the Green Economy; the development of associated. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) out of the MDGs; sustainable production and consumption (SPC); the status of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) within the UN system, rights, fossil fuel subsidies, a High Commissioner for Future Generations, the future of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), the Means of Implementation and the Rio Principles.

The main outcomes of the summit include proposals for a transition to a green economy, a plan to define Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and statements of intent with reference to issues such as the resource rights of the poor, and reaffirmation of the Rio Principles of sustainable development. Unable to agree on the themes for the SGDs, the summit agreed instead to create an 'open working group' of 30 nations to define the SDGs by September 2013, in time for subsequent integration intothe MDGs in 2015.

Campaigners such as Greenpeace, GREAT Trust, Council for Afrika International and Afrika Liberation Society, among others, have condemned the 2012 Earth Summit as 'a failure of epic proportions to the world's majority citizens, to whom it must be transparently accountable' (Global Race Equality Action Trust 2012).The final outcome document of the Summit, "The Future We Want", is a plan to set global sustainable development goals and other measures to strengthen global environmental management, promote a 'green economy', improve food security and enhance the conservation of ecosystems. Reflecting the deep divisions between the developed and developing countries, the lack of agreement and leadership (including the absence of most of the G20 leaders from Rio+20), the outcome document has been described as a wishy-washy document, lacking unequivocal national, regional and global leadership and without clear resource commitments. 'It is not a declaration, or even a "road map", but simply the "Rio+20 Outcome Document" (Griffin 2012).

'The Future We Want' has been criticized by civil society, developing country governments and indigenous peoples for 'pandering to corporate interests, being seriously shortsighted in its understanding of the scale and urgency of environmental and development crises, and lacking in ambition and detail to address these challenges' (Griffin, 2012).As with the Rio Earth Summit before it, Rio+20 failed to address the terminal crisis of the neo-liberal hegemonic pattern of civilization by failing to question the global operation of the dominant political and economic relationships, but instead, continuing to view the sustainability crises as 'market failures'. As with the Rio+10 Summit in 2002 and the Durban COP 17 Climate Summit in 2011 (Bond, 2012), Rio+20 re-emphasizes the market and accelerated growth as the solutions to these 'markets failures'. It introduces the concept of 'Green Economy'to define a new development framework which replaces the failed sustainable development.

Through a transition to the green economy, it will be possible to re-launch the global economy with rates of growth far higher than the current model (UNEP, 2008; Lander, 2012). It will be possible to create more and better employment, reduce poverty, reach greater levels of equality, and meet the millennium objectives. These outcomes would be achieved in a sustainable way that recognizes the value of nature and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. This in turn would reduce pressure on the natural environment, allowing it to recover, while at the same time creating new and profitable areas of investment that contribute to a resolution of the global crisis of capital (UNEP 2008).

The UNEP position (the UNEP report was the basis for the draft text negotiated at Rio+20) is decidedly pro-market, a historical and apolitical. It completely ignores any consideration of the significance of the extraordinarily unequal power relations that exist in today's world, and the interests that are at play in the operation of this global system (Lander 2012). The green economy proposal benefits the large capitalist economies and offers an opportunity for corpo-rations to resume the accumulation of capital and reap greater profits through both productive and speculative activities, with investment redirected towards nature ('natural capital'), the 'carbon emissions market', as well as new, supposedly clean technologies. The Green Economy thus seeks to create space for corporations to explore new techno-logical solutions to the climate and other environmental crises. The efficacy of these so-called solutions – which include carbon capture and sequestration, biochar, solar reflectors, algae blooms and 'clean energy' sources (such as nuclear energy, 'clean' coal, natural gas, hydro-power, biofuels, and biomass and so on) – has been questioned, with many of them already demonstrated to be 'unclean' (Bond 2012).

This 'green economy', defined by UNEP as 'an economy that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities…which is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive', was the subject of contentious debates at Rio+20. Developing countries wanted a $30bn per year fund to help in the transition to sustainability, which developed countries, wracked by the accumulation crisis, could not concretely support (Global Race Equality Action Trust 2012). Further, the summit was characterized by the ever present skepticism and suspicions of eco-imperialism among the countries of the global south , who felt Europe was pushing this agenda on the developing world in order to stimulate the economies of its member states. Consequently, there was no agreement on the pathways for a transition to the 'green economy', with the final outcome being simply an encouragement to all countries to find their own ways to a green economy.

The 'Green Economy' agenda is to expand the reach of finance capital and integrate nature into the market by putting a monetary 'value' or a 'price' on biomass, biodiversity and ecosystems functions – such as storing carbon, pollinating crops, or filtering water – in order to integrate these 'services' as tradable units into the financial market. The concept of payments for environmental services, operationalized through a UNEP initiative, The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), is instrumental in assigning an economic value to biodiversity. 'Environmental services' and 'trade in environmental services' play a key role in the 'green economy', and will result in greater commodification and privatization of nature and ecosystems, through the integration of their functions (defined as 'services') into financial markets'(World Rainforest Move-ment[WRM] 2012).

Carbon markets are a major initiative in this financialization of nature. The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) mandated by the Kyoto Protocol is a framework that enables companies that reduce emissions to sell them, as bonds, to other companies who find it more advantageous to use these pieces of paper as a license to continue polluting (see WRM 2012). Through the CDM, limits to carbon emissions have been placed on nations. Those that exceed their quota are then able to take up the slack of those who have not utilized their quota. However, the end result is that total pollution has not been reduced, as those responsible for the bulk of green-house gas emissions have been able to continue doing so by purporting to be polluting on behalf of those who would otherwise have not released extra carbon into the atmosphere.

By 2010, much of the growth in the volume of trade in carbon happened in the secondary carbon derivatives market. The carbon trade industry is controlled by financial markets and the major players are the Buldge Bracket investment banks. The Buldge Bracket refers to the world's largest and most profitable multinational investment banks, including Deutsche Bank, Morgan Stanley, Barclays Capital, Rabobank, BNP Paribas Fortis, Sumitomo, Kommunalkredit, Cantor Fitzgerald (WRM 2012). Financialization has meant that the benefits of the carbon markets have accrued to financial institutions in the form of profits, largely failing in their *raison d'etre* to reduce carbon emissions.

Clearly then the 'Green Economy' agenda is a manipulation of the ecological and social crises to create new opportunities to extend the reach of capital into nature (Lander 2011). Rather than addressing the real structural causes of inequality and injustices, capital is using 'green' language to launch an aggressive new round of consolidation and expansion, in alliance with governments. Corporations and the financial sector need governments to institutionalize the new rules of the 'green economy' to safeguard them against risks and to create the institutional framework for the financialization of nature. In this regard, a genuine green economy will not be possible without political domination based on the projection of military strength and power (Lander 2011; Bond 2012).

The tendency towards a market oriented green economy based on corporate securitizing, commodifying and financializing of nature deviates from the intended meaning of green economy by de-emphasizing the 'green' idea of environmental consciousness while emphasizing the 'economy'(Angbazo 2012).While the Rio+20 agreement urges nations to develop mechanisms to place a higher value on nature, including alternatives to GDP as a measure of wealth that account more for environmental and social factors, and efforts to assess and pay for 'environmental services' provided by nature, such as carbon sequestration and habitat protection (Watts and Ford

2012), such an approach would only serve to buttress the environmental markets ideology. Moreover, there was no agreement regarding the Means of Implementation (MOI) of the transition to the green economy. The outcome docu-ment may, in fact, represent a step backwards from the original Rio summit on the issue of technology transfer to developing countries.

It is necessary to subject the concept to class analysis in order to understand the political processes and forces pushing for market-based solutions. In particular, political analysis needs to take account of the democracy implications of the global re-constitution of power between states, the corporations and markets, and civil society. The Environmental Justice Organizations, Liabilities and Trade (EJOLT) statement, condemning the Green Economy outcomes typifies the cynicism of civil society: 'The promises are striking: conserving nature, overcoming poverty, providing equity and creating jobs. But the means and philosophy behind it look all too familiar' (Joan Martinez-Alier and Joachim Spangenberg, in Bond 2012).The faith in markets to regulate industrial gas emissions has already been shown to be misplaced. In the few months after COP 17, the Green Climate Fund, the design of which included mechanisms to incentivize private sector and market mechanisms to fund climate change responses, is practically empty. The $100 billion in Copenhagen has not materialized beyond some minor commitments made by South Korea, Germany and Denmark. The emissions trade is failing. In Europe, the ETS has all but collapsed (Bond 2012). The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) is not working. The international market in CDM credits collapsed in 2009 and 2010. The value of primary CDM credits traded fell to US$1.5 billion – the lowest figure since the Kyoto Protocol came into force, in 2005 (*REDD Monitor* 2011).

Another Kyoto Protocol mechanism, the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), seeks to place a monetary value on the carbon stored in trees. This is designed to serve as an incentive for forest preservation in countries of the south, since it will be more profitable to keep trees standing than to clear them. REDD proposes that the emissions supposedly 'reduced' by preventing deforestation be traded on the carbon markets (WRM 2012). However, REDD credits have still not been accepted by the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS), which currently accounts for 97 per cent of the existing carbon market. This means they must be traded on the unregulated voluntary carbon market, and mainly served to 'greenwash' the image of corporations (WRM 2012). REDD has created a situation where small forest communities are confronted by large corporations seeking access to forests for carbon sequestration. With the support of national governments, this has already led to the loss of rights, access to forests and livelihoods by many communities (Murombedzi and Ribot 2012). In Africa, the impacts of these 'green grabs' – land and forest expropriations for purposes of carbon sequestration or the production of agro-fuels – have been extensively documented (see e.g. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 2010).

In the year leading up to Rio+20, many developing countries and CSOs had vigorously campaigned for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), addressing the three pillars of sustainable development (society, economy and environment);to be defined and agreed on by the end of the MDGs era in 2015. The idea for new SDGs – including themes on climate change, water and sanitation, oceans and seas, energy, and sustainable cities – was proposed in 2011 by Colombia with the backing of Guatemala. The SDGs would apply to both developed and developing countries on the basis of the Rio principle on common but differentiated responsibilities. Although the SDGs are lauded as a key outcome of Rio+20, the outcome document does not identify any thematic areas for the SDGs, suggesting instead a plan to work towards the themes through an expert working group of 30 nations to establish, define and quantify the SDGs and determine the time frames to reach them. The groups report will be tabled in September 2013, and the resultant SDGs will be blended with Millennium Development Goals in 2015. As many observers have noted, these new goals will inevitably be a compromise between the interests of developed vs. those of developing countries. At Rio+20, the G77 group of developing countries' position was that the goals must include strong social and economic elements, including financing and technology transfer. This position attempts to give equal prominence to the three pillars of sustainable development. The developed countries, on the other hand, sought SDGs that did not submerge the 'environment' in social and developmental goals. The G77 are thus seeking SDGs that are bolder than the MDGs.

Sustainable Consumption and Production(SCP),which has been on the international agenda since Agenda 21 (1992), identified unsustainable patterns of production and consumption as the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment. The 2002 Johannesburg Summit called for a ten-year framework of programmes in support of national and regional initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production (UN-DESA 2007). The 19th Commission on Sustainable Development (2011) in New York finalized negotiations on the 10-Year Framework on SCP. However, because the conference was unable to come to agreement on many issues, which included *inter alia* the management of wasteland chemical, the Framework could not be officially adopted. Understandably, SCP would have implied a comprehensive revision of the liberal civilization. The inclusion of SCP in the Rio+20 was accepted after vehement opposition, particularly from the USA. The nations at Rio agreed that 'fundamental changes in the way societies consume and produce are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development'. The American way of life will be put under greater scrutiny.

The Rio+20 outcome document recognizes that, in order to give all the three pillars of sustainable development equal standing in the global system governing development, the status and power of the United Nations Environ-mental Program (UNEP) would have to be elevated. UNEP will get a more secure budget, a broader membership and strong powers to initiate scientific research and coordinate global environ-ment strategies (Watts and Ford 2012). Rio+20 also established a 'high-level' forum to coordinate global sustainable develop-ment, though its format is still to be defined (Global Race Equality Action Trust 2012).While it had campaigned for a change in its status to a specialized agency, on the same level as the WTO and ILO, and a name change to United Nations Environmental, UNEP will only get universal membership in its governing body, greater financing, and a streng-thened hand for coordination within the UN system.

Fossil fuel subsidies promote the use of fossil fuels and create challenges for the transition to cleaner fuels. Demands were made at Rio+20 for the elimination of these subsidies and investing the savings to promote renewable energy as part of the global response to climate change. However, reflecting the dominance of the fossil fuel corporations in global environmental governance, the outcome document contains only has weak and largely symbolic language on the reduction of fossil fuel subsidies. All nations simply 'reaffirmed'commitments to phase out harmful fossil fuel subsidies. No financial commitments or time lines are put in place to facilitate this shift. This issue will definitely confront parties to the UNFCCC 19th Conference of Parties in Doha in November 2012.

The question of inter-generational sustainability was not completely resolved. To the extent that the current neo-liberal dispensation promotes unsustainable patterns of resource use, it constitutes a form of taxation without representation for future generations. In response to this challenge, the negotiation document proposed a High Commissioner or Ombudsperson within the UN system, who would be responsible for assessing the long-term impacts of current policies and advocating on behalf of future generations. Ultimately, however, the outcome document makes no reference to this High Commissioner for Future Generations. Instead, the UN Secretary General is invited to make a report on 'the need for promoting inter-generational solidarity for the achie-vement of sustainable development, taking into account the needs of future generations'.

One of the major outcomes of the original Rio summit in 1992 was the creation of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), which has met every year since. The Rio+20 document brings that era to a close. It will be replaced by a yet-to-be-named high level political forum which will have the same mission as the CSD but be more action-oriented, have a larger role in bringing UN and other international multi-stakeholder groups to the table and ensuring coordination and cooperation between them, and produce a sustainable development report. This new mechanisms could provide opportunities for greater involvement of society in global environmental governance.

Although the outcome document reaffirms commitment to the Rio Principles, this represents watered down commitment. The Rio Principles, one of the most important outcomes of the 1992 summit, lay out in clear and concise language the mechanisms on which sustainable development should be based. At Rio+20, the most contentious debate (as at the COP 17 and in Copenhagen) (see e.g. Fuhr et. al 2012) was on the common but differentiated responsibility (CBRD) principle. Developed countries, always opposed to this principle, now also see it as an opportunity for emerging countries to blame them for the ecological crisis while shirking the burden which their own economies are placing on the environment. Developing nations, however, are adamant that the countries putting the greatest pressure on the global environ-ment should bear the biggest responsi-bility for changing their behaviour and contributing to efforts toward fixing the problem.

In a word, then, despite the promise in the lead up, Rio + 20 failed to challenge the hegemonic liberal order, and in many ways actually acknowledged and confirmed it. The outcome means that over the next decade, 'sustainable development' will continue to be informed by a neo-liberal logic of growth, this time increasingly emphasizing expansion into nature through privatization, commodification and financialization. The ever present specter of militarization will no doubt be pronounced. Weak communities of the global South will lose out to the powerful northern oligopolies. Climate change may reach catastrophic levels, and the fate of humanity may continue to be sacrificed for financial profit for a few. This is the settlement that the AMCEN meeting of 14 September 2012 endorsed.

What then Are We to Make of AMCEN's Arusha Declaration in the Light of these Outcomes and Where should Africa Go from Rio?

The main proposal of Rio+20, the 'Green Economy', is a remarkable paradox. Like 'Our Common Future' before it, it recognizes that the neo-liberal context of contemporary development models is the principal cause of unsustainability, and yet it proposes that the best way of responding to the challenges posed by the environmental destruction and poverty, is through more growth. It promotes further commodification of land and natural resource, and reinforces the current large scale alienation of land, forests and other resources occurring on the African continent today. The implementation of neo-liberal measures has already worsened Africa's most serious problems of poverty, inequality and institutional fragmentation. Just as the 19th century enclosures in Africa stripped commoners of land and resource rights, the current dispossessions will similarly diminish the rights of rural populations to land and natural resour-ces, with implications for their livelihoods, for commons governance systems, and for development. As Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation observed "If the current development model doesn't change, 'we are going to see economic dislocation greater than we are facing now. There will be more wars around water and energy, so we need labour and environment walking hand in hand' (Global Race Equality Action Trust 2012).

We are living through a reconfiguration of power on a global scale, producing new relations between states, markets and civil society. This new dynamic is playing out to the detriment of nature and resource-dependent people. In Africa and Asia, this is translating into a new scramble for nature, characterized by militarization and massive injections of capital into natural-resource exploitation based on the alienation of vast communities from public natural resources (Murombedzi and Ribot 2012). Indeed, the 'Green Economy' as proposed at Rio+20 is the new Washington Consensus, the next stage of capitalism to recover lost growth and profits. This is definitely not the future that Africa wants!

To be sure, there is a counter movement to this dynamic, as societies organize themselves into social movements to resist market dominance and demand representation. The market allocation of goods and services away from the poor is being questioned. The privatization and commodification of nature is being contested in many locations Demands are being made for governments to ensure that social protections are put in place to prevent markets from over-exploiting nature and further marginalizing the poor. (see e.g. Murombedzi and Ribot 2012).

The global crisis of accumulation reflects the growing power of the financial markets, of the increasing subjugation of any other social logic – be that democracy, equality, solidarity, or even the preservation of life, to single criteria: the maximization of short-term profits for capital (Lander 2011). It is not possible to resolve these crises without altering the existing power structures, or the relations of domination and exploitation. Market mechanisms and technological innovations are not the solutions to the environmental and social crises. Indeed, the weak leadership shown at Rio+20, regarding addressing the global economic system, has prompted many in civil society to rethink their strategies.

Instead of the current production system that emphasizes market mechanisms to allocate the costs and benefits of nature, what is required is a social structure of accumulation that places economic justice over profit and, more practically, institutes an inclusive, sustainable model for growth (Tabb 2012).What needs to be done in the post Rio+20 period then is a 'valuation' of the environment and a pro-poor environmentalism based on the representation and rights of society. Representation will ensure democratic outcomes which guarantee the rights, needs and priorities of society over those of corporations (see Murombedzi and Ribot 2012). This will enable a re-focus on a green economy that promotes equitable, sustainable and efficient resource use, while also reducing the vulnerability of marginalized groups to environmental and economic crises.

As demonstrated in the UNEP report, there are many possibilities for altering patterns of production, industry, agriculture, the organization of cities, construction systems, and transport. The report also documents a wide range of rich experiences in alternative technology, renewable energy and new regulatory regimes that exist in different parts of the world. This shows that there are many processes around the world today seeking alternatives to the destructive logic of the hegemonic models of production and consumption. This should be recognized as an important contribu-tion made by the report to debates on alternatives (Lander 2011). However, no proposal based on completely ignoring contemporary geopolitical realities has any hope of making a significant contribution to the global struggles we face today (ibid).

COP 17 demonstrated, beyond any measure of doubt, the absolute control that the governments of the industrial north and the transnational corporations exercise over negotiations at the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. As with the earlier conferences of parties before the UNFCCC, however, it was also an opportunity for gathering, mobilizing, articulating and protesting by a broad convergence of global movements (Lander 2011; Bond 2012). These movements call for radical measures to stop the destructive dominant dynamics and at the same time demand payment of ecological debt, equality, and justice. They reject responses such as carbon trading which – as experience has shown – far from reducing greenhouse gas emissions; have simply advanced the commercialization of the atmosphere and the creation of new sources of accumulation and speculation for finance capital (Lander 2011).

Observers of the Rio+20 summit noted that some strong initiatives and suggestions for responses to the crises of development were made, but mostly outside the negotiating halls. 'Significant agreements have been struck on investing in public transport, with commitments made to green accounting by corporations, and strategies agreed by cities and judicial bodies, on reducing environmental impacts'(Watts and Ford 2012). They further note that the 10-day 'people's Summit' and campaigns to reduce plastics in the ocean and create a new sanctuary in the Arctic provided dynamism to the process. 'There are real solutions to the problems governments have been unable to solve and those solutions have been on display all week in Rio, just not at the conference center' (Lidy Nacpil, director of Jubilee South – Asia Pacific Movement on Debt and Development, quoted in Watts and Ford 2012). It is imperative to support these campaigns and develop methods and mechanisms that link social movements with local, national and global policy making. Such linkages will ensure that environmental policies at all levels and scales are representative and accountable.

However, globalization implies that such engagement capable of taking into account issues of scale – that is the linkages between various levels of governing bodies, local, national, and global –will necessarily involve complex social interactions of actors and institutions in an interconnected policy regime. Methodologies need to be developed and refined to facilitate nuanced engagement between social movements, civil society, markets, state and supra-state actors in the design of responsive global environmental gover-nance policies that respond organically to the crises of the neo-liberal hegemony and address the needs of the people. Efforts are already underway in gover-nance research to refine the concept of multi-level governance (MLG). (Mwangi and Wardell 2012) In this interconnected context, democratic environmental governance schemes that are responsive to local needs and enable sustainable resource use and management are to be supported. This is possible through decentralization programmes that ensure representation and accountability in the implementation of environmental governance schemes such as REDD+ and other 'payments for environmental services' schemes, climate adaptations schemes and so on. Responsiveness will ensure that market dominance is tempered by accountable governance regimes that value local needs and capacities (Murombedzi and Ribot 2012).

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