



# National Center for Human Rights Education

## “Drop the Debt- Human Rights and the IMF/World Bank- An Unhappy 60<sup>th</sup> B-day Solidarity Statement”

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### **Human Rights**

The Human Rights Framework outlines a basic standard of living to which each and every human being is entitled. The modern human rights movement draws upon the framework offered by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948 (see reverse side). The UDHR's 30 articles describe the human rights guaranteed all people at all times in all places. International human rights treaties/conventions provide legal support for the UDHR by articulating standards to which governments and individuals should adhere. Human rights have been won through our many struggles for social justice and when we separate and segregate our human rights, we participate in our own oppression.

**Civil and Political Human Rights**- Civil and Political rights provide for liberty, equality and the right to participate in the political life of our communities. Civil and Political rights address concerns of discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation or national origin.

**Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights**- ESC rights address issues fundamental to human dignity such as food, unemployment, education, healthcare, a living wage, shelter, the right to organize etc...as well as the right to live and participate in communities, and retain one's cultural identity.

**Environmental, Sexual and Developmental Rights** – The growing discourse around these rights explores the right to a clean environment and drinking water, resistance to genetically-modified foods, and the placement of toxic waste dumps within communities of color; the right to reproductive freedom and to determine when and who you marry, with whom you have sex and lesbian and gay (LGBT) rights; and also the right to maintain control over your own communities' resources (ex. the invasion of Iraq for oil violates developmental rights).

### **International Monetary Fund/ World Bank**

Established following World War II the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have increasingly institutionalized the continuation of colonial economic exploitation reinforcing the distribution of wealth and power in favor of wealthy or industrialized countries. The IMF and World Bank wield great power with no accountability for the effect of their policies and actions on the everyday lives of billions of people. It is absurd that any institution affiliated with the United Nations is responsible for enacting policies and programs that run counter to meeting human needs and respecting human rights as outlined within the UDHR and other international human rights treaties/conventions. Structural adjustment and poverty reduction programs that blindly call for slashing social services or privatization and that place other “conditions” on aid, paralyze state governments and leave the most vulnerable to an increasingly insecure existence characterized by poverty, disease, low wages, hazardous work conditions, unemployment and displacement. Through these actions the IMF and World Bank erroneously target domestic expenditures as impeding social and economic development while failing to examine structural system level impediments to national development such as unfair bilateral and international trade agreements and the unchecked actions of transnational corporations that manipulate the economies of poor countries.

### **Drop the Debt--- Meet Human Needs and Support Human Rights**

Along with Jubilee USA, The National Center for Human Rights Education recognizes the 60<sup>th</sup> unhappy birthday of the IMF/World Bank. Sixty years of IMF/World Bank policies have resulted in the accumulation of unjust debt carried by billions of people who did not benefit in the least from incurring this debt. This unjust debt is overwhelming and servicing this debt literally takes food, shelter, healthcare, education and social services directly from the people that need them most, effectively denying economic and social human rights the world's majority. On this auspicious occasion we call for the IMF and World Bank to drop the debt and over the next sixty years prioritize policies and programs designed to meet human needs. We would like to let the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank know that only policies and programs based on the principles established within the Human Rights framework can support and promote true sustainable development and meet human needs.