

SUMMARY AND KEY MESSAGES AT A GLANCE

In this Memorandum the notion of *Resource Politics* is introduced to provide an analytical lens and inform strategies to change who controls and uses nature in which way. *Resource Politics* proposes to look at current conflicts around resource use as a complex set of interactions between nature, humans, interests, power relations and cultures in different *territories* (local, regional, global). This perspective offers solutions that protect the rights of people and nature. It questions the very notion of nature as a resource and thus creates freedom to think about transformative strategies.

Key drivers of environmental stress, inequity and shrinking democratic spaces include:

1. A deep-seated belief in the power and efficiency of markets to regulate economic exchange between individuals and nations, combined with a belief in political progress defined as GDP growth, creates institutional and mental infrastructures that lead to a financialization of nature, enclosure of commons and a justification for a continued grab for the last resources.
2. Large enterprises (private or state-owned) engage in very different economic sectors at the same time and gain a vast amount of money by keeping the current exploitation model as it is. These enterprises are getting too big and too powerful to be governed. They are, in fact, just like international banks in that they are «too big to fail» – and therefore mostly also too big to jail.
3. The economic governance regime for trade and investment protects large investors' rights but not people's rights or the environment, while the «other» global regime of human rights and international environmental law under UN mandate is treated as «soft law». Private and public economic governance structures are captured by the interests of corporate and political elites to serve a global consensus that relies on further extraction and trade in resources – the «commodity consensus».

This Memorandum offers a new perspective which inextricably combines democracy, ecology and human rights and lays out three fundamental ways forward that can form the basis for fair and sustainable Resource Politics.

- a) Secure the rights of people and nature over markets and profits and empower people to claim and assert their rights
- b) Stop concentration of power and bring access to and control over natural resources, financial capital and technologies back into the hands of the people

- c) Transform production, consumption and livelihoods towards socio-ecological justice

Since conflicts and power structures are highly specific to the national and local levels at which they operate, this memorandum can only offer a few ideas for the international context. Each region will have to define which approach is best suited to address its specific challenges and which alliances are needed to advance that approach.