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Islamic leaders call for fast action on climate change

By Juan Lopez

Islamic leaders from 20 countries yesterday called for rapid transition from a world economic order based on fossil fuel to one powered by renewable energy.

Wael Hmaidan, international director of Climate Action Network (CAN), described the declaration adopted by 60 prominent Islamic scholars and religious leaders at the two-day International Islamic Climate Change Symposium as a potential “game changer.”

“It challenges all world leaders, and especially oil producing nations,” Hmaidan said, “to phase out their carbon emissions and supports the just transition to 100 percent renewable energy as a necessity to tackle climate change, reduce poverty and deliver sustainable development,” according to a CAN report.

As part of a worldwide groundswell, the declaration urges governments to deliver a new international climate agreement in Paris this December that guarantees limiting global warming above pre-industrial levels to 2, but preferably 1.5, degrees Celsius.

The declaration makes the moral case, based on Islamic teachings, for the 1.6 billion Muslims and people of all faiths worldwide to take urgent climate action.

The declaration is in sync with the much



lauded Encyclical by Pope Francis released two months ago.

For its part, the Vatican has enthusiastically endorsed the Islamic declaration.

“The climate crisis needs to be tackled through collaborative efforts, so let’s work together for a better world for our children, and our children’s children,” declared Din Syamsuddin, chairman of the Indonesian Council of Ulema.

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Speakers at the Symposium included three senior UN officials, scientists, NGO leaders and academics.

Also attending were religious leaders from many other faith traditions.

Pope Francis’ activism, especially since the

The leaders of Islam are calling for rapid change from fossil fuel to renewable energy.

release of his Encyclical in June, has energized people of faith who have long advocated for the environment.

Since June, the World Council of Churches, Unitarian Universalists, Union Seminary, and the Episcopal Church have all divested from fossil fuels.

As of Aug. 13, 403 rabbis had signed a Rabbinic Letter on the Climate Crisis, calling for vigorous action to prevent worsening climate disruption and to seek eco-social justice.

In a related action, in July more than 180 evangelical Christian leaders signed a letter backing President Barack Obama's plan to reduce carbon emission from power plants.

The Climate Change Symposium Declaration urged "well-off nations" and oil producing states to "re-focus their concerns from unethical profit from the environment, to that of preserving it and elevating the condition of the world's poor."

Among other notable demands, the declaration called on the people of all nations and their leaders:

"To set in motion a fresh model of wellbeing, based on an alternative to the current financial model which depletes resources, degrades the environment, and deepens inequality.

"Prioritize adaptation efforts with appropriate support to the vulnerable countries with the least capacity to adapt. And vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples, women and children.

The declaration further called on the corporations, finance, and business sector:

"To shoulder the consequences of their profit-making activities, and take a visibly more active role in reducing their carbon footprint and other forms of impact upon the natural environment;

"Change from the current business model which is based on an unsustainable escalating economy, and to adopt a circular economy that is wholly sustainable;

"Assist in the divestment from the fossil fuel driven economy and the scaling up of renewable energy and other ecological alternatives."



Juan Lopez chairs Northern California CPUSA.

Anti-union attacks, steelworkers rally for contract, justice

By Scott Marshall

United Steelworkers (USW) union members and allies demonstrated this past week in two separate rallies for a fair contract for workers who produce steel.

Seventeen thousand US Steelworkers and thousands more at ArcelorMittal began industry-wide contract bargaining in basic steel about a month ago. Their current contracts expire on Sept. 1, and these two big steel companies have come with terrible proposals for cutting deep into active worker and retiree benefits, dangerous work rule changes, and proposals that will severely weaken bargaining rights.

These tough negotiations come at a time of unprecedented attack on unions by corporate-sponsored far rightwing politicians, think tanks and media. Extreme right-wing ideologues like Wisconsin governor (and 2016 Republican candidate) Scott Walker and Bruce Rauner of Illinois have made smashing unions a top priority as well as attacks on teachers and public workers.

The attack on unions isn't just about pushing down wages and getting rid of job security and pensions. It's part of a larger attack on democracy. Organized labor is the only force with the resources and the experience to defend the interests of the working class and take the fight to the one percent and its political creatures. As we move into an election year where the strength of organized labor could play a decisive role, the ruling class is desperate to kneecap its most dangerous enemy.

Already the aluminum company, ATI, has locked out 2,200 USW workers around the country. USW members aren't impressed by strong-arm tactics, and they won't give up without a fight. Union membership and leadership are fired up and rallying with allies around the country at the different plant gates of each company. At a rally in Gary, Indiana, third-generation steelworker Eric Bliss summed up the mood. "They're trying to take away 30 years of gains," he said. "I'm not going to give up like this."

The attack on unions are part of a larger violation on democracy.

Trans-Pacific trade agreement: Potential damage to global public health

Special to Peoplesworld.org

The proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a free trade agreement currently being negotiated among 12 Pacific Rim countries, threatens the future availability of affordable generic medicines and could undermine the global HIV response in developing countries, according to a new report released by amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research. By expanding intellectual property (IP) protections for existing pharmaceutical products beyond what is required by current international standards, the report warns, the TPP could greatly delay the entrance of generic medicines into the marketplace and keep prices high for lifesaving drugs among populations that can least afford them.

The dozen countries negotiating the TPP represent nearly 40 percent of the world's GDP: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States, and Vietnam. If passed, the TPP would become one of the largest free trade agreements in history.

"If the TPP moves forward, it will set a dangerous global precedent and put lifesaving drugs beyond the reach of millions of people with HIV/AIDS, cancer, tuberculosis and hepatitis C."

The new amfAR brief, "Trans-Pacific Partnership: Curbing Access to Medicines Now and in the Future," strongly opposes the aggressive IP provisions



of the TPP that could lead to unnecessary loss of life.

TPP negotiations have been conducted in secret, but leaked texts of the draft agreement reveal that the U.S. is proposing several provisions indicating its embrace of aggressive IP protections that go beyond those established by the World Trade Organization's agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS).

Through a provision on patent term extensions, for example, the TPP would make it easier for pharmaceutical companies to demand longer patent extensions and further delay the entrance of generic competition. It could also undermine the entrance of generic biologics - medical commodities developed through biological methods rather than synthetic chemical processes - into the market, including future vaccines. And it would allow the re-patenting of older drugs with minor modifications.

Generic medicines have been crucial to the massive expansion of antiretroviral treatment (ART) for nearly 12 million people with HIV in low- and middle-income countries today. However, many newer and better-tolerated antiretroviral drugs are still under patent and remain out of reach for many people in developing countries.

TPP could lead to unnecessary loss of life.

Spreading peace in Japan and worldwide

By Cathy Deppe

What is needed for the peaceful people of the world to build a lasting structure of peace -- a firm bulwark against the nationalist wars of governments everywhere? I gained new insights from recent participation in the annual peace conferences commemorating the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Japanese peace movement is in a life and death struggle to maintain one critical structure of peace - one that has rooted Japan in a war-free environment since 1945. Imposed by the United States after Japan's surrender, Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution is a renunciation of war that has kept Japan free of involvement in war for decades. No Japanese citizen has been sent to fight, kill, or die in any of the U.S. backed wars since then: Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Afghanistan, or Iraq.

From my experiences, I think that every nation should have an Article 9. We can spread the peace! The international adoption of constitutional amendments which renounce war is both necessary and possible.

In May, over 1,000 Japanese delegates traveled to New York for the United Nations Review Conference of the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty, now signed by over 189 parties. The Japanese peace movement delivered more than six million signatures from all over Japan, calling for an international convention for the abolishment of all nuclear weapons.

The petition asks all governments to enter negotiations without delay for a convention banning nuclear weapons. The cries of the world's people demand peace: No nukes! No war! No hate!

¿Qué significa un estado de excepción?

TeleSur

El presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, declaró este viernes el estado de excepción por 60 días en cinco municipios del estado Táchira, fronterizo con la vecina Colombia.

La decisión del mandatario responde a los hechos de violencia contra efectivos de la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana, el constante trasiego de productos de primera necesidad y el contrabando de billetes venezolanos de alta denominación.

1- El estado de excepción se aplica en circunstancias extraordinarias que afectan gravemente la seguridad de las personas, de la Nación o de las instituciones.

2- En un estado de excepción pueden ser restringidas temporalmente las garantías constitucionales, salvo las referidas a los derechos a la vida, prohibición de incomunicación o tortura, el derecho al debido proceso, el derecho a la información y demás derechos humanos intangibles.

3- Se decreta cuando una situación determinada no puede ser afrontada mediante las facultades ordinarias de los órganos del Poder Público Nacional.

En la Constitución Bolivariana de 1999, votada en referendo por la mayoría del pueblo venezolano, el Estado de Excepción está contenido en los artículos 337 y 339, que expresan lo siguiente :

Artículo 337

“El Presidente/ta de la República, en Consejo de Ministros, podrá decretar los estados de excepción. Se clasifican expresamente como tales

las circunstancias de orden social, económico, político, natural o ecológico, que afecten gravemente la seguridad de la Nación, de las instituciones y de los ciudadanos y ciudadanas, a cuyo respecto resultan insuficientes las facultades de las cuales se disponen para hacer frente a tales hechos. En tal caso, podrán ser restringidas temporalmente las garantías consagradas en esta Constitución, salvo las referidas a los derechos a la vida, prohibición de incomunicación o tortura, el derecho al debido proceso, el derecho a la información y los demás derechos humanos intangibles”.

Artículo 339

“El decreto que declare el estado de excepción, en el cual se regulará el ejercicio del derecho cuya garantía se restringe, será presentado, dentro de los ocho días siguientes de haberse dictado, a la Asamblea Nacional o a la Comisión Delegada, para su consideración y aprobación, y a la Sala Constitucional del Tribunal Supremo de Justicia, para que se pronuncie sobre su constitucionalidad. El decreto cumplirá con las exigencias, principios y garantías establecidos en el Pacto Internacional de Derechos Civiles y Políticos y en la Convención Americana sobre Derechos Humanos. El Presidente o Presidenta de la República podrá solicitar su prórroga por un plazo igual, y será revocado por el Ejecutivo Nacional o por la Asamblea Nacional o por su Comisión Delegada, antes del término señalado, al cesar las causas que lo motivaron. La declaración del estado de excepción no interrumpe el funcionamiento de los órganos del Poder Público”.