



## FINAL DECLARATION OF THE 10<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATORY OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

We, the participants at the present Conference, representatives from eight different countries, meeting here in Mexico City on the occasion of the **10th Conference of the International Observatory of Participatory Democracy** for the purpose of reflecting on the global crisis and the search for alternatives at a local level:

### HEREBY DECLARE

1. That the world is currently undergoing a profound, multidimensional crisis; one that not only affects the economic and financial dimension but has also extended to include a crisis of values. Strictly speaking this could be termed the first great global crisis, insofar as it not only affects those countries on the periphery, but also the developed nations themselves.
2. That this structural crisis has intensified impoverishment, unemployment and precariousness, and has increased inequality and the deterioration of living conditions, principally those of women, children and young people, with particularly harsh effects in the local sphere.
3. That in the world, to date, the powers that be have imposed a logic that is based on dealing with the crisis by negatively impacting on the conditions of life and work in popular sectors and in those social groups that are excluded. Essentially the policies adopted to deal with the crisis are coordinated on the basis of the privatisation of profits, for the minority, and the socialisation of losses, for the majority; the privatisation and mercantalisation of public properties and services, which are rights that have been hard won. This is expressed, among other ways diverting countless millions of public resources to save large financial corporations, thus generating an enormous public deficit that prevents governments, particularly at a local level, from developing new social policies that would be of benefit to the population.
4. That given the magnitude of the challenge that we are facing a vast process is taking place, at a local level, to seek and construct alternative solutions that are aimed at achieving a way out of the crisis by means of consolidation; from the bottom up, at a local and popular level, from the citizens; which will serve to cushion the immense social inequalities and extend and strengthen our democratic freedoms.

That these solutions, such as community banks or local currencies, various examples of which have been brought to our attention, are being set up on bases that stress solidarity, freedom and peace, aimed at building a new political culture based on equality, diversity, self-management and horizontality in terms of access to the fundamental rights of social equality.



5. That in this way citizens' participation has been converted into an indispensable strategic tool for discovering, innovating and establishing alternatives that improve quality of life, so that in the future we can count on societies that are ever more cohesive. Without the participation of citizens, social movements and organisations, i.e. without the mobilisation of their knowledge and social energies, it will not be possible to find the keys to a new logic of development that, rather than being based on constant growth, is based on quality of life.
6. That there is a need to reinforce public participatory policies, from the bottom up, promoting the use of local currencies and community banks as an alternatives to a new economy and bolstering policies in questions of urban agriculture. That while acknowledging the inherent complexities of working with young people, there is a need to promote participatory mechanisms that involve them and encourage association. That there is also a need to move towards levels of citizens co-management, empowering people for the good of the community, and to break free of the dominant monoculturalism, an essential step for the acknowledgement of new forms of community management. The legal instruments of participatory democracy must guarantee the right to participation and those experiences that are successful must be institutionalised and bureaucratisation avoided.
7. That, as we are faced with a crisis that appears to be getting worse and that is most probably going to last a long time, although this will not exclude episodes of recovery, it is essential to take a close look at and consolidate the most diverse participatory processes and instruments, which have presented alternatives to the model in crisis, in order to avoid the full weight falling on the victims rather than on those who are responsible for it.
8. That we have decided to fortify the OIDD network as a space for dialogue, debate and proposals and to extend the pool of experiences, in particular in terms of the successful alternatives that have proved most effective as options for dealing with the impacts of the crisis and which have been presented in this 10<sup>th</sup> Conference.
9. That reinforcing participatory democracy and transforming representative democracy are two sides of the same coin, the aim of which is that citizens, both men and women, should behave as such all the time –and not just when it comes to placing their vote- so that we can increasingly have a greater capacity to influence, exercise social control and effectively participate in the making of decisions concerning public matters. Finally, we assume that the essence of participatory democracy is in the process of constructing citizenship and ensuring the democratisation of our societies, governments and states: the commitment and the conviction of the OIDD.