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Affiliated organization to the WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

[www.fte-energia.org](http://www.fte-energia.org) | [prensa@fte-energia.org](mailto:prensa@fte-energia.org) | <http://twitter.com/ftenergia>

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Proposals of the FTE of MEXICO

## 16. Natural resources' defense

**ABSTRACT:** Natural resources have a geostrategic importance. Capital tends to plunder and predation. Workers and the people must defend the natural resources as common property of nations.

### 1. Introduction

In the world there are countless regional and local conflicts, that are not only national-ethnic issues, religious and border, but also by the need to protect itself in terms of national security and sovereignty, the sources of critical raw materials such as oil, natural gas, coal, uranium, water, mineral resources and forests, the economic returns on their holdings and transport logistics and circulation, which includes ensuring the control of supply routes of resources.

At the global level, there are at least three interconnected issues. The first has to do with growing global demand for renewable and nonrenewable resources such as water, food, oil and minerals. However, "population growth represents only part of the explosion in the demand of such resources. No less important is the spread of industrialization to a growing number of areas of the world, the incessant increase in personal wealth worldwide".

A second issue is the danger of the scarcity of resources linked to the type of "predatory" exploitation has been imposed worldwide. "It is clear that global stocks of some key resources are being depleted at a speed in many cases, exceeding the global capacity to

exploit new sources or develop substitute materials".

Third, the growth of disputes over control of sources of supply of resources is a disturbing feature in the current international dynamics. The Middle East and the Caspian Sea area are vital sources of oil supply are perhaps non-renewable resources with the most severe intensity of exploitation and depletion. Other regions as the waters of the Nile River in Africa and the major water reservoirs in South America and the largest source of biodiversity on the planet, the Amazon, are all key areas in the medium term due to the intensification of conflict over control of resources.

Moreover, the coastal sea areas are areas of extremely serious strategic importance, particularly for fish resources and the possible existence of hydrocarbon deposits.

Wars of sourcing and procurement of natural resources and their exploitation and inappropriate consumption, have caused irreversible damage to the planet, creating a shortage of resources, some vital for human life and causing increasingly violent wars.

About the conflicts worldwide, according to the UN, at least 40% is due to the possession of natural resources.

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A key aspect is the institutional context in which it operates the management of resources. In the process, property rights are often a critical factor. The future scenario poses challenges in terms of environmental and food safety. The problems of availability and water supply are critical, with serious pollution of aquifers and the lack of water distribution systems.

### 2- Natural resources for life support

In 2020, the global challenge, the global opportunity, the UN points facts regarding the world's use of natural resources.

**Water and sanitation** - One billion people lack access to clean water. By 2025, half of the world's population (3,500 million people) will face serious water shortage problems, particularly in North Africa and Western Asia, the groundwater reserves are consumed faster than they can be replenished.

**Energy** - fossil fuel consumption and carbon emissions continued to increase during the nineties, especially in Asia and North America. The signs of climate change are more visible. Droughts have increased in frequency and intensity in some regions of Asia and Africa. This is particularly evident in South Africa, together with other neighboring countries experienced severe droughts.

**Agricultural productivity** - The demand for food increases as the population grows, and the ability to keep up their production is declining, especially in developing countries. This situation represents a long-term threat to food security, especially in regions where the land has been degraded due to overexploitation of crops or desertification. Today, the ability to expand agricultural land in Southeast Asia and Europe is limited, while in North Africa and Western Asia continuing lack of potable water

supply limits the development potential of agriculture.

**Biodiversity and ecosystems** - An estimated 90 million hectares of forest were destroyed in the nineties. Deforestation is the main threat to biodiversity, since forests are home to two thirds of land species. Likewise, 9 percent of tree species worldwide are in danger of extinction, threatening the possibility to enjoy health benefits that offer potentially botanical resources.

**Health** - A significant percentage of deaths in less developed countries is caused by diseases related to the environment. Contaminated water kills 2.2 million people each year. The spread of disease has also been affected by the irrigation systems and deforestation.

### 3- Conclusions

The war and the liberalization of laws concerning the control over natural resources, tends to favor private ownership of the income generated in these sectors.

There is a strong and radical process of "de nationalization" of natural resources in favor of transnational capital.

### PROPOSALS

The FTE of Mexico presents to the 16th World Trade Union Congress the following proposal:

- 1- The WFTU calls for workers worldwide to fly the flag of the defense of natural resources as collective social ownership.
- 2- The WFTU calls for struggle against privatization of natural resources.

Energy Workers' Front (FTE), of Mexico  
energy@fte-energy.org