

# Plundering the Planet: Rigged Corporate “Free Trade Partnerships” and “Climate Change Agreements”

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In-depth Report: [Climate Change](#)

*What do rigged corporate trade agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Paris Treaty, an international climate agreement to be signed in 2015, have in common? They are both tools being pushed by the power elite to rip away our hopes for democracy and to commodify all things to monetize them for profit.*

It is this drive by multinational corporations to patent and control even living beings such as plants and animals and to privatize even elements that are essential to life such as water which connects all human beings on the planet. We are in a global battle of the people versus the plutocrats and this battle has a ticking timer called the climate crisis.

The global financial elites meet regularly to plan their strategy and tactics. If they can't push their agenda through the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization, they move to secret massive trade agreements. The Obama Administration is negotiating three such agreements right now: the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TAFTA) and the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA), those agreements are stalled thanks to a movement of movements coming together to stop Congress from giving Obama fast track trade promotion authority.

Similarly, in response to the climate crisis, the United Nations has been involved in what is called the Conference of the Parties (COP) which is part of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Big corporations have taken over this process and turned it into a method of their relentless drive to plunder the planet and exploit its living beings knows no limits. It will take people power to apply the brakes. Once the public understood the implications of the TPP the people created a movement of movements to stop it and the other trade agreement.

Now, with the Paris Treaty, a binding international climate agreement, set to be concluded in December of 2015, we must build a similarly unified movement that stops this rigged corporate agreement and puts in place real solutions to the climate crisis. We must understand that the climate change affects and connects all of us - the connection to climate change to every issue should be evident as the health of the planet will dominate the future. We must be as organized as the opposition to false solutions and the advocates for real solutions.

The United Nations Climate Summit in New York this September 23rd provides an opportunity to further build this unified movement in the United States. Hundreds of thousands of activists are planning to come to New York City for a march on September 21.

In the days prior to that, the Global Climate Convergence in partnership with System Change not Climate Change will host a [conference to discuss real solutions and obstacles to change](#), share skills and connect our sub-movements. This will be another step in the growing movement seeking real climate solutions in the face of the corruption and dysfunction of the United Nations and United States which have failed to address the climate crisis in meaningful ways.

### **Driven by profit, not real solutions**

The United Nations' statements on the climate crisis and the Obama administration's rhetoric about its climate strategy make it sound like real actions are being taken to mitigate climate change. But the reality is that both the United Nations and the US government are acting on behalf of the industries that are vying to profit from the climate crisis even as they make it worse.

The UNFCCC began in 1992 as an international treaty to coordinate action around climate change. It is responsible for the Kyoto Protocol which is set to expire in 2020. The UNFCCC currently includes 195 member states which make decisions through the COP. The COP usually meets yearly, although currently it is meeting more frequently to prepare for the [Paris Treaty](#) which will be discussed at the COP 21 in December, 2015.

Sounds great, right? Wrong. According to Anne Petermann of the [Global Justice Ecology Project](#) which sends observers to the COP meetings and provides opportunities for frontline groups to get media attention for their work, the COP meetings are really just industry trade shows. She [writes](#): "They block any forward process in stopping catastrophic climate change while creating new and diabolical schemes for making money off of false solutions." Petermann refers to the UNFCCC as the "World Carbon Trading Organization" and describes it as a body that promotes neoliberal economic models as do the World Bank and World Trade Organization.

Friends of the Earth [describes](#) the COP process as captured by corporate power to the extent that there are corporate logos everywhere. At the COP 19 in Poland, a concurrent meeting was held by the World Coal Association to promote the use of coal and false solutions like 'clean coal.'he extent that there are corporate logos everywhere.

A major false solution adopted at the COP 19 meeting in Warsaw, Poland is REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation). While on the surface, REDD+ sounds like a positive step by paying countries to leave their forests intact, in reality, [Petermann writes](#) that local communities and advocates see REDD+ "as a Trojan Horse that will lead to enclosure of forests, erosion of rights, and big loopholes for polluting industries."

In addition to false solutions, the COP meetings are becoming increasingly restrictive and repressive. Like the WTO, they take place behind barriers where access and activity are tightly controlled. There is no tolerance of dissent even as civil society sees the COP trading away the future of humanity and the planet as well as delaying real solutions.

The same things are happening within the United States. Although the Obama Administration claims to take the climate crisis seriously, their actions are actually making it worse. The Administration is promoting false and dirty solutions such as methane (a potent Greenhouse Gas euphemistically called 'natural') gas and [nuclear energy](#) and taking

ineffective steps to curtail emissions. [Obama's 'all of the above' energy strategy](#) allows for [carbon polluting and nuclear energy](#) to continue while investing inadequately in efficient use of energy, as well as development of solar, wind, tidal and other sustainable energy solutions. Obama's Office of Management and Budget has also been intervening to [weaken pollution standards](#).

Treaties like the [TPP](#) and [TAFTA](#) being negotiation by Obama will increase fracking and the export of coal, oil and gas. The US is in preparation to excavate land for tar sands extraction in [Utah](#) and [Alabama](#) even though that will permanently decimate the land and harm local communities while pouring more carbon into the air. The administration has approved the southern half of the Keystone Pipeline which is bringing tar sands from Alberta, Canada to the Gulf of Mexico for processing and export. And the Obama Administration has approved seismic testing for off-shore oil drilling even though [the testing will maim and kill marine mammals](#) and the drilling will set the stage for more disasters like the BP leak in the Gulf of Mexico.

The recent EPA rules proposed by Obama which have been applauded by Big Green non-profits are totally inadequate. Ken Ward [writes](#) in Truthout that "the emissions scheme is near-to-useless as policy and comes embedded in a pro-gas and oil plan...." And Sean Sweeney of the new Trade Unions for Energy Democracy [reports](#) that progress in implementing sustainable energy is also inadequate. At a time when the climate crisis is here and we must mobilize quickly to mitigate and adapt to it, drastic and coordinated actions are necessary.

### **It's all connected**

This is where the need for a 'movement of movements' to stop the Paris Treaty from being a boon to industry and a death blow for all living things comes in. There are solutions to the climate crisis, but like all other real solutions they will have to come from organized and mobilized people at the grassroots level.

Over the last several decades, there has been growing awareness of the climate crisis but somehow it was relegated to being an environmental issue and was ignored by groups working on other issues. This was a mistake and it's time to correct it. The climate crisis has its roots in the same soil as all of the other crises we face - corporate domination of public policy and promotion of neo-liberal economic models that seek to own and enclose all things, goods and services for profit despite the harm this causes to people and the planet.

The climate crisis affects everything we care about beginning with the water we drink and the food we eat. According to the [National Climate Assessment Report of 2014](#), water shortages are expected to worsen and the quality of water will be diminished. Cities particularly in the Southwest are [draining their aquifers](#) at unsustainable levels. Combined with the push to privatize municipal water, we can expect the price of water to rise and public access to decrease. Water shutoffs like we are seeing in Detroit will become more widespread. And climate change will lead to more crop failures, especially if Big Ag continues to dominate the food system and employ unsustainable practices that strip the soil of resiliency and plant mono-crops.

The climate crisis is already affecting human health from injuries and deaths due to extreme weather events, poor air quality and greater spread of infectious diseases. In addition, the Climate Report states that the climate crisis will lead to more stress and anxiety. The

communities that are and will be most affected are those with fewer resources and political power – low income and people of color including Indigenous communities.

The assault on our civil liberties and increasing militarization are connected to the climate crisis. The [Pentagon is studying](#) the effects of climate change on civil unrest including how to predict and control such unrest. No doubt, we are seeing some of their tactics unfold in Ferguson, MO in the wake of the police killing of Michael Brown. From police in full military attire in heavily armored vehicles shooting tear gas, flash grenades and rubber bullets at demonstrators to undermining the right to peaceful protest and press freedom.

The NSA, its allies and [private corporations](#) are engaged in widespread spying on people in the US, especially activists. This spying can be used to control the population. This year through the Pentagon's Minerva Program, experiments were conducted to [manipulate the public](#) through social media. And investigative reporter Dr. Nafeez Ahmed [recently exposed](#) new tools that are being developed to track and possibly kill activists.

Military conflicts are largely driven by access to dwindling fossil fuel reserves and other resources. Rather than promoting the development of sustainable energy sources which would be produced locally and would reduce Greenhouse Gases, Big Oil's influence is fueling military escalation in [Gaza](#), [Iraq](#) and [Ukraine](#). We can expect future wars over water and arable land.

Project Censored [reports](#) that the US military is the biggest polluter on the planet through its "uninhibited use of fossil fuels, massive creation of greenhouse gases, and extensive release of radioactive and chemical contaminants into the air, water, and soil." The US military also consumes the greatest portion of our federal spending, money that would [create more jobs](#) and be put to better use if it was spent on building a truly green economy.

This is just a surface examination of the ways in which these issues are related to the climate crisis. Perhaps the greatest connector of all is that if we don't act now to take real action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, our future existence on this planet is threatened.

## **The climate convergence**

The future is literally in our hands. Left unchecked, the global financial elite blinded by greed will take full control. The people must organize and put forward real solutions while preventing big business interests from taking advantage of and worsening the climate crisis. Popular Resistance is supporting the New York City march and will form a contingent marching with the global climate convergence ([join us, here](#)).

And, we have been working with other groups to develop the [Global Climate Convergence](#) which puts people, planet and peace over profit. The objective of the Convergence is to build and strengthen a movement that addresses the root causes of the climate crises; a social-economic system that values profits over destruction of the ecology of the planet. As the corporate captured UN proposes false solutions like carbon trading and sets meager greenhouse reduction targets, we will show the world what tackling global warming from the bottom up looks like. [To get more information on this event see here](#).

At the Copenhagen climate conference in December 2009, the people marched under a massive banner that read:

Another World Is Possible  
Another World Is Coming  
Another World Is Reality

The truth of that banner can be made real as together we write the future history of humankind. We do not underestimate the forces aligned against the transformation that is a necessity, but nor do we underestimate the power of a mobilized people in times of crisis. This September is another step in the march to a new reality.

[Join us at the People's Climate March New York City this September.](#)

*This article is produced by [Popular Resistance](#) in conjunction with [AlterNet](#). It is a weekly review of the activities of the resistance movement.*

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