



For Immediate Release: Monday October 6, 2014

join DURBAN, JOHANNESBURG and CAPE TOWN TEACH-INS about *THE WORLD BANK in SOUTH AFRICA: Friday, 10 October, noon-2pm*

Durban: UKZN Centre for Civil Society (6th floor, Memorial Tower Building, Howard College)

Johannesburg: Earthlife Africa (87 De Korte Street, 5th Floor, Braamfontein)

Cape Town: AIDC (129 Rochester Road, Observatory)

Civil society, on the streets and at teach-ins, demands an end to World Bank biases

South Africa's teach-in on 10 October will be skype-cast, as 'creative resistance' begins at the World Bank Annual Meeting in Washington, and globally

**** #WorldvsBank | www.ourlandourbusiness.org ****

Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa and Washington, DC — On Friday, October 10, as the World Bank's Annual Meeting starts in Washington, civil society groups and Indigenous People's organisations across the world will campaign against the Bank. [Our Land, Our Business](http://www.ourlandourbusiness.org), endorsed by over 235 organisations, will be staging 'creative resistance' events in Washington and nine other cities around the world. The Washington event is drawing support from a wide range of activist communities, including Occupy groups and representatives of affected communities from Kenya, Mali, and Ethiopia.

There is urgent concern that the Bank will use this meeting to both push its destructive '[Doing Business](http://www.ourlandourbusiness.org)' rankings and dismantle [operational protections](http://www.ourlandourbusiness.org) for people and the planet, introduced after years of civil society lobbying due to unmitigated Bank project disasters. The [trashing](http://www.ourlandourbusiness.org) of these safeguards occurs as the Bank begins **scaling up investment in the private sector** – having refused to learn lessons from its stake in [Lonmin at the Marikana massacre site](http://www.ourlandourbusiness.org) – while ratcheting up risky mega-projects (like SA's climate-killing [Medupi](http://www.ourlandourbusiness.org)) and imposing its pro-corporate 'neoliberal' philosophy.

In South Africa, civil society groups have demanded changes in the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) since the Jubilee 2000 movement rose in the late 1990s. In three SA cities, organisations will hold a **two-hour teach-in on Friday**, originating at the University of KwaZulu-Natal [Centre for Civil Society](http://www.ourlandourbusiness.org) – starting with a screening of the SA Broadcasting Corporation's Special Assignment May 2000 film [Two Trevors go to Washington](http://www.ourlandourbusiness.org) (at noon) – so as to review the history of World Bank financing of apartheid, current SA activity, and strategies to resist its unreformed 'neoliberal' agenda.

For example, the Bank's annual *Doing Business* report was [reviewed](http://www.ourlandourbusiness.org) in 2013 by former SA Minister **Trevor Manuel** and found wanting because of indefensible 'race-to-the-bottom' country rankings – yet has not been changed. One reason for weaknesses on eco-social, ethical matters may be that Bank Vice President for Integrity (*sic*) [Leonard McCarthy](http://www.ourlandourbusiness.org) was unveiled this week as having sought his position in 2008 in order to escape serious charges of wrongdoing in Pretoria (thanks to release of the 'Zuma Spy Tapes').

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION about THE WORLD BANK in SOUTH AFRICA



World Bank loans here date to 1951 when the apartheid regime was building Eskom's coal-fired power plants to provide electricity to white people only. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) also lent billions to the Pretoria regime during financial crises that were in part caused by pro-democracy activism in 1976 and 1982. A destructive, corrupt Lesotho dam was [another route](#) the Bank used to fund apartheid once financial sanctions hit Pretoria after 1985, resulting in long-lasting problems for Lesotho recently revealed by a [Mail&Guardian investigation](#). As South Africa finally democratised during the 1990s, the Bank played a crucial role in many areas of public policy: its 'neoliberal' (pro-corporate) advice made poor black people worse off in socio-economic terms. Inequality, poverty and unemployed soared as President Nelson Mandela, facing severe pressure from big business, [adopted numerous ineffectual Bank strategies](#).

'White gold' leaves a dark stain in Lesotho

For some in the mountain kingdom, water is a curse that has washed away any chance of a good life.



The World Bank's recent activity in South Africa includes the \$200 million funding of Lonmin's notorious 'developmental success' in Marikana (2007-14) – featured as a recent critical [case study](#) in an international management book, since the Bank still considers Marikana as 'best practice' – and the [biggest project loan](#) it has ever made: \$3.75 billion for Eskom's Medupi power plant. The coal-fired fiasco is a symbol of the Bank's [mega-project bias](#) and destructive incompetence. In February 2010, the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA) launched a global campaign to halt the Bank's Medupi funding, because of its climate-wrecking, poverty-creating corruption.



On Friday, SDCEA coordinator Desmond D'Sa – 2014 winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize for Africa – will assess the climate divestment tactic, on the heels of his New York tour and leadership role in the 400 000-strong People's Climate March last month. He asks, "Should we again launch a World Bank Bonds Boycott, to get investors to run on the Bank?"

During the 2000s, UKZN Honorary Professor Dennis Brutus (1924-2009) was one of the [World Bank Bonds Boycott](#) founders. As he put it at the campaign's 2000 launch, "We need to break the power of the World Bank over developing countries, as the divestment movement

helped break the power of the Apartheid regime over South Africa; this is why we support the boycott of World Bank bonds." Last month, writing in the *Guardian*, Brutus's close Jubilee ally [Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu](#) repeated his call for climate to be the basis for financial divestment. The World Bank is a logical target, since it continues fossil financing, carbon trading and other 'false solutions' to the climate crisis for which it is responsible as the world's largest historic fossil fuel lender.

Desmond Tutu: We fought apartheid. Now climate change is our global enemy

On the eve of the UN Climate Summit, Desmond Tutu argues that tactics used against firms who did business with South Africa must now be applied to fossil fuels to prevent human suffering

Desmond Tutu
The Observer Sunday 21 September 2014
Jump to comments (220)



South Africa bears other responsibilities for Bank malfeasance. SA's former Finance and Planning Minister [Trevor Manuel](#) also had a heavy hand at the World Bank, as chair of its board in 2000, head of its Development Committee in the early 2000s, regular promoter of the IMF (e.g. helping it [raise \\$750 billion](#) in 2009), and oft-mentioned candidate to lead the Bank or IMF. (Manuel retired from SA politics this year and was then hired by Rothschilds.)



This week, new revelations emerged from the 'Zuma Spy Tapes' about the World Bank's 2008 choice of former government ('Scorpions') corruption-investigations unit leader Leonard McCarthy as its 'Vice President: Integrity' (*sic*). That dubious job offer and the Bank's [ongoing defense](#) of McCarthy – in spite of repeated disclosures following the decision to halt prosecution of SA President Jacob Zuma on 783 charges of corruption in 2009, just before he took office, as a result of McCarthy's conspiracy – reflect the corrupt nature of the institution in personal terms. The Bank's support for McCarthy is comprehensible to many South Africans sick of the spy-versus-spy culture in Pretoria, because the [bugged-phone transcript](#) reveals Manuel's apparent endorsement of McCarthy's job application, *even though it is clear that both knew McCarthy's Machiavellian manipulation of SA politics and law should have disqualified him from such a post*. Given prolific corruption at the Bank, the job required a 'squeaky-clean' candidate, McCarthy is heard to remark. As [Ferial Haffajee](#), South Africa's most respected newspaper editor put it on October 5, McCarthy was "impaled by the seductions of power. He ruined our criminal justice system. I find it breathtaking that he is vice-president of integrity at the World Bank."

But we need not be surprised. Widespread local and global awareness of the Bank's pro-corporate, racist bias emerged in 1966 when SA Nobel Peace Prize winners Albert Luthuli and Martin Luther King asked that it halt apartheid lending; the United Nations agreed, but all were rebuffed impolitely by Bank lawyers (claiming the institution was 'apolitical'). That awareness rose again in April 2000 when 30 000 protested at the Washington Spring Meeting. There, Soweto city councilor Trevor Ngwane – subsequently founder of the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee – taught the crowd 'toyitoyi' protest techniques; inside, Manuel attempted to cover up (not fix) Bank flaws, as [SABC's documentary](#) showed. Later, in 2012-13, Manuel formally reviewed the Bank's *Doing Business* report and suggested that the extreme bias associated with its ranking system be halted – but the Bank rejected his advice.

What, then, should be done about this institution, especially given its surreal links to South African neoliberal elites? The Bank has made SA and the world a worse place, socially, politically, economically and environmentally. Elites don't seem to have a clue how to reform the Bank; it's time for civil society to debate long and hard, and hit the streets. In Washington and many other cities on Friday, people will learn more, and many will join the WorldVsBank.

Rising global concern = #WorldVsBank campaign

According to Alnoor Ladna of The Rules NGO, "Under the banner #WorldVsBank, this movement is calling for the end of *Doing Business* rankings and the new *Benchmarking the Business of Agriculture* project. They are tools of a pro-corporate, anti-poor, environmentally unsustainable model of development. If the World Bank keeps promoting economic activity that destroys biodiversity and the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, pastoralists and indigenous communities, they should not have a mandate to exist."

The Bank's annual lending exceeds \$35 billion and its influence ranges far into the sphere of public policy. The *Doing Business* rankings play a critical role in determining what form of economic development takes place around the world. According to the Bank's own literature, they are "an incomparable catalyst for business reforms initiatives." In practice, this has meant liberalising developing country economies so that western corporations can move in unimpeded. The casualties are the smallholder farmers and providers who currently feed 80% of the developing world but who are all too often rendered invisible or actively dispossessed.

To coincide with the #WorldVsBank mobilization, the [Oakland Institute](#), one of the world's leading research institutes dealing with land issues, is releasing a new study tackling the Bank's approach to land, agriculture and development, [Unfolding Truth: Dismantling the World Bank's Myths on Agriculture and Development](#). In addition, the Institute will also release [six new country fact sheets](#) that expose the reforms promoted by the World Bank in Kenya, Uganda, DRC, Laos, Cambodia, and Uruguay. In each country, the bank's policies have served as a catalyst for massive land grabs, dispossession, and forced eviction of countless small-scale farmers.

As Oakland Institute director Anuradha Mittal explained, "If you look behind many of the recent land grabs, you will find World Bank policies that enable investors to come in with projects that promise benefits to communities but don't follow through. We can keep going after each corporation and investment group but it would be more effective if the World Bank stopped using their immense political and financial power to pave the way for what has become the systematic exploitation of land and people."