

Equality and the Commons



What has destroyed every previous civilization has been the tendency to the unequal distribution of wealth and power. [Henry George](#)

It is a crime against humanity that [85 billionaires now have as much wealth as more than half the people on earth.](#)

As the Western form of “development” proceeds land values increase faster than the return to wage labor, a process called the [Law of Rent](#). As time goes on working people pay ever more for house rents and mortgages. Inequality of all kinds – economic, social, gender, race –is rooted in the “land problem.”

To regain balance and inhabit our planet with full sustainability, we must start by affirming the human right to the commons, to [Mother Earth](#).

A recent UNCTAD paper - [Wake Up Before It Is Too Late](#) - calls for:

a better understanding of the **multi-functionality of agriculture**, its pivotal importance for pro-poor rural development and the significant role it can play in dealing with resource scarcities and in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

A “[commons rent](#)” form of public finance can further land reform and provide a [fair and sufficient source of funding](#) for rural and urban needs for transport, sanitation, education, healthcare and other public services.

Commons rent amounts to 20 – 30% of GDP. UN HABITAT’s founding documents strongly advocate [land value taxation and other methods of claiming the commons rent](#) for the benefit of all while removing taxes on wage labor and productive capacities.

The equal right of all men and women to the use of land is as clear as their equal right to breathe the air. It is a right proclaimed by the fact of their existence. For we cannot suppose that some men and women have a right to be in this world and others do not. - [Henry George](#)