



On February 26 and 27, the Mobile Social Congress will discuss human rights struggles shared by the Global North and South

- **The event will encourage reflection and discussion on aspects of the tech industry silenced at the Mobile World Congress, held in Barcelona at the same time.**
- **A recent lawsuit by 14 Congolese families against the tech giants, gender inequalities and the defence of workers' rights in the sector will be some of the main topics addressed.**



Barcelona, January 30, 2020

The fifth edition of the Mobile Social Congress (MSC) will take place on February 24, 25 and 26 in Barcelona. This congress is organized each year by SETEM Catalunya with collaboration from a range of entities and administrations, and will consist of a series of debates and activities on the social and environmental impact of the tech industry. This year's MSC will be devoted to shared struggles of the Global North and Global South in the electronics industry, and will attempt to provide a balanced, up-to-date overview of the violations and obstacles the industry generates.

To this end, MSC2020 will focus on the violations of human rights and the environmental impacts that result from the electronics industry's current model of production and consumption in both the Global North and the Global South. It will also emphasize common ground and mutual dialogue among the different associations and labour unions fighting for a new model based on human rights.

#MSC2020 will kick off on the afternoon of February 24 with a series of **documentaries and short films** on the social and environmental impact of the production and consumption of electronic devices in both the Global North and South. Then, over the next two days, the debate will consist of four panel discussions. The first will address gender inequality in the electronics sector, with cases of

violations of worker security, health standards and rights. Next, we will hear from workers in the electronics supply chain, and look at existing synergies between associations and unions in the Global North and South. Meanwhile, we will hold a workshop on urban mining and a Restart Party (both will require prior registration). The workshop will take a look at the different materials our mobile devices are made of, where they come from and how to recycle them, while the Restart Party will teach us how to lengthen the lives of our electronics.

Day two of the MSC will start with a look at **the power of socially responsible public procurement in addressing gender inequalities in the supply chain** of the electronics industry. We will also take a look at the criteria for best practice followed by different administrations. In addition, we will learn about the global social and environmental impact of the extractive industry, with a special focus on the working conditions in Bolivian mines. The panel for this discussion will include the exceptional presence of **Terry Collingsworth**, who has presented a **civil lawsuit against the biggest tech corporations for the abuses and crimes committed in mines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**. These mines harvest cobalt and gold, essential minerals for the mobile phone industry. The lawsuit has the potential to make history, calling Apple, Google, Tesla, Microsoft and Dell to account for the first time for having benefitted from the use of forced child labour, and for their responsibility in the murder or bodily injury of these child workers.

Finally, with an **ideathon** workshop, we will learn **how to give new life to the components in our mobile devices** to keep them from ending up on the landfill. In February, those interested will get a chance to work together in teams using design thinking methods to generate innovative solutions to give a second life to the components of obsolete mobile phones. This activity will be part of a competition held throughout the month of February, where the resulting ideas will be presented within the framework of the MSC and a winning team will be selected.

Four years shining a light on negative impacts and presenting positive experiences in technological sovereignty

SETEM Catalunya is once again investing in a space where citizens can come together and reflect on the current model of production and consumption for information and communication technologies. This model generates serious human rights violations—especially regarding workers' rights—and environmental consequences that are hidden at the Mobile World Congress.

The electronics industry is one of the most important and dynamic sectors in the global economy. Each February, Barcelona becomes its main showcase with the Mobile World Congress. There, the handful of international companies that dominate this business present their innovations and promote the constant, unsustainable consumption of new ICT products.

This industry has an insatiable need for non-renewable mineral resources that have an alarming environmental and social impact on the communities where mining takes place. Plus, the biggest brands in this industry are responsible for the violation of human rights and health and safety regulations in the factories where they subcontract manufacturers as part of the murky global supply chain.

The pollution generated by electronic waste as a result of the programmed obsolescence of these products is a global problem, but it has uneven effects on the Global North and South. Irresponsible practices by the electronics industry shorten the lives of these products, leaving no room for them to be repaired, reused or recycled.

Finally, our user data is often kept in private servers and used for unknown ends, with companies granting access to our communications and data without our consent. The same capitalist logic promotes the privatization of knowledge—programs, for example—promoting a worldwide tech sector controlled by a handful of corporations.

At MSC, we invest in technological sovereignty and fair electronics.

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