



Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era

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SUCCESS AT A PRICE is failure preferable?

By Ewa Charkiewicz

DAWN Joint Research Coordinator for Sustainable Livelihoods.

It may be better to have a failed conference than a conference that ends with documents that fail the global community and default on sustainability and human rights.

The "success" of the fourth and final PrepCom for the Johannesburg Summit was in reaching the end of the meeting in Bali 27 May - 7 June without a consensus document. It showed there are significant resistances to re-opening and re-writing Agenda 21, to neoliberalism, and to United States hegemony. But the "success" was achieved at a price — compromises and concessions on women's human rights.

The 4th PrepCom closed with about 27% of the Draft Plan of Implementation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development still in brackets. Given the dominance of hyper-liberalism and the US hegemony in global politics, compromise on a fully agreed text could have only been reached by conforming with US demands that amounted to re-opening the agreements made in Rio, to changing the Commission on Sustainable Development into a minor forum for expert discussions on technical environmental problems, and to re-affirming the superior role of the World Trade Organisation over any structures and processes of global governance, including multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

Changes and continuities in the discourse in comparison to Agenda 21

The Draft Program of Action for Johannesburg, as well as the Proposed Elements for a Political Declaration, clearly state that sustainable development should be an overarching framework for all United Nations activities. This affirms the position of the UN as an alternative site of global governance, as opposed to global financial institutions. Sustainable development discourse is presented as an alternative to a neoliberal economic framework for global governance implemented via the WTO, and multilateralism engendered in the UN as an alternative to US hegemony.

But as in the preparatory process for UNCED, conflicts in negotiations are not only between sustainable development and economic growth models of development or development in terms of business as usual, but also over the meanings of sustainable development. The US negotiators prioritised privatisation, trade liberalisation, good governance, efficiency in resource use, voluntary commitments by industry, and private-public partnerships as pathways to sustainable development. It seemed they did not go to negotiate but to deliver their position as non-negotiable. At some point the exasperated Chair of the

Bali meeting asked "what to do about the United States?" Equally exasperated American NGOs working amongst NGO caucuses picked it up as their campaigning slogan.

Although the EU was in disagreement with US over a number of issues (eg. the precautionary principle, UNEP mandate, role of CSD, and changing consumption and production patterns), together with CANJUZ (Canada, Australia, Japan, United States, and New Zealand) they promoted trade liberalisation measures and endorsement of the results of the latest WTO Ministerial meeting that was held in Doha in November 2001. This commitment to Doha was reaffirmed in a recent proposal for mediation between the US and G77 by Jan Pronk, former Dutch minister of development cooperation and now special secretary general envoy for the WSSD.

The US, the EU, Australia and New Zealand strongly oppose a framework on corporate responsibility and accountability that is supported by G77 and NGOs. Other supporters of language on corporate accountability include Norway, Switzerland, and Japan. Instead of a binding framework, the language on "promoting and facilitating corporate responsibility and accountability" has been inserted in parts of the draft, although not without acrimonious battles.

During the preparatory process for the Earth Summit the downgrading of the UN Centre on Transnational Corporations left a void in the governance of corporations. At the same time, substantial mobilisation of business (eg. as manifested with the emergence of business networks and proliferation of statements on sustainable development) and the enabling of their role as stakeholders, positioned them as agenda setters in sustainable development discourse. Although it was not possible to achieve commitment to a binding framework, it has to be acknowledged that Rio + 10 has provided opportunity to put corporate accountability and responsibility on the global agenda. In the last decade initiatives such a Global Reporting Initiative on social and environmental impacts of business activities and OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises provide new tools to implement corporate accountability. However, as long as these and other tools are voluntary and as long as there

is no even playing field for companies including legal liability, the credibility and public trust in corporate accountability will not be substantial.

The Rio conference was an experiment in global governance that opened conference rooms to non-governmental stakeholders (or major groups, in the UN lingo), and organised participatory regional and major group consultations. Although the process opened up to civil society, it did not automatically translate to impact and influence over negotiations.

In preparations for Johannesburg, history repeats itself. Private-public partnerships, the so-called Type II outcomes, were launched particularly by the US as an avenue to sustainable development. But will they make sustainable development work? Voluntary initiatives and partnerships where power relations are unequal and where goals, frameworks and project designs as well as evaluation criteria are not decided in a transparent and participatory manner, will not make a substantial difference for sustainable development. Another cause to worry is that partnerships can divert resources from ODA, poverty reduction strategies or other implementation funding to co-finance developing countries partnerships with business. Regrettably, in the draft plan of action, partnerships are seen as a magic bullet.

Throughout the document developing countries put more emphasis on building a strong social pillar of sustainable development. It is interesting to see that after a decade marked by the rise of neoliberal economic policies in the North and also in the South, the proponents of sustainable development made a strong statement reaffirming its pillars: poverty eradication, protection of the environment, and changing consumption and production patterns. In contrast to the Rio process, the current debate it is more focussed on realities and problems in the countries of the South than Agenda 21, CSD and UNGASS documents. There is more emphasis, as well as several more concrete proposals, for integrating social and environmental aspects of sustainable development.

All this, however, refers to changes and resistances in discourse. Keep in mind that in the decade between Rio and Johannesburg, all problems prioritised in Agenda 21 - poverty, unsustainable production and consumption, and environmental degradation - have worsened. The Johannesburg

process is about changing or reaffirming terms and content of discourse. Because no concrete time-bound commitments were confirmed in the draft (apart from Millennium goals) and if those proposed remain bracketed, it is unlikely that the Johannesburg conference will change anything when it comes to environmental, social, and economic security and transforming the patterns of global financial flows.

Mapping brackets

Although most of the brackets are concentrated in the sections on globalisation and means of implementation of sustainable development, there are three themes that have been

bracketed across all these sections as well as elsewhere in the document. Two of them refer to the precautionary principle and to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Both were included in the Rio Declaration as principles guiding sustainable development.

The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities implies that countries that are the biggest contributors to environmental problems should take the lead in cleaning up the environment and changing consumption and production patterns.

The precautionary principle states that in case of threats of serious and irreversible damage,

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What's in the Draft Plan

The Draft Plan of Implementation for the WSSD consists of 10 parts.

Part I, the introduction, expresses commitment to the implementation of Rio Principles and Agenda 21 but in the second paragraph one of the principles on common but differentiated responsibilities is questioned and remains bracketed. Another principle bracketed throughout the document is the precautionary principle. Bracketed also is a reference to human rights and cultural diversity as essential to achieving sustainable development and ensuring that sustainable development benefits all.

Part II addresses poverty eradication and reaffirms commitment to Millennium Goals. Given the tendency in environment and sustainable development discourse to slip into addressing primarily environmental issues, this part reaffirms that poverty eradication has to be a strong social pillar of sustainable development. But this is unsupported by financial commitment and a proposal for a world solidarity fund to eradicate poverty remains bracketed.

Part III reaffirms and elaborates on the concept of changing consumption and production patterns, defined as efficient and sustainable use of resources. It includes sections on energy and sound management of chemicals, addresses the role of industry and launches a proposal for a 10-year work programme for changing consumption and production patterns. Although it inadequately reflects social dimensions of changing consumption and production patterns, it broadens the boundaries of the debate from single-minded focus on eco-efficiency to including a sustainability perspective, corporate responsibility and sound management of chemicals (that were not seen as a part of the agenda for changing consumption and production patterns at the time of Rio).

Part IV is devoted to protecting and managing the natural resources base of economic and social development (water and fisheries; disaster management; agriculture; desertification; climate change; mountain ecosystems; biodiversity; forests; mining, minerals and metals).

Part V on Sustainable Development in a Globalising world is one of the heavily bracketed sections.

Part VI deals with sustainable development and health, with the exception of one paragraph on the relationship between WTO/TRIPs and members rights to protect public health and promote access to medicine for all, as envisaged in the Declaration on the TRIPs Agreement and Public Health agreed in Doha. (See more on this section in the main article).

Part VII is devoted to sustainable development of small island developing states; **Part VIII** on Sustainable Development in Africa focuses on NEPAD, and **VIII b** addresses other regional initiatives.

The most heavily bracketed parts of the Draft Plan are **IX** on Means of Implementation, and **X** on Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development.

the lack of scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation. In international law, the precautionary principle is the cornerstone of the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol to the Biodiversity Convention. The Declaration that contains these principles was the preamble to Agenda 21 and was signed by the heads of states in Rio in 1992. In Bali the EU supported the precautionary principle, while developing countries were concerned that it should not be used as a market access barrier for southern exports. These concerns were accommodated in the draft document but remained bracketed – mostly because of US opposition to the precautionary principle. The US also opposed the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

The third heavily bracketed set of issues relates to WTO, particularly to the outcomes of the Doha ministerial meeting. Here the positions were configured differently. The CANJUZ group as well as the EU supported statements that referred to the role of trade liberalisation in promoting sustainable development, particularly the Doha commitments. One of the issues on the Doha agenda was the contentious relationship between trade agreements and multilateral environmental agreements. Developing countries (the G77 group) questioned this interpretation and the blanket endorsement of Doha.

The relationship between trade rules and MEAs is a hot topic for environmentalists concerned about sustainability impacts of trade agreements. Two years ago, under pressure from the environmental movement the EU commissioned a sustainability impact assessment of trade agreements, and NGOs have pitched their own critique. The second trade-related hot topic was the removal of “perverse” subsidies, as they are labelled in environmental discourse, in particular subsidies to agriculture. The EU, although under pressures to reform their subsidy system, is very defensive about any pressures from the outside. So is the US, which is increasing subsidies to agriculture while at the same time they declare their commitment to subsidy reductions.

Biggest failure: gender equality.

Global conferences are staged as a drama, with the US cast as the global villain, the EU as the global good guy, and the South as the victim in need of rescue by noble northern NGOs or the World Bank. This script deliberately questions the agency of developing countries in global governance and obscures many other complexities. But it also shows how, in order to work, power tries to find the most conducive discursive strategies, sometimes winning and sometimes failing. Power is not given and static, it is best understood through its effects and applications, including negotiated texts and what people say or refrain from saying in conference rooms. In Bali the most interesting readings on power were the resistances to US hegemony, and the costs of these resistances.

At the Bali PrepCom the good guys and the bad guys made deals with each other that prevented or relinquished any references to women’s human rights and reproductive rights appearing in the draft documents. They did put women into documents, but on questionable terms. Women and gender do not appear in any brackets, meaning that governments managed to reach consensus in all cases. In most cases this has happened at the lowest common denominator. Gender equality is easy to dismiss or surrender among participating NGOs as well as delegations.

Ten years ago almost every page of Agenda 21 included a statement on the role of women in sustainable development, not that it much changed the ways governments conduct their business. It is indicative of the power shift that ten years later there are fewer references to women and gender equality in the 76 pages of the document drafted for the Johannesburg Summit. Not only women’s rights but also “population”, and “population growth”, the cornerstone of environmental discourse in the times of Rio, is no longer on the agenda. In the Rio process it was a key contentious issue in debates on causes of environmental crises: was it wasteful consumption growth in the North, or population growth and poverty in the South? Today “population” is out and so are the tricky issues of control, abortion, access to contraceptives, women’s human rights and reproductive rights, accessible and affordable healthcare. But to be fair, the approach to health

in the Johannesburg draft is less technocratic than in Agenda 21.

In the 76-page Johannesburg Draft there are 30 references to gender and/or women, none of them in brackets. Most focus on the role of women as contributors and as resources for sustainable development, not on changing gender relations. Women's human rights are not mentioned at all. Not infrequently, women and children and/or indigenous people are addressed as a collective category of victims, a disempowered, vulnerable group in need of rescue by traditional or eco-modernised patriarchal men who define the terms and content of sustainable development discourse and maintain their own privileged position in society and gender hierarchies intact.

References to the role and position of women are concentrated in Part II on poverty. Gender equality is mentioned as a component of the definition of good governance, understood as sound social, environmental and economic policies, with gender equality lumped next to anti-corruption measures. But concerning forests, fisheries, agriculture and mining, women's role and agency and gender differences have been rarely mentioned, if at all.


In the chapter on health, women's access to health care has been mentioned with the following qualification: "while giving particular attention to maternal and obstetric care". A feminist commentator noted that the notion of "basic health care lurks in the document - but what does 'basic' include or exclude?" Although effectively addressing "reproductive health for all individuals of appropriate age" with references to UN conference documents including ICPD and WCW, the long battle to include language on women's human rights and reproductive rights was lost. This happened by tacit agreement amongst three major players - the US, the EU, and G77. Countries such as Canada and Norway, as well as several developing country governments, figured as lonely defenders of gender equality and women's human rights.

The call for effective protection of traditional knowledge and for recognising local communities as custodians of traditional knowledge was included in the document by

tacit agreement between the EU and G77 - seen as horse-trading in an attempt to forge an alliance in negotiations. Gender experts read it as endorsement of practices such as female genital mutilation or other seemingly less violent but deadly practices and prejudices that bar women from access to modern health care even when it is available and affordable.

It is informative to contrast the absence of women and gender in the document with the presence of many references to communities and to local ownership of biodiversity, forests, etc. The concept of communities and community ownership and control over local resources and knowledge is one of the icons of ecological debate. Regrettably, in WSSD and elsewhere it has been used as a blanket concept that ignores gender, class, ethnicity and age-based power differences within communities.

Conclusions

In the Elements for the Political Declaration of WSSD, presented by the chair of the Preparatory Committee Professor Emil Salim (see at www.johannesburgsummit.org, go to key documents), governments are expected to pledge commitment to multilateralism, poverty eradication, gender equality and changing consumption and production patterns, to addressing chronic diseases, armed conflicts, foreign occupation, intolerance, and terrorism. This document is a gauntlet thrown at neoliberalism and US hegemony in global governance. The strengthening of US hegemony in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 is a rather new element in global politics. There has never been a single superpower in remembered history. The US, as a global player, is experimenting with how to exercise its power as others try to figure out how to live with it and/or how to resist it. The resistances were the most interesting outcome of Bali, but it is still questionable how sustainable the countervailing force will be. Against it are the efforts to cut deals and finalise the Johannesburg Summit with a consensus document. UN senior officials, the Friends of the Chair Group, which is the rescue effort led by President Mbeki of South Africa, and the EU have offered to mediate between the US and developing countries - initiatives that push towards compromise. It may be better to have a failed conference than a conference that fails the global community. 

DAWN SAYS....

Political declaration delivered by DAWN at WSSD PrepCom IV in Bali, Indonesia, June 2002

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FROM A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

The consensus reached between the North and the South, between governments, NGOs and business during the Rio conference process (1992) was about integrating the environmental and social dimensions of development. In particular, social goals of development, such as poverty eradication, were of the biggest concern to the South. It was agreed that in order to meet the basic needs of their populations, national economies, in particular in the South, needed to grow. However, the growth needed for poverty eradication should proceed on greener terms of reducing environmental impacts and moving to changing production and consumption patterns. This consensus, already limited in form and substance, has been breached. The patterns of production and consumption have not changed while the global economy has kept on growing unchecked.

As production and consumption is speeded up, more goods are produced, consumed, and thrown away in order to achieve faster return on investments. More growth implies more toxics disseminated into the air, into water, into food chains. Chemical, military and bio-industry/ies poison the environment, human bodies, and jeopardise reproductive health.

Human health and reproduction are also undermined by rising income disparities and poverty that have increased worldwide, in particular in Africa. The former Soviet block has been quickly incorporated into marketised models of governance in order to provide resources for production and consumption growth in affluent economies, or to serve as new markets for consumer products.

Global economic volatility, fast changes in re-regulating and re-engineering states and markets and in people's lives undermine human and environmental reproduction, and generate or exacerbate conflicts, including violence against women. Even the affluent citizens of the North/West can no longer enjoy security.

A Strong Social Framework for Sustainable Development

The pressures on the regenerative, life-supporting capacity of ecosystems, and on the care economy where human reproduction is taking place,

have significantly increased since the times of negotiating Agenda 21. Meanwhile, the main objectives of reconciling social and environmental dimensions of development have not been achieved. Today, social and environmental policies are abandoned, reformulated, or integrated into trade liberalisation and privatisation measures, which are pushed as the new pillars of economic growth. This is the new and unfair type of integration and institutional framework for sustainable development that the United States, the World Bank or the World Trade Organisation are talking about.

Thus, DAWN calls for the urgent review of global environmental and economic trends from the perspective of their social impacts. We also call for the development of a strong social framework for sustainable development. While so far the efforts to operationalise sustainable development have focussed on policies and tools to reduce environmental impacts, to internalise environmental costs and to develop preventive environmental policies and management practices, a comparable effort has to be made to internalise, share, and prevent the social costs of economic growth.

The package of policy measures and tools to operationalise a social framework for sustainable development should include a living wage; affordable health care; access to land, including land reform; safe drinking water and access to sanitation; clean and affordable energy for household needs; access to public education; minimum pension security guaranteed by the state and so on.

Sharing the Costs of Social and Environmental Reproduction

Globally, the biggest share of the costs of social and environmental reproduction is paid by the South. The affluent consumption patterns in North/Western countries depend on the availability of cheap labour, mineral resources and primary commodities provided largely in the South. Tools such as environmental space concepts, environmental and social footprints, ecological and social capital, data on migration of labor including domestic workers, all serve to document anew the ecological and social debt of the North/West to the South.

Internationally and domestically, the biggest share of social reproduction (e.g. reproductive work in caring for children, the sick, the disabled, and for providing services for households) and subsistence production for household needs is provided by women. A strong social framework for sustainable development should include measures to share more justly the costs of such social reproduction by the market, the state, and within households.

Changing the patterns of production and consumption

Agenda 21, the Global Plan of Action adopted in Rio in 1992 included commitment to change consumption and production patterns, to develop national policy frameworks, and to undertake research on the social implications of changing consumption and production patterns. These and other commitments in Chapter 4 of Agenda 21 should be revitalised and implemented. Chapter 4 of Agenda 21 provides a political resource to challenge dominant ideologies of economic growth. The proposals and new practices that emerge under the umbrella of sustainable production and consumption tell us that markets can function differently. However, the debate is not without its shortcomings.

Limits of eco-efficiency

First of all, after Rio, the focus on technology, environmental management, and the gains for business in terms of eco-efficiency captured the central role in the debate. The limits to eco-efficiency (boomerang or rebound effect when gains in eco-efficiency are cancelled by the overall growth of volumes of production and consumption) have NOT received adequate attention. The ecological rationale for changing consumption and production patterns prevailed over the social rationale, and technology and management-oriented measures prevailed over other policy instruments to address social and health effects of current patterns of economic growth.

New economic models for sustainable production and consumption

Secondly, the dominant debate about changing production and consumption patterns was to a large extent de-linked from discussion of economic governance models. Markets are not simple mechanisms for exchange of inputs and goods between producers and consumers. Markets and terms of competition between companies have always been regulated or deregulated by governments.

Governments should take responsibility for creating binding regulatory frameworks to provide an equal playing field for business to move to sustainable production and consumption. Currently, profit-making capacity, competitive edge, and survival of companies in competitive global markets depend on their ability to achieve fast returns on investment. This they achieve by speeding up production and consumption, generating symbolic and material obsolescence (constant replacing of old products, symbols, ideas for new), and by externalising social and environmental costs of production and consumption to households, communities and public budgets.

One of the burning issues for the debate is to return to the discussion of the fundamental goals of production and consumption. For instance, the military captures financial and natural resources and disseminates toxic and radioactive chemicals into the environment. Human beings are made into resources for waging wars and conflicts. The \$800 billion spent annually on military expenditures should be redirected for social security and environmental regeneration.

The challenge for the sustainable consumption and production debate is to develop an analysis from the perspective of economic governance. What is needed are new economic models that take production, consumption, and social and environmental reproduction into account. The debate should draw on the work of feminist economists who have developed economic models that make visible the linkages between the formal monetised economy, the care and subsistence economy, and nature's economy.

Public ownership and support for sustainable production and consumption

Thirdly, the debate on sustainable production and consumption has so far proceeded among environmentalists, in particular in the North/West, who are mainly concerned with environmental limits to growth. Little is known of what the debate would look like if defined by other stakeholder groups such as trade unions, feminist networks, small business, or if seen from the perspective of health, from the point of view of sustainable livelihoods, or from the perspective of a small island developing state.

The North/Western debate is oriented to the future. Sustainable practices have by now disappeared from collective memories in the West, and new ones have to be created with the help of new technologies. For western countries what is at stake is to green the

future. For many developing and transition countries what is at stake is to protect existing sustainable practices

While it is non-viable to expect any U-turn in history, back to pre-modern patterns of production and consumption, there is much at stake to protect and support in the adaptation of existing pro-local sustainable production-consumption systems, community currencies, and fair trade schemes as ways out of poverty. Pro-local markets allow resources and money to circulate within communities.

Each country and region should develop its own mix of appropriate social, environmental and economic policy instruments for sustainable production and consumption. In order to generate public ownership and support for changes, policy frameworks for sustainable production and consumption have to be developed in local and national participatory consultative processes and genuine partnerships.

Human and environmental health - focus on precautionary principle


By now there is no animal or human on earth that is "natural". Human bodies contain close to a hundred new synthetic, man-made chemicals, so called xenobiotics, that have not existed during millions of years of evolution on earth, as well as 'natural' chemicals to which we have been exposed in previously unknown quantities. Some of these chemicals are persistent organic pollutants (POPs), which have a long half life, accumulate in the body and exert a range of impacts on human health, including disruptions to the endocrine system and effects on reproduction, foetal and childhood development. Another huge threat to human and environmental health comes from nuclear energy, used for civilian and military purposes.

Many toxic chemicals have been put on the market before any risk assessment requirements have been put in place. Even today mandatory licensing systems do not exist. The burden of proof of toxicity is on society, and not on the chemical industry.

The solution to some of the problems of health hazards brought by the chemical industry lies with changing the patterns of production, implementing the precautionary principle, and by putting in place independent mandatory licensing systems. The precautionary principle adopted in the Rio Declaration and institutionalised in international environmental law in the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol to the Biodiversity Convention should also be applied to all development projects that affect social and environmental reproduction.

The Challenge for Governments

The buffer function of the care economy to deal with the social impacts of global economic volatility, as well as the carrying capacity of ecosystems to support life, are

by now over-stretched. Not only environments but also societies have their limits in terms of how much poverty, resource degradation, toxic exposure, destruction of livelihoods, and gender-based political and military violence they can take. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of governments to regulate markets and to eliminate conflicts, and to safeguard social and environmental reproduction, including the fair sharing of its costs within households, between countries, and between and within the North and the South. 

The hand of the Vatican can be seen in the weak language on women's human and reproductive rights in the WSSD document. A planned Canadian initiative to reopen paragraph 47 in the WSSD document in Johannesburg in order to introduce human rights into it may be a risky but necessary move. The present text worryingly mentions only national laws and religious and cultural values without reference to human rights and fundamental freedoms, that were included in the UNGASS on Children text. There is also a concern that the WSSD text, by referring only to basic health services, could be used to exclude certain sexual and reproductive health services, e.g. legal abortion.


UNGASS on Children

37. To achieve these goals and targets, taking into account the best interests of the child, consistent with national laws, religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of its (*sic*) people, and in conformity with all human rights and fundamental freedoms, we will carry out the following strategies and actions:

(...)³. Address effectively, for all individuals of appropriate age, the promotion of their healthy lives, including sexual and reproductive health, consistent with the commitments and outcomes of recent UN conferences and summits, including the World Summit for Children, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, their five year reviews and their reports.

WSSD as of 12 June 2002

47. [Agreed] Strengthen the capacity of health care systems to deliver basic health services to all in an efficient, accessible and affordable manner aimed at preventing, controlling and treating diseases and to reduce environmental health threats and, taking into account the reports of recent United Nations conferences, summits, and special sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, consistent with national laws and cultural and religious values. This would include actions at all levels to:

(...)^(j) [Agreed] Address effectively, for all individuals of appropriate age, the promotion of their healthy lives, including their reproductive and sexual health, consistent with the commitments and outcomes of recent United Nations conferences and summits, including the World Summit for Children, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference of Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, and their respective reviews and reports; 

THE JOHANNESBURG MEMO IN BRIEF

The Johannesburg Memorandum was drafted by a group of 16 independent activists, intellectuals, managers, and politicians who were brought together by the Heinrich Boell Foundation to produce a document for Rio+10. The Memo was intended to redefine environmental debates and policy in terms of livelihood rights from an independent civil society perspective. It has been heralded as the best alternative document to the Johannesburg Programme of Action. The full memo, and the short version below, is available on the web from www.worldsummit2002.org/memo/ (See DAWN comments overleaf).

Southern countries - foremost the host country South Africa - intend to make Johannesburg a development rather than an environment summit. This is justified, given the systematic neglect of equity and fairness in world politics. Yet, it would be a regression of sorts, a sliding back behind Rio, if this implies neglect for the state of the biosphere. On the contrary, this Memorandum argues that the South (along with the economies in transition) go environmental. Southern governments will commit a historical mistake if they continued to consider the environment as a matter for the North, without much relevance for their own concerns. Environmental care is crucial for ensuring livelihood and health for the marginalised sections of the world's citizenry. In short, there will be no poverty eradication without ecology. Moreover, an environmental vision is indispensable for moving out of the hegemonic shadow of the North, leapfrogging beyond fossil-based development patterns that are already historically obsolete.

In choosing this perspective, the Memorandum takes a critical distance from both the policies suggested by the Davos World Economic Forum and the analysis provided by the Porto Alegre World Social Forum. As to the former, we doubt that worldwide growth and unconditional trade promote justice and sustainability in the world; all the evidence points to the contrary. As to the latter, we doubt that equitable growth and democratically managed trade are sufficient conditions for achieving justice; in an age of bio-physical limits, equity can only be imagined at resource-light levels of production and consumption. Although we feel we are closer to Porto Alegre than to Davos, we do believe that today, there can be no credible political project, unless it takes the finiteness of the biosphere into account.

Part 1 of the Memorandum, Rio in Retrospect, points out to the paradox of how the Rio process has launched a number of successful institutional processes without, however, producing tangible global results. In particular, the wave of economic globalisation has largely washed away gains made on the micro level, spreading the robber economy across the globe and exposing natural treasures in the South and East to the pull of the world market.

Part 2, The Johannesburg Agenda identifies four background themes that should run through all the debates at the Summit. The question sticks out: what does fairness mean, within a finite environmental space? On the one hand, fairness calls for enlarging the rights of the poor to their habitats, while on the other, it calls for cutting back the claims of the rich to resources. The interests of local communities in maintaining their livelihoods often collides with the interests of urban classes and corporations to expand consumption and profits. These glaring resource conflicts will not be eased, unless the economically well-off on the globe transit

towards resource-light patterns of production and consumption.

Part 3, Livelihood Rights, discards the conventional wisdom that poverty eradication is at odds with environmental care. On the contrary, livelihoods cannot be maintained unless access to land, seeds, forests, grasslands, fishing grounds, and water is secured. Moreover, pollution of air, soils, water and food chronically undermines the physical health of the poor, especially in cities. Environmental protection is therefore not a contradiction to poverty elimination, but its condition. With regard to the poor, there will be no equity without ecology. Given that resource conservation is based on stronger community rights, the reverse is also true: there will be no ecology without equity.

Part 4, Fair Wealth, emphasises that poverty alleviation cannot be separated from wealth alleviation. The global environmental space is highly unequally divided; obtaining more resource rights for the under-consumers in the world implies reducing the resource claims of the over-consumers

in North and South. The affluent will have to move towards resource-light styles of wealth. This is not just a matter of ecology, but of justice; otherwise the majority of the world's citizens remains deprived of their fair share of the natural heritage.

Part 5, Governance for Ecology and Equity, proposes changes in institutional frameworks at the international level for strengthening environmental protection and livelihood rights:

Rights: Enlarging democratic spaces is the best way to protect the environment. A framework convention on the resource rights of local communities could consolidate the rights of inhabitants of resource-rich areas that are exposed to mining, oil, logging, and other extractive industries. Environmental rights - including the right to full information, consumer rights, and the precautionary along with the polluter pays principle - should become the standard of law everywhere.

Price structures. Market prices cause environmental destruction, unless they tell more of the ecological truth. This calls for the immediate removal of environmentally perverse subsidies and tax reform to remove taxes from labour and shift them to resources, pollution, and waste. Finally, it suggests user fees for the global commons, in particular the atmosphere, the sky and the seas. With unbiased prices, a myriad daily economic decisions will collaborate in bringing about an

economy that has the least cost to the environment.

Market governance. International trade regimes need to foster sustainability and fairness, not just economic efficiency. From this viewpoint, WTO-style market liberalisation threatens social coherence and the maintenance of food and other ecosystems. What is needed between North and South is not free trade, but fair trade. Free trade will have to be circumscribed in its scope for the sake of human rights and sustainability, just as nations should have much larger discretion in regulating trade for protecting the public good. Environmental treaties should have priority over trade agreements. Over and above the verifiable codes of conduct for corporations, a framework of socially accountable production is called for that has principles applying to all commercial activities. The global financial architecture should be overhauled to introduce a currency exchange tax, relieve the debt burden, and broaden electronic cross-border barter trade.

Institutional innovations. A new historical agenda has to be embodied in new institutions. First, it is suggested to upgrade UNEP to a World Environment Organisation. Second, it is proposed to establish a decentrally organised International Renewable Energy Agency. Finally, the Memo argues in favour of an International Court of Arbitration. 🌱



*The Indonesia People's Forum protest outside the Bali International Convention Centre at WSSD PrepCom IV.
Picture: A. Griffen*

DAWN comments on the Johannesburg Memo. . . .

The Johannesburg Memo encapsulates western environmentalism informed by social justice and is the best available alternative to the Johannesburg Programme of Action. The Memo takes up rights perspectives – communities rights to the environment and global and local commons, to environmental knowledges, rights to land, right to the ownership of biodiversity – as well as delegitimises debt claims, talks of new ecological debt, and of restructuring the global financial architecture. It takes up a range of strategic issues that the governments' document ignores or chooses not to address. The Johannesburg Memo makes visible how cheap production from the South is a new form of subsidy to the North and how global production-consumption and global consumer class lives at the expense of irreversible damage to the environment. But it stops short of acknowledging social reproduction and the care economy.

The Memo is also good in showing alternative pathways to preserve environmental integrity and to maintain people's livelihoods, eg. a proposal for a convention on community resource rights, various measures for resource light economy, shifting tax base from labour to resources, etc.

The paradox is that while women and gender issues are hardly visible in the Johannesburg Memo, they are visible in the Program of Action, although not on terms that we can agree with. Both documents challenge economism/neoliberal governance strategies by emphasising environmental limits and the role of communities - and although the Draft Programme talks of the role of communities, and the Memo talks of community rights, both apply blanket concepts of communities, ignoring any power differences within.

The Memo's focus on the special relationship of women with biodiversity, eg. as the protectors of varieties of seeds is not tenable politically and does not correspond with research findings. It may be true for some communities, but it is not true for others. There is a variety of modes

of relationship between people and biodiversity. Gender, ethnicity, environmental factors, class/social, age, and religion all play a role. The assumption of a privileged relationship between women and nature is politically self-defeating because it places the responsibility for saving the environment on the shoulders of women.

The challenge is to link critical environmental thinking with feminism as social critique. Currently there are two linkage discourses, one ecofeminist, the other related to the management of development, eg. women, water and sanitation, women and forestry, etc. This is not enough to make feminist/environmental alliances. A potentially strategic pathway is to link debates on social and environmental reproduction. Environmentalists are concerned with ecological limits to growth; feminists are concerned about social limits to economic growth, in particular in its neoliberal format.

An other issue for discussion between feminists and environmentalists is the blanket concept of community - this is not only the leading social category in environmental discourses, but it is also an important category for fundamentalists and for preservation of traditional patriarchy. To forge genuine partnerships for sustainability there is an urgent need to bring the issues of social reproduction, gender justice, rights perspectives, participatory democracy as an indivisible package into the frameworks of critical environmental discourse. On the roads to sustainability feminists also need new travelling partners, liberated men who embrace caring and social responsibility as part of their new identity as ecological men. 🌱

DAWN Research Coordinator for Political Restructuring and Social Transformation, Vivienne Taylor, was invited to be a member of the Johannesburg Memo Group and made some interventions from a DAWN perspective, with support from the Joint Research Coordinator on Sustainable Livelihoods, Ewa Charkiweicz, who commented on the Memo above.

Battling in Bali

A short report on the 4th PrepCom from Arlene Griffen, who has represented DAWN throughout the WSSD process and is a member of the DAWN group to the Johannesburg Summit. The other representatives are the DAWN Research Coordinators for Sustainable Livelihoods, Ewa Charkiewicz and Yvonne Underhill-Sem.

Is it worth the effort?

Most NGOs voiced the same frustrations with the multi-stakeholder dialogue process and with the United Nations WSSD process that had existed from before PrepCom III in New York: they were fed up with their inputs not being reflected in the final document and with their demands falling on deaf ears. Eventually some NGOs boycotted the formal process in Bali and supported only the Indonesian People's Forum activities. There has been talk of boycotting the Johannesburg Summit altogether, and indications are that some NGOs won't go, although most will. Most decided that civil society input had to continue in order to moderate the predictable outcomes that would cause more suffering for the world. But it was felt civil society had to organise and to work differently: as a sleeping giant it needed to wake up to its real potential for effecting change in attitudes and directions that governments and communities must take.

Text negotiations

In the document text negotiations, there was a watering down, tit-for-tat, chop-and-change fight for consensus language between the usual sparring partners: the EU versus the G77 and China, and the US and its supporters versus the G77 and the rest of the world. The fight over language on a corporate accountability convention went back and forth. So far it is retained, but in much weaker form. Trade and finance language, especially Section IX on Means of Implementation, continued to be a problem in achieving consensus. The United States and Australia and usually the JUSCANZ group, (known by NGOs as the CANJUZ group – US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan) did not want to go beyond the Doha and Monterrey agreements, and kept emphasising the need for national level action and commitments by developing countries. The G77 wanted WSSD to build on Doha and Monterrey, but were opposed to environmental language that would add new obligations to developing countries or be used to justify protectionist measures. Norway was the most progressive of the key negotiating countries, stressing the need to go beyond Doha and Monterrey by including follow-up initiatives. It stayed strong on corporate accountability in the governance text, despite extreme pressure. With Canada, Norway worked hard at getting the language of gender equity raised again.

In Section X, Institutional Frameworks for Sustainable Development, dealing with governance, the G77 reacted to “coherence” language and countered with language calling for capacity building of developing countries to effectively participate in trade negotiations.

The United States applied the 4 Ds to texts — delete, delay, defuse, destroy — in an attempt to get rid of “timeframes and targets” language and to reject any mention of a corporate accountability convention. It also pushed partnerships/initiatives, substituted “voluntary” for “mandatory” in any best practice language, and opposed references to ILO standards, gender disparity, and right to food language.



The Bali battlers, from left, Gigi Francisco, Brenda Tohia, Arlene Griffen and Ewa Charkiewicz. Picture: A Griffen

Social and environmental reproduction

- towards a bottom-line framework for human security

by Ewa Charkiewicz: summarised extracts from a draft chapter for a forthcoming book, *Global Compact and Its Discontents*. The chapter aims to map environmental and feminist debates on social and environmental reproduction, analyse the linkages, and propose an integrative framework for assessing new projects of governance and new social compact ideas.

The conditions necessary to ensure social and environmental reproduction provide a bottom line for human security and sustainable production and consumption.

Feminists have revitalised the debate on social reproduction by theorising reproduction through the lens of power/gender relations, focusing on issues such as gender division of labour, (time and energy), unpaid domestic work in caring for people, reproductive health, economic governance, and empowerment.

Feminists have also scrutinised gender dimensions of new reproductive technologies that disembody and speed up reproduction and some predict a move to a post-gender and post-human world as a consequence. Chemical interventions and technological innovations also speed up the reproduction of farm animals and plants beyond the nature's seasonal breeding patterns.

Maintaining the reproductive or regenerative capacity of the environment as the life base (carrying capacity) for human survival, and safeguarding human reproduction are bottom lines for human security. Yet the interplay of factors that affect reproduction, the linkages between social and environmental reproduction, and how the effects of shifts in policy frameworks and development models driven by hyper-liberal economic fundamentalism reformat the conditions for reproduction - are all much under-theorised.

Environmental reproduction - debates

From an ecological perspective industrial economic growth models undermine the carrying capacity or the life supporting functions of ecosystems as well as prospects for continued (sustained) economic growth. The environmental costs of economic growth have been ignored by economic decision-makers because of the limits in

the dominant thinking when it comes to recognising the role of the 'natural' environment in economic activities. The mainstream proposition of environmental economics is to valorise the environment and to bring it inside the conceptual frameworks for economic activities.

The scale and speed in economic activities, and the dependence on non-renewable mineral resources (in contrast to renewable plant materials, although their processing also requires energy input) do make a difference for maintaining a life base for human security.

Social reproduction

In feminist analysis all forms and practices of reproduction are influenced by social institutions, including law, religion, the market, cultural norms, etc. Feminists argue that these institutions display male privilege, reinforced by separation between private (household) and public (market and government) domains, and association of male authority with the public.

Due to historically established, persistent gender inequalities in the access to resources and voice, social reproduction is at the expense of women's time and energy. Various empirical studies demonstrate that worldwide women spend more time on work and less time on leisure, while men spend less time on work, and have a larger share of paid work and leisure.

Economists such as Gita Sen and Diane Elson pointed out to the interlinkages between reproductive decisions in the household and mezo and macro level economic policies. Diane Elson re-named the reproductive economy as the care economy and showed how it has to be taken into account by policy makers. Irene van Staveren argued that the care economy plays a buffer function for volatility of financial globalisation, and that this function is now over-stretched.

Human and environmental reproductive health

Another highly important factor that jeopardises human security relates to health impacts of exposure to toxic chemicals. The systems of governance of chemicals are obsolete and inadequate and the available risk assessments methodologies do not reflect the hazards related to cumulative and multidimensional impacts. The solution to this problem lies in changing frameworks for the governance of toxics to include precautionary approaches. The precautionary principle that was agreed in the Rio Declaration and introduced to international environmental law with the Biosafety Protocol to Biodiversity Convention should be applied to all development projects that affect social and environmental reproduction.

Other linkages between health and social/environmental reproduction, such as the impacts of extractive mining, large-scale irrigation or infrastructure projects, and militarisation, should not be ignored.

Feminist insights on environmental & social reproduction and rethinking of economic theory

Feminist economists and others have pointed out the blindness of economic theory and policy to women's reproductive work, subsistence economy, and ecological processes on which formal and informal economic activities depend that has resulted in the invisible areas of economic activities being damaged by economic processes that have ignored the role of non-monetised exchanges of time, energy and resources.

Feminists have also challenged the assumption of an autonomous, separate, self-interested individual who competes and trades with other individuals in order to maximize a utility or profit. The subject of economic activities, the rational economic man, treats women's reproductive work and ecological processes as externalities. These reproductive domains were seen as taking care of themselves, passive/and or considered subject to human authority. Human authority was constructed as male authority, and economic agents expected to spring out of the earth by themselves, like mushrooms, destined to take control over nature and family.



Several feminist economists have come up with a framework for redefining the scope of economic activities which includes both formal, monetised exchange as well as unmonetised care and subsistence activities, and ecological processes on which all economic activities depend.

Time in (re)production and consumption: rethinking economic theory

The acceleration of production, and consumption has adverse effects on social and environmental reproduction. The velocity or speeded-up time of reproduction of capital and the time of human reproduction are on collision course with each other. The speed-up in the reproduction of capital has been linked with the persistence of antagonistic gender relations and environmental destruction.

Given its role in the speeding up and in sustaining human reproduction, consumption should be added to the feminist and environmental analytical frameworks that look at production and reproduction.

Towards conclusions...

The role of sustaining the environment (life support systems), issues of social equity, equal sharing of time, energy and costs of reproductive work, slowing-down of production and consumption, delinking of competitiveness from speed and obsolescence, transformation of antagonistic subject/object splits between self and the other, overcoming distinctions between theory and practice, new epistemologies for regenerative economics, shifting governance of development to precautionary approaches are the creative inroads to move economic theory and practice from here to more fair and sustainable systems.

Women's Major Group statement:

Freeing the market, not freeing the people

The Women's Major Group at the Multistakeholder Dialogue Session at the WSSD 4th PrepCom in Bali issued strong statements on governance and capacity building, calling for urgent action to address their concerns.

The statement on governance said that Rio had been about a new paradigm - an all-encompassing journey to peace, sustainable development, equity and equality. It called for common and differentiated responsibilities.

"Ten years later, at the global level we are more enmeshed in the freeing of the market than in the freeing of the people. International financial institutions, strengthened since Rio by the WTO, continue to limit women's participation in their structures of governance, while their policies and programmes determine our lives on a daily basis. We can no longer avoid addressing the lack of accountability in these institutions.

Agenda 21, with the strong input of women and other civil society groups committed to the far-reaching goal and overarching framework of sustainable development. This new paradigm was intended to link the economic, environmental and social sectors in a new path to development, that would be sustainable for people and communities all over the world, and for the planet. Since Rio, governments made additional commitments at Cairo, Beijing, Copenhagen and Istanbul to achieve gender equality and advance women's economic and social position."

The statement called for urgent action in the three key areas of global governance, governance and gender and transparency and accountability. The demands emphasised that poverty eradication, women's human rights and gender justice were inextricably linked, but gender commitments are not being automatically reflected in institutional governance. They called particularly for equal representation of women and men in all UN decision-making fora at all levels, particularly WSSD. They also wanted arrangements that recognise and reward women's contribution as key players in environmental protection management and conservation.

The Major Group said women shared the concern of many developing countries, that international financial institutions have gained increasing power over their development.

"Let's be honest, the IFI's are the dominant institutions and their goal is economic growth, not sustainable development. While concern is expressed about environmental impacts and poverty eradication, their record is clear - economic growth transcends both environment and social concerns. While the UN, through the financing for development process, has begun to regain its seat at the global economic governance table, its ability to redress the balance towards people-centred, women-oriented sustainable development is limited."

The Group called for the UN to address the lack of institutional democracy in international financial and trade institutions and put in place arrangements to implement the "polluter pays" principle.

The Women's Major Group Statement on Capacity Building

Women's increased participation in sustainable development, particularly in developing countries and countries in transition, requires a better understanding on the part of both governmental and non-governmental spheres of the development community of women's present status and respective barriers. In both developed and developing countries women are de-linked from essential governmental and intergovernmental processes.

So capacity building is a necessity that should consider the main obstacles that women face to engage in effective participation. The continued feminisation of poverty is another fundamental barrier as it provokes apathy and scepticism about government and a lack of belief that people can change things.

"There is a recognition that the failure to implement Agenda 21 is largely due to the weakness of institutions. Concentrated efforts are specifically required in the area of gender mainstreaming. We demand 50% of participation of women in all levels of decision making through deliberate capacity building programs targeted at women's organisations across thematic areas of interest."

The statement called also for gender budgeting at all levels and specifically recommended 50% of global funds and resources allocated to HIV/AIDS be channelled through women's organisations.

In a closing statement at the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues, the Women's Major Group said it had become clear in the process that while they were speaking, they were not being heard. They concluded that so far their participation had not been integrated in outcome documents. "Either we all continue to divert our energies to partnerships that cannot be enforced by the UN, or we commit to producing a strong outcome document with time-bound targets and a substantial mobilisation of resources."

The statement said action must be based on five basic principles, including the fundamental nature of women's equality and gender justice to the achievement of sustainable development.

The Women's Caucus made a statement on Partnerships that said Johannesburg must provide a strong action platform of binding commitments tied to immediate implementation of the time-bound targets of the Rio Conventions and Agreements.

"In the case of Type 2 Outcomes, women commit to one partnership: with the poor and the oppressed, women everywhere, and with nature. If we are generous and assume that Type 2 Outcomes do indeed hold the promise of achieving sustainable development, then they should explicitly be based on the principles of sustainable development. These would include the precautionary principle, a systems approach, an eco-systems approach, transparency, accountability, timely access to information, equity and justice, all in a human rights framework.

The Caucus expressed concern that the current process of Type 2 Outcomes was enabling corporations to substitute national governments' responsibilities, especially in the delivery of basic services such as water and sanitation, education, and health care. Partnerships should not be a cover up for outsourcing and privatisation.

"The IMF, the World Bank and the WTO are key institutions in the globalisation of poverty. Experience has shown that globalisation has led to the marginalisation of a number of so-called developing countries and citizens, particularly women."

The Womens Major Group listed the following actions as necessary to the outcome of WSSD:

1. Demilitarise, restore peace, and reallocate military budgets to achieve sustainable development.
2. Redress the negative effects of globalisation, and call upon the UN to refuse to underwrite the International Financial Institutions' policies.
3. Stop the commodification of basic services and systems, and the privileging of market-driven economic growth over sustainable human development.
4. Stop the flow of natural resources from South to North, and arrest the diversion of resources from the legitimate owners.
5. Achieve gender justice and gender balance in economic, political and social decision-making.
6. Prioritise financial resources to implement Type 1, over and above Type 2 Outcomes.
7. Guarantee a level playing field for all member states of the UN, by respecting the sovereign rights of all parties in all settings.
8. Require countries that want to engage in partnership to ratify existing conventions pertaining to sustainable development.
9. Reinforce accountability and transparency through monitoring, evaluation and the use of gender-sensitive indicators.
10. Account for, apportion and make restitution to developing countries for the ecological debt.
11. Direct 50% of HIV/AIDS global funds and resources to women, through women and people living with AIDS.
12. Institute polluter pays policies and programs.
13. Insist on the precautionary principle on matters of health and safety.
14. De-link Doha and Financing for Development from the WSSD process, and further the commitments made at the Millennium Summit for the full implementation of WSSD.
15. Call for a paradigm shift from the neo-liberal economic model to an alternative gender-sensitive, people-centred model, targeting macro-economic policies and programmes.