



Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era

Addressing the World Social Forum

A DAWN Supplement

Globalization and Fundamentalism: A genderscape

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The term 'genderscape' is inspired by the writings of Arjun Appadurai on globalization. It provides the image of a landscape defined by a gender lens.

DAWN has been closely involved with the World Social Forum since its inception. Despite our early and committed investment in the forum agenda, in Porto Alegre 2001 we identified critical gender gaps and absences. Our first and foremost concern was the absence of women and lack of a robust gender perspective in the analyses of globalisation developed in the 2001 debates. Another matter of concern was that there was no consistent scrutiny of the potential impacts of the recently-elected Bush administration in the United States on the political, economic and environmental dynamics of globalisation. It does not seem untoward to remind people that the only sharp and clear reference to the detrimental effects of Mr. George W. Bush's politics was made through a feminist demonstration against the US abortion foreign policy, adopted just a few weeks before Porto Alegre. We missed a greater emphasis on the universality and indivisibility of human rights as the contemporary ethical framework for addressing the inequalities and harmful effects of globalisation. We were also appalled by the absence of in-depth discussions on the meaning and scope of fundamentalism and its intrinsic correlation with current economic trends.

Porto Alegre 2002 cannot ignore these intertwined dimensions. Our critique of the gender blindness of the first forum agenda was made public in Porto Alegre itself when we signed a feminist statement titled "Practicing Gender Justice Now..." strongly pledging "*the organizers to practice the democratic principle of gender and regional balance in the constitution of the advisory and organizing committee*". It is worth noting that complaints regarding the forum's lack of balance in terms of political representation and content have been raised by others, particularly the Afro-Brazilian community. Since then, clear efforts

have been made by the Brazilian Organizing Committee and the International Advisory Group to ensure wider plurality of voices and perspectives in the WSF 2002 core agenda. DAWN welcomes and applauds this commitment. At the same time, we hasten to point out that the tragic evolution of global political events in 2001 makes it impossible for the 2002 forum to evade the significance of US Republican politics and the pervasive implications of fundamentalism in its various forms.

It is never a simple task for feminists to engage with and attempt to transform the perspective of progressive social and political movements such as those strongly represented in WSF. In doing so we often find ourselves being responded to through tokenism and vague or rhetorical commitments to gender, while at the same time being marginalised and criticised from all sides: by progressive men and women who do not have a feminist perspective; by feminists who find it futile to engage with males in male-dominated spaces and are critical of feminists who do so; and even by some grassroots women leaders of social movements who have essentially mobilised themselves on the basis of motherhood and the political virtue of women's values. This task becomes even more challenging under current global circumstances, with their multiple national and local ramifications.

Yet, as DAWN, we cannot avoid the risks implied in such an endeavour. Since the mid-1980's, we have been wrestling with problems arising from the interconnectedness of globalisation and fundamentalism and their detrimental effects on women's lives, rights, agency and freedom.

As early as 1984, DAWN's first book, *Development, Crisis and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives*, called attention to the resurgence of fundamentalisms, both South and North of the Equator, and examined how the transformation of women's role inside and outside the families was becoming a target for the orchestrated efforts of conservative forces. By then we had already identified the insecurity resulting from male unemployment and loss of prestige as the cultural ground for the rooting down of those threatening trends.

During the 1990's, DAWN was actively involved in global political arenas, particularly the United Nations, where equivalent tensions were also making their appearance. In the UN debates it became clear that on the one hand, supporters and promoters of a globalised world economy often supported the breaking of traditional patriarchal orders, but had great difficulty in understanding that, at the ground level,

social and economic outcomes of globalisation usually mobilise regressive anti-women forces. On the other hand, fundamentalist governments were, by and large, in the forefront of anti-globalisation struggles while at the same time, doing their best to overturn women's personal and political rights in the name of contesting western hegemony. We also witnessed the irony of the Vatican's position, leading a virulent crusade against gender equality and women's reproductive and sexual rights while presenting itself as the champion of the poor, constantly calling for basic social services, migrant family re-unification, and debt cancellation.

Concurrently, our country level research efforts identified the intensification of trends observed in the 1980s across Southern regions. In the case of South and South East Asia and the Pacific, the battle between North and South states around the expansion of globalised capitalism has provided new impetus for ethnic and nationalist patriarchs to re-assert their political aims. Through the revival of "values" — Asian, 'indigenous Pacific', Islamic, Hindu — and increased integration with economic globalisation, patriarchal states or organisations are systematically reasserting their hold on women as orthodox representations of some idealised concept or value from the past, further limiting the spaces in which women can continue to claim autonomy.

In Africa, structural adjustments programmes came into existence within the context of patriarchy, neo-colonial globalisation and new forms of exploitation that place women at huge social disadvantage. The combination of these socio-economic and political arrangements is mixed up with the broth of African "culture and tradition" — a phraseology always used to tell women they are not part of the discourse.

Latin America and the Caribbean, where from the 1980's great achievements have been made with respect to women's rights and economic autonomy, have not been exempt from these regressive strands. Throughout the Caribbean, as economic conditions worsened, a clear backlash against women's empowerment took form. Women, and especially feminism, are being blamed for all the ills of society, from the poor performance of males in schools and in the workplace, to the breakdown of family life. In this context, references to biblical texts are constantly used to justify attacks on women and to keep women "in their place". Across Latin America, vicious attacks on women's sexual and reproductive freedom are gain-

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THE FEMINIST BURDEN?

LINKING GENDER JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Extracted from a paper prepared by DAWN Research Coordinator on the Political Economy of Globalisation, Gita Sen, and DAWN Regional Coordinator for Anglophone Africa, Bene Madunagu, for Forum 2001: Civil Society, the UN+5s and Beyond, hosted by the Forum International de Montreal (FIM) 2-4 October 2001 in Brisbane, Australia.

Gender Justice in the Cairo+5 and Beijing+5 Reviews

The challenges facing feminist attempts to link gender justice with economic justice come from two directions.

On the one side there are the poorly regulated processes of globalisation, the new form of a free-market juggernaut riven by deep and growing inequalities of wealth and income, in which rising numbers of impoverished people, especially women, are being marginalised from access to secure livelihoods.

On the other side is the strengthening of national, religion-based, ethnic or other identities in which the assertion of "traditional" gender roles and systems of authority and control is central. The challenge for women is how to assert the need for both economic justice and gender justice in an increasingly globalised and fundamentalist world.

The conferences of the 1990s were the first significant global occasions when "women's issues" came forward from the margins of women-only conferences to the mainstream agenda. The commitments to gender equality and reproductive health that were reached at the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 were fundamentally based on International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) definitions. The Beijing Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women expanded on three - the Vienna agreements on women's human rights, Cairo recommendations on reproductive health and rights, and the WSSD macro economic agenda.

These agreements were fraught with controversy although no more so than many other global issues. What was striking about them was the extent to which a small minority of religious

fundamentalists and their allies could hold the negotiations to ransom through their attempts to reverse the Cairo and Beijing agreements during the +5 reviews. Although the climate of the 1990s was different from the harsh tensions of bi-polarity in the 1970s and 1980s, some of the actors and tensions had not changed and while the principal text of these negotiations appeared to be women's rights, the critical sub-text was the continuing South-North divide.

In this climate, fundamentalist forces have systematically attempted to emerge as champions of the South. The hard line positions taken by the Northern negotiators on every economic issue from the right to development, to debt, to trade, and to structural adjustment provided fertile soil for a growing closeness between the Vatican and at least some Southern negotiators. More recently, major civil society initiatives for global justice have had the Vatican as an ally. Whatever the rationale, the Vatican began to use its growing clout to oppose women's rights and gender equality in every possible international forum. By the time the Vienna conference on human rights took place in 1993, the Vatican had begun to mobilise its forces against the recognition of women's rights as human rights. In Cairo in 1994, the Vatican allied itself with Islamic fundamentalists to strongly resist the adoption of a reproductive health and rights agenda in the ICPD Programme of Action. At the Social Summit in Copenhagen six months later, this alliance worked to oppose every innovative aspect related to gender equality and reproductive health. This opposition continued through the Beijing and Habitat conferences.

What do the fundamentalists really want?

While the conservatives are certainly most virulent (and the Vatican nearly hysterical) on abortion and sexual orientation, this is only symptomatic of their core objection to gender equality itself. They are adamant in their refusal to recognise the brutality of domestic violence against women in all societies and in their vehement assertion of the sanctity of 'cultural' and 'religious' beliefs and practices however harmful to women.

In Cairo + 5 and Beijing + 5 the fundamentalists insisted on full respect for religious beliefs and cultural diversity while refusing to accord the same respect to the diversity among women.

Resilience, energy and imagination: women's organisations rise to the challenge

Despite these unfavourable conditions, both the Cairo + 5 and Beijing + 5 reviews ended with the gains of Cairo and Beijing intact, and with further progress on some key fronts. In this light, the political progress observed in the 1990s conferences must be credited to the strategic capacity of global feminist networks to navigate between the *Scylla* of fundamentalism and the *Charybdis* of the Northern economic agenda. To do this, women's organisations and networks had to overcome their own internal disagreements and build strong coalitions across the global divides.

In the 1990s, tensions at play within the feminist field itself, particularly in regard to the differences between Northern and Southern women's agendas, were gradually resolved through sustained efforts at building alliances. Women's organisations played multiple strategic and tactical roles during Cairo + 5 and Beijing + 5, essential given the weakness of delegations and the presence of a "do or die" fundamentalist opposition. The extremely important strategic and tactical role played by women's organizations and NGO activists inside and outside government delegations in negotiating the ICPD Programme of Action itself had given them considerable experience and credibility.

In both cases however, women had their work cut out in terms of bringing inexperienced delegations up to speed on the complexities, both technical and political, of the negotiations. Women also worked strategically to analyse the political direction of the negotiations and to support the building of key coalitions among governments. One such crucial coalition that emerged was SLAC (Some Latin

American Countries), that began to distinguish itself from more conservative G77 positions during the May Beijing + 5 inter-sessional meetings.

Although SLAC itself may have been a short-term tactical phenomenon, its emergence was a signal of major importance. For the first time, a significant bloc of South countries was willing to stand simultaneously for global economic justice and gender justice. By doing so, this bloc challenged others within G77 to show their true colours. In the period after Beijing + 5, SLAC has metamorphosed into GOR (the Group of Rio) in more recent negotiations. What is clear is that there is a strategic need for a global negotiating bloc positioned in the South that consistently links economic justice to gender justice and participatory democracy.

A final word to other development NGOs and networks. Unfortunately, there are still far too many at global and other levels whose commitment to gender equality is weak, and whose beliefs and political practice are fraught with patriarchy. But for too long, the tendency among even the more progressive development NGOs is to leave gender equality to be struggled over by women's organisations alone. It is high time they recognised that women's struggles for gender justice, economic justice and participatory democracy are central and may be key to the energy, strategic thinking and innovative wisdom this era of globalisation and fundamentalism demands. 🌟

Endnotes

¹ "Traditional" customs and beliefs are often not traditional at all but are customs of recent vintage created for the specific purpose of controlling women or other groups.

² This sub-text needs to be read with some care. There is sometimes a tendency among anti-globalization forces to cast South governments as the champions of a more economically just global order. The power and clout of Northern governments in global negotiations clearly became significantly greater in the 1990s as compared to the 1970s. But this is due, at least in part, to growing disparities among Southern countries themselves. These disparities appear to have eroded the capacity and political will of the South to negotiate effectively together against the North on economic issues such as debt relief, development aid, global environmental controls, or (until Seattle) for a level playing field in international trade. Sharply increasing inequality within many countries has also created powerful supporters of globalization inside South countries. Nor are these economic struggles simply over national sovereignty; they are also a mixed bag of battles over exclusion from globalization, or over its spoils.

WCAR: A Missed Opportunity for Advancing Human Rights

WCAR, held in Durban, South Africa 31 August - 8 September 2001, raised the hopes and aspirations of many racially segregated groups and others affected by racial and other forms of discrimination. But the final result was a very weak official document leaving out groups such as the Dalits in India, Romas in Europe, gays, lesbians and disabled persons. Some positive outcomes, however, were adopted in relation to migrants, the Afrodescendant population in the Americas and indigenous peoples, even though an article was inserted to avoid problems associated with their rights to decision-making and self-determination.

Participants struggled to reach last minute consensus on three important issues: reparations linked to colonialism and slavery; the Middle East; and grounds of discrimination. Meanwhile, the victims of ethnic wars in Central Africa, the dismembered children of Sierra Leone, the kidnapped child soldiers of Myanmar and the increase of HIV/AIDS amongst war rape victims were either forgotten or given very low profile at the conference and the NGO Forum. Nor does the Durban text contain explicit reference to religious fundamentalism, no mention of the Taliban and denial of the rights of Afghani women.

The domination of slavery and reparation issues in relation to treatment of Africans by western countries (with no opening for discussion of French, Dutch and British colonialism in Asia-Pacific or Spanish slavery and extermination in Latin America) weakened efforts to arrive at concrete recommendations for a universal fight against racism and discrimination.

The text that defined the grounds of discrimination was the key to defining the victims and possible action. Northern countries had proposed a more inclusive list, but African, Asian and Islamic countries had a limited one and Latin America and the Caribbean were divided between with Brazil, Equador, Chile, Guatemala and Canada proposing the inclusion of a sexual orientation paragraph that was not adopted. Nor were the intersections of multiple forms of institutionalised

By Cecilia Millan, who reported on the UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance for DAWN.

discrimination such as gender, sex, age, disability, language, class, culture, religion, health status or caste recognised. The final definition used elements from 50-year-old conventions, representing a great loss of opportunity to recognise a broader concept of human rights founded on diversity and mutual respect.

The final conference document was not, really, what women wanted, but it managed to place intersectionality on the NGO agenda as an important concept for the analysis of discrimination in general, and not only for women. Despite unflagging efforts at the preparatory meetings and in Durban, the Women's Caucus was unable to achieve discussion of the universality of human rights, the importance of education and literacy with a gender perspective, the role of media, or how women face diversity and difference. The women were without doubt, and despite several disagreements, the most organised and had a clear democratic discourse, but they were unable to achieve much. Durban was such a mixture of ineffectiveness, intolerance and ignorance it could have been a rehearsal for what we are living today.

Generally, WCAR has achieved a major objective: to generate publicity on a theme that is rarely discussed in international arenas. It has also developed legal texts and action plans for international treaties. However, the most important gain has been the strengthening of civil society through the preparatory processes, which will enable the formation of a social watch to ensure implementation of the agreements in the post-conference process.

There are surely many challenges from now on, but the first will be to demonstrate that the only valid fundamentalism is the one that recognizes people as fundamental.

“Conservative reactions to the ICPD and FWCW health agenda are spiraling both globally and nationally. Consequently sustained advocacy investments are needed in relation to those aspects of the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights agenda that are under attack from conservative forces. In addition, the expertise and advocacy capacity of women's organisations, particularly in the S&R H&R field, must be improved to allow for stronger policy advocacy connections between the ICPD and FWCWC agendas and the macroeconomic distortions being addressed by current globalisation debates. A related but less debated aspect is that gender equality, in all its dimensions, is not always consistently taken into account in the discourse and proposals emerging from the global civil society movements that gained momentum in recent years. As a Southern-based feminist network, DAWN views this conceptual gap as a matter of concern. In DAWN's view, it is not possible to address the negative impacts of globalisation -- that predominantly affect the South -- without a sharp and expanded gender lens that is able to capture aspects and impacts related to biological and social reproduction (and sexuality).”

Sonia Correa, Research Coordinator for Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights

Excerpt from Local Realities and Global
Action: Women Responding to
Globalisation by DAWN Former General
Coordinator, Peggy Antrobus.

"The point is that macroeconomic policies of structural adjustment that were/ are so devastating to women have their parallel in the political struggles waged over resources when religious fundamentalism was used to mobilise and reinforce anti-communist political forces. When capitalism is unchecked, the vulnerable suffer and women more so than any other group since they have primary responsibility for the care of people. When patriarchy is unrestrained, men lose their humanity, and a rule of terror is launched on the world. The impacts on women of unrestrained patriarchal capitalism are devastating and this has horrendous consequences for the whole society, as we have seen. There seems to be little or no understanding of the fact that the people who have suffered the most from the actions of the "terrorists" who used the lives of innocent people as human bombs to destroy the lives of thousands of other innocent human beings are the people of the countries in which these groups operate, and especially the women.

At this time we need information, reflection, analysis and dialogue to find solutions that will stop the violence, not escalate it. We need a different perspective and women, speaking as women (as distinct from women speaking as politicians or experts of one sort or another) can take leadership in this, in partnership with men who understand that patriarchy robs men of their humanity, no less than it dehumanises women."



UNMARKING BODIES

DAWN's work links economic justice, gender justice and democracy in the belief that all social structures, processes and institutions have both an objective logic and a subjective embodiment. The implication of this approach is that while critically understanding the logic of structures is necessary and important, equally critical is acknowledging and positively enhancing the agency of human subjects who are 'marked' by gender, race, nation, ethnicity, caste, sexual orientation and so on.

The DAWN panel at the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Unmarking Bodies, continued this work in Durban by highlighting the impact of concealed human agency in critical structures. The aim was to revive the possibilities of women's agency as a factor for 'making a difference.'

For instance, although much effort is given to close analysis of the policies and practices of particular structures like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation, the analysis often leaves out a critical consideration. Like nation states, these Bretton Woods institutions are not disembodied or without human agency, they are run by people. And it is precisely because of the kind of people asserting their will on such institutions that they can become, among other things, racist, intolerant and masculinist and impact negatively on women's lives, particularly in the South.

Women's agency refers to women's capability to do things that make a difference. For poor women in the South, it is generally an uphill battle to build on the little power they have in order to change their daily family lives for the better. Yet the possibilities for change are increasing. Thus, critical feminist work must go beyond analysis of structures dominating the global economy and pay equal attention to ensuring sustainable livelihoods can be possible for poor women in the South.

Yvonne Underhill-Sem, Joint Coordinator for Sustainable Livelihoods.

Advancing Women's Agency and Re-framing Social Contracts: key challenges in the global struggle for economic and gender justice

We are meeting at a time of unprecedented uncertainties, challenges and setbacks. The fallout from both the horrific exposure of chinks in the armour of the world's leading superpower and the horrendous punitive bombing of Afghanistan has radically altered the global political landscape. It has permitted widespread abuse of civil rights and liberties, and, by criminalising dissent, is directly undermining the growing strength of the global civil society movement against globalisation. There is a real threat that increased security measures instituted in the war against terrorism will allow increasingly repressive means to be used to counter legitimate social movements and national democratic struggles.

As the march of economic globalisation continues unabated, our effectiveness as global civil society actors demands not only that we make good sense and strategic use of the contradictions and disjunctures that are playing themselves out within and outside of state structures and institutions and within the multilaterals, but that we are informed by a clear understanding of what it is at base that we are collectively fighting for, and that we work to redouble our efforts not least by strengthening the solidarity amongst us. The pursuit of a just alternative to the present global economic system and its supporting social and political systems at global, regional and national levels demands strong support for advancing women's agency.

Women's agency means women acting as autonomous subjects, being full persons or owners of themselves. Women's agency is an emancipatory project. It entails gains in personal freedom for women and the de-stabilisation of gender systems. The expansion in women's agency especially in the last decades of the 20th century, as a result of changing production and consumption systems, the breakdown of the feudal family and the impacts of feminism, among other things, has seen fierce cultural and religious backlashes expressed in various forms of fundamentalism.

Far from being 'understandable' responses to the loss of jobs, lack of security, or destruction of national cultures by globalisation (a popular left analysis), the rise of various forms of fundamentalism has really been a response to the steady growth of women's agency. A defining feature of fundamentalism - whether based on religious (Catholic, Islamic), market and culture/

tradition/ethnicity ideologies - is its explicit denial of gender equality, expressed most starkly in controls on women's sexuality and reproductive rights. This must be clearly understood and taken on board by progressive organisations within the anti-globalisation movement if we are to effectively counter, on the one hand, the political leverage gained since September 11 by forces virulently opposed to Western economic hegemony and hostile to the universalisation of 'Western' values of equality, human rights and democracy, and withstand, on the other, reactionary states opposed to anti-globalisation movements and other legitimate democratic expressions of dissent.

Deepening our analysis of women's agency, as an emancipatory project requiring the support of global civil society, will be a key aim of DAWN's new project of inter-linking its analyses under the four themes of Political Economy of Globalisation, Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health, Sustainable Livelihoods, and Political Restructuring & Social Transformation.

The linkages project is broadly aimed at sharpening our analysis and strengthening our advocacy for economic and gender justice and democracy. It is premised on the collaboration and partnership of civil society organisations with whom we have been working for several years in the struggle for global economic justice.

The inter-linking of analyses of our inter-related themes has been an ongoing project within DAWN since the 1990s. We effectively inter-linked our analyses of SRR&H and globalization by emphasizing the enabling environment as a pre-requisite for both the implementation of health policies and the full realisation of women's sexual and reproductive self-determination. We have persistently stated that in the absence of a transformed global economic environment, sexual and reproductive rights will be threatened and undermined. We have also repeatedly emphasised that the combination of religious-political and male fundamentalisms are major impediments to SRR&H.

In a similar way, we inter-linked our critical perspective on globalisation with our analysis of state, governance, citizenship, democracy and social movement issues, published in 2000 under the title, *Marketisation of Governance*. Amongst other things, we argued here that South regions consisted of state-nations, where the corporate power of the state dominates, and the discipline

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of citizens is enforced through various cultural and material means, rather than nation-states, which would integrate active citizens into their institutions and processes.

There is also differentiated understanding and application of citizenship rights, affecting the ways in which women, the poor and other marginalised groups participate in society, and local power structures and elites including religious forces actively mediate between the state and the people.

With global financial and trade institutions remodelling the state to support economic, financial and trade liberalisation, its social responsibilities are being reduced and its capacity to meet national development needs eroded. The marketisation of state functions is also causing the burden of care to push women and children into the most dehumanising and hazardous forms of survival.

Recent preoccupations with 'good governance' conditionalities in no way address women's longstanding exclusion from or under-representation in national political decision-making, or their continued difficulty in accessing their de jure rights where these exist, due to male-determined interpretations, constraints imposed by conservative forces, the compromising of these rights through neo-liberal policies or their outright loss as a result of military intervention or domestic wars.

Despite the above attempts within DAWN to inter-link our analyses of globalisation and other themes, SRR&H continues to be largely absent in the broad civil society rebellion against globalization, and we ourselves failed to really link SRR&H and PR&ST in our Marketisation of Governance analysis. In the inter-linkages project we are now embarking on, we aim to develop a framework that will allow us to comprehensively inter-link both our analyses in all four theme areas and our advocacy efforts. We seek to do this in partnership with a number of (male-led) organisations which are open to broadening their gender analysis and strengthening their advocacy for gender justice.

In the project we will revisit the "re-construction/transformation of the state" envisaged in Marketisation of Governance to conceptually re-construct the idea or notion of the 'social contract', to clarify SRR&H as economic rights, and to explore SRH&R's inter-linkages with political processes and cultural-social environments. The focus on women's agency will be a key element in the exercise of re-framing the social contract. We also propose to use, as points of entry for this analysis, an examination of health sector reform programmes (and their impacts on the implementation of sexual and reproductive rights) and of the struggles taking place within the WTO with respect to basic drugs, and particularly HIV-AIDs drugs.

Other 'legs' of our new analytical framework will include: production and consumption, the issue of the state, and ensuring security. Among other things, we seek to shift current debates on the global economy and the environment away from a focus on efficiency' and back to changing existing production and consumption systems, by highlighting the externalisation of costs under the present system and who pays.

Ensuring security and sustainable livelihoods through a rights approach that emphasises the indivisibility and centrality of human rights and links with the ILO's work on 'decent work' and social security as a citizens right, will be a key element in our re-construction of social contracts and elaboration of alternative economic frameworks.

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ing leverage. Even in more liberal contexts like Brazil, politicians feel free to openly express sexist and homophobic stances.

From a DAWN perspective, the World Social Forum may lose its meaning, political grip and vitality -- as a radically democratic global civil society space -- if does not directly face and process these multi-layered paradoxes. In our view, the outstanding WSF challenge, as it unfolds into the future, is to constantly avoid the dogmatic adoption of its own "only way of thinking" to countervail the "only way of thinking" of the powers that be. Recapturing the imagery of the *Davos Man*, invented by *The Economist* and reconstructed by Spanish economist, Lourdes Beneria, to portray the subjectivity and politics of globalised capitalism, we fear that in the absence of critical self-reflection, our collective efforts to democratise and transform globalisation may inadvertently result in the materialisation of the *Porto Alegre Men*.

This supplement provides a few conceptual and political glimpses of the meanings of gender and plurality, as structural instruments to reshape economics, culture and politics. It was conceived as a feminist kit to help avoid the undesirable potential trap described above.