



DAWN INFORMS

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era

DAWN SAYS

NO TO NEGOTIATIONS

FOR BEIJING+10 AND CAIRO+10

The current political conjuncture of aggressive fundamentalism and militarism presents serious risks to women's human rights world-wide. DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) like a number of other organisations, is concerned about the possibility of setbacks to the gains made for women's human rights during and in relation to the UN conferences of the 1990s. Contrary to the relatively open environment for such advances that existed during the 1990s, the first decade of the 21st century confronts us with the extreme social conservatism, aggressive unilateralism, and support for militarism of the Bush administration, and the worsening of fundamentalist trends elsewhere as well. In such a context, it is very important to protect the gains made for women's human rights through careful and considered action. It is especially important not to place these gains at risk through promoting or agreeing to formats or mechanisms for regional or international meetings that are likely to be problematic.

We believe, in this context, it is imperative that there NOT be any international or regional inter-governmental meetings that in any way involve or may lead to official negotiations - not any UNGASS or Ministerial or other High Level meetings that by their very form automatically become negotiations. Not only would such negotiations be an unproductive use of scarce financial and human resources, but they are certain to put a severe burden on governments and the NGO community to defend the gains of the 1990s and to prevent rollback.

Contrary to the beliefs of some, prior official statements that promise or undertake not to reopen previously agreed conference texts provide no guarantee whatsoever against the weakening of existing agreements. In fact this was exactly the agreed position of every delegation including the Holy See (Vatican delegation) at Cairo+5 and Beijing+5, but there was a dreadful struggle anyway. This happened despite the fact that the US delegation was strongly supportive of women's human rights at that time. Since the Bush administration took over in the US, every negotiation that relates to women's human rights has been the scene of enormous struggle. This includes the HIV/AIDS UNGASS of 2001, the Children's Summit (+10) of 2002, WSSD+10, and most recently at the regional level in the Asia-Pacific Population Conference in Bangkok during December 2002. DAWN together with other organizations and friendly governments had to make a significant investment of time and effort to defend hard-won rights. It would be a major mistake to take this victory as a sign that we can keep doing this at other conferences in the current political climate.

April 2003

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Dawn pays tribute to the millions of people who have gone out into the streets to demonstrate their stand for peace... P 2

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DAWN's Call to Resist the War against Iraq

DAWN pays tribute to the millions of people who have gone out into the streets to demonstrate their stand for peace, most recently those who turned out on 15 and 16 February 2003 in over 600 cities worldwide, including Adelaide, Amsterdam, Melbourne, Sydney, Berlin, London, Rome, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur and Penang, Lahore and 20 other Pakistan cities, Manila, New York, Philadelphia, Rio de Janeiro, San Francisco, Sao Paulo, Suva, and Warsaw.

DAWN shares the understanding that any war against Iraq is not about weapons of mass destruction or any of the other stated rationales, but about imperial greed and the abuse of human rights and power.

DAWN calls upon all women and men

- in all war-mongering countries to continue holding their representatives fully accountable, including through campaigns pledging not to vote for individual politicians and political parties that have sought to justify and support unilateralism and preemptive attack instead of genuine multilateralism and the rule of law; and
- worldwide, to insist on the disarmament of all States and a total ban on arms sales.
- To resist patriarchal intolerance and all types of reactionary backlash against citizens rights, especially women's reproductive and sexual rights, as these are linked to militarism and fundamentalism.

We want a world where equity, equality, diversity and genuine peace reign.

DAWN condemns all leaders and governments that brutalize citizens, violate human rights, disregard international law, and use violence and destructive weapons as a currency of power. This condemnation extends to the Iraqi Government and Saddam Hussein, and even more so to the leaders of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and others in the so-called Coalition of the Willing, who aided and abetted Saddam in the past and now propose to ignore majority public opinion to launch an unjustifiable war against the Iraqi people. We say "No to war, even as a last resort!"

A Brazilian non-government organisation that works with HIV/AIDS has declared publicly that it will refuse to receive any more USAID funding because of the war against Iraq.



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While we are opposed to such official negotiations, we do not rule out other kinds of meetings, or technical reviews and assessments. For example, there could be technical meetings in different parts of the world that would include an assessment of implementation, a map of all monitoring, and what women are experiencing in their lives in the broadest possible context and linkages - an assessment that makes the process better and is compatible for all the regions but which is singularly focused on technically assessing implementation without any official negotiation of conference documents, text, plans of action, etc.

FOR THE SAKE OF OUR HARD WON GAINS, NO OFFICIAL NEGOTIATIONS OF ANY KIND!

This statement is available on the DAWN website and in Spanish at http://www.choike.org/links_esp/index.html The DAWN position and further debate is posted on <http://www.eurosur.org/wide/UN/WCW.htm>

There is emerging consensus on the DAWN position that the current climate is not right for a 5th World Conference for Women, and that we still should say **no** to any kinds of meetings that could become negotiations. In a recent message sent to the AWID e-mail workshop, the Finnish NGO Committee for the 5th WCW agreed that recent summits and world conferences had indicated that the political climate is not favourable for a World Conference on Women in 2005. The group continues to support a 5th conference, but sees this as taking place "possibly in 2007 but at least by 2010." They are adamant that "from the beginning it should be crystal clear that the Beijing Platform for Action text and substance would not be touched, neither revised." 🌞

Civil Society groups say

NO TO A MULTILATERAL INVESTMENT AGREEMENT

Rejecting a multilateral agreement on investment in the WTO: the state of play amongst civil society and developing countries' positions towards the Cancun Ministerial¹. These are excerpts from a report by Mariama Williams on a civil society meeting in Geneva in March on the WTO investment issue, full report on the DAWN website.

More than 40 civil society groups from developing and developed countries are calling on governments to reject the launch of negotiations on a multilateral agreement on investment at the upcoming WTO Ministerial scheduled for September 2003 in Cancun, Mexico. The groups, which include environment, development, food security, gender, human rights, indigenous movements, labour and religious activists, declared a **No to a Multilateral Investment Agreement** at the end of four days of workshops, seminar and strategy sessions on the WTO Investment issue, Geneva, 18-21 March 2003.

The civil society organisations hope to refine their final statement, add signatures from other CSO groups worldwide and officially present the statement along with supporting documentation to the next meeting of the WTO working group on trade and investment slated for mid-April 2003. There is also the possibility of coordinated national level presentations, dialogues and public discussions on this issue at the same time of the presentation of the statement to the WTO.

DAWN representative, Mariama Williams, chaired a session and made formal brief presentations in two (Civil Society Perspective and Campaigns on Investment, and Civil Society Perspectives on a possible Multilateral Investment Framework [MIF]). As Chair of the MIF session she issued a position statement in which she argued that from the vantage point of economic development there are economic, political and moral imperatives to seriously interrogate and reject any attempts to create a multilateral investment agreement in the WTO. The statement also argued that from the point of view of women, especially poor women, any investment agreement that severely circumscribes the rights and obligations of governments to regulate the entry, exit and general business conduct of foreign multinationals, and that seeks to restrict governments' ability to promote and nurture women entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises, gender sensitive technology transfer and promote sustainable development, simply lock developing countries into a cheap labour strategy that invariably disadvantages women. Therefore such an MIA was inherently inimical and potentially injurious to the strategic long-term interests of women.

The state of play in the WTO MIA discussion and in the Working Group on Trade and Investment.

The Doha Declaration required that discussion proceed on modalities for negotiations on investment and

the Singapore issues. However it did not launch negotiation on these issues. The decision to launch negotiations on investment is to be taken at the fifth Ministerial and only by the explicit consensus of all members. So far the WTO has been involved in discussion on modalities inside the Working Group on Trade and Investment, but as of early April there is no consensus. Nonetheless, developed countries led by the EC are aggressively pushing for negotiations on investment as well as the other three Singapore issues (competition policy, transparency in government procurement policy and trade facilitation).

Political Maps of country positions in the WTO on the MIA².

In general there are about four different types of country demanders for investment (core group of demanders, supporters, friends of investment agreement and those friendly to a launch of some type of investment agreement but not the MAI). There is a vocal opposition camp lead by India, Kenya and Uganda.

But there is also a group of potential swing countries that are hedging their bets (including the LDCs, coordinated by Bangladesh. In general these countries including Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand want to retain flexibility. And finally, there are the silent ones in this debate (CARICOM and the Rest of the Africa group, with the exception of South Africa).

The core group consists of the EC/EU (though not a solid block as some members such as Germany and Scandinavia are silent, while others such as the UK, Netherlands, Ireland, Italy, France, Greece and Spain are very aggressive), Japan, Canada, and South Korea. The EC argues that it is offering a modest 7-point investment proposal, based on the GATS-type positive list approach which, it says, does not seek to limit policy space of developing countries governments. It was noted that Korean investors were the least responsive to a code of conduct focused on working conditions.

Friends of the MIA in the WTO seek minimum standards and trade-offs on the Agreement on Agriculture. Their approach is not coherent, with countries such as Chile supporting the core group proposal while others such as Argentina, Mexico, Turkey, Costa Rica and Hungary offer varying degree of support for the MIA. Still others such as New Zealand, Australia and other CAIRNS group members seem to want a

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narrow agreement that they can trade-off for commitments on agriculture from the EU and others.

Despite explicit opposition to the MIA by India, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda and Cuba, few developing countries are much engaged in the MIA: there have been just four proposals on the investment issues.

The US is not particularly aggressive in the MIA discussion and would seem indifferent, but is expected to align with the EU in the end and become extremely proactive if there is agreement to launch negotiations. The US would like a strong agreement that includes portfolio investment and no Balance Of Payment exception. South America seems to be constrained by the negotiations of the FTAA that has serious investment provisions.

Brief points from the key presentations.

B. Lal Das, former director of the trade division, UNCTAD and a former ambassador to the GATT, presented an overview of investment and other new WTO issues: the Doha Mandate and implications for development. He said investment in the WTO will be more dangerous than the TRIPs. Investment will be deeper and ultimately halt the economies of developing countries. The proposal of the EU and Japan et al is not about enhancing development but about protecting the rights of investors. The main objectives of developing countries are to develop infrastructure, promote the sectors that are critical for growth and strengthen the economy, whereas the objectives of investors are freedom to enter and high profits.

There is no rationale for a Multilateral Investment Agreement, especially not in order to attract foreign investment. An MIA is 'harking back to days of empire'. Commitments are inherently the surrender of rights. It is fine to have these if there are benefits to be expected. But hardly any developing countries (who are demanders of foreign investment) have similar interest as developed countries (who are suppliers of foreign investment). Developing countries need to attract investment not protect it.

It is dangerous to rely on a so-called 'GATS-type flexibility' being discussed by the EU. There are many problems but two stand out: obligations are frozen and even with GATS-type approach, if a sector is included there is no flexibility to retract, only not to include other sectors.

Yilmaz Akyuz, Chief Economist, UNCTAD, Chief economist discussed the central issues surrounding investment. He said there was a need to consider that investment and talk of an MIA in the WTO is building on serious asymmetry between developed and developing countries that was built into the WTO system from the Uruguay round. The asymmetry is particularly evident in the inclusion of services, intellectual property rights and investment into the WTO.

It is difficult to design a liberal regime for long term investment without losing control over other types of investment. Recent history has shown that premature financial liberalisation is at the root of the financial market instability crisis.

There is considerable ambiguity on the contribution of Foreign Direct Investment to Balance Of Payments. Successful Asian countries do not try to attract FDI for BOP but for technology transfers and spillovers. Industrial policy is critical for ensuring these positive benefits. Experience shows that only countries that have had a strategic policy vis a vis FDI have benefited from FDI.



Economics Professor **Ha Joon Chang** of Cambridge University said that developed countries are pushing the view of one fix-all recipe for development, but there is doubt as to whether this was the strategy that developed countries used for their own development. Historical records show, for instance, that Britain and the US developed using protective subsidies; South Korea did the same but now champions free trade; and post-WWII Europe, now the importer, had restrictions on FDI.

A MIA in the WTO is problematic on many grounds but two stand out at the moment: national treatment is highly problematic and dangerous as there is an implicit assumption that all firms (domestic and foreign firms) are alike; and the highly problematic emphasis on a 'level playing field' when there is a need for a level playing field with players of equal weight.

David Woodward, formerly of the World Bank, Save the Children Fund, and WHO Consultant, argued that foreign direct investment can be costly to developing countries and is a source of rising indebtedness that can potentially create the next debt crisis. FDI represents a capital inflow (like borrowing); profit represents an outflow (like interest); reinvesting profits are like borrowing to pay interest; and the stock of FDI represents a liability (like debt). ☀

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¹ This report is based upon discussion and presentation by numerous individuals at the 'Workshop, Seminar and Strategy Sessions on the WTO Investment Issue', Geneva 18-21 March 2003 which was facilitated by Martin Khor of TWN, Shafali Sharma of the Institute of Agricultural policy, Steve Porter, Center for Environmental Law, Aimee Gonzales WWF and Celine Charveriat OXFAM. Participating NGOs included TWN-Africa, SEATINI, Seattle 2Brussels network, the International Gender and Trade Network, the Hemispheric Social Alliance, INESC and REBRIP Brazil, Forum Syd (Sweden) and CAFOD. The World Council of Churches hosted three day of the meeting at their Centre Oecumenique, Geneva.

² This section relied heavily on the work and presentation of Celine Charveriat and Daniela Perez of Oxfam, Geneva Office.

UM MUNDO, UMA LUTA/ONE WORLD, ONE FIGHT

HUMAN RIGHTS AND AIDS AT THE WSF

Extracts from an article by Rosalind Petchesky of WEDO, which can be found in full on the DAWN website.

At the 2003 World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, this slogan and its captivating logo—a globe laced with AIDS ribbons and circled by outstretched hands—appeared everywhere. On placards and balloons at the opening and closing demonstrations, on posters and billboards all over the city, Forum participants were reminded that the global AIDS crisis is more than ever with us. Most significantly, a two-day Seminar on Human Rights and AIDS: The Unsustainability of a World Crisis, held on 25-26 January provided vital information and in-depth political analysis about the global contexts of power and institutional and economic crisis that are inflaming the epidemic.¹

As the deaths soar (15 million from preventable opportunistic infections and 3 million from AIDS in the past year alone), prevention and treatment efforts continue to run on a collision course with global capitalism, structural adjustment policies, the breakdown of global governance, U.S. unilateralism and hegemony, and war. Maria Betânia Avila from the Brazilian Women's Health Network spoke for many when she said that we cannot think about AIDS outside the context of North-South conflict and U.S. hegemony—economic, political and military. The existing power relations—including the unprecedented degree to which they are driven by reactionary fundamentalism—require that we work strenuously to influence national governments and, above all, that we build strong coalitions of political solidarity across many diverse boundaries.

DAWN's Gigi Francisco offered a political analysis and critique of the fundamentalist/neo-realist and "institutionalist" branches of contemporary neoliberal ideology in the "era of debt economics." There are differences between these two ideological tendencies; one seeks global stability through the dominance of a few hegemony and the other through mutual agreements within multilateral institutions (e.g., the Security Council and the WTO). Yet they are wedded through a common belief in the primacy of states, self-interest and balance-of-power regimes. If we are to make another world possible, we cannot hope to do so in these institutional spaces but rather must explore new sites for new kinds of politics—e.g., regional frameworks like MARCOSUR—and build international solidarity across social movements.

Rosalind Petchesky, from New York City and WEDO, likewise argued that the collision between HIV/

AIDS and human rights strategies on the one hand and global capitalism and militarism on the other requires a much broader coalition of forces that unite women's, human rights, health, HIV/AIDS and economic justice groups. HIV/AIDS stands at the crossroads of all the exclusions of race, gender, class and geography, as well as epitomizing the politics of the body and bodily integrity. Over the past several years, human rights advocates have made significant gains on this terrain, despite severe economic constraints and fundamentalist backlash. Achievements include:

(1) global visibility of the campaign for access to essential medicines, especially for HIV/AIDS and especially in Brazil and South Africa;

2) unanimous opposition by all the Asian governments (including some who are U.S. allies in its "war on terrorism") at a recent UN regional conference in Bangkok to U.S. attempts to repudiate the commitments to reproductive and sexual rights in the ICPD Programme of Action; and

(3) support by Central American governments of a lawsuit by 3,000 banana workers against the giant chemical and fruit companies whose pesticides have poisoned their bodies with cancers and permanent sterility. Each of these campaigns has helped to strengthen and concretise the human rights to health and bodily integrity already contained in many international instruments. But they are still separate, fragmented campaigns rather than joined in a broader alliance. And they are more than ever threatened by the militarisation and privatisation of global goods and resources in the Bush administration's drive toward war.

Silvia Camurça, from Articulação de Mulheres Brasileiras, argued that the one-size-fits-all approach to development imposed by neoliberal doctrine and restructuring creates the illusion of uniformity across countries, whereas the underlying reality remains gross and increasing inequalities, both among and within countries, nowhere more apparent than in the vastly disproportionate incidence of HIV infection among women in poor communities of Africa and Asia. Susan Wangiru Ngugi, an activist speaking for women with AIDS in Kenya, described the disastrous impact of SAPs on public services in Kenya, especially in the health sector, combined with a culture that often demeans women, especially if they are poor. The result is that people with

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HIV and AIDS—who now number 2.5 million in Kenya, 1.6 million of them women—are entirely dependent on community based organizations, which lack essential drugs and equipment; or more often on home-based care. She stressed that the main cause of HIV transmission in Africa is a pervasive culture of male dominance in heterosexual relations.

Carlos Nicolas Garcia de Leon from Mexico and Maria Betânia Avila from Brazil both emphasized that the potential impact of the UN conferences and the Declaration on HIV/AIDS that emerged from the UNGASS process is greatly weakened by the organization's lack of enforcement and implementation powers vis-à-vis rich and powerful countries. The lack of agreed indicators and regional or national mechanisms for monitoring compliance undermines government accountability for meeting established goals, likewise with the UN's Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, from which only Haiti to date has actually received a payment.

Othoman Mellouk, from the Moroccan Association Fighting AIDS, indicated how the "war against terrorism" has infected the procedures of the Global Fund. Although Morocco is one of the countries selected to receive a grant, no representative from Morocco or any other Arab or Muslim country has been invited to attend any Global Fund meeting since September 11, 2001, due to U.S. pressure.

Thus, at both national and international levels, accountability of governance institutions for implementing existing human rights agreements related to HIV/AIDS is negligible


In discussion on technological developments, WTO strategies and human rights, André de Mello e Souza from Stanford University said developing country governments went along with TRIPS only because they were led to believe that previous laws allowing unilateral trade sanctions against countries that violated patents

would ease under TRIPS and that developed countries would open their markets and provide technology transfers in return. But these beliefs have turned out to be false, and the basic incompatibility between intellectual property rights and human rights, especially to treatment access, is increasingly apparent.

Postscript: In the aftermath of the 2003 WSF in Porto Alegre, the devastating impact of U.S. policies and the "war on terrorism" on HIV/AIDS policies has become increasingly stark. At the February meeting of the WTO General Council in Geneva, the U.S. continued to block any agreement on access to generic drugs. Moreover, in his "State of the Union" address at the end of January, President Bush tried to soften the threat of a unilateral war of aggression on Iraq with a promise of \$15 billion in additional funds for HIV/AIDS, targeted at the most needy African countries and Haiti. Yet even this pretended gesture of benevolence has turned out to be a fundamentalist right-wing weapon in disguise. Its aim is clearly to subvert the Global Fund and its multilateral approach and replace it with a U.S.-controlled, unilateral policy that can be used to reward certain countries and punish others. Further, if any new U.S. funds are forthcoming (so far none have actually materialized), they will clearly be used to impose the Bush administration's anti-abortion and anti-sexual rights policies, including the "Global Gag Rule." [See articles in this issue.] It goes without saying that, under this fundamentalist approach, any countries or services suspected of "terrorist" activities will be denied access to funds. Indeed, the way things are going, abortion and condom distribution to unmarried youth may themselves become defined as "terrorist" acts.

Gaelle Krikorian from ACT-Up-France exposed how wealthy countries (especially the U.S.) have systematically worked to sabotage implementation of the Doha Declaration on TRIPS, a South-initiated document that would allow developing countries to issue compulsory licenses or import generics in order to "protect public health" and "promote access to medicines for all." After over a year of negotiations, no consensus has been reached, leaving it to countries like Brazil or generic manufacturers to export their drugs, or NGOs to smuggle them into countries in need, in defiance of patent laws.

Michel Lotrowska of MSF-Brazil observed that most developing countries lack the technological capacity to manufacture their own drugs and thus to pose any threat to the giant pharmaceuticals. By 2005,

countries like India, China and Mexico will be prohibited under TRIPS from continuing to produce generic versions of patented drugs; meanwhile, the FTAA will be deployed to annihilate the Doha Declaration by extending patents to 27 years. Even Brazil, which has produced its own ARV drugs through its state-owned company, Farmanguinhos, is unable to produce the full range needed to treat people with AIDS, and no doubt lacks the capacity to provide enough for Africa. Eloan Pinheiro, resigning Director of Farmanguinhos, said that the two major forms of international domination, arms and patents, are both intended to reinforce divisions between rich and poor countries and to keep technology in western hands. The only solution is to oppose the regime of patents altogether. 

¹ A fuller synopsis of these events, including a series of colorful photos, may be found at the website: www.aids2003.net.

BUILDING SOLIDARITY

DAWN's Gigi Francisco shared insights on how to work between global economic justice communities and the women's movement at a dialogue for building movement solidarity for economic justice, peace and women's rights held at the World Social Forum III. Lisa VeneKlasen of Just Associates, Washington, was one of the conveners and facilitators and gave a report, from which we take these excerpts.

Movements sometimes have difficulty in learning from one another and tapping the best in their respective experiences to strengthen collective analysis and action. Finding common ground between distinct, and often disparate, movements is vital for mobilising the influence necessary to project these alternatives into reality. For example, while the impact of corporate globalisation has been clearly understood to have both significant gender and class implications, approaches towards economic alternatives have often been weak or lacking in gender analysis. To a large extent, social movements are working separately, with so-called "women's issues" left to be taken care of by the feminist community, peace-building to be left to the peace movement, indigenous rights to be fought for by indigenous peoples and so on.

Ultimately, although many diverse movements are critical to chip away at the consolidation of power from different angles at different moments, mutual validation between social justice movements increases both the individual and collective impact of movement work. The urgency of the current political moment demands strategies that draw strength from the collective impact of numerous groups working together—not via a common strategy, but by finding a common vision around which multiple efforts can mobilise, interact, and build on each other's political action and analysis.

Gigi Francisco described the two main ways that linkages or encounters between feminists and other social movements take place:

1. When coalitions and networks have already established themselves without the participation of women and feminists. Feminists are either invited in, or they have to push their way in, and somehow try to influence the agenda.
2. When feminists effectively link their agendas to the other movements' agendas without compromising, e.g. using language that is familiar to others, while at the same

time not compromising feminist ideas and analysis.


The nature of these linkages raises tensions around integration and autonomy: how we as feminists strategise integration with other movements while also promoting our autonomy. There are also major tensions between militant/feminist women and grassroots women. Often, men use these divisions against women to discredit the feminist agenda. However, there are increasingly genuine attempts among women to align their agendas.

The political spaces that are opened for mobilisation around local, regional and/or international agendas, such as the WSF, are important sites of convergences for feminists and other social movements. When these convergences or encounters take place, feminists are generally able to preserve the bonds that come with having a common consciousness and agenda. In the end, feminists may be both combatants and allies but we are dependable members of coalitions. We link up and work together, side by side, even when we still have differences.

Nonetheless, we have to contend with persistent blind spots – for example, the notion (not just found among men) that gender "doesn't matter". Or similarly, the perception held by some women, that class and race don't matter. Yet, feminists are maturing as a movement and are beginning to deal with these issues more honestly.

There is also what could be called a "reigning in" symptom – where a woman is brought to the table to represent feminist issues. It can be said that this gives control over the agenda, but in fact it creates a superficial tension by pitting women against other women. We therefore need to be clear,

in order to avoid these divisions, that everybody's story is equally important.

In sum, feminists must be very clear on why we are engaging, what our relative strength is, and what we will do after strategic alliances have been built. 

Gaudi García,
*REPEM participant,
President of the
Association of Women
Producers of Bottling Fruits,
Venezuela: "For me, being at the
WSF was like looking at the whole
world at a glance. Faces expressed
deep emotion in a show of solidarity,
sisterhood and friendship. I think
that we women who were able to
be there, participating in different
events and workshops, are on
the right track and we are
moving to the same destiny
'Another world is
possible'."*

Irene Ferrer, *micro-entrepreneur, a
REPEM representative from Uruguay:
"Getting to know Porto Alegre, its
people, its wonderful movement, and
sharing with people from all over the
world has marked me. It was a great
experience and it reassured me in my
mind that another world is possible.
Being together, united in concern on
common issues, created an atmo-
sphere of harmony, solidarity and re-
spect that felt like a balm for my low
spirits due to the situation in my coun-
try. My feeling was that people gathered
not in search of power but in search of
solutions, with the purpose of sharing
experiences and ideas to achieve a
more sustainable world for everyone -
men, women, plants and animals."*

One World, One Fight

Market Access , Institutional Diversity & Human Freedoms

Marina Fe B. Durano of DAWN and the International Gender and Trade Network, spoke on the HBF panel at the World Social Forum. She sought to find a framework that would help determine the value of a particular policy prescription, in this case market access; and to analyse market access within the context of promoting institutional diversity and development as human freedoms. The full paper may be found on the DAWN website at www.dawn.org/fj/global/worldsocialforum/socialforum.html

The bottom lines on the World Trade Organisation Agreement on Agriculture are: no real market access has been made available to developing countries; developing countries have an inherent disadvantage in domestic support systems; and, there are now limited options for an industrial strategy with export promotion.

Market Access: An incomplete picture

Analysing international trade from a market access perspective alone or with heavy emphasis on market access will reveal an incomplete picture. Market access has been seen as one solution to the problem of poverty. The argument in the area of trade is that greater market access will help developing countries generate export revenue, which will add to national income and lead to economic growth, and, therefore, a reduction in poverty levels.

This argument has parallels in other areas of economic policy. The closest is the policy on employment generation as one solution to poverty. The idea is that the poor would not be so if they had jobs, so all we need to do is to generate employment. This is another way of saying that the poor need to have market access and the specific market that must be accessed is the labour market.

Similarly, women's participation in market activities is also being promoted as part of poverty eradication through microfinance schemes, training and so on. Thus, we have seen an increase in the labour force participation of women, who are moving out of their household confines and socially-ascribed caring functions and are contributing to production. In this situation, women become valued when they are able to access the market.

However, we are already well aware of the limitations of economic growth as a definition of development. It is not just about being employed but finding quality employment and decent jobs (in the language of the ILO). Women not only want opportunities for market work but also an easing of


reproductive burdens. So we find that market access is not everything.

How then do we begin to analyze the role of markets in international trade? One is to look at the role of institutions in markets and the other is to understand development from the perspective of human freedoms.

It seems that the promotion of market access for developing country products implies the promotion of further economic integration among trading partners, almost by definition. Reaping the benefits of market access will require adherence to international agreements and internationally-determined standards (important for non-tariff measures). Doing so will require states to give up some amount of jurisdiction over these areas of governance. It seems to me that we are not ready to face the ramifications of this unintended consequence of promoting market access. The price that we may have to pay for the ability to sell our goods is loss of our self-determination, national identity, and institutional diversity.

Entitlements are the set of commodities over which a person can establish ownership and command. Entitlements depend on three factors: endowments, production possibilities, and exchange conditions. The value of market access can be analysed by how it changes the distribution of endowments, the kind of production possibilities it creates or destroys and the manner by which it will affect the determination of prices. In promoting market access, we are not sure whether it will expand entitlements or lead to entitlement failures. Basically, we have not been bothered by such questions.

Markets, Institutions and Freedoms

Markets do not operate in isolation but within a set of institutions. Institutions do not appear out of nowhere, they are a consequence of historical factors and negotiations among social actors, which explain institutional diversity that is in itself desirable. These institutions are governed by a sovereign state. It is the interaction between markets and institutions that can determine the outcome of a policy prescription. Markets can promote freedom and deny freedom. The question of market access should be seen as part and parcel of a development process that involves "the expansion of human capability to lead more worthwhile and free lives." 

Patricia Jaramillo, Sociologist, REPEM Colombia: A rich diversity represented by nearly 130,000 participants from more than 120 countries, global, continental, regional and sub-regional networks representing almost 5000 organisations involved in 1710 activities: workshops, seminars, conferences and testimonies. The opening march was exciting, not only for clearly proclaiming no to war - yes to peace and living together in many languages, but for walking together for many hours and finding so much solidarity.

IMPERIAL IMPUNITY: A Double-Edged Sword

Gigi Francisco, DAWN-SEA Regional Coordinator, participated in the Asian Social Forum in Hyderabad, India, 2-7 January 2003 and gave the Inaugural Speech at the ASF Women's Conference on January 5. These are some excerpts from the address found in full on the DAWN website.

The peoples of the world are entering the year 2003 having to face the double-edged sword of imperial impunity that threatens entire humanity. One side of this sword is neo-liberal globalization that cuts a deep wedge into our people's livelihoods, social reproduction, environmental integrity, democratic institutions and national sovereignty. On the other side of the sword is militarisation with its crippling war, violence and intolerance and whose center stage is once again in our own Asian backyard.

In this period of extreme competition, thousands of Asian women workers are in conditions of employment characterised by very low wages, longer working hours, insecure tenure, manual and repetitious work, sleep-in arrangements in crowded factory-based dormitories and absence of labour protective legislation, while migrant women workers in the North face the same job insecurity, and the risk of slavery-like conditions and prostitution. With the retreat of the state from its welfare provisioning function, social care has now been transferred to the market. Neo-liberalists promoted the myth of the market as the "neutral and efficient allocator of resources and opportunities". From our daily struggle for survival, we know clearly that the market is neither neutral nor efficient. The market is friendly only to those who have the capabilities and resources and is harsh to millions of poor women and their families. Neo-liberal globalization has expanded Asian women's precarious employment in order to run the factories of greedy transnational corporations. At the same time it turns us into its captured consumers. Contrary to claims made by our governments and those who support free trade, there has been no income forthcoming to the poor. We are simply made to scramble for the crumbs and even these are quickly siphoned back into the coffers of capitalists!

The global discipline, control and legitimacy that the soft power of the neo-liberal globalisation could not secure for the empire is being acquired by the hard power of militarism. This time, the myth of the 'enemy' has replaced that of 'growth'. Even without the actual use of material weapons of destruction Asians have been militarised enough by discourses and attitudes emanating from the ideological machinery of the empire. As women who have to contend with disciplinary forms of power in our traditional families, patriarchal cultures, male-dominated religions, masculinist ideologies, or simply from sexist attitudes in ordinary circumstances, we know only too well the debilitating effect of this web of power forces that spreads out in society. The oppression of women in all its forms has made women more than men, work all our lives - inside and outside the homes, even in bed as we are forced

into sexual performance whether paid or unpaid, forced or with consent. We are the booties of wars, the keepers of family honor, and the object of male rage and revenge - battered by jealous husbands, maimed or killed in the name of family honor, raped by rampaging soldiers, molested on the streets by drunk men, or publicly shamed because how we looked did not please the fundamentalist village head. We must persist in our resistance to both neoliberal globalisation and militarisation, mobilising in new ways that reflect a different stage in our historical struggle, and are more self-critical of our own constructed formalisms, sexism, center-peripheries and complicities. One that is also more consciously linked with others who remain outside the borders of our sectarian ideologies, parties, networks and political programs. 🌞

OPPOSING NEO-LIBERAL GLOBALISATION

Hyderabad is claimed as a symbol of the cyber-world in India. But it is also the capital of the state known for tragic suicides by hundreds of farmers and weavers, and for starvation deaths, due to the impact of neoliberal globalisation in recent years. This statement, in full on the DAWN website, was made by the social, mass and peoples' movements and organisations of Asia and the Pacific gathered at the ASF to exchange experiences and raise voices against neoliberal globalisation, imperialism, militarism, patriarchy and fundamentalism.

The whole of Asia is yet again the centre of poverty, war and intolerance, with the mass of people facing starvation, impoverishment, displacement, indebtedness, and destruction of livelihoods. Imperialism targets Asia with its militarist and economic offensives for making strategic gains, including the greed for oil. US political and military interventions in Asia under its so-called War on Terror - particularly in South, South East and East Asia - has brought us to the brink of nuclear war. Meanwhile, all over the region, citizens are kept in check by undemocratic and draconian laws imposed by colluding regimes. This has promoted a false discourse on terrorism and security while systematically marginalising and assaulting people's struggles for survival, livelihoods, rights, inclusion and self-determination. All these pressures are generating ever more virulent forms of patriarchy and the oppression of Asian women. Capitalism and neo-liberal globalisation are leading to widespread increases in levels of poverty and widening gaps between the rich and the poor. They have also led to the increasing degradation of the environment

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African Social Forum

ENGENDERING DOCUMENTS & DEBATES

from Bene Madunagu

Feminists had to maintain vigilance and make constant efforts to have gender injected into the proceedings of the African Social Forum, held in Addis Ababa 5-9 January 2003.



DAWN Anglophone Africa Regional Coordinator, Bene Madunagu, served on the Resolutions drafting committee that worked late into the night to produce an engendered document. She was also rapporteur for the final day's proceedings, during which the African Social Forum Charter was introduced.

The Charter set out to correct limitations and consolidate the African Social Forum, including defining responsibilities of the organising committee, in response to concern voiced in the plenary about the perceived adoption of the ASF by the African Union. Its objectives include promoting a more effective African participation in world events, particularly in the World Social Forum, and strengthening the African social movement. Gender participation, equality and perspectives were written into the recommendations for organising the African Social Forum.

The struggle to engender discussion and documents began in the first sessions of the Forum. The debate on African culture as a buffer against neo-liberalism and as a tool to reinvent the future was joined by feminists concerned to prevent African culture, as it is, informing such an important debate. They were able to gain acknowledgement of the need to reject aspects of culture that oppress women and to redefine culture in positive terms through the recognition of gender equality. The idea of a new African culture of clearly defined gender equality was accepted.


Feminists continued to work to inject gender concerns into the debates on Peace, Conflict and Security,

New Information Technologies, and Debt and Poverty. The workshop report on Health, Poverty and Development was critiqued for its lack of gender and rights issues and a new paragraph introduced to bring in sexual and reproductive health and rights and matters of adolescent sexuality.

Gender remained a central issue of concern in the plenary sessions, where there was an opportunity to inject gender perspectives into areas that had remained gender blind. The Millennium Goals were seen as just a new ploy that had no possibility of change in the interests of the people, while alternative negotiated documents that had the involvement of civil society and women's groups and regional negotiations already existed. They included the ICPD Plan of Action, the Beijing Platform for Action, their +5 commitments, and CEDAW.

Resolutions passed in the final session included the acceptance of the principle of a 50/50 female/male representation ratio as a mechanism for mainstreaming gender in all Africa Forum processes and activities, and condemnation of American President Bush's policies in African countries, as well as in Venezuela and other places.


Resolutions on gender also included the promotion and support of all strategies on elimination of gender discrimination against women as stipulated in regional and international declarations and conventions; and the popularisation of the draft Protocol on women to the African Charter and advocacy for its adoption by the African Union and its implementation by the member states. There was also a resolution calling on the global social forum to unequivocally commit itself to the principles of gender equality in all its policies, structures and activities.

The resolutions on United States aggression expressed grave concern about the increasingly domineering, aggressive and militaristic approach of the United States to the world at large. The ASF declared unqualified opposition to war on Iraq and called on African governments to resist pressure from the United States, Britain and other governments. They condemned the use of debt relief and other inducements for obtaining African government support for or acceptance of aggressive aims. 

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and ecology resulting in widespread disease and death threatening the very survival of the planet. Attacks on the economies of all countries in the region have led to total loss of self-reliance, de-industrialisation, privatisation and destruction of natural resources of land, water and forests, and the retreat of labour protections. The combined actions of the World Bank, IMF, ADB, export credit agencies, ODAs and WTO are wilfully and deliberately undermining our economic and political sovereignty while destroying local and national economies.

Capitalism and neo-liberal globalisation also

jeopardize peoples' lives and accentuate multiple forms of exclusions for the marginalised sections. The worse affected are women, children, indigenous peoples, Dalits, ethnic minorities, tribals, the unorganised sector, migrant workers and other socially excluded groups. Meanwhile, instances of exclusion include the withdrawal of safety nets and affirmative action, rise in violence and discrimination against vulnerable groups, flattening of social diversities that puts greater pressure on the minorities to conform to the dominant view and greater incidence of contrived conflict that pits these groups against one another. 

PROTESTING THE GAG RULE


The Global Gag Rule was imposed by the US Bush Administration in January 2001. The policy disqualifies nongovernment organisations outside the United States from receiving US family planning funding if they provide counseling on abortion, provide legal abortion services except in very narrow circumstances, or participate in political debate surrounding abortion. This 'sign-on' protest letter was circulated in early March by a group of health care professionals and sexual and reproductive rights advocates from groups including DAWN, the International Women's Health Coalition, Centre for Health and Gender Equity, and Catholics for a Free Choice, following the announcement of President Bush's new HIV/AIDS global initiative for a proposed \$15 billion fund. This protest complements a similar letter that was earlier supported by more than 130 organisations from throughout the United States.

Dear President Bush: We are health care providers, researchers, religious leaders and advocates working daily on the frontlines in the ongoing struggle to improve the lives of women and families throughout the world and particularly in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific. We are convinced that a consistent global response to HIV/AIDS requires more than financial assistance. Given the close connections between HIV/AIDS and poverty, this response demands consistent poverty eradication strategies, efforts to eliminate patterns of male violence and domination, and in many settings, most particularly Africa, a sustainable solution for debt problems. Nonetheless we welcomed the announcement in January that your administration would dramatically increase US funding for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care in Africa and the Caribbean. We recognised that the HIV/AIDS initiative announced by the US government could have meant increased assistance to address the needs of those most vulnerable to HIV infection throughout the world.

These hopes were dashed, however, when we learned that you planned to expand the "global gag rule" to HIV funding, thereby disqualifying a large number of organisations—especially family planning programmes—from delivering integrated HIV prevention services. We understand that your administration is considering expanding these restrictions to all development assistance. Rather than saving lives, this policy will have the opposite effect: consigning untold numbers of women and girls to infection, suffering and premature death that could otherwise have been prevented. Women now represent half of those infected with HIV worldwide and 58 percent of those in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the AIDS epidemic has taken the greatest toll to date. Women and girls are at highest risk for HIV infection for a broad range of reasons, including lack of social and economic power, lack of access to information and services, and widespread violence and sexual coercion against women. For these same reasons, women also are at high risk of unintended pregnancy. Today, conservative estimates by the World Health Organization indicate that over 600,000 women die each year from complications related to pregnancy, including obstructed labor, hemorrhage, and infections resulting from unsafe abortion. Indeed nearly one-sixth of all maternal deaths result from the complications of unsafe abortion in countries where safe services are either illegal or inaccessible. Beyond the figures, we know the faces as we see them every day.

Integrated sexual and reproductive health services offer pre- and post-natal care, family planning information and supplies, nutrition information, infant and childcare services and a host of other basic health care interventions. They offer HIV prevention information and skills training to women at risk. Increasingly, they are working to change the cultural and social norms that promote violence and other forms of discrimination against women and that encourage men and boys to seek multiple partners and engage in unsafe sex. Without these programs the epidemic we know today would be far worse. The women who become infected and die of AIDS are the same women who at different times in their lives and under different personal circumstances may seek to have healthy pregnancies, may experience unintended pregnancies, may undergo unsafe abortions when they decide they cannot carry a pregnancy to term, or may die in childbirth. They are mothers, daughters, sisters, and wives. They are often solely responsible for the health and well being of their children. They are the primary caretakers of family members affected by AIDS and other diseases. And they all leave behind increasing numbers of orphans.

We know that integrated sexual and reproductive health care saves lives, and that the single most effective strategy to prevent unnecessary deaths is to combine political will, economic resources, and sound public health policies to strengthen and expand access to sexual and reproductive health services. Each and every one of these deaths can be prevented. To do any less represents a moral and political failing. Yet we watch as the United States attempts on every level to undermine such services throughout the world.

We therefore write to tell you in the strongest possible terms that we oppose the Mexico City Policy in its current form, and we oppose any expansion of this policy to HIV/AIDS funding, development assistance or debt relief. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to abandon your plan to expand these restrictions in any form, and to do what is needed to increase funding for and access to reproductive health services including HIV prevention. Doing so will save the lives of hundreds of thousands of women throughout the world each year. It will give your stated commitment to compassion and to family values some serious meaning. 

PROTESTING THE GAG RULE

AFRICA ACTION CALL TO REDUCE UNSAFE ABORTION

From Bene Madunagu, who attended Africa's first regional consultation on unsafe abortion where participants spoke out strongly against US President Bush's Global Gag Rule as part of their calls for action to reduce maternal mortality.

A total of 112 African leaders, lawyers, academics, health care professionals and women's advocates from 15 countries who attended the continent's first consultation on unsafe abortion concluded deliberations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 5-7 March 2003 with a demand for action to address this global public health problem.

In a final statement, delegates at the "Action to Reduce Maternal Mortality in Africa" consultation said they "vehemently oppose the Global Gag Rule that was reinstated in January 2001 by US President George W. Bush and which clearly impedes efforts to reduce unsafe abortion. We call on African governments and the global community to be accountable to their citizens and other stakeholders by opposing it."

"By reducing funds available for preventive family planning, the Global Gag Rule clearly impedes efforts to reduce unsafe abortion," said Dr. Eunice Brookman-Amisshah, a former Minister of Health of Ghana who now heads the IPAS Africa Alliance for Women's Reproductive Health and Rights (www.ipas.org), that with several other organisations sponsored the meeting. "Contrary to its stated intentions, the policy results in more unwanted pregnancies, more unsafe abortions, and more deaths of women and girls. We who have seen those effects first-hand can no longer tolerate silence about the gag rule's tragic effects."


Delegates reviewed numerous dimensions of the public-health challenge of unsafe abortion, including the sociocultural, legal and policy context in which it occurs. "Recognising that abortion has always occurred and will continue to occur in all cultures, we focused on the need to make it safe in order to reduce related deaths and injuries of women. We examined laws, policies and international commitments influencing access to safe abortion in Africa; health-care providers' and public and private health systems' roles in meeting women's needs for safe abortion; and strategies for creating an enabling environment that supports women's right to safe abortion and related services.

Based on our own experiences and on presentations and discussions during the consultation, we note with alarm that maternal mortality rates remain unacceptably high and that unsafe abortion accounts for an average of 12 percent of maternal deaths on the African continent. At the national level, experts estimate that unsafe abortion contributes in the range of 10-50 percent of maternal deaths in African countries. Of the 68,000 deaths from complications of unsafe abortion worldwide, 30,000 – or nearly half – are in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition to the shocking number of African women whose lives are

lost each year, unsafe abortion causes thousands more women to suffer serious illnesses and injuries and renders many infertile. These deaths and injuries are preventable, since safe and effective technologies for contraception, pregnancy termination and postabortion care are available but underutilized. We also know that deaths and injuries from unsafe abortion disproportionately affect adolescents, poor and other marginalised groups of women, depriving Africa of a valuable human resource.

We recognise that, worldwide, restrictive abortion laws and lack of safe abortion services are the major factors contributing to the disproportionately high mortality of women from unsafe abortion. Most African countries operate under archaic laws related to abortion that were imposed by former colonial powers and have long since been changed in those countries. In most countries where abortion laws are liberalised, there are almost no deaths from unsafe abortions. We note that legislation in most African countries legally permits abortion in limited circumstances – such as in cases of rape, incest or to save a woman's life – but that the majority of women and health-care providers remain uninformed of their legal rights and obligations. We further recognise that many of the root causes of unsafe abortion – including African women's lack of access to comprehensive reproductive-health information and services to prevent unwanted pregnancy, and lack of decision-making power related to sex and reproduction – are the same as those underlying the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

We note also that all African countries have signed the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and other international agreements, compliance with which requires addressing the public-health problem of unsafe abortion, including by making safe abortion available to the full extent of local law.

We stress that unsafe abortion has significant economic implications, including enormous costs to African health systems associated with managing its complications. Until women can make their own reproductive choices safely, poverty alleviation and economic development cannot be achieved. Policies of Northern governments and international financial institutions such as health-sector reform, debt restructuring and structural adjustment severely constrain health and social spending by African governments and require revisiting." Delegates ended their statement with a list of commitments and recommendations for organisations and governments. 

PROTESTING THE GAG RULE

US President Bush's HIV/AIDS global initiative for a proposed \$15 billion fund announced in February 2003 drew other strong criticisms.

Women, HIV, and the Global Gag Rule: The Dis-Integration of U.S. Global AIDS Funding

By Jodi L. Jacobson, Executive Director of the Center for Health and Gender Equity writing for the Foreign Policy in Focus (see www.fpiif.org)

In his proposed "Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief" announced during last month's (February) State of the Union Address, President Bush promised, among other things, "a comprehensive plan [to] prevent seven million new HIV infections." International organisations working to prevent the spread of HIV and improve women's health worldwide met the announcement with a mixture of hope and scepticism. Hope because prevention is critical to reducing the toll of HIV worldwide. Scepticism because sound AIDS prevention depends on effective promotion of safe sex, an obvious area of contention for the Bush administration.

Now comes the announcement by the administration that U.S. funding for global HIV programmes will be saddled by ideologically-driven restrictions aimed at separating "family planning" from "HIV prevention" in developing countries. The so-called Mexico City policy or "global gag rule" will now be applied to all integrated family planning and HIV prevention programmes. Seeing an abortion behind every clinic wall, but clearly just opposed to family planning generally, the administration has now decided to apply these restrictions wholesale to integrated HIV and family planning programs.

These restrictions are morally and ethically indefensible and contradict basic principles of public health, human rights, and economic efficiency. If the president seriously believes that the U.S. has "a calling to make this world better" he should devise an HIV/AIDS initiative in which actions speak louder than words.

The New AIDS Fight: Protect Women, Stop a Disease


Excerpt from an 'op ed' article in *The New York Times* 1 March, reprinted in the *International Herald Tribune* 4 March by International Women's Health Coalition (www.iwhc.org) Board member Kati Marton, and available in full on DAWN website.

More money to fight AIDS is both welcome and necessary. But its effectiveness depends on how well it helps the primary victims of AIDS in the most highly affected areas: women and teenage girls. Fifty percent of those infected worldwide, and 58 percent of AIDS victims in sub-Saharan Africa, are women. If we are serious about combating this plague, women must be empowered so that they can defend themselves against the men who are infecting and abandoning them. The administration has failed to do anything significant in this critical area. In much of sub-Saharan Africa, girls under 18 are four times to seven times more likely than boys the same age to become infected. Why? The answer is sexual coercion and violence against women, child marriage, polygamy and the widespread belief that having sex with a virgin will cure AIDS. Girls are frequently forced into sex with older men in exchange for food for their families or money for school — or for nothing.

These cycles of abuse and exploitation will not disappear by making AIDS medication more readily available. A huge — and forthright — education campaign and the strengthening of public health programs in the developing world are also essential. But on these critical issues, the Bush administration's policy has been worse than disappointing. Most recently, it proposed extending the so-called Mexico City policy, or "global gag rule," to its AIDS initiative, effectively barring any organisation that receives funds from performing

abortions, or even discussing them. Driven by ideology rather than concern for public health, the policy would deny money to organisations already well positioned to provide women with the full range of services they need.

The administration also opposes the distribution of condoms in refugee camps, where rape is endemic. Its proposed budget would cut more than \$20 million from international family planning. The administration has already blocked a \$34 million contribution to the United Nations Population Fund, the largest provider of family-planning services, because of claims that it supported forced abortions and sterilizations in China. (A subsequent State Department investigation found no evidence for this claim.)

In a mind-boggling alliance with Iran, Libya, Sudan, Syria and Iraq, the Bush administration tried to block a consensus at the UNGASS on Children last year in support of better education on how to avoid sexually transmitted diseases. The countries stood together in asserting that sex education promotes promiscuity. Not surprisingly, the administration's new budget calls for a \$33 million increase in financing programmes whose version of sex education is "abstinence only until marriage." Of course, abstinence is one important way to avoid AIDS. To maintain that it's the only way, however, is not only delusional but also dangerous. Women must have access to free female condoms and effective microbicides, as well as to programs that can teach them to resist sexual predators. So while we should support the president's initiative, let us look carefully at the not-so-fine print. Congress should authorise the funds to fight HIV and AIDS — but only if girls' and women's needs are central. 

SEXUAL RIGHTS: Much has been said, much remains to be resolved

by Sonia Correa from a lecture presentation in the Sexuality, Health and Gender Seminar, Department of Social Sciences, Public Health School, Columbia University, October 2002. The full paper is on the DAWN website, www.dawn.org.fj, and can be downloaded from the home page.

In the course of the past decade, discourse on sexuality has taken a new detour: we have started to speak of sexual rights. The main expression of this new trend is the troubled saga that evolved at the level of the United Nations, starting with the debate on systematic rape in conflict situations that took place in the Human Rights Conference of Vienna in 1993. In my own view, this endless struggle is just the tip of an iceberg whose composition, meaning and implications has yet to be fully analysed and understood. The UN debates must be analysed in light of the rapid process of change that has become known as globalisation: its impacts on economies, States, societies and particularly the destabilisation of institutional patriarchal structures, gender systems and family formations. The UN debates were originally set in motion by rather conventional approaches to global public health concerns, particularly family planning and the HIV-AIDS pandemic. But they were clearly transformed under the political impact of a range of “sexual subjects” who have gained access to the public sphere and discourses in the past three decades. At the same time, the UN political dynamics in relation to sexuality cannot be fully understood if we do not take into account politics of ethnic and national identities and various forms of fundamentalism, which also include a search for reassurance in times of deep economic and political uncertainty and risk. It is also crucial to remember that these forces had been targeting women’s rights, sexualities, condoms, contraceptives — as a means to attack “Western values” — long before September 11th (DAWN 1984). Another aspect to be underlined is that in UN negotiations, gender and sexuality issues have been systematically interwoven (or have been traded-off) with economics.

Nevertheless, complex and difficult as these “sexual battles” have been, a clear consensus emerged that human rights constitute an appropriate ethical foundation for addressing sexuality within the broader agenda of development. Paragraph 96 of the Beijing Platform of Action became the icon of this new era.

A first challenge is the need to go beyond a conceptualisation of “sexual rights” that is still fundamentally framed in terms of reproduction, health and violence, which is what prevails in UN documents and their interpretation. As relevant as it is to properly link sexuality, health, reproduction and violence, it is different to call for rights in

sexuality as a protection (against pregnancy, rape disease and violence). And to call for sexual rights as a protection against pregnancy, rape, disease and violence, is a different matter from affirming these rights in relation to eroticism, recreation and pleasure. This second interpretation was in the minds of many of those who struggled for Paragraph 96. The call for conceptually differentiating between gender and sexuality assumes new contours at this critical turning point of daring to propose normative frames to address human experience in sexuality.

A second challenge is whose sexual rights? Except in relation to the HIV/AIDS agenda, gay communities and other “sexual subjects” do not interact systematically with global human rights and development debates. Many other voices have not been heard in the process leading to Para 96, such as those of sex workers, transvestites, transgender individuals and hijras (traditional Indian transvestites), to mention just a few. Within this large and diverse community of individuals and groups there are both divergent and convergent perspectives on crucial components of a “sexual rights agenda”, just as there is tension between criminal codes and civil regulations, violence, eroticism and

I would like to propose that the conceptualisation of sexuality as a practice of freedom may, in fact, contribute to de-constructing the given assumptions about sex that underlie much of the abuse and violence that is presently experienced in the domain of sexuality.

pleasure, right to privacy and intimacy vs state intervention, bodily integrity, just to quote a few instances. It is therefore critical in achieving a potential global consensus on sexual rights to map, spell out and process — politically and conceptually — these positions.

Concurrently we are also challenged to respond to another difficult question: what human rights are we talking about? This interrogation derives from the fact that human rights debates and institutionalities are informed by contradictory epistemological frames. Most actors, voices and constituencies that are potentially part of this scene view sexual rights as a discursive strategy to enhance the potential of individuals in relation to the State (and other agents) and the law itself; and to create multiple “spaces” in which their own identities and the meanings of these rights can be refined. If we have in mind the premises that inform contemporary theories of sexuality, the procedural perspective (that emphasises coalitions and consensus and basically interrogates what makes a discourse universal) appears to be our best choice. It is cautious with respect to the genuine spirit and truth of the law and it converges with the emphasis on plural public spheres and

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the situatedness of moral debates devised by some authors as requisites to further refine the meaning of sexual rights. But does a preference for the procedural approach automatically excludes other pathways? Debate is urgently required with respect to the unanticipated implications of our choices in terms of human rights philosophical approaches.

Another critical task in this area is to identify human rights principles that could be used to define an adequate normative basis for entitlements in relation to sexuality. I offer here a short list that encompasses principles that are fully enshrined in international instruments, such as freedom, non-discrimination, equality, equal treatment under the law, right to privacy and safety of the person, the premises of personhood and diversity, and also long-standing but somehow forgotten premises of rights such as the absence of fear and want, or the ability to be able to appear in public without shame. Last but not least I propose we preserve the core content of the Beijing sexual rights language: freedom from coercion, discrimination and violence in matters relating to sexuality. Theoretically, the articulation of these principles and premises can become an exploratory frame to address the multiple dimensions involved in the proposal for rights in the domain of sexuality. But this approach will not automatically dissolve thorny conceptual and political questions that remain nor the many others that will arise concerning interpretation and application of these rights.

The framing of a positive approach to sexual rights will require a re-thinking of our conceptions of private/public boundaries. Two decades ago we called for the full disclosure of the private sphere as the locus of sexual violence and abuse, and this premise must be retained. The closest we have been able to come to this in the past two years is a strong recommendation that subjective transformation is needed to enhance – at the personal, household, community and institutional levels – a deeper sense of entitlements and responsibilities in relation to sexuality. While there is recognition that punishment of “sexual violations” may play a strong role in transforming attitudes, many voices have also said that other strategies must be devised to overcome the “terror of difference” that underlies homophobia, misogyny, discrimination and intolerance, as well as other forms of sexual violence.


Regarding specifically the linkage between sexuality and equality, important steps have been taken in recent years in human rights in relation to HIV/AIDS. By and large, however, global and national policy debates remain caught in the false dilemma between the “seriousness” of the problems of health, violence and poverty and the “frivolity” of sexuality. Within this view,

The framing of a positive approach to sexual rights will require a re-thinking of our conceptions of private/public boundaries.

sexuality-related problems are seen as irrelevant because they are a private matter, or because they exclusively affect “minorities”. The only way to overcome this discourse is to document what remains invisible, such as the linkages between sexual exclusion and poverty and vice-versa; economic deprivation, sexual division of labour and violence; compulsory heterosexuality, homophobia, hegemonic masculinity and various forms of violence.

Another problem to be tackled is the strange absence of strong references to freedom in the sexual rights construct of the 1990s. This may be explained by a combination of apparently isolated factors: the HIV/AIDS pandemics which deflected the “sexual liberation” agenda towards “sexual risk”; the emphasis on victimisation that prevailed in sexual rights discourses after 1995; AND last but not least, the predominant approaches to poverty and inequality that by and large tend to reinstate the 19th century Marxist critique of formal liberties: freedom has little value for those that live in poverty.

Once again there are no easy ways to move beyond these obstacles. However, I would like to propose that the conceptualisation of sexuality as a practice of freedom may, in fact, contribute to de-constructing the given assumptions about sex that underlie much of the abuse and violence that is presently experienced in the domain of sexuality. Another theory that may guide us in our efforts to better articulate sexuality, equality and freedom is that of Amartya Sen, who moved beyond the conventional understanding of freedom as political liberty to view it as empowerment, as greater individual and collective autonomy that contributes to development in its broadest sense, and enlarges freedom in the private and public spheres.

As inspiring as these ideas may be, much additional research and conceptual striving are still needed to properly link sexuality, equality and freedom. This would include studies to show evidence that enabling political and economic environments do favour sexual freedom and happiness (or erotic justice), and research that would aim to demonstrate the positive economic and social impacts of freedom from coercion, discrimination and violence in sexual matters. The need for this conceptual breakthrough becomes increasingly relevant in light of the current global scenario. On the one hand, the runaway world of global capitalism in the 21st century favours a market-consumer frame to legitimise entitlements to sexual diversity. On the other hand, it is clearly intensifying the structural factors at work behind complex threats to human security that derive from sexual violence, oppression and discrimination. Such threats as the call for war, as we well know, affect a majority of persons and groups who will benefit little from a market-consumer approach to sexual rights. 

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- in a neo-liberal frame

Brief excerpts from a paper by the Research Coordinator for Sustainable Livelihoods, Ewa Charkiewicz, that traces the shift in the UN sustainable development policy discourse from the rights-based framework of the Rio Earth Summit (1992) to the neo-liberal sustainable development of the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002). It inquires into how neo-liberalism was institutionalised as a new framework for sustainable development, through what kind of practices and alliances. The report maps resistances and analyses the implications of this shift for feminist and environmental justice agendas. The full paper will be available on the DAWN website.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, Johannesburg 2002) was not really about environment and sustainable development. The main issue at the conference was globalisation, its social effects, how and by whom it is to be governed. The discussions were shaped by the political effects of 11 September 2001. During the negotiations, three modes of governance (sets of ideas how the world should be governed and related practices) competed and colluded with each other: technocratic neo-liberal economism, new conservatism (embraced by religion-based governments such as US Bush administration and likeminded others in the North and the South), and liberal sustainable development, where various critiques of globalisation have coalesced. Neo-liberals as well as new conservatives attempted to re-write Agenda 21 (document of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio). On the 54 pages of the final Johannesburg document, trade, the World Trade Organisation and the Doha Ministerial Declaration are mentioned 72 times, human and social rights 9 times, and sustainable livelihoods 3 times. The WSSD was used to institutionalise the neo-liberal paradigm via such measures as integrating trade with poverty reduction, promoting private-public partnerships, endorsement of privatisation of former common property resources, public services and other public goods, and reducing development agenda to Millennium Development Goals. Women's rights have disappeared from the document under pressures from a global conservative alliance that comprises of new conservatives in the Bush administration, and the Vatican, as well as fundamentalist Moslem states that lobbied against human rights and in favour of religious values and dignity.

At the same time WSSD documents reflect significant resistances to neo-liberalism and conservatism, and many tenets of Agenda 21 and the Rio Principles have been preserved. WSSD recognised sustainable development as an overarching framework for the UN system. This may suggest positioning of the UN as an alternative site of global governance to the WTO. However, given contradictory inputs to the WSSD Plan of Implementation, it is not certain which sustainable development is to be mainstreamed in the UN.

Since power is best read through its effects and capillary applications, the conference provided an interesting opportunity to analyse post-9/11 changes in global governance, what was at stake, and how the remaking of a rights-based approach to sustainable development into sustaining free trade was achieved. The key issue to look at after the Summit is integration, how the three new pillars of sustainable development (trade, poverty reduction, environmental protection) are integrated, and how the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the WTO integrate or divide their roles in global governance.

The Rio agreements (Agenda 21, Programme of Action for Sustainable Development and Rio Declaration on Environment and Development) contained prospects for participatory global governance. The dominant political identity of Agenda 21 is reflected in the package that combines equitable, predictable, and secure international trade, economic instruments to internalise environmental costs, appropriate technology, sustainable consumption and production, gender justice, and rights based approach to development (human rights, women's rights, social rights and community rights). Eco-efficiency measures, nuclear and advanced technology, and corporate rights have taken a marginal position. Agenda 21 can also be read through what is not in the document. Two contemporary debates are missing: the critiques of structural adjustment, and critiques of corporations.

In Johannesburg the rights-based approach to sustainable development disappeared. The WSSD documents are made of statements that reflect two competing approaches: neoliberal development as well as sustainable human development. In comparison to Agenda 21 there is a very significant decline in the references to social and human rights, and gender justice. Although towards the end of negotiations human rights reappeared in the final text of the Draft Plan of Action, and the most damaging language on subordinating environment and development to WTO rules was removed, in Johannesburg the debate on sustainable development was reframed as the debate on sustaining free trade. The intensification of international trade was projected as the only solution for poverty reduction and environmental improvements.

A significant difference between the Rio and Johannesburg conferences, that shaped WSSD as political project, was that while Rio talked about problems and policies both in the North as well as in the South, in Johannesburg the North was invisible in the document and the South was constituted as the problematic object of discourse. The key problems discussed in the WSSD

process: global inequalities, poverty, trade and finance were addressed on terms of locating them in the South (poverty, decline in economic growth, “good governance”) or their effects on the South (trade liberalization, lack of finance). “North” was not problematized. It was addressed only as a problem of market access for developing countries, or as source of finance for development. In Rio Southern agency was manifested in a number of ways. In Johannesburg the South spoke from the position of structural inequality institutionalized in global governance through the WTO. One the avenues to claim agency was to use the ideology of neo-liberalism and its self-proclaimed goals as resources to bargain for better deals for the national business and industries in developing countries. In Johannesburg, the impossibility of getting rid of “dirty subsidies”(meaning those that reward environmental degradation) showed the difference between neoliberalism defined as framework for global economic governance, and really existing neoliberalism. Neoliberalism as development project should not be assessed through what is promised in discourse, but rather by how it is practiced, and what are its social and ecological effects.

Civil society organizations resisted neo-liberal development by targeting BWIs and the WTO. Another big battle between neo-liberal sustainable development and sustainable development is the battle over the UN. There are two reason why it is important. One is the preservation of the UN as the site of multilateral global governance within the framework of sustainable development. The second is that in Joburg and other UN conferences these coalitions and interventions that were successful were those that could rely on a degree of institutional linkages with the UN or bloc of governments.

For both internal (political differentiation and agenda shift within the women’s movement, managerial turns in the debate on women, gender and the environment) and external reasons (backlash against women’s rights and the political shifts in UN and governments which in the past strongly supported gender equality agendas), the women’s coalition was not influential in terms of shaping agendas in WSSD. Women’s organisations led by WEDO and women in governments and the UN directed their energies to damage control and securing the language on basic human rights. These concerted actions, impressively, resulted in reopening the paragraph on health to include references on human rights and fundamental freedoms, and prevented the conservative coalition from capturing the agenda on women and gender equality.

The shift in governance from Rio to Johannesburg can also be traced through the differences visible through comparing the structure of documents, and type of language used. The Rio Agenda 21 was about elaborating set of principles, framing problems, identifying what needs to be done, what are the tasks of governments, intergovernmental organizations and major groups, and providing costs estimates for these actions. Agenda 21 was

written in a language grounded in concrete meanings that could be attributed to public interest advocates or epistemic communities of experts. Rio Principles (the equivalent of political declaration) were written on terms of rights and obligations. Joburg Plan of Implementation and Political Declaration combined the technocratise (including its anonymous self-hiding subject and global truth claims) with statements written in a vague and non-committal language.

In Johannesburg Declaration principles and statements on rights were replaced with poetics about ‘caring’, ‘human dignity’, ‘creating a new brighter world of hope’, about ‘bringing together rich tapestry of people and views’. Such statements belong to everybody and to nobody at the same time, and pretend the commitment instead of actualising it in concrete obligations. They serve two functions at the same time. One is they are meant to legitimise power and obtain consent, and two, they are a smokescreen to make power invisible. The shift towards virtual policy language corresponds with the general trend in aesthetication of practices of every day life and politics. How people look, and how the products and political events are marketed is more important than who they are. (Baudrillard, 2000, Bauman, 2002). When people are no longer the subjects of sustainable development, and the link between policy debates and realities of people’s lives is severed, as it happened in the WSSD, the negotiations move into simulation mode, rather than negotiating of conflicts over meanings and interests. One dangerous character that looms behind the smokescreen of simulated discourse is really existing neo-liberalism. The other is the rise of fascism.

While globalisation creates new impoverished masses, new conservatism and its counterpart, fundamentalism, evoke political aesthetics that provide the masses with communitarian and nationalist identities and allow masses to express themselves - but do not provide rights and other tools to intervene in governance to defend their livelihoods. The looming third world war is about economic and political interests, but it is also the war legitimised in the name of defending American ways of life, and *lebensraum*¹ (life space) for some of the American corporations. Small but cruel wars in the name of religion, life styles and *lebensraum* are also fought in other places, such as Gujarat. Sustainable consumption and production, and the rights based approach to development is an alternative to authoritarian development, as well as a governance framework for a negotiated world order. The emergence of the global conservative alliance in the WSSD which promotes authoritarian, patriarchal world order, and their collusion with neo-liberal development, certainly rings alarm bells.



¹ *Lebensraum* (life space, in German) defines territory seen as indispensable for a country’s security interests. It had a place in German political history, and was used by Hitler to legitimise the 2nd world war. The alternative is *leben und leben lassen* – live and let others live.

WSIS: SOAP BUBBLE NEGOTIATIONS

From Magaly Pazello, who attended the second WSIS preparatory committee meeting (PrepCom) in Geneva 17-28 February 2003.



WSIS PrepCom 2's mission was to discuss the themes and content that will shape the draft of the Principles Declaration and Action Plan. However, long, slow and convoluted negotiations returning to previous texts developed around which documents should provide the background for the draft. The prolonged negotiations gave the impression that agreements had been reached inside a soap bubble — just one delicate touch and they could disappear.

The PrepCom II opening session was an indication of what kind of discussion and difficulties faced the participants. Called a Visionary Panel, it was intended to bring the political scene within the horizon of the Information Society. Unlike what might be expected, people of different areas and perspectives were not invited and the presentations concentrated on the present time. They only just touched on some of the problems that should be considered for the Summit, such as regional inequalities in terms of technology, the differing impacts on poor and developing countries, and governance. This was strange, because the panel was composed of a so-called "group of strategists", yet they failed to show the contradictions in the 'knowledge models' of the information society and the 'economic development models' and their impact on people's lives.

The differences between the points of view about the themes showed up in the second week's plenary, after the battle for defining what documents would be appropriate for drafting the texts. This battle raged around the PrepCom President's proposal, described as a 'non-paper', based on the results of the experts' informal meeting (Geneva, September 2002). GRULAC countries rejected the proposal because it hadn't considered the results of the regional conferences. GRULAC countries and others refused to use the text and also disagreed with the way the process was being conducted. The core of the struggle includes concerns on internet governance that involve millions of dollars being transferred directly to companies and managing organs of the internet in the US. It is also connected with concerns about infrastructure, information flows (the renegotiation of internet traffic), the "global culture of cyber-security", privacy and global public goods.

These issues were the "nerve point" of the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Ministerial Preparatory Conference for WSIS at Bávaro, Dominican Republic, 29-31 January 2003. They were also the reason for the reservations of the United States and Canada to the paragraph on internet governance in the final text of the Bávaro Declaration. During negotiations in Geneva, however, the paragraph was retained although with the

reservations. It is interesting to note that the Dominican Republic, host of the regional conference, is also the chair of the FTAA Negotiating Group on Intellectual Property Rights. The last FTAA NGIP (Panamá, 20-21/01/2003) was just days before the regional conference. The NGIP Chair, Mr. Orlando Jorge Mera, presided at both meetings.

The draft committee finally produced a substantive document. WSIS secretariat put on line the draft of the Principles Declaration and the Action Plan that are for discussion in the intersessional meeting.

Some items of note, apart from the internet governance issue, include:

A) The launching of a "Global Digital Compact" (Action Plan (draft), Objectives, § 45, C, "... as a new pattern for partnership and interaction between governments and non-governmental actors, based on division of labour and specialised responsibilities, as well as on identified specific and common interests; to work together to achieve ICT development goals (e.g. governments create stimulating regulatory environment and fiscal incentives, business bring in technology and made available simple applications, non-governmental organizations undertake awareness campaigns and work at community level etc.) — a model that could start from the institutional relationships already existing in ITU, with ITU as coordinator.

B) Cultural diversity/identity and human dignity as in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001. There are many NGOs that defend the cultural identity in terms of the protection of indigenous people, multilingualism and local languages on internet, but there is little understanding of the problems surrounding identity and diversity.

C) The balance between intellectual property rights and the public interest: "An appropriate legal framework should be defined for the development of a public domain of information and knowledge...Protection against unfair use of indigenous knowledge should be developed."

D) Returning to clusters and margins: DAWN has pointed out elsewhere that at global and local level the language around gender equality is moving back to the time when "women, children and youth, older people, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and rural communities" appear grouped together in documents.

The return to the "cluster language" instead of insisting on the UN agreed language about gender equality is a huge risk that women organisations need to pay attention to. However, few feminists and women's NGOs attended PrepCom2 and few organisations are involved in

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the process. Yet this could be an opportunity for women, because the Bush war agenda may prevent the US from paralysing the negotiations as they did in the Financing for Development Conference. During the PrepCom, a group of NGOs including APC WNSP, Isis International - Manila, and International Women's Tribune Centre wrote to WSIS President Samassekou expressing their increasing concern about the directions taken by the preparatory process, particularly the Proposal for an Orientation Document for PrepCom-2 (the "Non-Paper"). They urged a restoration of a focus on human development objectives within the WSIS process.

Issues of concern were:

1. Strong centre-staging of market-based approaches and an assumption that growth, efficiency and profit-maximising should be the guiding principles of development. There are good reasons to fear promoting an information society in ways that are linked to currently inequitable aid packages to the South will lead to entrenched indebtedness, rather than lead to sustainable human development.
2. The WSIS Secretariat is making efforts to define the roles and relationships of various stakeholders and strengthen partnerships amongst them, but the division of labour and specialised responsibilities outlined seemed to be in over-simplistic terms.
3. There is no mention of gender equality in any part of the document, and all references to women are couched in the frame of "women and youth", suggesting they are fundamentally similar and should be approached in the same way. Gender equality should be identified as a Key Principle and a cross-cutting issue.
4. There is a heavy focus on digital technology, making little mention of more traditional ICTs.
5. Separating the media from ICTs is conceptually flawed, even if common practice, and all information and communications tools used for information sharing, news delivery, public broadcasting, knowledge transfer and entertainment should be recognised.
6. Any attempt to legislate around security concerns, such as "the elaboration of an international convention on information and communication network security" must not be at the expense of existing human rights and civil liberties frameworks.
7. At the level of principles all fundamental human rights should be upheld and the development of ICTs be in line with other social development goals that have been stated in previous UN conferences.

Women's groups considered they were largely successful at PrepCom2 and at the subsequent 47th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in ensuring gender concerns and advocacies were incorporated into the draft Declaration and Action plan. 🌞

DATES to watch for the WSIS process:

July 2003:

WSIS, Intersessional Meeting, Paris, France
(15/7/03 / 18/7/03)

September 2003:

WSIS, 3rd Meeting of the Preparatory Committee
(PrepCom-3), Geneva, Switzerland (15/9/03 -26/9 /03)

December 2003:

World Summit on the Information Society -Phase 1, Geneva,
Switzerland (10/12/03 / 12/12/03)

November 2005:

World Summit on the Information Society - Phase 2, Tunis,
Tunisia (16/11/05 / 18/11/05)

Regional Meetings

April 2003

Pacific Island Regional Consultation - executive summary.
The consultation is intended to prepare Pacific island countries to participate effectively in the WSIS process, 8-11 April 2003, Suva, Fiji

Organisers include the Islands Forum Secretariat - <http://www.forumsec.org.fj/default1.htm>; and Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association - www.pita.org.fj

May 2003

ITU and UNESCO, ICT & Gender Conference: Optimizing Opportunities, 27-30 May 2003, Kuala Lumpur MALAYSIA
The 2003 Forum on ICTs and Gender a multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder initiative that will bring together 300 participants from around the globe.

For more information: gender@gkpssecretariat.org.my

Some useful links for WSIS information:

The ITU site

<http://www.itu.int/wsis/index.html>

Regional conferences

LAC: <http://www.indotel.org.do/WSIS/>

Asia-Pacific: <http://www.wsis-japan.jp/>

Pan European: <http://wsis-romania-ro>

Bishkek-Moscow: http://www.itu.int/wsis/preparatory/subregional/bishkek_moscow.html

Western Asia: www.escwa.org.lb/wsis

Africa: www.geneva2003.org/bamako2002/

UNESCO

<http://www.portal.unesco.org/wsis>

DAW

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/ict2002/index.html>

UN General Secretariat (UN ICT Task Force)

<http://www.unictaskforce.org/>

Gender Caucus

<http://www.wougnet.org/WSIS/wsisgc.html>

Civil society

<http://www.globalknowledge.org>

<http://www.apcwomen.org/wsis>

<http://www.crisinfo.org>

http://www.choike.org/cgi_bin/choike/links/

<http://www.genderIT.org>

<http://www.isisinternational.org/>

<http://alainet.org>

<http://www.iwtc.org>

<http://www.misa.org/wsis/index.html>

Civil Society Gender Working Group

E-mail: susanna@isiswomen.org

The Latin American and Caribbean Regional Ministerial Preparatory Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society was held in Bavaro, Dominican Republic, 29-31 January 2003. Along with countries of the region, UN agencies, the European Union, development banks, private sector companies including mass media, and civil society networks, there were delegations from the USA and Canada who, after some discussion, were finally accepted as participants in the negotiations for the Final Declaration with speaking and voting rights. The regional conference was organised into plenary sessions and thematic debating sessions, to which non-government organisations were invited to contribute as panellists for 15 minutes each.

WSIS: NGO Viewpoint from the LAC Region

From DAWN's Magaly Pazello, who is also a member of the APC Women's Networking Support Programme. Her presentation in the regional conference theme session on Human Capital can be found in full on www.indotel.org.do/wsisis and in Spanish on www.cmsi.org.br, and other information from the WSIS section on DAWN's website.

Her presentation focussed on social inequality and the digital divide. She said that without efficient and effective public policies to overcome poverty, the Information Society could deepen inequalities instead of narrowing or eradicating them, with much greater impact on poor women, African descendents, indigenous peoples and the young poor.

The new information and communication technologies have not contributed to changing unequal gender relations, especially as regards the sexual division of labour. With the exception of DAWN, the Centre of Investigation for Women's Action (CIPAF) and the APC Women's Networking Support Programme (WNSP), there does not appear to be representation from other women's groups, and even less from feminist groups.

There is a large gap between the perspectives of those movements active in the information society and other social movements, as seen in the language used in the declarations, which is often quite backward and seems to rely on requests for hand-outs, particularly where gender is concerned. Dialogue is needed amongst these movements so that actions around the Information Society do not return to the past or even worse, allow the language already accepted in the United Nations to be revised to exclude language achieved in the so-called UN Social Cycle (the cycle of conferences of the 90's)."

There was no consensus at the regional conference around contributions that went beyond a welfare-type approach to themes related to women, excluded ethnic groups, the disabled, the young, the old, and marginalised groups. The contributions of the NGOs present went no further than the reductionist viewpoint which transforms so-called excluded groups into a single label. It is extremely important that the various social movements talk to each other so that the debate around the Information Society improves in quality and visibility, and can truly affect at decision-making

Final Declaration


The negotiations around the Bavaro Final Declaration were slow and suffered from a "small issue" between the USA and Cuba: 40 years of embargoes. The Cuban delegation informed NGOs who contact them that they used the access to information and communication theme to try to gain access to the Internet cables that come out of the US and connect the rest of the continent. The USA will not tolerate this. The discussions over the paragraph

related to the transparency of the governing Internet bodies were also difficult, and to manage to include three little words, "democratisation", "transparency" and "representativeness" was very hard. The NGOs present were able to make proposals for the final text of the Declaration, and distributed to some delegations a short document with their suggestions for each paragraph.

In the early hours of the third and final day, the conference reached agreement on a provisional (final) text for the Final Declaration, which contained the dissenting views of the US and Canadian delegations, the countries that were previously excluded because the conference had not been intended to include North America.

Of note in this process was the ease in getting access to the national delegations, since all shared the same space, as well as to representatives from the UN, the World Bank and the private sector. This suggests that NGOs can establish close and even informal dialogue, yet on the other hand it may make these moments of dialogue nothing more than that, without creating any possibility for exchange and input into the decisions taken around the negotiated document. NGOs rightly complained of not having any real help for their participation, such as funding for the expensive journey to Bavaro or online discussions prior to the conference. Few NGOs or networks were in fact present. Many of the NGOs that were there lacked expertise in working in negotiating processes with government delegations. This is a disadvantage faced by NGOs in a regional and global process, and for this reason it is extremely important to create capacity-building opportunities to learn about political lobbying and negotiation.

It also needs to be recognised, however, that the regional conference was planned for the same dates as the World Social Forum, but after various requests there was enough political good faith on the part of the governments and ECLAC for the dates to be moved by one day, allowing the NGOs at WSF to also attend the conference. Those who have followed other negotiating processes can affirm that the Bavaro Regional Conference was more open than many others held by ECLAC in the region.

A civil society event organised by the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) was held on February 28 and results of this event were presented to the Plenary. NGOs and networks held parallel meetings with the idea of organising a regional NGO meeting. 

Data gaps and diverse economies

Excerpts from a paper given by DAWN Pacific's Yvonne Underhill-Sem at the Symposium on Global Trade and Multilateral Agreements: Gender, Social and Economic Dimensions, held at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Suva, Fiji, 12-14 February 2003. A full paper can be found on <http://www.dawn.org.fj/global/globalisation/trade>

There should be little doubt that the impacts of the current system of multilateral trade on many groups of women and their families are not good at present, will be worse in the next five years but will be even more severe in the longer term. Concerted efforts are needed now to ensure that economic policies pay due attention to integrating economic, social and gender justice. This should no longer be a debatable issue as evidence of such impacts is clear in the daily lives of women in the Pacific.

Contrary to some opinions, much is already known about the gender, social and economic dimensions of current economic systems. No doubt more analysis can contribute to better policies however, the aim of this analysis should NOT be so that "shared prosperity for all" will be "seen to be" happening as some may wish. This analysis should NOT be so that the negative impacts or adjustments, the collateral damage, the inevitable social costs, are understood better and brought into line with the current economic dogmas. This analysis should NOT solely be to ensure harmony with global trade processes. Rather, analysis SHOULD refine policy tools, evaluate the extent to which national governments are meeting their commitments and continue to highlight the range of diverse economies that exist in our diverse countries.

'Data' gaps – the power to define as the essence of politics

The calls for more gender-disaggregated data, case studies, best practice and so on are loud, clear and necessary. The main data gaps that concern me, however, are gaps in ideas - in ways of thinking about how to do economic activities differently and coming up with alternatives. There are still many people using their initiative and trying new ways of mak-

ing a living for themselves and their families. Though at times, many people, and especially women, struggle to find food and ensure security for their families, there are still many others in the Pacific who continue to improvise. And this improvisation is an enormous resource.

Yet this is what is most under threat with the bundle of policies that come with an explicit agenda to open our markets to all and in return to be able to trade in other markets. The problem is that there can be not 'fair trade in an unfair market'. Time and again the evidence is that there are some markets in rich developed countries – like agricultural markets in the EU, US and Japan - that are closed. This is why we cannot leave the political out of our understandings of the economy because ultimately the power to

define is the essence of politics.

All regions regardless of size experience this political and economic injustice. For instance, despite the expressed solidarity of 79 ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) countries, they continue to struggle against the political and economic might of the EU. This particular constellation of power is not new – developing countries historically succumb to their more powerful and wealthier partners. And today, as market-led globalisation extends ever further into defining economic activities, we must be ever vigilant of the particular geopolitical configuration within which we are working. For instance, huge support is now available for micro-credit schemes for women when previously they were considered economically unfeasible. Rather than being the panacea for alternative livelihoods, micro-credit schemes targeted to women serve to both release national governments from fundamental social responsi-

It has been argued that a new feature of the present round of globalisation, as distinct from prior rounds, is that this round did not need a war to consolidate it. Prior rounds seem to have been linked to wars: the scramble for Africa and territories in Asia and the Pacific were linked to military conflicts between various European powers; the last previous round of globalisation was only established after World War II etc. Until recently, however, it did not seem that a war (meaning a global-type event) was an intimate feature of the present dynamics of 21st century globalisation. The big catalytic events, the 'hot wars', seemed in the past, though many argued that there were a lot of 'proxy' wars. Globalisation was seemingly being enforced by benign (contractual as opposed to aggressive) agreements such as those of the World Trade Organisation, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and for the management of external debt. In the early 1990s some went so far as to speak of a 'silent war' in which the 'interest rate' — the power of banks and financial institutions, especially with regard to Third World governments' external debts — was the main weapon. This was only partly true: the debt crisis did play a strong role in bringing countries into IMF and WB control, involving tremendous prescriptions around market and trade liberalisation and opening up to multinational corporations. However, I think that recent events, and now the War of Terror, belie those expectations." International Gender and Trade Coordinator, Mariama Williams of DAWN, who was the Commonwealth Secretariat consultant who prepared a reference manual and addressed the symposium.

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bility as well as to draw women further into neo-liberal economic rationalities.

This counter-intuitive move is not only a challenge for national governments who must contend with internal political-economic nuances, but also for regions, sub-regions as part of the array of multilateral, bilateral and plurilateral arrangements. NGOs face the same scenario, because the NGO community has expanded to cover



Above, from left, IGTN Coordinator Mariama Williams, Keturah Babb of DAWN Caribbean and Yvonne Underhill-Sem of DAWN Pacific at the DAWN display at the Symposium on Global Trade and Multilateral Agreements: Gender, Social and Economic Dimensions, held at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Suva, Fiji, 12-14 February 2003.

a diverse and often conflicting range of political interests. At the same time as these power battles are operating at this level, there are some basic political facts much closer to home that are consistently overlooked.

"Prejudice, discriminatory policies and sexist mentalities' were identified by the Mauritian Minister for Women's Rights only last month as the main reasons women's contribution to the nation are being undervalued. It is not simply a matter of not having the data, or not being able to disaggregate gender effects, it is a matter of having the political commitment to value social justice and gender justice above "economic equity for all"

In economic analysis and theory construction, there has been a long struggle to recognise the value of the care economy - and it is still not won. Yet it is possible, as any marketing professional will tell you. Breastmilk, infant feeding and oral rehydration campaigns in developing countries are evidence of how effectively

gender-disaggregated data can be collected and used. Similarly in the medical field, the rights and interests of people pale into insignificance over the rights of the professional - and this is an ongoing battle. There is a similar struggle in the field of economics. But is not a struggle without resistance in many forms.

Diverse Economies: alternative ways of thinking

Diverse and complex are two words often used to describe the Pacific, Africa, the Caribbean and most other developing countries. I want to apply diversity to economies - diverse economies.

In dominant economic analysis the dominant means of transacting exchanges is through the market; the dominant means of exchanging labour is through wages; and the dominant mode of organising these exchanges is through the capitalist system. But there are other ways of doing these same things. Let us look more closely at these key features of an economy and keep in mind who - men or women - might be involved.

Other ways of making economic transactions include alternative markets like the local trading systems seen on street corners, at villages centres, across seas and national borders. There are also alternative currencies and black markets. These should not just be written off as 'informal markets' although they do mostly escape control by national taxation systems. But they are often highly formalised and can be both long-standing and open to innovation. We also have non-markets like barter systems, household flows, and gifting.

We have wage labour, but we also have alternative forms of payment and reimbursement for work; co-operatives, self-employment, and indentured work. We also have unpaid work in the form of volunteering, housework and family care. Diverse modes of organising our economies include alternative capitalist modes of organisation where environmental and social ethics are maximised. The non-capitalist ways of organising exchanges include communalism, independence, feudalism and unfortunately, even slavery.

Once we look at the diversity that is the economy, we can then both begin to question the superiority of global capitalism, and realise possibilities in the multi-tasking and complex ways that many women and their families operate on a daily basis. Globalisation may be the most widely spoken-about challenge, but like many unspoken challenges, greater rewards will come from addressing the silent challenges like what is not globalisation. 🌟

PEOPLE BEFORE MARKETS: Perspectives from Caribbean Women

DAWN Caribbean's Keturah Babb spoke on the experiences of Caribbean women and their views on trade liberalisation at the Symposium on Global Trade and Multilateral Agreements. The full paper is available on DAWN website.

The perspectives of Caribbean women of African ancestry on trade liberalisation and globalisation are shaped by their historical experience of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism. For these women trade liberalisation is simply the modern day continuation of a political agenda of supremacy that has expressed itself in the Caribbean in the form of genocide, slavery, indentureship and subjugation. Many policy makers would like to think that this is in the past, but the disadvantaged position of women instruct that the current trade objectives are not meant to favour them.

Some impacts of trade liberalisation on women in agriculture include:

- The WTO ruling on the EU preferential banana regime for the Windward Islands and Jamaica resulted in loss of employment for the majority of women who provide 70% of the labour in that industry; and
- Cheap vegetables from North America severely undermining the income and productive capacity of women vegetable farmers throughout the Commonwealth Caribbean in a context where they have few alternatives.

In manufacturing, impacts include:

- Relocation of garment factories to Mexico as a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement leading to loss of 12% market share for Jamaica and St. Lucia leading to loss of employment for women.
- State revenue accumulated through women's work in the garment industry now being used to justify the low wage strategy while turning a blind eye to the conditions under which these women work.



repair and adjustment of faulty fits rather than design and production where they traditionally had advantage. An encouraging recent development was the move by CARICOM to create a stabilisation fund and make available technical expertise when Dominica experienced difficulties due to the combined loss of earnings from the banana industry and from tariff intake, saving the island from the harsh conditionalities attached to a loan offer from the IMF.

DAWN Caribbean research into the effects of trade liberalisation on women's lives in two of the four Windward Islands has identified critical factors such as availability of water for irrigation and protection of the domestic market via government policies, as critical to the success of their agricultural activities. The research also unearthed the different impacts on the elderly, children, men and other family members when women had to adjust to loss of income with additional survival strategies. Overall the research confirm that citizens are aware of and wish to exercise their right to inform public policy formulation. Organisations of women and farmers have begun to identify how they can collaborate to determine some gender indicators for both informing the formulation of trade policy and for measuring the impact of trade agreements at all levels on women and their families. Recommendations have emerged including demands for convergence between sustainable human development goals as elaborated in the various UN Programmes of Action and the content of multilateral trade agreements; and household wages instead of minimum wages for women, given their predominance as single heads of households and their economic responsibility even when headship is shared. 🌞

Will trade liberalisation lead to the eradication or exacerbation of poverty?

DAWN General Coordinator, Claire Slatter, who is a member of the Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG) gave a keynote address at a Trade Forum in Wellington on 21 February. These excerpts are from her paper that can be found on DAWN website in the Regional section, under Globalisation.

Trade liberalisation, or free trade through the rules-based multilateral trading system that is being put in place through the WTO, is touted by free trade advocates as not only a reliable route to attaining development, but also a primary means of alleviating poverty. The argument of 'trade-led development' has been used in the lobby for a new, so-called 'development round' of comprehensive trade negotiations within the WTO. The argument is premised on successful 'trade creation' and expansion in production for trade, in response to expanded market access. These premises need closer examination.

Overwhelming recent evidence has documented huge increases in food imports into developing countries because of trade liberalisation, damaging the livelihoods of smallscale farmers and not helping to achieve food security.

Theoretically, the influx of cheaper products and services from external suppliers is all to the good for national consumers, providing them with wider choices. But this pre-supposes that all would-be consumers are earning and can therefore access these expanded choices. If, however, the liberalisation process results in undermining and closing down domestic businesses and crowding out local suppliers who are unable to compete, people will lose jobs and be without income to enjoy what the market has to offer. Moreover, the opening up through deregulation and privatisation of basic services such as water, health and education to competitive foreign suppliers, will likely see increased charges for these basic services, making them unaffordable for the poor.

The trade-led development model encourages an emphasis on production for export at the expense of production for domestic consumption. In much of the Pacific region, more than 75% of the population pursue semi-subsistence livelihoods, facilitated by communal land-owning systems. While most in this category are engaged to some degree in cash crop production for export, the extent of their engagement in the production of tradeables is essentially self-determined. The social implications of allocating land presently used for subsistence food production to 'more productive users' (eg export crop farmers) are enormous, and would without a doubt entail impoverishment for thousands.

The expansion of production for trade - or earning income from expanded exports - can have other impoverishing consequences in the long term. In the fisheries sector in Fiji, combined with affirmative action policies for the advancement of Fijians in business, it is reportedly leading to the issuing of more fisheries licences - to foreign companies in joint ventures with Fijians.

Fiercely defended as an entitlement to a share in the wealth that is being reaped from the tuna fishery (and enjoyed up till now by only a few nationals), the additional licenses granted to foreign investors through the provinces involved in the joint ventures encourage rent-seeking 'investment' and natural resource plundering, which will have adverse long term impacts on the sustainability of Fiji's commercial fisheries. In other countries, in a similar way, forest owners have been encouraged by the expectation of overnight enrichment, to exploit their forestry resources, in tandem with foreign companies which come in to plunder.

Regional trade agreements like the Pacific's PICTA and PACER agreements primarily serve to encourage and facilitate compliance with WTO trade rules, while engendering a sense of collective ownership, and a perception that regional interests are being served. For Pacific Islands states, small producers without the technology, resources and other factors of production and economies of scale to ever be effective competitors in the global market, whose economies are especially vulnerable to the vagaries of the market and to natural disasters, and who have long been the beneficiaries of non-reciprocal preferential trading agreements, it is ludicrous to expect trade liberalisation to work miracles and achieve either economic growth or poverty reduction. ☀

Women's Day 2003

Sudan, a country that has been at war with itself for more than 37 years, has long declared another war against women, according to a report from the African Democratic Forum on efforts to organise an International Women's Day celebration in Khartoum. Permission for the Sudanese Studies Centre, French Cultural Centre and some other indigenous organisations to hold a lecture and creative performance at the National Museum was refused. The only celebration was organised by the Government and held in the presence of the Special Reporter of the UN Representative for Human Rights in Sudan.

In **Fiji**, the young women's group of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement were denied permission to hold a "Poetry in the Park" celebration in the botanical garden surrounding the national museum in Suva. Instead, they held a successful "unofficial" programme of readings and music on the verandah of the museum.

Women and Islam in 21st Century Africa

Excerpts from a paper on Women and Islam in Africa in the 21st Century: *An African feminist perspective*, given by DAWN Francophone Africa Regional Coordinator, Fatou Sow, at the Centre for Gender and Development Studies of the University of the West Indies on 15 November 2002 in their lecture series on Caribbean Women: Catalysts for Change. The lecture is dedicated to the memory of the late Dame Nita Barrow, who was Governor General of Barbados and Convenor of the NGO Forum of the 3rd World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985. The full paper is on the DAWN website.

Muslim women at times confront both the rigid attitudes of Muslims as well as Western religious or political fundamentalists hostile to the women's rights movement, and also rigid attitudes of feminist groups that are anti-patriarchy and anti-religion. In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States, the assimilation of Islam into terrorism worsened the situation. In Senegal, where women demonstrated with men against the US strikes in Afghanistan, there was complete confusion of messages. Although Senegalese women do not usually wear the hijab (veil) they found they were supporting the claim that the hijab was part of the Afghan women's culture and they had a 'human right' to wear it. Meanwhile they are fighting to get joint legal responsibility for their children, a right that is refused by men and the State in the name of patriarchal Islam.

Islam has been deeply embedded in African societies and cultures for centuries and is part of the identities of millions of women. The Muslim world, Umma, is a mosaic of races, peoples and cultures with a common faith in Islam, but with local values, traditions and customs as part of the Muslim identity. All feminist discourses on women's rights and gender relations must take into account religious identity. My deep concern, as a Muslim feminist researcher, is about the contested political use of Islam as a tool of power. Women's bodies often become sites of struggle between political forces, as in the Muslim Northern Nigerian states.

Islam is always more than a religious matter. It is also a political issue, both in the public and private spheres of its communities. What African activists and feminists are questioning is not Islam as a religion with moral values that anyone can obey in her/his own right. The challenge is the political use of Islam to get access to power by controlling peoples' minds, bodies and lives.

The question of secularisation is critical — it is the one that impacts most on women's lives. Introduced by colonisers, secularisation was more than de-veiling and imposing the European dress code in Muslim Africa. But today, the current debate is the need for a secularist approach to the social and legal position of women within a society where access to resources and political power are not based on religion, be it Islam, Christianity or any African religion.


Muslim societies always tend to conflict with secularisation as a Western process imposed by colonial rulers. Many family codes in sub-Saharan Muslim

countries that maintain secularism as a principle of government have yet introduced provisions from the Qu'ran that deprive women of the right to equality in personal law — strengthening men's position as head of the family, maintaining unequal inheritance between men and women, acknowledging the dowry as a prerequisite for a valid marriage, upholding polygamy etc. In Senegal the 1982 refurbished Family Code (1973) repealed some provisions, such as the husband's right to prevent his wife from exercising a profession he deems degrading for his family, or the unilateral choice by the husband of the marital home. However the code still remains deeply unequal and a new Constitution still has a clause making the husband head of the family, while claiming gender equality.

The area of reproduction is one in which the State reproduces gender inequalities, and women's rights to control their bodies, sexuality and reproduction remain a struggle for African women. Rights to refuse early, arranged or forced marriage, female genital mutilation, to be inherited by the family of a deceased husband, and the right to be protected against unsafe sex leading to HIV/AIDS are amongst those not addressed by existing laws.

Major agencies still rely on moral and religious authorities to promote family planning, which gives them enormous power to direct people's conscience against a background of poverty, moral and social fragility where it is difficult to act individually. It can entail all kinds of obligations for and abuse of women. Religious authorities become empowered, especially where there is a lack of judicial, administrative or police structures. Above all, men and culture are thus reinforced in their ownership of women's bodies.

It is critical to address women's lived conditions, their difficult access to natural, material and financial resources, low participation in the decision-making process, while referring to culture and religion. Culture has been used as a buffer against Western ideologies and politics and is identified today as a buffer against neo-liberal policies. It is not an easy position for women to transmit new ideas, challenge taboos and silences, when their own environment accuses them of losing both their African-ness and their faith.

While religion is still deeply rooted in many Muslim countries, the struggle for gender equality and human rights for women requires, more than ever, the separation between the State and religion, and the secularisation of the State and the law. 

CSW SESSION SUSPENDED

The Commission on the Status of Women session held in New York, 3-14 March 2003, was suspended when consensus failed on adopting agreed conclusions on violence against women, a situation that underlines DAWN's concern about the threat posed by official negotiations to previously agreed language and texts (see P1). The meeting did adopt its draft-agreed conclusions on women's access to the media and information and communication technologies. These reports are from the International Womens Tribune Centre and Mavic Cabrera-Balleza of ISIS International-Manila.

The Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women unexpectedly suspended the March session when delegates failed to adopt agreed conclusions on women's human rights and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls. The delegate from Iran, with support from Egypt, objected to the inclusion of the paragraph to "condemn violence against women and refrain from invoking any custom, tradition, or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination as set out in the Declaration of the Elimination of Violence against Women." The Brazilian delegate who had facilitated informal consultations stressed that the draft agreed conclusions were a product of extensive deliberation and needed to be respected, and suggested seeking the opinion of the UN legal officer.

The Iranian delegate disagreed with the legal advice and continued to press to delete the paragraph. When the Chair, Ambassador Othman Jerandi of Tunisia, moved for adoption of the agreed conclusions without resorting to a vote on whether the paragraph should be deleted, the Iranian and US delegates questioned the rules of procedure. After a break, the Chair said that translation services were no longer available and suspended the meeting till a later date. Both NGO and government delegates expressed disappointment that the week-long discussion and week of prior negotiations had ended with what amounted to nothing.

United States Ambassador to CSW, Ellen Sauerbrey, made a statement on March 25, 2003 deeply regretting that delegates failed to reach consensus on the document.

"That the Commission could not reach agreement on a few issues must not divert us from our national and international responsibilities to end the scourge of trafficking, domestic violence, rape and other horrific acts of violence to which women are subjected. The United States hopes that the work of the Commission has raised awareness and recognition of the importance of this issue and of the need for political, economic and social empowerment of women, to ensure that they are able to live productive lives, free of violence and coercion."

There was no mention in the US statement of the war on Iraq or the violence being suffered there by women.

Agreed conclusions on women's access to media, information and communications technologies recalled the provision in the UN Millennium Declaration on the need to ensure that the benefits of the new ICTs are available to all. It was agreed also that there was a need to focus on gender dimensions of ICTs to prevent and combat any adverse impact of the digital revolution on achieving gender equality, and the need to integrate gender perspectives in WSIS. There was agreement of provision of management, negotiation and leadership training for women, mentoring systems and other support strategies and programmes, as well as gender-specific indicators on ICT use and the need to enable equal access for women to ICT-based economic activities such as small business and home-based employment. Final discussions also covered concerns on the sexual exploitation of women through the traditional media and through new technologies.

Agreement failed, however, on including at least 30 per cent women in national, civil society and private sector delegations to WSIS after a US objection that the quota was arbitrary. There was virtually no discussion on the issue of intellectual property rights, a hotly debated issue in the WSIS process.

It is highly noticeable that the phrase "as appropriate" that US delegates insisted on inserting in all paragraphs that demand resource allocation, is no longer in the final document.

CAMPAIGNS

- that DAWN has supported from November 2002 to March 2003
- [2/11] letter to the Nigerian Ambassador regarding Amina Lawal [Oprah website]
- [18/12] letter of petition on behalf of Joy Lee Sadler and Lesley McCulloch to the Indonesian Ambassador to Washington [Indonesian Human Rights Network]
- [12/1] endorsed Petition to the World Bank to Decommission Pak Mun Dam [Assembly of the Poor, Thailand]
- [18/2] signed-on to the letter to the World Bank regarding the Coal India project [Chotanagpur Adivasi Sewa Samiti]
- [21/2] signed-on to the Declaration of the Essential Rights of Afghan Women [NEGAR-Soutien aux Femmes d'Afghanistan]
- [26/2] signed-on to the Appeal for Peace in Iraq [Third World Network]
- [28/2] signed-on to the letter to the President of the WSIS Preparatory Committee [NGOs at WSIS PrepCom 2]
- [11/3] signed-on to the Letter of Protest against the Gag Rule on behalf of women and families throughout the world and particularly in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific, addressed to President Bush [Centre for Health and Gender Equity, DAWN, Catholics for a Free Choice, International Women's Health Coalition, et al]
- [11/3] signed-on to Water is Life: A Civil Society World Water Vision for Action [Public Citizen]

STEERING COMMITTEE NOTES



DAWN is deeply honoured to receive an award from AMANITARE, the African partnership for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women and Girls, in recognition of DAWN's contribution to African women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. Sonia Correa, Research Coordinator for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, received the award on behalf of DAWN (see left) from AMANITARE Programme Officer, Madeleine Macfoy-Kennedy, at the AMANITARE conference in Johannesburg, 4-7 February 2003. Ms Macfoy-Kennedy said DAWN had influenced global debates on development by offering holistic analyses from a Southern feminist perspective that is both grounded in women's experience and inspired by women's collective strategies and visions.

"In the early 1990s DAWN included reproductive health and rights on its agenda and published valuable theoretical analysis on the issues by network members such as Sonia Correa and Peggy Antrobus. As a south-to-south network, DAWN was an important voice in articulating the vision and voices of women before and during the deliberations of the NGO forum of the International Conference for Population and Development in Cairo in 1994. At the regional level DAWN's work connects with the priorities of women's and civil society organisations in each region, and helps strengthen their capacity to deal with issues arising from the impacts of globalisation. Much of DAWN's global advocacy work involves working in partnership with other organisations and networks to reform international institutions, ensure that governments live up to the commitments they made in the conferences, and mainstream gender in NGO advocacy initiatives."

DAWN's award is in the non-African category. Through its Africa group it has been able to contribute to connecting African women's voices to world fora and to supporting African women leaders.



DAWN Meeting in Bangalore

DAWN is planning a three-week training programme for about 30 young feminists from the South in Bangalore, India, in September/October 2003 as a main element in its interlinkages project. A group of DAWN coordinators — Ewa Charkiewicz, Sonia Correa, Vanita Mukherjee, Gita Sen and Claire Slatter — met in Bangalore 9-12 February 2003 to draft a programme designed to develop a cadre of young women with strengths in global, regional and national advocacy. Its intended objective is to upgrade advocacy skills and analytical capabilities, and particularly an understanding of interlinkages and power relationships. DAWN's four themes — the Political Economy of Globalisation; Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights; Political Restructuring and Social Transformation; and Sustainable Livelihoods — and the ways in which they interlink will provide the core of the programme.

The daily schedule will begin with early morning yoga, tai chi, meditation, gymnastics or swimming. Participants will prepare debates on critical topics, such as cultural values versus human rights, and will be expected to produce a number of papers and a substantive analysis that may be published. There will also be case studies and advocacy training sessions.

DAWN will shortly begin the process of identifying and inviting participants. 🌞

SC MEMBER HONOURED

Karolinska Institutet of Stockholm is awarding Gita Sen an Honorary Doctorate of Medicine. The honour, to be awarded in May 2003, is for her work showing the increasing role of interdisciplinary research between health and social sciences for understanding world health at a time of globalisation, and for making cutting edge contributions in this field.



"Her research offers evidence of deep-seated gender biases in health research and policy institutions that continue to downgrade the importance of gender perspectives in health. Gita Sen's innovative and unique insights into the interaction between gender and other markers of social inequity, such as class and race, have important implications for current legislative, economic, political and scientific trends for gender relations and women's health and well-being." In the last year Gita included Swedish researchers in her networks and thereby facilitated researchers at Karolinska Institutet in gaining new international contacts in this field. She is the principal investigator of the Gender and Health Equity Network (GHEN) Project in which Karolinska Institutet is a collaborating



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Subscriptions for printed version: Free to women based in the South. Friends based in the North are asked to make an annual minimum contribution of US\$20.00. Please notify any change of address by contacting seona@dawn.org.fj or fax (679) 314 770. Now available also on email, pdf or Word document, by sending your email address to seona@dawn.org.fj

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