



# From Profit to Provisioning: A Gender-Equitable Public Policy

**O**ne question that was prominent in the discussions during the review of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development was the appropriate place for gender equality. The Monterrey Consensus, reiterating previous United Nations commitments, was clear that an important goal was to achieve gender-sensitive economic development.

As an important step in answering this question, it would help to identify the public policies that could be implemented in order to achieve the desired objective. In other words, it would be useful to understand what constitutes gender equitable public policy given that one of public policy's purposes would be to promote gender equality.

Feminist economics is useful in starting this conversation because it also asks questions about the purpose of economics itself. In the words of Diana Strassman, "[b]y and large feminist economists hold economic thought to a standard that requires it to

be more responsive to the needs and well-being of women and their families." In more general terms, economics should look more into provisioning to benefit human lives. Such an approach implies the importance of human development that would "insist that a fundamental part of the good of each and every human being will be to cooperate together for the fulfillment of human needs and the realization of fully human lives," to quote Martha Nussbaum when she wrote on the subject in 2004.

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*Marina Durano's presentation at the Panel on Gender-Equitable Public Policy: Best Practices and New Options, Doha Review Conference on Financing for Development, 30 November 2008*

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This definition stands in contrast to the typical approach of seeking the most efficient allocation of resources for producing goods and services. How do societies provide for its members? We are most familiar with the production of goods and services that are exchanged in the market; although some are consumed directly by the producers while others are exchanged through barter. The exchange of goods and services across international borders and even between the present

➤ [From Profit to Provisioning / P4](#)

## **Gender Perspectives of the Financial Crisis: Emerging Issue of the CSW 53<sup>rd</sup> Session**

**T**he United Nations Commission on the Status of Women will consider the theme: "The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS" at its 53rd session at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 2-13 March 2009.

Representatives of Member States, UN entities and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world will gather once again to evaluate previous commitments to advance gender equality, identify challenges and deliberate on emerging issues, including "Gender perspectives of the

financial crisis" through an interactive panel. The 53<sup>rd</sup> session will also review progress of the implementation of the agreed conclusions on "Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels" adopted at the 50th session of CSW.

Visit <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/53sess.htm>. ■

### **In this Issue**

**Good but Not Enough: Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Doha 2008 / P2**

**Victory for Gender Equality in Doha: Interlinked Lobby Work Led to Cautious Celebration / P5**

**DAWN @ AWID Forum / P6**

**Book Launch: Sexuality, Health and Human Rights / P8**

**Looking Back | Moving On / P9**

# Good but Not Enough: Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Doha 2008

**T**he Women's Working Group on Financing for Development welcomes the fact that the outcome document of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development in Doha goes far beyond the 2002 Monterrey Consensus with regard to gender equality.

But this is not enough. We urge that gender equality policy commitments and actions on development, trade, finance, debt, aid and systemic issues will be strongly addressed in the follow-up process and the planned UN Conference at the highest level.

It is especially laudable in that it commits to the promotion of gender equality and women's economic empowerment as essential to achieving equitable and effective development; takes gender analysis to the wider public management arena; and reaffirms the elimination of gender-based discrimination in all of its forms including in the labor and financial markets as well as, inter alia, in the ownership of assets and property rights (*Paragraph 9bis in the draft outcome document revised text as of 1 December 2008*).

However, the commitments to gender equality in the document will only be truly meaningful if the systemic issues that underpin poverty, asymmetries and maldistribution of power and resources in the global political economy are decisively addressed. As women who have been fighting for the recognition of our human rights within the United Nations, we continue to believe that an inclusive, rights-informed and accountable multilateralism is more realizable when pursued under the purview of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Decision makers must acknowledge that macroeconomic, systemic, and financial issues are not gender-neutral and thus demand gender-aware policies. Women

constitute the majority of people working in flexible and informal sectors with often precarious working conditions. Thus, in times of crisis they struggle harder to maintain their jobs and income levels. At the same time, cuts in public service provision, including education and health, increase the burden of unpaid and invisible work done mainly by women. With the frequent fluctuations in prices, women are struggling to deal with increased financial stress within households.

We will persist in strengthening the linkages between gender equality, women's rights, and women's empowerment and the various issues, responses and reforms that may be agreed upon as the global community reviews the financial and

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*Issued by the Women's Working Group on Financing for Development in Doha, 02 December 2008: African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), African Women's Economic Policy Network (AWEPON), Asia-Pacific Women's Watch (APWW), Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Feminist Task Force-Global Campaign to End Poverty (FTF-GCAP), International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN), International Council for Adult Education – Gender and Education Office (ICAE-GEO), Women in Development Europe (WIDE)*

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monetary systems toward a comprehensive reform of global economic governance. In conclusion, we underscore the valuable significance of the outcome document's commitment to a conference at the highest level that will be called by the UN General Assembly. ■

## Women's Groups Analyse Effects of Economic Policy Conditionalities

**I**n a joint publication by the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN) and Women in Development Europe (WIDE), feminist scholars and activists revisit the much contested conditionality debate and its relation to human rights and development.

Entitled, *Conditionalities Undermine the Right to Development: An Analysis Based on a Women's and Human Rights Perspective*, the booklet is a compilation of women's critique on the effects of economic policy conditionalities that are viewed to weaken rather than support commitments aimed at promoting gender equality and women's rights within the context of

development. The publication was launched during the panel on Trade, Aid and Conditionalities from the Women's Rights Perspective at the recently concluded AWID forum, which included presentations by some of the contributors such as Cecilia Alemany (AWID), Gigi Francisco (DAWN and IGTN) and Nerea Craviotto (WIDE). ■

# Calling on the UNHRC: Integration of a Gender Perspective Throughout Its Work

**F**or the last two decades, DAWN has been engaged in generating a Southern feminist perspective on the global political and policy environment. Its aim in the Human Rights Council is to contribute to expanding the policy space for incorporating gender perspectives into the diverse and interrelated human development and human rights themes.

Beyond efforts to integrate a gender perspective in select areas of the Special Procedures, however, much more remains to be done (see Prasad, Sandeep, "Integrating a Gender Perspective in the Work of the Council and Its Special Procedures," [www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/unadvocacy/HRCgendinteSept%2008.doc](http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/unadvocacy/HRCgendinteSept%2008.doc)). Mandate holders and the Special Procedures system as a whole must improve their work by more consistently illuminating the negative effects of unequal gender power relations on the fulfillment of human rights for all. The following are ways by which this can be done:

- **Strengthening of local to global connections in an effort to bridge global discourses and local realities.** This panel can recognize the crucial role that the Special Procedures plays by bringing human rights abuses experienced at local levels to the attention of the Council, and by raising awareness of local actors about the debates taking place in global arenas. As we all know, women play a major role in local processes, as a group subjected to various circumstances of vulnerability, but also as active agents advocating for change in the social, legal and policy environments where they are situated.

- **Examination of interconnections across various human rights areas to systematically integrate a gender perspective in the Special Procedures system.** The reports presented to this Council over the past year reveal a number of gaps and inadequacies. While some reports mention "women" several times, other reports make a one-time token reference to the categories of "women" and/or "gender" even when the subject addressed clearly demands an in-depth gender analysis. Most troubling are those reports that totally dismiss gender inequalities and how these contribute to or exacerbate other human rights violations. Furthermore, the reports adopt a rather simplistic and binary concept of gender that does not take into account, for instance, that transgender and intersex persons – or in specific cultural contexts, hijras, kothis, metis and other forms of gender expression – are also victims of human rights violations. The lack of interconnections across human rights areas can be seen in the Human Rights Council mandates that review the situation of human rights in relation to economic and financial trends but never adopt a gender perspective. None of the reports recently presented to the

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*Excerpts from Statement delivered by Angela Collet on behalf of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) during the panel debate on Integrating a Gender Perspective in the work of the UN Human Rights Council and its Special Procedures, 12 September 2008*

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Council on the effects of economic reform policies and foreign debt or transnational corporations appreciate the value of the categories of "gender" or "women" in examining the social dynamics of these issues. This is in stark contrast to the review process of the UN Financing for Development Conference, where the NGO Women's Working Group, in which DAWN participates, has systematically underlined the impact of unequal gender power relations in areas such as domestic resource mobilisation, foreign direct investments and private capital flows, trade, international financial and technical cooperation, and debt.

- **Application of Gendered Analyses in all aspects of its work including the Council's special mandates on critical ecological concerns such as toxic and dangerous products and wastes; the right to food; access to safe drinking water and sanitation.** The Council can effectively contribute toward illuminating the linkages between the devastating health and livelihood effects of environmental degradation, the increasing impoverishment of women, and human rights violations worldwide. ■

## From Profit to Provisioning / P 1

and future in the markets are facilitated by financial products, including currency, lending instruments, among others. There is another aspect that is not fully acknowledged in policy circles and that is the labor expended for the caring of oneself and of others, who are usually members of the same household but not necessarily so.

After understanding the structure of an economy, the next question to be asked is who the key actors in these spheres are. Many are familiar with companies and workers, or with landlords and farmers, or with self-employed informal sector workers, or landless laborers. Less recognized is women's labor, often unpaid, in the performance of caring functions. Women's social assignment is to care for others, especially in the absence of institutions that provide care. It is possible to purchase caring services from the market but for households in poverty, this is not accessible. Governments can provide services but in the face of severe budgetary restrictions or situations of conflict, such services many not be available. For many households, the default solution is to rely on women's work.

In designing gender-equitable public policy, it is important to understand the division of responsibility over the varying aspects and processes of provisioning for the improvement of well-being. This understanding is necessary for making decisions over the distribution of material and labour resources that members of society need for survival, maintenance and prolongation. What we consistently find is that the assignment of responsibilities for care is skewed towards women, to the extent

that it limits her ability to participate fully in all of society's activities. Gender-equitable public policy should be able to address the imbalance in the responsibilities for provisioning.

Stephanie Seguino and Caren Grown's chapter in the book, *The Feminist Economics of International Trade*, published by Routledge in 2007, highlights three elements that guide the design of gender-equitable public policy. These are: equitable access to jobs through the elimination of discriminatory barriers against women;

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equity between the genders in earning living wages; and, equitable distribution of state resources.

The elements proposed by Seguino and Grown are often reflected as the desired results from policies that balance out different and, sometimes, contradicting social objectives. Among the objectives that need to be balanced out are the following: balance between growth targets and social objectives; balance between market expansion and subsidised public service and regulation; and the balance between promoting property rights and human

rights. Many alternative policy proposals seek to achieve coherence among these objectives.

However, for policies to be truly gender-equitable, they should aim to change and correct the imbalance in the responsibilities for provisioning, particularly in easing the burdens of women. For example, in implementing cash transfer programs, women have been chosen as the primary beneficiaries because their expenditure patterns are closer to socially desired goals, such as health care and education. Benefits have been shown to accrue to the children of women receiving the cash transfers and, yet, the responsibility for ensuring that the sick are cared for and that school assignments are done remains with the women. In this case, the cash transfer program falls short of changing the burdens of responsibility.

This approach to defining gender equitable public policy raises questions on the extent to which gender mainstreaming continues to be a useful strategy. There is no debate as to whether or not there is any need to address discrimination. This is certainly needed and programs that target women specifically are helpful in this sense. However, we need to be able to go beyond these approaches in order to deal with the "systemic issues" on the appropriate role of various social institutions in provisioning for the improvement of well-being. Public policy must change the incentive structures in society so that the responsibilities for provisioning and care are more evenly carried among states, markets, and households or communities. In doing so, gender-equitable public policy contributes to social transformation. ■

# Victory for Gender Equality in Doha: Interlinked Lobby Work Led to Cautious Celebration

The coordinated lobby by a network of women's organizations throughout the consultative processes around the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus led to remarkable achievements for women's rights and gender equality in a conference that otherwise disappointed many for its failure to herald a new financial architecture.

The two major commitments won by women are found in Paragraphs 4 and 19 of the Follow-up Conference's Outcome Document. Taken together, they are probably the most wide-ranging commitments to gender equality made by governments in any recent economic-oriented forum that typically ignores this dimension of development.

Paragraph 4 states: "We recall that gender equality is a basic human right, a fundamental value and an issue of social justice; it is essential for economic growth, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and development effectiveness. We reiterate the need for gender mainstreaming into the formulation and implementation of development policies, including financing for development policies, and for dedicated resources. We commit ourselves to increasing the efforts to fulfill our commitments regarding gender equality and the empowerment of women."

In paragraph 19, governments committed to: "Gender equality and women's empowerment are essential to achieve equitable and effective development and to foster a vibrant economy. We reaffirm our commitment to eliminate gender-based discrimination in all its forms, including in the labour and financial markets, as well as, inter alia, in the

ownership of assets and property rights. We will promote women's rights, including their economic empowerment, and effectively mainstream gender in law reforms, business support services and economic programmes, and give women full and equal access to economic resources. We will further promote and reinforce capacity-building of State and other stakeholders in gender-responsive public management, including, but not limited to, gender budgeting.

These results came from linking and synchronizing through information sharing and joint strategy sessions (on line and face-to-face) the global advocacy work of different women's organizations and networks in key negotiation areas of aid, trade, and official development assistance. Gender equality issues in international trade have been consistently raised in forums covering the negotiations under the World Trade Organization as well as in the UNCTAD XII held in Ghana in August 2008, especially those highlighting food security and food sovereignty. Women also played a prominent role in raising issues in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Action Agenda in September 2008, as well as carrying them through to the UN ECOSOC's Development Cooperation Forum held in July 2008, particularly highlighting

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*By Gigi Francisco and Marina Durano; A slightly edited version appears in the NGLS newsletter Go Between*

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controversies around positive conditionalities and how they might undermine women's leadership and empowerment. Earlier in 2008, the 52nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women carried the theme of financing gender equality and women's empowerment. This annual session provided a strategic opportunity for women's organizations to identify the basic advocacy positions that could be taken in the various financing for development forums including the Follow-up Conference in Doha.

The combined lobbying and advocacy of women's / feminist networks follows a recent history of political impasse between developing countries that are resistant to language on gender equality and some developed countries promoting it aggressively. The association of gender equality principles with policy conditions attached to neoliberal trade, finance and official development assistance policies, has contributed to gender equality language being thrown away in many forums. For as long as progress in gender equality is kept separate from meaningful progress in poverty reduction and sustainable development in developing countries, a cautious celebration for the commitments won in Doha can only be taken at this juncture.

Indeed, the United Nations that had been in the forefront of global commitments to women's rights and

➤ [Victory for Gender Equality / P10](#)

# DAWN @ AWID

## Do We Really Have a 'Feminist Family'? Plural Notions of Family and Marriage

*Panel organised by young women graduates\* of the DAWN Training Institute; by Kemone Brown*

**O**ur dear feminist sisters Asha George and Anasuya Sengupta (India) of DAWN Training Institute (DTI) arrived at the question as to whether or not we really have a "feminist family."

Pulling the interest of Michelle Reddy (Fiji), Claire Luczon (Philippines), Kemone Brown (Jamaica), Joana Chagas (India), Indhu Subramaniam (India) and Sanjukta Chaudhuri (India) among other DTIs, the group decided to take our topic to the AWID forum. With our mixed 'masala', we were ready to begin the work. Due to our various locations, we were unable to have a physical meeting, so the group utilized electronic communication, which included constant emailing and chats. Each of us was responsible for analyzing the question individually, writing our own understandings of the topic, doing independent research, gathering what theorists such as Carole Pateman had to say, and creating our own perspectives. Even after a few hiccups, we were finally able to have a group of DTI alumni carry on the session at the AWID forum, consisting of Michelle Reddy, Claire Luczon, Indhu Subramaniam, Angela

\* DTI alumni workshop facilitators at the AWID Forum: Nicole Bidegain (Nicaragua), Kemone Brown, (Jamaica), Angela Collet (Brazil), Claire Luczon (Philippines), Michelle Reddy (Fiji), Indhu Subramaniam (India).

Collet (Brazil), Kemone Brown and Nicole Bidegain (Nicaragua).

Though it was difficult to decide on the format our panel would take, we all came to the decision that we needed to coordinate a very interactive session, where as many views as possible may come about on the topic, thus opening a dialogue on the feminist perspective of the family. We refused to give prescriptions or exercise plain theorizing. Rather, we focused on examining whether or not what we have gathered in our research complemented our actual experiences. We started the forum by asking the participants what comes to their mind when they hear of the word "family". As expected, varied responses have been elicited and some have identified "family" as pertaining or related to polygamy, social institution, parent and children, economy, religion and so on. We progressed with dividing the participants into five groups, where each was asked to reflect on a given scenario based on real situations of women in different contexts.

➔ [Do We Really Have / P10](#)

## Global Feminist Critique: Confronting the Realities of the South

*Excerpts from Gigi Francisco's presentation at the panel on Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights*

**A** "South" identity is problematic, filled with contradictions and deployed without any clear understanding of the realities of the South.



DAWN Former Steering Committee Members with Calabar Secretariat in Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2 Nov 2014

Issues such as the radically altered and altering south realities and identities; generational divide among south feminists; the lack of grassroots voices and leadership; the marginalisation of LGBTQI and the NGO-isation and strong donor-dependency of South feminist and women's movements; professionalisation of South feminists and technicalisation of women's equality and empowerment

## DAWN Panel: Debating Feminisms in the Women's Movement

The DAWN panel at the AWID Forum discussed the importance of understanding the complexities of building alliances among "south feminisms" and "north-south feminist solidarities" that inform current global policy advocacies of women's movements.

DAWNees' presentations focused on building feminist alliances in different policy advocacy sites; limitations and possibilities of feminist engagements on trade and economic justice issues; regional and transnational politics; and challenges of internal critique and

democracy within feminist organizations. Attended by about 150 participants, the interactive panel provided straightforward recommendations on how women and feminists can effectively engage with each other across geographical and other barriers.

## Political Collaboration: Follow the Money and Participate: Realities of the South Women and the Politics of Climate Change

Panel organised by DAWN, Isis International-Manila and WGNRR

with controversy, and at times conveniently ignoring its complexity.



November 2008

commitments... are just some of the big challenges that we have had to repeatedly confront on a daily basis.

In the last few years and due mainly to the drying up of funds in the North, feminist organisations and NGOs that were founded by Northern feminist activists and which for years were led by Northern women have moved to the South, had

➤ [Global Feminist / P11](#)

Yvonne Underhill-Sem's presentation at the panel on Climate Change and Gender Equality

**W**hat steps can women take at this point in time to ameliorate the devastating effects of climate change on poor communities in the Global south? The answer is very easy: follow the money and participate

**Follow the money.** As critical feminist scholars we should always be asking where the money comes from. This is becoming increasingly important in climate change debates as the impacts of climate change are being more intensely felt. A welcome and growing interest in documenting these impacts is evident, especially in relation to vulnerable groups, which is where women's interests come to the fore (see GEF on Mainstreaming Gender in Climate Change). And while this is quite right and proper, women must also be recognised as active players in development and cannot be just written in as part of the most 'vulnerable' groups in disaster risk reduction. And here all women can do what they often do so very well – keeping their eye on the money trail.

This is especially relevant in climate change debates where principle of developed countries providing new and additional funding to developing countries has been agreed to by all 192 countries that have ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (article 4.3). As moral arguments continue to hit their target – that

developed countries have a moral duty and responsibility to fund those developing countries that have contributed least to the temperature rises – so too has a rise in apparently new funding initiatives. We need to ask though – are these funding initiatives really 'new' and 'additional'?

A new UNFCCC financial architecture has been called for by developing countries (The Third World Network June 2008) but more feminist voices need to be added to this call. To be sure, where there is money, there are many 'bees' – that is "brazen efforts to extract silver". For instance, take a closer look at the World Bank's new Strategic Framework for Development and Climate Change which includes as one of its six action areas 'facilitating the development of market-based financing mechanisms'. How familiar does this sound!

So we need to continue to repeat the call that all financing for climate change must be new, additional and unconditional!

**Participate.** Developing countries are still in the process of making strategic decisions about their plans for adapting to

➤ [Follow the Money / P11](#)

DAWN Panel organised by Gigi Francisco  
Presenters:

Vivienne Taylor  
Mariama Williams  
Yvonne Underhill-Sem  
Celita Eccher  
Angela Collet

### About the AWID Forum

The International Forum on Women's Rights and Development that took place on 14-17 November 2008 brought up to 1500 women's rights leaders and activists from around the world that converged at the Cape Town International Convention Center in Cape Town, South Africa to discuss the power of movements. Visit [www.awid.org](http://www.awid.org).

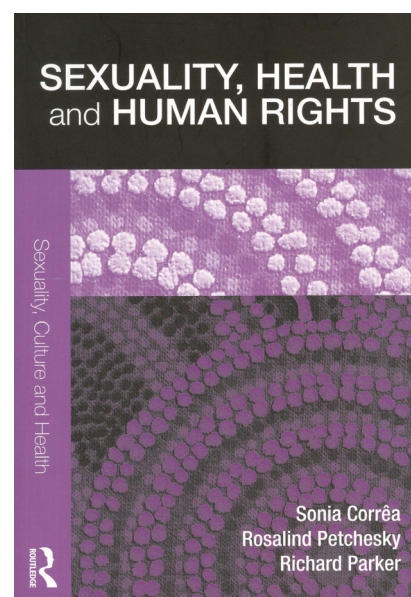
## Book Launch

# Sexuality, Health and Human Rights\*

On 7 October 2008, a special reception was held at the City University of New York (CUNY), in the USA to launch the new book, *Sexuality, Health and Human Rights*, by Sonia Corrêa, Richard Parker and Rosalind Petchesky, published by Routledge in August 2008. This ground breaking work, intended as a companion volume to the 2007 e-book, *SexPolitics: Reports from the front lines*, provides a critical analysis of shifting theoretical perspectives and activist strategies regarding sexual politics and their larger geopolitical context in the twenty-first century. Long in the making, the book surveys the “Global ‘Sex’ Wars” in the shadow of both religious resurgence and political conservatism; new research agendas in the face of biomedical discourses and HIV/AIDS; and “The Promises and Limits of Sexual Rights,” both from within international LGBTIQ and feminist human rights activism and beyond.

Each of the authors is a leading scholar and advocate of sexual rights. Sonia Corrêa is Research Coordinator for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights at Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (Brazil); Richard Parker is Professor of Sociomedical Sciences and Director of the Center for Gender, Sexuality and Health at Columbia University (USA); and Rosalind Petchesky is distinguished Professor of Political Science at Hunter College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York (USA). In addition, all share a commitment to, and have leadership roles in, the global forum, Sexuality Policy Watch (SPW), which consists of researchers and political activists from around the world who seek to strengthen sexual health and rights through policy-oriented research and analysis. Of central importance to SPW – and in many ways also hallmarks of Sexuality, Health and Human Rights – are protecting sexual diversity and freedom, understanding sexuality and the body through the lens of political economy, and building transnational and multisectoral alliances.

At the New York City event, the authors invited a panel of three guest speakers to introduce *Sexuality, Health and Human Rights* and draw attention to its major contributions and challenges. Rafael de la Dehesa, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work at CUNY, College of Staten Island, commended the authors for effectively straddling the divide between academia and activism, for detailing the impacts of global capitalism, the “war on terror,” UN agencies and human rights regimes on local and national settings, and for analyzing secularism and religious conservatism from the same critical perspective. De la Dehesa also raised interesting questions about the authors’ ambivalent position with regard to secular politics: should an understanding of religions as complex and diverse mean dismissing a commitment to secularism?



Ananya Mukherjea, Assistant Professor of Women’s Studies and Sociology also at CUNY’s College of Staten Island, noted the author’s healthy skepticism toward the emerging conceptual framework of sexual rights at the same time as they embrace its aspirations. Mukherjea also commended their skillful theorizing of desire and motivation, which have, of late, often been diluted or obscured in sexuality studies and policy platforms in the wake of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In particular, she found the critique of human rights groups that remain silent on issues of sexuality, and of the recent trends toward re-medicalizing HIV/AIDS, to be especially illuminating and important contributions to related bodies of literature and approaches to advocacy.

A third colleague, Nomvuyo Z.T. Nolutshungu, Doctoral candidate in Political Science at CUNY’s Graduate Center who is writing a dissertation on transitional justice and human rights, was grateful for the authors’ treatment of human rights as insufficient yet indispensable, and their vision of how human rights policies could be improved. She was especially taken by their recommendations that sexual rights be individually relational rather than universal, necessarily transformative of boundaries of inclusion/exclusion, and expanded and made locally, as well as globally relevant through broad coalitions of diverse social movements.

Some 100 people attended the launching. The authors thank the following sponsors for their support: the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies and the Program in Political Science at the CUNY Graduate Center; the Women and Gender Studies Program and the Political Science Departments at Hunter College; and the secretariats of Sexuality Policy Watch at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health and at ABIA in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. ■

\* Article by Nancy Worthington. Online: [http://www.sxpolitics.org/mambo452/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=184](http://www.sxpolitics.org/mambo452/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=184).



## Looking Back

**Message from Bene Madunagu  
Former DAWN General Coordinator**

I would like to acknowledge Peggy Antrobus who first inspired me in 1986 to join DAWN. I met Peggy in Ibadan, Nigeria in 1986 and listened to her presentation, at the end of which I filled out a form to become a member of the DAWN team. For me this is very significant being that I joined DAWN when DAWN visited Nigeria and I am leaving DAWN as the DAWN secretariat leaves Nigeria.

Secondly, permit me to give tribute to Peggy, Gita, Sonia the first of the DAWN women I met who deeply inspired me and all the DAWN women and associates the SC members, Research Coordinators, Regional coordinators (past and present), as well as my African DAWN sisters (past and present) and the secretariat support team from Barbados to Fiji to Nigeria. I have benefited a lot from the generosity of the sharing of knowledge, skills, information and sisterhood in my 22 years in DAWN.

Again, I sincerely thank all of you and I wish DAWN new inspirations and new activism in this global conjuncture that poses new challenges to the feminist agenda. And to Gigi, I wish you a very successful term as the new DAWN General Coordinator. I am happy that you are very much poised to lead DAWN into this new era as you envision it. Best wishes.

Bene Madunagu  
Former General Coordinator, DAWN



**New DAWN General Coordinator Gigi Francisco accepts the DAWN Seal from Former General Coordinator Bene Madunagu**

## Moving On

**Message from Gigi Francisco  
New DAWN General Coordinator**

Thank you for welcoming me as new DAWN General Coordinator. In the past four years, Bene Madunagu has been the General Coordinator when DAWN was able to do many things in analysis, training and advocacy. We are very grateful to Bene for holding the reins during this period and to African feminists for having supported the DAWN secretariat in Calabar.

We move forward with the implementation of our strategic plan with a number of new activities and engagements about which we are all very excited. We will make sure that we are able to reach out to you and to work with you in this phase. Our times are highly challenging and uncertain; we especially think of feminists from the South and North whose important work is being adversely affected by the impact of the global financial crisis.

The DAWN secretariat is presently operating from Manila where it has been embraced by feminist friends in Southeast Asia and ably staffed by Anna Dinglasan in Program and Coordination; Sarah Domingo in Information and Communications; and Remy Gamboa in Finance Administration. We look to continued collaboration, interaction, joint work, and mutual learning. Thank you for being with us on our journey thus far. We are with you now and in the future.

Gigi Francisco  
General Coordinator, DAWN



**DAWN Secretariat: Past and Present**

## Victory for Gender Equality / P5

gender equality, among others, had to fight for its own legitimate place in global economic governance during the negotiations in Doha. Women remain disturbed by a global division of labor that increasingly undermines its primacy in comprehensively addressing macroeconomic, financial and systemic issues that make development elusive for many developing countries and poor peoples.

During the negotiations, it became clear that resolving external debt issues and promoting debt sustainability had to be left to existing debt workout mechanisms within the Bretton Woods Institutions and this is reflected very clearly in Paragraphs 64 and 67. Although there is some breakthrough in increasing the predictability of aid through commitments on “rolling indicative timetables (paragraph 43; also paragraph 46)”, the OECD-DAC and its Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness defines the principles and standards for official development assistance. Under the theme of international trade, negotiations centered on the successful resolution of discussions in the WTO and strengthening the aid-for-trade framework.

## Do We Really Have / P6

Do we really have a feminist family? During our preparation, we had an interesting discussion on how we, as feminists, have created our own notions of the family in terms of the issues within (power, resources, gender etc.) and the visions for the “feminist family” (equality etc.). We looked at how these notions have built or broken down the values, norms, and ideas of the societal (conventional, hetero-normal) family. We were then able to deconstruct the ideas of marriage, polygamy, singlehood, love and other forms of relationship that constitute in one way or another the family. Guided by our individual experiences, we reflected on how these concepts have been viewed by fundamentalists and what we, as feminists, have done in challenging and changing these views by communicating our ideas to others beginning with our own families.

From our unique circumstances, we were able to pull together the similarities and differences in the notions of the family. Our research showed that both Fiji and Jamaica have been viewed as patriarchal societies because of the thought that women are the head of the households. However, in both contexts, this was not the reality. We have realised that in Fiji, women have no say in land inheritance, nor are they able to make major decisions. The Jamaican society, on the other hand, is viewed as patriarchal only because many of its households consist mainly of single mothers. It was therefore concluded that because in both situations, men still make

Moreover, the rush to find solutions to the global financial meltdown produced an exclusionary process exemplified by the G20 Summit in Washington, DC. The result pre-empted the FFD Review Conference limiting the policy options and actions that could have been considered to correct long-term systemic imbalances. The opposition mainly came from the G-20 whose member countries from the South promoted a progressive rhetoric but behaved differently in the negotiations.

The upcoming UN conference on the world financial and economic crisis and its impact on development to be organized by the President of the General Assembly provides an excellent opportunity to carry forward new commitments to gender equality. Women’s groups need to strengthen the linkages between gender equality and the policies and reforms to restructure global economic governance systems, processes and mechanisms through concrete proposals on applying gender analysis to the technical issues in financing for development in order to avoid the obstacles so far experienced in programming and financing, as well as the obfuscation in institutional responsibilities. ■

the final decisions, both countries are indeed patriarchal societies. In the case of India, Brazil, and Jamaica, we have seen the presence of homosexual families. Although in Brazil, the act of homosexuality is not criminalized, as in Jamaica and India; homosexual families in all three countries still suffer from discrimination. Through these comparisons, we began contemplating whether or not our efforts to communicate as feminists have been inadequate (unintentionally). Has feminism transformed the notion of the family in inclusive feminist ways?

At the forum, the group leaders shared how their members viewed given scenarios based on their actual experiences. All the participants condemned laws prohibiting a woman to divorce her husband unless she can prove that he is psychologically incapacitated and that such incapacity has existed prior to marriage. Everyone shared similar views on lesbian unions and parenting, which have been said to be affected by issues of legality, prejudice and discrimination. In some contexts, on the other hand, the idea of a woman and a man having a family but not living together physically was seen as negative if the woman is incapable of deciding whether she wants this or not. The same view was expressed in circumstances where heading the household was forced upon women. In contrast, however, while many contested the male ability and practice of marrying or

◀ [Do We Really Have / P11](#)

## Follow the Money / P 7

climate change. So we need more women to actively participate. All developing countries are obliged to submit National Communications. These reports, submitted to UNFCCC within three years of ratifying the Convention, outlines the steps countries are taking, or envisage undertaking, to implement the Convention. To date, 134 countries have submitted their first communication but only 9 have followed up with a second communication. So look out for the process in your country. Find out which government department is driving this process. It could be the Ministry of Environment (most often), the Ministry of Physical Development and Environment (for example in Barbados), the Ministry of Water Resources (for example in Ethiopia) or the National Environment Commissions (many). Check out the UNFCCC website for your countries National Communication and do the gender analysis.

Furthermore, for 49 Less Developed Countries, there are still opportunities to participate in your National Adaptation Programmed of Action (NAPAs). These participatory action plans are designed to provide a process for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to identify priority activities that respond to their **urgent** and **immediate** needs to adapt to climate change – those for which further delay would increase vulnerability and/or costs at a later stage. More women need to contribute to their countries' NAPAs.

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## Do We Really Have / P10

having sexual relations with his wife's sister, this was said to remain as the norm in some societies.

At the core of communication is the understanding of why and how fear and resentment begin. The forum has shed light on the need to sensitively yet powerfully resolve and overcome these fears and resentments expressed by our own feminist sisters who might believe that that the feminist notion of the family is exclusive. We understand that in order to transform the family in inclusive feminist ways, we must continue the debate. Most voices are left unheard, and ideals and ideologies have yet to be deconstructed. We wish to continue the discussion as we have realized, which has been 'cemented' at the AWID forum. From our interaction with the participants, we have learned that the ideals, issues, norms and notions of the family need to be taken up in a joint effort and guided by our own unique actual experiences. We, therefore, as a group, have taken the decision to continue our discussions around the topic of the 'feminist family'. ■

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Participating in country-based planning and reporting processes, allows for possibilities for continued involvement at regional and international discussions that involve financing climate change. In this respect, it is not too late!

**Finally ...** Women were at the forefront of global efforts that saw the introduction of sustainable development. But many of us took our eye off the ball in the 1990's only to now find that engaging in the debates require familiarity with new technical scientific and policy language. But we have been there before – think of the WTO – and we can get up to speed on this as well. The Bali Road Map – especially the Ad Hoc Group Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA), provides a way to engage via your country delegations – but do it now.

At the end of the recently concluded climate change negotiations in Poland, all eyes now turn to the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (7 - 18 December 2009). But to be effective we need to engage in the major UNFCCC gatherings that will take place in 2009. Of particular significance will be introducing the need to take into account women as active participants in development. Discussions related to the commitments of developed countries, the financial support required and the institutions that will deliver that support as part of the Copenhagen outcome, will remain indifferent to women unless we say otherwise. ■

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## Global Feminist / P 7

transferred leadership to South feminists and... their agenda had increasingly become South/ East-led as they intensified their international reach...

Yes, the South standpoint-viewpoint is swimming in contradictions and counter-factual tending to support a view of its irrelevance or redundancy. I do not think so. The South is alive. It is a legacy of and continues to be fed by an international political economy and power relations that divide rich countries/ economies of the North and poorer or not-so poor countries/ economies of the South. Peoples in the South are struggling to dismantle old forms of inequalities and subordination arising from colonialism and neo-colonialism, even as we confront newer forms of power imbalances, asymmetries, exclusions and deprivations in the processes of neoliberal globalisation. ■

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Source: *We!* Newsletter of Isis Manila, 05 January 2009. Other speakers were Sylvia Estrada-Claudio of WGNRR, Tesa de Vela of ISIS International, and Mira Ofreneo of ILGA, with Cai Yiping, ISIS International Executive Director moderating.

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