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P 5-13, 1994

## EDITORIAL

# New Approaches v. Old Dogmas

The issues at the up-coming United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) go far beyond those of contraceptives, abortion, population control or even reproductive health. Our report on PrepCom III (see page 3) shows clearly that at stake is nothing less than women's rights and the quality of women's lives. The most fundamental aspect of women's struggles - our right to bodily integrity - is being undermined by a small group of states directed by the Vatican, and the majority of governments appear to offer little resistance to this tyranny of the minority.

In this situation the women's movement acted as a powerful force - the only one to challenge the hegemony of the Vatican at the PrepCom and beyond. Why is it that women's interests have become the target of these fundamentalist forces? Over the past 10 years the women's movement has emerged as arguably the most significant movement to speak out on issues of social and economic justice. It is the women's movement that has challenged the hegemony of institutions like the church which claim to speak for human rights and justice, while taking positions that deny these basic rights to the majority of the world's population. And, it is a constituency of women's organizations that has developed the new framework on population and development through an exhaustive and careful process of research and consultation.

The Vatican and its supporters have sought to portray the new approach to population as individualistic, dangerous, unethical and focussed on the single issue of abortion (see page 5). But the fact is that the new framework is far more comprehensive, inclusive, holistic and ethical than the previous one, which merely focussed on family planning and fertility control.

The new framework of 'rights, health and empowerment', speaks to the indivisibility of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights and the link between these and women's access to economic resources, livelihood and social services. It identifies abortion as a public health issue and recommends comprehensive reproductive health services including counselling, screening and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and reproductive tract infections, and anti- and post-natal care. It also calls for increased funding to programmes aimed at reducing the health hazards associated with clandestine abortion, and for research and accountability mechanisms to ensure that women's health and lives are not placed in jeopardy by programmes which are insensitive to their needs.

When the draft Plan of Action was debated at PrepCom III,

almost all references to the new framework were bracketed and these are the sections of text that the Vatican and its supporters are seeking to have removed under the guise that their inclusion makes the document 'unethical'. But, as the Chairperson of PrepCom-III pointed out, the whole document is about ethics! Indeed, the Round Table on Ethics sponsored by the Columbia University Department of International Law (New York, March 1994), and attended by a number of feminists, was one of the highlights of the several informal consultations initiated by the UN Secretariat.

And, what of the Vatican's claim that the new approach has been imposed by an imperialist feminist ideology from the North? In truth, it is thanks largely to the efforts of women of the South and women of colour of the North, that feminism in the 1990s stands not for individualism but for relationships, not for selfishness but for solidarity. The feminism reflected in the draft document is about a deep concern for the lives and well-being of people, especially 'the poorest of the poor, the most powerless of the powerless'. It is a feminism which finds its roots not in New York or Toronto, London or Paris, but in the experiences of the most marginalized sectors of our societies - in the slums of Calcutta and the barrios of Brazil, in the maquiladoras of Mexico, in the brothels of Bangkok, and in the toxic dumps of Manila - and in women's research centres and organizations throughout the South.

DAWN has contributed significantly to the analysis which has led to the emergence of this new framework (see pages 6, 7 & 11). This analysis examines reproductive rights and health, population and development in a more structural, more holistic and more political way. It emphasizes the link between increasing poverty, macro-economic policies of structural adjustment, decreasing public investment in social services and the deterioration in health, education, welfare and human well-being everywhere.

Women must continue to stand united, as they were at PrepCom III, to resist these attempts to send them back into the kitchens - barefoot, illiterate and pregnant - so that the forces of oppression can continue unchallenged.

We must not be silenced by the name-calling and the slurs to our character.

We must continue to assert our claims as responsible, relational and rational human beings seeking a more just and humane world for ourselves, our children, our families, our communities, our countries, our world.



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# Steering Committee Updates

Annual Meeting & Latin America Regional Meeting  
(Chile, May 16-22, 1994)

The Annual meeting of the DAWN Steering Committee took place in Santiago, Chile, immediately before the Latin America meeting on alternative economic frameworks. Present were: DAWN Founder, Devaki Jain (India); DAWN General Coordinator, Peggy Antrobus (Barbados); Regional Coordinators, Sonia Cuales (Curacao), Neuma Aguiar (Brazil), and Hameeda Hossain (Bangladesh); Research Coordinators, Gita Sen (India) and Sonia Correa (Brazil); and Audrey Roberts (Barbados). Absent were Regional Coordinators, Noeleen Heyzer (Malaysia), Claire Slatter (Fiji), Bolanle Awe (Nigeria) and Srilatha Batliwala (India).

The crowded agenda included regional reports; the Ford Foundation evaluation report commissioned in 1992; ways of strengthening the work at regional level; a review of the platform document for Cairo (see pages 6,7 and 11); DAWN's participation in the preparatory processes leading up to ICPD (see pages 3 and 6 for full reports), the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, as well as plans for other regional meetings.

## Meetings

### Social Development Summit

DAWN plans the following related activities:

● Two panels during PrepCom II (New York, August 22-Sep 2, 1994) on *Engendering the Social Development Summit (August 23)*, and *Families and Social Development: Children in Crisis (August 25)*.

● A series of pre-PrepCom meetings aimed at bringing together a core team to work towards the activities surrounding the Summit. These will include:

- ✓ A two-day meeting of DAWN members and South NGOs on the Summit themes of the Summit, from which regional perspectives will be extracted and then presented.
- ✓ Two meetings with DAWN's North partners - WIDE (Women in Development Europe), Alt-WID (Alternative Women in Development), SID-WID (the Women's Programme of the Society for International Development), CRIAW (the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, and WEDO (Women, Environment, and Development Organization) - in order to strategize and plan for collaboration in the process leading up to the Summit.
- ✓ A dialogue with G77 representatives to PrepCom II.
- ✓ A special Summit issue of *DAWN Informs*.

### The Conference on Women

● Concern was expressed about the conference preparations being isolated from those of other international conferences. It was agreed that DAWN should highlight the need for an analysis of the global context within which the conference is taking place and produce material to fill the gap. Gita and Sonia Correa have since produced a two-page 'challenge' which has been circulated via *Keeping Informed* and *Womanet*. Peggy has also prepared a paper on the global context which was presented at the DAWN/CAFRA meeting prior to the sub-regional ICPD Preparatory Conference for the Caribbean (Curacao, June 27-29).

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# A New Geography?

*Sonia Correa, DAWN Research Coordinator, reports on the latest debate in the lead-up to Cairo, and predicts difficult negotiations and a possible impasse.*

## The Vatican's 'Amplified Obstruction'

The April 1994 PrepCom III debates were marked by stepped up efforts on the part of the Vatican and its allies to obstruct the concept of reproductive rights. In its very first plenary intervention the Vatican flatly refuted the concept, saying it was a new justification for population control and calling it 'egotistical' and 'individualistic'. Ignoring the fundamental debate on the inequalities of global development, the delegation suggested the draft document being debated lacked a 'minimum ethical basis' - an affirmation that provoked an immediate and irritated reaction from the Session President, Dr. Fred Sai.

In summary, the Holy See did not limit itself to rejecting abortion, but questioned the entire new conceptual framework. Its position was supported by a small but extremely vocal group of countries: Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, which initially spoke for Central America; Ecuador, Argentina, Venezuela, Malta, Cameroon, Benin and the Philippines at the meeting's outset. (In the case of the Latin American countries, the position was in open contravention of the Mexico Consensus.)

However, over the weeks as the debate progressed, this pro-Vatican group suffered some defections. El Salvador and Panama began to present a different position and Venezuela ceased its intervention altogether, while the arrival of the Manila group led to a radical shift in the Philippines delegation.

Nonetheless the pro-Vatican forces were able to systematically have enclosed in brackets, any term that might relate to health and reproductive rights, including those previously approved and adopted by international conferences and by the World Health Organization. The list includes 'sexual and reproductive health', 'reproductive

rights', 'fertility', 'regulation', 'safe maternity', and even 'family planning'. Their argument was that 'abortion' might be implicit in any of these terms. (Bella Abzug showed the absurdity of this notion when she remarked ironically in one of her daily *Earth Times* articles that if this logic were maintained, 'pregnancy' and 'women' should also be enclosed in brackets!)

The demand to enclose 'family planning' in brackets caused particular annoyance and irritation among delegations and family planners since the term had been negotiated with the Vatican in 1974. The Vatican was disgruntled about the use of this term in the Cairo document as part of sexual and reproductive health programmes, which it opposes as a whole.

Its reaction to the reproductive themes are extended to 'individual rights', the 'autonomy of adolescents' and, of course, to the use of the plural term 'families'. Even the word 'condom' was kept in brackets until the last minute, when the Holy See was willing to back down - provided there was also a reference to 'abstinence'.

The net result of the Vatican's obstruction? The draft Plan of Action to be approved in Cairo is pervaded by brackets, especially in chapters VII and VIII which deal directly with reproductive related issues.

## The South States: A Qualitative Leap

This should not, however, be viewed as a Vatican victory but rather as an expression of a position under siege. Unlike the situation at the Conference on the Environment (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and at PrepCom II (New York, May 1993), North/South differences on reproductive rights are being rapidly overcome thereby reducing space for Vatican manoeuvring to benefit its own agenda.

Two distinct developments have

helped to bring this about. At the official level, the Group of 77 Nations (G77) has decided to emphasize economic issues in Cairo, with the focus on those chapters in the draft Action Plan which deal with development, funding and monitoring mechanisms, and resource allocation.

This will make it possible to avoid differences stemming from gaps in national positions on reproductive issues - such as those between India and Argentina - freeing delegations to assume individual stances. However, the shift mainly results from the consistent and efficient work of the women's movement in influencing official positions at the national level.

During the three weeks of negotiation and debate, numerous developing countries challenged the Vatican. This was not surprising coming from Asian nations like India, China, Bangladesh and Nepal, which implement demographic policies and have no reason to submit to Catholic values. But this is not necessarily true of the Pacific islands or of African countries such as Malawi, Botswana and Zimbabwe. In the same context, the support from more lay-oriented Islamic governments, such as Turkey and Tunisia, was very important.

Of most significance were the shifts in the Latin American countries. Peru, Brazil and Mexico would have nothing to do with the Vatican's strategy of on-going obstruction. On the contrary, these delegations, which included feminists and had been directly influenced by national debates, were positive and vocal in supporting the new perspectives. The same was true for the Philippines delegation. It goes without saying that these delegations have been and will continue to be pressured by the Holy See.

This qualitative leap on the part of the South countries meant more than mere resistance to the Vatican. The wording of the Action Plan as a whole, was

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improved thanks to the support of friendly delegations from both South and North. For each bracket the Vatican and its shock troops proposed, a new concept was introduced. For example, the term 'sexual' was added to the previous reproductive health and rights formulation; and the right to physical integrity and personal security was incorporated into the final document which strengthened the formulation that guarantees the right of individuals and couples to decide on the number of children they wish to have.

### The 'Silent Controlistas'

During PrepCom III although there was clear tension between feminists and 'controlistas' or family planners, expressed in both battles over wording and in the many informal Women's Caucus discussions, it was surprisingly low-key. The population establishment maintained a discreet presence and when they spoke, they did so in politically correct language.

Three factors have contributed to this political shift. Since 1993, dialogue between the two camps has deepened. In particular, the links established with women directly involved in providing family planning services in South countries proved positive. They collaborated wholeheartedly with feminists and most of them had fully incorporated the critique of structural adjustment programmes and of global inequalities. Secondly, the family planners have not traditionally faced the conservative forces openly and radically as the women's movement has been doing. So, in PrepCom III, to the extent that feminists led the debate, it was impossible for the 'controlistas' to disqualify them. In addition, the impact on these sectors of the open support given by the US government and other donor countries to the broader feminist perspective has to be taken into account.

But, while this conflict was low-key in the PrepCom, it did not vanish. Hints of it were brought out in a *New York Times* front page article of April 13. In this analysis of PrepCom III, which compared the two positions, well-known defenders of population control charged feminists with lack of political realism in attempting to put forward a Cairo document which was committed to broader health programmes, in the context of increasingly scarce

international resources.

The approach of the 'controlistas' also remained intact in some sections of the draft Action Plan, including Chapter VIII on Structure and Demographic Growth, where objectives and actions were formulated in strictly demographic terms, and Chapter XI dealing with Information, Education and Communication, where the same tone dominated.

The old conventional approach was most notably in Chapter XIII on Resource Allocation. When estimating the budget to implement the Action Plan, the Secretariat only included unmet contraceptive needs, projecting the expenses to the year 2010 and adding small amounts of extra funding for reproductive health. This estimation was questioned by the European Union, the United States, the Nordic countries and the G77 as going against the objectives and action of the plan. The section was then rewritten and in the final version total funding was increased and allocation altered in favour of the area of sexual and reproductive health. However, since the structure of the proposed budget was not radically changed, the dispute will not end in Cairo. The challenge to the women's movement, therefore, will be to utilize the Action Plan as a guideline to set priorities that guarantee adequate investments at regional and national levels.

In the final analysis, while the Vatican may feel it can celebrate a temporary victory in PrepCom III, the same cannot be said of the population establishment, since it is obviously no longer the dominant influence on the process. In these circumstances, hard line 'controlistas' may be tempted to resort to insidious maneuvers - including bargaining with the Holy See to overturn the new approaches in favour of the old conventional formulations. Given these risks, careful monitoring of the political machinations of the population establishment will be necessary prior to and during the Cairo meeting.

### Are We Addressing Development Issues?

One other area illuminated by PrepCom III was the notion that South feminists have ceased to question global conditions of development and in so doing have become prisoners of the

prevailing logic in the population camp. This criticism, which became widespread in 1993, stems from the decision by several women's organizations to prioritize the reproductive health and rights approach in the processes leading up to Cairo.

In the research and action carried out by the women's movement since 1992, particularly in South countries, the debate on health and reproductive rights has always been linked to the broader perspective of sustainable human development. This approach is set out quite clearly in the final document of the Conference on Reproductive Health and Justice. In addition, several international networks involved in the process have consistently pointed out that the debate will not end in Cairo but continue through to the Social Development Summit and the Fourth World Conference on Women next year.

At PrepCom III, the Women's Caucus proposed amendments, negotiated and carefully monitored all sessions related to the macro issues. Much of the 'progressive' wording on development was introduced to the draft Action Plan by direct influence of the Caucus or through the women's NGOs. In particular, the work of the Caucus had a direct impact on enhancing relationships between NGOs and governments.

The first draft of the Plan restricted the role of NGOs to implementation activities, and during debates, several delegations - including China, India, Iran and some of the African nations - strongly opposed the recognition of NGOs as autonomous partners. However, the final document reasserts the important need for NGOs to contribute to the design, implementation and monitoring of proposed actions.

Caucus monitoring also assisted the process of reformulating important shifts in the global context of the debate. In this way, it was possible to overcome US opposition to the inclusion of the issue of consumption in developed countries, and an impasse over the section dealing with the correlation between population and environment in Chapter III on Sustainable Development.

Perhaps these and other efforts would have been more successful if the atmosphere of the PrepCom had not been so contaminated by the tactics of the Vatican. In addition to the bracketed sections on reproductive health and rights, many other issues remained



unresolved. For example, the principle of human rights as a reference for monitoring the Plan was opposed by China; and the premises of good government, democracy and the fight against corruption which the Europeans defended was bracketed by the G77, leading to retaliation from the Europeans who opposed a paragraph committing the developed countries to maintaining current levels of development funding.

The issue of international migration, which had been deemed potentially explosive, did not prove greatly controversial. The two reading sessions were substantive and difficult, but in the final document the only bracket refers to the 'right to family reunification'. Turkey defended this position while the US and the European Union were against.

The April debates have established a new geography for the conflicts. The North/South gap has narrowed in some aspects, but remains frozen in others. Simultaneously, new zones of tensions are becoming more evident, among them

the Chinese bid to become, as quickly as possible, the new world power. The open conflict between the G77 countries and the new Eastern European bloc of so-called 'transition economies', is another area of tension to be noted.

### From New York to Cairo: Challenges and Tasks

Contrary to the predictions of a few months ago, ICPD will not be a formal conference designed to approve documents already agreed on, but rather a forum characterized by difficult negotiations that are subject to impasse. What are the challenges and the tasks for women worldwide?

- As the process nears culmination in Cairo, many bilateral and multilateral negotiations will be taking place. All these activities will have to be monitored, critically analyzed, and rapidly disseminated.
- Circulate and endorse the document,

*Hear Our Voices*, produced by women's NGOs at PrepCom III (see page 10), as a strategy for reducing the impact of the Vatican's tactics of obstruction.

- Increase awareness of the areas of reservation and impasse in the draft Action Plan, most particularly those referring to democracy and resource allocation.
- At the national level, support allied state positions and strive to ensure the broadest composition of official delegations to Cairo.

For the women's movement and NGOs, the final stage of negotiation from now until September has many implications. Among them, the certainty that it is impossible to abandon the approach that has brought us so far, for it both guarantees commitment to the work of the past decade and shows the way that will take us to Copenhagen and Beijing.

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## Vatican Fights UN Draft On Women's Rights

*The Vatican's position prior to, during, and after PrepCom III was outlined in a New York Times International lead article by Alan Cowell on June 15, 1994. Extracts follow:*

**Rome, June 14:** The cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church voted today to oppose what they portrayed as a pervasive feminist influence at a forthcoming United Nations population conference, saying measures on abortion and women's rights sponsored by the United States reflected "cultural imperialism."

An extraordinary gathering of 114 of the 139 cardinals warned that the measures would legitimize "abortion on demand, sexual promiscuity and distorted notions of the family."

In recent months, the Vatican has begun a campaign in countries that will send delegates to Cairo for the September talks, and Pope John Paul II has denounced the measures.

The cardinals' unanimous vote today, in response to an appeal by John Cardinal O'Connor of New York, further defined the battle-lines.

The Vatican disputes the suggestion by conference organizers that the proposals would elevate the standing of women (saying) the church prefers to promote its own concept of women as deserving equality and special respect, within the context of church tradition.

"This conference could be of enormous

value to all peoples of the world if it focuses on the family - the family, that is, in the traditional and natural sense of the word," Cardinal O'Connor said.

### An Eye On the Americans

The Vatican's choice of the New York Cardinal to sound the alarm apparently reflected the view that much of the language that the church finds offensive comes from American feminists. In specific terms, the Vatican fears that some draft language will weaken the family as society's most basic social and moral arbiter, lead to abortion on demand and spread access to contraception, all in direct contravention to church dogma.

### Focus on Abortion

"We have no quarrel with the Vatican," said Timothy E. Wirth, the State Department Counselor. "Our purpose is to create as strong a program as possible to focus on the issue of population stabilization and on the issue of women... We do not believe that a woman should be coerced to have an abortion or coerced to have a child."

The draft plan mentions abortion

specifically only in a chapter about the public health problems of unsafe abortions, which kill an estimated 250,000 women a year.

Several population groups said that far from being an American cause, the emphasis on women's rights reflected the concerns of women in developing countries who have been victims of forced sterilization or who have had more children than they wanted because they were subservient to men, had little formal schooling or had no access to contraception.

### Response From Supporters

"The agenda of this document is far broader than in the past," said Joan Dunlop, president of the International Women's Health Coalition, a private group that works with women in developing countries. "The Vatican's inflammatory language is a smoke screen; they are threatened by women having a say in their own lives."

Sally Ethelston, a spokeswoman for Population Action International, another private population group, said: "Women should not die or suffer irreparable physical harm as a result of unsafe abortions because of a group of 114 celibate men."



## The Dawn Framework

DAWN views reproductive health as inextricably intertwined with women's human rights. Therefore, DAWN's framework for women's reproductive rights and health incorporates attention to women's economically productive and cultural roles in addition to their biological reproductive functions. And in the biological context, DAWN's definition of reproductive health services includes not only access to contraceptive information and methods and legal abortion, but also STD and cancer prevention, pre-natal care and mental health services, all within the context of comprehensive preventative health services.

A further element of the DAWN perspective on reproductive health is respect for traditional health knowledge, much of which is gradually being destroyed by imposed medical technologies.

DAWN's comprehensive reproductive rights and health policy would guarantee women access to housing, education, employment, property rights and legal equality in all spheres. It would also secure women's freedom from physical abuse, harassment, genital mutilation and all forms of gender-based violence.

Our insistence upon a holistic analysis reveals DAWN's bias toward comprehensive health services as a key component of our proposal for social policies and infrastructure designed to meet people's (especially women's) basic needs. In Southern countries, DAWN recognizes an alarming trend away from state responsibility for basic needs, in which market forces are increasingly employed to mobilize and distribute health resources that should be widely available to the public. Based on structural adjustment policies, this tendency toward privatizing the health sector isolates it from other basic services (which, in many cases, are also being privatized), and limits even further poor women's access to health care.

## The DAWN Panels: ICPD NGO Forum

### ● Sexual/Reproductive Rights & Population: DAWN's Platform

**Date:** Monday, September 5  
**Time:** 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.  
**Chair:** Gita Sen (India)  
**Panel:** Sonia Correa (Brazil) - The DAWN Framework  
 Vanita Mukherjee (Malaysia) - Population Policies;  
 Nancy Palomino (Peru) - Strategies;  
 Patricia McFadden (Zimbabwe) - Sexual & Reproductive Rights/Health

### ● Women Without A Voice

**Date:** Tuesday, September 6  
**Time:** 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.  
**Chair:** Carol Narcisse (Jamaica)  
**Panel:** Clorinde Zephir (Haiti); Yamila Azize (Puerto Rico);  
 Rebeca Cutie (Cuba); Samia Tabari (Palestine)

### ● Sexual/Reproductive Rights/Health & Racism

*(In collaboration with the National Black Women's Health Project, Atlanta)*

**Date:** Wednesday, September 7  
**Time:** 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.  
**Chair:** Audrey Roberts (Barbados)  
**Panel:** Diane Forte (USA/NBWHP); Edna Roland (Brazil);  
 Dina Nfon Priso (Cameroon); Bene Madunagu (Nigeria)

### ● Political, Social & Economic Context of Women's Health

*(In collaboration with the Center for Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers University)*

**Date:** Thursday, September 8  
**Time:** 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.  
**Chair:** Mallika Dutt (USA/CWGL)  
**Panel:** Gita Sen (India); Patricia McFadden (Zimbabwe);  
 Rhonda Copelon (USA)  
**Testimonies:** Clorinde Zephir (Haiti) - Political/Economic Framework; to be named (Burma/Thai Border) - Trafficking

## The Dawn Critique

- Demographically driven population policies that are top down and bureaucratically driven are harmful to women's health and human rights, disrespectful of women's needs, and tend to be ineffective in their own terms.
- Women's and men's health must be approached in an integrated way because there are many positive and negative synergies between general health and reproductive health. In the context of population and development analysis, this means that the population issue must be defined as the right to reproductive decision-making in the context of

secure livelihoods, meeting of basic needs, and political participation.

- There are positive relationships between health status, women's empowerment and autonomy, and fertility outcomes. This means programmes must consistently address gender systems, sexuality, private and public boundaries, design of social and health programmes, and production of technology.
- Reproductive health must be seen as women's basic right and thus an end in itself, rather than an instrument to achieve demographic targets.



### Building a Platform from Local to Global

With the finalization of the DAWN ICPD Platform, *Population and Reproductive Rights: Feminist Perspectives from the South*, a research framework involving hundreds of women worldwide has reached successful completion. And, because of its broad and democratic nature, the process will have already contributed to the development of insights that will give all those involved the cutting edge in contributions to the Cairo discourse.

Conducted over the past three years, the DAWN research project on Reproductive Rights and Population has combined ongoing field work in the form of regional workshops, with international panels, the building of linkages with global networks and the publication and dissemination of enabling literature. In this process the DAWN analysis has been used to build a bridge from the local to the global.

Some 150 women from over 50 countries of the South took part in DAWN's regional meetings in the Pacific, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. They comprised researchers, activists, population professionals and development workers, from NGOs and governments, grassroots groups, universities, and development agencies. Each brought her experiences to add richness to the DAWN critique, and at the same time each was able to review her own activities within the context of the holistic framework for development that DAWN promotes.

For the majority of the women who gathered at the DAWN regional meeting in the Pacific (Fiji, December 1-14, 1992), it was their first encounter with DAWN and the issues outlined, 'but nonetheless, participation was excellent' according to the final report. In the Asia meeting, contributions came in the form of films, testimonies representing grassroots organizations and papers on issues confronting women in Korea, Pakistan, Indonesia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, India, and the Philippines.

The Latin America discussions were marked by the active participation of women from the English-speaking Caribbean, reports on national meetings in Uruguay, Argentina, Peru and Colombia; case studies from Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and the Caribbean; and the analysis of consensual documents produced by women's NGOs.

The Caribbean meeting brought together women from all the language areas of the region - English, Dutch, Spanish and French. Participants from Nigeria, Kenya, Cameroon, South Africa, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe at the Africa meeting rated the discussions highly, expressing particular appreciation for the opportunity to exchange experiences with their counterparts in other countries.

At these meetings issue-focus varied widely. For example, the focus of the Pacific women was on militarism, colonialism, and

their effects on the environment; concerns in Asia were marked by the diverse contexts - population policies are predominantly anti-natal, but Malaysia and Singapore follow pro-natal policies and the Philippines is characterized by both depending on which government is in power, while in Vietnam anti-natal policies are in disarray because of the transition from a socialist to a market-oriented economy; a major reproductive rights issue in India is the rise of religious fundamentalism, while in Singapore it is lack of sex education.

The Latin America agenda included Human Rights, Demography, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Development which, according to the report, were seen from different yet complimentary points of view. In the Caribbean, problems ranged from teenage pregnancy, the impact of migration, abortion as a form of resistance, and sexuality as the centre of women's oppression; in Africa, themes ranged from suspicions of racism associated with population control measures, the growing impact of HIV/AIDS, the diversity of the African family, and the impact of war.

What emerged was the level of cultural and political diversity in the area of reproductive rights/health and population, and therefore the need for revision and clarification of traditional concepts. Participants also proposed and assisted with various follow-up actions, such as identification of areas that needed additional information and researchers to assist the process, and production, translation and dissemination of the numerous papers presented.

Lobbying efforts coming out of the meetings included a letter to ICPD president and director of UNFPA, Dr Nafis Sadik, calling on her to ensure the continued and full participation of the women's health movement in the preparatory process and in Cairo itself. Media coverage of the events impacted on national mobilization efforts and highlighted DAWN and its activities.

For the DAWN network, the process of building the Platform for ICPD has strengthened its regional bases and produced fruitful partnerships with several global networks active in the area of population: the Global Network on Reproductive Rights, the Latin American Women's Health Network (ISIS), the Hunter College Reproductive Rights Research Programme, the Brazil National Reproductive Rights Network, PRODIR/Findacao Carlos Chagas, the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, WEMOS, and ISS/Den Hague.

All these developments auger well for Cairo but also for the important strategizing efforts that will be required post-Cairo on the road to Copenhagen and Beijing.



- DAWN will organize panels focussed on structural adjustment policies and alternative economic frameworks at the Regional NGO Forum for Latin America and the Caribbean (Argentina, September 19-23), at the request of **Gina Vargas**, regional NGO coordinator.
- DAWN's Africa Regional Meeting is planned for Dakar, Senegal, in November prior to the Regional Preparatory Conference being organized by the Economic Commission for Africa. DAWN plans two panels, on alternative economic frameworks and reproductive rights and health.
- DAWN's Platform will review changes in the global political economy since 1985, and critique the institutions established to manage the world economic system. It will address ways in which the emerging global division of labour is transforming production and reproduction; emerging hierarchies in reproduction and what this means for women; gender relations, and environmental health. It's main message: the aim of development strategies must be to release the energies and creativity of all people. In terms of the way forward, the platform will argue that the complexity of current problems calls for a three-pronged approach: challenging the market, transforming the state, and building the institutions and practices of a genuine civil society.
- In conjunction with the platform document, DAWN also plans a series of edited volumes on key themes, including: Transformations in Global Production and Reproduction; Critiques of Regional and Other Documents; States, Markets and NGOs; From the Micro to the Macro: Feminist Economic Alternatives.

### STRENGTHENING DAWN AT REGIONAL LEVELS

This is a major challenge for the future. Regional Coordinators are to develop work plans around three themes: analysis, advocacy and networking.

### THE LATIN AMERICA REGIONAL MEETING

Despite organizational problems, the Latin America meeting was rich in its analysis of issues facing the region. It also pinpointed follow-up actions which will contribute to DAWN's organizing efforts for the 1995 conferences and to the platform for Beijing.

#### *Latin America's New Regional Focal Point*

**Flora Tristan** (Peru) is the new regional focal point for DAWN in Latin America. The choice of **Gina Vargas**, Flora Tristan's head, as the coordinator for regional NGO activities toward Beijing, should help to ensure the closest coordination between DAWN's activities and those of the larger NGO community. Participants expressed appreciation to out-going Coordinator for Latin America, **Neuma Aguiar**, for her contribution to the DAWN work in the region from the inception of the network. Neuma was the first General Coordinator of DAWN from 1986 to 1990.

## What Happened to Development?

UNESCO International Symposium June 18-19, 1994, Paris

Some 50 women took part in this forum, which was called by **President Mitterand** and by the **Director General of UNESCO, Dr. Federico Mayor** as a sounding board in his preparations for the Social Development Summit. Participants gave him plenty to think about.

They deplored the kind of activities being sold as 'development' and called for an end to the Bretton Woods institutions. Structural adjustment programmes were condemned for driving countries away from democracy and towards fascism since they encourage collusion between state and private sector corporations and strengthen bureaucracy. The result? Repressive measures being used to control inevitable upsurges of discontent and distress arising from inequality and reduced basic needs. Hence the need for political restructuring; the democratization of development expressed in the shift of power; access to resources, and decision-making in communities.

The potential of social and political movements to break the North-South deadlock was emphasized, since they were already building bridges with greater depth of analysis and understanding than governments. In this context, the women's movement and networks were providing the richest resource. Women's critique and experience of development, their efforts to change development through research and action, and their contribution to building solidarity, should be acknowledged as currently the most lively and insightful groundswell.

It was recommended that UNESCO shift away from merely facilitating and informing governments, to informing, responding to and facilitating people's institutions, and as a fearless critic of existing systems and approaches. In terms of the Summit, UNESCO should work towards influencing the declaration, incorporating notions such as, *Social Development is Good Economics and Removal of Economic Deprivation Requires Social Security as a Priority*.

From a report by DAWN Founder, **Devaki Jain**, who took part in the symposium.

## DAWN/SIDS Workshop

At the UN Conference on Small Island Developing States in April, DAWN organized a one day workshop on *Alternative Approaches to Population, Environmental Degradation and Sustainable Human Development*. The morning session took the form of a debate on the relationship between population size and growth and sustainable development, while the afternoon session focussed on case studies of the Dominican Republic, Mauritius and Brazil.

The workshop ended with several recommendations, including a strong call for population policies to be directed by the majority to ensure the well-being of all and to reflect harmony with people's realities. In particular, women must have the right to make choices about their reproductive health, as well as access to information and quality of care to enable them to exercise this right. In addition, the cultural norms and values of each region should inform the policies that seek to address common concerns of fertility rates and family size.

At the national level, the quality of life for the majority should be the main consideration over population size, and structural adjustment which has cut heavily into health and education, should be challenged. At the level of the individual, the issue should be about choice and control over bodily integrity.



# Population and Development: A Southern Perspective

*Gita Sen, DAWN's Research Coordinator on Alternative Economic Frameworks, examines the arguments put forward by protagonists in the population debate - and finds them silent on the crucial issues for which DAWN and signatories of the Women's Voices '94 alliance struggle.*

The population and development debate has had two overlapping historical phases: one in which the mainstream concern was the effects of population growth on the economy, and one where concern focussed on the effects on the environment.

Neo-conservative economists, neo-liberals and Reaganites argue that there is no need for concern in respect of either capital formation or the depletion of resources for development. These problems, they say, will be taken care of by the market since prices for endangered resources will rise leading to both conservation and substitution via technological change. And, to a certain extent, this does happen, especially where metals and minerals owned by corporations are involved. However, the same argument cannot be applied to resources such as forests or soils, particularly where these are the common property of poor or indigenous communities.

The standard critique from the left and the liberals, as well as from the Group of 77, has been that poverty and not population growth is the cause for resource depletion by poor communities. This critique also says the North is overwhelmingly responsible for both resource depletion and environmental degradation worldwide, since northern lifestyles account for consumption of most of the world's resources.

At this stage, however, G77 and the mainstream environmentalists part company. The argument from G77 is that southern countries have a right to rapid economic growth and the northern nations have no right to impose environmental standards to which they themselves did not adhere during their early phase of industrialization. Hence countries like China and Malaysia are champions of sustained economic growth. Mainstream environmentalists believe this is a recipe for disaster both globally and locally, arguing for controls on the types of technology used and patterns of growth - in other words, sustainable development.

Progressive southern development NGOs, such as Third World Network, try to bridge this gap with the view that sustainable development can only be possible if international problems - like debt, the GATT, structural adjustment policies - are resolved in favour of the South. Eco-feminists take the position that there is a worm at the core of development, and the worm is male violence, which harms both the environment and women. This critique mixes the anti-capitalist positions of the progressive development NGOs with a type of feminism in which nature is personified as female (i.e. Mother Nature), and women are **naturalized**.

Where does DAWN stand *vis-a-vis* all of these arguments? To answer this, it is necessary to examine what is **not** being said by the protagonists.

Firstly, except for the eco-feminists, none of the arguments address the fact that population growth takes place through reproduction and that reproduction depends fundamentally on women's bodies, and gendered relations of economic, political and cultural power, as well as the sexual control of women. As a consequence, in the heat of the battle about the relative contribution of population growth to environmental or economic problems, population policy is not addressed in the context of health needs (let alone reproductive health), or gender power. And, while the progressives see sustainable development as a process that should reduce inequalities between nations, they rarely argue that it should transform the power relations between genders, or in other words reduce inequalities between male and female. While the progressives are willing to engage in the policy debate about debt, trade and sustainable livelihood, they rarely argue the need for safe and effective contraception, abortion or other reproductive health services. In short, they dichotomize reproductive and socio-economic rights.

It is this silence that DAWN uses as its starting point. We argue that sustainable development requires that all inequalities are addressed - the inequalities among nations, classes, races, and those between genders, including gender power. Yes, it is true that macro policies around debt and trade are crucial in providing either an enabling or debilitating environment for sustainable livelihood and for meeting human needs. But, the transformation of gender relations and meeting women's reproductive health needs, as well as acknowledgement of our reproductive rights, must be at the very heart of a sustainable human development agenda.

The strategies of the DAWN network with respect to the ICPD draft document and process have been:

- ✓ To pull the population debate away from the grip of the environmentalists, whether pro- or anti-. They could go on till doomsday arguing about the relationships between population growth and the environment without ever addressing women's need for reproductive health services, or acknowledging women's reproductive rights.
- ✓ To move the 'development is the best contraceptive' argument far beyond the position taken after

(cont'd on page 12)



# Together Women Speak

*The following statement has come from women who participated in the DAWN panel, Women Without Voices, on Tuesday April 12, at the ICPD PrepCom III. The women - from Jamaica, Haiti, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Palestine, Africa and the USA - spoke about situations that threaten women's reproductive rights and health in their respective countries. They ask you to join your voice with theirs in protest against national and international policies and actions that violate our human rights. Make copies, endorse it, circulate it and send it to the DAWN Secretariat, Women & Development Unit, UWI School of Continuing Studies, Pinelands, St. Michael, Barbados, WI. Together, our voices will be heard.*

We applaud the international community and the United Nations for responding to the groundswell of demands from peoples and governments around the globe by undertaking a series of international conferences and summits - Sustainable Development for Small Island States, ICPD, the Social Development Summit and the Conference on Women in Beijing - to examine the human condition within a focus of eliminating the life threatening social problems which hamper human development.

As we move towards ICPD and begin to plan for implementation of policies and programmes which are more humane and responsive to women's reproductive rights and health needs, we remain cognizant of the persistence of a global socio-economic and political system which reflects racism and is reinforced through militarism:

- Military budgets remain excessively high while allocations to basic social services continue to be cut.
- Structural adjustment programmes and debt continue to burden developing nations.
- Spiralling inflation and an ever-falling standard of living fuel the poverty trap for millions around the globe.
- Inadequate health facilities continue to undermine women's ability to meet their health needs and to realise their reproductive rights.
- The violation of women - in situations of war, civil strife, in homes and communities - persists.
- Action from international institutions which can impose sanctions for violations of international law with regard to refugees and asylum seekers, remain insufficient.
- The persistent legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism constitutes oppression.
- The inadequacy of mechanism to monitor the actions of transnational corporations and the exploitation of the world's resources for production and over-consumption on the part of affluent groups within nations and internationally, is having dramatic impact on the environment and the people.
- Limited opportunities are available for broad-based people's participation in governance, policy-making, programme design, implementation and monitoring.

These remain as daunting challenges to all who are concerned

with human welfare and dignity. We recognize that the impact of these factors is worse in some countries than in others and that women and their families bear the brunt of unsustainable development policies. We therefore wish to highlight the situation being faced by the women and people of Haiti, Cuba, Puerto Rico; People of Colour in the USA; and of Palestine, Angola, Mozambique and other African states in situations of conflict. We call for immediate, effective action by governments, non-governmental organizations, and institutions committed to policies and initiatives of mediation and change.

In the case of Cuba, we call for an end to the US unilateral embargo against a people whose government, despite economic adversity, has, and continues to, maintain programmes in health and education which place human development and gender equity at the centre of national policy.

In the case of Haiti, we call for the international community to act to end illegitimate military regimes which violently deprive the Haitian people of their democratic, political, and human rights; for the reinstatement of the freely elected head of state, President Jean Bertrand Aristide; and for action against those within and outside Haiti whose commercial and economic interests are served by the drug trafficking and supply of weapons to the military and its supporters. We call for an end to the racist and discriminatory US immigration policy and practice as applied to Haitian refugees and asylum seekers.

In the case of Puerto Rico, we call for the recognition of Puerto Rican women's voices and rights within issues of population and development since they have been objects of sterilization abuse and clinical contraceptive trials without consent; and, given the colonial status of Puerto Rico, we call on the US government to give genuine participation to Puerto Ricans in the ICPD.

In the case of Angola, Mozambique, Palestine and nations in situations of conflict, we call for action to bring about speedy and peaceful resolution of the conflicts.

At this historic moment, on the eve of the 21st century, women of the world are forming alliances, are acting in solidarity, are a force charting an alternative human-centered course of development, in which equality and peace are imperatives.

Women's voices will be heard through their signatures to this document.

This document is endorsed by:

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# The DAWN Net

## Publications

### POPULATION AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES FROM THE SOUTH by *Sonia Correa*

*in collaboration with Rebecca Reichmann*  
(forthcoming from ZED Books Ltd & Kali for Women  
in association with DAWN)

DAWN's platform for ICPD carries four chapters: The Population Debate: Challenging the 'Grand Ideologies'; Fertility Management Policies: Past, Present, Challenges to the Future; Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: Southern Premises; and Beyond Cairo: Strategies. It begins with a section on DAWN's premises on Population and Development. The book is expected to be available in English in time for the Cairo meeting. Summaries in Spanish, French, Arabic and Portuguese will also be available for ICPD.

### POPULATION POLICIES RECONSIDERED: HEALTH, EMPOWERMENT AND RIGHTS

*edited by Gita Sen, Adrienne Germain and Lincoln C. Chen*  
(Sponsored by The Harvard Center for Population and Development  
Studies and The International Women's Health Coalition;  
Funded by The Swedish International Development Authority;  
Distributed by Harvard University Press)

This volume brings together a combination of scholars, senior policy-makers and women's health advocates with experiences in population policy and family planning programme implementation. They explore future directions for population policy centered on health, women's empowerment, and human rights. The underlying premise is that public policy should assure the rights and well-being of people already born and those who will be born, rather than simply attempt to limit the ultimate size of the world's population. The aim is to contribute to a new consensus on policy directions for the 21st century.

[Cost: US\$14.95 plus US\$3.00 for shipping. Contact: Harvard University Press, 79 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA; FAX 800-962-4983 (US) and 617-495-8924 (Intl.)]

## Translation Rio Conference Report

The report of the Reproductive Health and Justice Inter-Regional Conference (Rio de Janeiro, January 24-28, 1994) is now available in Portuguese and Spanish.

### CONTACT:

CEPIA (Citizenship, Studies, Information & Action)  
Rua do Russel, #680 - apt: 71 - 7th floor, Gloria  
22210-010 Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

### WE SPEAK FOR OURSELVES: POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

VIEWS FROM LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN  
(The Panos Institute)

Part of a broader Panos project designed to elicit and publish the views of population and development stakeholders, this volume presents a set of articles by experts and activists in Latin America and the Caribbean, who have a wide range of views and analyses on population.

For example, Marva Phillips of the University of the West Indies examines male roles and responsibility in the framework of the plantation legacy and seasonal migration, while Nesha Haniff of Red Thread Women's Development Project in Guyana explores gender and power as a fundamental human rights issue; and the contributions of Chilean journalist and HIV/AIDS expert, Tim Frasca and Brazilian theologians, Edna Rodrigues and Sr. Ivonne Gebara, put forward very different perspectives on the role of the Catholic church in sexuality and reproductive choice. Despite the varied viewpoints, however, all the contributions place population clearly in the context of development.

[Cost: Free to Southern NGOs and US\$6.95 plus US\$2.00 for shipping to Northern NGOs. Contact: The Panos Institute, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 301, Washington, DC 20036. Fax: (202) 483-3059]

### ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS WORLDWIDE (Gale Research International Ltd.)

This first edition lists over 3,400 women's and women-related organizations covering a broad range of subject areas including Breast cancer, Child Care, Divorce, Domestic Violence, Equal Rights, Lesbianism, Pregnancy, Sexual Harassment; Women in Business and Management, Politics, Religion and Sports.

[Contact: Gale Research Inc., 835 Penobscot Bldg., Detroit, MI 48226-4094. Tel: (313) 961-2242]

## PROFILE ProHealth

*The ProHealth Foundation* was established in 1992 in Suriname, South America, by a group of women health professionals. Its mission is to increase knowledge and understanding about social and other factors related to health problems with special attention to women, and to promote and improve health, particularly that of women.

Pro Health's approach is action-oriented with studies being used to support efforts to improve the health status of people, particularly the disadvantaged, and to strengthen communities to change health conditions. Its focus is on women's multiple roles in health - reproductive, as family caretakers, and as informal educators - in addition to their status in society.

Contact: ProHealth Foundation, P.O.Box 864, Paramaribo, Suriname. Fax: (597) 455009.



Bucharest - that is, beyond UNFPA's mantra of female education and women's status - to one of transforming gender relations and significantly altering the content and character of family planning programmes.

- ✓ To continue emphasizing the importance of the enabling environment in terms of international and national macro-economic policies.

In DAWN's view, all these strategies are equally important, although emphasis may change from forum to forum depending on which actors are taking centre-stage. The Vatican would love to shift the core of the debate entirely to the third strategy, while some Northern countries would push for, and some of our non-feminist South colleagues would be satisfied with, the first two.

Only the women - and not only DAWN but many Northern colleagues, including many who negotiated the statement coming out of the meeting on Reproductive Health and Justice (Rio de Janeiro, January 1994) - are clear about the equal importance of all three.

Thus far in the ICPD process, we have managed to expand and thereby alter the terms of the entire debate, making the

link between reproductive health and rights and development by calling attention to:

- ✓ The negative impact of structural adjustment programmes and neo-liberal views on the role of the state as it affects the access of poor women to reproductive health services.
- ✓ The indivisibility of women's rights and reproductive health.
- ✓ The crucial importance of women's health and empowerment to achieving the goals of sustainable human development.

In summary, we are calling for the debate on sustainable human development to be located within a new human rights framework in which reproductive rights and socio-economic rights are integral.

As a network of South women, DAWN will carry this argument forward in other fora as well. But, if ICPD does not clearly and strongly address reproductive health and rights, no other international forum will. Certainly not the Social Development Summit. And, we already know what happened at UNCED. We could carry it to Beijing, but who would be listening?

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**DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era)**

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