



DAWN

### INSIDE

UN SG's Report	2
CWS Report	4
WSIS	6
WTO+10	11
The relationship of research to activism in the making of policy: lessons from gender and development	13
SIDS	15
WSF highlights	16
<i>DAWN news</i>	
20th Anniversary celebrations	17
DAWN Training Institute	19

# DAWN INFORMS

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era

## Talk MDGs, Think BPA

Excerpts from a presentation by Peggy Antrobus on the AWID, DAWN, UNIFEM, WEDO and WICEJ panel in New York, 3 March 2005.

The Millennium Development Goals provide a strategic entry point for raising issues that are important to women with people who pay no attention to us otherwise.

They provide an opportunity for challenging the assumptions of the neo-liberal policy framework. Since the structural adjustment policy framework of the 1980s — the so-called Washington Consensus — we have known that neo-liberalism widens the gap between the rich and poor and exacerbates poverty. Although in recent years the phrase 'structural adjustment' has been replaced by phrases like 'public sector reforms', 'privatisation' and 'trade liberalisation', the policy framework remains essentially the same with the same consequences. Far from eliminating poverty and hunger, the framework suggested by MDG#8 increases these scourges. 'Public-private partnerships' between a weakened public sector and an emboldened private sector gives the private sector special advantages and opportunities for increasing their control of assets and services that are essential to social reproduction, such as water, health care and education.

Another opportunity is in pointing out linkages between gender relations and key issues. The demands of women's unwaged work in the household and care of children and elderly along with their reduced access to assets and resources, and discriminatory practices all serve to curtail their ability to earn incomes comparable to men of their class, race and ethnicity. Women's poverty, low levels of education and the low priority given to human development jeopardises their lives and those of their children.

Maternal mortality is a measure of women's vulnerability and the link between maternal mortality and lack of sexual and reproductive rights has been established. Women raised to consider themselves subordinate to men easily accept that their lives are not as important as that of their children. Thousands of women die each day because their lives are not valued by society or themselves.

Women's powerlessness to negotiate safe sex, along with gender socialisation practices that orient them towards pleasing men and placing the interests of men over their own makes them particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. It is no accident that the highest rate of increase in the spread of the virus is among girls 15-24 and among married women.

The task force on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment has done a good job of pointing out the limitations of the indicators

To next page



# MDGs AND FREEDOMS

The Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, issued a report titled *"In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All"* in March 2005 which outlined the linking of development, security and human rights within the UN system. The document provides the basis of the five-year review of the Millennium Development Goals at the Millennium Summit, to be held in September 2005. The Annex of the report will be negotiated during discussion on the MDGs.

Here are DAWN's comments on the section on *"Freedom from Want."*

The Report has some clear pluses in its overall perspective on development.

- 1) It clearly states (section B) that development, security, and human rights should be viewed synergistically, not as trade-offs against each other.
- 2) It recognises that growth has gone hand in hand with rising inequality within and among countries.
- 3) It acknowledges the need for global collective action (although it doesn't explicitly say 'global public goods').
- 4) It calls for accountability of states to citizens, states to each other, international institutions to their members and present to future generations (para 38)
- 5) It affirms the need for an active civil society not only to provide services but also to ensure accountability.

But its vision also has some gaps and minuses:

- 1) It asks developing countries to put in place "the policies and investments to drive private-sector led growth" without anywhere providing a balance in terms of needed regulation, or ensuring that equity, economic justice, and public goods are protected and promoted.
- 2) It assumes that such private sector led growth will automatically support the MDGs or at least not be inimical. Indeed meeting the MDGs appears to "set the foundation for private sector-led growth (para 39).
- 3) It is silent on the potential and actual impacts of trade and financial liberalisation on food security, the cost and availability of services, the impacts of privatisation on water, seeds etc. Thus it has nothing to say about how possible negative impacts may be avoided. (para 37)
- 4) What if para 37 (private sector led growth) and 38 (civil society calling for accountability) cannot coexist?

To next page

---


## From previous page

assigned for Goal#3. For instance, for Caribbean women, the high level of achievement of girls does not translate into equality in economic opportunities; the number of women in Parliament does not translate into better policies for women.

Talking about MDGs gives an opportunity to draw attention to the contradictions. Raising the issues is part of advancing women's interests and agendas. The MDGs touch on most of them, and pointing to the gaps and omissions is a powerful way of drawing attention to the forces that are pitted against women's rights. Sexual and reproductive

rights were left out of the first list, and there is silence on violence, which is a top priority for women everywhere.

While it has been difficult to get money for implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action, if we can show how the MDGs link to women's interests and agendas we can capture some of the massive MDG resources.

MDGs provide a unique opportunity for advocating and advancing women's rights and development. My advice is: when they talk MDG think BPA. 



### Some specifics:

- It is good that the sub-section on National investment and policy priorities starts with “Gender equality: overcoming pervasive gender bias”, and specifically includes the interventions from the Taskforce 3 Report (including ‘ensuring access to SRH services’). But Box 3 on “The tragedy of HIV/AIDS” does not even mention the rapid feminisation of the pandemic.
- Paragraphs 40 -46 pick up specific recommendations from the different taskforces, but how these link up with the overall vision of development is unclear.
- The SG report calls for developing countries to scale up public investments and mobilize domestic resources (para 34) – this is defeated by WB and IMF conditionalities that promote reliance on unstable FDI-led growth.
- Moreover, the goal-oriented policy framework demanded from developing countries (para 34) which in developing countries are also known as anti-poverty programs have practically been subsumed under the overriding concern for a WTO-compliant trade liberalization agenda. In countries such as the Philippines, there is practically no anti-poverty or development program left. What the government has is a trade liberalisation program.
- The protection of women’s employment must be made a central concern for any sustainable development or anti-poverty program. In the last 20 years, women’s employment has expanded but also receded rapidly because of FDI flight to places where there is cheaper women’s labor. Where women’s employment is currently expanding, labor protection must be ensured. Long-term and sustainable employment programs that bring in decent wages, protection from sexual harassment, that do not pose health risks to women workers, and in which the right of women workers to collective bargaining is secured, must be put in place.
- Para 45 - ensure that the content of education is free from gender biases and social discrimination, and is instead promotive of women’s human rights and gender equality (align with Beijing commitment)
  - i. Under AID, it should be made explicit that aid should not be tied to any precondition that limits women’s access to safe, affordable and accessible reproductive health services.
  - ii. under DEBT - there is no mention of heavily indebted middle income countries, such as the Philippines. Without this, any initiative in debt rescheduling or reprieve will not benefit this country or similarly situated ones. It is important to acknowledge that much of the debt in some of these countries went to dictatorship governments and money was not spent on national development.
  - iii. under DEBT - document is silent on the negative impact of the high cost of debt servicing on the national budget. The trend is decreasing public funds for health and education while debt servicing is securitised through automatic debt appropriation. What we will have in the future are people with poor health and limited education, much worse than now
  - iv. under TRADE – the imposition of time limits to getting a trade agreement in place within the WTO is not helpful to the needs of the South. The document should instead speak of achieving gains in substantive discussions that aim to strike a balance between nationally determined domestic regulation and protection with market access commitments, and between reciprocity and flexibility, and between standards-setting and SDTs.
  - v. under TRADE - in order to ensure that products from least developed countries do not become vulnerable to price fluctuations, market price support mechanisms must be put in place.
  - vi. The document is silent on the privatisation of services under the WTO-GATS. Publicly provided services are important for women because these respond to the social reproductive needs of the entire society without which women’s work burdens will increase.
  - vii. It is also silent also on WTO+ FTAs and BTAs that are actively being pursued. 🌅



# SURVIVAL ONLY FOR BEIJING PLATFORM

By Alejandra Scampini, representative of REPEM/DAWN and part of the Latin-American and Caribbean Committee for the Follow-up on Beijing in the 49th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (February 28-March 11, 2005), also known as Beijing + 10. DAWN was active at CSW and also at a number of side events, including the conference and launch of the UNRISD report on *Gender Equality - Striving for Justice in an Unequal World*, at which Peggy Antrobus was a keynote speaker.

Right after the UNGASS held 5-9 June 2000 in New York, Gita Sen, DAWN Political Economy of Globalisation Research Coordinator, declared that the most important thing about Beijing + 5 was that the Beijing Platform for Action (BFA) survived. Five years later we are declaring the same thing again.

All the reports and press releases confirmed that at the 49th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, women's rights and gender equality were not watered down despite all the efforts and manoeuvres of anti-women's rights groups. The political declaration and the ten resolutions that were finally completed on Friday 11 March 2005 reaffirmed a commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action that was agreed at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. Hence the feeling of relief and survival.

The scenario at the CSW session was full of the same risks we faced during the prepcoms and Beijing + 5 itself, but the situation was even worse. It involved the presence of large numbers of religious fundamentalists, the weakness of women's rights focus within UN agencies, the weakness of some official delegations during the second week, the modality of the USA imposing its domestic agenda, imposing a neoliberal economic model and development framework on other countries, and constant moves to erode, neglect and invisibilise human rights, specially women's rights and regional and international consensus as well.

There was also some ambivalence within women's groups, partly inherited from previous processes such as Beijing +5 and Cairo+5 and regional processes towards Beijing+10. Yet tensions were overcome and the work inside the different thematic and regional caucuses was very efficient.

Many assessed that one of the gains accumulated through women's history of participation in UN spaces is the fact that a large number of government delegations had NGO representatives, indicating the sustained work undertaken at national level during the past ten years. Many NGOs participated as observers, with a large number of newcomers and opportunity for young women to learn and actively engage in a global conference. There were youth caucuses which developed an excellent strategy to follow each session. Many young women were actively engaged for the first time in a global

conference. A positive feature of the process was how they worked with more experienced colleagues and focused on specific issues, while making time for interlinkage with other caucuses. A large representation of hard-working indigenous women finally succeeded in having a resolution included because of strong support by other women, even though it was not on the official agenda and had not been submitted on time. However, their presence was not so visible in thematic caucuses or strategic caucuses, and women's and feminist's groups will have to look at how to incorporate indigenous issues in an interlinked fashion and how to improve networking.

Women worked with delegations to demand that they hold to their regional commitments. The Latin-American and Caribbean group lobbied their governments to stick to what they had signed on to in Mexico and Santiago. The Linkage Caucus, convened by the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL), the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), insisted throughout the CSW that governments recognise that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the time-bound targets for eradicating poverty and implementing the Millennium Declaration, could not be achieved without advancing the human rights and empowerment of all women in all their diversity.

The Millennium Summit in September is another opportunity to exercise pressure and for governments to make a real advance in gender equality, but much still needs to be done to ensure the participation of civil society.

The resolutions over which the caucus groups laboured so hard to provide relevant documents and timely translations appear to have played a key role in distracting the attention of governments from what they were really there to do. The objective of the 49th CSW Session was to reaffirm and re-commit to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), and to advance it. But governments spent hours and hours, days and days, on drafting, redrafting, adding and deleting language around resolutions. It was a good sign that some governments registered protests on the addition and multiplication of resolutions. The ten resolutions were adopted and are available in the CSW 49th website.

See <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/>. Overview: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/wom1504.doc.htm>



## NGO Panels and Activities

The Latin America and Caribbean BPFA Follow-up Committee organised a panel on Poverty and Development with Equity. The aim was to debate the new agenda that the UN and other international organisms, cooperation agencies and status have on the eradication of poverty as one of the MDGs. It was sad to see that the panel discussion covered women's development better than the discussion in such a significant space as CSW and the reaffirmation of the PFA. The second panel, convened with UNIFEM, was on UN Reform: the unavoidable debate. Ximena Machicao, REPEM, opened up the discussions trying to link the UN Reform process to the MDGS process, the Security Council meeting, and the implications of these processes in the CSW.


As well as the Youth for Women's Rights Caucus, there was a Diverse Sexualities group that gave visibility to sexual rights. The activities of the Latin American group included an 'intelligence area' as a meeting point for key women's groups; where important documents and strategic information were available; there was an information and safe meeting space run by the International Women's Health Coalition; and many side events run by funders, UN agencies and women's groups that supported the work going on inside CSW. DAWN worked with the Center for Women's Global Leadership and WEDO on a Global Week of Action for Women's Rights – Beijing and Beyond. There was space for networking, discussion and further debate on current issues, as well as celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first International Women's Conference held in Mexico City, 1975.

## Last but not least...Latin American and Caribbean Caucus expressed concerns

In its final review session, the LAC PFA Follow-up Committee caucus expressed the feeling that the victory in retaining the PFA was again partial and left a question of how they could sustain this sort of process and improve conditions of the struggle in a context in which human rights are continually eroded. The group is particularly concerned for the regional feminist movement because of the unilateralism of the US and the pressure it brings to bear on the UN – in the CSW meeting case through lack of clarity of negotiation mechanisms, increasing limitation imposed on women's organisation participation, and lack of translations.

Despite the favourable outcomes and goodwill in the CSW meeting that argue in favour of NGO participation and the critical role of civil society in the UN processes, the matter is not being properly resolved and each commission or bureau uses a different modality for each UN gathering. Much depends on the mood and profile of delegations. It is important to strengthen the role of CONGO and UN agencies that focus on women's rights. While the various agencies do their best to be efficient, in moments of rapid decision-making, the procedures and rules work to the detriment of NGO needs. All roads lead to UN reform. Many groups still concede the UN is the space that guarantees human rights, despite its weaknesses. We need a new UN, one that promotes peace, security, human rights, sustainable development and issues of critical importance to women as well as to men, a space in which women's equality prevails.

## GLOBAL CALL FOR ACTION AGAINST POVERTY

REPEM/DAWN has been an active member of the GCAP since its creation in September 2004, and is part of the International Facilitation Group. AWID and many other women's organisations including REPEM and DAWN, and development agencies, agreed to launch the Call and collectively prepared a brochure: "In 2005, women's groups throughout the world will join hands with hundreds of civil society groups whose aim is to mobilise citizens across the globe to demand much greater action by their governments on poverty. The Global Call to Action against Poverty is a worldwide alliance committed to pressuring world leaders to fulfill their promises including those outlined by the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Hundreds of civil society organisations from all over the world – including women's groups, trade unions, faith groups and human rights organisations – are joining together to work toward shifts in national and international policies in order to end poverty and both achieve and exceed the Millennium Development Goals. More information on this initiative can be found at: <http://www.whiteband.org>. At the end of CSW, it is felt there is much to celebrate! The Beijing Commitments and Consensus are alive and kicking, and so is the energy and determination of progressive feminist and women's movements to continue struggling to advance women's human rights and gender equality at different levels. Hopefully, the energy and spirit present at the Beijing + 10 / CSW session these past weeks will carry on to other significant international and regional processes and venues, such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation, as well as the UN Millennium Summit Review Process where decisions are being and will be made for the lives of women and girls worldwide." 




# Identifying gender issues in ICT

DAWN representatives in the World Summit on the Information Society, Anita Gurumurthy and Magaly Pazello, are active in the ongoing regional processes that include meetings on pornography and cybercrime as well as focussed gender issues. Both were at the PrepCom 2 in Geneva in February and provided the following reports.

Gender equality advocates were caught between fatigue following the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil in January and hectic preparation for the Commission on the Status of Women meeting on Beijing+10 in New York in March — with the result that few women who could anticipate the political directions of WSIS PrepCom 2 were on hand for immediate action to ensure civil society interventions in the government plenary would address gender equality. DAWN worked to present a Gender Caucus statement on alternative language and gender sensitive text, and to give a basic critique of the current negotiations and documents.

Alarmed gender advocates drew attention also to the initial text on financing prepared by the Task Force on Financing Mechanisms, which contained not a single reference to women or gender. They continued to struggle throughout the meeting to reclaim commitment to addressing the gender digital divide, a problem partly due to an assumption that issues of financing of information communications technology (ICT) for development and governance of internet are not 'women's issues': a posture typical of that used in early trade debates. But both are public policy issues within the realm of equity and social justice, and hence the mandate of governments. Researcher activists from the South and supporters engaged in activism on Financing ICT for Development worked together to draft alternative language. Some, such as Paragraph 21B of Chapter 2 of the Tunis Agenda for Action ("We recognise that public finance plays a crucial role in providing ICT access and services to rural areas and disadvantaged populations where markets are incomplete and inadequate") have been accepted and paved the way for more informed and pro-South language.

Initial analysis of the meeting indicates that advocacy for gender equality is now having to reinvent 'mainstreaming'. Gender equality advocates seem to be confronting even more the truism that just adding gender and women here and there like the early 'women in development' models cannot work unless there are substantive shifts in global policy on issues of the Information Society that are pro-women and pro-southern women.

The debates are being seen as inherently gender neutral. If anything they are viewed as biased against regions (such as rural areas, hilly areas, and island countries) rather than against populations (such as marginalised social groups including women). This attitude has to do with the perception of information society politics being situated in telecom infrastructure development, as if by providing connectivity the rest will follow. However, it does not: no more than more hospitals mean quality health care for women. WSIS PrepCom 2 reflected the need to invent a new mainstreaming that aligns with positions and allies who stand for inclusiveness, rather than take far less effective routes such as attempting to add gender and women to the text. These attempts are acceptable only as far as other groups are also mentioned, in this there is a trade-off: gender becomes more a principle and less actionable. Extracting commitments for gender equal outcomes is the greatest challenge. *Anita Gurumurthy* 



# GENDER CAUCUS STATEMENT

Excerpts from the Gender Caucus Statement that Magaly Pazello delivered to WSIS PrepCom2, Geneva, 18 February 2005.

...from Geneva to Tunis, as we move from principles to implementation, mentions of women's empowerment and gender equality in the text have been reducing. The Tunis Agenda for Action is completely silent on gender in all aspects of implementation. We find this silence unacceptable and something that must be corrected.

...the current debate on financing in the WSIS process puts disproportionate emphasis on private investment to achieve ICTD goals. While economic growth may be best served by private investment models, development encompasses much more than economic growth, and is premised on social justice and equity. ICTD needs to be placed squarely within a framework that recognises the social justice basis of the information society. Financing ICTD must account specifically for women's development priorities and their information and communication rights.

Existing financial mechanisms, promoted by markets and private sector investments have not taken connectivity and the gains from ICTs to regions that the Tunis agenda for action calls "less attractive".


...Women constitute a large majority of the excluded. The role of public finance in reaching connectivity, as well as the larger benefits of ICTD to women cannot be over-emphasised, especially in the context of what the Tunis agenda for action calls "market challenges".

Connectivity and macro indices like tele-density, internet access etc. often hide more than they reveal... ICTs cannot bring empowering outcomes for women. ICTs need to be linked to development in ways that are empowering for women. ICTD needs to be seen through the lens of social investment that is time and resource intensive. The gestation between investment and returns need to be recognized. Challenges to include the poorest women will be the maximum considering the obstacles. Even as the Tunis plan of action holds up Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships as the preferred route, within MSPs it is crucial to determine who holds the key control and therefore who benefits more... We require structures and mechanisms at the local level that are gender sensitive so that women's equal participation and ownership in any partnership can be ensured.

...Women's empowerment is a qualitative issue and not merely an issue of macro indicators like teledensity. All financing mechanisms need to ensure a gender and regional balance in their administrative structures.

...Rural women represent one of the most excluded in the information society and stand to gain from 'open access' (telecom policies that can reduce connectivity costs).

...The role of public resources is critical for appropriate technologies that account for women's roles and interests and go beyond telecom technologies to software and localised applications.... Local content production and dissemination is especially relevant for poor women.

...ICTs should be used as a catalyst to give women a stronger voice and empower them in democratic processes. 



# TAKING FINANCE TO TASK

Excerpts from the statement Anita Gurumurthy read at the WSIS PrepCom2 plenary on financing the information society in Geneva on 17 February 2005. It was prepared by the Association for Progressive Communications, Bread for All, Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS), Instituto del Tercer Mundo (ITeM), IT for Change and the Gender Caucus (which DAWN strongly supports).

The group's main concern was that civil society was inadequately represented on the Task Force on Financing Mechanisms and needed a larger role. The statement outlined three principles to form a basis for any discussion:

That information and communications networks are a global public good, particularly for the extension of network infrastructure in developing countries and to all excluded populations;

Private investment cannot displace the central role of public finance in the core area of Information and Communications for Development, even though ICD provides unique opportunity for private investment; and

The potential of community driven and owned ICD initiatives and networks to contribute to sustainable development and social empowerment, especially women's empowerment, should be explored and integrated into financing strategies.

The recommendations urged a commitment to the central role of public resources in implementing the Geneva Plan of Action, to be included in section 11 of the political chapeau referring to resource mobilisation, and in concrete expression in all sections of the operational section.

Based on proposals in the TFFM report, the statement recommended forming a multi-stakeholder global ICD policy and financing facility to:

Assist developing countries use existing financial mechanisms for ICD more effectively;

Provide policy information, advice and capacity building to developing countries without conditionality;

Explore new financial mechanisms to support ICD that avoid diversion of existing funds and could include a global tax and contributions from commercial internet domain name holders.

The Digital Solidarity Fund should be endorsed to support ICD in cities and towns. It should be located in Africa and governed and operated on a multi-stakeholder basis, clearly focussed and using principles of free and open source software, open standards and access.

The Gender Caucus took a strong position on financing mechanisms, stating that the discussion was not conducive to gender equal outcomes, particularly the ideas that:

The market could be relied on for delivering ICT

for Development;

ICT for Development was synonymous with economic growth; and

investment in telecom infrastructure was adequate for achieving development goals through use of ICTs.

Non-negotiables for gender-equal outcomes included seeing ICT for Development as a development issue, encompassing market-led growth but fundamentally a public policy issue. Market mechanisms could not be expected to take development benefits of ICT to disadvantaged populations including the majority of women, as evidenced by the many digital divides. 🌟

## WSIS UPDATE - Latin America

By Magaly Pazello

Interesting differences are showing up in regional prepcoms in Latin America leading to WSIS second phase. Compared with the first, held in Bavaro, Dominican Republic, in January 2003, the next one scheduled for Rio de Janeiro 8-10 June 2005 is influenced by the Brazilian model of internet governance and its successful implementation of free software in telecentres and e-governance. The United States, which took up time at the Bavaro meeting with its problems with Cuba, has not been invited but the doors have been opened to the European Union. The European Community has run a programme in Latin America for the past four years mostly assisting infrastructure projects related to areas such as e-health, e-education, e-governance and others, and in relation to negotiations around agriculture, TRIPS, etc.

ECLAC is working on indicators for measuring aspects of the information society at global level and has already coordinated with several national statistics institutions to harmonise a survey in Latin American countries and establish a network, with a first target date of 2007. This regional action plan is known as eLac2007. Civil society participation was not considered in the Rio conference budget, but there are some initiatives in process. To ensure a minimum presence, a group of organisations are working together around the gender and the youth caucuses, including DAWN, Computing Professionals for Social Responsibility, and a youth group, TakeIT Global. The gender caucus will fund three women and are planning a gender panel. A number of other organisations working in the WSIS process, including APC, will also be participating. 🌟



# REFLECTIONS TOWARDS TUNIS

Extracts from a paper by Anita Gurumurthy for the WSIS PrepCom in Damascus on Partnership for Building the Arab Information Society in November 2004.

Multi-stakeholder platforms have not really meant much in terms of gains for civil society, as was witnessed in the first phase at WSIS. What they have taught us is that the lines between allies and adversaries around the negotiating table are blurring and that the interests of marginalised and women need to be reclaimed in civil society activism.

The reason for most ICT strategies today is efficiency. It is even viewed as a revenue earner for governments – ways by which public information can be provided to citizens for a user charge. For women and the marginalised, it is in the empowering possibilities to access public information, to be heard, and participate in governance as agents of change, that e-governance becomes meaningful. However, The IT policy of most governments in Asian countries focuses on growth, and is silent on what IT will do for social transformation. Gender is perceived as being unconnected with e-governance and with the architecture of a knowledge society. The result is that in many ICT initiatives, development itself is constructed in the language of efficiency; notions get distorted and abused - like in the case of community telecentres where sustainability is constructed exclusively in terms of financial returns.

Ongoing research shows that for ICT services to serve development and empowerment of local communities, it requires affordable connectivity, and a local level catalyst institution that works to set up service points. Yet though many remote villages in a country like India have excellent dial-up connectivity, it does not necessarily imply transformative possibilities. The two conditions are insufficient and need also a process of 'evangelisation' to get

To next page

## LESSONS FROM THE PAST

If there is any silver lining around the not-so-happy discussions on women and their access to gains from ICTs, it is in the fact that the story fortunately is almost identical to gender in relation to all other domains. We can take heart in the fact that a new script for engendering policy and engaging in advocacy for women's rights thankfully need not be written.

Policy makers have been ready to acknowledge gender issues where they were able to see a 'woman' connection, eg domestic violence. But in issues where gender is hidden, gender advocates have had to engage with great perseverance. Gender often seems hard to grasp on the policy table and knowing that it needs to be unearthed is a useful position.

ICT policy is seen by national governments in Asia purely as within neo-liberal macroeconomic frameworks – of GDP, employment, competitiveness. This coexists with ICT development approaches dictated invariably by donors. This is no problem as long as donor strategies are informed. "But in truth we are all early learners and most of us are still experimenting with the potential of ICTs for social justice."


Gender and ICT policy and practice today lie at the cross currents of two mainstreaming efforts – gender mainstreaming, and mainstreaming ICTs. Their success will depend upon developing and harnessing

the synergy between the two. The policy process requires intervention at four levels:

- The larger social information and communication context;
- The availability, nature and role of ICTs;
- The integration of ICTs into substantive development sectors;
- The enabling role of ICTs towards gender equality.

Policy often takes the path of expedience and leaves empowerment and participation to the 'community' level and local NGOs. The ICT policy process needs to involve the necessary expertise at many levels to recognise lurking opportunities for women's empowerment and cannot be relegated as a task for 'local communities.'

Policy cannot afford to construct a template of the typical rural woman and bunch all women into one box, e.g. illiterate women need a different strategy, daughters in schools and colleges need different opportunities. Women facilitators need different tools.

When we think of gender and ICTs we also need to think beyond the computer, to telephones, handycams, and what digital media can do; and to think laterally, about what ICTs can do help reduce women's isolation, alienation from political processes and exclusion from social institutions. 

Anita Gurumurthy



## From previous page

people to engage with ICTs, and a crystal clear vision of social justice in the diffusion of technology.

The interests of women cannot be served unless all three conditions are understood and addressed in gendered terms, and connectivity is consciously delivered to women as a tool of empowerment. Women need to be equal stakeholders in community level processes of technology harnessing – over the spectrum from participating in the design of the service-basket (such as literacy for women's groups and health information, including reproductive health, legal literacy, interactions with the government delivery departments), in service-delivery mechanisms (as kiosk owners or operators) and in using services and playing their role as animators to take technology to other women.

Most communities in developing country contexts will never be able to completely own technology, for instance because of the infrastructure required. However, local institutions – either local governance bodies, or NGOs or cooperatives or collectives and self-help groups of women, with active policy and institutional support from the state, can certainly innovate upon the technology infrastructure and draw benefits.

The market cannot be expected to replace or substitute for the role of civil society and the state in this. Because the reach of the government is incomparable, governments need to be involved in development delivery – invest in software applications that take information on health, education, agriculture and other topics to women and marginalised people. This is an expansion of e-governance in the direction of good governance, rather than as an administrative tool.

In the context of WSIS, the discussion needs to be placed squarely within the ancient discourse of development financing. Unfortunately, financing for ICTs for development is still a hard bone of contention within the WSIS process.

Development agencies have been exploring the ways and means to mainstreaming ICTs into sectoral activity and policy. ICT applications in education, health, agriculture, poverty alleviation, protection of cultural diversity etc are being emphasized. The policy process needs to recognize that the new ICTs are not only providing entirely new paradigms in education, health and governance delivery, in fact, it has to take cognizance of the specific opportunities presented by ICTs to tackle traditional obstacles to women's access to and participation in all these domains.

Policy often hides behind the convenient smokescreen of rhetoric. Women's needs are often culled through so-called participatory tools at the 'community' level, but these processes rarely guarantee empowering outcomes for women.

Gender mainstreaming in ICT policy involves addressing gender issues in the context of a complex and less understood arena. Therefore the ICT policy process needs to involve the necessary expertise at many levels to clearly recognize the lurking opportunities for women's empowerment through ICTs. This cannot be left unarticulated or relegated as a task for "local communities".

Women's claim over communications media and information technology has shown how we can connect across boundaries and differences, overcome isolation,

publish our views, seek justice, build solidarity, exchange ideas and employ information for furthering social goals. These claims are absolutely vital since the concerns, positions and identities of women in the South are increasingly being constructed and articulated by the transnational corporate media for whom poor women of the South are esoteric objects, or by conservative forces within our communities who have arrogated to themselves the right to articulate what women want.

Technology did not predate women's struggle for equality or self-expression, but it can help our journey in empowerment - from where we are and in the manner we choose. 🌟

**W**omen from Manipur protested the rape and murder of a Manipuri woman by the Indian army. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, gives enormous powers to security forces and amounts to state sanction of human rights violations. Women had protested such violations before, but this time, the mainstream media picked it up because among the forty Manipuri women who stormed the Army headquarters with signs reading "Indian Army, rape us", twelve of them were naked. They shamed the army by parading the very female body that brought humiliation and death to their sisters." A video film that archives these moments of protest is more than a testimony to the violations of women's bodies and to the courage of their sisters; activists from the region have been screening the film all over India to broaden debate over the Special Powers Act.

**I**n the early 90s, a water and sanitation project in North West Frontier province in Pakistan used "Woman to Woman Video" to give women the opportunity to speak across the physical boundaries of the purdah to participate in choosing the best water supply option for their households. Women filmed women using a camera linked to a portable, car battery-powered monitor for playback, with no electricity supply or editing required.



# WTO+10 - Development and Gender Tensions Remain

DAWN Coordinator for the Political Economy of Globalisation (Trade), **Mariama Williams**, spoke to the high level session on Trade, Economics and Growth at a World Trade Organisation Public Symposium on 'WTO After 10 Years: Global problems and multilateral solutions' held 20-22 April 2005 in Geneva, Switzerland. These are some brief excerpts from her notes on 'Some tensions between the role of trade, development and gender equality.'

**F**rom the viewpoint of many heterodox economists, the law of comparative advantage does not adequately explain in a consistent manner current trade patterns. Furthermore, they would also counter that the dominant underlying character of trade is 'competitive' or 'absolute advantage' and not comparative advantage (which is based on assumptions of full employment, same technology, and automatic price adjustment mechanisms that lead to a world of balanced trade). The heterodox proposition would better help to explain the present situation of chronic current account imbalances, deteriorating terms of trade, structural unemployment (even in the context of some growth) and the persistent and pervasive trade-induced debt relationships between north and south.

Consider that the subtext in trade discussion, even at the WTO, is a pervasive underlying mercantilism coupled with a pecuniary approach to competition. This goes a long way towards explaining why it has been so difficult to get to the development dimensions in the Doha round and the unwillingness of the rich countries to resolve the outstanding implementation issues that are critical to development.

Current patterns of trade (and trade rule-making) may present significant challenges for gender equality objectives, which, in turn, can have significant untoward effects for long-term development.

Although there is still resistance to incorporating gender as an analytical category in the so-called hard areas of macro-analysis, trade and finance, there is increasing recognition that unless the issues of gender inequality, women's social and economic empowerment and their role and contribution to the national and global economy is acknowledged and deeply intertwined into all aspect of macro policies, including trade, the issues of poverty, inequality and under-development cannot be adequately resolved. The work of feminist economists and gender advocates have shown "that gender relations are not something outside of the economy in some realm of 'preferences', 'aptitudes' and 'traditions', but are continually reformulated and permeate all economic activities."

When mainstream economists take a glance at gender, trade and growth they tend to see nothing but the good: trade liberalisation creates employment that benefits

women and/or import competition diminishes gender discrimination in labour markets. Feminist economists and gender and trade activists work with a more complex, highly nuanced and sometimes disturbing picture. This is because the focus is not simply on 'trade' but on the link between trade and the spheres of production and reproduction, 'the care and development of people and their capacity to work.' This opens up the issues of the division of labour in society between men and women, paid and unpaid work and their contribution to the market, access to resources, intra household distribution of income and resources and the conditions under which entrepreneurs do business. It also allows explicitly for examining their informal and household economies and their contribution to trade and growth.

Gender considerations are also important for the success of trade and growth strategies. Research links industrialisation and the feminisation of exports and supports observations that 'employment of large numbers of women in the low-value chains of global production networks often provides the stepping stone for a systemic industrial strategy,' for example, EPZs in South Korea, Mexico. However, recent work on Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea and Mexico shows a decline or reversal of women's share in manufactures—de-feminisation.

The role of women's and men's location and participation in the economy and how directional shifts in trade orientation and policy impacts on existing gaps in men's and women's differential access to resources and the labour market must be a critical factor in determining the effectiveness of trade to the economy in the medium and long term.

## **Tensions (and dilemmas) in the role of trade and economic development**

There are apparent tensions between the norms, values and practice of trade and economic development—present patterns of trade (and trade rules) do not seem to be supportive of economic development that is consistent with poverty eradication, full employment, the protection of human rights and the environment and social development

The classical economists viewed trade as one way of contributing to the wealth and capital accumulation of a nation. However, the specification of the direct and

To next page



## From previous page

continuity transmission effect of trade to the growth of the economy was never adequately spelled out. Empirical evidence does not validate an automatic linkage between trade and growth.

The ensuing and emerging developmental and social costs of engaging in international trade, which were not configured into the framework, is now playing havoc with the process of economic and social development in many developing countries. Such developmental costs include lack of attention to production capacity in the domestic economy—due to discontinuities in industrial and development policies as a result of over focusing on trade reform, lack of attention to human resource development etc. The major social costs that can be linked to trade or that are trade related include rising inequality, food insecurity, and trade liberalization induced fiscal revenue shortfall which endangers social sector spending.

Clearly, the role of trade in the national and global economy is not as straightforward as it once appeared. While the classical economists view of trade is not without some validity—trade does seem to enrich the rich countries of today, and some developing countries seem to have prospered from international trade -- this is not necessarily so for the vast majority of developing countries, especially the LDCs. Trade may indeed have the potential for all that is promised on its behalf, but it is clear that there are explicit and implicit adjustment costs as well as unequal sharing of the burden of adjustment between rich and poor countries. More significantly, trade has been overdressed with a top heavy and cumbersome trade liberalisation agenda that would seem to be increasingly pathological in its excesses and deficiencies. It not only penalises countries that follow the rules, but whether inadvertent or by design seems to perpetuate unequal exchange and retard sustainable growth. These excesses and deficiencies that are now having a stranglehold on developing countries include:


- Excessive emphasis on promoting the freedom of choice—right to entry and exit—of foreign economic agents and the goods and services they produce. Increasingly, developing countries have no room for experimentation and reconsideration of policy approaches, remedies and instruments.
- A most egregious excess is the largess of subsidies to agri businesses in the north that results in the dumping of agricultural products (corn, milk, rice etc.) by rich countries on poor countries. On the other side, there is a deficiency in commodity prices and insufficient protection for food staples such as rice in developing country.
- There is also excessive attention to how the market

works versus inadequate attention to how markets are actually developed, function and maintained in different developing countries.

- Excessive attention to market access and inadequate or deficient treatment of conditions and nature of domestic production and reproduction.

In the current increasingly polarised political climate, there is need for new directions that can relieve tensions and build a new ground for moving forward. This space must allow discussion, sharing and interchanges around core values that are at the centre of the UN's, and hence global, commitments to gender, social and economic justice and peace forged over the last millennium, and in particular the last fifty or so years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Thus, a strategic framework for sustainable global trade must be based upon the following two critical legs.

- 1) A renewed social contract between rich and poor countries that is grounded in a commitment to economic development grounded in principles of: food sovereignty; fair competition; fair share in the burden of adjustment of external accounts; narrowing or closing the gap between overly tightened trade rules and overly lax financial and monetary rules; better terms of trade for developing countries' products; co-existence of varieties of exchange rate management, depending on a country's self defined needs; respect and tolerance for a variety of approaches to economic and social policy, depending on a country's self defined needs and priorities
- 2) Trade assumes the role of one among many key cornerstones of a broad prosperity agenda that includes:
  - A renewed emphasis on full (and meaningful and sustainable) employment
  - Upwards harmonization and safeguards of workers rights
  - Gender equity, gender analysis and gender indicators in assessing benefit gains, costs and losses from trade
  - The promotion of comprehensive approach to human rights in all bilateral, multilateral and regional trade agreements
  - Corporate accountability
  - Tax on speculative capital transactions, especially foreign exchange transactions
  - Liberalisation of immigration (as it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Europeans were able to emigrate to Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and elsewhere—this made a substantial contribution to the economic development of Europe).
  - Debt write-off 



# The Relationship of Research to Activism in the Making of Policy: Lessons from Gender and Development

*Very brief excerpts from a paper by Gita Sen, DAWN Coordinator for the Political Economy of Globalisation, for the Conference on Social Knowledge and International Policy Making: Can Research Make a Difference? UN Research Institute for Social Development, Geneva, 2004*

The field of gender and development is often viewed as a sterling example of researchers and activists working together to bring about policy change. A cursory glance at the kinds of policy changes that have occurred in the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century suggests strong confirmation for this view. It happened furthermore, in a relatively short 30-year time-span during which the field of gender and development was itself evolving and taking definition. During this time policy was made, changed and shaped by the agglomeration of researchers and activists that call themselves part of the women's movement. And policy makers who rarely have time or patience to deal with the intellectual vagaries of a newly evolving field appear to have paid attention.

What lessons are to be learned by those who attempt to create knowledge to support social policy? Is the experience of the women's movement unique or special?

Three illustrative examples of policy change: engendering macroeconomics; sexual and reproductive health and rights; and human rights, especially violence against women, show that the relationship of activism to research has been far from smooth, and continues to be fraught with challenges. Nonetheless, it offers a number of lessons for how a better understanding of the politics of policy, and the politics of discourse may actually help to close the gaps between research and policy.

.....The field of gender and development took shape in the 1970s, informed by the critical research of feminist anthropologists and historians. There was not, at this time, a sharp distinction between researchers and activists; this blurring of roles may also have been due to the importance of universities in the social uprisings of the 1960s. Feminists' work was focused on understanding the place of gender in socio-economic systems and post-Beijing there has seen further strengthening of feminist analysis of trade, and integration, albeit slowly, of women's concerns in the movement for global economic justice as represented in the World Social Forum.

.....Women's struggle for control over their bodies is currently in its second phase. The first phase occurred during the birth-control movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Despite the South versus North skirmishes over the relative importance of 'development' versus family planning in controlling population growth, there was very little real challenge to this consensus about population policy until the rise of the modern women's movement in the 1960s and '70s. A new framework for population-related policy was created that affirmed women's right to control their fertility and meet their needs for safe, affordable and

accessible contraceptives, while recognising the social determinants, and health and rights consequences of sexual and reproductive behaviour. New and radical concepts such as reproductive and sexual health and rights had to be clarified. A significant part of this research reflected the conscious combined and collective effort of feminist researchers, activists, and a growing number of people from the policy establishment to win a place for activists at the policy table, and to build support for the paradigm shift within the policy establishment.

.....Women's organising in preparation for the 1993 International Conference on Human Rights in Vienna set the stage for the broadening of the human rights framework. Violence against women became the lever that moved the opposition argument that there was no need for specific recognition of women's human rights. This struggle brought together a powerful combination of activists who could identify and document experiences, and feminist lawyers who could translate those experiences into the legal terminology and concepts needed for negotiation. This experience of working together also gave the women's movement analytical and negotiating skills and very importantly the language skills needed to become effective players in official negotiations.

Looking more closely at these examples raises questions about the politics of policy advocacy and the politics of discourse.....

## .....The Politics of Policy Advocacy

The achievements of the women's movement in these situations were due in no small measure to the ability to work through internal differences and develop common positions. However, the differences were sometimes quite significant and often very difficult to transcend; sometimes the differences would be set aside in the face of a common 'enemy' only to resurface when the situation became easier.

Substantive differences often arose around the relative importance of immediate ground-level perceptions and understanding versus analytical discussion and extrapolation or abstraction. Whose 'reality' has greater validity when there are differences? While such tensions are inevitable given the varying grounds of research and activism, they have become sharper in the era of globalisation.

These differences often translate into differences of power. Challenges to the links between knowledge and power have a long tradition in the women's movement, in the early days often taking the form of a South versus North divide.

To next page



### From previous page

This has changed considerably as direct links between activist organisations in the South and funding agencies have grown. Ironically, the result has been greater 'research' demands (framing proposals, monitoring, analysis and report-writing) being imposed on organisations that have little capacity for research. Activist organisations now perforce have to search for more qualified professional staff who can fulfil these requirements, and this has its own dynamic for the internal hierarchies within an organisation. What has tended to happen as a result is that what used to be a struggle for power between an activist organisation and external researchers has been displaced to two other levels: the level of an internal struggle within organisations, and a new form of struggle between funding agencies and organisations.

A more symbiotic relationship between researcher and activist is now evolving as a result. But this does not mean that the relationships are now free of tension. A closer look at the sociology of research and activism may provide another perspective on these issues. Tension between researchers and activists is not the same or evenly distributed in different countries and regions. The potential for tension appears greater when researchers and activists come from similar social and economic backgrounds, but have made different life choices early on which then affect their life trajectories and life chances. Competition may sometimes appear in the guise of disagreements over the basis of knowledge or the extent of commitment to a cause. Such competition may be more or less severe depending on whether life choices once made are difficult to alter, or whether people can move more fluidly from being a researcher to being an activist and vice versa.

This would explain why the attempt to combine research with activism is greeted with suspicion and wariness. If the researcher begins to combine in herself field-level knowledge obtained from the ground, or if the activist develops the capacity for more rigorous analysis, it can make her a far more formidable competitor in the struggle for funds and recognition.

I do not hold that all the differences that surface between research and activism are only manifestations of such displacement. But the issue is present enough and important enough that it has to be addressed in a more straightforward manner.....

### .....The Politics of Discourse

In an International Feminist Dialogue, there was an argument made that the language of human rights and reproductive rights has been so coopted by powerful institutions that women's organisations should no longer use these concepts or the related frameworks. This is neither the first nor will it be the last time that such an argument is heard. Its source is frustration at the slow pace of change and mistrust of the organisations entrusted with change, or who may be the self-anointed agents of change.

This is the point at which two different routes can be taken. One is that chosen by the speakers in the

International Feminist Dialogue who argued that it is time to drop the use of terms that have been coopted and by implication corrupted and rendered bereft of transforming power. The other route is one that I believe has more potential for moving debate forward. It is to recognise that the fact that the new terms and frameworks are being taken up by the opposition is an important sign not of failure, but of success in the first level of the struggle for change. If knowledge is power, then changing the terrain of discourse is the first but very important step. It makes it possible to fight the opposition on the ground of one's choosing. Giving up one's concepts and frameworks at this stage is a sure guarantee of losing both the battle and the war!

.....Ground-level mobilisation (except perhaps for the WSF and anti-WTO rallies) still happens by and large at local and national and possibly at regional levels. This is especially true for the women's movement. But the struggles over language and discourse have happened in the first instance at the global level, particularly for many in the South. The gap between the two is literally oceanic! Great efforts have to be made to communicate the content, meanings and implications of the conceptual changes that have occurred. And this has to happen if activists in local and national locales are to play the role of interlocutors of governments to ensure implementation - the changes in laws, institutions, practices and mind-sets - that are necessary in the next phase.

The transformation of discourse into policy change - implementation in a word - is bound to be a time of great turmoil and clashes of interests as those who were favoured by the status quo ante are challenged..... and...

### .....Implications for the making of social policy change

How effective has the combined research and activism of the women's movement been in making an impact on social policy? The changes in discourse have been almost monumental in some instances. Changes on the ground within countries have been more mixed as might be expected.

Engaging in relationships with allies and opponents has been essential for the field of gender and development to really be able to transform policy. But the women's movement's own capacity to engage has had many sociological limitations. Very few women are actually trained as economists; women have relatively little experience with making policy since they have by and large been outside the mainstream of policy institutions and structures, and even marginalised from the institutions of representative democracy; women also have little background in negotiating power within large organisational structures such as bureaucracies or other institutions of the state which men have dominated from time immemorial.

These weaknesses have often meant that feminist activists are more comfortable with oppositional politics that requires them to be on the streets rather than in the

To next page



# LOSING GROUND FROM BARBADOS TO MAURITIUS

DAWN Caribbean Regional Coordinator, Joan Grant-Cummings, was at the UN international meeting to review the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, SIDS, held in Mauritius 6-14 January 2005. DAWN was a co-supporter of the Coalition for Community Participation in Governance, which represented Jamaican NGOs and women's organisations and participated in the concurrent Civil Society Forum, 6-9 January 2005.

The Caribbean caucus carried a number of concerns into the meeting, including gaps between national assessments and reality that indicated the need for development of benchmarks and indicators for the Barbados Programme of Action. The caucus agreed also that information on the BPOA was incomplete and unclear.

The three regions, Caribbean, Pacific and SIDS of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea, identified critical issues that included trade inequalities, transport of hazardous waste through SIDS regions, biodiversity conservation, sustainable production and consumption, climate change, HIV/AIDS and health, and militarisation. The Civil Society Forum included a number of workshops to develop consensus recommendations on key issues. Those from the workshop on participation and governance for sustainable development for SIDS included the need for participatory processes in all stages of governance and the involvement of vulnerable groups, particularly children, youth, women, farmers, fishers and people in poverty.

A workshop on ocean and marine resources management considered the serious decline of coral reefs due to pollution and global warming and ineffectiveness of conservation work. It called for coral reef restoration using the method developed by the Global Coral Reef Alliance. The group called also for an end to perverse fishing subsidies and harmful practices, including damaging bottom trawling, and condemned the United States refusal to sign the Kyoto agreement.

A Women's Caucus convened by the Coalition for Community Participation in Governance/DAWN succeeded in having key issues of concern to women from SIDS regions included in the Civil Society Declaration that was read at the official Mauritius meeting. The statement called for civil society and all governments to recommit to

agreements already outlined in the UN Beijing Platform for Action; recommitment to the agreements of the International Conference on Population and Development; and a call to all countries to ratify the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The Women's Caucus said many households in some SIDS are single female led and that women make up 90% of those in the 'informal' economy, with low wages, underemployment, no social security and increased unpaid work. The feminisation of HIV/AIDS was registered as a major issue for all SIDS, and the effective 'sweeping under the rug' of abortion, family planning and birth control as part of national, regional and international debates. While women have more access to education in some SIDS, it had not translated into greater access to power and economic independence.

In the official meeting it became clear that no SIDS government, intergovernmental agency or multi-lateral institution was happy with implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action so far, and all agreed that lack of commitment to promised resources was a major barrier. Nor had the advent of the WTO after the adoption of the BPOA been taken into account or been expected to have such a retarding effect on progress.

## Conference Outcomes

The meeting process produced two agreed documents, a strategy paper and declaration. Of note is the inclusion of culture (knowledge and capacity building) as one of the pillars of sustainable development. There was also recognition that greater cooperation between SIDS should actually be implemented.


Climate change and sea level rise was contentious from the outset, and ended with SIDS losing ground. Rather than commitment to prevent and treat the issue, there were half-hearted promises to 'adapt'. For SIDS this is a non-starter, given that they do not create most of the environmental situations leading to climate change and sea level rise, and adaptation is financially prohibitive. Key intergovernmental agencies committed to allocating resources for further implementation of the BPOA (now the Mauritius Strategy), and the Caribbean coalition group was successful in being included in the UNEP Civil Society Implementation proposal as a partner on water and sanitation projects. The fact that many governments, intergovernmental agencies and panellists spoke specifically about the involvement of civil society and the inclusion of culture demonstrates some potential shifting in how governments see the further implementation.

---

## From previous page

offices and corridors where negotiations occur and power is brokered.....

## .....Conclusion

Neither research by itself nor activism by itself can bring about change in policy discourse or policy implementation. Different combinations may be necessary in different circumstances, but the two must come together nonetheless. The terrain of power in which social change movements have to operate is a complex one where opponents can be obdurate or wily, where alliances can shift like quicksand. Self-reflexivity, patience and stamina are essential ingredients for forward movement. 



# WSF highlights - Porto Alegre, January 2005

DAWN took an active role in the 2005 World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, 26-31 January, including producing a special supplement on the changing social contract, and in the preceding Feminist Dialogues, 23-25 January 2005. Here are some excerpts from presentations given by DAWN South East Asia Coordinator, Gigi Francisco.

“Our feminist dialogues put us squarely within a feminist politics of resistance and re-generation. Resistance because no matter where we are, we persist in our active opposition to various forces that are intensifying old and creating new forms of oppression and exploitation of all women who continue to be politically marginalised and socially controlled and among whom the majority are poor, coloured and/or belong to stigmatized groups. Re-generation because even as we continue to resist, we are at the same time in the process of refining our critiques, revitalising our links across diversities, and re-creating a democratic and inclusive transnational feminist movement that finds itself in the bosom of global resistances and alternatives alongside other progressives and social movements.

A few strategic guiding principles in moving towards a new form of transnational feminist inter-subjective connectivity, even as we accept that we are in a permanent state of tensions with one another, are:

Acceptance that each of us brings only a partial view of women's oppression and exploitation that is bound by our contexts, historicities and identities; that even within this positional standpoint-viewpoint, the impact of neo-liberalism, militarisms and fundamentalisms are forcing us to re-adjust our lenses and re-think strategies.

Recognition and respect of our diversities. No one struggle is above any other's struggle.

Continuing to find ways on how to confront each other - in respectable ways and within safe spaces - about whether and how we bring economic justice or the need for re-distribution of wealth and opportunities, into our feminist analytical and political equation.

The necessity to grasp the complexities spawned by the era of globalisation, particularly at this juncture. The technological and information revolution has produced both negative and positive impacts on our lives and bodies as female human beings and as citizens, but all are being over-ridden by neo-liberal policies in the service of capitalist modernity, and further transmogrified by the unilateralism of one country that has become more insidious in the hands of war-mongering, fundamentalist neo-conservative forces. This is not the globalisation we want. More vigorous promotion of democracy within the social movements and in our own actions in ways that respect diversities and facilitate our coming together

with other social movements around a temporal strategic political agenda of resistance and alternatives.

Specific action can include:

Being visible in various sites, movements and fronts of resistances .

Radicalising democracy by engaging in debates on all forms, tendencies and resurgence of fundamentalisms, fascism and patriarchy in our societies, communities, networks and organizations, even as we claim our rightful spaces in these sites and spaces in the spirit of solidarity.

Prioritise solidarity with those of us who are poor and marginalised and are struggling against extreme poverty and those fighting for their lives in situations where persecution of democratic and progressive women and men are taking place, those living under occupation such as Iraq and Palestine, and those women and men who are being targeted by armed movements because they are supporting democratic processes.

Diversify and multiply the spaces for feminist dialogues and inter-connectivity outside and beyond the inter-governmental meetings of the United Nations and the annual World Social Forum even as we critically engage in their processes.” **Closing Plenary, Feminist Dialogues**

---

## Inter-Movement Dialogue

Our experience in inter-linking women's emancipation aspirations and gender issues into the “male-stream” of social movements is a story of persistent struggle marked with some happy moments and uncertain outcomes. Since 1996, DAWN has embarked on engendering the social movements through our participation in coalitions and alliances at the global and regional levels, such as in the International Council of the World Social Forum and some regional WSF events, the WTO, the alliance against war, social movement aggregations, and NGO lobby and campaigns in and around UN. In these ten years, some of us have become quite impatient over how little has been achieved from the tremendous effort that we put in our process of inter-linking. Overall,

To next page



# DAWN 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

DAWN's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event in Cape Town, 24-27 October 2004, was successful in bringing together a significant number of feminists from throughout the South who had worked with DAWN in one way or another during the past two decades. They were joined by friends, supporters and funders from the North for a gathering aimed as much at reflecting on current and future challenges and rejuvenating the international feminist movement as celebrating the network's achievements.

Just over 100 women were able to travel to South Africa for the event, including 89 whom DAWN was able to fund or subsidise through grants raised especially for the Anniversary. Representatives of some of DAWN's donor partners were also able to attend, including Kilolo Kijakazi of the Ford Foundation, Ireen Dubel of HIVOS, Gitti Hentschel of HBF, and Nomcebo Manzini of UNIFEM. Many of those unable to join DAWN in Cape Town sent congratulatory messages that provided a strong sense of feminist solidarity with DAWN. These messages were shared at the opening session and posted on the website.

A special anniversary issue of DAWN Informs was published to chart the network's course from its beginnings in Bangalore in 1984 preparing for the UN Conference on Women in Nairobi, through the meetings of the 1990s,

To next page

## From previous page

however, DAWN continues to see the value of building bridges across feminist movements and other social movements, because after all, the fight for an alternative world is one that we all have a part and a stake in.

Happy moments include:


That there are more women and men in labour groups, social movements, NGOs and left political parties that are aware of the issue of sexual harassment.

To a lesser extent, there is cautious tolerance of sexual choice and diverse lifestyles that is slowly transgressing into hetero-normative modes of thinking and behaving.

There is some genuine recognition of the contribution of feminists in the construction of an alternative world and the determination of issues that would go into the groups' political programs or platforms.


Feminists are now accepted by other social movements as members of the broad women's movement, with feminism having become more widely accepted as a source of political analysis and actions within women's movements.

The biggest, most serious and dangerous risk that could completely overturn these gains is the creeping influence of fundamentalist patriarchal ideas within social movements and in people's struggles.

Fundamentalisms do not only pose a threat to feminists and women, although we are one of its first targets, but is also very much a threat to social movements that are advancing their struggles for social justice, democracy and peace. 

## New Politics

"Feminist and women's movements are very concerned about the creeping influence of fundamentalist notions and resurgence of patriarchal ideas within social movements and in people's struggles. For us, this is a serious and dangerous risk not only for women's movements and feminists but for social movements and progressives everywhere. Even in the WSF, we see the emergence and valorisation of some leaders who promote fundamentalist ideas of disciplining and marking women's bodies as symbols of moral correctness and political militancy. Fundamentalists do not have a tolerance for diversity; they essentialise women's roles according to culture and religion; and they are characteristically authoritarian and anti-democratic. As one woman from Iraq expressed in our feminist dialogues two days before the WSF opened: 'We are caught between two sharks: US occupation and fundamentalist movements.' The question we should be asking is: how do we persist fervently in our anti-occupation struggles in a way that we do not also lend political legitimacy to fundamentalists?"

Linked to this, abortion and same sex unions have also become controversial issues and a source of tensions among social justice movements that enjoy traditional support from the Catholic Church. What the Catholic Church hierarchy wants is to withdraw from women our hard-won struggle to gain recognition for sexual and reproductive rights and self-determination. Our question is: how are social movements and progressives defending our political space that is secular, democratic and diverse? Can and should social movements lend solidarity with feminists and women's movements in re-affirming our human rights?" 



## From previous page

the +5 and +10 reviews and other engagements in the changing geopolitical environment of the new millennium.

The event opened with a party and lively celebratory cultural evening organised by 17 graduates of the inaugural DAWN Training Institute. The opening began with warm welcome addresses from local DAWN hosts, DTI graduate Shamillah Wilson and DAWN Research Coordinator for Political Restructuring and Social Transformation, Vivienne Taylor, and outgoing General Coordinator, Claire Slatter. Cape Town's female band, Women Unite, gave a music and dance performance and the DTI alumni paid tribute to DAWN in song.

The morning of 25 October was given to a multimedia presentation on DAWN, beginning with a powerpoint presentation of DAWN history prepared as an anniversary gift by REPEM, DAWN's Latin American partner based in Uruguay and until 2004, the organisational base of DAWN Regional coordinator for Latin America, Celita Eccher. The presentation was a tribute to ingenuity because of the poor attention DAWN had paid to keeping a photographic record of its work, particularly its early activities.

In the Feminist Graffiti/open mike session that followed, Rosalind Petchesky shared her personal experience of working with DAWN and showed an entertaining selection of pictures of DAWN representatives engaged in meetings around the ICPD+5 review. Others within and outside DAWN shared stories and memories of DAWN. Carol Narcisse paid a moving tribute to DAWN founding member Lucille Mair of Jamaica, an internationally-known Jamaican feminist historian, advocate for women's equality, diplomat, and leading figure in the UN Decade for Women. Others put their thoughts, memories and tributes on papers pinned to the walls.

Later the content and analytical framework of DAWN's anniversary publication (in press) was shared by a panel of contributors who included editors Gita Sen and Sonia Correa. The publishers, Zed Press, distributed flyers for the book that builds on DAWN's work in the past four years of linking its themes. The book was conceived in a Bombay traffic jam on the way to the 2004 World Social Forum, where DAWN representatives found themselves suspended between two possibilities offered by banners surrounding the WSF site. A huge slogan from the Communist party of India that declared: A Communist World is Possible, and the WSF's distinctive red banner which asked inexplicably 'Have You Ever Wanted to Climb the Air'. As the

contributors explained it, the book offers both a critique and revitalisation of the idea of social contracts, posing questions aimed at assiting an understanding of our troubled world, and who and what feminists are within it. The panel was followed by an animated discussion amongst participants, which provided the DAWN authors with helpful feedback.

Tuesday morning began with an Intergenerational Dialogue, organised by DTI graduates. It was introduced by large screen projections of cameo interviews with old and young Anniversary participants, who were filmed sharing their thoughts and visions for the feminist movement by documentary film maker Deepa Dhanraj and her team the previous day. Among the older DAWN women interviewed for the film were Devaki Jain, Hameeda Hossain and Fatma Alloo. Zen Tadesse of Ethiopia facilitated the intergenerational dialogue that followed.

The programme continued with a vibrant debate on the theme 'Economic Justice, Gender Justice and Erotic Justice: are they compatible?' Moderated by South Africa's Pregs Govender, a former ANC parliamentarian, the panellists included Margaret Chung of Fiji, Rosalind Petchesky of the US, Susanna George of Malaysia, Dzodzi Tsikatas of Ghana, and Bernadette Muthien of South Africa.

On the final day there were moving speeches, presentations and gift exchanges relating to the leadership transition within DAWN. Outgoing General Coordinator, Claire Slatter, was thanked for coordinating the network since 1997 and Bene Madunagu was welcomed as the new General Coordinator. Peggy Antrobus was sadly farewelled as the outgoing Past General Coordinator, her place on the Steering Committee now assumed by Claire. In a moving gesture of support for the new General Coordinator, Bene Madunagu, and solidarity with DAWN, African DAWN representatives presented gifts of 'kanga' cloth from Tanzania to participants and to Claire, who reciprocated with a presentation of masi, Fijian bark cloth, from Pacific DAWN to Bene.

A highlight of the programme was the launch of a book on the global women's movement, *The Global Women's Movement* (Zed, 2004), by former General Coordinator Peggy Antrobus. The volume also had a lively New York launch during the CSW session in March 2005.

The programme was designed with enough space in mind to permit ongoing debate and feminist discussion among DAWN and friends – but as ever, there seemed never enough time to talk, plan, or to reminisce. 🌻



# DAWN Training Institute

DAWN will hold its second feminist advocacy training programme in Montevideo, Uruguay, 7-29 November 2005. Applications closed 31 March and the selection of up to 30 participants is in process.

The DAWN Training Institute was inaugurated in Bangalore, India, in 2003 and has been followed by a number of regional programmes. The training programmes are designed for young feminist activists who are engaged in, or have a strong interest in, global advocacy work for gender justice. The programme draws on both DAWN's feminist analysis which interlinks issues under the themes of Political Economy of Globalisation, Sustainable Livelihoods and Environmental Justice, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and Political Restructuring and Social Transformation; and the network's considerable experience in UN conference processes and other sites of struggle, including the global civil society movement against economic globalisation.

The broad aims of the institute are to build capacity among young feminist activists, especially in understanding linkages between different issues and advocacy agendas, particularly those concerned with economic and gender justice; to strengthen feminist advocacy work at global and regional level; and to deepen analysis in some complex areas. It is intended to prepare young feminists for the challenges entailed in working for gender justice in the present global political and economic context.

Participants will be trained by experienced feminist advocates who will assist them to understand the changing terrain of the struggle for gender justice. They will be exposed to the ideas and work of other activist scholars and will examine critical issues under each theme in the context of current debates at the global level, and their interlinkages with issues under other themes.

## Reports on Regional Training:

### AFRICA

An Africa Regional Training Institute was held in Dakar, Senegal, 6-12 June 2004. It brought together 20 women from different organisations and networks in Nigeria, Senegal, Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, South Africa and Burkina Faso with funding from Population Action International.

The general objective was to share research outcomes of the on-going SRHR project by DAWN in three African countries, and to empower young African women activists with data and information for the debates, discussions and consensus building in the process of the regional meeting of ICPD+10.

Activities included a training/skills building workshop with young African women and DAWN African regional team members before the ECA ministerial meeting of June 10-12, 2004 in Dakar.

Participants mapped out strategies and shared research findings to provide data and analysis for clarity of discussion on the implementation of the Cairo POA and evaluation of progress made; and worked on information and communications skills to help delegations hold to the Cairo commitments and a reaffirmation of the ICPD POA

Participants were able to get registered and attend all crucial sessions of the Ministerial meetings that were open to NGOs. They formed the main lobbying group to get the official meeting to re-affirm the Cairo POA. The African activists in the DAWN

team were strongly supported by and benefited from the expertise of PAI, FCI and IWHC. The group also took part in the NGO forum initiated and moderated by the DAWN team and were involved in developing the position paper from NGOs. One of the young women trainees read the NGO statement at the official meeting. A listserv keeps the group in touch and advances the sharing of information to keep abreast of ICPD+10 and Beijing+10 processes.

### PACIFIC

A five-day Pacific training programme organized by DAWN Pacific and the Fiji Women's Rights Movement was held in February 2005 in Nadi, Fiji, for 18 young women from Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. They interrogated the concept of a 'Pacific' feminism while strengthening skills in advocacy and sharpening capacity for critical analysis. The workshop drew on FWRM's extensive experience in training and DAWN's feminist analysis and experience in conference processes. Some participants shared their recent experience in the Feminist Dialogues and proposed national and regional level dialogues.

Two graduates from the inaugural training institute, Varia Williams from the Caribbean and Tara Chetty from Fiji, were amongst those who facilitated sessions. Participants commented that the learning contract designed and agreed upon with the facilitators created a safe space that allowed them to express themselves without judgment. 🌺



**D**AWN *Inform*s is published by Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) as a networking tool for its members. DAWN is an autonomous inter-regional organisation of the South which acts as a network and catalyst advocating alternative development processes that emphasise the basic survival needs of the world's people, particularly Third World women and their children.

Subscriptions for printed version: Free to women based in the South. Friends based in the North are asked to make an annual minimum contribution of US\$20.00. Please notify any change of address by contacting [dawn\\_angafri@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dawn_angafri@yahoo.co.uk)

## STEERING COMMITTEE

**General Coordinator:** *Bene Madunagu, Nigeria*  
Tel: (234) 8722-2340; Fax: (234) 8722-0929  
Email: [dawn\\_angafri@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dawn_angafri@yahoo.co.uk)

**Former General Coordinator:** *Claire Slatter, Fiji*  
Tel: (679) 313900 Ext 2183/2184  
Fax: (679) 314770  
Email: [claire@dawn.org.fj](mailto:claire@dawn.org.fj)

## RESEARCH COORDINATORS

### Political Economy of Globalisation:

*Gita Sen, India*

Tel: (91) 80 663 2450;  
Fax: (91) 80 664 4050  
Email: [Gita@iimb.ernet.in](mailto:Gita@iimb.ernet.in)

### Political Economy of Globalisation (Trade):

*Mariamaw Williams*

Tel: (561) 655 0881  
Fax: (561) 833 8177  
email: [mariamaw@hotmail.com](mailto:mariamaw@hotmail.com)

### Sexual and Reproductive Rights:

*Sonia Correa, Brazil*

Tel: (55) 21 2223 10470;  
Fax: (55) 21 2253 8495  
Email: [scorrea@abiaids.org.br](mailto:scorrea@abiaids.org.br)

### Pol. Restructuring & Soc. Transformation

*Vivienne Taylor, South Africa*

Tel: (27) 21 6504221;  
Fax: (27) 21 6854304 (h)  
Email: [Taylor94@iafrica.com](mailto:Taylor94@iafrica.com)

### Sustainable Livelihoods and Environmental Justice

## REGIONAL COORDINATORS

**Africa: Anglophone:** *Afua Hesse, Ghana*  
Email: [ahesse@ghanatel.com.gh](mailto:ahesse@ghanatel.com.gh)

**Africa: Francophone:** *Fatou Sow, Senegal*  
Tel: (221) 825-0090; Fax: (221) 825-6533  
Email: [Fatousow@sentoo.sn](mailto:Fatousow@sentoo.sn)

**Caribbean:** *Joan Grant-Cummings, Jamaica*  
Tel: (876) 929 8873; Fax: (876) 968 9260  
Email: [bracelets59@yahoo.com](mailto:bracelets59@yahoo.com)

**Latin America:** *Celita Eccher, Uruguay*  
Tel/Fax: (598-2) 408-0089  
Email: [dawn@repem.org.uy](mailto:dawn@repem.org.uy)

**Pacific:** *Yvonne Underhill-Sem*  
Tel: (64 9) 373 7599  
email: [yju\\_sem@yahoo.com](mailto:yju_sem@yahoo.com)

**South Asia:** *Vanita Nayak Mukherjee, India*  
Tel: (91) 471 441534  
Email: [Vanita@md2.vsnl.net.in](mailto:Vanita@md2.vsnl.net.in)

**South East Asia:** *Gigi Francisco, Philippines*  
Tel: (63) 2 9272421; Fax: (63) 2 4260169  
Email: [gigifran@skynet.net](mailto:gigifran@skynet.net) & [dawn-sea@mc.edu.ph](mailto:dawn-sea@mc.edu.ph)

You are welcome to use or reproduce any material from DAWN *Inform*s, but please cite the source as DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era). This issue of DAWN *Inform*s is available on DAWN website: [www.dawn.org.fj](http://www.dawn.org.fj)

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

### Note new address:

PO Box 3663, UNICAL Post Office  
Calabar, Cross River State, NIGERIA  
Email: [dawn\\_angafri@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dawn_angafri@yahoo.co.uk)  
Website: [www.dawn.org.fj](http://www.dawn.org.fj)