

DAWN

DAWN INFORMS

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era

DAWN at the World Summit

A brief report on the World Summit by Françoise Girard (U.N. liaison for DAWN). Françoise was one of DAWN's representatives at the World Summit in New York, September, 2005.

Between April and September 2005, DAWN worked closely with WEDO and the Center for Global Women's Leadership (CWGL) to ensure that previous international commitments to gender equality and reproductive health would be fully reflected in the document to be adopted at the UN World Summit.

In order to do this, DAWN hired Françoise Girard as a consultant. Françoise worked previously as Senior Program Officer for International Policy at the International Women's Health Coalition, where she gained extensive knowledge of UN negotiations. DAWN, WEDO and CWGL developed a common position on the first draft of the Outcome Document submitted to governments by the Secretary General in March 2005. They also reached out to the United Methodist UN Office and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to get their perspective on the peace and security proposals. Together, all five groups agreed on a common set of proposed amendments from women's organizations. They began meeting with UN missions in April 2005 to persuade them to adopt this language, while also arranging meetings with national governments at country level. DAWN also kept close contact with UNFPA on the issue of sexual and reproductive health.

Throughout the summer and the various versions of the draft Outcome Documents, DAWN and its partners continued this outreach to diplomats and government officials, with modified amendments as required. Happily, each version of the draft Outcome Document saw some improvement of the text on issues of gender equality.

DAWN also worked closely with WEDO, CWGL and the Global Call for Action Against Poverty (GCAP)'s Feminist Task Force to ensure a strong presence of feminists at the Civil Society hearings held in June 2005 to provide input into the draft Outcome Document. This was very successful, and the message of gender equality was stated by many participants in all the sessions at the Hearings – and repeated by Kofi Annan twice in his own summary of the Hearings. DAWN, WEDO and CWGL brought together 30 NGO representatives from all regions of the world for a 3-day strategic session for women's

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Successes in the Summit's agreements

In a strong statement issued at the end of the UN World Summit to assess progress in implementing the Millennium Development Goals, women's organisations cited successes in the Summit's agreements on gender equality, but underscored the lack of political will to tackle poverty, foster peace, and ensure human rights

United Nations, New York City, September 14, 2005

After months of pressuring governments on women's rights, advocates from around the world have achieved some gains on gender equality in the World Summit outcome document, despite the lack of meaningful action on the total package under debate.

Advocates ensured that women's rights issues were not casualties of the Summit's high-stakes poker game. In fact, the Millennium Development Goal on gender equality (#3) has been expanded from an original focus on primary education to include the following:

An end to impunity for violence against women

The goal of universal access to reproductive health

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organizations after the Hearings, where we reviewed what we had done and prepared for the next steps.

DAWN, WEDO and CWGL retained a media consultant, Riptide Communications, to try to secure media coverage of women's concerns at the Summit in spite of the competing news stories (Hurricane Katrina, the Roberts hearings, etc.). We prepared a background document for the press ("What's At Stake for Women at the Summit?") We held a press briefing at the UN 2 weeks before the Summit, and issued a steady flow of press releases and statements. Coverage included NPR/WNYC, Women's Enews, Interpress News Service, and WBAI.

In the last few weeks, when negotiations took place at the UN, DAWN was present to engage with diplomats and pressure them not to drop language on gender equality. DAWN, WEDO and CWGL wrote a letter to US Ambassador John Bolton warning him that his tactics would weaken the outcome of the Summit, and would not secure the reforms the US allegedly wanted. We also wrote letters of support and exhortation to President of the General Assembly Jean Ping and to Secretary-

General Kofi Annan to maintain the existing language on gender equality in the text.

DAWN also participated actively in strategy sessions organized by the Gcap Feminist Task Force, and in other strategy meetings convened by other groups working on the Summit.

In spite of our disappointment at the Summit's weak agreements on the Human Rights Council, trade, debt relief and foreign assistance – all subjects on which we had also worked hard - we can nevertheless claim a measure of success in our Summit work. The final Document adopted by the General Assembly on September 16 contains many provisions relative to gender equality that we proposed and fought for – notably a statement that MDG 3 on gender equality should be achieved by means of a series of strategies (rather than by access to primary education only), including by combating violence against women and ensuring access to reproductive health. The section on "Health and HIV" also states that universal access to reproductive health as agreed at ICPD must be included in strategies to achieve the MDGs on maternal and child health, HIV, gender and poverty reduction. The important role of women in peace building as outlined in Security Council resolution 1325 is recognized explicitly, as is the urgent need to eradicate policies and practices that discriminate against women and to adopt laws that support gender equality.



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The right to own and inherit property

Equal access to labour protections

Increased representation of women in government decision-making bodies

In addition world leaders agreed to repeal all laws that discriminate against women and promised to implement the landmark Security Council Resolution 1325, which promotes women's increased participation in peace and security processes.

One of the most significant achievements of the Summit was a historic agreement on the responsibility of states and the international community to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Another concrete gain is a commitment to double the budget for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

However, women's groups have been dismayed by a shameful lack of political will on the part of governments to tackle poverty, foster peace, and ensure human rights. The grand bargain envisioned for the World Summit has failed. This bargain called for a serious commitment to trade reform, debt relief and financial resources for development in exchange for a Human Rights Council, Peace-building Commission, and UN management reform. Instead, countries referred these issues to the General Assembly, where the same political divisions prevail.

The US was rebuffed on its top priority of UN management reform, because of its refusal to agree to any substantial compromise on development issues. With the arrival of Ambassador Bolton, the US shifted into high gear, issuing ultimatums, insisting on hundreds of amendments and renegeing on past commitments.

No progress was made on the key demands of developing countries-The US and a few other wealthy nations refused to commit to deadlines for giving 0.7 percent of GNP for official development assistance. Agreements on trade were virtually meaningless. The "agreement" on climate change was a step back from what the G8 agreed to at their recent meeting in Gleneagles, which was already weak. Furthermore, the permanent members of the Security Council retain their veto power, even in cases of genocide and crimes against humanity.

Women expected more from their governments. Once again they have missed an opportunity to take meaningful and bold action on the world's most critical problems. But women's advocates will not be deterred. We will continue to press for our rights and to hold governments accountable for their commitments to the world's women.

Statement by:

Action Aid International Africa

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development Gender Program

Centre for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)

Choice for Youth and Sexuality, Netherlands

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)

Family Care International

Gender and Education Office (ICAE)

Girls' Power Initiative, Nigeria

Inform, Sri Lanka

International Council on Adult Education

International Institute for Cooperation Amongst People

MADRE

Milenio Feminista

Red de educacion popular entre mujeres de America Latina y el Caribe (REPEM)

United Methodist UN Office

Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

Youth Coalition



Women's Groups Prescribe Political Viagra for World Leaders

United Nations, New York City, September 13, 2005

Women's organizations worldwide are gravely concerned by the state of negotiations on the World Summit. We are especially appalled by the unilateralism and unwillingness of the US to compromise. We are dismayed by the impotence of so many governments - especially the US - who clearly lack the political will to reach a groundbreaking agreement on development, human rights, peace and UN reform.

Despite the fact that the outcomes of UN conferences of the 1990s have recently been reaffirmed by all governments - the Beijing Platform for Action as recently as March 2005 - governments are now showing little courage to live up to those commitments.

The paragraph proposed by Brazil on increasing the capacities of adults and adolescents to protect themselves from HIV infection, has not been supported widely, and is in danger of being diluted by US language that is a covert attempt at inserting "abstinence-only education" as a main prevention approach.

The text on the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts is being held hostage to language on "foreign occupation" - an intractable debate at the UN that should not be used to derail this crucial paragraph.

The agreement on the Responsibility to Protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity is still held up by squabbles over its title.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission is caught up in insistence by the US that it remains under the complete control of the permanent members of the Security Council.

Even issues the US allegedly cares about have

been severely undermined by the chaos caused by its own obstructionist tactics in the Summit. For example, the creation of the Human Rights Council is now in serious jeopardy, since

consideration of its composition and functioning is now to be discussed in the future, and not at the Summit itself.

Women of the world are watching and expect more from their governments. The well-being of billions of poor and marginalized women, girls, men and boys is at stake. The future of multilateralism, international cooperation, and the UN itself, is in the balance.

We expect political will, courage, and a sustained commitment to human rights, democracy, development and peace.

At this final stage of the Summit negotiations, nothing else will do.

Statement by:

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

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Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL),

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Red de educacion popular entre mujeres de America Latina y el Caribe (REPEM)

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Open Society Institute

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Gender Program)

Inform (Sri Lanka)



Women's Groups Find Silver Lining in Summit

By Laura Angela Bagnetto

WeNews correspondent

UNITED NATIONS (WOMENSENEWS)—Amid a sense of disappointment over the three-day U.N. World Summit held here last week, women's rights advocates claimed a small victory.

When the dust settled after strained, last-minute negotiations over the "outcome" document of the summit, key strategies promoting gender equality remained in the text signed by 191 world leaders last

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Friday.

"For women's rights activists, the most important outcome is that in a space that was not women-specific, we kept women as a political factor at the forefront of the U.N.," said Charlotte Bunch, executive director for the Center for Women's Global Leadership, the State University of New Jersey, Rutgers.

Language condemning violence against women, boosting their access to reproductive health and defending their property rights—fought for, but not obtained, at the U.N. Millennium Summit in 2000—is now in the outcome document.

Reflecting the general consensus of world leaders, this document is meant to provide a road map for how to proceed.

The document underlines the importance of involving women more at decision-making levels, especially in promoting peace and security. It advocates giving women a greater role and more access to the global labor market and promotes the increased representation of women in government and decision-making bodies.

The 60th session of the U.N. general assembly, which opened Saturday, will focus on follow-up to the summit.

Millennium Development Goals

Language changes about women in the outcome document were either retained or added to the so-called millennium development goals, a set of eight objectives to address global poverty, health, environment and gender inequities.

These goals, set five years ago at the 2000 summit in New York, were reviewed as part of broader summit negotiations over the outcome document.

"This is a real improvement in the framework of the millennium development goals on gender equality," said Francoise Girard, U.N.

liaison for Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, a nongovernmental group with offices worldwide. "We're pinching ourselves in a way. We have to give ourselves credit; it was very systematic work."

Girard, along with Bunch and June Zeitlin, who heads the Women's Environment and Development Organization, joined forces a month ago to form the Gender Monitoring Group to ensure women's voices would be heard in the document.

Each organization had been lobbying for three years with other global women's groups to ensure that delegations remained focused on gender issues. They cultivated relationships with U.N. delegates, held meetings with ambassadors and ministers and waited outside closed conference doors in the basement of the U.N. to engage diplomats emerging from debates on the document.

The signed document provides what rights activists say is a textual basis for women to push their agenda with their own political leaders.

"Women can use it to keep advancing whatever they're working on locally and nationally," said Bunch. "They can use the document to insist that substantial funding goes to gender equality, violence against women and reproductive health issues." But in general, women's rights advocates—mindful that women represent a disproportionate number of the world's impoverished—expressed dismay that leaders had not agreed to stronger and more specific poverty-ending goals.

"We were shocked by the lack of political will and the impotence of government," said Girard. "They need political Viagra. Most of the world leaders coming to the summit were men and evidently in the 11th hour they didn't get it."

Last month, in the lead-up to the summit, negotiations over the document turned rancorous as government leaders from 191 countries seemed to battle over almost every paragraph, including proposals from Secretary-General Kofi Annan to reform the U.N.

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Stop Talking Start Implementing!

GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEARINGS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY; New York 23- 24 June, 2005

Prepared by

Ana Agostino, ICAE- GEO- Gender and GCAP in Africa

Cecilia Fernandez, ICAE-GEO

Alejandra Scampini, REPEM-DAWN- Feminist Task Force GCAP

There were two parallel sessions one on MDGs 1 to 7 and the other was on Goal 8 and Financing for Development.

The main points addressed in the sessions were: the interrelation of MDGs, the linkage of development, security and rights and how human rights must be the framework for development; the cross cutting nature of gender equality as well as of the environment; questioning of the development paradigm; the call not to tie aid to a particular approach to development; the need for people to take control of their own development; and the major role of civil society and the grassroots in this process. There was a strong call to stop talking and start implementing, and for NGO involvement in the definition of targets and indicators for monitoring the achievement of MDGs. There was a distinction between participation in development and ownership of development.


Peggy Antrobus from DAWN, IGTN and the Feminist Task Force of GCAP took the opportunity to emphasize the indivisibility of the 8 MDGs and the other Freedoms in the Secretary General's Report, and that women's equality, empowerment and agency are cross cutting issues and essential to the achievement of all the goals. Peggy also reaffirmed that the policy framework reflected a market oriented approach to development which opened up countries of the south to increased exploitation from powerful corporate interests from the North and further marginalized people who suffered most from a development model based on the exploitation of people and resources.

Roberto Bissio from Social Watch and GCAP followed Peggy's contribution by pointing out that women are a disproportionate part of the world's poor. All these goals and targets were already discussed in previous conferences but they were not implemented. Many participants expressed that these unkept promises were promises betrayed.

There were many interesting issues to be recalled but the most repeated and stressed were the elimination of agricultural subsidies and anti dumping practices, Summit outcomes must ensure that trade rules are dedicated to poverty eradication and bound by existing international agreements that promote and protect human rights and the environment. There was also a call to urge governments to conduct gender reviews and impact assessments of bilateral, regional and international trade agreements.

In terms of external debt, participants said that the call for cancellation is already 10 years old. In spite of this debt continues to grow and is one of the major obstacles to eradicating poverty. There was a call to eliminate conditionality of AID and for follow up to see that this is fulfilled.

The 0.7 ODA target was mentioned again and again. And there was a reminder that it is already 35 years old. In spite of this, most countries are far from reaching it.

This was one of the issues flagged by GCAP men and women at the Hearings and Flavio Lotti, in a very energetic and articulate way expressed that thousands of men and women all over the world were ready to go to the streets to demand their rights and make the strong call against poverty with their white bands. 

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The U.S. bickered over basic language and compromised grudgingly to settle on a 35-page document signed by world leaders on Friday that fell short of Annan's more ambitious goals proposed last March.

Annan's proposals—touching on everything from creating an ethical human rights body at the United Nations to redoubling efforts to halve world poverty by 2015 to changing some basic operations of the U.N. organization itself—were watered down in the final document.

The summit gave wealthier countries a chance to help the poor by pledging 0.7 percent of their national income towards foreign aid by 2015, a goal that was proposed five years ago.

The United States agreed to the 0.7 pledge three years ago at a development meeting in

Monterrey, Mexico, but since then, women's groups and others have expressed dismay that the Bush administration has failed to show renewed commitment.

"It's all nice to have strategies for achieving gender equality, but what if we can't pay for it?" asked Girard.

Much of the blame for final-stage turmoil has been aimed at the United States. Three weeks prior to Tuesday's vote on the document, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., John Bolton, proposed 700 changes, which many diplomats said indicated a reversal in earlier U.S. commitments to Annan's reform proposals.

In his initial changes, Bolton wanted to strike any reference to the millennium development goals and any references to developed countries contributing 0.7 percent of their gross national product to help halve poverty by 2015.

After much political wrangling, the goals

were included, as well as the 0.7 percent target, albeit with vague wording.

Ben Chang, a spokesperson for the U.S. mission to the U.N., didn't see the outcome in a negative light, however.

"We have an accomplishment here," said Chang. "We have an important step in this process. We don't proclaim victory and walk away."

Isobel Coleman, a senior fellow on U.S. foreign policy at the Council on Foreign Relations, expressed disappointment that the United States has not yet committed to contributing 0.7 percent to development assistance.

"Even with private development aid from the U.S., it could be and should be doing more," Coleman said.

"The U.S. fought very hard against the target 0.7 percent GNP; it is mentioned (in the outcome

Annan's proposals—touching on everything from creating an ethical human rights body at the United Nations to redoubling efforts to halve world poverty by 2015 to changing some basic operations of the U.N. organization itself—were watered down in the final document.


document) but in a weak formulation," said Coleman. "In some respects that's of concern to women."

So, while women scored a small victory in seeing

gender references added to the summit document, Bunch also lamented what she saw as a larger disappointment.

"In terms of a breakthrough to end world poverty, we didn't achieve it," she said. "And that is disappointing to women everywhere."

—Karen James contributed to this article.

Laura Angela Bagnetto is a writer in New York who covers the United Nations. Karen James is a Women's eNews intern and a master's candidate at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. 

Public Panel Discussion on 'Reform or Collapse of the UN?'

An Intervention from Gigi Francisco,
DAWN/IGTN

Berlin, Germany, 06 September 2005.

Addressing the question of global governance is a necessary process that must be carried out. We live in a period of unprecedented changes and a dramatically altered international context. Certainly we know that an anachronistic, inefficient and bureaucratized multilateral organization such as the present United Nations cannot assure us of the enjoyment of our human rights, development and security in the 21st century.

Elsewhere I have said that: *in the 1990's many of us believed that this process (of rearranging global institutional arrangements and now its architecture) was being pulled and defined by states persons, global leaders and institutionalists who were dedicated to seeing a new world order, with the principles of human rights and democracy squarely at its center. Now we know better. And we are afraid of what we are seeing – a rush by states to make quick-win deals and with it, a compressing of the scope and meaning of rights if not its total trade-off for market access and state-centered security. Marketization with its focus on capital mobility, growth, efficiency, privatization and liberalization has taken over the imagination of most of our world's leaders, including those who claim to "represent the south and the poor". And because such marketization is also marked by*

hyper-rapidity – or a rush to "make things move", an increase in the democratic deficit is also unfolding (Panel on Women's Human rights and the Global Agenda at the 6th International Inter-Disciplinary Congress on Women, Seoul, July 2005).

What we need is a huge amount of reconstructive imagination, democratic participation and political will to craft and put in effect a radical UN Reform plan and process. Unfortunately, none of these prerequisites had been adequately realized. The

What we need is a huge amount of reconstructive imagination, democratic participation and political will to craft and put in effect a radical UN Reform plan and process. Unfortunately, none of these prerequisites had been adequately realized. The UN knows this, no less than Kofi Annan's office.

UN knows this, no less than Kofi Annan's office. All of the member-countries also know this. The Secretary General's Report (March 2005) and that of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (December 2004)

are peppered with aspirational language on human rights, development and security but its proposed re-structured organization for the UN does not go far in freeing the UN from the clutches of inter-state realpolitik that had undermined its ability to enforce treaties and human rights standards for the longest time.

Indeed the "devil is in the detail"! Antonio Papisca's paper (Human Rights Centre, University of Padua, August 2005) mentions a number of these: (1) Proposals on expanding the permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council while preserving the veto powers of the 5 Permanent

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Members; (2) Rather than strengthen the UN's role as a decisive guarantor of collective peace and security, the proposed changes gives more leeway for states to launch wars against other states in response to "imminent attacks"; (3) ECOSOC's unequal status to that of the Security Council and silence on its authority over the Breton Institutions; (4) the silence on the role of civil society organizations and the International Court of Justice; (5) the narrower and highly restrictive (even exclusionary) Human Rights Council concept; and many more.

In the lead-up to the UN Summit next week, the international community day by day becomes more pessimistic and uncertain that a minimalist document around which painstaking consensus had been slowly built among the member countries would ever see its light. Of course Bolton's explosive dismissal of what he termed as the so-called "MDGs" is being hyped about as the cause of the "disruption". But I

wonder how deep and real the American challenge to the Summit is. Given the recent "bad boy" antics played by the USA in the recent UNCSW Session on Beijing Plus Ten that effectively held hostage the international community to one week


of stalemate thereby losing precious time to address critical issues and progressively move commitments to women's human rights, empowerment and development, I tend to think that this is but another ploy to get everyone scampering unto the bandwagon of the MDGs and the UN

Reform architecture. Once they are in, then the real hard-nosed negotiation (and may I say the arms twisting) will begin. When this happens without effective resistance from the other member states, we can expect a global agreement that will have a minimalist agenda for development, a human rights regime that had been transmogrified by various temporal and self-interested interpretations, and an architecture of the UN that continues to be captured by narrow state interests.

In April this year, I participated in a conversation entitled Women's Voice on UN Reform that was organized by Latin American feminists during the UNCSW Session on Beijing Plus Ten. At that meeting, I expressed pessimism on the whole UN Reform process. I continue to hold on to this pessimism. I would like to end my intervention with exactly the same thoughts with which I left the audience at the March event. "For the UN to become truly forward looking, it would need to rid itself of the "fear of change" that still

reverberates across the institution."

Unfortunately, given institutional constraints and a highly discredited leadership, the UN at best is aiming for a win-win scenario in which the power and wealth of a few nation-states remain intact even while increased concessions are given to developing countries. Such a pragmatist win-win scenario cannot make a dent to systemic global inequality and injustice.

win-win scenario cannot make a dent to systemic global inequality and injustice. A step-by-step reform is not what the times demand. Rather it is a radical breakthrough in transnational global governance that reaffirms the principles of human rights, collective security, just and people-centred development and substantive democracy. 

Tribute to Amelia Rokotuivuna

By Claire Slatter (Past General Coordinator)


Amelia Rokotuivuna, passed away in the afternoon June 1, 2005 after losing her fight with cancer. Amelia, 63, was one of three DAWN Trustees (required under Fiji's Charity Act), serving in this capacity between 1998 and 2004. She also assisted the DAWN Secretariat in organising the first DTI in 2003. DTI graduates will remember her well as she communicated extensively with each of them prior to the training, handled their travel arrangements and answered their many queries.

Amelia was an extraordinary woman - a lifelong activist, she was a courageous advocate of all that is right and just, a strong feminist and a veteran peace, democracy, workers rights and anti-racism activist. She made her mark as a voice of conscience from the NGO movement when she was General Secretary of the Fiji YWCA in the 1970s. Interpreting the YWCA's purpose in terms of a commitment to the principles of economic justice, equality and peace, she joined the organisation to the anti-nuclear movement which she came to lead, and led the organisation in making public submissions on a range of policy issues, from fair taxation and electoral systems to population policy and abortion. She mentored a number of young students at USP (including Vanessa Griffen, Joan Yee - another of our Trustees, and myself), drew us into the Y and conscientised us. Needless to say, her radicalism was feared and the organisation's board was infiltrated by the women's wing of the ruling party in 1977, and Amelia and three others were fired on the pretext of restructuring. Fortunately the YWCA is a membership movement and the board was dismissed and the staff reinstated by the membership in an expertly organised special general meeting

Amel was an early public advocate of a woman's right to abortion - I remember her speaking at a public meeting in the seventies when a parliamentary committee on population policy was receiving public submissions, and later joining her on a radio programme on abortion. She was a commanding public speaker, brilliant in rallies and also a great political organiser - among other things she organised (with a section of the trade union movement in Fiji) a major protest against the stopover visit to Fiji by General Pinochet in the early 1980s - he was returning to Chile from the Philippines and needed a refuelling stop and the Fiji government was going to receive him.

I did an interview with Amel in February this year, following the DAWN Pacific -FWRM training in Fiji - she was among those from the Pacific region nominated for the 1000women for peace project- I had little inkling then that she would soon take ill again and die within three months and am so very glad that she was able to tell some of her own story through this interview, which we both enjoyed. Among other things, she spoke of how the 1987 military coup had been one of her 'darkest moments' - she said she felt that a contract had been breached, a code broken. I recalled her turning up at my office at USP on the day of the coup, beside herself with grief and anger over what had happened. A couple of days later she led a march of equally angry and indignant young people through the streets of Suva before being arrested and detained for several days.

Amel was a longstanding supporter of the labour movement (she grew up in the gold mining town of Vatukoula and knew injustice early), an active campaigner in the pro-democracy movement, and after returning from a three year stint of working for the World Y in the 1980s, she worked for a time in the Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF), helping to secure a democratic constitutional settlement. She attended the NGO Forums of three of the four World Conferences on Women (in Mexico, Copenhagen and Beijing), and was a key speaker at these meeting on issues of nuclear militarism, development and peace. She gave a lifetime of service to the YWCA, a membership organisation to which she was devoted and in which her leadership was always appreciated and respected.

Aside from her political persona, Amel was a caring mother and aunt, a community-minded neighbour, a thoughtful and generous friend, a critical intellectual, and a reflective, spiritual person who lived by her principles and religious beliefs. NGO activism in Fiji and the Pacific will never be the same without her, but her fearless spirit and legacy will hopefully continue to inspire present and future generations of activists. 

'Poverty, inequality and insecurity: What answers does feminism have?'

DAWN Perspectives on international relations in relation to foreign policy, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and international trade

Excerpts of the address presented by Yvonne Underhill-Sem (DAWN Pacific Regional Coordinator) to 20th WIDE Annual Conference, hosted by the UK Gender and Development Network, 24-25 June 2005

Foreign policy and international trade

As far as International foreign policy goes, there is no shortage of analysis that shows that this is currently dominated by two powerful bullies – one in Washington, the other in Rome. Fuelled by ever confident moral conservative forces, a certain irrational “fear factor”, and steady progress in neoliberal attempts to dismantle the economic means and political positioning of growing number of impoverished states, the US and the Vatican are slowly consolidating their positions. What will not have escaped their attention however, is the unrelenting growth of China. This new geopolitical actor is already making itself felt on global commodity markets and brings to my mind, a picture from childhood – that of the awakening giant Gulliver tied down in Lilliput. However, I come from small tropical islands frequently visited by devastating hurricanes - so I know that it is possible to stand your ground even in the face of incredible odds. No doubt this is how the US feels but even more so we in the progressive women's movement are facing a formidable geopolitical landscape.

.... the efforts to get a common currency some years back, more recent attempts at building a united Europe have been less successful. Clearly there is

still some way to go before the EU becomes an effective counter-balance to US unilateralism, let alone an emerging China. I am looking forward to your analysis of the events of this week with the EU sugar reform and Blair's speeches to the EU. I am also interested in how you see the recent debt package for Africa. In particular, what you anticipate to be the modes of delivery of this hopefully “new money”.

We are moving rapidly away from the decade of global conventions and the hope of multilateralism, into a period of unilateralism and non-secular politics. **Although as we continue to protect those global commitments to gender equality and the end of poverty that were fought so hard for, the battle sites are shifting from the global to the national and the regional. How well prepared are we to engage in these new sites?** Do we understand the implications this has for movement building, for information sharing and strategic alliances at other than the global level? In particular how well can progressive women's movements at the national level retain their positions with progressive but often male-lead organisations? And what role do newer members of the women's movement (younger women, indigenous women, and other marginalised women) have to play in this?

Clearly much more attention must be given to the processes and institutions that perpetuate gender inequality at the national and region levels. We must learn how to track the genealogy of ideas and to identify the tools that are being used to resist progressive agendas. In our strategic alliances we need to recognise that there new sites to work in (at national and regional locations), new complexities to unravel (the boundaries of international legislation), and new skills to learn (the details of patent laws, new mobilisation skills).

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Sexual and reproductive health and rights

This takes me to the issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights which continues to be a critical area of work in DAWN. DAWN has been involved in health policy and systems research for some time because without policy directives and resource commitments to sexual and reproductive health information and services, women's rights to them cannot be realised. This means investment in appropriately trained health personal, infrastructure development, better supply chains for medical and health supplies, and strengthened information systems. While some governments are taking their international commitments seriously in developing policy consistent with Cairo and Beijing declarations, without concerted political will, the implementation of them is instrumental and lacking the underlying reinforcement of the fundamental right of women to reproductive and sexual health and rights.

But the persistent resistance to **reproductive health and rights**, often on the basis of indifference and apathy as well as blatant discrimination, pales into insignificance in relation to challenges to talking about **sexual health and rights**. The battle for sexual health and rights is far greater. There was a time when HIV-Aids first became the frightening reality it is, where talk about sexuality was possible – for a time. Because, unlike anything else we in the women's movement advocate for, women's sexuality retains a potency that fires an irrational and immoral conservative response that effectively continues the subordination and mutilation of women. This violence has to stop and DAWN believes an unqualified commitment to basic human-rights is the start.

That sexual rights and health is still up for negotiation is not surprising given the critical roles that human sexuality has in both providing pleasure to the body as well reproducing society. There are many people and organisations still unwilling to

accept the humanity of respectful bodily pleasuring (erotic justice). Instead their concerns focus on controlling human sexuality by aggregating individuals into disembodied population groups like teenage pregnancies and female-headed households. The contradictions and anomalies of such teachings fail to derail the determination to control women's sexuality for the benefit of everyone except the woman herself. We cannot allow this to continue. The agony of deciding whose rights should prevail in an unwanted pregnancy – especially one as the result of violent rape – is one shared by many women. In most places only a handful of women are able to safely choose their rights.

So we must to struggle for reproductive and sexual health and rights. And be satisfied of the wins – even when they are hugely compromising – as at the recent CSW where the trade off was “women's equality and reproductive rights” for “human rights of sex workers”. This is the “real political state of the arts. The old trade off might have been economics for women's rights but the new trade off is now economics and well-being and women's reproductive rights for the human rights of sex workers. We should not be proud of this, but at least we are still holding our ground. **This leads to my other key point, how can we continue to keep sexual health and rights on the agenda with reproductive rights and health, or must we accept the current trade-offs.**

At the recent training programme that DAWN Pacific and the Fiji Women's Rights movement ran, young women – all of whom called themselves feminists at the conclusion – were particular aware of their lack of sexual rights. While their reproductive rights were acknowledged and service provision on track, the incidence of STD's, the growth in the use of emergency contraception and the suicides of pregnant young women underscored the worrying need to keep advocating

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for sexual health and sexual rights. In the Caribbean, my colleague Joan Grant-Cummings was telling us of how the male marginalisation thesis was being challenged by evidence of high levels of use of emergency contraception among university students – in this case, clearly education is not a fail safe route to greater equality in negotiating sexual relations.

Regional trade agreements

DAWN is aware of the growing complexity but necessity of engaging in the technical debates in this arena. This, at the same time as continuing to make the case for gender relations to be recognised as critical to all economic activities. From my position in the Pacific region, the negotiation of EPA's under the Cotonou Agreement is a particular cause for concern. For instance, fisheries, one of the major common resources left in my region, yet one where we as a region are grossly failing to develop as a sustainable industry, is targeted for development under the EPA. From the highly dubious sale of flags of convenience to the regulations controlling wages and conditions of workers in the industry, this sector is unwell. Small locally owned fishing businesses are being forced out of business as bigger players are allowed to enter and then dominate the sector. As an industry, it is highly gendered, with mostly men involved in higher paying harvesting activity and mostly women in poorly paid processing activities. Moreover, the very mobility of the male harvesting crews has ensured the mobility of sexual transmitted diseases at rates that contribute to the alarming increase in HIV-Aids in the region.

Getting gender into this discussion in the Pacific is an uphill battle. While the EU and European civil society has supported the mobilisation of civil society – a small number of whom identify as feminists – little effort is made at the regional level to bring civil society into regional negotiations, let alone perspectives from women's

movements.

In addition to the creation of regional trade markets evident in the Cotonou Agreement, bilateral deals continue. In the Pacific case bilateral arrangements with European countries are still being negotiated. I wonder if WIDE can throw more light on these processes. We have our work cut out trying to track the often contradictory and increasingly arrogant bi and tri-lateral arrangements made between NZ, Australia and Pacific countries, let alone the spoiler effects of interest from Taiwan and China. For instance, Australia's newest attempt to provide development assistance to Papua New Guinea takes the form of the insidious Enhanced Co-operation Programme whereby Australian citizens are placed in line ministries of the independent state of Papua New Guinea – not just as advisors but to ensure Australia's development investment is spent as it was intended.

This week's announcement of the cuts in sugar subsidies and in particular the effect this will have on ACP countries. Look forward to WIDE's analysis of this. From my perspective, it will be devastating for ACP sugar producing countries – many of whom were hanging out for a longer time frame to reorganise their industry and or consider the value of appeals to special and differential treatment. Coming hard on the heels of the banana trade-off, small island developing countries in the Caribbean and the Pacific, will be left reeling with the reality of new WTO compatible deals totally eclipsing their development concerns. As with other WTO rulings in favour of further market liberalisation, the immediate implications will be greater global trade inequities, reduced government revenue in vulnerable developing economics and with this the further contraction of social services, with the effect of greater impoverishment and pressure on the already poor. The chances of women's bodies feeling it most are high.

International trade continues to intervene in sexual and reproductive health and rights, especially in the area of HIV/Aids. A new patent law proposed

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in India will effectively cancel out India's ability to supply cheap generics of AIDS drugs. Part of the reason that India has been supply cheap drugs is because of a sophisticated copycat drug industry made possible by laws that grant patents to the 'process of making medicines, rather than the drugs themselves'. But this is set to change with a WTO agreement on TRIPS requires that patents must be instituted on all products by Jan 2005. India signed the TRIPS in 1994. This has nothing to do with free trade and more to do with the lobbying power of trans-national pharmaceutical companies. Although it is possible to appeal to the WTO 2001 decision that allowed countries to supply generic drugs in the case of the need to protect public health, getting a licence to do this under this new decree is enormous. At risk are some of the newer drugs that are needed as resistance builds up. This is not just an obscure dispute – it is in fact critical for the sexual and reproductive health and rights of millions of people

Conclusion

Good research-based advocacy goes a long way.

DAWN, believe strongly in the value of G77 consensus on economic issues – the South's firm stance vis a vis the North is exactly what the G77 was created for – and the reason is still there. In terms of women's human's rights though, there remains considerable divergence and difference on positions relating to women's human rights for a single unified G77 position to make sense. This is why we need to continue to monitor the forums where country and regional positions

are articulated.


Suggestions for a Human Rights Council – we need to track the activities of those interested in preserving the Commission on Human Rights. Annan keen to ensure that the proposed Council is not subject to the same politicisation of the current Commission which means the current membership of the HRC need to have as little input as possible – and this will be a battle for Annan – but one we must watch closely

But what happens when the social contract cracks – as when the Neoliberal agenda deliberately set out to empty the State of its ability to run institutions to provide services. One of the unintended consequences of de-legitimising the State has seen the emergence of new institutions who craft new social contracts. In place of the state are new players - the private sector, religious groups, narco-traffickers. These players gain a greater role in the return of feudal forms of cracked social contracts (traffickers, dons). This is not surprising when the state no longer provides any services. As it loses its

But what happens when the social contract cracks – as when the Neoliberal agenda deliberately set out to empty the State of its ability to run institutions to provide services. One of the unintended consequences of de-legitimising the State has seen the emergence of new institutions who craft new social contracts.

legitimacy, or has that stripped away, new forms of legitimacy arise and new unregulated social contracts emerge.

Social contracts are a way of claiming ones rights – under feudal forms of social contracts, these rights are so far from the universal indivisible human rights of the Vienna

Convention – let alone those in the Cairo PoA. This is troubling reality has stimulated DAWN to think about how to better use rethought notions of social contracts to help get human rights and particularly women's human rights, back on track. 

GCAP Feminist Task Force... Key Messages

June 22, 2005

Cluster 1 – Freedom from Want

- contradictions in MDGs: gender equality/women's empowerment key to achieving all goals but this is not happening
- development, peace, human rights interlocking but are often isolated; human rights framework imperative to achieving goals
- Goal 8: critical to achieving all goals but are also undermining process through assumptions that do not address trade liberalization, net resource flows between north and south, unequal power in global governance, etc.
- concept of development in this process needs to be challenged as development being used as basis for opening markets and further exploiting southern countries (get rid of market-based approach which is exploitative)
- Issue of public/private partnerships needs to be addressed, weakens public sector and strengthens private sector; also undermining role of civil society
- Violence against Women and sexual and reproductive health and rights are excluded; fundamental rights....current indicators and targets are completely insufficient for reaching goals


Cluster 2 - Freedom from Fear

- needs reformulation of peace and security through HR context
- women's participation and women's community groups
- consideration of violence against women (VAW) and sexual/repro rights
- commit to end large and small arms trade
- adequate addressing of HIV/ AIDS & impact of HIV/AIDS on women
- without justice for women, there is no peace, end to impunity
- address VAW and access to justice
- commitment to peace and women's rights education

Cluster 3 - Freedom to live in Dignity

- women's experience must be a cross-cutting issue
- implementation is crucial, Vienna, Cairo, etc.
- women's participation in these process are key
- cross-cutting: ngo and women participation

Cluster 4 - UN Reform

- Strengthening the ECOSOC: more relevant and substantive, interface with IMF, World Bank and WTO by looking at proposals that already exist (Pakistan, etc.)
- Role of civil society/NGOs/women's groups: do not have adequate access to GA, SC; need right to speak, have written statements, etc. (building on Cardoso report)
- Human rights machinery needs to be strengthened in terms of treaty bodies, OHCHR. The discussion needs to be more about substance than what it is named (commission vs. council)
- Gender architecture- not enough has been done. Women's agencies are under funded, understaffed and not enough access to having their voices heard.
- Security council: it's undemocratic, needs to be reformed in methods of work, procedures, relations within UN and with on-the-ground groups 

Ten Years of the WTO is a long wait!

Gigi Francisco (DAWN's South East Asia Regional Coordinator) represented DAWN at the Training Workshop on Gender and Trade for LDCs in Bangkok, 25-29 July 2005. Here are the Conclusions of the Training Workshop.

The time to act is here and now! If nothing is achieved by LDCs in the Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting, their concerns will be left in the back burner for another ten or twenty years!

1. A Regional Training Workshop on Gender and Trade for LDCs was convened by the International Gender and Trade Network – Asia in Bangkok, Thailand on 25-29 July 2005. It was attended by women from national, regional and international non-governmental organizations, research institutes and government ministries in the following Asian countries: Least Developed Countries – Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Lao PDR (in accession), Burma and East Timor and Developing Countries – India, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam (in accession).
2. The overall workshop objective was to better understand the challenges and adjustments faced by Least Developed and Accession Countries in the World Trade Organization through a gender analysis / feminist economics approach to examining global market integration processes and rule-making. The workshop is further aimed at enhancing women's advocacy and negotiation capacities as their governments participate in intensive processes leading to the 6th WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong on 13-18 December 2005.

3. The workshop which was organized in several plenary sessions, country presentations and workshop activities reached the following general and specific conclusions:

GENERAL

4. Participants invoked the long-standing WTO commitment to effectively take into account the development needs of its members, particularly the special needs of Least Developed Countries, Accession Countries and Developing Countries. However, they lamented the slow progress and continuing lack of attention given to achieving more precise, effective and operational measures that would turn this commitment into reality. Therefore, the Committee on Trade and Development should immediately perform outstanding work on Special and Differential Treatment taking into account the LDC Programme.
5. While participants positively noted the emergence of negotiating blocs among Developing Countries in the WTO, they also raised the hope that greater solidarity and cooperation be achieved between Developing Countries, such as India, Brazil, China and Least Developed Countries. In particular, efforts to clarify measures on Special and Differential Treatment must not run parallel but should be pursued based on the mutual interests of Least Developed and Developing Countries. Least Developed and Developing Countries must jointly lobby Developed Countries on issues of Technical Barriers to

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Trade (TBT) and Sanitary and Phyto Sanitary measures (SPS). Moreover, Developing Countries must also manifest in more resolute ways their support for the development of Least Developing Countries in their bilateral trade relations and exchanges.

6. Multilateral institutions such as the IMF, WB and ADB should align its lending policies with the special and differential treatment accorded Least Developed Countries and Countries in Accession to the WTO. These should immediately stop imposing WTO Plus conditionalities including the privatization of publicly provided services that are essential to social reproduction.
7. The participants lauded the Livingstone Declaration issued at the Fourth LDC Trade Ministers' Meeting in Zambia in June 2005 in that it reflected in no uncertain terms the extreme needs and concerns faced by LDCs as their economies are opened up and integrated into a global market. They also called on all LDC governments to strengthen in-country democratic governance, human rights guarantees and accountability mechanisms to ensure that technical and financial assistance reflect a more balanced consideration of national development priorities – the social good including gender equality and equity - and international trade commitments.

SPECIFIC

Special and Differential Treatment

8. Participants call on the WTO to ensure that provisions on Special and Differential

Treatment become mandatory in all negotiations and WTO processes. Moreover, governments should take full advantage of the flexibilities available through S&DT which should be used to implement a national development plan that will strengthen our economies for meeting social needs upon which the process of integration in the global economy shall be based. Such plan shall include programmes that support social reproduction and care work in order to ease the burdens of women in trade and trade-related activities but more importantly to sustain this critical but often overlooked sphere of economic life.

Technical Assistance

9. The LDCs' supply-side reinforcement should take into account more explicitly gender equitable education and health services and well-being needs through accountable and transparent governance processes. As well, adjustment challenges should be concerned not just with market factors but should equally address the right to social protection and development.
10. LDC rights and flexibilities must be optimized toward building on alternative policies that rest upon the foundations of gender and socially responsive economic development. Solidarity links between Least Developed Countries and Developing Countries could be greatly enhanced through Technical Assistance for capacity building in heterodox and progressive economics, including feminist economics, which contribute to expanding policy options.

Services

11. LDC governments must not participate in rounds of offers/request unless the mandatory

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News from the Regions

DAWN South-East Asia

Young Women's Leadership and Advocacy Institute (YWLI), 13th-18th June, Bangkok.

The Young Women's Leadership and Advocacy Institute (YWLI) was held in Bangkok as a collaborative effort. AWID, CREA (from India) and Shirkat Gah (from Pakistan) were partners of DAWN in this collaboration. AWID raised all the funds for the training institute. The process of collaboration included coming up with a training module, dividing responsibilities as facilitators and being a part of the selection process while disseminating the information to our networks and partners in the region.

Altogether 30 participants from South Asia (Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and India) and South East Asia (Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, China (Hong Kong) Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos) were selected representing a wide array of organizations. A number of

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assessment of services sector liberalization that must include gender-responsive measures is carried out. Thus far, all offers made to LDCs have failed to address the "Modalities for the Special Treatment of Least Developed Country Members" in the Negotiations on Trade in Services. Without completing the negotiations on Rules, LDCs must be prudent and selective in allowing transnational / multinational corporations and foreign direct investments into their economies.

Food Aid

12. Recognizing the centrality of food in social reproduction - which is a major concern in Least Developed and Developing Countries - we call on our governments to implement agricultural development programs aimed at the progressive achievement of food sovereignty. Toward this end, our governments must develop

and implement transparent, accountable and inclusive national food and agricultural policies and programmes that involve the participation of civil society organizations of women, farmers, fisherfolk, informal workers and marginalized groups.

13. In order to address balance of payments deficits arising from food imports, the WTO must exert all efforts to ensure that the international community - including the financial institutions - implements the provisions found in the Marrakesh Decisions that support Net Food Importing Countries. Furthermore, we strongly support the call for food aid to be purchased from local and regional markets as an effective measure to counter the use of food aid as a mechanism for dumping of products from the highly subsidized agricultural sector in Developed Countries. 

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applications were received from the disabled community out of which 2 were chosen. The age group was 22-30 years with the oldest 28 years and the youngest 21, all with young fresh energy and faces.

Process

The highlight for DAWN was the initiative taken by DAWN Training Institute graduates of 2003 in this process who were in the forefront at every step. The 6-day training was divided into several 'modules' guided by an explorative process with the participants. The training agenda was not 'pre-set' in that sense, but worked out using broad thematic areas as a sounding board to frame the sessions. The substantive areas of gender, economic and human rights were designed as 'skill-building' sessions. The first day after introductions, participants in sub-regional groups mapped out themes they wished to be addressed and this became the basis for finalizing the training agenda. There was a big demand for conceptual clarity on the basics what is gender, what/who is a feminist, how do we understand economic frameworks, what are reproductive and sexual rights, the WTO and so on. Along with this "Movement Building" and "Feminist Advocacy as a Strategy for Change" were two dedicated sessions. Both participants and facilitators used creative pedagogy and reading groups were initiated for one compulsory reading every night. DTIs – Tashia Peterson and Jo Villeneuve took charge of this session every morning before the sessions began. The other two, Anasuya and Shamillah guided the advocacy and movement building sessions, while the substantive skill-building ones was divided among Joanna of AWID (for Economic frameworks), Pramada Menon of CREA (Human Rights) and Vanita Mukherjee of DAWN with Anasuya (for Gender Frameworks).

Three volunteers from among the participants gave a feedback to the facilitators on a day-to-day

basis after monitoring the sessions and participants inputs. This helped to plan the training very effectively for the next day. The participants lead most of the energizers. The presence of disabled young women forced us all to be sensitive to their needs, especially for energizers.

Outcomes

The Gender Frameworks session after dealing with concepts that moved away from a purely hetero-normative approach, examined the 'political' and 'technical' use of gender and went into a social history of Feminism including the different schools as they emerged. There was a lot of confusion (and discomfort) about what is feminism among the participants. It was a fascinating session as these are very young women in post-feminist days reaping the 'benefits' of some of struggles waged by our generation of women, like accessing well-established women's studies departments in their university, getting funding for women's rights' work and so on. Most of them were in their early teens when the slogan 'women rights are human rights' gained currency, yet there is a chasm in their sense of history of where it all came from and what it is all about. There is a sense of taking things for granted or feeling confused about what is feminism today. One of the questions that emerged on the mapping issues day was, 'Is Feminism and Gender Equality the same'?

The Human Rights session was kicked off by the very powerful and moving documentary, 'The Vienna Tribunal' filmed live in Vienna in 1993. It fleshed out graphically the issue of 'women's rights are human rights' quite eloquently. An exercise focusing on a true-life case study from India of sterilizing physically/ mentally challenged women (as there are no care-takers to handle menstruation) was extremely challenging, but the manifold issues that emerge out of this case around reproductive (and sexual) rights could not be discussed at length that day.

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DAWN Pacific

From the 30 June to 3 July, over 800 women from across the Asia Pacific region met near Bangkok for the Asia Pacific NGO Forum on Beijing +10. We were a diverse and colourful group full of passion, experience and for four days in the tropical heat of Thailand *our discussions* as the women of the Asia Pacific region took centre stage.

Four plenary sessions put forward the issues of
Celebrating women's gains and confronting women's issues
Asian Women in Muslim Societies
Transnational Women's Movements: Challenges and Future Politics in the Period of Globalisation
and War
Women's Rights, Democracy and the Challenge for Sustainable Development


Global trends such as religious fundamentalism, conservative backlash and terrorism and increased militarism were highlighted as issues which would particularly threaten or compromise gains for women won so far. The conference reaffirmed commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action and recognised successes so far. It also recognised challenges still being faced such as the uneven implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, backlash against equality and shifts in the macro environment which have systematically eroded women's status (from conference statement).

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Pramada of CREA did a whole session on sexual rights with another very interesting exercise the next day. Some of questions that were raised on the first day by the participants while mapping issues were, "What is the history of HRs?", How do we deal with human rights when one group gain precedence over the other? i.e. Community Rights vs Individual Rights", "How to integrate Women's Rights and movement into other social movements? How do they work?" and "Is there a need to look at human rights and women's rights separately"? In the Advocacy sessions, the focus was local, national and regional. This was done in sub-regional groups around issues the group prioritized. The idea was to discuss advocacy strategies after every case study, the strengths and weaknesses and it was extremely lively and engaging. Along with this approach (that

was meaningful for a regional group), I felt a short presentation on the experiences of women's movement's advocacy at the international level (the UN for instance) for historical information would have rounded up the session well, and connected some of SRHR issues emerging from Cairo and Beijing. The Movement Building session was designed around issues identified by the participants.

The workshop can be summed up this way: "The participants think we brought together extraordinary experiences and insights that helped to shape a process that delivered the kind of results it did. My inbox is inundated with thank yous from the participants and until I left on Sunday - many of them dropped off notes at my room to share how much this meeting has meant to them - how it has helped them to see things differently and how they will continue to build on the process we initiated at Bangkok." Shamillah Wilson 

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Aside from workshops evaluating progress on the 12 key areas of the Beijing Platform for Action, special workshops were held which critically examined the tools and strategies of global women's advocacy. These included workshops looking at Gender Mainstreaming, NGO-GO relationships and Feminist Strategies. *Feminist Strategies in Sites of Resistance* was a workshop held by women organising the Feminist Dialogues (FD) as part of the World Social Forum (WSF). This session was introduced by a discussion of the evolution, history and conflicts around the WSF and the FD; as well as the role and place of the feminist movement within the women's movement; an issue relevant to the conference itself – this was a women's movement conference *not* a feminist conference – not all women's-issue-NGO-women are feminist, and interpretations and practices of feminism are contested and evolving anyway.

The second part of the workshop discussed the importance of feminist strategy – how do we contend with the global threats of militarism, terrorism, imperialism, religious fundamentalism, neoliberalism and conservative backlash? A call was made for strategic feminist action rather than reactive action. This means comprehensive strategies about how the Beijing Platform is at risk of being renegotiated in a global political environment where neo-conservatism risks key achievements for women's rights (see DAWN Inform April 2003). Gigi Francisco outlined the UNESCAP processes and advised how national groups can lobby their representatives to prevent delegates having the opportunity to

DAWN INFORMS

The Feminist Dialogues run parallel to the World Social Forum, and has been set up as a space where like the WSF, people or feminists from diverse backgrounds come together for dialogue between diverse points of view and rather than reaching consensus or negotiating a solution participants can find their own answers.

renegotiate. The significance of the *Forum Statement* rather than a traditional Forum Declaration is part of this strategy of preventing new (less progressive) goals and renegotiation and focusing on shortfalls in the implementation of the Beijing Platform we already have.

The Feminist Dialogues run parallel to the World Social Forum, and has been set up as a space where like the WSF, people or feminists from diverse backgrounds come together for dialogue between diverse points of view and rather than reaching consensus or negotiating a solution participants can find their own answers. Sunila Abeysekera outlined that the Feminist Dialogues are important because of the increasing fragmentation of the women's movement, and that such a forum allows reengagement for groups alienated by labels and constructions around what the women's movement is, or what feminism is.

The conference also reinforced a relatively new youth movement determined to forge an autonomous identity and establish mechanisms for engaging substantively rather than tokenistically with the wider women's NGO movement at conferences such as this. The youth contingent was coordinated by the Network of Asia Pacific Youth (NAPY) and the Youth Declaration built on previous NAPY work and was put together during informal meetings throughout the conference. The processes around youth engagement are still in flux though have much potential to make a meaningful contribution to future discussions in the region. 🌅


A draft version of the Purple Book is available at the forum website: <http://ap-ngo-forum.isiswomen.org>.

DAWN Training Institute

DAWN will hold its second feminist advocacy training programme in Montevideo, Uruguay, 6-29 November. Thirty participants will be present at this training programme.

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. 

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

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