

South Feminist Reflection on BPFA+20 and the 5th WCW

*Excerpted from a speech given by Claire Slatter at the public forum entitled
Feminist in the Economic South & Key Global Processes: Debates and Controversies,
sponsored by the UWI-IGDS, CODE RED and DAWN, 17 May 2012, Barbados*



Claire Slatter at the DAWN Public Forum

Some of you will remember that late in 2002, DAWN took a public stand against the proposal to hold a 5th WCW – Beijing + 10. As a network of feminists from the global south who had been closely and centrally involved in securing advances in women's rights through several UN Conferences in the 1990s, and in protecting them from being eroded in subsequent 5 year review processes, DAWN was very well placed to judge that the political climate was far too dangerous to risk intergovernmental negotiations that might remove reproductive rights language from any resulting text. Remember this was the Bush era, the Gag rule had been reintroduced, the Vatican was in an unholy alliance with fundamentalist Islamic states and the Christian right was in the ascendancy. The DAWN statement was widely publicized – AWID opened an online debate on their website – and must have been effective as voices that were earlier calling for a 5th WCW became muted – and we avoided a 5thWCW.

But here we are again, facing the prospect of a 5th World Conference on Women – and a proposed review of implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action, 20 years on

DAWN has some serious concerns, which we want to share with you. Firstly the proposal for this conference apparently emerged from the office of the UNSG, apparently without consultation with UN Women, the single specialized agency within the UN working on women, and its announcement came out of the blue and as a complete surprise to everyone. Secondly, it was proposed to be held in Qatar!

The surprise announcement triggered some discussion online mostly among women disconnected from any UN process, some of whom started became excited at the prospect of another global conference on women, although others were alert to the risks of re-opening agreements to renegotiation. There were also some suggestions that women's organizations might critically engage but insist on some non-negotiables.

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DAWN@CPD45: DAWN Welcomes Historic CPD Resolution on Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights for Adolescents & Youth!

The UN Commission on Population and Development (CPD) adopted a historic Resolution on “Adolescents and Youth” at its 45th Session held from 23-27 April 2012 in New York. The Commission adopted new and very progressive language including protection and promotion of “human rights and fundamental freedoms of young people regardless of age and marital status ... by eliminating all forms of discrimination against girls and women... and by protecting the human rights of adolescents and youth to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health.” (OP7)

The ground for this operational paragraph (OP) had been laid earlier in the Resolution in a pre-ambular paragraph (PP) by the recognition “that reproductive rights embrace certain human rights that are already recognized in national laws, international human rights documents and other consensus documents.” That such “human rights include the right of individuals to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on mat-

ters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination, and violence”(PP15)

This long-awaited positive result at CPD was the product of intense and coordinated preparation and advocacy by a coalition that included Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Realizing Sexual and Reproductive Justice (RESURJ), International Women’s Health Coalition (IWHC) and Amnesty International as well as close work with the Center for Reproductive Rights. There was also joint work during the week between this coalition and IPPF. It is also the product of strategic thinking and positioning, of excellent organizing, and of the passionate hearts and minds of feminists present at the CPD. At this year’s CPD 45th Session, DAWN had a particularly strong presence, working with 15 feminists and advocates from countries across the Global South: Kenya, Fiji, Cook Islands, Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia, Uruguay, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and China.

Beyond geographic diversity, the DAWN Team comprehensive-

ly covered all areas of work at CPD, including strategic analysis and ongoing assessment, establishing contact and lobbying government delegations, providing language/text suggestions, monitoring and responding quickly to political dynamics on the floor, and covering the long and gruelling days and nights of advocacy at the UN in the midst of conservatives from many religious and geographical fronts. DAWN and our allies IWHC and RESURJ have expressed great satisfaction and optimism at the strength of this final resolution; and at the commitment of many States including from the South in progressing this positive outcome. DAWN looks forward to national, regional and global use of this text for policy-making and advocacy as we move toward into the urgent work of Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development will be held in June 2012, twenty years review of ICPD in 2014 and towards the post-MDGs development framework beyond 2015.

SRHR: The Unfinished Agenda

The following is a full transcript of Gita Sen's speech in the 5th International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, Istanbul, May 24-25, 2012

I am speaking here wearing multiple hats: as a professor at the Centre for Public Policy of IIM Bangalore which is my primary academic affiliation; as a founding member of DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era), the South feminist network that has been working on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) since before ICPD; and drawing from my recent work as a member of the High Level Expert Group on UHC set up by the Planning Commission of India. The last has made me aware of the dangers of allowing health system reform and the ICPD agenda on parallel tracks.

I've been asked to speak to you on 'getting more out of health partnerships to advance the ICPD mandate'. Before I do that, I want to tell you a tale of four generations of my own family. I am sure they won't mind. My grandmother was married at the age of 9 as was the custom then. She had seven children, was widowed early, and had the difficult task of raising her children, educating them, sometimes selling her jewellery piece by piece in order to do so. In a different time, my grandmother would have made a wonderful foreign service diplomat with her skill with languages

and people. My mother was married at the age of 14, had three children, and all her life wanted to be a medical doctor. Even today, well into her 80s, she will read any medical or health material put before her. I was married at the age of 23 and had my only daughter at the age of 36. She is a young human rights lawyer in her 20s – whether or when she will marry or have children, I don't know. What I do know is that her life will not be only one of motherhood (as much as I respect the hard work that entails) but one in which she will do the work she loves as a human rights advocate for justice and fair play. When people talk about population, there is often a focus on how quickly the numbers have grown in the last century. What is often forgotten is how much our lives and circumstances have changed as well, and how young people like my daughter cannot be pushed back into my grandmother's time. But there are many young people today who do not have the options and choices that she is fortunate to have. That is the reality behind the ICPD paradigm change of Cairo.

The ICPD Programme of Action, the Key Actions for its Implementation and a number of related consensus documents

including the recently adopted Resolution on "Adolescents and Youth" at the 45th Session of the UN CPD last month, contain a remarkable and ongoing consensus for collective action by the world's governments, organizations and people. In the 18 years since ICPD, we have seen a sea change in perceptions and recognition of the centrality of women's autonomy and agency on SRHR – our sexual and reproductive 'citizenship' so to speak ; we have also seen changes in laws, policies, and programmes.

It is also important to recognize that ICPD and its follow-up have been the product of a critical partnership –between and among women's organizations, parliaments, governments, and agencies such as UNFPA and WHO; and also of an alliance between women's organisations, human rights organisations, young people's organisations, and family planning and other organisations. Like most partnerships, some of these have had their ups and downs, but in essence they have worked to produce a remarkable collective agenda for forward movement on sexual and reproductive health and rights. But there is also a large unfinished agenda.

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DAWN Speaks Truth to Power at Rio+20!

The following is excerpted from Noelene Nabulivou and Anita Nayar's DAWN Executive Committee analysis of Rio+20



Ixchal is a sharp and wise Mayan goddess. One of her signs is the rainbow as her wisdom comes from the fertility of the earth. She would find little to celebrate and much to correct, in the final days of the Rio+20 negotiations on sustainable development.

The Political Theatre of Rio+20

Twenty years after the 1992 Earth Summit, we are witnessing intense confrontations and competing interests among negotiating governments, and an absence of vision and leadership for guiding global sustainable development work for current and future generations - at a time of the fiercest economic, social and ecological conditions for this planet and its species.

Whether the expected 130 heads of State and thousands of government and UN officials, and civil society advocates in the Rio+20 process can boldly advance human rights and shape global policy to reduce poverty, increase peoples wellbeing, and advance social equity, environmental sustainability, and economic justice must be our core question.

If the strength and 'staying power' of a paradigm depends on its ability to hold its place in the midst of alternative powerful narratives, there are certainly great geo-political and development challenges ahead for states negotiating through this global Rio+20 process, whether they are representing the interests of north, south, transition, BRICS, G77, JUSCANZ, small island states, landlocked states, and more. This does not end at Rio+20 either, as the implementation of any agreement will be as politically sensitive as the guiding policy. However, what is also

becoming very clear is that state parties must get it right, and with greatest urgency.

Gender Lite

In the historic agreement adopted at the Earth Summit in 1992 - Agenda 21 - there were around 170 references to gender and an entire chapter on women. In the latest version of 'The Future We Want' there are only around 50, and we see these being watered down and used as negotiating chips by majority of states. It is not primarily a simple matter of gender mentions either, but rather an unfortunate willingness by some states to allow operational references into the thematic and cross-sectoral issues sub-sections, with the result that there are elements of text that are far weaker than those in existing international agreements on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Governments are compromising long-time and agreed international agreements on gender equality and women's human rights including sexual and reproductive health and rights. South states are concentrating on their 'big ticket' items of finance, trade and ODA with little interest to incorporate a gender analysis in into these macroeconomic issues. Instead gender is relegated to the periphery of the negotiations. So a minority of states (with the strong support of an observ-

er state - the Holy See) that oppose women's equality are taking advantage of this moment to push their minority agenda. They have been prominent in the gender and health discussion and whenever gender is negotiated in the text.

Good Set, Bad Script

The preambular paragraphs of the draft Rio+20 Outcome document, 'The Future We Want' offers a vision of people-centred sustainable development built on the UN Charter and with a core of democracy, good governance and rule of law. There is also much in this vision-setting section that signals international willingness and cooperation toward a future of equity and rights based sustainable development. All states agree, for example, on the need for balanced attention to the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

Thereafter though, things fall apart and quickly. Very early in the second section that affirms specific Rio Principles and existing commitments arising from Agenda 21 (1992), the Convention on Sustainable Development (CSD) and other international development and human rights agreements, and the threads really start to fray.

Early divergences include how the north and south view the human right to food, including a spurious textual

argument about whether the right to food must be packaged within a 'right to an adequate standard of living' (which seems to be code for northern states protecting their lifestyle in the context of economic crisis, while over 2.5 billion people in the south live on less than \$2 per day).

North Distorts the Narrative, South Objects

Negotiations on the key green economy and IFSD sections are well and truly stuck because of the lack of agreement on key and linked aspects of finance, trade, technology transfer and aid.

The sustainable development paradigm is being narrowed to the so-called 'green economy' that is skewed toward the economic pillar, emphasising growth over equitable development and without any ecological limits. This reductionist approach is being challenged by a small but vocal group of ALBA states that insist on affirming diverse visions, models and approaches to development as well as the policy space to integrate all three dimensions of sustainable development.

The text has been peppered with the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility' (CBDR) by the G77, along with repeated references to 'voluntary and mutually agreed' aspects of technology transfer by various JUSCANZ members. It remains to be seen how these foundational concepts that posit social equity and historical accountability against a commoditised and privatised development regime are reflected in the outcome document.

There are also serious and unresolved issues around textual reference to the precautionary principle. These divergences occur because of the contradictions in south and north positions on privatisation of development regimes today, simultaneous with changing state uptake of extractive industry and other climate mitigation focused technology.

In the trade and finance discussions, states cannot seem to move past a deep

divide on the very nature of ODA in this post global financial crisis era. The US and EU state that they wish to fundamentally change the nature of ODA. The US objected to the G77 introduced strong text on increased ODA, counterpointing that this obviously would necessitate an expanded G8 or G20 group, where non-traditional donors (unnamed but obviously referring to the BRICS states) would be far more responsible for aid contributions to other south states, and expanding on the existing group of donor states. Throughout negotiations the US and other North states also referred often and variously to mobilisation of financial development resources from expanded foreign direct investment, domestic investment, domestic revenue generation, trade, private charities, foundations, and remittances.

The US called for fundamental changes to ODA systems and this in turn elicited a tougher and stronger response from G77, stalling and holding overly firm on large portion of text wherever there was the slightest chance it could impact on other sections. They also openly accused the G77 of skewing the picture of donor commitments, saying that they are delivering in excess of their existing commitments, especially in Africa.

The finance and trade sections remain blocked and the G77 flatly refuses to negotiate further on trade and aid. They are holding fast to their fuller narrative on poverty eradication and maximum development for the widest population, with a continued focus 'on developing countries'. Meanwhile, smaller south states including LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS are no further ahead on ODA and aid for trade, and indeed as many are in the throes of negotiating other regional and national negotiations on multilateral and bilateral trade with EU and others, this is a serious concern with only days of negotiations to go.

While no new financing is on the table, governments are deliberating on launching a process under the UN General Assembly toward a Sustainable Development Financing Strategy.

Meanwhile, northern states continue to be more directive on the issue of ODA by linking it to possible sustainable development goals (SDGs). These goals are being touted as one of the most important outcomes of Rio+20. The EU is pushing for concrete goals, targets and timelines. The G77 meanwhile is only prepared to negotiate on a process to launch a process within the General Assembly, with full transparency and participation of all developing states. They continue to insist that any SDGs must incorporate specific reference to all Rio Principles and in particular CBDR in coherence with Agenda 21 and JPOI.

Harsh New Realities

The contradictory nature of the G77 positions on extractive industries is illustrative here, where they are forced at one and the same time to show strength on environmental sustainability for member states including territorial integrity for small island states, while at the same time trying to resist further regulatory text on public-private mining contracts.

This type of contradictory positioning manifests in policy frameworks that draws an imaginary line between territorial waters and the high seas with the latter requiring increased protection and the former is profit driven and therefore relaxes regulation. This is entirely incoherent.

On the one hand a likeminded group consisting of South Africa, Maldives, Brazil, Nauru, Micronesia, India, Chile, Trinidad and Tobago, Peru, Ecuador, Monaco, Argentina, Philippines, Fiji, Barbados and Uruguay have shown leadership in Rio+20 by breaking with wider G77 and northern positions to propose support and resources for an urgent implementing agreement to UNCLOS to address the conservation and sustainable use of BBNJ. On the other hand, using a rationale of sovereignty and economic growth, G77 called for the deletion of any reference to mining industries being managed, regulated and taxed and on improving revenue and contract transparency.

DAWN @ Rio+20



DAWN, a coalition of feminists across the global South has been actively participating in the Rio+20 process, through analysis, advocacy and media intervention. DAWN continues to demand that governments stop regressing on their commitments and start addressing the structural transformations needed for genuine sustainable development.



“It is time to move towards a women’s charter of human rights that encompasses bodily autonomy and integrity and sexual and reproductive rights and links this to the right to survival, the right to sustain livelihoods, the right to produce and consume in ways that could mean sustainability for the planet” -Gita Sen (India)



“We are here with DAWN just as we were here 20 years ago to bring into the debate alternatives to achieve gender, economic, ecological and erotic justice while resisting the financialisation of nature and the cooption of the UN by corporate power” - Nicole Bidegain (Uruguay)



“It is important to link what you are doing on the international level and the things you can use for advocacy and accountability at the national level” -Monica Novillo (Bolivia)



Gita Sen at the press conference at Rio+20 on June 15th on the topic of Human Rights and Equity.



Romyen Kosaiakanont and Monica Novillo are interviewed by Radio Canada.



On the 18th of June, the DAWN team at Rio joined the Women's March which was held in the heart of Rio de Janeiro City. The extremely humid weather on top of the group's hectic schedule did not stop the participants of the Rio+20 conference, who were joined by huge numbers of local and international groups, in celebrating their solidarity in reaffirming their commitment to human rights. A strong feminist presence was felt as the group centered on the aim of integrating women's rights with sustainable development concerns. The march was colorfully accompanied by music, dancers and vibrant posters.

“We are not here to ask for rights, we are here as women from across the economic South to demand our gender, economic and ecological rights for all. Without it, a sustainable future is not possible for this planet.”
-Noelene Nabulivou (Fiji)

“The Rio+20 outcome text is imbalanced across the three pillars of sustainable development without sufficient attention to gender and social justice, including women's rights. It fails to tackle the systemic inequities of the international monetary, financial and trading systems; and prioritizes economic growth over ecology and equity” *-Anita Nayar (India)*



“The rights for development are the rights for women and people should be at the centre of sustainable development” *-Romyen Kosaikanont (Thailand)*



“Women in different social movements are angry about the ongoing economic and climate crisis and how corporations are being strengthened by the green economy framework that does nothing except placing profits before people and the survival of the planet itself. In Africa, we are faced with droughts and a food crisis and we are demanding an alternative to the current system.” *-Hibist Kassa (Ghana)*

Governments Gamble with Our Future South Feminists Demand Action Now!

The following is excerpted from the DAWN Statement on Rio+20, 22 June 2012

In sharp contrast to twenty years ago at the historic Earth Summit when linkages between gender and all three pillars of sustainable development were substantively acknowledged, the Rio+20 outcome document has relegated women's rights and gender equality to the periphery without recognition of a wider structural analysis.

Over the past few months we have witnessed and confronted attempts by a small group of ultra conservative states (with the strong support of an observer state – the Holy See), to roll back hard won agreements on women's rights. We are outraged that a vocal minority have hijacked the text on gender and health and blocked mention of sexual and reproductive rights, claiming that these have nothing to do with sustainable development. Meanwhile most states concentrate on what they considered their 'big ticket' items of finance, trade and aid with little interest to incorporate a gender analysis into these macroeconomic issues.

There is a reference to women's "unpaid work" but without recognizing the unequal and unfair burden that women carry in sustaining care and wellbeing (para 153). This is further exacerbated in times of economic and ecolog-

ical crisis when women's unpaid labor acts as a stabilizer and their burden increases. For example, reference to the root causes of excessive food price volatility, including its structural causes, is not linked to the risks and burdens that are disproportionately borne by women (para 116). Development is not sustainable if care and social reproduction are not recognized as intrinsically linked with the productive economy and reflected in macroeconomic policy-making.

Reference is made to the critical role that rural women play in food security through traditional sustainable agricultural practices including traditional seed supply systems (para 109). However these are under severe threat unless governments stop prioritising export oriented agribusiness. The reason why such wrong-headed policies are not adequately addressed is because of corporate interests that are protected in the Rio+20 outcome.

Northern governments advocating for such corporate interests have warped the sustainable development paradigm in the so-called 'green economy' that is skewed toward the economic pillar, emphasising sustained economic growth over equitable development and without any eco-

logical limits. Within this section women are regarded as either welfare recipients or as a supplier of labor for the green economy, but not acknowledged as rights holders, especially of economic, social and cultural rights (paras 58k & l).

The 'green economy' concept is somewhat challenged in the text by an affirmation of diverse visions, models and approaches to development as well as the policy space to integrate all three dimensions of sustainable development (para 56). While the recognition of policy space and sovereignty over natural resources, is important, there is a need to deeply question a development model that is based on extractivism and that fails to take into account social and ecological costs.

While the Rio principles including common but differentiated responsibilities are reaffirmed at Rio+20, the outcome is imbalanced across the three pillars of sustainable development without sufficient attention to gender and social justice, including women's rights. It fails to tackle the systemic inequities of the international monetary, financial and trading systems; and prioritises economic growth over the ecology and equity.

Politicize CEDAW Article 14(a): Rural Women and the Triple Crisis

The following was presented by Marina Durano at a Side-Event of the 56th Committee on the Status of Women 2 March 2012, New York, USA

Among the long-standing questions we are facing is how best to fully implement commitments in Article 14 of the CEDAW. CEDAW's Article 14 placed special emphasis on rural women's lives. The recommendations in Article 14 may be grouped into three broad areas, which are: participation and organizing, social security and services, and access to finance and assets. This requires from governments the formulation of rural development strategies and agricultural policies take into provisions in Article 14. What we are doing today is discussing this issue at a time when the UNFPA reports¹ that more than half of the world's population is now living in urban areas. This population shift would seem to make the concerns of the rural poor less significant, especially if the concerns of the urban poor captures the attention of policy makers.

The potential urban bias resulting from population shift may actually be a result of decades of policies that have neglected agricultural development, and, by extension, neglected the obligations of CEDAW's Article 14. Let us note, in particular, economic growth strategies that rely on export-orientation and especially manufactured exports, which has been the symbol of industrialization. This not to say that export-orientation has not reached agriculture and the rural areas because, after all, there are high value added exports of agricultural commodities as well as mining and natural resource extraction. Recently, agricultural production in some areas have shifted to biofuels. I would argue that these policies have not substantially increased rural women's access to finance and assets as required in Article 14, paragraph (g) even if these policies can claim to have opened up opportunities for employment.

The opening up of domestic markets to imported goods has created additional challenges. In the years before the 2008 global economic crisis, import volume surges were recorded in developing countries for cereals and in animal and vegetable fats and oils creating competitive conditions against domestic, perhaps, even rural producers threatening their livelihoods. Net food importing countries recorded import surges of 18 per cent of total import volume during this period, according to the South Centre². Perhaps an even sadder occurrence is that developing countries are relying on the importation of food to meet their needs rather than supporting domestic production. Thus, the global crisis came at a time when conditions were already tough. Indeed, I would argue that the global economic crisis deepened existing crises in rural areas.

It is not only import surges that have been worrisome. Food prices have also been very volatile. The FAO Food Price Index in February 2011 was nearly double its value in 2006. While there is considerable debate on the extent to which financial speculation contributed to food price hikes, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food in a Briefing Note released in September 2010³ offered recommendations that included a comprehensive reform of all derivatives trading.

Article 14, paragraph (g), also obliges governments to give rural women equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes. Many countries report progress in this area and, yet, again, we need to be conscious of intervening factors that can undermine women's claims and entitlements. There are

1 UNFPA (2007), State of World Population 2007: Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth. (<http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2007/english/introduction.html>, accessed 1 March 2012)

2 South Centre (2009), "The extent of agriculture import surges in developing countries: what are the trends," South Centre Analytical Note SC/TDP/AN/AG/8 (November 2009), Geneva: South Centre.

3 de Schutter, Olivier (2010). "Food commodities speculation and food price crises: regulation to reduce the risks of price volatility," Briefing Note 02 (September 2010). Geneva: Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food.



Marina Durano at the 56th CSW Side Event

concerns over desertification that make living in arid and semi-arid lands even more challenging. Think of the pastoralists, for example. In other communities the threats come from flooding, especially where surrounding forests have receded or disappeared.

A different type of threat to land ownership is a phenomenon called land grabbing. Timothy Wise and Sophia Murphy identified land grabs as a threat that demands specific action from policymakers⁴. Reports vary on the extent of land grabbing but there is agreement that this phenomenon has seen a recent acceleration driven by investors, including sovereign wealth funds, biofuel producers, as well as natural resource speculators. So that while land titling efforts might have redistributive consequences benefiting rural women, incentive structures change with the entry of land investors that could lead to the erosion of earlier positive benefits for women. These investors create an additional layer of complexity in unending struggles over who owns and controls land. After all, land symbolizes power in the many places that we come from. This is especially true in settings where customary law and colonial legacies of administration continue to befuddle contemporary reform efforts⁵.

Struggle is not a word to be taken lightly. Rural women have burdens of care that often define what they do and what they can do. And struggle is what these women undergo to fulfill social expectations. They struggle to survive in order for others, their children and their household, to survive. CEDAW Article 14, paragraphs (b), (c), (d), and (h) are obligations for rural women's access to social security and a variety of services. Somehow, I imagine that on the rare occasions that these women are able to access these services, improvements in their well-being are appreciated only as an instrument for growth and development. Rural women's intrinsic value is lost to the development industry.



The DAWN team at the 56th CSW Event in New York

In very broad strokes, I tried to illustrate how institutions are embedded in other institutions creating a complex setting that often overwhelms us in the search for solutions. We end up spinning in circles over tools, markers, methodologies, and formulas hoping that politics will somehow disappear. Institutions do not change without politics. There was the food riots before the Occupy movement. There is a much longer history of agrarian movements and their transnational efforts today aim directly at changing the structural imbalances that I have outlined today.

CEDAW Article 14, paragraph (a), which is an obligation for rural women to participate in development planning at all levels and paragraph (f) an obligation for participation in all community activities. When the G-20 Agricultural Ministers met for the first time in Paris last year, there was the promise of giving special attention to women smallholders in developing countries. They seem to have missed Article 14(a) that demands participation and not just attention. It seems to me that a politicized interpretation of CEDAW Article 14 is very desperately needed in this age of crises, in this fierce new world.

⁴ Wise, Timothy and Sophia Murphy (2012). "Resolving the food crises: assessing global policy reforms since 2007", Medford, MA: Global Development and Environment Institute and Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

⁵ Berry, Sara (2002). "Debating the land question in Africa," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44: 638-668.

DAWN Panel at CSW 56: Socializing Care in Rural Development

Excerpts of interventions made by Tarusila Bradburgh (Fiji), Masaya Llanavares (Venezuela) Avanti Mukherjee (India), and Mbathio Samb (Senegal) at the DAWN panel “Rural Women’s Struggles in a Fierce New World” 4 March 2012, New York, USA

The unequal gender division of labor and poor access to resources creates greater time poverty for rural women in India. Given the multiplicity of women’s tasks, they are unable to achieve the quality of child-care, housework and farm production that they desire. By ignoring the gender division of labor between women and men, and treating non-market work as irrelevant, public policies miss points of intervention that can potentially break vicious cycles of rural poverty. The same is true when donors concentrate on disarmament and reintegration as a strategy for preventing future violence among youth, as in the case of Sierra Leone, for instance, yet their strategies for macroeconomic growth and spending caps undermine economic and educational opportunities for young people. In the Pacific, closely-knit families

and communities may also block young women’s empowerment due to cultural taboos and other economic and social issues related to their sexual and reproductive well-being. And while Latin America represents an interesting case in that care has occupied both conceptual and policy agendas in different ways, particularly from 1999 onwards, the process of translating these new models and ethics of development into a new generation of policies has shown to be complex (Escobar, 2010).

According to Avanti Mukherjee, “India’s National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) entitles every rural household to 100 days of work, for minimum wages, on a public work site within 2-5 miles of its homestead... Studies have shown that almost 70-90% of the demand for NREGA jobs

comes from women, and this is particularly true in regions where women do not have access to off-farm jobs. While the implementation of NREGA has certainly boosted women’s income earning capacity, if women are still responsible for child-care, housework and other tasks such as fetching water, firewood, etc then increased wage incomes will not translate into their well-being and that of their household members... In India this translates into a social choice between a 9% growth rate with inequalities, and a 5% rate of growth that ensures rural and broader social transformation. More generally, altering rural development strategies to socialize care becomes plausible if there is a wider social acceptance of social structures i.e. those that give rural women inviolable rights to decent livelihoods health and education and thereby the ability to participate in society without unjust constraints.”

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is a macro-economic tool and political process that effectively complements conditional cash transfers, said Masaya Llanavares. To quote: “The Bolivian experience has taken a multidimensional approach that requires social groups to maintain deep and constant participatory channels... For popular women leaders, many of whom are indigenous women the process of



From Left to Right: Tarusila Bradburgh (Fiji), Mbathio Samb (Senegal), Marina Durano (Philippines), Avanti Mukherjee (India) and Masaya Llanavares (Venezuela)

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South Feminist Reflection on BPFA+20 and the 5th WCW

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A concern amongst women from key networks which met in New York is that if we decline to engage, there will be actors who will fill that space. There was a consensus on a number of points –

- (1) That we must say “NO” to the proposed venue of Qatar
(other venues are being proposed, including San Francisco and Australia)
- (2) That without resources for genuine participation it will be difficult;
- (3) That we must say NO to negotiation.

Women’s organisations have been caught on the back foot on this and will need to start thinking carefully about how to respond. DAWN has had an initial discussion and our position is a definite “no” to Doha, “no” to it being a Beijing +20 (so there is absolutely no possibility of a reversal of Beijing agreements) and “no” to any negotiation. DAWN also wants to try and influence a delay in UNGASS passing a resolution this September agreeing to it taking place, to give women’s movements and organisations time to strategize, and organize for it.

Politically it remains a tricky time for discussing, let alone advancing, women’s rights. It makes little sense to be reviewing implementation of conference commitments 20 years on. Which raises questions about what will or should be its purpose, and when should it take place?

One way to approach it, which was suggested in our discussions today, is to drop the language of Beijing altogether, to call it simply a 5th WCW and to seek to focus it on what the MDGs are supposed to be for women. Wouldn’t this be a lovely upstaging of the main event – the MDG Conference? We recalled with much appreciation Peggy Antrobus’ apt dubbing of the MDGs as the Most Distracting Gimmick and a minimalist agenda. But more seriously this could be a way of giving women a collective process and a voice and trying to ensure women get what they want out of the MDGs, as well as bringing women’s concerns about the MDGs to the centre.

SRHR: The Unfinished Agenda

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There are three critical elements to this unfinished agenda:

First, we still do not have universal access to quality, comprehensive, integrated sexual and reproductive health services, counseling, and information for women and adolescent girls, with respect for their human rights, and with an emphasis on equity and respect for diversity. Comprehensive services include the following: gynecological care, all forms of safe and effective contraception, safe abortion and post abortion care, maternity care, and prevention, timely diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections including HIV, breast and reproductive cancers, and infertility. Ideally, these should be integrated, one-stop services tailored to women’s needs throughout the life cycle, with effective referral. It is extremely important to reiterate that safe and effective contraception and safe abortion and post abortion care are central to this agenda. Furthermore, if these services are to be provided without coercion, with attention to quality of care, with respect for rights, and in

consonance with the ICPD POA, family planning cannot be a silo provided by itself but must be integrated into the provision of other SRH services and with protection and promotion of rights. And accountability for these must be built into programmes and their monitoring and evaluation, and not left as the responsibility of civil society organisations alone.

Second, programs that empower young people, particularly adolescent girls and young women, to know their bodies and to exercise their rights, especially through comprehensive sexuality education, are still woefully inadequate. At the 45th Session of the UN CPD last month, the member states of the UN agreed to a remarkable set of forward looking actions to promote young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights – inter alia Operational Paragraph (OP) 7 on human rights protection including on sexuality; OP 12 on protection on violence; OP 17 on male responsibility for gender sensitivity; OP 26 on sexuality education; and OP 27 on youth friendly services. All these and more can now be used at the national level to bring about the changes needed.

The third element of the unfinished agenda is protection and promotion of reproductive rights as human rights, and international adoption of sexual rights as human rights. Full recognition and implementation, through policies and programs, of existing and emerging legal standards are urgently needed. It is important to recognize that sexual rights is not a Northern agenda; indeed the opposite was true in the coming in of Article 377 of the Indian Penal Code against male homosexuality during the heyday of the British empire; its removal a century later was the act of the Delhi High Court on the basis of the Indian Constitution; it is part of our collective commitment to human rights.

DAWN Panel at CSW at 56: Socializing Care in Rural Development

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participating in budget discussions has intrinsically implied the need to discuss what development women want and how they think it must be achieved... The process had led women to design specific categories that allow people to direct fiscal expenditures. One of these categories, for instance, requires local governments to invest on what they call 'social and public co-responsibility on family care'... Active feminist presence in the political discussions about the translation of new development alternatives into policy is highly necessary.”

Echoing her colleagues, Mbathio Samb emphasized the need to take into account gender equality in macroeconomic policies, including general budget support and poverty reduction strategies. “Fragility has a differential effect on women and men and missing this point leads to ineffective policies that engage women and men as agents of change... The gender sector needs to make real in conflict and fragile countries the objectives of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).”

Finally, Tarusila Bardburgh calls for an inter-linkage approach that includes young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights. To quote: “We need to examine bodily integrity, Sexual Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights, women in decision making and other gender equality and youth concerns, as equal parts of strategies for and by rural women.”

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Linking Rio+20, Cairo+20 and MDGs+15 from South Feminist Perspectives – DAWN Panel at the People’s Summit

The following article was written by Elizabeth Cooper

Development Alternatives with Women of a New Era (DAWN) organized a panel titled “Linking Rio+20, Cairo+20 and MDGs+15: South feminist perspectives” at the People’s Summit on June 16th in Rio de Janeiro. This panel raised “questions of moving beyond poverty to questions of environment and social justice and a development in which everyone can participate” said Gita Sen, the moderator of panel and executive committee member of DAWN. Represented in the panel were feminist activists from different regional areas of the global South, Noelene Nabulivou from Fiji, Alex Garita from Mexico, Hibist Kassa from Ghana, Nicole Bidegain from Uruguay, Monica Novillo from Bolivia and Lalaine Viado from Philippines.

Noelene introduced the current context of the Rio +20 negotiations describing it as “theatre, an elaborate performance or reflective space.” She framed the current discussion as presenting “two oppositional stories.” The North concentrated on a “forward-looking” agenda, with pressure behind to push the green economy. Meanwhile, the South, G77 and China, defended for retaining of Rio Principles, especially Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) in order to recall historic damage and failed promises from the North. She urged the renewed commitment and communication between “those that do hard and sharp work” within the policy negotiations and the “long term building of social movements” to hold governments accountable. Alex Garita reflected on

the connection between Rio+20 and the UN Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994, which addressed “population and development and therefore reproductive rights and women’s ability to make decisions about their own bodies,” said Garita. Now, she alerted audience that there is a push to control women’s fertility in the South and a renewed assault from neo-Malthusian approaches that are regressing from the conversations 20 years ago. Thus, she saw “the main challenge [of Rio +20] is to secure women’s reproductive rights so that we can see it when we move forward for the 2015 process.”

Nicole Bidegain spoke to how the sustainable development goals (SDGs) being discussed in Rio+20 are linked to the post-2015 agenda. She articulated three possible scenarios for feminists to be aware of – first, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) mandate could be extended; second, the MDGs could be reformulated to reflect some of the critiques, for example, including secondary education, decent work, etc.; third, a new framework for development could be launched. She suggested that feminists should advocate for the third scenario and ensure that the new development agenda is not minimalistic or donor driven, but instead holistic to include human rights, equity, sexual orientation and gender identity, and the care economy. Any post-2015 agenda must address issues of financing and the reform of global economic and financial governance as little can be achieved without this. The final three speakers

presented their country-based reflections on relevance of Cairo-MDGs-Rio to their home states. Hibist Kassa stressed that following structural adjustment policies driven by key international development agencies, there has been a “decline in cultural and manufacturing center, also decline in focus on social policies.” For Africa there is a strong “argument for a comprehensive agenda as opposed to a narrow approach to development,” said Kassa. Lalaine Viado discussed the strong presence of the Holy See and other conservative forces within Filipino political institutions. Facing this pressure, she says it has been difficult for the national government to push through policies for sexual and reproductive rights despite signing on outcome documents of Rio, Beijing, and Cairo conferences.

Finally Monica Novillo stressed the links between what is achieved at the international level, and what can be fought for at the national level. Bolivia projects itself as a progressive nation, and is greatly interested in maintaining this position in the international community. Novillo drew attention to the fact that this projection carries many contradictions on a national scale, such as not yet affirming sexual and reproductive rights. Novillo hopes that Rio +20 will “re-affirm the principles of the Beijing platform and principles of Cairo, that would be a basic achievement,” meaning an assertion of sexual reproductive rights as essential to sustainable development.

Financialization, Food Security and Women's Rights: An African Perspective

The following article was excerpted from a plenary speech given by Zo Randriamaro at the International Association for Feminist Economics (IAFFE) Conference, 25-27 June 2012, Barcelona



Zo Randriamaro

The global financial crisis has highlighted financialisation as a key feature of the 21st century capitalist system, in that profit generation depends more on short-term returns from financial transactions that are dependent on speculation and derivative-based strategies for generating profit, rather than production and commodity trades (Epstein, ed. 2006, cited in DAWN 2010). Since 1970, the derivatives market has become the largest market in the world, the actual value of which was estimated at \$11 trillion in 2007 – about the same as the entire economic output of the United States at the time –. Even after the credit crunch, the overall net turnover was \$600 trillion in September 2008 (Hildyard, 2008: 13).

“Securitisation is a process whereby assets that generate regular streams of income (such as loans, corporate bonds, mortgages, export credit debt, care homes, etc.) are sold to a newly created company, which issues derivatives that give investors the right to the income stream from the assets” (Hildyard, 2008: 4-5). A report by Olivier de Schutter (2010), UN Special Rapporteur on Right to Food, noted a spectacular increase in the holdings in commodity index funds from US\$13 billion in 2003

to US\$ 317 billion by 2008 and that among others, the number of contracts in maize futures increased from 500,000 in 2003 to almost 2.5 million in 2008.

His research led him to declare: “The 2008 food price crisis arose because a deeply flawed global financial system exacerbated the impacts of supply and demand movements in food commodities. Reforming the global financial system should therefore be seen as part of the agenda to achieve food security, particularly within poor net food-importing countries” (2010: 6).

From a feminist perspective, the key question is where do women fit in this global food system characterized by financialisation and imbalances of power? In most African countries, women are affected by multiple disadvantages that are likely to be exacerbated by these systemic issues.

Firstly, across the continent, gender inequalities in access to productive resources – such as land, water, other agricultural inputs and extension services, credit and technology – continue to prevail, while the prolonged food crisis has perpetuated gender inequalities in access to food in a context where women made up 60 percent of the chronically hungry even before the recent food crisis, in spite of their central role in agricultural production (FAO, 2006).

Second, women are mostly providers of labor in the agricultural production systems, including unpaid family labor. Poor women small-scale farmers and agricultural laborers are often net purchasers of food as they do not produce enough food for their families. In particular, female headed households dominate among the landless or land-poor rural households, who are often the poorest of the poor. This means that they are more disadvantaged by high food prices as they spend a larger share of their income on food (FAO, WFP and IFAD 2011).

These gender inequalities are compounded by the bias against food production for subsistence in national agricultural policies, which give priority to large-scale agribusiness and corporate interests in an increasingly concentrated agricultural input providers' sector. In spite of the rhetorical developments around the critical role that rural women play in food security, the disproportionate burden that they carry in sustaining care and social reproduction goes uncounted in most national accounts, and is ignored in most national budgets and agricultural policies.

Third, women's disadvantaged position in the global food system is perpetuated by the widespread tendency among policy makers to consider hunger and food insecurity as issues of demand and supply, and to ignore the structural issues of inequality, entitlements, power relations and governance within the global food system as well as the interconnections between them. As such, the overwhelming focus on increased production has resulted in siloized policies that have proved their inability to reduce hunger and ensure food security, while shifting the burden of sustaining an increased number of impoverished families and communities onto women.

The multiple prejudices affecting women have also meant that they bear the brunt of the negative impacts of the financialisation of the global food system. Ordinary African women dominated among the participants in the food riots that erupted between February and May 2008, which were called the "housewives' revolt" in some media reports. For instance in Burkina Faso, one of them explained that "the majority of Burkinabe workers are low paid. With a monthly budget of FCFA40,000 [about €60], I do not know how I can possibly make do with it. We only eat once a day and the children cannot understand." (Napon, 2008, cited in Randriamaro 2012).

And yet, women lack the power and means to defend their interests within this financialised global food system. In particular, they critically lack the analytical clarity and knowledge-based activism that are needed to challenge this system.

For instance, a clear understanding of derivatives markets, their mechanisms and operations, as well as the dynamics of change within these markets would allow to expose the contradictions between neoliberal theories of market efficiency and their real practice, especially in relation to their claim that financial markets are working in the „public interest“. This provides another opportunity for collaboration and alliances between feminist activists and economists. In particular, the analysis of the social networks that influence financial market behavior would be helpful in challenging the structures of power constructed by financial speculators and their allies.

As well, forging alliances between feminist economists and women in communities affected by rising food prices and volatility in the commodity markets is necessary for building social movements that can contribute to deeper structural change. It is the only way to generate the political pressure for ensuring policy reform and effective regulation of the global financial system in the public interest and not only in the interest of the financial sector.

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Transforming Finance to Work for Gender Justice in a ‘Fierce New World’

*The following article is adopted from Nicole Bidegain’s Intervention at the Rio+20 side event entitled Reigning in the Power of Money and Finance: Transforming it to Work for Social and Environmental Justice
15 June 2012, Rio de Janeiro*

We face at the global level converging crises on finance, climate, food and energy that have tremendous impacts on people’s life, especially on women. Old structural problems such as income distribution, poverty, lack of access to education and social services are now combined with emerging issues such as climate change, speculation on food and the financialization of the economy and nature. We in DAWN call this the “fierce new world” – a world with uncertainty of advancing on achieving women’s rights as a consequence of the weakness of multilateralism, the growing concentration of economic power and the lack of commitment of our governments to implement comprehensive and well funded social and economic policies. It is time to recognize that macroeconomic policies are not gender neutral

Gender relations explain to a certain extent, the distribution of opportunities and resources existing in society. This implies that women and men experience the impacts of international trade, financial liberalization differently, as members of the workforce, consumers and producers, and as responsible for the activities of the “care economy” within and outside households. Thus, macroeconomic policies are not gender-neutral. They can perpetuate inequalities and occupational segregation between men and women, or the contrary, promote gender equality in economic sectors.

For instance, the financial liberalization implemented in the current phase of globalization has impacted negatively on women from the South by different channels. First, the financial

crisis caused by the volatility of capitals flows and speculative bubbles has impacted women through labor market, where they have assumed the costs in terms of unemployment, wages and job insecurity. Furthermore, increased unemployment implies an intensification of care work by the reduction of household income. Second, there are also impacts in relation to the opportunities of access to credit and finance, especially for SMEs.

Third, financial speculation on food has led to a rise in prices that destabilize household budgets, and especially female-headed single parent ones. Corporate control over food production in developing countries has severely threatened people’s – especially women’s – livelihoods and right to food. Focusing on austerity policies and fiscal discipline, the costs driven from privatization, cuts in cash transfers and social services, are transferred to women through the overburden on unpaid work. Finally, regressive tax structures impose additional pressure on the price of basic goods, hindering the ability of women to manage household budgets. So, a gender analysis raises questions on the connection of the current multiple crisis and volatilities to (a) women’s wages, employment and unpaid labor, (b) state of social reproductive and social protection capacities, resources and services, and (c) intra-country and intra-household sharing of financial risks and shocks.

Some proposals to advance on gender and economic justice that had been advanced by the Women’s Working Group on Financing for Development convened by DAWN were:

Firstly, developing countries should be allowed to take ownership of their domestic policy space in order to implement heterodox economic policies (including monetary and fiscal ones) for achieving economic, environmental and gender justice. Second, countries should advance in the collection and utilization of gender disaggregated data, including time-use surveys that measure women’s unpaid work and its contribution to the national economy to make visible women’s actual economic contribution and gender-responsive measure in the National Accounts System. It is important to transform the imbalance between the productive economy and the reproductive economy, which is largely dependent on women who function continuously in spite of crisis as if their capacity and the capacity of households are elastic. This process implies also to dismantle the “ideal worker” paradigm of the labour market, entailing a full-time employee that works after hours and devotes a very small amount of time to the household physical maintenance chores or to caring of dependant family members.

Third, it is urgent to move to progressive and fair tax regimes that can optimize revenues, while easing the income disparities. Also we support measures such as tax rebates to women in recognition of their contribution to the society, their historical discrimination in land ownership as well as their unequal sharing of family responsibilities; and also tax relief for the poor and for single household heads a majority of whom are women who either care for the very old or the very young.

In this light we support progressive fair and efficient taxation, including taxation of transnational corporations, addressing more forcefully the problem of tax evasion and tax havens, and strengthening world-wide tax cooperation.

Fourth, we join in the effort by our colleagues in civil society in putting forward the call for a multilateral mechanism that would subject investors and transnational corporations to more lawfully binding norms and standards. The right to prior and informed consent by affected communities including indigenous peoples should be guaranteed. In the meantime, investor behavior continues to pose problems to developing country governments that have difficulty dealing with the effects of wage competition, the global tax race to the bottom and the social and environmental impacts. FDI should follow environmentally and socially sustainable production systems, and align its operations with national and local economies.

Fifth, it is important to improve women access to finance. This must go well beyond the common practice of opening channels for women to access micro-credits and must take into consideration and tackle structural inequalities that have prevented many women and other marginalized groups from accessing funding and loans.

Sixth, we have to continue the battle to strengthen the authority of the UN to lead the necessary rights-based pro-development economic and financial reforms, in particular responding to issues of global macroeconomic policy including its social and ecological dimensions as well as supporting the creation of alternative financial and monetary architectures at the regional level.

Finally, the main challenge is to address gender, economic and ecological justice at the same time. Not one comes first, than the other. This implies thinking about new forms of production, consumption, redistribution. It also means putting people and environment at the centre of development instead of profit.



DAWN Informs is published by Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), a network of feminist scholars and activists from the economic South, engaged in feminist research, analysis of the global environment, working for economic and gender justice, and sustainable development. A limited number of copies are printed for free distribution and an electronic version of this newsletter is available at www.dawnnet.org. Enjoy reading!

PUBLISHED JULY 2012

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