

Stepping Stones From Copenhagen to Beijing

The document, *Stepping Stones from Copenhagen to Beijing*, aims to link the issues of the World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen, March 6-12) to those of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, September 4-15). It was developed at a two-day meeting hosted by the Gender Division of EUROSTEP - a network of European agencies involved in development assistance - just prior to the NGO Consultation. DAWN was represented at the meeting by General Coordinator, Peggy Antrobus.

Stepping Stones addresses three sets of related issues: the lack of a conceptual framework and analysis in the FWCW draft Platform for Action; its many flaws; and the restrictive process in the lead up to Beijing. It was discussed and endorsed by many NGOs at the WSSD Forum, and forwarded to NGOs involved in preparing an NGO document for the final FWCW PrepCom (New York, March 15-April 7). Later, in a working group on economic issues set up by the EUROSTEP group, along with colleagues from DAWN and the Women's Alliance for Economic Alternatives, *Stepping Stones* was used as the starting point for another document - *Quality Benchmark: An Economic Framework*. Following are edited sections of *Stepping Stones*:

Women and development organizations and regional networks are concerned about the direction of the preparatory process of the Fourth World Conference on Women which is not allowing any debate that takes into account the achievements of the women's movement. The draft Platform for Action also lacks any analysis of changes that have taken place at global and national levels, and how these changes have affected the lives of women. Additionally, issues related to implementation - particularly accountability and commitment of resources - are not being seriously addressed. In summary, the preparatory process lacks significant concern by governments to seriously address the problems women face.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS

At the First World Conference on Women (Mexico City, 1975) consensus was reached for the United Nations to draft the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted in 1979. In 1980, governments committed themselves to ratification of agreements, but subsequently failed to take the legal and political steps to make this effective. Development became the central focus of this Second World Conference on Women.

The 1985 Third WCW identified vitally important policy definitions in adopting the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies, but still failed to launch the comprehensive integration of a gender perspective into all dimensions of policy making. In 1992, the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) achieved a global breakthrough in recognizing a gender perspective on environment and the critically important role of women's NGOs in the international process. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights saw a major advance in the recognition of women's rights as human rights. This critical opening of perspectives moved the international community to recognize violence against women as a violation of their fundamental human rights.

Recently, the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) recognized the empowerment of women as crucial for the success of population policies. This included the protection of women's human rights, and in particular women's self-determination in controlling their reproductive and sexual decision-making.

These achievements were gained as a result of the efforts of the women's movement. While there has been a diversification of priorities identified by different groups within the movement, core issues of common concern have also been defined. We therefore believe that it is possible to develop a more precise framework for the Beijing Platform for Action.

A CHANGING CONTEXT

Momentous changes since 1985 have made the context in which the 1995 World Conference on Women takes place very different to the context in which the Forward Looking Strategies were formulated. An analysis of current trends and their underlying structures must therefore be a starting point for proposals aimed at achieving sustainable models of development.

The globalization of world markets and trade liberalization have taken place within economic structures that have allowed accumulation and concentration of wealth in transnational corporations and social elites. While the World Trade Organization is established to bring order in global commerce, its mandate is the deregulation of markets. But in a context where jobless growth is becoming widespread, jobs that are created are often at the expense of labour rights. In a number of countries the volume of external debts, and multilateral debts in particular, has become a

cont. on p. 12

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DAWN INFORMS is an occasional bulletin published by
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Gender Perspectives on the

by Sonia Correa,

It is impossible to assess the negotiations and results of the World Summit on Social Development without acknowledging its nature and calendar. The Summit debates were always going to be hard because of the macro-economic issues directly addressed by its agenda and because of its timing. Its late inclusion in the United Nations calendar of events for the 1990s squeezed it between Cairo and Beijing making it hard for women's organizations to catch up with the agenda both at national and international levels. The same difficulty was encountered by the larger NGO community and, as surprising as it may seem, among States themselves which did not adequately prepare their reports, positions and interventions during 1994. It remains critical, therefore, to view WSSD agreements as a departing point and not a point of arrival.

In retrospect it seems really shortsighted that some women's networks, donor agencies - including UNFPA - as well as allied developed and developing countries viewed the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) as a final victory and not as an intermediary battle, and on that basis decided to skip the Summit and focus exclusively on Beijing. There was little understanding that although the UN agenda is narrowly sectoral, the political process is not. The result? Instead of consolidating our gains and pushing forward, women's organizations and these other actors took hard knocks in the course of WSSD negotiations. The most striking example was the incredible energy women's organizations were forced to expend in order to retain core ICPD definitions, most particularly concepts of family and reproductive health.

WSSD Politics: Implications for a Gender Agenda

"We are using the politics of the past to deal with the agenda of the present and the future."

(Ambassador Butler, chairperson of the Working Group on Human Rights)

There have been significant changes in the political balances within the UN from UNCED in Rio (1992) to ICPD in Cairo. Firstly, the wide North-South breach revealed in UNCED - both in the official and NGO settings - assumed new contours in ICPD. Throughout the Cairo process Northern delegations were closer to feminist positions than many developing countries. South positions ranged from the Holy See moral rationale to population control premises that were often harder than those proposed by some of the industrialized countries. Given this lack of consensus, the G-77, wisely, only operated in a block on the chapters dealing with development, ODA and follow-up mechanisms.

More importantly, a clear Southern based gender agenda has called into question the logic behind the historical alliances between the women's movement in the South and the G-77, and favoured more flexible lobbying strategies across the North-South historical divide. The balanced language achieved in various sections of ICPD's Platform of Action - especially the Preamble, Principles, and Sustainable Development - is a result of this rather surprising political alchemy.

During the WSSD process, however, the G-77 reactivated its traditional mode of operation on all issues, probably as a strategy to rebuild its internal cohesion and political momentum within the UN. Developed countries, although sincerely committed to gender equality, often returned to their narrow economic interests - particularly evident in the case of the US as a consequence of the Republican victory in the 1994 congressional elections just before ICPD.

The 'dialogue of the deaf' between North and South, which we had witnessed in Rio, was revived in Copenhagen and this narrowed available space for maneuvering. By the same token the Vatican, its satellite minority forces and fundamentalist states gained a firmer foothold within the G-77. In the final analysis those who lost in Cairo jumped forcefully into Copenhagen with the aim of setting back our victories. Now, having gained some leverage, they are moving with strength and renewed confidence in the Beijing process.

Social Summit: Challenges, Risks and Breakthroughs

DAWN Research Coordinator on Population & Reproductive Rights.

But the tensions of WSSD politics have even wider and deeper implications. The alliance with developed countries constructed in ICPD around a consistent gender agenda, has been gradually eroded by their hard positions on creating an 'enabling global economic environment'. This Northern resistance naturally pushed us back to our historical alliance with G-77 positions and served to dilute some important debates.

If it is true that G-77 countries lack power in the global arena, it is crucial to verify whether this 'lack of power' also applies to the relationship between States and civil societies in the developing countries - particularly in respect to women's rights and autonomy. There are also critical questions in regard to the G-77 position concerning the 'right to development': What kind of development are we talking about? Gender blind? Environmentally unsustainable? A development model smartly combining markets, authoritarian politics, the re-domestication of women and family stability?

The brackets and reservations emerging from the PrepCom III negotiations (New York, January 16-30, 1995) sharply illustrate the implications of the WSSD political skirmishes for a long term gender and development perspective. The brackets involving core gender issues - family, reproductive health, unpaid labour - were more numerous than those affecting tough macro-economic issues. The same trend was evident in the persistent lack of consensus on sovereignty and universal human rights which results in negative consequences for women's rights in most developing countries.

In summary, the gender agenda for the 21st century has often been used as a battle field for the positions taken by major actors on macro economic issues, national prerogatives and cultural diversity, which has put the conceptual and political achievements accumulated by the international women's movement since Mexico in 1975 at enormous risk.

The NGO Environment: Pluses and Minuses

"These people seem to be small kids. You can't let them alone in a room because they start doing everything wrong!"

(Bella Abzug of WEDO, commenting on the negotiation process)

WSSD witnessed the increasing skills of NGOs as civil society international negotiators. It was true to say that most diplomats taking part knew very little about PrepCom III and even less about Cairo or Vienna. In fact, the small group of NGO Observers at the informal Informals knew much more about the process and previous agreements than most negotiators. So if the document is uneven or even bad, it could have been much worse if we had not been there lobbying with energy and zeal! Among the breakthroughs achieved by the efforts of women's NGOs, a major one is the inclusion of an early paragraph in the Programme of Action inspired by the balance of principles adopted in Cairo. This particular insertion consistently blocked the on-going efforts by some delegations to dilute the commitment to human rights in the watershed of cultural relativism.

Another positive development was the proliferation of caucuses and interlinking between them. Relations and dialogue between official delegations and NGOs have continued to improve. For

example, the Brazil delegation included more than ten NGOs as observers and Latin American NGOs have reached a formal agreement to be fully involved in follow-up activities at the regional level. Every region had close and hard negotiations with their delegations and increasingly the G-7 delegations (US, EU, Japan, Canada) had moments of dialogue and liaison with the NGO community at large, breaking the conventional national and regional boundaries which have marked NGO-States relations.

But once again there were problems including the fracturing of agendas and priorities, division of labour and linking between the Forum and the Official Conference. Each national NGO had the right to two people in the official area and global networks could have five representatives. By the third day - when things got really bad - the conference Secretary General, Juan Somavia, gave NGOs access to the negotiating rooms so long as they were accompanied by an official delegate. But rumours that access was difficult or impossible proliferated. In addition, many people at the forum had not followed the process closely enough or received adequate information.

The circumstances in Copenhagen revived and deepened the problems of communication we observed in Cairo. This pattern suggests that for the future the Forum space for networking and consensus-building should precede the official negotiations where an opportunity should be given to NGOs to express their perspectives and views prior to and after official agreements have been reached.

The biggest problem though, remains the lack of clarity both in regard to 'an alternative framework' and political strategy, which affected all of us. Throughout the process we have been dealing with the tension between confrontational and challenging positions and incremental-change approaches. If we have found this difficult to resolve within the borders of the women's movement, it is worse in the wider NGO community. All of this was reflected in the NGO Alternative Declaration, which consumed twenty people in three days and nights of work. The final text did not please either the confrontationists, who wanted it stronger, or the incrementalists, who wanted it to be more consistent with the process.

The Summit approach to SAPs was also a major issue of debate and conflict in the NGO community - including among DAWN members. Some say that acknowledging the detrimental effects of SAPs in a UN document signed by heads of states is a step forward on the road to reframing global policy definitions taken by the International Financial Institutions. But many feel the document as it stands legitimizes SAPs and, as it has been previously analyzed, would rather see a radical shift in the entire framework. This is a dilemma which may best be considered in this context: The possibilities for a revolution in a UN Conference or document are limited since they are by nature a forum and a text for incremental change.

But more specifically, 'the radical alternative framework' we are constructing is not yet as clear as we would like it to be. The DAWN tryptic - Transforming Civil Societies, Changing the State and Challenging Markets - is a rather enlightening, but also very preliminary, starting point.

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The Final Document

The text of the WSSD Declaration and Plan Of Action is rather uneven unlike the ICPD document which is consistent from beginning to end. Reading it you get extreme sensations. In one paragraph you may say, 'This is a wonderful breakthrough!', while in the next you say: 'Here we have a major backlash!' This is most true of the sections dealing with gender issues.

In spite of the strong efforts we observed to roll back Cairo agreements, reproductive health language remains relatively intact. However, it is important to recall that the notion of 'reproductive rights' has never been included in the document. Also, in the Programme of Action, a strong paragraph makes explicit reference to Cairo reservations and declarations, an unusual and inadequate procedure in international agreements. In addition, it has defined sustainable development as being centered in 'the human person' instead of 'human being' - which is UNCED sanctified language. The implications of this shift in regard to the anti-abortion and right to life agenda are not yet very clear.

Our major loss has been families. The term 'various forms' is used here and there, but the document also mentions 'husband and wife', an outdated term in UN documents which have preferred the more neutral 'spouses'. The final text is ambiguous in its simultaneous references to both ICPD and WSSD agreements on families, since the definitions are radically different in each case.

In terms of macro-economic issues, the final agreements are also ambivalent. Debt reduction measures do not go much beyond the Paris Club definitions of December 1994, but a brief reference is made to debt swaps for social development. Negotiations concerning resources for development assistance were extremely tough. It is interesting to share a comment by an experienced NGO female observer who, in the middle of the turmoil leaned over and whispered in my ear: "People don't yet understand that the era of Overseas Development Aid, as it has been conceived and implemented as an instrumental component of the bi-polar order, is definitely gone." By the end agreement had been reached in regard to additional resources and 0.7% of GNP to ODA, but the US has reserved in both cases.

The negotiations on the 20/20 compact got slightly better language than at the final PrepCom, but the evaluations on this are contradictory. Some of the players see this as a negative because, they say, there is not enough commitment; others argue that it is not so bad since it is framed on a voluntary basis in order to avoid conditionality. Having witnessed some G-77 debates on this particular subject I would dare to say that in most cases this WSSD 'voluntary basis approach' on 20/20 will really mean: "You pay for our social programmes and we keep our money to buy arms!" In that sense James Speth is probably right in a recent interview with the Earth Times when he says that the 20/20 compact was watered down in Copenhagen.

Significantly the agreements on 'excessive military expenditures' are the worst in the whole document. Here major resistance and reactions came from India, Pakistan, Iran and Egypt. In G-77 debates, the argument constantly raised was that developing countries could not afford to eradicate poverty and social development if they could not ensure the security of their citizens. It proved useless to point out that the text did not refer exclusively to Southern

countries but to excessive military expenditures at the global level. In the final main committee debate Costa Rica, consistent with its ethical commitment to disarmament, reserved on the paragraph.

The Tobin Tax is not explicitly mentioned, but two paragraphs have been approved which refer to the instability of global financial markets and the need to look for creative ideas and instruments to fund development. Relations between the UN and IFIs are not as strong as we would like to see. But it is interesting to note that the World Bank and IMF, that were very silent and invisible last year, showed their faces in Copenhagen. Some say this is because the agreements do not challenge their agenda but we should also bear in mind that what comes next is more important that the words approved in Copenhagen.

All through the document the detrimental effects of structural adjustment policies is acknowledged - on poverty, on women, on children, on social development. In the chapter on Social Integration, the US wanted to introduce a phrase referring to the 'positive effects' of SAPs. The argument was that if the 'positive' was deleted we would lose the possibility to dialogue with other major actors such as the IFIs. The 'positive dimension', although weakened, remains.

Finally: language on partnership with NGOs is much weaker than in the ICPD Plan of Action which goes far beyond the consultative status that has traditionally marked the formal relationship between States and NGOs and emphasizes the notion that Government/NGO partnerships must be guided by full respect for the autonomy of the non-governmental sector. WSSD agreements revive the consultative approach and emphasize models of functioning which are in accordance with national legislation, but many developing countries have openly rejected the notion on NGO autonomy. No explicit mention is made about the vital role of women's organizations in the section dealing with the role of NGOs in the WSSD Programme of Action (Chapter V-Implementation).

Gender 'Achievements'

Gender equity and equality is included throughout in spite of previously referred to skirmishes, risks and long term implications. But other steps forward are to be found in the final text. As already mentioned, most references to SAPs clearly acknowledge detrimental gender impacts and some call for specific measurements. Even if contradictory interpretations remain in regard to this particular dimension it is important to recall that the international women's movement - most particularly DAWN - has been fighting for this acknowledgment since, at least, 1985.

The agreement on International Labour Organization principles and standards which directly relates to the Social Clause in WTO, was very hard to negotiate. The debate, however, was developed in a very sincere tone (different from other macro issues) and the final language is very good in respect to freedom of association and bargaining, prohibition of forced and child labour, and non-discrimination. Although 'gender' is not specifically mentioned, the formulation also makes a lot of sense for women experiencing bad labour conditions. In the same context the US has let go (by mistake) equal pay for work of equal value - the ILO definition of 1951 which they have not ratified.

Most importantly the measurement of unpaid labour in GNP satellite accounts was approved, for the first time in a non specific

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A DISAPPOINTING PREPCOM III

by Peggy Antrobus,
DAWN General Coordinator

The 39th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (PrepCom III) (New York, March 15 - April 7) in preparation for the upcoming Fourth World Conference on Women was a disappointing exercise marked by frustration and chaos at both the official meeting and among NGOs.

Charlotte Bunch of the Center for Women's Global Leadership provided a good summary of what happened in a memo to other networks soon afterwards: "A combination of organizational problems, a low priority on women's concerns, and a backlash against what women have achieved in prior conferences - especially at ICPD - led to a mediocre document with previous gains for women now in danger of deletion, and minimal opportunities for NGO participation." In regard to the Platform for Action, she says, "Almost 40 per cent... is in brackets, including important portions of the health, economic and women's human rights section.... The Vatican organized a small but loud opposition (with Guatemala, Honduras, Malta, Ecuador, Argentina and Benin) to Cairo advances on women's reproductive health and empowerment... They also tried to put the word 'gender' in brackets. Most of the Western and some other governments failed to make real commitments to issues of poverty and economic rights."

I had gone directly from the Social Summit in Copenhagen to New York with the main aim of working with other organizations to strengthen economic issues in the draft Platform for Action, which were particularly bad. In this effort I joined representatives of the gender team of Oxfam/UK and members of the Women's Alliance for Economic Alternatives.

Later we merged efforts with the Working Group on Economic Issues set up by the Linkage Caucus organized by the Women's Environment Development Organization (WEDO). Our analysis took off from *Stepping Stones from Copenhagen to Beijing* (see page 1), and later developed into another - *Quality Benchmark: An Economic Framework*. We formed four Task Forces, one for each relevant chapter, and drafted alternate language which we fed through the lobbying document of the Linkage Caucus. Unfortunately we were not nearly as well organized as the Working Groups on Health and Rights and the process fell apart towards the end of the PrepCom when a number of people had to leave.

In general, the process for NGOs proved very problematic. On the official side, most of the substantive work was done in informal sessions from which we were excluded. But, beyond this fact, NGO activities also suffered from lack of coordination between the NGO Organizing Committee and the Linkage Caucus. In very real terms, this undermined the effectiveness of NGO lobbying.

The fact is that whatever NGOs were able to secure in terms of language on rights and health was due largely to the skills and experience gained by networks and individual women in the lead up to Vienna and Cairo. And, if all of the official blockages and in-fighting were not enough, in the final days of the PrepCom the news broke on China's decision to change the site of the Forum to a location even further away from the Conference!

DAWN PREPARES FOR BEIJING: MAY CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

DAWN Caribbean Meeting: May 8-10

Focus: Alternative economic frameworks. Organized by the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) which represents the Caribbean on DAWN's Steering Committee.

DAWN Inter-regional Meeting: May 12-14

Aim: To produce a global analysis on alternative economic frameworks based on South experiences, for the DAWN platform document at the Beijing meetings.

DAWN Caribbean Strategy Meeting: May 14

Aim: To develop a strategy for the region before, and during the Beijing meeting as well as develop ideas for the larger DAWN Strategy meeting.

DAWN Inter-regional Strategy Meeting: May 15-16

Aim: To generate material and formulate a strategy which could enable the women's movement to negotiate a more positive response from their governments before they go to Beijing and at the Conference itself.

DAWN Annual Steering Committee: May 16-18

Aim: To finalise DAWN's Platform for Action and other plans for Beijing, select the next General Coordinator and location of the Secretariat, and focus on DAWN's post-Beijing work.

The following brief was developed and presented to G-77 delegations at the Third PrepCom for the World Conference on Women (March 15-April 1, New York) by women's groups from G-77 countries. It concentrates on key issues and concerns to the women from the south that are non-negotiable.

- The Platform of Action must reaffirm that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated as expressed in the Vienna Declaration and must advance the recommendations of the Vienna Declaration to fully integrate the concerns of women into the full range of international human rights protection and mechanisms at all levels.
- Governments should ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) without reservations and withdraw existing reservations. National legislation must be reviewed and revised to fall in line with the provisions of CEDAW. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) should draft an optional protocol creating the right to individual petition under CEDAW. Governments should establish the machineries through which the rights of women can be realized.
- Women's rights for equality within the family with regard to inheritance, guardianship, marriage and divorce should be ensured and protected through the enactment of positive legislation where necessary. Governments themselves must commit to reduce gender inequality and protect the sharing of rights, responsibilities and privileges of women within the family on the basis of equality.
- Women must have full political, economic, cultural and social rights at all levels to realize their productive potential. They have a right to recognition of their economic contributions, both remunerated and unremunerated. Governments must ensure women's full labour rights and the opportunities to participate in decision making processes of labour unions.
- Global economic processes have created new forms of poverty. The unequal relationships that exist on the basis of class, caste, ethnicity and gender, have resulted in women in many parts of the world being impoverished in this process.

Of the estimated one billion poor people in the world 70% are women. There is urgent need to reduce the critical level of poverty and have specific measures to ensure the right to sustainable livelihood of the particularly vulnerable groups. Development models need to be people centered and sustainable with a focus on human resources development which builds both productive and reproductive capacities of people.

- People have the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being including food, clothing, housing, health-care and necessary social services.
- In view of the existing gender inequalities with respect to access to education for all, the UN Declaration of Education for All by Year 2000 should be implemented with particular focus on women and girls. The Vienna Declaration reaffirms that States have the obligation to ensure that education strengthens respect for human rights and fundamental freedom.
- Governments should commit themselves to prepare and implement national plans of action to eliminate violence against women (UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women). Governments should also take measures to eliminate all forms of exploitation, abuse and sexual discrimination.
- In view of global macroeconomic trends, women in the Third World, are an increasing part of the worldwide migrant work-force. Governments should ensure rights to migrant women to work free of slavery, economic, racial or sexual discrimination, harassment and exploitation. They should be integrated into the labour force with full entitlement to labour and social rights. Their right to family reunion should be assured. Governments should ratify the International Convention of the Rights of Migrant Workers and their family members adopted by the UN General Assembly. Sending and receiving countries of migrant workers need to enter into bilateral agreements on the basis of internationally agreed standards and norms.
- Governments should review and revise discriminatory family laws and related practices in

Governments in Beijing?

accordance with international standards and obligations, bearing in mind that the laws that determine a woman's status within the family also affect her ability to exercise her citizenship rights in the public sphere.

- All citizens have the right to representation and participation in public affairs and Governments should take appropriate measures to ensure that women have equal opportunities to represent themselves and participate in decision making bodies at local, national and international levels.
- Women's rights over their knowledge and technology such as medicinal and agricultural practices should be recognized and respected. Governments must ensure protection against exploitation of this knowledge by TNCs through patenting, for example.
- National, regional and international mechanisms of accountability should focus particular attention on violations of women's human rights and should ensure that violations are investigated, prosecuted and perpetrators are punished in accordance with international standards of due process and that victims are compensated.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Women form a disproportionate majority of the poor in every country, and the incidence of poverty is increasing among women. Because of women's role in reproduction the poverty of women is also detrimental to the well-being of people who are dependent on the care of women. The framework of women's human rights has been used to focus on the issues.

Poverty cannot be addressed without a consideration of the framework of macro-economics policies and global trends, gender roles and women's human rights.

- Governments must design and implement macro-economic policies that take women's concerns fully into consideration. Women should participate fully and equally in designing, implementing and monitoring these policies.
- Policies of structural adjustment must be reviewed and revised to ensure that resources directed to meeting basic needs are not reduced (Social Summit).

- The current market-driven global economic model of development must be questioned and the role of the state in guaranteeing basic social economic rights must be affirmed.
- In the context of the WTO, the G-77 Governments must take the necessary measures to protect the domestic economies and environment from the negative effects of economic globalization, with special concerns for women's livelihood.
- New indicators and measurements are needed to count women's unremunerated work, and to monitor the social and environmental costs of macro-economic policies. Satellite accounts that incorporate women's productive and reproductive work must be developed.
- Women's access to and control over productive resources including credit, land and technologies and to education and training needs to be ensured.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Health is fundamental to women's well-being and the development of their full potential, and capacity to contribute to socio-economic development. Women's health, rights and empowerment are inextricably linked and must be seen within the context of broader socio-economic development policies.

The Platform of Action for Beijing must build on the Programme of Action adopted in Cairo. Women's health must be addressed:

- Throughout the life cycle;
- By the universal provision of primary health care, which includes reproductive health care services;
- By recognizing maternal mortality, morbidity and unsafe abortion as major public health problems;
- Male responsibility for sexual and reproductive health and behaviour; and,
- Acknowledging violence against women and girls as a major threat to their health.

DAWN viewed the World Summit on Social Development as another opportunity to challenge current socio-economic and political structures which are serving to aggravate problems of poverty and unemployment. A second major aim at the Summit was to continue building alliances and coalitions with other non-governmental organizations working towards a more just world - in addition to its links with other women's networks across several active world lobbies (population, human rights, environment, poverty, workers). The result was the formation of a Women's Alliance for Alternative Economics. DAWN was also involved in a number of other activities.

A Panel discussion, Social Integration: DAWN's Perspective on the Social Summit, explored the links between the themes of the Summit and those of other international conferences of the 1990s; economic frameworks, environment, and Population and reproductive rights. The issue of political empowerment was also addressed, using South Africa's experience in the formulation of an Economic Recovery Programme as a case study.

The panel, which was chaired by DAWN's General Coordinator, Peggy Antrobus, included Marcia Riviera of the Social Science

Research Council of Latin America (CLACSO), who is the focal point on the theme of Alternative Economic Frameworks for Latin America; Sonia Correa of the Brazilian NGO, IBAZI the founder of SOS Corpo - a feminist organization working on issues of reproductive health - and Research Coordinator of DAWN's project on Population and Reproductive Rights; Vivienne Wee, head of the regional NGO, ENGENDER (Center for Environment, Gender and Development) based in Singapore; and Vivienne Taylor of South Africa, a member of the Women's movement of the ANC, and one of the authors of the Women's Charter.

Panelists also spoke about the achievements of DAWN and the women's movement during the last five years and pointed to directions towards the year 2000 in respect of what are and should be women's relationships to states (national and international), markets and others in civil society - especially other NGOs.

The Hearings focused on the violations of women's socio-economic rights that have taken place within, and are a consequence of, macro-economic policies. These policies are formulated

GENDER PERSPECTIVES... cont. from p.4

conference and document. The text does not mention satellite accounts but its technical definitions. China resisted this most but other G-77 members would also love to have the mention removed. So, in summary, if 'families' was the major loss, unpaid labour was the major gain.

The Larger Political Environment

WSSD results cannot be evaluated exclusively from an internal perspective but must take into account repercussions in the society at large. As was the case in Cairo there were as many journalists as NGO delegates in the Bella Center. Coverage by the Danish newspapers was good. The newspaper *Politiken* had its own publication. *Politiken's* coverage was refreshing as it covered the debates through a different lens to that of *Terra Viva*, *Vivre Autrement* and *Earth Times* which are now often repetitive in their analysis.

The media debate on some critical issues went beyond the state of negotiations and agreements, particularly the priority of poverty eradication, the limits of the market to respond to human needs, 20/20, the Tobin Tax and the military expenditures. The Mexico economic disaster and the Baren's Bank crash, which coincided with the Summit, favoured receptive political coverage especially in respect to the Tobin Tax. President Cardoso of Brazil did not go to Copenhagen but visited Chile during the period and called for a major reform of IFIs in order to contain the financial "volatility" of markets. *Folha de Sao Paulo* (which in Brazil is equivalent to the *Washington Post*) had an editorial on the Tobin Tax right after the

Summit and for the first time larger circles beyond the borders of the NGO community became aware of the proposal.

There are other outstanding examples. French President Mitterrand made an outraged speech in Copenhagen ("Will we let the world be ruled exclusively by markets with their law of the jungle?") which was covered by all the major European TV channels and newspapers. *CNN* included WSSD negotiations in every newscast and each day presented a 20-minute special programme on Summit issues including the Danish minister of cooperation explaining why Denmark has canceled the debts of three developing countries; the Pakistan president saying his country would like to reduce military expenditure and invest in poverty alleviation, but felt threatened by India; and a feature on fundamentalism in Egypt which gave a very clear analysis of how fundamentalists were exploiting poverty and the inability of the Egyptian State to respond to basic needs. On the other hand - and quite significantly - the *Financial Times* in the main section of its Sunday edition did not mention anything about the Summit debates, but in a later page published a strikingly conservative piece on family which is unlikely to have been chosen by accident.

In reviewing the media coverage, another statement by Ambassador Butler in his final speech comes to my mind. Strange as it may seem he quoted Oscar Wilde: "Cynics are those who know the price of everything but do not acknowledge the value of anything." ■

MOVE AT WSSD

and/or adopted by governments at national and, increasingly, international levels. They go by different names - structural adjustment policies, supply side economics, neo-liberalism, export/market-oriented policies, Reaganomics - but always constitute a framework that places the interests of capital before those of people. They also reflect a set of values that makes the creation of wealth an end in itself rather than a means to an end.

The testimonies were from women of very different backgrounds. Rita Pereira, a women's activist and lawyer at the Federation of Cuban Women, shared her experiences of the devastating impact of United States economic sanctions on women's lives in Cuba. Sharon Booker, a survivor of domestic violence who was imprisoned for defending herself against her batterer, linked domestic violence to poverty and the criminal system. Sharon works as a consultant and advocate for women confronting acts of violence and organizes workshops on domestic violence, gang violence and HIV/AIDS education.

The third participant, Carolina Arullo from the Philippines, addressed the consequences of the presence of United States military bases and prostitution on Filipina women. As the vice-Chair of Bayan, a multi-sector alliance working for national sovereignty and democracy in the Philippines and a member of Gabriela - the largest women's federation in the country - she has dedicated most of her life to the liberation of Filipina women from all forms of oppression. Finally, Charlotte Black Elk, the Secretary of the Black Hills Steering Committee, talked about the work of the Committee for the return of lands in the Black Hills to the great Sioux Nation. The session was moderated by Noeleen Heyzer, head of UNIFEM.

Collaboration with the Centre for Women's Global Leadership in presenting these Hearings reflected DAWN's initiative to build alliances with networks based in the North which share similar concerns and visions. The Centre has demonstrated its commitment to the advancement of women's rights as human rights through its work leading up to the Human Rights Conference held in Vienna in 1993, and its support for the on-going Global Campaign for Women's Rights as Human Rights.

DAWN also participated in an International Women's Day Rally on March 8, and launched a Campaign Against Poverty (DAWN-CAP) within the 180 Days/180 Ways Women's Action Campaign. The slogan, Poverty is a Violation of all Rights, is being supported by a number of strategies including a women's dossier of economic crimes against humanity, compiled through a chain letter of women's lives (see pages 10 and 11) and conceptualized as an open file of news clippings documenting economic crimes. ■

Reclaim the Market: Roundtable Strategies

DAWN organized a South/North Roundtable with the theme, Reclaiming the Market, in collaboration with the Women's Alliance for Economic Alternatives. Co-chairs were Helen O'Connell and Devaki Jain. Participants included Pauline Eccles, Europe; Ela Bhatt, India; Esther Ocloo, Ghana; Vanessa Griffen, Coordinator, Asian and Pacific Development Centre; and Noeleen Heyzer, Director UNIFEM.

The market was defined by participants as referring not only to the local market place and the macro economy global market, but also to an intermediate category defined as medium size small scale enterprise. It was assessed that the global market, with a turnover of a trillion dollars a day, cannot be easily influenced. In fact, this market is more powerful than individual States. However, there are ways in which people can reclaim the middle ground identified. It was noted that women are talking about new forms of organizations with new values such as cooperative structures which work for empowerment. Action and approaches suggested included the following:

- The whole theory of free trade and the "efficiency" of the market needs to be challenged. People need to have enough information, since that is the basis for developing resistance.
- Women need to become a transnational force. Regional economic blocks contradict free trade. Within regions there is free trade, but this is not so from region to region. Also, many of these regional economic blocks have been "corrupted" by the entry of actors from other regions.
- Such a transnational force could be ethical in nature with participants defining themselves not as citizens of any particular country but as consumers. Action possibilities would include boycotts or selective buying. The consumer vote is the most powerful economic vote in the hands of the masses. Organized selective buying can shift production and trade habits. There is power in the hands of women which has not yet been exercised. Consumer power is part of the market.
- In the South Asian Region which is still not in an economic cooperation block, there is an opportunity to build up production and trade in order to enhance livelihoods and job opportunities as well as to prevent export-led policies where even natural resources are used in ways that are destructive to the ecology.
- It is not enough to take an academic approach to factors operating in the global market such as capitalism. A detailed understanding of the way the global market links with the local market, with governments and others, is necessary in order to take a position.

DAWN CAMPAIGN AGAINST POVERTY

Get Involved!

March 8, 1995 (International Women's Day)

Dear Friend,

This is a chain letter of women's lives. It is part of DAWN's Campaign Against Poverty. We believe that people's lives should not be traded for profit and that poverty is a violation of all rights. Women suffer the worst effects of economic policies driven by powerful forces inside and outside our countries. Our governments tell us that there is no alternative but to engage in economic arrangements with institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank and to accept the conditions they set. But we bear the impact of these arrangements and policies through our lives, our families and communities.

Women have been excluded from economic and political decision-making, both nationally and internationally. This makes us easy to exploit. In a world where women are 70% of the world's poor and are increasingly impoverished, women's lives need to be valued. We urge all women to resist economic fascism, for it cripples and reduces the lives of women and the poor to fit the market.

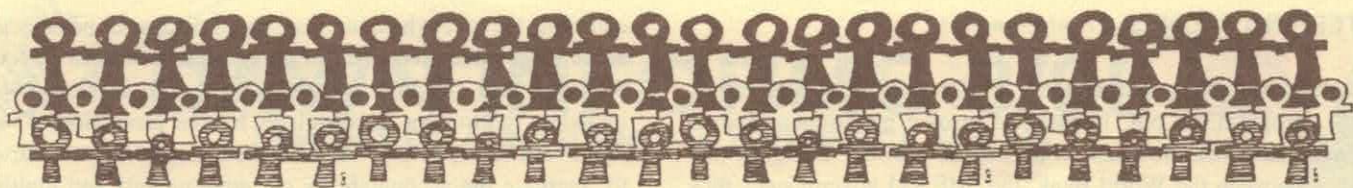
This chain letter begins with one woman's story of how her life has been affected by economic changes imposed through structural adjustments. Mahfoudha Alley Hamid of Tanzania has written her story in the form of a poem. She says: "This is just a simple poem but written with feeling. I am voicing the cries of a million women like me. I am just a medium for them. This poem is dedicated to all the victims of the financial blackmail that is called SAP. It does me honour to be their representative."

Structural Adjustment Program (SAP)
It's disastrous what we can do
Us the developing world are involved too
Tanzania my country has been ensnared
We cannot run we cannot hide truly we are trapped.

The World Bank has lured us to this
The IMF has fooled us surely it has.
Plunging us to the depth of poverty.
Now it hurts, it hurts they have robbed our liberty.

They fooled us with the programme of SAP.
Tricking us to devalue our noble currency
Like lambs to the slaughter we did believe
Now we find we have nothing to save

Oh Lord we sank to the bottom of the bottom
Diseases engulf us medicines are out of reach
Schools have no books for teachers to teach
How can we contribute when we are not rich
Where can I get food, I am confused
SAP has made sure that I can't afford
Adding fuel to the fire for more devaluation



They sit back and smile to their satisfaction.
Commodities have flooded, shops overflow
The prices are high with no hope of going low
My staple food maize meal to me has become
A luxury unaffordable to many and not some.

My friends, sisters and brothers,
I have a question which does me bother
What is SAP may I ask--
pitiless, shameless, murder is their task
Vampires sucking us, adding to the misery.

Let us avoid it with all our might
let it go back, let us all fight
let them adopt it if it is right
Let us unite and chase it out of sight.

I am fed up with SAP, I feel like throwing
It has messed my life, I am in a cocoon
I can neither feed nor dress myself
Educating my children is a dream far off.

Please SAP leave us alone
Please untie the cuffs you have put on
These are our cries, the World hear our plight
Free us from this burden you are squeezing us tight.

Mahfouda Alley Hamid is not alone. Millions have sunk "to the bottom of the bottom", and cannot afford food, medicine, or school for their children. Do you have a similar story? Has your life been affected by economic changes beyond your control? How have you resisted these forces and reclaimed your life as your own?

Please write your story on another page in your own words, in your own language. Make copies of this letter with your added page--photocopies, hand-written copies, as many as you can afford. Send us one copy of your page. Send the other copies to your friends and ask them to write. Please keep this chain letter going. We need to tell the world how our lives have been affected by external forces who neither know nor care what happens to us. We need to reclaim our right to live decent human lives. It is important that the world listens.

DAWN will publicize the letters you send back to us. We will read them out at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, September 1995. This chain letter is part of the 180 Days Campaign from now until the Beijing Conference in September. We await your letters.

In Sisterhood,
Peggy Antrobus
General Coordinator of DAWN

structural obstacle to sustainable development. Structural adjustment programmes put in place to resolve government budget deficits, have been focused on export led growth. Designed and agreed between the World Bank, the IMF and governments, they have created more poverty by reductions in social expenditure, such as in education and health.

As poverty around the world continues to increase, the heavy burden falls disproportionately on women, especially in the rapidly growing number of female headed households. Women represent the highest percentage of the unemployed and their access to remunerative work is limited. While they are burdened with triple responsibilities, they are forced to enter less protected labour in both the formal and the informal sectors. The feminization of poverty has, therefore, become a reality.

Violence against women is a result of this exploitation. Although prostitution and the trafficking of women are overt abuses, many governments have failed to address these adequately. Moreover, while there is a greater international recognition that violence against women is a violation of their human rights, the reality of physical or psychological violence in the family and public life continues.

This increase in violence against women, in all its forms, parallels a growth in political and religious fundamentalism. The processes of social disintegration create mobilization potential which is used by political forces. At the same time, localized conflicts resulting from this disintegration and fueled by the availability of weapons, have led to massive violations of women's human rights and their forced displacement from their homes. Women

constitute the overwhelming majority of displaced persons. A new social order is required, one that is created with women on equitable principles and one that is oriented to social development. This includes reinforcing mechanisms for the protection of human rights. However, it also implies the strengthening of instruments to increase the accountability of governments and multilateral institutions. ■

GROUPS CONTRIBUTING TO STEPPING STONES:

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