



DAWN

INSIDE

DAWN Africa panel	2
From Bandung (1955) to Bamako (2006)	3
WSF Caracas, Venezuela	4
If priests got pregnant, the Vatican will distribute condoms!	5
WSF Bamako, Mali	7
Complex challenges from globalisation	9
'Renegotiating the religious contracts'	13
Young peoples and social contracts	21
WTO update	22

DAWN INFORMS

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era


Polycentric World Social Forum

POLYCENTRIC WSF 2006

WSF is a world process; its most visible expressions have been four huge events organized in Porto Alegre, Brazil, (2001, 2002, 2003 and 2005) and one in Mumbai, India (2004) with tens of thousands of participants from all over the world.

The first World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre in 2001 has developed into a process of regional, thematic, national and local social forums. The geographical shift of the annual World Social Forum from Porto Alegre in Brazil to Mumbai in India where the fourth WSF was held, is a first step in actively, firmly establishing the process in as many parts of the world as possible.

The WSF 6th edition will be polycentric, it means that it will be decentralized, being held in different places around the world. So far, three cities will receive the 6th WSF: Bamako (Mali, Africa), Caracas (Venezuela Americas) and Karachi (Pakistan, Asia). The Bamako event took place from January 19th to 23rd, 2006. The event in Caracas took place from January 24th to 29th, 2006. The Karachi event, previously planned to take place from January 24th to 29th, 2006, was delayed for 2 months: from March 24th to 29th.

DAWN participated in two of the Polycentric WSF forums, in Bamako and that of Caracas and we include in this issue some of their presentations 

DAWN AFRICA AT THE POLYCENTRIC WORLD SOCIAL FORUM

DAWN held a panel at the POLYCENTRIC WSE, in Bamako, Mali from 19th 23rd January 2006. Moderating the panel was Afua Hesse (DAWN Anglophone Regional Coordinator); panelists were Fatou Sow (DAWN Francophone Coordinator); Bene Madunagu (DAWN General Coordinator); Shamillah Wilson (DAWN training Institute alumna); Djingarey Maiga (DAWN training Institute alumna)

Panelists and the moderator at the DAWN Panel during the WSF in Bamako



This year the World Social Forum took the form of polycentric forums in Caracas, Bamako and Karachi. One was held on the African continent in Bamako, Mali from the 19th - 23rd January 2006. The Feminists dialogues was also held *during* the same meeting. Five participants represented the DAWN Africa region. The Global Fund for Women (GFW) supported the full participation of three of these participants and partly supported the others who took part in the DAWN panel on the occasion.☀

DAWN AFRICA PANEL

After an initial mix-up when the DAWN panel was listed on the same day but in two separate and distant venues, the panel was held on the 21st January at the Palais de la Culture which was also termed the Women's Universe, at 2.30pm. Due to the change in venue and time, separate posters and handmade bills were printed in Bamako indicating the change of time and venue and these were hand-distributed by members of the panel who were also the members of the DAWN team.

Afua Hesse provided French to English translation whilst Fatou Sow provided English to French translation.

Our panel was one of the few activities that actually did take place. Although there was a large daily listing of activities, invariably majority of these did not take place.

TITLE: Recasting the social contract- African style

Moderator- AFUA HESSE

RESOURCE PERSONS

Fatou Sow spoke on 'Renegotiating religious contracts'. She made the strong point that women would continue to be marginalized by interpreters of their religion for as long as they allow others to read and interpret their religious books for them (see presentation).

Bene Madunagu spoke on "What direction for SRHR? - focus on Africa". Bene spoke about the efforts of women to get the rights based approach on the agenda, elaborating on the concept of "the rights based approach as the basis for addressing population issues through

To next page

DAWN INFORMS

From previous page

promoting gender equality and women's rights to sexual and reproductive health "(see presentation).


Shamillah Wilson spoke on "Are young people involved?" Shamillah reaffirmed the commitment of young people to involvement with social contracts stating "that young people are indeed supportive of processes to renegotiate social contracts. For the very reason that 'denial' or non-commitment to social contracts has resulted in young people inheriting a world that is shaped by forces such as: HIV/AIDS, sex trafficking, economic globalization, patriarchy, poverty, economic globalization, conflict, biotechnological revolution among other things", (see text).

Djingarey Maiga a 2nd DAWN training Institute graduate who made a presentation on 'The faces of Female Genital Mutilation' drawing from the Malian experience, where in some of the regions up to 97% of women are circumcised. For a number of the participants, this was their first experience of seeing the implications of FGM at close range and a

number were shocked. Some participants had to leave the session at this point as they found the pictures too vivid.

There was a rich discussion after the presentations and the general comments from participants were of appreciation for the panel and the richness of the various points put forward.

Several questions were asked about how women advocates could position themselves when working on women's rights in areas such as Northern Nigeria where Sharia law is operative. The resource persons agreed that there was no set formula but that each individual case scenario would be tackled differently. The emphasis being on individual women reading their religious books for themselves so as to be able to credit or otherwise the interpretations offered.

DAWN participants in spite of the general disappointment about the marginalisation of women are hopeful and determined to ensure that the Feminist dialogues to be organised at the WSF, next year, 2007 should mark a definite step forward for women, especially those in Africa. 

FROM BANDUNG (1955) TO BAMAKO (2006)

The Bamako Appeal : "We need to revitalize the spirit of Bandung".

On January 18, 2006, the Third World Forum headed by the famous Egyptian economist, Prof. Samir Amin, celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, Indonesia (April 1955), with the support of other organizations as Forum for another Mali, World Forum for Alternatives, and ENDA. Fatou Sow, coordinator of DAWN Francophone Africa, who was in attendance, briefly reports some of the outcomes of the debates.

More than hundred people coming from various countries and organisations attended the meeting. They belonged to the international political arena, mostly 'alter-globalisation' group leaders, the international press, and several global and local NGOs. Samir Amin reminded the audience of the spirit of Bandung 50 years ago. The conference, which gathered 29 countries from Asia (23), Africa (4) and the Middle East (2), was a benchmark for the political creation in the Third World and a major step in the history of decolonisation. The Heads of State condemned colonialism, imperialism, and apartheid, and claimed their non alignment to the Western as well as the Eastern blocs. As Samir Amin stated, "What the Heads of State who attended the Bandung conference achieved in 1955, was the 'alter-globalisation' of their days. The conference caused a set back for imperialism. We have to build on it".


After the morning plenary where the debates mainly focused on the many political and economic dimensions of globalisation and the need to reaffirm the 'internationalism' of peoples, participants

To next page

attended roundtables about propositions on how to:

1. Construct a world founded on the solidarity of human beings and peoples;
2. Construct a world founded on the full and entire affirmation of citizenship and gender equality;
3. Construct a universal civilization offering to all its diverse members in all areas its full potential of creative application;
4. Construct socialization through democracy
5. Construct a world founded on the recognition of the non-market-driven law of nature and of the resources of the planet and of its agricultural soil;
6. Construct a world founded on the recognition of the non-market-driven status of cultural products and scientific acquisitions, of education and of health;
7. Promote policies that closely associate democracy without its limit defined in advance, social progress and the affirmation of autonomy of nations and peoples;
8. Affirm the solidarity of the people of the North and the South in the construction of an internationalism on an anti-imperialist basis.


By the end of the Day of celebration, The Bamako Appeal was launched. It expressed the collective will to:

- (i) Construct an internationalism of the peoples of the South and the North confronted with the ravages engendered by the dictatorship of financial markets and by the uncontrolled global deployment of the transnational firms;
- (ii) Construct the solidarity of the peoples of Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas confronted with challenges of development in the 21st century;
- (iii) Construct a political, economic and cultural consensus that is an alternative to militarized and neo-liberal globalization and to the hegemony of the United States and its allies. 

WSF CARACAS, Venezuela

Report from Polycentric World Social Forum, Caracas, January 2006 by Alejandra Scampini and María Adelaida Entenza (REPEM/DAWN/ICAE)

Among whistle-blowing, horns and in a rather hectic way, the opening march launched the VI World Social Forum.

The Forum was scattered everywhere: universities, La Carlota airport, high-schools, squares, the Central Park and other venues. Some venues were changed at the last minute so this added a feeling of frustration and uncertainty about the impact of the activities. But very good ideas were also implemented for the first time. For instance an entire transport system was established for people's mobilization. At the airport there were more than 100 buses driving people to the city free of charge. Besides, the subway in the city was free by submitting the WSF registration. There was much concern in relation to the collapse of the Caracas-La Guardia highway and Jacobo Torres (member of the Organising Committee of Venezuela) expressed that they were expecting the return trip to be "less traumatic". 

If Priests got Pregnant, the Vatican would distribute **CONDOMS!!**

Together with hundreds of Venezuelan women (some of them were REPEM members) we joined the march with our "Education for Inclusion" T-shirts and flags, the proposal that ICAE/GEO and REPEM have brought to the Forum.

The proposal of Manuelita Sáenz movement, an organization formed by hundreds of Venezuelan women from all the states within the country, was remarkable for its originality. "Women in power" yelled these women, dressed in "pregnant" priest costumes, carrying big posters that read: "If priests got pregnant, the Vatican would hand out condoms". Some of them covered themselves with torn purple cloths, imitating torn condoms.

Women and feminists marched demanding, at different moments, the legalization of abortion, saying "No to war and no to imperialism", "Other world, other America is possible", education for inclusion, reject war, agrarian reform, labour rights and gender equality."

Rural women's voices were also heard: "For an integral agrarian reform" and for a "decent and just world with solidarity."

Indigenous Venezuelan women participated with joy because it is the first time in Venezuela that indigenous people are taking decisions in higher education and, at present, they are working jointly with ministries so as to save the planet.

Joy, drumming, horns and chants contrasted with the massive presence of National Security Officers who were seen every 100 meters, to ensure our security during the march.

Finally, after some hours marching, around 15000 participants reached the "Esplanade of National Heroes" where a cultural event called "Giving and giving" was organized with the participation of Cuban, Venezuelan, Argentinean and Ecuadorian singers. Cindy Sheehan, among others, mother of a North American soldier who died in the Iraq war, who has confronted George Bush's belligerent politics, took the floor. "My son Casey and other relatives died for a war based on government lies. We must stop war in Iraq so that our sons and daughters can return back home

immediately", claimed the activist. And, then closed her presentation inviting all the audience to sing the slogan of the march and of the Forum: "No to war, not to war."

World Education Forum (For Planetary Citizenship for Universal Right to Education)

The World Education Forum has been taking place since 2001 in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Every year we witnessed a more significant participation that tells us of that need of having a space to generate debates about the possible alternatives to the neo-liberal education project, built upon a pluralist approach of ideas, methods and concepts. Moreover, this WEF has been based since its foundation on another fundamental pillar: to be a plural space, non confessional, non governmental, attached to no political party, truly international.

It is essential to support this space, underline these pillars that lie at its foundation, and establish links with other movements in order to contribute to the critical reflections from a gender justice perspective. This will allow studying in depth, the issue of another possible education, to think about education policies, plans and programmes at every education level.

In that spirit and from that perspective we arrived in Caracas on the 23rd of January to participate in the World Education Forum 2006, which this year was organized under the title "**American Integration and the fight for an emancipatory education project**": a big title and a big responsibility to approach it and organize a Forum that can contribute in that sense.

The opening and morning session aimed at giving a balance of the situation of education and debate about education as a public good and about how the struggles for the right to education in a globalized work had taken place. This last issue is very important if we bear in mind the recent WTO debates, where education is seen as a service under the GATS, and private education providers are increasingly emerging; today the privatization of education is discussed and

To next page

From previous page

implemented, and there is talk about the need to regulate those forms of privatization in a space such as the WTO, where the language of rights does not exist. There is a tension between the established objectives in 1986 related to access, equity and quality, and the importance linked to the public provision of education and the recent tendencies of commodification and internalization of education. Despite the significance of these debates, the presence of these issues lacked strength.

Gentili of FLAPE Brazil, spoke on the right to education, saying that in relation to this right, the diverse ways in which persons do not access this right must be considered, enumerating one by one every form of discrimination, most often *invisibilized*. He also emphasized the issue of strengthening quality public education.

Salette Valsean, Paulo Freire Institute, said that the WEF was important because every sector of the formal, non-formal, informal, higher education, as well as the social movements, the trade unions, etc, are coordinating and advocating for an education platform that vindicates quality public social education for all.


Aristóbulo Isturiz of the Ministry of Education and Sports of Venezuela presented clues of clear and possible strategies in a context such as Venezuela's. He underlined that in the neo-liberal model there are two strong tendencies: *privatization and exclusion*. In Venezuela, he said, the state did not invest in public school. The voucher system was extended, as in many other countries of the region, and as a result no one attended public school. Teachers used to go on strike, not even sending their own children to school. Then he spoke about the steps taken by the government: firstly, they freed the registration fees in public schools; they organized school canteens and Bolivarian schools ("full time schools that take children out from four hours of TV, which teaches violence!). In the Bolivarian school meals and room libraries are secured: "From Colon to Chávez 10,000 libraries were built; from 2004 up to this date 72,000". The current challenge for the government is the universalization of pre-school education. The Venezuelan government allocates currently 7%

of their GNP to education, and they aim to reach 10%". He continued saying that exclusion is the consequence of the capital accumulation model, where "having" is prioritized over "being",...promoting individualism and consumerism." He concluded his presentation by pointing at the need of new teachers with pedagogical formation which enables them to respond to the new needs - "*To know, to do, to coexist, lifelong education and learning.*"

The morning session contributed to our knowledge of the reality of this country, as there were many inputs in this sense. But it also convinced us that it is urgent that the WEF can really become a space for deepening and reflection, as there were many questions left unanswered and many perspectives that were neither heard nor approached. THIS IS AN IMMEDIATE CHALLENGE.

The afternoon session heightened this concern. A debate took place, which was neither deep nor plural, with low visibility in terms of the complexity of the education issue. At some point, it seemed we were frozen in time, and that since Freire we haven't been able, as movement and as educators, to work on ways of thinking about education and that the contributions to education could come only from Freire's or Simón Rodríguez' heritage. Are there any other ways of thinking of an alternative pedagogy to that imposed by the neo-liberal model? How is emancipatory pedagogy seen in other realities? How can Freire's proposal be considered in the new contexts, facing the new challenges posed to the citizens? What do other contributions to education, such as Boaventura de Souza Santos', Morin's, say?

As WEF participants we have a clear challenge. How do we re-enchant ourselves? How do we call on more people to engage? How do we revive these discussions without ending up in what we criticize from our own discourses? Delete: Are Freire and Simón Rodríguez the only benchmarks we can resort to?

The education movement does not limit itself to those present at the WEF, and that all of us constitute the WEF, built by all the people that are part of the education movement. On this account, it is a collective challenge and a shared responsibility to go back to the spirit that created the WEF. 

WSF BAMAKO, Mali

REPORT ON THE FEMINIST DIALOGUES AT THE POLYCENTRIC SOCIAL FORUM IN BAMAKO, MALI, JANUARY 18 23, 2006 by *Bene Madunagu, DAWN General Coordinator*

One thing I would say about the hosting of the polycentric session of the World Social Forum in Bamako is that people of Mali; women, men and young people should be proud that they hosted this event which to me marked the revival of progressive actions, vibrancy of civil society mobilizing people from the African continent and beyond, indeed worldwide to build a common vision against neo-liberalism. There was a similar mobilisation of African progressive forces in the 1980s in response to the deepening of poverty through implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPS). The new forms of globalisation continued to promote inequalities between gender, class, ethnicity etc. Poverty on the part of the people and dwindling social services in the face of promotion of marketisation of governance had a crippling effect on ability of poor people to mobilise in a common struggle against neo-liberalism. This WSF thus opened the way for hope of the silent suffering majority. However, women issues were not taken on board by WSF. Feminists rose to the call for activism to take their space in the WSF. While struggling within the WSF, a space that should be less crushing to marginalised groups, feminists still required to strategise to raise issues of gender concerns. This gave birth to the Feminist dialogues at the global level of the WSF since.

Bamako was the opportunity for Africans in particular feminists to dialogue and have a

strong women's voice in the WSF, at the regional level. For Feminist dialogues to yield positive outcome, it is imperative for the FDs to take place before the WSF. This did not happen in Bamako. This was number one challenge. The second challenge was that the venue for the FDs, Univers Des Femmes (Palais de la culture) was miles apart with where the main WSF was held at Palais Da La Congress Centre Internationale de la Conference de Bamako. Hence women found themselves in "ghetto" outside of the main event. The Palais Da La Congress was large enough with several theatre-sized halls for all events to be accommodated but we experienced this physical separation.

As important as it is for women, especially African women, who have been excluded and marginalised for centuries, to have their own space to discuss women's issues and deliberate on solutions, this should not be another barrier to women's full participation in the main WSF. This was the case in Bamako.

The feminist dialogues was organised by African Women's Development and Communications Network FEMNET, Kenya. Medium of communication as listed on the agenda was French, with an improvised on the spot English translation.

A few issues of gender concerns were raised and suggestions / recommendations were made for the organisers to take on behalf of women

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To next page

into the main WSF agenda. One important issue was about the 2007 WSF to take place in Nairobi. It was recommended that women engage at country level Social Forum to ensure that their issues were taken on board up to the regional level and then to WSF in Nairobi. Another recommendation was a demand through a motion for 50:50 representation of speakers women: men at Nairobi Plenary sessions in 2007. The third was that Feminist Dialogues should hold at least two days prior to WSF in Nairobi in January 2007 to strategise and have the outcome/demands from women ready to be fed into the main process and for women to therefore be fully engaged with the main events at the main venue to be effective, in the WSF in 2007.

Among the few gains in the Feminist dialogue were:

- Discussion and consensus as regards the issue of mentoring and inclusion of young women in the feminist movement. Some young women were recognised to air their views. The young women felt that older feminist have monopolised the movement for too long and do not give room for young women participation. They therefore urged that for them to be fully part of the movement there should be efforts to build their capacity through internships, and sustained mutually respectful mentorship. Most importantly, they asserted that their rights to introduce new ideas and make their own informed choices should be acknowledged.
- - Some people raised the issue that

To achieve this in 2007, work must start now at all levels national, regional culminating at the global. At each level FDs should be organised before the main forum by feminists. Other spaces should be sought for consultations across all women's interest groups etc. before FD to ensure that all women's concerns are taken on board and analysed from a feminist perspective.


feminists only engage with themselves but that it was necessary for men and women to work together if gender equality is to be understood and be achievable. There was some tension as to how feminist engage with men without their space being taken over. Experiences were shared to support each side of the discussion working with men or not.

- The third important conversation was on the issue of alliances, collaborations and networking with feminists from

other regions.

- Attention was also drawn to the fact that we do not usually celebrate our gains. At this point current gains by

women in leadership were recognised such as the women presidents in Liberia, Chile and Germany.

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COMPLEX CHALLENGES FROM GLOBALIZATION

Presentation by Josefa (Gigi) Francisco, DAWN South East Asia Regional Coordinator

Women's exclusion from the state as citizens and as political agents has been a long running issue within women's movements everywhere. Several feminists from the South have characterized the relationship of the women's movements with the patriarchal state and state power as ambivalent (Taylor, 2000), ambiguous (Shaheed 1997), complex and contradictory (Vargas, 2000). This relationship is particularly perplexing, to say the least: "... while the state is correctly seen as patriarchal and clearly biased against women, much of the movement's activism is, in fact, addressed to the state and carries a definite, albeit unarticulated expectation that the state will, or should, or must, support women's rights and equality" (Shaheed, *ibid*). Or, worse, a dangerous de-politicization: "The question is whether we have this critique any longer of patriarchy, the state or the UN or whether we are only interested in being included in the system" (Khan in Braig and Wolte (2002) cited in Antrobus 2004).

But there is nothing ambivalent nor ambiguous nor contradictory in the consensus of 189 countries in Beijing when they pledged to promote the equality of women in decision-making and in strengthening national machineries for enabling women's co-equal governance with men. Section G on "women and power and decision-making" of the Beijing Platform for Action supports the advancement of women's participation in public leadership and governance. Central to this commitment is the goal of achieving gender balance in political representation and decision-making. Certainly the responses from women's movements were widespread and varied. Women's actions in many parts of the South went into the expanse of issues relating to women's citizenship and issues of democratizing power relations at all levels (Vargas, 2000). Some of the more prominent responses included the following: monitoring projects that took to task governments for making true their promises in Beijing; women's participation in electoral politics and entry into

political parties as well as assumption to appointive government positions; lobbying for laws that protected women from all forms of violence; strengthening of national machineries for women's equality; and promotion of various gender mainstreaming strategies and methods, particularly in development and anti-poverty programs. Putting these responses in a perspective, Antrobus writes:

"There is also no gainsaying the fact that women need the state. This is especially true for women in the South. The dilemma for women's movements in the South in relation to the state is that on the one hand, the majority of women lack resources and therefore must depend on the state to provide the basic services essential to women's multiple roles; on the other hand, women must be careful that this dependencies not used to reinforce traditional roles within the family." (Antrobus 2004)

Ten years after Beijing, the overall sense coming out of several studies in the Asian region is that the goal of state transformation through women's equality in decision-making was far from being achieved. Doubts were raised on whether there had been real movement. Worse, reversals of earlier gains were noted, linked to the emergence of a more difficult political climate and challenging economic environment. This puts into question gradualist and linear notions of women's political entry in politics and governance (APWW 2005; FES & SEAWWATCH 2005; ISIS International-Manila, FES and SEAWWATCH 2005).

II. Strange Bed Partners: Trade Intensification and Democratic Politics

In the past politics and governance was understood in relation to the organizing principle of the sovereign state. However, globalization

To next page

From previous page

has altered not only what national governments can do but more fundamentally what the nation-state is all about. Nowadays governance has expanded to include global, regional and even sub-national spheres. In the midst of the "free market juggernaut" (Sen 2005), governance by national governments is not just alive but strong. In Asia, the state may be contested, the administration may be weak or politically beleaguered but there is a government that refuses to wither away. Asian states with their authoritarian governments have been the prime movers of the political project of modernization in the 70's and 80's that enabled Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) to emerge (Francisco and Fong 1999). Asian governments may have lost much of the charisma and power that their past dictators enjoyed but these continue to play a central role in re-structuring their economies and societies along trade intensification in present-day globalization. This gives credence to what some have claimed that the states (and therefore, national governments) remain relevant in globalization although "its primacy and its actual capacity as an actor is being altered (Held and McGrew 2000 quoted in Encinas-Franco, 2006).

Today Asian states govern within a context in which global and regional institutions foremost of which are the World Trade Organization (WTO) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) are wielding influence in the domestic sphere. These global institutions do so within a formal global coherence agreement that is meant to coordinate policy direction and negate inconsistent or conflicting advice given to governments (Floro and Hoppe 2005). Two decades earlier, the IFIs had managed to gain entry into domestic policy and program formulation through their structural adjustment programs. But it was the trade-finance linkage, or more specifically, the need for regulatory frameworks that could provide market stability and predictability for capital's expansion, especially to avert market failures, such as, the devastating Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, that finally led to the agenda of "good governance" in the reform and development

packages of the IFIs, the United Nations and the donor community (Encinas-Franco 2006; Bakker and Gill 2003).'

In this period of trade intensification, governments now rarely speak of 'import substitution', or 'government owned corporations', or 'local content and equity'. Rather we often hear government enthusiastically speak of the need to "liberalize the economies" or "remove barriers to trade" or "attract foreign investors" or "export human resources." Governments are not only changing their language, they are also changing laws and codified regulations. Even Constitutions are being re-negotiated to 'harmonize' them with new global trade rules. Legal guarantees of patrimony, self-sufficiency or the social function of property are now superseded by terminologies such as 'national treatment' 'most favored nation', or 'right of ownership for foreign individuals or corporations'. One socially progressive provision found in the Philippine Constitution, among others, is expected to be amended in the ongoing effort at charter change. To quote: "The use of property bears a social function, and all economic agents shall contribute to the common good. Individuals and private groups, including corporations, cooperatives, and similar collective organizations, shall have the right to own, establish, and operate economic enterprises, subject to the duty of the State to promote distributive justice and to intervene when the common good so demands" (Philippine Constitution Article XII, Section 6).

Moreover, governments are re-structuring through strategies of right-sizing, out-sourcing, devolution, and privatization of public utilities. Poverty reduction strategies no longer talk of 'people' but of 'human capital'. Government subsidized programs are being overtaken by income transfer strategies while long-term social protection rather than be treated as a state obligation is now more widely viewed in government as "direct consumption and therefore unproductive" (Cook, Kabeer, Savannarat, 2003). Finally, governance reforms related to trade and finance management have privileged the executive branch of government and created a special place within it for technocrats, often

To next page

From previous page

without adequate political check and balance from the legislative and judicial branches. DAWN calls this phenomenon as the 'marketization of governance' (Taylor 2000).

The hyper-consolidation of governance around trade intensification took place at a time when Asian women were also actively seeking entry into politics and governance, buoyed by strong women's movements linked to the resurgence of democratic movements and re-democratization processes following the fall of dictatorial regimes.⁴ On the one hand, across Asia and the South, forms and institutions of governance patterned after capitalist-based democratic practices in colonizer countries were easily accommodated by trade intensification that was also a global political and economic project of these former colonizers. On the other hand, democratic demands, expressions and their articulations by social movements that were honed in struggles against colonialism, dictatorships and 'elite democracy', are using inadequate and restricted democratic spaces or are creating "counter publics" to raise issues of rights, social justice and substantive political participation. The phenomenon of "people power" in the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia are an expression of the new democratic and progressive forces that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. Many of these groups and networks continue to actively push for the expansion of the democratic space within their countries including socializing progressive and democratic political ethos and practices. They continue to be a part of new regional networks of resistances against corporate-led globalization.⁵ The tensions and contestations created out of the interaction of forces linked to both tendencies of state-led integration into a single global market economy and the democratic mass movement resistances to such consolidation mark an important context for understanding the complex terrain in which Asian women in politics and governance is taking place.

III. Re-examining Women in Politics and Governance

The goal of women's equality in decision-making and politics is aimed at the re-

distribution of formal power and decision-making between women and men. The target of raising the proportion of Asian women decision-makers to at least 30 percent is a benchmark used by lobbyists that call for the institution of quota systems or allocated seats for women in several institutional bodies, such as, political parties, parliaments, national governmental agencies or ministries, local government units, and courts. Passing legislation that allocated seats for women called gender quotas, to engage in electoral politics has been the dominant approach to reaching the quantitative goal. Ten years after Beijing, the quantitative target remains as elusive as ever, with results manifesting no progression but instead reflecting an erratic behavior or if not, a stagnation and recent downward movement (FES and SEAWATCH 2005). The exception is South Asia where grassroots women have managed to capture seats in the *panchayat* (village level) to as much as 80 percent but where women's participation in higher level politics echo the trend found in Southeast Asia (ISIS, FES and SEAWATCH 2005).

Reflective of the broader dilemma arising from women's movements engagement with the state and its apparatuses as laid out at the beginning of this essay two key issues are raised with regard to Asian women's entry into politics. The first is the question of: "Who are these women?" Except for the grassroots women who have been elected to village councils in South Asia, by and large women in political parties and national governance are middle class educated women. However political and ideological differences exist among them. Some certainly reflect a class-based elite democracy orientation while others those who have been involved in democracy struggles and human rights issues in their countries manifest progressive political ideas and positions. In the Philippines, the women parliamentarians associated with the smaller and newer parties have done much to try to move the democracy and social equality and equity agenda within their parties and in the broader realm of politics and governance⁶; women in Left parties in South Asia have similarly done so (Basu, 2005). But the situation is less straightforward than this. In Southeast Asia, some elite women politicians from traditional elite-controlled political parties

To next page

From previous page

have also been instrumental in pushing for legislation that addressed various forms of violence against women as well as women's access to reproductive health services legislation that certainly benefits all women in their societies.⁷ Thus, in terms of providing legal frameworks and services beneficial to women, middle class women who support anti-VAW and reproductive and sexual rights legislation and measures may be said to be contributing toward the achievement of an aspect of the women's equality agenda. However, the scenario also includes disturbing indications about the overall state of women's status in the Asian region which raises serious concerns about the wider implication to women of the strategy and goal of women's increased political participation. The persistence of poverty among women is certainly a key issue but included as well are the widespread practice of sex selection abortion in India and China, the emergence of 'new poor' of women in East Asia, trafficking in women, and the continuing lack of political clout and effectiveness of national women's machineries. To top it all, there are emergent women leaders from broad-based political parties that promote conservative views on women, such as, those associated with religious-based parties and some anti-globalization movements.⁸

These issues bring us to the second key question which is that of accountability that was also raised by Basu (2005) namely: "To whom are these women accountable?" Within the region, there are hardly feminist or women's political parties except in the Philippines where two small women's parties have emerged. There is no unified regional women's movement; rather there is a tapestry of diverse women's movements.⁹ National women's groups may be strongly divided along class, ethnic and ideological lines and may be locked in contesting claims of recognition and redistribution in the public sphere, discoursing with each other and sometimes incapable of working together. Individual women who become members of political parties were expected to "toe the party line" while those who are appointed to government positions, including seats in the national women's

machineries, had to act "consistent with the national policy." In the governance stream, women in politics became vocal proponents of 'soft' development and welfare issues, through invocations that were largely framed by the principles of "temporary special measures" such as mandated allocation of opportunities and resources or protective legislation. They did so largely within a "mainstreaming" approach with which they had become familiar with. It was rare, if at all, to find women politicians and appointed women officials critically engaging the state on the linkage of their issues with "hard" development issues, such as, policies and programs on finance, monetary and trade management. One thing worth noting is that with the spate of capacity building programs in the region, their attention was focused on gaining skills in the technical aspects of gender mainstreaming that was aimed at integrating more efficiently women's equality goals into national development programs. Partly this moved their attention away from the growing public clamor of women's movements for the state to address more directly issues arising from trade intensification, and when they listened, had to rely on the language of technically oriented advocates that could translate "political" demands into "technical" inputs, processes and outcomes. Partly, as well, the "technicalization" of women's equality that was already a familiar terrain to women, made economics and hard development issues look even more distant and incomprehensible.


Given all of these considerations, women in politics and governance by a combination of both design and default were simultaneously saddled with competing accountability claims from multilateral agencies that expected them to produce sound surveillance of government's national development and anti-poverty plans, the party in power that appointed them to official positions, the political parties where they belonged, the women's networks that were also often raising multiple demands. How have women in politics and governance played around these competing interests as they determine which gender justice and economic justice issues to support or not to support? This essay argues that the questions posed in relation to women's participation in politics and governance need to be more directly and squarely addressed by women's

To next page

From previous page

movements. Clearly the questions are complex, their interrogation requiring a situated-ness within a diverse set of political histories and cultural realities, and as argued for by this paper, a better grasp of the changed political terrain and socio-political dynamics spawned by trade intensification. How do women in politics and governance negotiate for gender justice and economic justice through governance institutions that “emphasize the technical and quantitative over the social and human components” (Bakker and Gill 2003)? Or could they really?

It is of strategic value to anchor such interrogation of women in politics and governance within the discourse and politics of the women's movements. After all, placing women in political positions and leadership in governance constitutes but a piece of what is political. Politics and governance are not just about “governments” and ‘states’ and “elections”. These encompass broader questions of “voice”, “identities,” “parity,” “justice,” and “social change.” The public space is not just the governmental or the inter-governmental spaces but includes several “subaltern counterpublics” (Frazer 1997). Democracy after all is about the contests of political ideas and utopian visions by social groups that engage with one another in open and ever enlarging spaces.

The essay has presented a brief critical re-examination of women in politics and governance from a consideration of the changed political and governance terrains linked to the twin phenomena of trade intensification and re-democratization that have swept the region. In so doing, it has touched on a number of issues that women's movements need to take a fuller understanding of the limits and potentials of middle class educated women in politics and governance; the rise of new political parties and their relationship to issues of democracy, gender justice and economic justice issues; the technicalization of gender mainstreaming; the persistence of women's issues particularly of women's impoverishment and discrimination. It began with the re-articulation of the dilemma of women's movements and feminists in their engagement with the state and ended with a plea for progressive women's movements and feminists in the region to reclaim and reposition the discourse related to women's entry into governance and politics within the broad-based women's movements. In ending I want to reiterate what DAWN has time and again said: “Our engagement with the state is one that is simultaneously and an act of cooperation but also of maintaining critical distance” (Taylor 2000) Indeed such is a difficult balancing act and it certainly not the only the space in which women's movements have to address and challenge patriarchy and gender relations (Sen 2005). 

‘RENEGOTIATING THE RELIGIOUS CONTRACTS’

by Fatou Sow (Francophone Africa Regional Coordinator) at the DAWN Panel at the POLYCENTRIC WSF in Bamako, Mali, January 18-23, 2006.

Why evoke religious contracts? Africa, one knows, is a continent where religion continues to occupy an important space in the daily lives of both individuals and the collective society. The religious movements of all faiths (Muslims, Catholics just as Protestants) know this as a fact. If the Islamic discourse has become

prominent in Africa and Asia with the resurgence of Islamic politics in the Arab world, we must not lose sight of the same resurgence of the reformed churches notably the Pentecostal movement on the same African continent. The traditional religions may have lost their influence but they are still a part of the original spirituality originating from Africa.

To next page

From previous page

Why discuss religion in terms of contracts? It is important to show that the social contract which the state signs with its citizens, takes on a more crucial dimension in largely secular countries. Apart from Mauritania and Sudan which are Islamic republics, the Arab countries (Morocco, Algeria, Libya or Egypt) where Islam is a state religion, no other country claims any other faith all rejecting any form of discrimination based on religion in their constitutions or fundamental laws. Yet religion has never ceased to influence the laws and the political life of these countries. The church just as the mosque has been a part of pressure groups (constituency) that make or unmake political power. Or by default support, or criticize. Thus the national conferences of a number of countries in Central Africa (Benin, Congo-Brazzaville) have sometimes been chaired by men of the cloth. One has not forgotten the roles of Bishops Desmond Tutu (South Africa) or Mozorewa (Zimbabwe) in the political life of their countries. In Senegal, the traditional overlords left after colonisation saw themselves replaced by foundation marabouts and chiefs of Muslim communities who were the local symbols of power facing the colonial administration. The preservation of family codes inspired by Sharia has permitted the conservation of an identity both religious and cultural in the face of a prominence of western culture.

If the powers that be have generally negotiated their relations with religious leaders usually in their favour, then today, this religious control has escaped them. The case of political Islam is in point and

obvious. The rules of Islamic religion have by and large not left the private sphere. Widely used to legislate on relations between men and women within the family (marriage, divorce, inheritance...), the Koran not having any influence in spite of divisions within Islamic or Christian religions within the same country. A president has never been elected on the basis of his religious beliefs, knowledge of religious texts, prayers, etc. The state has ingrained within a number of Muslim countries, inequality between the sexes written within the religions of the Book and has maintained this within the family codes including those inherited from the colonialists. In Congo which is predominantly Christian, as in Niger or Mali which are predominantly Muslim, men head the family. In countries predominantly Muslim, they continue to conform to Sharia laws continue to develop laws which move away from respecting the principles of secularism written within their constitutions. The Republic of South Africa is no doubt the only African constitution which states the equality between the sexes as a basic fundamental right.

With the resurgence of religious fundamentalism, the rights of women have never been under such threat even as at the international level, an impressive number of conventions favouring women's rights have emerged one is used to pointing the finger at Islamic fundamentalism. With this is a further isolation of women behind a veil either actual or symbolic. The Catholic fundamentalists hide behind a discourse of human rights to force a similar imprisonment. Their condemnations around sexuality (condoms, abortion, sexuality education....) are as negating of Christian

To next page

DAWN INFORMS

freedom acquired by women. The gag rule of the American administration goes up to imposing conditions on aid to countries concerned by these conditions. Resources in the fight against AIDS can depend on the legal condemnation of prostitution.

At the beginning of the 21st century, must we revive the sacred to the detriment of the human rights of women? This is an insidious fight which we must squarely face. 🌹

ENSURING THE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH & RIGHTS OF WOMEN AFFECTED BY HIV

***AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
FOR ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN***

*Joint statement submitted by Ipas to the UN CSW on 10 January 2006,
with DAWN and other NGOs as co-signatories*

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will review the thematic issue of “Enhanced participation of women in development: an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of education, health and work”, at its 50th session from 27 February to 10 March 2006. In that context, we would especially like to highlight the need to ensure the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and rights of all women affected by HIV/AIDS as an essential contribution to enabling women around the world to achieve gender equality and development for themselves and their families. These women include (but are not restricted to) adults and adolescents who have been infected with HIV and women who engage in sex work as a means of ensuring their own and their families' survival.

Until very recently, the majority of HIV programs related to women and AIDS focused on preventing perinatal transmission (PPT) of HIV, rather than on women's universal needs for basic SRH services. While efforts to reduce risks of perinatal transmission must certainly continue, we should acknowledge that most PPT programs have considered women mainly as vectors of disease. Insufficient attention has been given to expanding access to effective voluntary HIV counselling and testing for all women, whether they are pregnant or not. Greater attention must be given to the development and distribution of affordable

technologies that can prevent HIV infection, particularly in women. SRH and HIV programs must both address the links between HIV/STI infection and unintended pregnancy as outcomes of unprotected and non-consensual sex.

To more effectively combat the effects of the AIDS epidemic, SRH and HIV/AIDS programs should provide unbiased and respectful diagnostic and treatment services that will ensure HIV-positive women's wellbeing, whether they are pregnant or not. Antiretroviral therapy programs must be gender-sensitive, ensuring that women and men have equal access to steady drug supplies; women's access must not be inhibited because drugs are only available through PPT programs or because attendant costs (for example, for CD4 counts and viral load tests) are unaffordable.

High numbers of women and girls suffer sexual assault, both within and outside marriage and in the context of sex work. Such rapes put them at risk of both HIV/STI infection and unwanted pregnancies. Much greater efforts are needed to expand access to post-exposure prophylaxis for rape survivors, as well as STI diagnosis and treatment and availability of emergency contraception for female survivors of assault.

The development of policy statements and service guidelines on sexual and reproductive health should include representatives of HIV-positive women's networks, including younger

To next page

From previous page


women, so as to benefit from their personal insights and experiences. SRH and HIV policy statements and service guidelines should at the least include the following elements:

- ? An emphasis on the human rights of women living with, and affected by, HIV/AIDS. This includes freedom from discrimination in the provision of health services and recognition that coercion or pressure on HIV-positive women to undergo sterilization or terminate pregnancies is a clear violation of their rights.
- An emphasis on giving adolescent and adult women, including those who are HIV-positive and/or sex workers, non-judgemental information tailored to their needs and in a manner which is easily accessible to them.
- A range of high-quality services including: comprehensive contraceptive services geared at both preventing HIV/STI transmission and avoiding unintended pregnancy; antenatal, perinatal and postnatal care, when requested, both for woman and baby; post-abortion care and measures to ensure women's access to safe, legal abortions when requested; antiretroviral therapy and drugs to treat opportunistic infections; and diagnosis and treatment of reproductive tract infections.
- Employment of women living with HIV in prevention and voluntary HIV counselling and testing programs as paid staff rather

than as unpaid volunteers.

• In addition, governmental bodies, NGOs and universities must promote capacity-building and skills-building for women affected by and living with HIV/AIDS so that they can participate meaningfully in advocacy and policymaking. These measures will help us achieve the promised development envisioned in the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals on empowering women and advancing gender equity, reducing maternal mortality, and combating HIV/AIDS.

***Co-signers:**

Action Canada for Population and Development, Canada
Advocates for Youth, USA
AIDOS, Italy
Australian Reproductive Health Alliance, Australia
Catholics for a Free Choice, USA/International Program
Fundación de Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer (FEIM), Argentina
International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS, global
International Women's AIDS Caucus/International AIDS Society
Ipas, global
Living Together Project, South Africa
WEDO, global
Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice, The Netherlands
Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR) - NEW WAYS, Turkey
World Population Foundation, The Netherlands
Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) 

INTERNET GOVERNANCE NGOS DISAPPOINTED WITH DECLARATION

Stefania Milan

Terraviva Online, Tunis 2005.

Civil society groups have reacted with disappointment at the decision to leave control of the Internet in the hands of the United States.

Under a compromise agreement on the eve of the summit, the California-based Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) that has technological control of the

Internet will remain in charge of the web.

"This was presented as a 'summit of solutions'," said Chantal Peyer from the Swiss NGO, Bread for All. "But still there is a clear lack of political will by rich countries."

An Internet governance forum has been set up to debate the future structure of the net. It will include civil society actors and businesses, but its decisions will not be binding.

NGOs seemed divided on the benefits of a forum like this.

To next page

From previous page

"It is a good result for our participation in the summit process, it is a way for civil society to have a say," Sally Burch from the Latin American Information Agency, a non-governmental organisation said. Others said that is not enough. "The WSIS speaks in a vague way of the Internet as a facility. We believe it is a universal public provision which should be available to all," Anita Gurusurthy from the Indian association IT for Change told Terra Viva. "Only from there universal access could be reached."

Far less satisfactory was the debate on financing poor countries' digital infrastructure.

"The positions of the European Union and United States are incoherent. Western countries do not want to commit any additional money, but operate within the existing funding mechanisms, which is not enough," Peyer said.

"It came out that only national governments of developing countries are responsible for bridging the digital divide," Peyer added. "It seems there is no notion of international cooperation and coordination."

While developing countries were asking for a clear mandate for the UN to take action on implementation and monitoring, Western countries and especially the United States oppose any strong language on concrete commitments and implementation measures.

The buzzword for the post-WSIS phase seems to be "voluntarism".

The Digital Solidarity Fund to raise resources to bridge the digital divide has been set up, but participation is voluntary. It is not supported financially by any rich country other than France.

Civil society leaders say other issues that are

supposedly a part of the development agenda are being ignored by the summit.

"Gender equality, media concentration, free software and cultural diversity issues were left out. No concrete proposals were made on how social groups from the South can appropriate technologies without infringing laws," Burch said.

NGOs are calling for an active civil society role in the post-WSIS phase. "We will monitor what will be done and put pressure on governments, and continue to work on national and international issues excluded from the summit agenda," Burch said.

NGOs also plan to pursue the link between the UN Millennium Development Goals and new technologies. "There is room for a public policy agenda on development," Peyer said.

"Governments recognised not enough was done so far for inclusion of rural areas. Now WSIS official documents mention the need for public investment and policies for access in rural and disadvantage areas, and we will start from there to move forward," Peyer said.

On the same day that the United Nations world information summit opened in Tunisia, three UN human rights experts urgently called on the North African country's Government to take immediate steps to respect the fundamental freedom of expression in the face of reports of serious abuses.

They urged that the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis served as "an opportunity to reinforce freedom of opinion and expression in Tunisia so that human rights defenders, judges, lawyers and journalists can successfully carry out their activities in a secure, free and constructive climate."

In a joint statement, they expressed their "profound concern" at the deterioration with regard to freedom of expression, assembly and association and the independence of judges and lawyers in Tunisia.

The three are Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Special Representative on human rights defenders, Hina Jilani, the Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression of the UN Commission on Human Rights, Ambeyi Ligabo, and the Commission's Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and

To next page


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lawyers, Leandro Despouy. Special Rapporteurs are unpaid experts serving in an independent personal capacity who receive their mandate from the Commission and report back to it. In their statement, the three stressed that they have received numerous reports of repeated attacks on human rights organizations and their members, as well as against judge's, lawyer's and journalist's associations. 'The Special Rapporteurs and the Special Representative expressed their deep concern in the face of numerous cases of fines, forced transfers, physical attacks, arrests, condemnations and imprisonment of civil society members and judges for having publicly raised human rights issues and expressing their opinion,' they said. They also voiced their concern over reports of

obstacles to the freedom of association encountered by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and labour unions, including systematic bans on meetings by human rights organizations and those of journalists, judges and lawyers, as well as police clampdowns on their offices and "physical violence" perpetrated by security forces.

'The Special Rapporteurs and the Special Representative urgently called on the Tunisian Government to take immediately all measures necessary to respect fundamental freedoms, in particular fundamental norms with regard to freedom of opinion and expression, association and gathering, as well as with respect to the independence of judge and lawyers,' the statement said.

'They call for the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society to serve as an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of freedom of opinion and expression in the world, in particular for the promotion and protection of human rights.' 

Final Declaration of the III Summit of the People of the Americas

AN INTEGRATION FOR AND FROM THE PEOPLE IS NECESSARY AND POSSIBLE

Mar del Plata, Argentina, November 4, 2005

[Http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/cumbre_americas2005/1104declaration.htm](http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/cumbre_americas2005/1104declaration.htm)

- The FTAA should be buried forever!
- No to "free trade" militarization and debt!
- To truly end poverty unemployment and social exclusion

Delegates of social organizations from all regions of the continent, from Canada to Patagonia; workers, farmers, indigenous, young and old, of all races, women and men with dignity have come together in Mar del Plata, Argentina, to demand that the powerful, who normally ignore us, listen to the voice of all of the people of our America. Like previously, in Santiago de Chile and in Quebec, we have come together in the face of the Summit of the Americas, which brings together the presidents of the whole continent, with the exception of Chile, because in spite of the fact that the official discourse continues to be full of words about democracy

and the fight against poverty, the people continue to be not taken into account at the hour that the decisions are made about our futures. We find ourselves here in the III Summit of the People, to express our profound resistance to the neo-liberal calamities orchestrated by the imperial power from the north while at the same time constructing alternatives. We continue to demonstrate that it is possible to change the course of history and we promise to continue down this road.

In the year 2001, in the official Summit in Quebec, when the vast majority of the governments were blindly inclined towards neo-liberal orthodoxy and to the dictates of Washington, with the honourable exception of Venezuela, the US managed to establish January of 2005 as the end date for their new project of domination called Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) to enter into effect, and that during the 4th Summit

To next page

DAWN INFORMS

From previous page

which was programmed to happen in Argentina would be the event at which the negotiations for this perverse project would be signed. But on the first of January in 2005 we woke up without FTAA and this official Summit has arrived with the negotiations irreversibly stalled. We are here today to celebrate this!

Without a doubt, the US has not changed their strategy to affirm their hegemonic control of the hemisphere, now using bilateral and regional Free Trade Agreements such as CAFTA, which was ratified by a very close margin and AFTA which they are now looking to force on the Andean countries.

Additionally, Washington is moving forward with an Agreement for Security and Prosperity in North America (ASPNA). They are doing this in spite of a multitude of incontestable evidence of more than 10 years of NAFTA, and now this FTA plus has the objective of imposing the element of CEsecurity1 of the US on the whole region.

But the US is not content to advance the pieces of chess in their project of domination on the continent. They insist on accommodating us in their hegemonic framework while at the same time not renouncing their FTAA project. Now, together with their governments they come to Mar del Plata with the intention of breathing new life into the cadaver FTAA, when the people have clearly expressed their rejection to an integration subordinated to the US.

At the same time, their strategy in favour of the North American corporations has been accompanied by an increased militarization of the continent, with US military bases. And now to finish the genocide, George W. Bush has come to the Summit in Mar del Plata with intentions to promote his policies of CEsecurity1 to the continent under the pretext of combating terrorism, when the best way to reverse that is to end his policies of colonial intervention.

In the final declaration which is being discussed by our governments, the possibility exists that

the real threat could come to pass, even though they try to hide what their real intentions are. This declaration is full of empty words and demagogic proposals to combat poverty and generate decent employment. The reality is that these offers only perpetuate a model which has brought more misery and injustice to our continent, which has the worst distribution of riches in the world.

This is a model that favours a select few, which promotes a deterioration in labour conditions, promotes migration, contributes to a deterioration of the environment, privatization of social security and education, the implementation of laws which protect the corporations and not our citizens, as is the case with the intellectual property chapters.

In addition to the FTAA, they insist on moving forward with the Doha agenda, which is designed to give more power to the World Trade Organization (WTO), in order to impose non-equitable economic rules on the least developed countries to further promote the corporate

agenda. They continue to promote the plunder of our natural goods, our energy resources; the appropriation and privatization of our water aquifers and hydrographic reserves, converting access to water from a human right into merchandise controlled by transnational interests.

In order to impose these policies, the empire and its accomplices, use the blackmail of external debt which impedes the development of our people in violation of all of our human rights. The declaration of the presidents offers no concrete solutions, such as the cancellation of payments on this illegitimate debt, the restitution of the extra which has been charged and the repayment of the historical social and ecological debts to the people of our America.

The delegates of the different peoples of America are here not only to denounce, we are here because we have been resisting the policies of the empire and its allies. But at the same time, we are in the process of constructing popular

They continue to promote the plunder of our natural goods, our energy resources; the appropriation and privatization of our water aquifers and hydrographic reserves, converting access to water from a human right into merchandise controlled by transnational interests.

To next page


From previous page

alternatives, through the solidarity and unity of our people, constructing a social fabric from below, from a place of autonomy and diversity of our movements with the purpose of attaining a society which is inclusive, just and has dignity.

From this III Summit of the People of America we declare:

- 1) The negotiations for the creation of a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) should be **SUSPENDED IMMEDIATELY AND DEFINITELY**, as well as all bilateral and regional FTAs. We join with the resistance of the people of the Andean Region and of Costa Rica against those FTAs and with the people of the Caribbean so that the EPAS will not come to signify a new era of disguised colonialism and the struggles of the people of North America, Chile and Central America to turn back treaties of this type which weigh so heavy on them.
- 2) All agreements between countries should be based on principles of respect of human rights, the social dimension, respect of sovereignty, a complementary relationship, cooperation, solidarity, considering the economic asymmetries, favoring the least developed.
- 3) We prefer to promote alternative projects of regional integration, such as the Bolivian Alternatives for the Americas (ALBA).
- 4) We join our forces with the conclusions and actions which have been born in the forums, workshops and encounters of this Summit and we commit to continue going deeper with our process of constructing alternatives.
- 5) All of the illegitimate un-payable external debt of the South should be cancelled, immediately and without conditions. We take the position of creditors to collect the social, ecological and historical debt with our people.
- 6) We join with the struggle of our people for an equitable distribution of riches, with dignified work and social

justice to eradicate poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion.

- 7) We commit to promote a diversification of production, the protection of native seeds which are patrimony of the people in the service of humanity, food sovereignty of the people, sustainable agriculture and an integral agrarian reform.
- 8) We energetically reject the militarization of the continent being promoted by the empire from the North. We denounce the doctrine called CE cooperation for hemispheric security¹ as a mechanism of repression of popular struggles. We reject the presence of US troops on our continent; we want neither bases nor military conclaves. We condemn the state terrorism of the Bush Administration which would attempt to bloody the legitimate rebellions of our people. We commit to the defense of our sovereignty in the Triple Border, Heart of the Guarani fresh water reserve. So we demand the US troops out of Paraguay.
- 9) We condemn the immorality of the government of the United States, that while it talks about struggling against terrorism, it protects the terrorist Posada Carriles and continues to detain the 5 Cuban patriots. We demand their immediate release!
- 10) We repudiate the presence in our dignified Latin American land of George W. Bush, the principal promoter of war in the world, and heads up the neo-liberal creed which even impacts the interests of his own people.
From here we send a message of solidarity to the dignified women and men of the United States, who are ashamed at having a government which has been condemned by the entire world, and who resists against wind and tide.
After Quebec, we constructed a huge campaign and continental popular consultations against FTAA and have managed to detain it. In the face of the attempt to bring the negotiations back to life, and to add the military objectives of the US, in this III Summit of the Peoples, we assume the commitment to reinforce our resistance, strengthen our unity in diversity and convoke a new and larger continental mobilization to bury the FTAA forever and build at the same time a new alternative America that is just, free and based on solidarity. 

YOUNG PEOPLES AND SOCIAL CONTRACTS

By Shamillah Wilson (DAWN Training Institute alumnus), Africa Social Forum: Bamako 2006

The questions posed for this panel presentation are whether young people are involved in social contracts? What do young people think about social contracts? Etc.

As a preamble to this presentation it is important to note that young people are indeed supportive of processes to renegotiate social contracts. For the very reason that 'denial' or non-commitment to social contracts has resulted in young people inheriting a world that is shaped by forces such as: HIV/AIDS, sex trafficking, economic globalization, patriarchy, poverty, conflict, biotechnological revolution among other things. This global situation can either be an opportunity to some young people or a threat with fewer choices to some. The fact that young people do not constitute a homogeneous grouping, means that their experience of these realities are further impacted on by factors such as regional location, socio-economic background, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, health, education, etc.

Learning to chart a course through such perilous waters is difficult enough at an individual level. For emerging young activists, being part of a collective challenging these power dynamics is a much more strategic choice. Renegotiating social contracts is therefore the very basis for young people to explore alternative models of power for social justice.

Why social contracts?

The evolution of social contract politically is significant for the meaning that "power emanates from people" and has at its centre the notion of citizenship and through that the rights of citizens. The social contract is based on two premises: first that governments should be held accountable for delivery of basic services; and second, that individuals or communities can and should exercise their citizenship rights to

ensure those services.

The social contract is relevant for the African continent in particular given the fact that we have been operating in a global context where privatization of basic public services (such as health, education, water, electricity, sanitation, etc) has become a dominant issue. What makes this issue so important is the fact that basic services cuts across a wide range of issue areas such as: accountability, transparency, human rights, poverty reduction, democratization, gender equality, debt reduction and cancellation and environmental protection. For young people in particular, at the centre of the analysis is that by ensuring access to basic service, for example, clean water and accessible health care it will reduce the overall incidence of illness (e.g., epidemics). Similarly, universal education increases economic productivity and forms the foundation of meaningful citizenship. What this means is that by denying citizens these basic services, governments are contravening the basic rights of citizens and denying them the tools and an environment in which to claim their dignity. For young women in particular, cut-backs on spending in public education, health and water has had adverse impacts on their abilities to gain an education and has increased the burden of care in terms of workloads at home.

Thus, from a young person's perspective, as citizens, we need to hold our governments accountable for making provision for basic needs and in the contexts of liberalisation of trade in services, to ensure the adequate government regulation and measures to cushion negative effects on citizens such as those who are poor, women, youth and children.

Where are young people?


Given above analysis, we are back to the question of what is the involvement of young people in renegotiating social contracts. As young activists

To next page

From previous page

on the African continent, we face similar challenges within movements as our colleagues in other parts of the world. The context of challenging, resisting an renegotiating with our governments requires us to be able to access the spaces where our strategic engagement is necessary and in many cases it would need to transcend the boundaries of national and regional borders. So, we are challenged to remain connected to each other on this diverse African continent, which in itself is challenging given resource and infra-structural challenges, and at the same time allow our activism to be informed by our engagement with other young activists from the South and North. Our generation knows that in order for us to be meaningful participants, we need to be able to understand processes and spaces and move into them with ease. However, as young activists,

those of us who can move across the spaces, who do have the theoretical analysis and are engaged locally are a minority and we are a privileged few. So, as we engage in these processes, we constantly bear in the back of our minds the necessity to grow a critical mass of young activists (with the right analyses of power, gender, age) who can engage in the ways that are necessary in our current context, given the impediments faced by our continent.

So, while we as young people want to be more actively engaged we want to raise the fact that there needs to be more of us that are meaningful participants at the table to renegotiate the social contracts that would leave a legacy for the next generations. It is our duty to ensure that the lessons from historical struggles inform our strategy on how we as a multi-generational movement proceed to create the context where all people have access to claim their dignity. 

WTO UPDATE

Alejandra Scampini REPEM/DAWN Feminist Task Force of GCAP

Regional Coordinator South East Asia, Gigi Francisco and Alejandra Scampini DAWN / REPEM represented DAWN at the WTO 6th Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, 12-18 December, 2005.

I was excited and anxious about what was going to happen in the opening march since I have been receiving all these e-mails about the preparations of women's groups, farmers, fishermen/women, trade unions, etc. Unfortunately I only got to the end of the rally, policemen where everywhere standing and attentively following the return of the crowds, along Marsh Road. At a distance I could hear the drums, the songs, I could see the colorful flags, T-shirts, banners, painted faces, etc. GCAP banner was there; many women and men were wearing the GCAP T-shirts and wearing the white bands.

Many people I found on the streets told me that Korean farmers lead the march with the battle cry "WTO kills our brothers". I was told there was a heavy coffin built of material brought from Korea by the Korean Advanced Farmers Federation, on it was the message RIP WTO.

But the climax arrived at 3pm when in the middle of speeches and among the many ways in which more than 4500 people demonstrated, 100 Koreans reached the edge of the harbor and they jumped into the cold sea to the chorus of Down down WTO !!and started swimming towards the venue of the summit. I could not see this jumping on the sea neither the coffin but saw lots of press photographers catching the action as women and men were marching to Victoria Park where the different groups/coalitions have their tents and gathering centre. Though the sense is that all these mobilizations were low key compared to Seattle or Cancun, for me it was interesting and energizing to see the crowds at Victoria Park gathering with different messaging going from "JUNK WTO" to "Another smaller WTO is possible." It reminds me at one point the energy you get when you walk along all that mass in WSF opening March.

Gigi Francisco from IGTN and DAWN informed me that the march outside was complemented with an inside strategy. The Opening ceremony was disrupted by the

To next page

From previous page

activists to the chorus of "Lamy No more lies, no more lies." Imagine the scene. 149 member countries gathering at a very nice and formal convention centre in Wai Chai. Mr Lamy , Director General of WTO, approaching trade ministers to put politics aside and this time to achieve results. Imagine now Mr Lamy with a magic wand. Yes a magic wand. He said: "I have kindly been given a magic wand but I am afraid is not working very well and it is the type of magic wand that only works if everyone believes in it.

Now imagine a large group of NGOs, 200 were accredited to the ceremony, and they were waiting for the right moment to come and scream NO MORE LIES LAMY! The banners carried by the NGOs at the back of the room brought the messages of No deal is better than a bad deal, WTO kills,! NGOs were kindly invited to leave the room by the security. But the media was already hooked so once outside they approached representatives of NGOs such as Walden Bello of the Focus on the Global South that criticized the major trading powers for dressing up the conference as a development package in order to pass the meeting off as a success and our friend, Gigi Francisco that as you may imagine gave a comprehensive and clear comment on why women continue to reject a bad deal and called for an equitable and just global trade regime.

Demonstrations continued outside, specially Korean farmers who tried to clash with police for second day to the chorus of DOWN DOWN WTO. Inside the corridors were pretty silent to me, the climate was quite okay and the negotiations were running somewhere. Some of us, as many NGOs, were not allowed to enter these negotiating rooms and there was no Viena Café but small nice café spots where people could get to smoke and get the latest! NGOs were here, there were a lot, I came across many Brazilian friends, Filipinos, Germans, etc. Some NGOs had also their strategy sessions and panels in the exhibition center but none of them were well attended since you needed every minute to see where you could sneak in and get info, where to meet the advisers of delegates so as to see where was the right moment to issue a

declaration, press release, demonstrate, etc. So, the dynamics in WTO are so different from UN or any other process I had the opportunity to follow that it is difficult to get a sense of what actually was being discussed and what the hot issues were. You definitely needed people inside delegations and in green rooms that could come outside and inform you about the situation of the discussions. The discussions were being televised and you could watch them from the corridors but not green rooms. At IGTN daily sessions you could get good information and there were also NGO briefings at 4pm every day. In terms of services , it seemed EU was looking for more specific language on services, pushing and pushing for something more concrete while US opposed this, they needed to protect some of their services, and it seemed there was also a proposal coming from Asia and Caribbean but no clarity on that . No matter what language EU proposed, the threat here was that services such as water, health, education which are critical for women and social reproduction in general could be part of these deals unless there was an exclusion of these essential services. Unless we had that explicitly said, we remained in a vague definition of which services and we were running the risk of losing that battle. The ambiguities needed to be clarified as Maria Pia from IGTN, was saying in the second day of negotiations, especially on rule making and subsidies and safeguard mechanisms. In terms of Special Products, G33 presented a proposal which included guidelines on how to think of these in terms of rural development, food security and agriculture, specially mentioning women and other groups (**being this the first time, women are mentioned in these negotiations, according to Maria Pia from IGTN**) . The proposal was available in WTO web page and the sense was that the proposal was okay but it was useful to remind ourselves that any mechanisms to protect agriculture, food security or rural development, such as tariff reduction was not addressing the cause of the issue of food security. The main problem always lies at the root of the development model that is being put forward. As far as Non Agricultural Market Access(NAMA) , there is a group working on an alternative text, because the

To next page

From previous page

available one was not good at all. The non linear approach for tariff reduction that is being promoted is really harmful to the economies that do not have a solid industrial base.

As you can see from this simple report on negotiations, gender is not a preoccupation in WTO. WTO is about trade rules and trade outcomes "as many trade advocates would say, social outcomes are to be negotiated elsewhere. WTO is, about tariffs, quotas, duties, not gender or environment. We, who have been in UN conferences and summits can see that this lack of interest on gender is not only the realm of WTO but symptomatic of what is happening everywhere and trade finance is predominant to human rights and the coherence framework, meaning Monterrey consensus is the

framework being promoted and not the coherence of WTO and Beijing agendas. So you can see it is a difficult place to bring gender in the discussions on trade or trade related fora. The vision about women is related to what WTO needs to give business women so they can take advantage from trade liberalization.

However, and almost stubbornly, women's groups came to WTO to bring the analysis and linkages between gender and trade in the context of development and as Gigi said, to secure what women had gained elsewhere and critically raise the issues women need to raise : exposing the double standards practiced by rich countries. To participate in WTO, explained Gigi, is not limited to mainstreaming gender, is participating and engaging critically. 🌹

WSIS THE BEGINNING OF A GLOBAL INFORMATION SOCIETY DISCOURSE

Parminder Jeet Singh and Anita Gurumurthy (Anita Gurumurthy with Magaly Pazello, participated in the WSIS process for DAWN, assess WSIS outcomes and implications for global governance)

The Context of WSIS

In attempting to evaluate the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), two of its characteristics need especially to be kept in view. One is the fact that WSIS, unlike earlier world summits, was not mandated with a more or less clear-cut global 'problem'. It came out of an excitement generated by some paradigmatic breakthroughs in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) at the turn of the millennium. These breakthroughs were manifestly far-reaching, and to many they seemed to herald a 'new model of social organisation' or a new kind of society. History testifies to such links between disruptive technologies and basic societal changes. Such a broad context to the WSIS meant that its mandate was never very clear and well-formed. Different people came to WSIS with completely different ideas. The fuzziness of WSIS outcomes must be seen in this light.

The second important characteristic of WSIS is the global governance context in which it was located. The unilateralism of the US has become increasingly more menacing, and neo-liberal ideology is strengthening its clasp over the global policy and governance spaces. The ICT phenomenon has largely been private sector driven and such has been the domination of the private sector in this arena that it is often considered the primary expert on strategy and policy even when the use of ICTs has concerned social and developmental purposes. ICT multinationals have been getting politically more powerful than ever before, further sidelining the state and other legitimate political entities from the discourse on shaping an emerging 'information society'.

In light of the above analysis, it is meaningful to discuss the outcomes of WSIS in terms of (1)

To next page

what was achieved in substance and, (2) what are the implications of WSIS for global governance.

What exactly was WSIS about?

The ICT and the 'information society' (IS) phenomenon were born in the North. And their concepts and theories largely represent the dominant socio-economic paradigm of today's world. At one level, new ICTs were conceived as bringing forth a new Global Information Infrastructure (a term used by the US) and at another, they were considered as underpinning a new economic system called the 'knowledge economy'. The term 'information society' was popularised by the EU, but its vision remained largely economic, and within existing paradigms.

The North-driven IS discourse has not really been willing to address the structural and institutional shifts implied in the far-reaching impact of the new ICTs on our social and political processes, even while vaguely acknowledging them, in the conception of a new type of society. This is quite understandable as the attitude of the 'incumbent'. However, these new paradigms are more meaningful for the South, vast sections of the population of which are ill-served by the dominant socio-economic paradigm. Unfortunately, the leaders of the countries of the South have mostly not shown the vision to grasp the new opportunities and have not begun to engage with the information society discourse on the terms determined by the interests of the South. Under these circumstances, the relevance of ICTs to development is also an arena whose theory has mostly come from the North, predominantly in the form of a cooption into the dominant discourse on ICTs and the IS. Many initiatives - like the DOT Force initiative of G-8 countries, the Digital Opportunity Initiative, and UN's ICT Task Force - and their reports, build a largely neo-liberal framework of ICT for development (ICTD), which remains the default IS discourse in its developmental context.

Against this background, WSIS may be seen as

having made considerable progress in terms of a broader and certainly more legitimate conception of a global information society. **The WSIS outcome documents have a much greater socio-political vision and make greater reference to some paradigmatic and structural aspects of the impact of the new ICTs than the above referred documents on ICTD that seek to articulate a 'pragmatic' and efficiency-based discourse, that is essentially neo-liberal.**

WSIS has legitimised and given broad directions to the information society discourse the real fruits of which, it must be admitted, lie only in the future. It was too much to expect a UN Summit, especially in the present conditions of global governance, to make paradigmatic visionary shifts to global policy, that a meaningful engagement with IS issues really calls for. The outcome documents do contain many 'pegs' which can be used to shape an IS discourse in the required directions. The institutional basis provided by WSIS and its follow-up (however weak and poorly defined) provide the context and the space for a collective engagement with IS changes to guide them in directions of greater equity and social justice.

The arena of real struggles to define the significance of the emerging IS in terms of greater equity and social justice, or in a more general way, in terms of a people-centric and development-oriented IS, mostly lies outside the confines of WSIS. And many contestations have been happening all around us in the open source and free software movement, in open content paradigms like Creative Commons and Wikipedia, in a growing alternative or citizen's media, in 'illegal' VoIP and in free public wireless connectivity models. An example from closer home, in India, would be in the potential of the Internet in 'operationalising' the right to information legislations and enforcing transparency in many governmental processes. Of course, we have also been witness to the negative aspects of new ICTs as well, from the use of online spaces for sexual abuse to the role of ICTs in strengthening the stranglehold of global capital. While the new digital

To next page

technologies promise greater democratization of information and communication, the use of these technologies to increase the state's interference in and control over the private lives of citizens is an issue that has greatly concerned the civil society.

An ongoing information society discourse which sees these struggles in a broader and shared context can certainly help them along in a positive manner both through their legitimisation even if with contestations and through sharing information and strategies across different spaces both topical and geographic. The 'either or' attitude to these struggles and policy engagements at global and other levels must therefore be avoided, and complementarities between the two processes recognised and strengthened. **WSIS may need to be judged more from the processes that it has set into motion than what it has achieved substantively.**

Global policy on 'bridging the digital divide'

In addition to establishing the role of WSIS in formalising and legitimising a global policy discourse on the information society, it is necessary to also assess it on more specific outcomes. In journalistic shorthand, WSIS has come to be associated with two basic issues: bridging the digital divide, and Internet Governance.

The digital divide issue in its broadest scope includes a whole swathe of issues implicated in the gap between those who seem to be benefiting from the emerging information society and those who seem to be left behind. Many of these issues from the different approaches to software production, to telecom access models for free or affordable connectivity, open access to information, capacity building, international telecommunication costs, R & D for affordable hardware, technology transfer on preferential terms, and the role of the state and public policy in the information society, to community based ICT initiatives got discussed at WSIS, and they find mention in one form or the other in the

outcome documents.

In its narrow conception, the issue of 'bridging the digital divide' was seen in terms of financing the ICT infrastructure and other basic concomitant requirements for an inclusive information society in the South. Some least developed countries, especially from Africa, expected countries of the North to commit specific financial assistance for laying ICT infrastructure in their countries. This did not happen. Governments of the North are mostly wary of making funding commitments at UN summits, and, even if they agree on the basic proposition for specific funding, they prefer unilateral commitments or work through exclusive clubs like the G-8. However, **WSIS failed even to establish the context and the rationale for considering ICTD financing at a level different from regular development financing. This was a huge failing of WSIS.**

As an information and communication infrastructure that represents an entirely new basis for organising a whole range of social and economic processes, new ICTs have to be seen as an essential public infrastructure. ICT financing therefore must follow a different logic than most economic goods and services. The fact however is that the same infrastructure that is seen by some as a potentially 'equalising field' for faster development with greater equity and social justice among countries and among sections of the society, is also seen by others as the economic infrastructure around which a new set of comparative advantages have to be concretised for protecting their economic, social and political dominance. **The question of whether 'basic connectivity' and basic ICT capacities constitute a normal economic service, that should be subject to market forces, or whether they qualify strongly to be considered public goods that are best produced by public funds and provisioned in a non-rivalrous and non-excludable manner has not been discussed, much less sorted out, at WSIS.**

This should, however, not come as a surprise since this basic issue is still strongly contested

To next page

From previous page

in ICT policy spaces in countries of both the South and the North. Two examples of such contestation are provided here, one each from the South and the North. In India, the broadband project of the state of Andhra Pradesh to connect all villages on a regulated per-connection price of \$ 2.3 per month recently ran into problems with telecom regulators. (The issue has since been sorted out). Similar problems have occurred earlier with some other developmental projects in India innovating affordable or free connectivity solutions. In the US, many state governments have threatened to bring in legislation to prevent municipalities from providing public connectivity systems. (More than 300 municipalities in the US have such public connectivity provision.)

As with connectivity, other 'information society' issues like software models, bottom-up media alternatives and easier access to content are going through similar basic and far-reaching contestations and transformations. It is unfortunate that the dominant interests governments and multi-nationals of the North apart from not discussing the 'public goods' paradigm for basic IS infrastructural requirements, were able to keep the important issue of IPR and freer access to knowledge out of the WSIS.

All these issues need to be articulated and advocated at both global and local levels, and the momentum generated by the WSIS on these or related issues need to be carried forward by interested actors. This brings forth the twin need for optimising the WSIS follow-up process, especially from a Southern point of view; the role of civil society, and the need for strengthening South-South collaborations, for further developing pro-people and pro-development IS paradigms and relating these to real policy options.

For the last ten years, the US and the EU have been conducting formal annual dialogues on IS issues; it is geo-politically important that the countries of the South, and civil society, also engage continuously to discuss and, if possible,

develop common positions on IS issues.

IS and global governance

WSIS took place at a time when US-led interests have been very active in undermining UN organisations and such relatively democratic forums of global governance. The growing intolerance of global capital for public policy regimes has been both a strong motivator as well as an ally in this process. These dominant forces conspired in many ways at WSIS to undermine the political legitimacy of global governance structures. At one level, there was a consistent attempt to keep as many substantial issues out from the discussions as possible using varied excuses, from claims that some of these issues were 'legitimately' in the purview of other multi-lateral forums (IPR with WIPO and telecommunication agreements with WTO) to assertions that the summit lacked the political authority to 'direct' the UN system and its entities towards one direction or the other and that these entities should be left to 'act as they deem fit'. At another level, the role of private sector as a supposed leader of information society was pushed in very questionable ways into various governance arrangements.

It was because of such an attitude of the-US led governments of the North that a summit that had one of the widest mandates came out with very weak outcomes. And, except in the area of Internet Governance, it has left very weak follow-up mechanisms. Under much pressure from developing countries, US-led countries of the North budged only so much as to look into the possibility of changing the mandate of the ECOSOC Commission on Science and Technology for Development to include follow-up on 'information society' issues. It is significant to note that in the MDG + 5 Summit as well, 'information society' is dealt with under the section on science and technology. It is ironical that all the conceptual progress made in the last decade from seeing ICTs as merely another set of technologies to understanding their society-wide impact as a complex and far-reaching socio-economic phenomenon has been nullified through such exercises. It is not that

To next page

From previous page


countries of the North do not understand the significance of IS changes; they certainly do. For example, the EU has a very ambitious IS program, and an IS commission, or a similar body, is one of the institutional arrangements that is recommended to the countries aspiring to join the EU. However, the countries of the North are not enthusiastic about relatively democratic and representative global governance structures like the UN having a strong role in 'governing' the emerging information society. They prefer more exclusive arrangements - privileged membership groups like the G-8 or other systems that represent dominant geo-political interests like some private sector led arrangements. The existing regime of Internet Governance (IG) is one such system. WSIS could not change the present regime though some significant processes of possible changes have been set in motion. This became possible because on this one issue - where some unilateral exercise of power by the US, for example, its control over the DNS root zone file, was unacceptable even to the normally amenable European nations - the EU broke ranks with the US in the last stages of the negotiation.

Though the present IG regime remains unchanged as of now, the tough negotiations that ensued after the EU break-away have ensured that some processes have been put in motion by the summit which will examine various aspects related to internationalization of political oversight over the present technical and logical management functions of IG. Another significant gain is the setting up of a multi-stakeholder Internet Governance Forum (IGF) that will debate and present recommendations on various public policy issues related to IG. Governments, civil society and the private sector will participate on an equal footing in this forum, or so it appears from the reading of the summit outcome documents, and the precedent in a similar body, Working Group on Internet Governance, which had contributed to the WSIS process. IGF will be a significant new age institution - an organisation that is a true multi-stakeholder partnership dealing with some very significant and substantive global governance issues.

WSIS and Multi-stakeholderism

The concept of multi-stakeholderism in the WSIS remained controversial. While WSIS saw a greater official role for civil society and the private sector

than any other global governance forum ever before, there are two significant aspects of this issue worth taking note of. One, that often the presence of civil society seemed to provide a cover for a greater private sector role in the WSIS, and in the IS discourse generally. Two, the accent on multi-stakeholderism was at times used to further undermine legitimate global governance bodies like those of the UN, and thus played to the designs of the US-led governments of the North. In fact, civil society from the South was also often more interested in 'show-casing' ICT for development initiatives at the summit rather than in contesting important issues taken up by the summit. A new class of ICT for Development NGOs seem to be so taken up with 'looking for real solutions in cooperation with all actors' that this multi-stakeholderism often comes at the expense of engaging with purposeful advocacy for more structural changes. The need for such engagements, as discussed above, may be more rather than less relevant in case of an emerging IS.

However, the gains for civil society in terms of multi-stakeholder platforms for global governance are real and significant, even if WSIS was perhaps the most apolitical summit ever - generally, as also in terms of civil society's role. One of the problems, as stated earlier, was that civil society that converged at WSIS came from too diverse a background. For some, human rights was the basic issue at stake, and for others WSIS was more about media and communication. Still others were looking at vast socio-economic opportunities for developing countries. For many, governments were the prime enemy; for others, like those concerned with development potential of ICTs, they were a necessary partner. Altogether, the range of backgrounds, interests and opinions were too wide for the civil society to present a strong political front at WSIS. **Probably, it was due to the fragmented and depoliticised nature of the WSIS that progress could be made on the issue of multi-stakeholderism in global governance.** What is significant is that since this procedural gain in global governance has been made, the WSIS precedent will always be useful to push for a greater role for civil society in the more politically contested global governance spaces like WTO, WIPO and disarmament negotiations, and issues like cultural diversity, environment and media. It is also necessary for all actors - and civil society needs to take a lead in this - to develop connections between these arenas of global policy and those that are more directly dealt with as IS issues. IS issues are by their very definition society-wide issues, and thus cut across all other arenas. In fact the IS discourse provides the opportunity for advocating and leading meaningful positive changes in many areas of global policy and governance. 

DAWN Training Institute DTI

The 2ND DAWN Training Institute was held in Montevideo, Uruguay, from 6-26 November, 2005, were a total of 26 applicants from 16 countries of South participated in the training.

The DAWN Training Institute was inaugurated in Bangalore, India, in 2003 and has been followed by a number of regional programmes. The training programmes are designed for young feminist activists who are engaged in, or have a strong interest in, global advocacy work for gender justice.


The programme draws on both DAWN's feminist analysis which interlinks issues under the themes of Political Economy of Globalisation, Sustainable Livelihoods and Environmental Justice, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and Political Restructuring and Social Transformation; and the network's considerable experience in UN conference processes and other sites of struggle, including the global civil society movement against economic globalisation.

Particular attention was paid to providing an environment that would put participants from diverse backgrounds at ease and able to cope with the demands of an intensive programme. Team teaching and support was provided by DAWN Coordinators, with four other resource persons: Cecilia Ng, Anita Nayar, Francoise Girard and Zo Randriama; all feminist intellectuals with expertise in global advocacy in the four thematic areas of DAWN work. These experienced feminist advocates assisted the participants to understand the changing terrain of the struggle for gender justice. They were exposed to the ideas and work of other activist scholars and examined critical issues under each theme in the context of current debates at the global level, and their interlinkages with issues under other themes.

The training programme was divided into three: the first week was used to introduce the DAWN research themes (Political Economy of Globalisation, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Justice, and Political Restructuring and Social Transformation) through background analyses of the issues for feminists under each theme. In week two, inter-theme and global /regional/ local linkages were made, highlighting DAWN's ongoing linkages work and the challenges it presents. The final week focussed on advocacy and activism on issues in all theme areas and at all levels.

Participants were encouraged to begin each day with entries in personal journals to assess the previous day's discussion and prepare for the next sessions. They were also engaged in group discussions which energized their concerns around politics and governance.

From both the participants and DAWN trainers' feedback, the training institute was successful. The training Institute programme promises mutual benefits to DAWN and young feminists from the South. It was possible to effectively share with the young feminists DAWN considerable experience over the past 20 years in feminist advocacy at the global level. The training also offers DAWN's way of regeneration through the recruitment of DTI graduates into DAWN's global and regional advocacy work.

The DAWN training institute is planned to be held every other year as each year following the training will be used as a follow-up year in which to engage with DTI graduates with one another and with DAWN as they worked to establish effective networks within their regions. 

FINAL REFLECTIONS (POLICY/ADVOCACY PERSPECTIVE)

An address by Bene E. Madunagu of Girls' Power Initiative (Nigeria) and DAWN at the closing Plenary session: From Research to Action in Reducing Unsafe Abortion in Sub-Saharan Africa during the conference "Linking Research to Action to Reduce Unsafe Abortion in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Regional Consultation, March 20-23, 2006 at the United Nations Conference Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Women Count!! Girls Count!!

Women, girls, men and boys are equal citizens of their countries. Research has provided facts on incidence and alarming rates of deaths of girls and women in Sub-Saharan Africa, due to unsafe abortion. We have been informed by experts that safe abortion is an easy and inexpensive medical procedure. If we all care about the lives of girls and women, as healthcare providers, policy makers, advocates and human rights activists, what stops us from ensuring that women do not die from a medical procedure that has been proven to be easy and safe?

Amongst us here at this conference, there are champions who care, who are respected and who get listened to. We need these champions to identify their counterparts in all of our countries to carry the message for saving the lives of girls and women through provision of services to address the challenge in the ICPD, PoA, 1994, para 8.25.

Adolescent girls contribute a large proportion of maternal mortality from unsafe abortion in sub-Saharan Africa. We all know why. We need to provide comprehensive Sexuality Education to inform and build their negotiation, refusal and communication skills to reduce the risk of unwanted pregnancy and the attendant mortality due to unsafe abortion. Girls will find it easier to use

medication abortion. Let us get wide approval to ensure access for these young people. This should be provided with non-judgmental counseling for all adolescents that need such services. Abortion laws in most parts of Africa are all gendered because, for what reasons are other colonial laws revived and/or replaced while restrictive abortion laws remain?

These restrictive colonial abortion laws should be repealed because abortion is a natural medical / health procedure which do not require any laws; abortion does not require laws but services to ensure that the lives of girls and women are saved.

Restrictive abortion laws are indicative of gender apartheid against girls and women. It can be equated to the neo-colonial / imperialist gag-rule and the new extension of that through the Conditionality before the release of funds for HIV/AIDS prevention and care.

We need to conclude this forum with the resolve to build coalitions and working relationships between researchers, advocates, health care providers, the media and policy makers to be able to open up the debate, break the lethargy of fear and stigma and hold our governments accountable to the treaties and policies they have signed at global, regional and national levels to save the lives of girls and women.

I thank our supporters who have co-sponsored this conference to continue in providing resources particularly in the area of medication abortion before restrictive laws get replaced or reviewed.

For all of us, we need the Gender Lens to succeed in this War Against the unnecessary death of girls and women. Let us be reminded that we are in 2006, less than 10 years to 2015 when the world leaders promised us to expect an end to high maternal mortality rates. Addressing the public health concern of mortality will due to Gender Apartheid of unsafe abortion will move us closer to achieving MDG goals numbers 3 & 5. 🌞

ANNOUNCEMENT

DAWN Africa Regional DTI (DAWN Training Institute)

DAWN's Anglophone Africa region and Francophone Africa region will jointly host DAWN Africa Regional Training Institute in Accra, Ghana from 16-24 June, 2006.

For more information contact the Regional Coordinators for Anglophone Africa and Francophone Africa (contact at the back of this newsletter). The form (both in French and English) can be downloaded from the DAWN website. 🌞

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

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

STEERING COMMITTEE

General Coordinator *Bene E. Madumagu*
Tel: 234-803-2757688
Fax: 234-87-236298
Email: dawn_angarfri@yahoo.co.uk

Former General Coordinator *Claire Slatter*
Tel: (644) 4764148
Email: dawngc@infogen.net.nz

RESEARCH COORDINATOR Research Coordinator of Political Economy

of Globalisation:

Gita Sen
Tel: 91-80-26993076
Email: gita@iimb.ernet.in

Research Coordinator of Political Economy of

Globalisation Trade:

Mariamaw Williams
Tel: 561 655 0881
Email: mariamaw@hotmail.com

Sexual and Reproductive Rights:

Sonia Correa
Tel: (55.21)2223-10470
Email: soniacorrea@globo.com

Political Restructuring & Social

Transformation:

Vivienne Taylor
Tel: 27-21 650 3482
Email: taylor94@iafrica.com

Email: fatousow@sentoosn

Caribbean: *Joan Grant-Cummings, Jamaica*
Tel: 876 929 8873
Fax: 876-968-9260
Email: bracelets59@yahoo.com

Latin America: *Celita Eccher, Uruguay*
Tel: (+5982) 4080089 / 401
Email: dawn@repem.org.uy

Pacific: *Yvonne Underhill-Sem*
Tel: (649) 373599 ext. 82311; Fax: (649) 3737411
Email: y.underhill-sem@auckland.ac.nz,

South Asia: *Vanita Nayak Mukherjee, India*
Tel: 91-471-2441534,
Email: vanita@vsnl.com

South East Asia: *Gigi Francisco, Philippines*
Telefax: (+63) 2-435 - 9229
Email: jfrancisco@mc.edu.ph

REGIONAL COORDINATORS

Africa: Anglophone: *Afua Hesse, Ghana*
Tel: (233) 24 437 0429
Email: ahesse@ghanatel.com.gh

Africa: Francophone: *Fatou Sow, Senegal*
Tel: (221-820 03 55)

DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women
for a New Era)

Note new address:

PO Box 3663, UNICAL Post Office

Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria

Email: dawn_angafri@yahoo.co.uk

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