

**WOMEN DEMAND A PEACEFUL AND HEALTHY PLANET**  
**Dialogue paper for WSSD Preparatory Committee IV**

We the women of the world have a vision of a future built on the principles of peace and solidarity; equity and shared power; environmental integrity; social justice and respect for human rights, cultural and biological diversity. At the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)-to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa in August-diverse women from all regions of the world will put forth "Women's Action Agenda for a Peaceful and Healthy Planet 2015," a comprehensive blueprint of their dreams and goals for sustainable, gender-sensitive, people centered development. Following are highlights:

**A. Peace**

Violence is incompatible with sustainable development. Increased militarisation and military expenditures (more than \$800 billion per year) accompanied by rapid growth in the arms trade, has derailed sustainable development, diverting vital human, natural and financial resources away from pressing social needs and polluting land, water and air. In war and conflict, women particularly experience displacement, widowhood, and loss of livelihoods and community support. Sustainability presupposes human security, and therefore protection of all human rights as well as steps to address the ecological, social, economic and political causes of conflicts, violence and terror.

**Women's Recommendations**

- Strengthen adherence to international law, in particular the agreed provisions of treaties on arms control and of international humanitarian and human rights law;
- Promote universal ratification and implementation without reservation of the International Criminal Court emphasizing the responsibility of all states to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women;
- Implement Security Council Resolution 1325 assuring women's equal participation in conflict prevention and resolution, peace-keeping and peace-building;
- Include peace as a subject in all school curricula;
- Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace.

**B. Globalization for Sustainability**

Left unchecked economic globalization driven by liberalized market forces, results in growing gaps between rich and poor, increasing poverty, violence and crime, and environmental degradation. The current economic system perpetuates inequitable distribution of wealth and the means of production, skewed power relations, over-consumption, and irresponsible use of natural common resources. Privatization has deprived women of essential services formerly provided by the state. Thus women bear the impact on multiple levels-juggling more work and household tasks with less income and less access to land. Women's economic inequity is further exacerbated by the failure of international institutions to formulate and evaluate financial and trade policies from a gender perspective, and the failure of governments to address working conditions in the informal sector, and wage inequities in the formal sector, or to integrate women's unpaid work into national accounting systems.

**Women's Recommendations**

- Replace the neo-liberal paradigm governing the global economy with a sustainable, gender-sensitive, and environmentally sound development framework that addresses the needs of people and the planet in equal measure to economic concerns;
- Governments must aim to halve by 2015, the number of the world's people living on less than one dollar a day, the majority of whom are women and children, in keeping with the UN Millennium Goals;

- The World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization-working under the auspices of the United Nations and monitored by a UN established external gender-monitoring group involving civil society-must set goals and timetables for increasing the number of women in decision-making positions to at least 30 percent, and mainstream gender perspectives in all institutional programs, policies and operations;
- Guarantee UN conference outcomes are not compromised in the process of building greater coherence with the international finance and trade institutions;
- Ensure international trade and investment policies are transparent and that mechanisms are established for participation of the most vulnerable stakeholders;
- Establish a UN Convention on Corporate Accountability, and reinstate the UN Centre on Transnational Corporations with a broader mandate and the necessary resources to monitor and address violations by corporate entities;
- Governments should adopt gender budgets at the national level.

### **C. Access and Control of Resources**

The earth's biological diversity is threatened by the irreversible destruction of natural habitats and endangerment of animal and plant species due to production and consumption patterns driven by market forces. Women's contribution to biodiversity in terms of labor and skills, and their knowledge of how to use and manage natural resources, is most often overlooked or, when acknowledged, exploited. A major cause of women's impoverishment and social insecurity is lack of equal property and inheritance rights, especially land rights. Trade related intellectual property rights (TRIPs), that do not provide safeguards against bio-piracy, further undermine women's autonomy and access to and control over vital resources.

### **Women's Recommendations**

- Implement all instruments to halt further depletion of natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity and for protecting these resources, including the treaty restricting and/or eliminating the use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs), the Convention on Biodiversity, the Kyoto Protocol on global warming;
- Establish systems of accountability for those responsible for polluting or depleting the environment and its natural resources and biodiversity;
- All governments and national and international agencies must promote gender mainstreaming and ensure gender balance in decision-making, based on gender disaggregated data, in all environment and sustainable development related policies and programs;
- The WTO must undertake a gender and social impact assessment of existing and new international intellectual property rights regimes and instruments, including TRIPs;
- Apply the precautionary principle of bio-safety and social justice to all genetic modification, and take steps to halt all patenting of biological resources, processes and knowledge, and to condemn the so-called "terminator technology."
- Implement CEDAW provisions, including the adoption of gender equality legislation that guarantees women's equal rights to own, manage, inherit and control land, and to access credit and appropriate technology.
- Phase out the production and use of nuclear energy and toxic substances while developing and expanding the use of safe alternatives, including renewable, solar and other clean energy sources, in cooperation with the scientific community.

### **D. Environmental Security and Health**

Worldwide environmental security of rural and urban communities is at risk, and people-especially those living in poverty-are exposed to toxic substances and radiation, lack clean, safe water and sanitation, or live in disaster prone areas. Global climate change contributes to these dangerous situations. Women and men have different susceptibilities to various environmental hazards, but women are further challenged by unequal opportunities to protect and promote their health. Women's human rights and economic security are unattainable without accessible and affordable basic health and reproductive health services.

### **Women's Recommendations**

- Include gender-disaggregated data and report on women's health risks related to the environment in monitoring implementation of Agenda 21;
- Increase access to sexual and reproductive health care for all individuals of appropriate ages by 2015 through the primary health care system;
- Implement the Millennium Goal to reduce maternal and child mortality by 2015;
- Governments should aim to halve by 2015, the proportion of people with no access to safe drinking water as recommended in the UN Millennium Goals;
- Increase young people's access to HIV-prevention information and services as well as affordable drugs in keeping with UN Millennium Goals (90 percent by 2005 increasing to 95 percent by 2010);

### **E. Governance for Sustainable Development**

Governance for sustainable development includes, but is not limited to, full and proportional participation of all stakeholders/citizens at all levels of decision making, accountability of governments to their citizens, transparency, inclusiveness, the rule of law, and equality. Governance is not gender-neutral. Women's participation in governance structures at local regional and international levels remains woefully low. The unprecedented rise of transnational corporations (TNCs) has resulted in the concentration of global power in the hands of a few, mostly men based in the industrialized countries, excluding large segments of global society, particularly women, from political and economic decision-making.

### **Women's Recommendations**

- Governments and international institutions must commit to measurable goals and timetables to achieve critical mass (30%) of women in decision-making by 2003 and gender balance by 2005;
- A reporting mechanism, in addition to the CEDAW process, should be instituted within the UN system by the year 2004 to allow tracking over time of women in decision-making roles in countries worldwide;
- Local Agenda 21 processes must be promoted as part of local government structures, and engendered;
- Strengthen links between the LA21 processes and the implementation of the Habitat agenda.

### **F. Capacity Building**

Access to education is essential for sustainable development but many educational programs fail to consider sustainable development as critical to the future of all generations. Women's education is key to the promotion of poverty eradication and sustainable development but women and girls comprise the majority (65%) of the world's non-literate.

### **Women's Recommendations**

- Implement programs to achieve full literacy for all, ensuring that rural and urban people, especially the poor, benefit from education relevant to their needs;
- Promote gender sensitive education for sustainability at all educational levels and ensure that sustainable development is integrated in all curricula;
- Integrate and protect women's traditional and indigenous knowledge in education, policy and decision-making processes;
- Use and promote gender-disaggregated instruments such as gender impact analysis, gender budgeting, data and indicators;
- Governments must seek to narrow the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005 and to ensure that, by 2015, all children complete a full course of primary education, as recommended by the UN Millennium Goals.

### **G. Partnerships for Sustainable Development**

Partnerships between governments, institutions and civil society should be built on principles of respect for human rights, transparency and accountability, inclusiveness, equal participation, and gender balance and equality and include genuine consultation and dialogue as well as policies and actions that support local communities and improve ecosystems. Many partnerships already exist among women's organizations worldwide including partnerships on peace, governance, environmental security, and economic justice.

**Women's Recommendations**

- Develop a clear and enforceable Partnership Code of Conduct including a gender audit, that has an inbuilt system of monitoring and assessing inputs, results, impacts and benefits;
- Provide financial and other capacity-building resources to enable true participation and equal partnerships.