



**Women's  
Action  
Agenda**  
*for a*  
**Healthy  
and  
Peaceful  
Planet**  
**2015**



A decade of  
women's advocacy  
for sustainable  
development



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omen from around the world took a comprehensive global platform to the 1992 United Nations Conference on

Environment and Development (UNCED). The impact of their energy, spirit and ideas was clear: Activists used the platform to successfully lobby for an array of critical references to women throughout the official conference agreement, called Agenda 21, as well as an entire chapter devoted to gender issues—Global Action for Women towards Sustainable and Equitable Development (Chapter 24).

Popularly known as Women’s Action Agenda 21, the platform was formulated by 1,500 women from 83 countries, who gathered at the First Women’s World Congress for a Healthy Planet in November 1991. The document spanned a host of critical issues: governance, the environment, militarism, the global economy, poverty, land rights and food security, women’s rights, reproductive health, science and technology, and education.

Over the next decade Women’s Action Agenda 21 became the spark for activism spanning a series of UN conferences on development. It helped galvanize women worldwide to push for their priorities in international institutions, governments, the private sector and civil society. Women have used the action agenda to lobby at the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, and to win national and local implementation of UNCED recommendations.

In the lead-up to the 2002 UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the agenda was updated and revitalized. The new Women’s Action Agenda for a Healthy and Peaceful Planet 2015 looks toward the future by building on the

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diverse experiences of thousands of women striving to bring the UNCED agreements to life.

In the two-year process of preparing for the WSSD, an international working group of women activists reached out to women in all regions of the world to develop the revised agenda. Electronic consultations tapped into women’s networks and organizations with expertise on particular themes.

At the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil (January 31-February 5, 2002), a coalition of Brazilian women’s networks organized Planeta Femea II, a vibrant space for women’s groups to review and revitalize Women’s Action Agenda 21.

Discussions took place during the UN’s preparatory processes and in five regional meetings that were organized in partnership with women’s groups and networks. These meetings took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Pittsburgh, U.S.A.; Prague, Czech Republic; Bangkok, Thailand; and Venice, Italy.

The breadth and diversity of the consultation underscores the collaboration that has always been at the heart of the international women’s movement. Crossing issues, cultures and nations, it is a movement that expresses core visions and values for a sustainable society.

## Get the Facts

**United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 1992:** Groundbreaking conference that engaged different sectors of civil society to develop Agenda 21, an action plan for sustainable development.

- [www.un.org/esa/sustdev/agenda21.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/agenda21.htm)  
Official documents, publications and reports
- [http://www.wedo.org/sus\\_dev/section1.htm](http://www.wedo.org/sus_dev/section1.htm)  
Women’s advocacy and gains

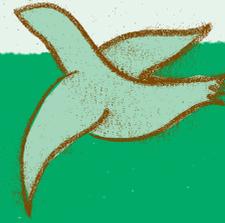
**World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg, South Africa 2002:** Meeting ten years after UNCED for governments to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 21.

- [www.johannesburgsummit2002.org](http://www.johannesburgsummit2002.org)  
Official documents, publications and reports
- [www.earthsummit2002.org](http://www.earthsummit2002.org)  
Stakeholder Forum’s information hub on WSSD
- [www.earthsummit2002.org/workshop](http://www.earthsummit2002.org/workshop)  
Gender perspectives
- [www.earthsummit2002.org/wcaucus/csdngo.htm](http://www.earthsummit2002.org/wcaucus/csdngo.htm)  
CSD Women’s Caucus
- [www.worldsummit2002.org](http://www.worldsummit2002.org)  
Heinrich Böll Stiftung English website
- [www.worldsummit2002.de](http://www.worldsummit2002.de)  
Heinrich Böll Stiftung German website
- [www.riomaisdez.org.br](http://www.riomaisdez.org.br)  
Website organized by ECOM, REDEH and other non-governmental organizations (Portuguese)

# Towards A Healthy And Peaceful Planet

An action plan  
for governments,  
international institutions  
and civil society

## A. Peace and Human Rights



**V**iolence is incompatible with sustainable development. Increased militarization and military expenditures—now more than \$800 billion per year globally—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.

The production, testing and storage of nuclear and biological weapons have had devastating consequences for natural resources and human health and livelihoods. Forced displacement due to environmental degradation and disasters has resulted in growing numbers of refugees, exacerbating pressure on natural resources where they settle, and causing conflicts with local populations over scarce resources.

In war and armed conflict, women's experiences of displacement, violence and loss are disproportionate because of their unequal status: women and children are the majority of refugees; domestic violence and sexual exploitation rise steeply; and women suffer long-term reproductive health consequences.

Sustainability presupposes human security, protection of all human rights, and actions to address the ecological, social, economic and political causes of conflict, violence and terror.

### Women's Recommendations

- Strengthen adherence to international law, in particular the agreed provisions of treaties on arms control, on human rights and on humanitarian law.
- Reallocate funds from military budgets to human needs.
- 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 forms of violence against women.
- Implement Security Council Resolution 1325, which assures women's equal participation in conflict prevention and resolution, peace-keeping and peace-building.
- Include peace, conflict prevention and conflict resolution as a subject in school curricula.
- Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and women's contributions to fostering a culture of peace.

## B. Globalization For Sustainability



**L**eft unchecked, economic globalization driven by liberalized market forces has widened gaps between rich and poor, spread poverty, sparked waves of violence and crime, and contributed to environmental degradation. The current global economic system perpetuates inequitable distribution of wealth and means of production, skewed power relations, over-consumption, and irresponsible use of common natural resources. Privatization has deprived women and the poor of essential services formerly provided by the state. Thus, women bear the consequences on multiple levels—juggling more work and household tasks with less income and less access to land, water and other resources. Furthermore, women's economic inequity has only deepened through the failure of international institutions to formulate and evaluate financial and trade policies from a gender perspective. Governments have also failed 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 with a sustainable, gender-sensitive and environmentally sound development framework that puts people

- and the planet before profits.
- Halve by 2015 the number of people living on less than one dollar a day in keeping with the UN Millennium Goals.
- Call on the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization (WTO)—working with the United Nations and monitored by an external gender-monitoring group involving civil society—to set goals and timetables for mainstreaming gender perspectives in all programs, policies and operations.
- Reform the international finance and trade institutions to enable them to fulfill their responsibilities towards implementation of UN conference outcomes of the 1990s.
- Ensure international trade and investment policies are transparent and that mechanisms are established to allow participation of all 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.
- Implement programs to achieve full literacy for all, ensuring that rural and urban people, especially the poor, benefit from education relevant to their needs.
- Adopt gender budgets at the national and international levels.

women's voice

## C. Access and Control of Resources



The Earth's biological diversity is threatened by the irreversible destruction of natural habitats and the endangerment of animal and plant species due to unsustainable production and consumption patterns. The key contributions of women to biodiversity—in terms of their labor and skills and their knowledge of how to use and manage natural resources—are generally either ignored or exploited. A major cause of women's impoverishment and social insecurity is the 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 international agreements to halt further depletion of natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity, and to protect these resources. These agreements include the treaty restricting and/or eliminating the use of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Kyoto Protocol on global warming.
- Establish systems of accountability for corporations and others responsible for polluting or depleting the environment

and its natural resources and biodiversity.

- Promote gender mainstreaming and ensure gender balance in decision-making, based on gender disaggregated data, in all governments, national and international agencies, and environment and sustainable development related policies and programs.
- Require the WTO to 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. Take steps to halt all patenting of biological resources, processes and knowledge, and to condemn the so-called "terminator technology."
- Implement the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW), 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 energy sources, in cooperation with the scientific community.

## D. Environmental Security and Health



Worldwide, the environmental security of rural and urban communities is at risk. In many parts of the world 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 susceptibility to various environmental hazards. Women are further challenged by unequal access to basic health services, including reproductive health services. Women's right to reproductive and sexual health is essential to realizing women's human rights and economic security.

### Women's Recommendations

- Include gender-disaggregated data and report on women's health risks related to the environment in monitoring

implementation of Agenda 21.

- Recognize women's right to reproductive and sexual health as part of women's human rights.
- Halve the proportion of people with no access to safe drinking water by 2015, as recommended in the UN Millennium Goals, and establish the goal of halving by 2015 the number of people without access to sanitation.
- Increase access to sexual and reproductive health care for all women by 2015 through the primary health care system.
- Implement the UN Millennium Goals to reduce maternal and child mortality by 2015.
- Increase young people's access to HIV-prevention information and services as well as affordable drugs in keeping with the 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 equitable participation of all stakeholders and 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, national and international levels remains woefully low. The unprecedented rise of transnational corporations has resulted in the concentration of global power in the hands of a few, mostly men in the industrialized countries. It has excluded large segments of global society, particularly women, from political and economic decision-making.

### Women's Recommendations

- Commit governments and international institutions to measurable goals and time-

tables for achieving a critical mass (30%) of women in decision-making by 2003 and gender balance by 2005.

- Institute a reporting mechanism, in addition to the CEDAW process, within the UN system by the year 2004 to allow tracking over time of women in decision-making roles in countries worldwide.

- Promote and engender Local Agenda 21 processes as part of local government structures.
- Strengthen links between Local Agenda 21 processes and the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.
- Use and promote gender-disaggregated instruments such as gender impact analysis, gender budgeting, data and indicators.
- Narrow the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005 and ensure that by 2015 all children complete a full course of primary education, as agreed in the UN Millennium Goals.

# Agenda 2015

# Actions You Can Take

**1 ADOPT THE ACTION AGENDA** Join the hundreds of organizations and individuals worldwide who have adopted Women's Action Agenda for a Healthy and Peaceful Planet 2015. Access the full list at [www.wedo.org](http://www.wedo.org).

**2 GET THE FACTS** Has your government endorsed the UNCED and WSSD agreements? What actions has your government taken to implement their commitments? Who is responsible and in which ministries? Are they working with women's organizations and other stakeholders to turn the words into policy? Is your local administration implementing Local Agenda 21?

**3 NETWORK, BUILD COALITIONS** Reach out to women's organizations, labor unions and other stakeholders to make demands and monitor implementation of government's commitments. Keep the community informed, involved and on the alert.

**4 SPREAD THE WORD** Distribute this pamphlet in your community. Use it to sensitize the media and influential leaders at national and local levels.

## Advocacy Tools

**Women's Action Agenda 21**  
(November 1991) [www.wedo.org](http://www.wedo.org)

**Women and Sustainable Development: A Local Agenda**  
(May 2001) [www.wedo.org](http://www.wedo.org)

**Women's Action Agenda for a Healthy and Peaceful Planet 2015**  
(May 2002) [www.wedo.org](http://www.wedo.org)

**Women's Dialogue Paper**  
(March 2002) Women's perspectives on implementing Agenda 21, from UNCED to WSSD.  
[www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/major\\_groups/no169171/women.pdf](http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/major_groups/no169171/women.pdf)

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Women's Action Agenda for a Healthy and Peaceful Planet 2015 was facilitated by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and Network for Human Development (REDEH) in collaboration with women worldwide in the preparatory process leading up to the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg 2002). The working group members are:

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