

# a small world after all



Women Assess  
The State of the Environment  
In the U.S. and Beyond



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The Women's Environment and Development Organization is an international advocacy organization that seeks to increase the power of women worldwide as policymakers at all levels of governments, institutions and forums to achieve economic and social justice, a healthy and peaceful planet and human rights for all.

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The Rachel Carson Institute was established at Chatham College in 1989 to continue the legacy of Chatham's most distinguished alumna, Carson '29 by promoting the awareness and understanding of significant and current environmental issues through national and regional conferences, debates, lecture series, seminars, panel discussions and other educational programs.

WEDO and the Rachel Carson Institute acknowledge the support of The Heinz Endowments, The Ford Foundation, The Joyce Foundation, Magee Women's Hospital of UPMC Health System, Stonyfield Farms Yogurt, Wall-to-Wall Studios.

**A SMALL WORLD AFTER ALL**

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Design: The Handy Design Company

Copied on recycled paper

Copyright © August 2002 ISBN: 0-9670314-8-6

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# foreword

By Ellen Dorsey

**W**hen women organize, change occurs. Historically, women have been the ones who have led their communities to challenge dangers to the environment. They have protested the wasting of the earth, their skills and their health, due to government inertia and corporate greed. They have sounded the alarm about environmental crises that disrupt community, food safety, children's health, and air and water quality. And they have responded to the consequences, documented impacts, moved families, and found alternative sources of food, water and livelihood. Women's bodies alone often mark environmental contamination through diminished fertility, abnormal fetal development, increased rates of cancers and other forms of environmental illness.

Yet women and their perspectives on the environment are often marginalized, as those from affected communities are typically neither consulted on development decisions, nor proportionally represented in decision-making positions with the power to shape environmental, developmental and human rights outcomes. Lack of women's leadership is particularly pronounced in institutions with the greatest impact on the environment: national governments, corporations and international financial institutions.

Despite being shut out, women respond by coming together and working for change. They have challenged conventional scientific understanding, developed new methods of documenting harm, pushed for international standards, as well as national and local regulation, and consistently demonstrated the links between environmental degradation and women's lives, economic viability and community and family health.

Feminist leaders like Bella Abzug and Rachel Carson have long recognized these contributions. Drawing from this legacy, the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and the Rachel Carson Institute at Chatham College collaborated to sponsor a summit called Women Assessing the State of the Environment (WASTE) in November 2001. Over 550 participants and leading figures in the environment, development and human rights fields came to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to network, debate strategy, offer expertise, and draft recommendations.

The meeting connected women from across the United States, forging a strong constituency for progressive domestic and global environmental policies. The result was the *U.S. Women's Environmental Action Agenda*, a comprehensive set of recommendations, summarized in this report, for lobbying both nationally and at the 2002 UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa. The WSSD will review progress since the historic Earth Summit, convened in Rio, Brazil, in 1992. That

year, women issued *Women's Action Agenda 21*, a chronicle of perspectives from around the world on the environment and economic development.

The WASTE Summit succeeded in building momentum and enthusiasm for the WSSD. It integrated national and grassroots campaigns around common themes, weaving together the myriad forms of advocacy that women champion throughout the United States. Participants included activists, policy analysts, scientists and scholars. Community leaders came from as far away as Nigeria and Brazil. Students flocked in from schools in Washington, Kentucky and Connecticut, attending both the summit and a day-long session on youth that followed.

Not all of the presentations, nor the richness of their analysis, can be contained in the following report. But the excerpted information samples the themes, the connections across issues and identities, and the level of political sophistication to produce a vision for a more humane and sane U.S. policy, for corporate accountability and for global standards and solidarity.

Topics at the meeting included an overview of environmental policy before and after September 11, environmental health and justice, energy and consumption, reproductive health and population, and globalization and international development. Alliance-building and environmental justice were cross-cutting principles that ran throughout all sessions. After each panel, recommendations were debated and then compiled for presentation at the closing plenary.

The recommendations eventually fed into a global document, *Women's Action Agenda for a Healthy and Peaceful Planet 2015*, created from a series of regional consultations with women around the world. We hope this will serve as a blueprint for women's activism in the United States, helping us rise to the challenges sparked by crises in the environment and in formal U.S. leadership, as well as the opportunities proffered by the WSSD.

When Rachel Carson published her seminal *Silent Spring* forty years ago, women flooded editorial pages around the U.S., calling for protection of their health, their children and their communities, in the form of government action, stronger regulations and standards for new chemicals. Today, women continue to speak their minds; this report reflects the experiences they have had with organizing. But all their recommendations are only as good as the paper they are printed on if we don't build the growing women's environmental movement and organize to transform the words into action. Otherwise, it will be a *waste!* ●

**Dr. Ellen Dorsey is the executive director of the Rachel Carson Institute at Chatham College.**

# introduction

By June Zeitlin

**b**ella Abzug, who co-founded the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), was one of the first women leaders to recognize that the feminist movement for equality, peace and justice in the United States must be linked to women's struggles around the world. Bella participated in all four UN World Conferences on Women, beginning in Mexico City in 1975. As part of that year's observance of International Women's Year, Bella, then a member of the U.S. Congress, pushed successfully for legislation authorizing the first and only U.S.-funded national women's conference, where women from diverse backgrounds came to demand that their voices be heard and their needs be addressed.

In the early 1990s, Bella and her WEDO co-founder, Mim Kelber, realized that the UN Conference on the Environment and Development, which would be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, would offer a unique chance to promote women's visions and leadership in the global arena. By many accounts, humanity had reached a turning point. Current policies seemed only to deepen divisions within and between countries, increase poverty, heighten gender and ethnic disparities, and inevitably lead to more hunger, sickness and illiteracy, along with the rapid deterioration of the earth's ecosystems.

The first step forward was for women to work together on developing a set of principles and a plan of action. Abzug and Kelber collaborated with more than fifty women leaders—including parliamentarians, activists and scholars from over thirty countries—and formed the International Policy Action Committee (IPAC). The committee guided WEDO in launching a global women's gathering, the Women's World Congress for a Healthy Planet, in Miami, Florida, in November 1991. Attended by fifteen hundred women from eighty-three nations, the congress adopted the *Women's Action Agenda 21*, a comprehensive blueprint for achieving a more peaceful, just and sustainable world. Women took this vision to Rio and persuaded their governments, for the first time in such a forum, to include a chapter on women's equality in Agenda 21, the official conference agreement.

Ten years later, as women began preparing for the World Summit on Sustainable Development to assess progress in implementing the Rio commitments, WEDO sought to reconnect the global to the local by looking at how far Americans had come in achieving sustainable development. In partnership with the Rachel Carson Institute at Chatham College, we

held the Women Assessing the State of the Environment (WASTE) Summit in November 2001, bringing together women's activists, community leaders and environmentalists from across the country.

The summit took place when the September 11 tragedy was still fresh in people's minds. The loss of life and ensuing fear and insecurity newly experienced by Americans permeated the discussion, adding another dimension to the now obvious links between global and local issues. Interdependence was undeniable, and the need to take action to achieve sustainable development more urgent than ever before.

At WEDO, we found great comfort in the outpouring of solidarity from our sisters from around the world. We continue to draw strength from the experiences

women have shared with us, the courageous ways they have found to confront conflict and extreme economic deprivation. We have moved forward with a renewed urgency to fulfill WEDO's mission—the achievement of women's equality, a healthy and peaceful planet and human rights for all—working globally and locally in the United States.

U.S. military and economic dominance enables Washington to wield disproportionate influence in the global arena. Thus, to change global policy, it is also necessary to change U.S. policy. Women understand mis-

use of power and, at the WASTE Summit, they emphasized the need for Washington to deploy power wisely. Women from the United States, as well as overseas, came down squarely on the side of multilateralism, more restrained use of military force and reallocations of military expenditures to fulfill basic human needs.

After September 11, many of us were pleased that the U.S. government seemed to reach out to other countries for support. Even the hard-core skeptics in the Bush Administration appeared to see that the United States cannot continue to go it alone despite its status as the richest and most powerful nation on earth. There was hope that a new, multilateral foreign policy would follow.

Instead, the Administration has moved even further toward unilateralism. The United States came close to being expelled from the UN General Assembly as a result of its repeated failure to pay its dues. It temporarily lost its seat on the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. And as for UN conventions, the United States stands only with countries such as Afghanistan and SaoTome/Principe in declining to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and alone with

At the WASTE Summit, women emphasized U.S. multilateralism and the reallocation of military expenditures to fulfill basic human needs.

Somalia—though they have recently signed—in failing to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

During less than two years of the Bush Administration, the unabashed attitude to foreign policy has been indifference, followed by an approach that can be summed up as “my way or the highway.” President Bush refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, despite well-documented evidence (including from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) that greenhouse gases are the most significant contributor to global warming. He also “unsigned” (an option never previously exercised) the Rome Treaty creating the International Criminal Court, announcing that the United States would not be bound by its provisions. Now he is opposing an optional protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture, because it would allow unannounced inspections of U.S. prisons.

Perhaps most egregiously, one of the Administration’s first acts was to prohibit any U.S. aid to foreign organizations that support the right to abortion, even if they do so with their own funds. More recently, Washington announced that it would withhold its contribution to the UN Population Fund, which supports family planning and maternal health programs in over 140 countries.

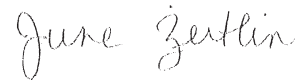
Women at the WASTE Summit unequivocally rejected “his way or the highway.” They took strong exception to this unilateralist and unidimensional point of view, which elevates military might along with unfettered free market ideology. They reiterated from many perspectives that this approach doesn’t work, except for a very few people already at the top. Participants focused their attention on the widening inequalities between people and countries, increased

human suffering and deprivation and rising incidences of environmental degradation.

Women in the United States—following in the pioneering footsteps of leaders like Bella Abzug, Rachel Carson and many others—must show that there is “another way.” Activists understand the meaning of global interdependence, recognize the critical role the United Nations has played in gaining governmental commitments to advance women’s rights worldwide, and are prepared to lead, push and pull the country to embrace a multifaceted, multilateral agenda.

Long before September 11, women and other social advocates in the United States voiced concerns over the dangers of the growing gap between rich and poor, and the unacceptably high levels of poverty, child mortality and low-quality education in the world’s richest nation, as well as over the perils of the ever-widening divide between countries in the North and South. Now more than ever, in the interests of the planet and all humanity, U.S. women are demanding alternatives to the destructive Bush agenda.

As Bella Abzug once said so eloquently: “Our struggle is about creating sustainable lives and attainable dreams. Our struggle is about creating violence-free families. And then, violence-free streets. Then, violence-free borders. In that order. Because the root of the problem is persistent inequalities and growing inequalities. For us to realize our dreams, we must keep our heads in the clouds and our feet on the ground.” ●



June Zeitlin is WEDO’s executive director.

*“Women do not want to be mainstreamed into the polluted stream. We want to clean the stream and transform it into a fresh and flowing body. One that moves in a new direction—a world at peace, that respects human rights for all, renders economic justice and provides a sound and healthy environment.” —BELLA S. ABZUG*

# women shaping the future By Devra Lee Davis

**W**hen it comes to the problems of the world, you can't blame women because we didn't create most of the social, economic and environmental problems we face. But women have something special to offer. We are going to figure out how to solve these problems. It's our turn to play a leadership role and as we explore opportunities for change we can think about how to make that happen.

I interviewed a woman when I was at the National Academy of Sciences. We had to meet for coffee in between her picking up her three children, who were at three different schools, and after her job as an attorney. I started the interview and I asked, "Have you had much management experience?" And we both couldn't stop laughing. Women are managers all over the world—no matter what else they do, no matter whether or not they get paid for other work. And because of the multiple roles women play they have a unique perspective when it comes to sustainable development.

What is sustainable development? It's a term that everybody likes to use, but nobody's quite sure what it means. Sustainable development has three parts: social equity, the environment and the economy. It's a term that is being used so much these days that in many cases, it no longer means

what it should. You've got to be suspicious when "sustainable development" is being used by such diverse groups as Exxon Mobil and Greenpeace. It's clear that though they're using the same words, the meaning is very different.

The good news is that we have the advantage of giving the term "sustainable development" meaning ourselves. It is both people-centered, insofar as it aims to improve the quality of human life, and conservation-based, insofar as it is conditioned by the need to respect nature's ability to provide resources and life-supporting services. Sustainable development means improving the ability of humans to thrive within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems.

But the goals of sustainable development clearly cannot be achieved when there is a prevalence of debilitating illnesses, where there are growing socio-economic inequities, or when natural resources are being depleted at a rate incommensurate with their continued use.

Most people think of the environment as only related to air, water and soil. But that is not true. It is not a healthy environment if you can't eat or if you don't feel safe—one out of five children in the world will not live to see her fifth birthday.

Women are managers all over the world—no matter what else they do, no matter whether or not they get paid for other work.

## A MOVEMENT IN PROGRESS

The idea of sustainable development is not a new one. In 1987 the UN commissioned—in part due to the lobbying efforts of women—a global study headed by Gro Harlem Brundtland, the former Prime Minister of Norway, to examine environmental problems and propose an agenda to address them.

After speaking to a broad range of people in all regions, the Brundtland Commission discovered no single priority issue. Instead, when people talked about the environment they talked about living conditions, gender issues, resources, population pressures, international trade, education and health. It was clear that environment needed to be considered in a larger context.

The evolving concept of Sustainable Development—development that meets the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs—gained momentum in the international development community as a comprehensive way to examine social, environmental and economic issues as they relate to everyone's

human rights and the well being of the planet.

The findings of the Commission led to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Popularly known as the Earth Summit, the conference was an important event for women worldwide, accepting their crucial role in achieving a different type of development. All the final documents of the conference included references to women and Agenda 21—the UNCED blueprint for sustainable development—contained an entire chapter on women.

The success of the Earth Summit gave global civil society high hopes for the future. But ten years later many of the problems addressed at the summit have worsened and new problems have emerged, such as the widening gap between rich and poor caused by economic globalization.

The 2002 UN World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa provides an opportunity for governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society to review progress since the Earth Summit and develop a plan of action for a healthy, just and peaceful planet for all.



In Indonesia, forest fires started by farmers to clear land spread throughout the entire region. The pollution was so thick that planes crashed. Children are more vulnerable to air pollution; children living in more polluted zones have a higher risk of dying than those living in less polluted zones.

I was on a UN panel of experts on climate change, and we looked at forest fires that were happening all over the world. We calculated the health effects in the short term. We are dealing with major temperature changes. This is not normal. We may enjoy warming trends now, but you're not going to enjoy it in July and August. And it's not only warming that we're concerned about. It's the variation in temperature that we have to deal with. It's clear that the more energy we use, the more carbon dioxide we produce—and the biggest producer is the United States.

When I was at the World Resources Institute, working with the World Health Organization, our research showed that you could save millions of lives by adopting energy conservation technologies that were on the shelf then. That was reported in 1997 and was presented at Kyoto before the protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was ratified. Today, the problem remains as grave as it was then.

The consequences of global warming are becoming more apparent. Look at what's been happening to coral reefs. Coral are like the lungs of the sea, if you will. They take in sunlight and carbon dioxide. They are very valuable. They are producing energy for us but the metabolism of many coral reefs has been reduced by half as water temperatures rise. Reefs that are hundreds of millions of years old are being destroyed in an alarmingly short period of time.

Where does all of this leave us? We know enough to know that we need to act to prevent further harm. That is what the Precautionary Principle—enshrined in Agenda 21, the final document of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development—is all about. We must act based upon the information that we have now. If you want the future to be

## women's action agenda 2015

In 1992 women addressed

the UN Conference on Environment and Development with their own comprehensive blueprint for change. Formulated by 1,500 women from 83 countries and covering a broad range of critical issues, *Women's Action Agenda 21* helped galvanize women worldwide to push for their priorities in international institutions, governments, the private sector and civil society. In the lead-up to the 2002 UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, women around the world collaborated to update and revitalize the agenda for change. The new *Women's Action Agenda for a Peaceful and Healthy Planet 2015* is a vision for the future and a document of principles that people worldwide can contribute to and use for their own advocacy globally, nationally and locally. It covers peace and human rights, globalization for sustainability, access and control of resources, environmental security and health and governance for sustainable development. *Women's Action Agenda 2015* is available at [www.wedo.org](http://www.wedo.org).

different from the past, we must study, and learn from it.

Also we must recognize that female literacy is the key to sustainable development. Literate females all over the world control their reproduction; they reduce population growth, improve child survival and promote a sustainable future for the entire planet.

As a student, I was involved in the 1965 civil rights march in Selma, Alabama led by Martin Luther King. I remember marching with Rabbi Abraham Heschel, who often said he was praying with his legs when he marched. Now more than ever we have to pray with our legs and act with our hearts and souls. In the words of Bella Abzug, "We must pray for the dead, and fight like hell for the living." ●

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*"Women often bear the worst consequences of environmental policies that ignore the principles of sustainability, such as industrial logging, over fishing and toxic dumping. When water is contaminated, or large tracts of forest destroyed, or technology displaces workers, women have to cope with the increased difficulties of the day-to-day survival of their families."* —THAIS CORRAL

# tackling disparity

By Zehra Aydin-Sipos

**t**he run-up to the 2002 United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg has unfolded in a different world than the one that greeted the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio. The September 11 terrorist attacks in the U.S. changed all of us, but as horrible as those events were, they were part of a larger context: the world's disparity. We have imbalances in health, wealth, education, access to information, natural resources—there's a very long list. And the list has grown until the inequities are now unbearable.

The solution is sustainable development, which supports economic, social and environmental equity in the short term, and equity between the generations over the long term. But the only way we can move down this path is by developing appropriate actions.

Our patterns of consumption demonstrate how difficult these imbalances are. I am very uncomfortable living in a part of the world where my existence uses four times the resources as a woman in Bolivia. We don't have to limit or reduce our quality of life—only produce and consume differently. But clearly, the consumption patterns we have right now cannot be continued. They are simply not sustainable.

This becomes even more clear if we look at the UN Population Fund's recent report on world demographic trends. It predicts that within three or four decades we will reach a world population of 10 billion. If we feel the imbalances and strains on the economy, the society and the ecology today, you can imagine how much worse it's going to feel in three or four decades, when our children will be suffering because of the things we did or didn't do now. We may be the last generation able to make change happen in time.

What is different about the Johannesburg Summit can be stated in a very simple way. The 1992 Rio Earth Summit was a 20th century meeting of governments with some of their stakeholders present. Johannesburg is a 21st century meeting of people with their governments present.

That can recast the perspective and approach to issues. You may think that unless you run for office and get to the top of the decision-making heap, you cannot do much. But there are partnerships, actions and initiatives. You can clarify ideas and articulate them as doable, tangible targets. Bring them to the national level. Create partnership-based initiatives within your country and link up with other people around the world.

Connecting with other people is the best way to be empowered. Hundreds of communities around the world want environmental justice. Thousands want better health

for women. Building partnerships between women's organizations and mayors' offices and a number of companies who have alternative energy technology and want to market it can create changes. Why not take advantage of this desire?

Working together is also one of the best ways to generate political will, which is often missing from initiatives. For example, one of the best movements has been Local Agenda 21 (See Box). We now have 3,500 Local Agenda 21s in the world, yet only six are in the United States. Sweden has about 250 local governments and all of them have a Local Agenda 21. The disparity is clearly not a matter of limited resources, because Swedish and U.S. resources are comparable. Another example is the climate change process. The seventh meeting of the conference of parties recently reached a deal on how to implement the Kyoto treaty on climate change. One country was missing. You can imagine which one.

We can look to the Johannesburg Summit as a meeting that will produce compacts for the people—through dialogues, partnerships and targets developed in collaboration with governments, private companies and other actors. In the end, people's compacts may work better than intergovernmental conventions. We have seen hundreds of the latter pass during the 20th century and the results have been half-hearted. But with the people's compacts, we can focus on getting our act together and telling the world: "This is what we have decided to do. If you like this idea you can join. If you don't, let us just do it." ●

**Zehra Aydin-Sipos is the focal point and UN task manager for the Major Groups, Division for Sustainable Development of the Department for Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations.**

## from global to local

Women can be a part of environmental decision-making by participating in Local Agenda 21—a long term, strategic action plan that addresses local sustainable development concerns. The International

Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) formulated and launched the Local Agenda 21 (LA21)

Campaign in 1991 as a framework for local governments worldwide to implement the outcomes of UNCED. ICLEI, a membership association of local governments representing some 300 million people worldwide, incorporates gender in its methodologies and takes a sustainable development approach to meeting the challenges of urbanization. Join the ICLEI Network: [www2.iclei.org/member.htm](http://www2.iclei.org/member.htm)

# looking for leadership

By Jeffrey Barber

**m**uch has been said about fighting terrorism following the September 11 attacks on the U.S. However, many forms of terror threatening human security get much less attention. These threats do not hijack planes, but do claim victims. Indeed, the terror caused by poverty, hunger, pollution, and the destruction of local economies brings suffering and death to millions of people, yet the U.S. government complains about providing the resources needed to confront these threats and introduce sustainable development.

There are several definitions of sustainable development. The Brundtland Commission emphasized providing for current human needs without undermining the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The UN Summit on Social Development proposed a framework that balances economic, social and environmental priorities, improving the quality of life for everyone.

For me, especially since the birth of my daughter, sustainability is about taking responsibility for the world we leave to our children. It means thinking about citizenship as something more than voting, watching TV news, and being unafraid to buy things and take vacations.

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg provides an opportunity for the U.S. to look back over the past ten years as a nation and think about what we have accomplished and where we're headed. The Citizen's Network (CITNET) was formed in 1990 to encourage American participation in the Earth Summit, and has continued to work with civil society on environmental issues.

Together, we formed a Citizen's Preparatory Committee for the WSSD—after the U.S. failed to comply with the UN's call for governments to set up national preparatory committees. We've tried to accomplish several things, such as promoting public awareness and holding consultations with the US delegation. We have worked on a national assessment of progress, and encouraged a collective strategy to identify opportunities and obstacles to sustainability in America.

As a nation, we can use the World Summit as a chance to examine our policies in an international context, especially in those areas where the United States has made commitments. The U.S. must take responsibility for addressing the problem of sustainability. As Agenda 21—the final document of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development—explicitly states, developing a national plan for sustainable development is the way to take responsibility.

What has the U.S. accomplished since the 1992 Earth Sum-

mit in Rio? Some of the initiatives included setting up the President's Commission on Sustainable Development (which was disbanded in 1999), reorganizing the Agency for International Development to promote sustainable development, spearheading the international coral reef initiative and signing the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). Drinking water quality is reported to be improving and the proportion of disease outbreaks attributed to public water treatments systems has declined.

On the other hand, 900,000 Americans suffer from waterborne diseases each year while one in four water utilities are in significant violation of the Clean Water Act. The U.S., the biggest consumer of fossil fuels, refuses to ratify the Kyoto treaty while retreating on fuel efficiency standards for vehicles. Among industrialized countries, the U.S. provides the smallest percentage of Official Development Assistance (ODA).

There are many obstacles to sustainability in America, but the biggest may come from the industry lobbies and the political action committees protecting commercial interests. Another obstacle arises from policies based on

an obsolete economic model of industrialization. Then there's advertising, which aggressively promotes consumerism here and around the world. We also face a lack of public awareness, poor media coverage and a lagging political will.

It's been said that this generation may be the last one able to correct the course of world development before it reaches the point of no return. We need to call for action on a national sustainable development plan, a sustainable development office with authority and resources, and a national policy framework for sustainable production and consumption. We also need an economic system that doesn't encourage environmental harm, and ODA for sustainable development must be increased. Perverse subsidies and export credits that encourage poverty must be dismantled, and corporate accountability mechanisms put into place.

What are we personally willing to do? We have a motto: "If government won't show leadership, it's up to citizens." I invite you as a citizen to better understand the issues; support organizations working for change; change your own way of thinking and doing things; push government and business to become more responsible; and work collectively to develop the strategies we desperately need to change the course of development. Such leadership is at the heart of citizenship. ●

**Jeffrey Barber is executive director of the Integrative Strategies Forum (ISF), which is Secretariat for the Citizens Network for Sustainable Development.**

The present generation may be the last to correct the course of world development before it reaches the point of no return.

# sustainable development and peace

By Cora Weiss

Three billion people—half the population of our world—live on less than US \$2 a day. One billion live in absolute misery. Among the world's 2.2 billion children, 150 million are malnourished and 10 million will die before the age of five. Millions of people are unemployed, and a third of those under age 15 can see no future. Women everywhere are marginalized.

We cannot leave the world in its present condition and expect a life of peace for our grandchildren. May I remind you of Rachel Carson's warning, "The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we will have for destruction."

Desperate conditions lead people to respond to the call of fundamentalism and brutal behavior. Our task is to issue a call to democracy, gender equality, decency, the promise of sustainable development and sustainable peace. Only then are we addressing the root causes of terrorism.

While the world spends US \$800 billion a year on the military and war, it would take only US \$9 billion to provide clean water and sanitation for all; US \$12 billion for reproductive health care for all women; US \$13 billion for basic health and nutrition; US \$6 billion for basic education. This is a bargain, especially given the alternative, which is devastating to imagine. Bombs cannot buy peace in a world of extreme injustice and inequality.

Sustainable development must begin at home. The United States currently ranks 25th in the world in infant mortality. There are 10 million children without health insurance and 14 million schools that are in serious need of repair or replacement. Meanwhile, US \$343 billion is budgeted for the Pentagon, which runs through US \$9,000 a second. This is 23 times greater than the military budgets of our so called adversaries—Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria—and more than three times the Russian and Chinese military budgets combined.

It would take only US \$14 billion a year, over eight years, to repair all the crumbling schools in America. This could be achieved by reducing our nuclear arsenal to 1,000 weapons—more than enough to destroy the world many times over. Or we could bring home 100,000 troops from Europe and Asia. If we canceled the contracts for Cold War weapons, we would save US \$116 billion and we could repair all of the public schools in one year.

We must also reduce class size. Currently, U.S. students rank 18th in math scores and 19th in science among the world's countries. We know children do better in smaller classes. That means hiring more teachers and paying them more. We need to raise a new generation of environmentally sensitive and peace-thinking teachers. The basic skills of "reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic" are no longer enough for this new century. We need the fourth *R*: reconciliation.

Conflict resolution and negotiating skills need to be integrated into all forms of education, along with art and music, which help to make people less violent. We need to introduce respect for and admiration of the "wonders and realities of the universe" and help create generations of environmentally sensitive people. A new approach to education would embrace democracy, gender sensitivity, tolerance, non-violence, human security and environmental consciousness.

ties of the universe" and help create generations of environmentally sensitive people. A new approach to education would embrace democracy, gender sensitivity, tolerance, non-violence, human security and environmental consciousness.

## THE FOUNDATIONS OF PEACE

The violence committed on September 11 was a crime of enormous magnitude. A crime, not a war. We need to find the terrorists and bring them to justice in an international court, as we did with those responsible for the Lockerbie air disaster.

We are a civilized people with a grand history of developing laws and tools to contend with violence. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Through violence you may murder a murderer, but you cannot murder murder; through violence you may murder a hater, but you can not murder hate. Darkness cannot put out darkness—only light can do that."

Yet despite this legacy, more than 3,000 bombs have fallen over the remnants of 22 years of war, poverty and drought in Afghanistan. In the past 20 years, the United States has dropped bombs on Libya, Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq, the former Yugoslavia and now Afghanistan again. Before that, Vietnam was bombed for 10 years. With the exception of Yugoslavia, all of these countries are poor nations home to people of color. Rachel Carson asks, "The question is whether any civilization can wage relentless war on life without destroying itself, and without losing the right to be called civilized."

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In a world with about 30,000 nuclear weapons, including 5,000 on hair trigger alert, we have some worrying to do. What happened on September 11 affected the whole world. We have become interdependent, and self-interest now

While the world spends \$800 billion a year on the military and war, it would take only \$9 billion to provide clean water and sanitation for all.

requires us to consider the interest of others. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama says, “We are faced with developing a sense of universal responsibility, which is the best foundation for peace, for the equitable use of our natural resources and for the proper care of the environment. All forms of violence including war are inappropriate means of settling disputes.”

Meanwhile, women are denied the power to bring non-violent approaches to decision-making. We have women, women everywhere and not enough in power. The tragedy of women in Afghanistan and in other fundamentalist societies is intolerable and illegal under international human rights law. The oppression, suppression, torture and killing of women must not be allowed to continue.

One year ago, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. It calls for women to participate at every level of every UN mission, emphasizes the need to protect women and children who are refugees, and underscores that women must take their place at every negotiating table. One woman does not women make. Women count, only if you count the women.

The agenda for the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg should make it clear that women need to be part of every solution, need to be at every table where the fate of humanity is at stake, and need to be able to enjoy the equal protection of international laws.

Alternative forms of energy, including wind, sun and water, must replace fossil fuels, and only by investing now in research and development in a serious way will that be possible.

We must transfer funds from the military to peace educa-

tion with gender and environmental sensitivity needs to be integrated into every classroom in the world. We need to raise new generations of people able to negotiate nonviolent solutions to their disputes.

National budgets need to prioritize health and education, not the military. No nation should have a military budget higher than its health and education budgets combined.

Bombing is not a solution to heinous acts of terrorism. War is waste and waste is the greatest environmental crime. Police action, under the United Nations flag, to identify and arrest the terrorists, destroy their networks, and bring them to justice is the only safe way to end this tragedy. Freeze their banking; prevent their travel; and search for and address the root causes of terrorism.

In the meantime, we must preserve our democracy, guard our hard-won freedoms and rights, and not let our need to locate and bring to justice the bin Ladens of this world invade our constitutional rights to speech and assembly.

If you repeat an idea over and over again, it becomes part of the culture. People have a right to live their lives without violence. We have a right to peace and a right to live without fear. We have a right to live in a clean and beautiful environment. It's the least we owe our children and grandchildren. Say it, print it everywhere. People need to hear it, to see it, and then they will believe it and work for it. If you never stop thinking about the wonders of this great little place called earth, you won't be engaged in destroying it. ●

**Cora Weiss, president of the Hague Appeal for Peace, is a lifelong activist in the civil rights, women's and peace movements and was a leader of Women Strike for Peace.**

*“Man is part of nature, and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself.”* —RACHEL CARSON



# conventional neglect

At the United Nations, where countries and interest groups meet to decide economic, social and political issues, the United States wields enormous influence. As a permanent member of the Security Council, it has a veto over UN decisions, and with the world's largest economy, it is expected to pay a proportionate share of the UN budget. Whether or not the U.S. cooperates and compromises with other nations largely determines whether the United Nations can succeed in its mission of promoting global equality, development, and peace.

How has the U.S. used its influence? It has tried to establish a double standard for international rules, seeking condemnation of its enemies, but endeavoring to exempt itself and its allies from any UN scrutiny. It portrays itself as a world leader in human rights and environmental issues, yet has failed to sign or ratify many of the major treaties or "conventions" addressing these concerns. When new conventions are under negotiation, the U.S. is among the most obstructive countries, waging a continual diplomatic war for exemption from international standards. Here is a look at a few of the many UN multinational treaties that the U.S. has refused to sign or ratify.

## WOMEN

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: CEDAW is an international bill of rights for women. The U.S., Afghanistan and Sao Tome & Principe are the only three countries that have signed but not ratified this convention (signed by the U.S. 17 July 1980).

<http://www.unbchr.ch/btml/menu3/b/e1cedaw.htm>

Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages: signed by the U.S. 10 December 1962, but not ratified. <http://www.unbchr.ch/btml/menu3/b/63.htm>

Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others: A June 2002 U.S. State Department report on trafficking criticized several U.S. allies for doing too little to combat it, but the U.S. has not signed this treaty. <http://www.unbchr.ch/btml/menu3/b/33.htm>

## ENVIRONMENT

The Bush administration has downplayed the risks of global warming and refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the grounds that it would damage the U.S. economy. The U.S. is the world's largest producer of greenhouse gases.

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants: Only after strong pressure from environmental groups did the U.S. sign this treaty to reduce and/or eliminate releases of chemicals harmful to human and the environment, like industrial products and by-products. Signed by the U.S. 23 May 2001, but not ratified.

[http://www.chem.unep.ch/sc/documents/convtext/convtext\\_en.pdf](http://www.chem.unep.ch/sc/documents/convtext/convtext_en.pdf) or [www.chem.unep.ch/so/](http://www.chem.unep.ch/so/)

Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal: signed by the U.S. 22 March 1990, but not ratified. <http://unfccc.int/resource/convkbp.html>

Convention on Biological Diversity: signed by the U.S. 4 June 1993, but not ratified. <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/legal/cbd-en.pdf>

Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes: not signed by the U.S. <http://www.unece.org/env/water/text/water>

Statutes of the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology: not signed by the U.S. [http://www.icgeb.trieste.it/GENERAL/Statutes\\_ICGEB.pdf](http://www.icgeb.trieste.it/GENERAL/Statutes_ICGEB.pdf)

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea: not signed by the U.S. [http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention\\_agreements/texts/unclos/closindx.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/closindx.htm)

## DISARMAMENT

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: This treaty bans all forms of nuclear weapons testing, but it will not go into force until ratified by all 44 countries with nuclear weapons or facilities. As of summer 2002, 165 nations had signed the treaty and 93 had ratified it, including 31 of the 44 key nations. Signed by the U.S. 24 September 1996, but not ratified.

<http://disarmament.un.org/TreatyStatus.nsf/>

Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction: Also known as the Ottawa Treaty, this convention is a crucial tool of the international movement against landmines. One hundred and twenty-five states are party to this Convention by ratification, accession or approval. The U.S. opposes it, along with North Korea, Iran and Iraq (those countries labeled as an "axis of evil" by President Bush), among others. Not signed by the U.S. <http://www.unog.ch/frames/disarm/distreat/ottawa.htm>

International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries: not signed by the U.S. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/44/a44r034.htm>

International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings: signed by the U.S. 12 January 1998, but not ratified until 26 June 2002. <http://untreaty.un.org/English/Terrorism/Conv11.pdf>

International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism: signed by the U.S. 10 January 2000 but not ratified until 26 June 2002. <http://untreaty.un.org/English/Terrorism/Conv12.pdf>

## HUMAN RIGHTS

Convention on the Rights of the Child: The CRC is the most widely and rapidly ratified human rights treaty in history, with 191 participating nations. The only two non-ratifying countries are the U.S. and Somalia, which lacks a functioning government. Signed by the U.S. 16 February 1995, but not ratified. <http://www.unhcr.org/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict: signed by the U.S. 5 July 2000, but not ratified. <http://www.unhcr.org/html/menu2/6/protocolchild.htm>

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography: signed by the U.S. 5 July 2000, but not ratified. <http://www.unhcr.org/html/menu2/dopchild.htm>

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: signed by the U.S. 5 October 1977, but not ratified. [http://www.unhcr.org/html/menu3/b/a\\_cescr.htm](http://www.unhcr.org/html/menu3/b/a_cescr.htm)

Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Aiming at the Abolition of the Death Penalty: not signed by the U.S. [http://www.unhcr.org/html/menu3/b/a\\_opt2.htm](http://www.unhcr.org/html/menu3/b/a_opt2.htm)

International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid: not signed by the U.S. <http://www.unhcr.org/html/menu3/b/11.htm>

## ECONOMY/LABOR

Of the eight core UN conventions relating to work and the International Labour Organization, the U.S. has ratified two. This places the country level with China, Armenia, Burma and Oman, and behind Afghanistan, Qatar, Somalia and Vietnam, which have each signed three. <http://ilolex.ilo.org/1567/english/docs/declworld.htm>

Among the labor related treaties the U.S. has not ratified:

Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention: [http://www.unhcr.org/html/menu3/b/j\\_ilo87.htm](http://www.unhcr.org/html/menu3/b/j_ilo87.htm)

Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention: [http://www.unhcr.org/html/menu3/b/j\\_ilo98.htm](http://www.unhcr.org/html/menu3/b/j_ilo98.htm)

Convention concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment: <http://ilolex.ilo.org/1567/scripts/convide.pl?C138>

## JUSTICE

Since 1945, the International Court of Justice in The Hague has been a forum for settling disputes between states. On 7 October 1985, the U.S. declared it would no longer abide by the court's decisions and terminated its agreement to the Declaration Recognizing as Compulsory the Jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, which it had signed on 26 August 1946.

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court: The ICC is a permanent court for prosecution of individuals on war crimes, such as genocide and crimes against humanity, that were previously handled by temporary tribunals. The U.S. and most of its allies signed the treaty, but in an unprecedented action, the U.S. declared 6 May 2002 that it no longer

## WHEN TIME TO TALK, U.S. PREFERS TO WALK

The U.S. left the UN International Conference on Racism, officially because of heavy criticism aimed at Israel. A conference debate on racism in U.S. society and demands for compensation for slavery may have provided additional reasons for the U.S. decision. Nations rarely walk out of debates opting instead to enter reservations in keeping with accepted diplomatic norms for recording dissent.

[http://www.unfoundation.org/unwire/util/display\\_stories.asp?objid=17592](http://www.unfoundation.org/unwire/util/display_stories.asp?objid=17592)

considered itself bound by it, claiming the court might try American citizens on 'frivolous' charges. Signed by the U.S. 31 December 2000; "unsigned" by the U.S. 6 May 2002. <http://www.un.org/law/icc/statute/romejfra.htm>

Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties: This codification of the legal framework for international treaties and the resolution of conflicts over treaties is central for the functioning of international law. Signed by the U.S. 24 April 1970, but not ratified. <http://www.un.org/law/ilc/texts/treaties.htm>

Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity: not signed by the U.S. [http://www.unhcr.org/html/menu3/b/p\\_limit.htm](http://www.unhcr.org/html/menu3/b/p_limit.htm)

United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime: signed by the U.S. 13 December 2000, but not ratified. [http://www.uncjin.org/Documents/Conventions/dcatoc/final\\_documents/383e.pdf](http://www.uncjin.org/Documents/Conventions/dcatoc/final_documents/383e.pdf)

—Researched by Edward  
Andersson, Matebello Matlounge  
and Rebecca Worner

# environmental health

**a** growing body of evidence shows that toxic chemicals in our environment are devastating to women's health. Alarming research has linked these chemicals—few of which have been adequately tested—to increasing cancer rates. Everyday, we are exposed to toxins in food, water and air. In the United States, young women are developing 50 percent more cancer than their grandparents did. Every child on earth is born with synthetic chemicals in his or her body. But investment in controlling and studying avoidable environmental risks to health remains low. Occupational hazards to women, for example, are on the rise but remain unrecognized and uncontrolled. In the following section, some of the issues related to links between the environment and women's and children's health are explored.

## children's health

The universe in which our children live today is a chemical universe. Of 80,000 chemicals invented since World War II, 3,000 are produced in quantities of more than 1 million pounds per year. Only 43 percent have been tested for potential toxicity. Only about 10 percent have been tested for the risk of toxic effects on fetuses, infants and young

children. To quote my colleague Herbert Needleman, "We are conducting a vast toxicological experiment using our children and our grandchildren as the unwitting, unconsenting subjects."

Why are children particularly vulnerable? First, they are more heavily exposed: they breathe more air, they drink more water, they eat more food, pound for pound, so they take into their body more chemicals in air, food and water. They live and play on the ground where toxins concentrate and put everything in their mouths. In addition, the enzymes that break down and permit the excretion of chemicals are not as well developed in infants as in adults.

Today the number two cause of death in children in the U.S. is cancer. (Injuries are number one.) Various diseases are increasing: asthma has doubled and childhood brain cancer has risen 40 percent. Air pollution is an important trigger for asthma, and just last summer the National Academy of Science concluded that environmental factors cause 28 percent of developmental disabilities in children.

Yet despite the evidence, environmental law remains fractured. We have laws that govern air, water, food, toxic substances and hazardous waste sites. Each of these laws has different decision-making standards. They also approach the problems one chemical at a time, while the reality is that children are exposed to mixtures of toxins.

Fewer than 60 chemicals have been banned, and often this means that we simply restrict their use, turning the problem into a detective game to discover how people might be exposed and how to control exposure. The absence of good data on chemical release and movement forces the government to average the data over large population groups or long periods of time, obscuring, for example, the problems of people experiencing bursts of pollution. Furthermore, laws often allow information to remain confidential—we are not allowed to know the inert ingredients in pesticides or the composition of artificial flavors.

The most fundamental principle of environmental law should be to require that information be collected, centralized and freely dispersed. Surveillance to manage children's exposure should be conducted in homes, schools, play areas, vehicles and occupational settings to understand the mixtures of chemicals children encounter. Laws should require that contamination and pollution limits protect the health of children, infants and pregnant women.

We need a new paradigm placing children at the heart of our society. They are our future, and we must safeguard their health and the health of generations to come.

**Elizabeth Sword is executive director of the Children's Health Environmental Coalition.**

## ovarian cancer

### INCIDENCE AND MORTALITY

- Rates of ovarian cancer are higher in developed countries (except Japan)
- The second most common gynecologic cancer, it is the fifth most common women's cancer in the U.S. and the sixth worldwide
- Over 23,000 new cases expected annually in the U.S.
- It is the deadliest gynecologic cancer due to late stage detection
- The five-year survival rate in the U.S. is 50%

### THE RISKS

- Proven: increasing age; family or personal history of breast, colon, prostate and endometrial cancer; not bearing children
- Possible: talc/asbestos, fertility drugs, hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- Questionable: diet (fat, cholesterol, dairy), smoking, nitrates in water, ionizing radiation, diethylstilbestrol (DES)

The recognition of ovarian cancer symptoms and risk factors is critical to early diagnosis.

Nicole Cozier Boyd is the director of the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance



## the precautionary principle

When there is risk of real danger and scientific uncertainty, the precautionary principle emphasizes taking action to prevent harm. Allowing harm to occur while scientists study a problem is ethically wrong. The precautionary principle calls for examining all alternatives and preferring the least harmful, and it tells us that everyone affected should have a say in decision-making.

I grew up near Manville, NJ, a company town where Johns-Manville made asbestos. In the 1930s, articles began appearing in the medical press showing links between workplace exposure to asbestos and pulmonary health problems. The precautionary principle could have been invoked, but wasn't. Companies wanted workers to prove they were harmed. But for many years, workers were not told of potential problems.

At Johns-Manville, company doctors regularly gave workers physicals, including lung x-rays, and started noticing disease. The company decided not to release this information. By the late

1970s and early 1980s, even people who never worked in the plant started developing asbestos-related illnesses. These were the wives and children of the men in the plant, and Manville residents, such as hairdressers, who regularly came in contact with the dusty workers—called “snowmen.” People used to joke that it was snowing in July as white dust rained down.

Between 1980 and 1995, deaths from asbestos accounted for more than half of all deaths, illnesses and injuries on the job. Johns-Manville filed for bankruptcy in 1983, eventually settling with the government in 1988, creating the Manville Personal Injury and Property Damage Settlement Trusts. In 1993, it formed a new company called Manville Corporation. So the company lived on while protecting itself from future liabilities.

Not only is this the history of corporate malfeasance, but it also shows how precautionary action was never taken. It wasn't that the science didn't tell us that asbestos was dangerous, but the threat of harm failed to discourage business as usual.

And this threat continues. Today, the

largest group of asbestos-removal workers in the U.S. comes from Latin America. Many do not speak English and work with false papers provided by their employers. Contractors do not offer workplace safety and often require workers to sign pledges forfeiting all rights to sue. Another example is Ground Zero in New York, where the blast created asbestos particles so small they escaped detection by the EPA's monitors. Many workers have complained of persistent coughs and chest pains that will not go away.

Precautionary action is the only way to stop continued exposures. We must insist on the right to take precautions in the face of scientific uncertainty, and join with workers to get stringent safeguards in the workplace. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights promises workers these rights. We must ensure that they are taken seriously if we are ever going to achieve justice.

**Maria Pellerano is the associate director of the Environmental Research Foundation (ERF), the publisher of *Rachel's Environment & Health News*.**

## breast cancer

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in developed countries, and it is rapidly increasing in the developing world. Known risk factors, such as family history and length of time during which a woman experiences regular menstruation cycle, explain fewer than one

in three cases. While screening and diagnosis have improved, this cannot completely account for the rate increases. To

date, more research funding has been devoted to treating instead of preventing breast cancer, and potential environmental causes receive little attention.

Yet significant evidence links the environment and breast cancer, with recent research focusing on estrogenic compounds, or other agents that can damage genes, such as radiation. Most of the known risk factors for breast cancer can be linked to total lifetime exposure to bioavailable estrogens. In fact, 40 percent of all cancers in women are thought to be hormonally mediated.

Scientists believe that synthetic estrogens may modify or mimic natural estrogen, a key hormone in the endocrine

system. Over time, accumulated exposures to these xenoestrogens may result in abnormal cell activity. Certain xenoestrogens may boost production of “bad” estrogens, or increase aberrant cell growth, resulting in cancer. Others can bolster “good” estrogens that prevent cancer. “Good” estrogens can be found in some plants and “bad” ones in some agricultural chemicals and plastic products.

Synthetic xenoestrogens come from factories, not food. But they wind up in food because they seep into the environment, where toxic organic pollutants like DDT can persist for decades. Even pesticides banned in the U.S. still arrive in imported fruits, vegetables and flowers. Xenoestrogens also appear in everyday substances, such as gasoline, some plastics and weed killers. Confronting this issue requires coordinated action by governments, industry, organizations, local authorities, the media and policymakers in the areas of health, social welfare and economics.

**Devra Lee Davis, Ph.D. is a professor at the Heinz School of Public Policy, Carnegie Mellon University.**

# population & consumption

As the world's population grows so does the rate at which the world's resources are being used. The earth is being stretched beyond its carrying capacity, leading to high waste yields, inefficient use of natural resources and toxic emissions into the atmosphere and water. But population growth alone does not explain environmental degradation and is too often used as a justification for restricting women's reproductive freedom. Greater emphasis must be placed on investigating the root causes of social, environmental and economic problems. This section examines the links between population, consumption and the environment.

In the very beginning of the discussion about the

## expanding our vision

environment and population, there was Malthus, who warned that population growth would plateau and drastically decline due to the inability of the Earth to sustain high numbers. Malthus's predictions did not come true...and the world became skeptical. Then in the 1960s, prominent environmentalist Paul Ehrlich wrote *The Population Bomb*, coining such phrases as "population control in the name of environmental protection." Over time, the media has persistently referred to "population control." And many in the world distanced themselves from the population-environment discussions.

Meanwhile, the world's human inhabitants have grown to 6.1 billion, from a mere 1.6 billion in 1900. We have increased carbon dioxide levels by 120 percent in the past 150 years, forever decreased the world's biodiversity and brought two-thirds of the ocean's fisheries into decline. We've managed to produce a US \$30 trillion economy, yet one half of the world lives on less than US \$2 a day.

In the environmental community, we have learned several lessons. First, merely spouting off these numbers will not engender the collaborative discussions that we need to solve environmental problems. We also understand that protecting the environment involves a comprehensive analysis of the interactions among

population, environment, poverty and the empowerment of women.

Women are profoundly affected by demographic, development and environmental trends. In attending to the very basic needs of their families—such as obtaining water and fuel, and tending to the land—women play key roles in natural resource issues. Often, acquiring necessary resources to survive makes them unwitting agents of environmental change. Therefore, their involvement and empowerment is essential in crafting effective responses.

After years of discussing how population growth affects the environment, women and environmental groups today are also talking about how environmental factors affect population, particularly women. Alarm is growing about the chemicals associated with female reproductive cancers, as well as pregnancy failures and early childhood development difficulties. There are special concerns about the effects of Persistent Organic Pollutants, primarily produced in the U.S. As endocrine disruptors that interfere with normal hormone function, they impact fertility, miscarriage, certain cancers and puberty for girls.

At present, demographically stable, developed nations are the driving force behind the most far-reaching environmental challenges. They are responsible for most harmful emissions and the bulk of the world's waste. With only 20 percent of the global

population, developed nations account for over 85 percent of consumption. In contrast, the poorest 20 percent of the global population accounts for only 1.3 percent of consumption.

Consumption impact must be included in discussions of long-term sustainability. The danger, otherwise, is that these discussions will focus disproportionately on demography, stressing that reducing population growth is a requirement for sustainable development rather than a result of it.

In actuality, both meeting basic human needs and realizing human rights, particularly for women and girls, are essential to achieving slower population growth and sustainable development. Gender inequality exacts a toll on women's lives and is closely associated with high fertility. Efforts to increase women's self-determination and improve their health lower population growth and achieve environmental objectives.

We've come a long way since Malthus. The language has changed quite a bit, as have our partners, in trying to address global population and environmental issues. It is imperative that we, as environmental organizations, continually emphasize that empowering women worldwide and changing our own consumption patterns are some of the best ways to actively ensure long-term environmental sustainability. —Annette Souder  
Annette Souder directs the Sierra Club's Global Population and Environment Program.

“Explaining away the most pressing concerns of the

## collective imagination

world as a ‘population problem’ is appealing. It is simple and elides other structural and historical causes that may explain the situation. The image of the ticking clock, the incendiary “population bomb” that will set off a massive, earth-destroying explosion, is etched into our collective psyche.

Population increases are associated

with faceless and undifferentiated poor women of color in intricately coded and unspoken ways. This fear seeps into public discourses and discussions, distorting understanding of the world. The Committee on Women, Population, and the Environment (CWPE) investigates the reasons why a variety of environmental, social and security issues are defined

or presented as population problems, while supporting women’s right to safe birth control and abortion as part of comprehensive health care.”

—Jael Silliman

Excerpted from *Dangerous Intersections*, South End Press, 1999. Jael Silliman is an associate professor at the University of Iowa.

### CLIMATE

Despite new evidence that human activities are causing climate change, the U.S. Climate Action Report, published May 2002, emphasizes economic development over environmental protection. By choosing to value the national economy over the global environment, the U.S.

ignores the threat posed by climate change not only to developing countries but also to its own citizens—for example in Alaska, where the rapidly melting permafrost is irreparably damaging people’s lives and livelihoods.

The main international effort towards enforcing a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is the Kyoto treaty on climate change. As the country responsible for a quarter of the world’s carbon emissions, the U.S. must be a party to the Protocol before it can come into force. Yet the U.S. government refuses to ratify the treaty.

### WATER

Present levels and patterns of water use are unsustainable. Worldwide, governments spend approximately US \$700 billion subsidizing inefficient water use, with almost half that amount supporting agriculture in the developed world.

While global fresh water consumption has doubled since 1960, nearly a third of the world’s population remains

without safe drinking water. Demand by developed countries has depleted many of the world’s fisheries, leaving almost a billion people at risk of losing access to their primary source of protein.

In the U.S. an estimated 10-33 percent of gastrointestinal illness are attributed to tap water contamination, while a number of large water facilities have been found to be in significant violation of the Clean Water Act.

### ENERGY

Since the early 1980s, U.S. public spending on research and development in the energy sector has declined by a third. Of the amount that is spent, less than 10 percent goes to improving energy efficiency, with the rest spent on fossil fuel and nuclear technologies. Nuclear energy already supplies 20 percent of the total U.S. energy market, and the U.S. report on climate change is merely the latest government publication to present nuclear power as a ‘clean’ alternative to fossil fuels, despite the real potential for accidents and contamination.—Rebecca Worner

Rebecca Worner is a WEDO consultant.

Sources: <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global>; UNDP, *World Resources 2000-2001*.

If every person in the world were to consume as much as the average American, given current technologies, it would take four extra Earths to provide the land and shallow seas required for all the food, water, housing, energy,

## how much is too much?

transportation, commerce, and waste absorption that people would demand.

- Americans make up only 5 percent of the world’s population, yet consume a third of the world’s resources and produce close to half of the world’s hazardous waste.
- The average person in North America consumes five times as much as the average person in Mexico, ten times as much as the average person in China and thirty times as much as the average person in India.
- On average, a person in the U.S. consumes more than twice the amount of energy than does a person in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany or Japan.
- The U.S. produces 25 percent of the world’s carbon emissions. In 1999, greenhouse emissions were 12 percent greater than they were in 1990. Each U.S. citizen is responsible for between five and six metric tons of carbon emissions per year.
- The average price of gasoline in the U.S. is \$1.53 per gallon, making it cheaper than milk spring water or coffee. Many European countries place higher taxes on gasoline in order to encourage the use of public transportation.—RW

Sources: Wilson, E. O. (2002) *The Bottleneck* at <http://www.sciam.com>;  
<http://www.pbs.org/kcts/affluenza>;  
<http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming>;  
<http://www20.cera.com/gasoline/summary>

# environmental decision-making

**W**omen experience everyday life differently than men. Traditional gender roles corner women into juggling multiple responsibilities in the home, at the workplace and in the community. As a result, women have a unique knowledge of the environment and the importance of sustainability. But the demands on women also leave them with less time than men for political involvement, and without a voice in the decision-making processes that impact their lives and their environment. This section explores how women in the U.S. can work with state legislators to bring their voices to policy debates, advocate for greater representation in government and address sustainable development concerns at the local level.

As our nation wages the new war on terrorism, we continue to fight our

decades-long war on terrorism against women's human rights in the United States and around the world. So it is nurturing to be with my sisters, because we all are links in the golden chain of global feminist revolution to change the institutions that govern our lives.

The Center for Women Policy Studies, founded in 1972, is a national, multiethnic feminist policy institution that brings the voices of women of color to national and state-level public policy debates. We work with women state legislators in all fifty states and with advocates nationwide on a range of issues—from the women's HIV/AIDS epidemic to violence against women and sexual trafficking, to welfare reform and beyond.

We will take the WASTE outcomes to our network of state legislators and our colleagues in Congress. I fear that you will need to rely upon someone less radical, feminist and outspoken to reach the Bush Administration.

I must share some of my own—and the Center's—principles, because I believe that our global feminist revolution also is guided by these principles. I believe that we truly are revolutionaries—in the best possible sense of the word, defined by Che Guevara: "Let me say, at the risk of seeming ridiculous, that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love."

I also remember what our sister,

## winning equality

friend and hero Shirley Chisholm said when she was an outspoken feminist member of Congress: "The law cannot do the major part of the job of winning equality for women. Women must do it for themselves. They must become revolutionaries."

And our dear Bella Abzug left us a powerful legacy of activism and courage that inspired all of us to be fierce and fearless women warriors. It will be difficult, but we must make our voices heard in Congress and the Administration. In this post-September 11 era, we must demand that attention be paid to the increasing assaults on women's human rights and on environmental protections that are being justified by the need for more energy resources for a wartime economy. At a minimum, we must insist that the Bush Administration listen to state legislators who have led the way on these issues.

The Center's "Contract with Women of the USA State Legislators Initiative" is one mechanism to bring the WASTE Summit's work to the attention of state legislators who will support it. The initiative began in November of 1995 at the Center for American Women and Politics Forum for State Legislators, where the Center and legislators from eight states decided to create a new approach to implementing outcomes of the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

The Center and WEDO translated the Beijing Platform for Action into

U.S.-relevant terms and named it the "Contract with Women of the USA," because Bella had reminded the world at Beijing that the Platform is "a contract with the world's women." We built our work with state legislators around her insistence that "it is not legally binding, but it is politically binding."

Since then, the Center has built an activist network of women state legislators committed to implementation of the "Contract's" principles. We serve as legislators' national staff on women's issues; we publish the *State Legislative Report*, a quarterly newsletter for state legislators; we send legislators action alerts on key national issues, and we have an active presence at the annual conferences of the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators and the National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women. In our newest program, the Foreign Policy Institute for State Legislators, we are developing the role of legislators in influencing U.S. foreign policy as it relates to women's human rights.

It always gives me comfort and strength to know that, even though we cannot duplicate Bella's passion and power, we can at least try to live and work in her spirit. As she instructed: "Never underestimate the importance of what we are doing here. Never hesitate to tell the truth. And never, ever, give in—or give up." —Leslie R. Wolfe

**Leslie R. Wolfe is president of Center for Women Policy Studies.**

## 50/50 by 2005: get the balance right!

No government can claim to be democratic until women are guaranteed the right to equal representation. At the 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, 189 governments agreed to this principle in the Beijing Platform, and committed themselves to take steps to achieve it. But the percentage of women legislators has only increased by .5 percent a year since then. At that rate, it will take 75 years to reach an equal gender balance!

The 50/50 campaign aims to get the balance right. Launched by WEDO in New York on June 8, 2000, during the five-year review of the Beijing Platform

for Action, the campaign's goals are to increase the percentage of women in local and national politics worldwide.

The 50/50 campaign is not just about numbers; it is also about women making a difference. In other words, when women bring their experiences and feminist perspectives to the table, everyone benefits—peace and justice can become a reality in the present rather than in some distant future.

The 50/50 campaign has been adopted by 154 organizations in 45 countries since it was launched. Many countries have launched their own 50/50 campaigns including Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Bulgaria, Namibia, Kenya, Yugoslavia, Argenti-

na, Albania, Guyana, Philippines, Indonesia, India, Nigeria, South Africa and Canada.

WEDO has also taken the 50/50 campaign to the United Nations. With 94 percent of the UN missions headed by men, WEDO is lobbying governments to make a pledge to divide the two top positions in their missions between women and men.



### five ways to get the balance right

- 1 GET THE FACTS:** Who's who in your government—How many are women? Which political parties promote gender parity? Who has/has not appointed women to decision-making positions?
- 2 SPREAD THE WORD:** Use the facts to sensitize your community—Develop a slogan. Make and distribute flyers. Start a petition. Write letters to your local newspaper. Call a meeting. Develop a website.
- 3 NETWORK AND BUILD COALITIONS:** Bring together elected women and feminist activists across party lines. Seek support from individuals, groups, unions and political parties.
- 4 LOBBY:** Target elected officials and influential community leaders—Ask questions, demand answers and insist on action.
- 5 PREPARE FOR LEADERSHIP:** Encourage women in public office to share their experiences—Identify the main issues. Organize workshops. Establish support systems. Seek financial and media backing. Identify potential candidates. It could be you!

#### 50/50 IS ENSHRINED IN THESE INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS:

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): <http://www.un.org/rights/50/decla.htm>  
Article: 21

Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952):  
<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/planactn.htm#14>  
Articles: Preamble, II and III

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1960):  
[http://www.pch.gc.ca/ddp-hrd/english/iccpr/CN\\_1.htm](http://www.pch.gc.ca/ddp-hrd/english/iccpr/CN_1.htm)  
Article: 3

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979): [gopher://gopher.un.org/oo/ga/cedaw/convention](http://www.un.org/oo/ga/cedaw/convention)  
Articles: 7 and 8

The Beijing Platform for Action (1995): <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/decision.htm>  
Paragraphs: 190a, 191 and 192a

Beijing+5 (2000):  
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/finaloutcome.pdf>  
Paragraphs: 100a and 117a

For more information on the 50/50 Campaign visit WEDO's website at [www.wedo.org](http://www.wedo.org)  
Join the 50/50 listserv at [50-50ingovernmentnetwork@yahoogroups.com](mailto:50-50ingovernmentnetwork@yahoogroups.com)



# globalization and U.S. policy

**f**or years, women’s advocacy groups have monitored, analyzed and developed alternatives to macroeconomic policies that have harmed women’s lives and communities. Women contend that the existing approach to economic globalization proliferates severe imbalances in productivity, resource mobilization, and the distribution of goods and services. Today, corporate profits supercede environmental protection and social and economic justice. Moreover, the failed policies of the “Washington Consensus”—deregulation, privatization, and financial and trade liberalization—have diminished the state and swelled the ranks of the poor, particularly women. New approaches are needed to address deepening economic disparity. This section highlights some of the key areas in which women are focusing their demands for economic justice.

## economic decision-making

Despite various international agreements supporting equal representation in economic decision-making, women are still extremely marginalized. Women comprise only 14 percent of the members of national legislatures and 14 percent of government ministers. Of all the policymaking arenas, economics and finance have the lowest levels of women’s representation. Worldwide, there are only 28 female ministers holding economics-related portfolios. Women are much more likely to be concentrated in the so-called soft domains, such as education, health, social affairs and human resources.

At the international level, women’s representation in the decision-making structures of the major finance and trade institutions—the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization

(WTO)—is also glaringly low. Women make up 5.5 percent of the Board of Governors and 8.3 percent of the Board of Directors at the World Bank. The figures at the IMF are, respectively, 2.2 percent and 0 percent. The WTO could not provide comparable data.

Unless women are present in critical numbers and empowered to share their different experiences, perspectives, concerns and needs, they will not be recognized in policy debates. This is true not only of governmental and intergovernmental institutions, but among civil society organizations as well. The protest movement against financial globalization has been at the forefront of defining a new approach to globalization—one focused on promoting sustainable development to challenge inequalities. But gender analyses—and women themselves—are still under-represented in that movement. Mainstreaming gender perspectives and representation in both official processes and

civil movements are critical in our work for the global economic rights of women. —*Nadia Johnson*  
**Nadia Johnson is WEDO’s Economic & Social Justice program associate.**

## corporate accountability

Economic globalization has led to a growing concentration of wealth and power in the hands of undemocratic transnational corporations (TNCs) and other institutions of globalization. This is in direct conflict with the principles and aims of the UN, which should take an active role in ensuring member states hold their businesses accountable to internationally accepted and agreed upon human and labor rights and environmental standards. However, the UN response to the problem has been contentious. The Global Compact, a July 2000 agreement that created a partnership between the UN and many TNCs known for their human and environmental rights viola-

tions, pledges that all UN agencies will embrace and develop partnerships with the private sector. Controversially, because the Compact was passed with the support of UN agencies with mandates for environmental, labor, and human rights, these agencies are now encouraged to form partnerships with private corporations known for their environmental, labor, and human rights violations. And because voluntary compliance prevailed over accountability and monitoring mechanisms in the Compact, justice-violating corporations are left to police themselves, committing the UN to the will of the corporations instead of the rights of the people.—*NJ*

## UN financing for development

For some 30 years, women have participated in UN conferences, resolving to shape economic, social, environmental and political decisions. Women have provided testimony, analyses, proposals and energy to these processes with the hope of creating a world rooted in justice, sustainability and peace. Some conferences, on issues such as the environment (Rio, 1992), social development (Copenhagen, 1995) and women (Beijing, 1995), agreed on programs of action, but the necessary resources were not committed and progress beyond the conferences has been stymied. The 2002 Financing for Development conference in Monterrey was supposed to provide the financial platform necessary to implement these actions.

Women's advocates had high expectations for the UN Financing for Development (FfD) process, which presented a critical opportunity to shape global economic policy. The

### WHEN MEN CONTROL THE GLOBAL PURSE, WOMEN GET SHORT-CHANGED

- Worldwide men dominate in economic decision-making: in governments (86% of all parliamentarians); in the biggest transnational corporations (99% of top executives); and on the board of directors at the World Bank (91%) and International Monetary Fund (100%).
- Women work two-thirds of the world's working hours and produce half of the world's food, but earn only 10% of the world's income, own less than 1% of the world's property, and are the majority of the world's poor.

conference's broad agenda linked finance issues directly to development, drawing together an unprecedented range of participants, including governments, UN agencies, the private sector, civil society, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The UN is the only international economic decision-making arena that allows the participation of NGOs; the meetings of the multilateral finance and trade institutions are closed to civil groups and are criticized for their lack of transparency, democracy and accountability.

Yet despite women's efforts in the FfD process, persistent power imbalances emphasized the agendas of developed country governments—most predominantly the U.S.—and weakened the ability of developing country governments to challenge the current global economic framework. As a result, the conference outcome

document, the Monterrey Consensus, failed to systematically address gender and other social concerns, and contained few substantive results or commitments. This weak 'consensus' can be attributed to the lack of agreement over the role of the UN in the international financial architecture, with governments ultimately deciding that neither the UN nor its processes should be equipped with the authority to challenge the mandates of the international trade, financial and monetary institutions.

Though women have celebrated some of the gains made in the FfD process, such as commitments to gender budgets and mainstreaming gender perspectives in development policies, they recognize the challenges ahead, like the lack of commitment to systemic analyses, both in the context of gender and the current governing macroeconomic framework.—*NJ*

### trade

Many women are calling for U.S. foreign policy and globalization to focus on human beings, employing universal values. For the majority of women living in poverty to benefit from trade liberalization, negotiators must adjust policies so that the goal of trade goes beyond simply increased profits and economic growth. Trade must provide higher levels of economic and food security, and greater protection for social, political, cultural and human rights.

U.S. policymakers promote trade as a means for developing countries to improve the lives of their citizens; private investment in poor countries now far outstrips the contributions of official aid programs. Even U.S. foreign assistance itself is now targeted toward building developing countries' capacity to engage in international and regional trade, rather than helping these countries achieve fundamental goals in education, health care, family planning, social development, human rights, democracy, the rule of law and environmental protection. Recently, U.S. development funds have gone toward building private sector and political support for World Trade Organization (WTO) accession; drafting new laws and regulations so that countries can conform to trade rules; and assisting in public awareness campaigns to promote the benefits of WTO membership.—*Marceline White*

Excerpted from *Making Trade Work for Women: Opportunities & Obstacles* by Marceline White, director of the Global Trade Program at Women's EDGE.

# environmental justice & alliance building

**d**uring the last few decades, movements have emerged to address a raft of issues such as sexism, racism, war, poverty, globalization and environmental degradation. Increasingly, activists understand the links between these social and environmental crises and the common causes that underpin them. Many activists are highlighting, in particular, the lead role that nations such as the United States play in perpetuating injustices.

In this context, alliances between different movements have become necessary to generate the momentum that fuels progressive change. The act of coming together to establish common ground and build consensus on clear messages, helps advocates from different spheres pool resources and expertise in addressing the complex problems of today's world. The following section examines aspects of environmental justice. It also tells the stories of alliances that have made a difference, whether they involve the convergence of activists from around the globe or of local groups around a common issue.

## opportunity & courage *By Young Shin*

For the last eighteen years, the Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA), a community-based organization in the San Francisco area, has worked to educate and develop the leadership capabilities of low-income Asian immigrant women, employed as seamstresses, electronics assemblers, hotel maids, nursing home aids, janitors, waitresses and factory workers.

When we talk about the environmental justice issues experienced by low-income Asian immigrant women, we need to talk about where these women spend most of their waking hours: at work. Many work more than ten hours a day, six to seven days a week. And work is where some of the most egregious examples of environmental hazards are taking place. AIWA concentrates on the electronics and garment industries because they are notorious for workplace violations.

Many household names in the electronics industry, such as Hewlett-Packard, IBM and Apple, contract out their production to other plants in the Silicon Valley. Immigrant workers in these plants are concentrated at the bottom of the pay scale and bear the brunt of workplace hazards. A 1999 AIWA survey of women working with chemicals in the plants showed a prevalence of ailments such as headaches, forgetfulness, dizziness, drowsiness and irritated eyes, nose, throat and chest.

Garment workers also experience workplace hazards. In a survey by AIWA of over one hundred immigrant garment workers, all had one or more work-related health conditions, including back, neck and shoulder strain. Ninety-four percent experienced pain severe enough to interfere with their daily activities.

While some laws exist to confront these problems better enforcement mechanisms on the part of government agencies are needed. And unless the people directly affected by poor working conditions have the opportunity and courage to stand up for their rights, violations will continue to occur.

But how does one create opportunity and courage? Many immigrant women do not have access to the knowledge and information needed to demand decent working conditions and are afraid that if they speak up they will lose their jobs.

This is where AIWA comes in. We start by holding classes the women request, such as basic survival English, literacy and computer skills, at convenient times and places. In

the process, many women become involved in AIWA's programs, like a leadership development retreat where they develop strategies for ensuring their workplace rights.

Developing leadership skills does not happen overnight—it takes time and encouragement. But an immigrant woman who has overcome her fear of speaking up is a powerful woman. For example, in 1996, immigrant garment workers won a historic settlement with major Bay Area garment manufacturers that called for implementation of a confidential toll free hotline for immigrant seamstresses to report violations.

In 1999, after two years of grassroots campaigning, immigrant women secured from city government a no cost site at which to hold literacy classes. And women's testimony at state and local hearings in California resulted in a bill requiring contractors to be responsible for unpaid workers' wages.

Successes like these have given immigrant women workers the confidence to continue their efforts. An AIWA immigrant leader said: "After the leadership training, I felt empowered and I wanted to share the information I learned

Developing leadership skills does not happen overnight—it takes time and encouragement. But an immigrant woman who has overcome her fear of speaking up is a powerful woman.



with other immigrant women. I realized that I have every right to enjoy a decent life, regardless of my English speaking ability and cultural differences, and I wanted to help other immigrant women believe this also.”

Even though grassroots campaigns have had success in bringing about workplace justice, we need more successful

## curbing corporate abuse *By Betsy Apple*

Transnational corporations (TNCs) are key perpetrators of environmental discrimination. In the United States, communities of color and other disadvantaged groups experience a disproportionate impact from environmental degradation, such as the dumping of waste and the location of plants that generate pollution. Similar issues are at work internationally in brown and poor communities in developing countries, with the exportation of toxic waste. While corporations are curbed in some (but not all) of their practices by laws and regulation in the United States, legal systems in parts of the developing world may be weak and in some cases rife with corruption.

Clearly, the globalization of justice has not kept pace with the globalization of corporations. Some U.S.-based corporations export their activities to locations where they can operate with impunity. Due to constitutional restrictions, the U.S. government does not regulate the overseas activities of corporations who otherwise fall under U.S. jurisdiction. But more action can be taken.

We must advocate “right to know” legislation, requiring U.S. corporations to disclose information about environmental, human rights and labor practices within their foreign investments, to enable community oversight. Currently, lawsuits in U.S. courts under the Alien Tort Claims Act offer the only legal redress for foreign victims of environmental violations at the hands of U.S. corporations. So far, most

outcomes. Those affected by workplace hazards must be able to routinely demand that industry and government ensure healthy and safe working conditions. I believe this should be true for low-wage working women all over the United States and the world. ●

**Young Shin is director of Asian Immigrant Women Advocates.**

cases have focused on human rights abuses, but we encourage those with very strong environmental cases to consider this option.

One critical issue is the environmental discrimination produced by transboundary toxins. EarthRights International is particularly interested in persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and their impact on women’s human rights. POPs travel through air and water, affecting indigenous peoples and women disproportionately. National approaches are inadequate to deal with this problem, which require negotiation and participation on an international level.

Clearly, the globalization of justice has not kept pace with globalization of corporate activities. Some U.S.-based corporations export their activities to locations where they operate virtually with impunity.

Many issues of international consequence arise from U.S. consumption. Much resource extraction, especially in Asia and Africa, has created transboundary migration, resulting in “environmental” refugees, and in some cases armed conflict as well. U.S. consumption patterns have played a role in propping up “resource dictators” and supporting “resource wars.” A clearer understanding of the discriminatory impacts of U.S. consumption is a prerequisite to policy and legislative changes. ●

**Betsy Apple is women’s rights project director at Earth Rights International.**

*“We should demand of all governments that they respect the people’s agenda. That we, in fact, say ‘no’ to corporate globalization and ‘yes’ to people’s globalization. This is the task before us.” —JOCELYN DOW*

## **analyze, plan and act** *By Brownie Ledbetter*

Building alliances is absolutely crucial. How we do it has a lot to do with how successful we will be. How much clarity we have, how carefully we develop consensus and trust in each other, how much we will give and take without losing our principles or jeopardizing those of our partners—basically how much political discipline we can practice.

I'm talking about building a U.S. women's constituency that will confront and change the negative U.S. policies executed globally that are ravaging the lives of our sisters, their children and their men, and are devastating many families in our own country. We have to persevere with the same resolve as the boys in charge, but with no guns, no weapons, no bombs, just keeping at it with a clear commitment to our cause.

Rhetoric about protecting women and children is useless, exploitative, cynical and mean without policies and

## **understanding geo-politics** *By Eleanor Smeal*

We have been working for several years now on Afghanistan. The basic issue there, which you don't hear very much about, is that Afghanistan is on a pipeline pathway from oil-rich areas in the Caspian Sea. These deposits are probably second to, or greater than, those in the Persian Gulf. It's trillions of dollars. The U.S. and many countries, including Saudi Arabia, Great Britain, France and Japan, want to build a pipeline from the Caspian Sea through Afghanistan to Pakistan and then to the Arabian Sea. Who controls the pipeline really controls the oil, so Unicol, a huge natural gas and oil company located in Houston and Los Angeles, entered into a contract with the Taliban.

In 1997, the Feminist Majority started a project on this issue. Everybody said that women weren't interested in global issues, that we didn't even know where Afghanistan was, and that it would never work. But by 1998, the feminist campaign helped to make sure that neither the UN nor the U.S. would recognize the Taliban as a legitimate government because of its terrorist treatment of women. And we stopped the pipeline. Unicol gave two reasons why they abandoned the contract: the first was that the Taliban was not recognized as a government, and the second was the feminist campaign.

Sometimes I think we need to hear about our successes more. We're told so frequently that we're apathetic, that people don't care, that we're not interested in issues that are beyond our mall or immediate area. And none of that could be farther from the truth.

Long before September 11, we sent more mail to the State

practices that allow women and children to improve their lives. We have to find out what's happening as a result of our government's policies, and analyze, plan and act—over and over again.

The vicious terrorist attack in our country gave us all a devastating wake-up call. Suddenly, people are opening their eyes to the fact that there is whole world out there and much of it is suffering mightily. Even in the corporate controlled media there is interest in covering issues besides movie stars, shark attacks and our politicians' sexual exploits. But we need to move quickly before our patriotic duty is defined totally as going shopping a lot. We have to wake up and not be this mindless consuming-obsessed culture.

From building new alliances will come coalitions, partnerships, women's activists and organizations that will get the boys moving in a new direction. This country needs our help. ●

**Brownie Ledbetter is a life-long activist and WEDO board member.**

Department speaking out against the Taliban and for liberating the women of Afghanistan than any other domestic community has produced on an issue of foreign policy. I believe that if we hang in there, we will get not only women's rights and democracy restored, but a rebuilding of South Central Asia. There must be a mini-Marshall Plan in that area, which has been made a pile of rubble as the last stop in the Cold War. Only 12 percent of the people have clean water. One in four children dies before age five. One woman dies every thirty minutes in childbirth because there is essentially no health care system.

If we're ever going to have a safe environment and a safe world we must understand the geo-political issues that make this country and this world click. Because while we keep talking, they keep figuring out which pot of money they can get. Lockheed, for example, just got a U.S. \$200 billion contract on the back of this tragedy.

There is so much for us to do, starting with understanding how our issues are intertwined—an eco-feminist movement, for example. I can still remember Bella Abzug arguing with a major breast cancer coalition, insisting that they look at the environmental questions about breast cancer. And to this day that coalition will not address the environmental aspects. What in the heck are we doing? If you look at the different types of cancer, it fits a geographical pattern. Why? Because of environmental issues.

I am determined that we start bringing these forward as feminist concerns. We must have foreign and environmental policies in our movement, and we must make sure that we are at every decision-making table with at least 52 percent of the power. ●

**Eleanor Smeal is president of the Feminist Majority Foundation.**

## **a world built on human rights** *By Loretta Ross*

I've been active in the women's movement since the early 1970s. And then in the early 1990s I took a sharp turn and went into civil rights, where I monitored hate groups from the far religious right. After five or six years, I became very frustrated. Because you go into these towns that have been ravaged by the Klan and the militias and the neo-Nazis, and the best thing you could tell them was "teach tolerance."

Tolerance as a framework for justice has never really appealed to me. Tolerance is something I use for shoes that hurt my feet. I put up with them long enough to get home and change the suckers. This should not describe the status of human relations—it maintains the power hierarchy. I will put up with you until I no longer have to. But our other message was even worse: "Just say no to hate." I felt like Nancy Reagan in black face. Just say no? It doesn't work to stop teen pregnancy, drugs or militarization. It just does not work.

But then I was fortunate enough to be introduced to the human rights framework. For the first time, it became fairly clear that I wasn't fighting against a bunch of different things—racism, sexism, classism, colonialism, naturism. We can link them all. Suddenly, there was one thing I was fighting for: a world built on human rights.

I also wondered how come the human rights movement is fifty years old, and I haven't made this connection before? I realized I'm part of the American public that had heard the term "human rights," but always associated it with something overseas. So I founded the National Center for Human Rights Education six years ago in Atlanta to bring human rights

### **A CALL TO PRECAUTION**

"The 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil identified precaution as a key principle to guide policies ranging from chemical regulation to climate change. Since then the Precautionary Principle has spread like a prairie fire. Breast cancer activists have invoked it to focus attention on preventing breast cancer rather than betting the farm on elusive cures. Public school districts have adopted it in their approach to pesticide use in schools. In New England, a coalition of health and environmental groups has formed the Massachusetts Precautionary Principle Project, which seeks to incorporate into state laws, regulations, and policies a "better safe than sorry" approach to child health."

Excerpted from Sandra Steingraber's "Having Faith: Ecologists Journey to Motherhood," Perseus Publishing, 2001. Dr. Steingraber was a keynote speaker at the WASTE Summit and recipient of the 2001 Rachel Carson Leadership Award.

home, to talk about why our problems here in the United States are human rights violations. And since September 11, now more than ever, to talk about how our foreign policies have continuously violated people's human rights, so that the terror in their lives is being brought home to us.

I think we need to use a human rights platform to challenge the influence of the right wing in our foreign, domestic and environmental policies. We've got one set of religious fundamentalists fighting another set in this war that no one asked for, and we're like the grass that the elephants trample beneath their feet. We have to understand the danger of fundamentalisms in all that we're doing.

The right wing has been so successful that they have redirected whole conversations: class and power are now about the anti-Communist movement; sexism is about the feminazis; race and power are about reverse discrimination; environment and power are about population control or the wise-use movement; immigrants and power are about freedom-hating terrorists who come here to get a good deal.

Most of us reduce human rights to civil rights, which is an important category of human rights protection—your right to be treated as equal to everyone else. But we live in a society where they offer equality but treat all of us like dogs. We don't get justice, just basic, simple equality. Human rights also includes economic, social and cultural rights, as well as political rights. And new human rights conversations are happening around environmental and sustainable development rights.

A human rights approach provides a way for us to unite not only issues, but also social justice movements that historically have not worked collaboratively. I know all of us feel like walking coalitions sometimes. Are you a women's rights activist, an environmental activist, a person who works against racism or a person who works for youth? Many of us are multi-dimensional—we need a multi-dimensional movement.

I think we must begin including human rights education in all of our social justice work, and particularly in the women's movement. We use that phrase, "women's rights are human rights," but we don't know what it means. Most of us don't know how the United States has undermined the international mechanisms that we now need.

But as Mab Segrest, a leading feminist lesbian writer whom I absolutely adore, said: "Men, you have had the last millennium and dedicated it to war and conquest. Well, you can't have this century. Stand down and zip up your pants." ● **Loretta Ross is founder and executive director of the National Center for Human Rights Education.**

**united we stand** *By Gloria Bingle*

The United Steelworkers of America is a labor union started by men who worked in steel mills. They used to comprise 100 percent of the union; but in the 1970s, the steel industry went through a large transition and many steel mills closed. At that time, they began to hire women to work in the mills. Also, around the same time, we began to go out and organize workers in other types of industries into our union. There are many different kinds of occupations that are represented by the United Steelworkers of America today—everything from health care workers, to people who make caskets, to librarians.

Women make up about 20 percent of the union today. As we first begin to organize women, we wanted to find a way to get them involved. I've been a steelworker for 34 years, working in a small office because women were not working in the mill at that time. I have only been an active union member for about 10 years because the opportunity was not there for women to get involved.

If you start at the local union level, you know how things work. A guy brings his buddy to a meeting because he sees some talent there. He takes the buddy under his wing and teaches him the ropes and shows him how things are done. When the time is right and there's an opportunity to use him somewhere on a committee or send him somewhere to a class, he recommends him. It doesn't happen that way for women because there are not that many women in leadership positions to reach down and mentor someone.

Women got involved at the local level and we worked very hard. Yet when it came time to send someone to a conference or to an educational program, they looked over your head and still picked Joe, with whom they went hunting and fishing.

As more women and people of color were being organized into the union, our leadership began to recognize the fact that the face of the union was changing. Around ten years ago, we added to our constitution the right for locals to form Women of Steel committees to give women a voice in this predominantly male union. That sounds like a simple thing, but in was not an easy task because people are not used to change.

Pennsylvania is District 10, and I'm the women's coordi-

nator for the district. My job was to form several councils in the state where women from the local union committees could come together once in a quarter and target issues to work on and exchange ideas. We could look at women who had potential and mentor them. We could also recommend women for some of the educational programs that we offer. It gave us the opportunity to network with each other and learn what was going on outside of our local.

Last year we had our Second International Women's Conference. About 800 people from the United States and Canada came together in Pittsburgh. We marched through the

streets and let people know we exist. We talked about all kinds of things in our workshops. One of the most important discussions was on forming coalitions and making change outside of the union.

After that, we decided we needed to get more involved in a lot of other issues as well. For example, in Mexico we have women coming up out of the fields to work along the border in industries that have relocated there to take advantage of the cheap labor and the lack of environmental laws. Hundreds of these young women have disappeared. Many have been killed

or raped—all kinds of terrible things are happening to them. Nobody's doing anything because they're not really concerned. So we've decided to take on this problem.

We have also learned that in order to make our issues visible, we have to form alliances with all kinds of groups. For example, we had a work stoppage for Kaiser Aluminum. It was a long labor dispute. One of the ways we were able to win was by partnering with environmental groups because Kaiser was violating the environment in a terrible way.

Coalitions can be kind of crazy things. Groups may not agree with each other on everything but can come together and work toward solving one issue that they do have in common.

The USWA is still a union whose leadership is primarily 50-year-old white men. I don't have a thing against 50-year-old white men because I'm married to one. But sometimes they come to the International Women's Committee and talk to us about a new plan they have. We look and discover that it's the same old plan. And you know why? Because they're looking at it through their eyes and their experiences in life. Until they get women and people of color at the table, nothing is going to change. ●

**Gloria Bingle is the women's coordinator for the United Steel Workers of America, Pennsylvania.**

Coalitions can be kind of crazy things. Groups may not agree with each other on everything but can work together on solving one issue that they do have in common.

## ain't no power like the power of women *By Camilla Feibelman*

On November 8, 2001, two Mexican environmental activists were released from jail after being held on false charges. Amnesty International had designated them prisoners of conscience. Their release was the result of the blood, sweat and tears of activists all over this country, Mexico and even the world.

Two years ago, Amnesty International and the Sierra Club came together to form a Human Rights and the Environment campaign. We built an alliance between two major movements that had really never met before, intending to look at a pattern throughout the world of human rights violations against environmental activists. One of our most important cases involved Rudolfo Montiel Flores and Teodoro Cabrera Garcia, the two recently released prisoners in Mexico.

As a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement, Boise Cascade, a U.S.-based company, was able to log at unprecedented rates in the Mexican state of Guerrero. Community members became concerned about the environment and their ability to make a living. Would they be able to use wood as a source of income? Would the incredibly rapid rate of logging affect agriculture? Many of their concerns proved true when corn production for the average family fell from three tons to one ton of corn per hectare.

So the community members organized and went down to the state capital to say, "No, you cannot do this." On their way, they were met by one hundred federal police officers who shot seventeen people, point blank. The officers pursued Flores, who was targeted as a leader, into his village, arresting him and Garcia. The two were tortured, forced to admit to non-existent charges and sentenced to 10 years in jail.

Activists from around the United States and Mexico wrote their hearts out—to the ambassador from Mexico to the United States and to President Vicente Fox. They asked President Fox to make real his promises to protect the environment, environmental defenders and human rights activists in Mexico.

But the situation worsened. Digna Ochoa, the lawyer on the case, was shot to death in her office. She had been arrested twice in the last year and regularly received death threats.

During a memorial service, I heard stories about Digna Ochoa's tremendous courage and willingness to speak out. And it occurred to me that that's what young people have to do. We have to shout to show people that we are not

apathetic. We volunteer at rates unlike any previous generation. Unfortunately, we also consume at levels unlike any previous generation. We buy Boise Cascade's paper products. We buy oil that cost the blood of Ken Saro-Wiwa in Nigeria. We have to take responsibility for that.

As young people, we have to say, "This is my government; you will listen to me." As older women, you have to say, "I will bring a young person to every meeting I go to, who will speak in every press conference I do. I will train you as I trained my daughters." If you fail to do this, none of your life's work will matter, because we won't know how to do it.

A couple of things on building coalitions: before you sit down at the table, ask yourself, "Who am I going to be working with, and what are my preconceptions about them? How do I find out which of these are true? What can I do for you, and what can you do for me? What are our common goals, and how far can we go together in meeting them?" In the Sierra Club's Environmental Justice Program, for example, we have examined how we can work with local community organizations given our high level of resources and energy. In general, we always have to keep questioning. Are the needs of our brother and sister NGOs being met? Are the needs of

youth being represented? Will that play out in the alliances we build? Will Northern NGOs talk over the voices of Southern NGOs? Will the older talk over the voices of the younger? Will whites talk over the voices of blacks? Will we listen? Will we be a true alliance?

Our tactics and our step-by-step goals may be different. We may be accused of having a laundry list of issues. As women, we realize that the world is interconnect-

ed. But how do we communicate that the very existence of the laundry list is the problem? That the environment is a factor, that women are a factor, that children are harmed, that water is affected—that's what's scary. You can't put each of those issues in separate rooms and ask them to work themselves out.

Don't let the mechanics of building an alliance get in the way of doing the real work. If Amnesty International and the Sierra Club hadn't figured out how to work together, Flores and Garcia would not be free today. We would not be here, ready to fight and shout like Digna. You're going to have to work with me because it's a little bit complicated; you have to say, "Ain't no power like the power of women, 'cause the power of women don't stop." ●

**Camilla Feibelman is the Environmental Justice and Hispanic Media coordinator for the Sierra Club.**

Older women have to say, "I will bring a young person to every meeting I go to. I will train them as I train my daughters."



# building a better world By Lois Gibbs

**t**he WASTE Summit provided us with new people, ideas and information, but at the same time this new information is very scary, and way beyond hard. It made me think, well, I don't really want to work on poverty issues, because I work on environmental justice, even though this is a poverty issue as well. But I can't do both. Then I thought, there are other issues I really want to get involved in. Like getting people elected or getting women into corporate boardrooms. And then I remembered that I have a full-time job and X amount of employees and four children. And so I wondered, "How many other people are thinking the same thing?"

To use a girl analogy: There are people who plan the bake sale, and there are people who bake the cakes. I cannot plan every bake sale; I can't lead on every issue. But for each of the issues that are critically important to me, I can bake a cake. You too need to think about how you can connect with other folks—maybe you cannot take over the leadership or do half of the bake sale or even do the publicity for the bake sale, but can you, at a minimum, bake a cake? Or, if you are not a baker, find someone who can bake a cake, someone to buy it and someone to deliver it.

When we talk about working in coalitions, we feel really energized. We know we cannot move forward unless we act together. And then we think, well, how can I do that? How do I, sitting in Virginia, help people in South Africa? How do I help people in the United States? How do we go about forming a new homeland security? Because it's not about bombs and terrorism, but about our very survival. Our homeland is the globe.

I predict that women around the world will take the lead on the security of our planet and human life, our children's future, equality, power and resources. Social justice movements have not all been led by men. But part of our problem is we don't reflect on that. We need to look at where women have made a difference, and what we can learn from that, and how we can become energized by it.

I am an executive director of a national environmental organization that has been predominately controlled by men. When I came to it, I was told by people who were supposed to be my colleagues, "Go home, you're just a housewife. You don't know how to play the game in DC and you're going to make a mistake that will cost us." But I am here in this position because of a women's movement many, many years ago. And there are many other movements in this country, because women are passionate and because women plan very well. We're multitaskers and multithinkers.

There are already ties between every one of our struggles—we can address economic and sustainable development

by using the Precautionary Principle approach, and get involved in economic development in our cities, towns, states, provinces and countries. But economic development is related to human health and health care, because if what you're developing poisons the environment, it's a big mistake. Education, information and women's access to resources are also linked. You can't participate in economic development and public health discussions without information and resources.

I frame all of this as a human rights struggle, which we have to win. We are literally on the edge of disaster in this country, surpassing the danger level in other countries. There is no reason for people to be poisoned, no reason for people not to be educated, no reason for all the things people have talked about during the course of this meeting.

## BAKING NEW CAKES

I'm suggesting finding new strategies, new ways to bake cakes. For example, we have talked a lot about all the treaties that have failed, that weren't recognized by the United States. But one treaty that did pass was the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Treaty. We need to look at why that passed, why it was signed by the President, why it didn't get thrown quickly away.

There were inside and outside strategies around that particular treaty. When the U.S. government at first blocked the agreement, many male environmental leaders would not get involved. They wanted to be respected as professionals, and all that rot. It was women who led the way. Women stood outside the building where governments negotiated the treaty and put paper bags over their heads that said: "Bag the U.S. policy. I'm a U.S. citizen." That embarrassed the dickens out of the U.S. government. And they said to these bag people, "Can we negotiate?" You wouldn't see one of these professional environmental men do that, and there are several environmental women who also wouldn't do that, because they're professionals too. They're players, and they play the game the way it is conventionally played.

Another group action on that particular treaty involved women putting on papier mache bellies, so they looked like they were pregnant, and holding a silent vigil outside the negotiating room. After the press conference, these women were allowed inside. So the women with these bellies were talking about how the treaty will affect the next generation. That made a difference.

Women are brave and courageous. Most of us are not solely concerned with keeping our professions. Most of us are willing to put a bag over our head. Most of us are not willing to compromise.

But more importantly, what women bring to the table is that we are the most unpredictable group of human beings on this earth. And because we're unpredictable, they don't know how to handle us. That's why we're not in the corporate boardroom. What if she cries? What if she throws a book at us? What if she brings her baby?

It is a strength, not a weakness. We think and act outside the box. And they cannot fight that unpredictability. They know how a man is going to behave. When he walks in a room they know what he is going to say, how he's going to say it, what his negotiating point is and how to handle him when he gets angry or is ready to celebrate.

We are different. We walk in the room and they're afraid of us because they don't know what we're going to do. So when we sit at a table and say something, they're always on the reactive side. Think how you feel when the president says something opposing your issue. You get angry. You send press releases and you line up your best spokesperson and you ask everybody to write letters to your elected officials and government bodies. Think about putting them in that position. Isn't it cool?

Another advantage we have is that women are persistent. Partly, we are nurturers, partly we have a tendency to look further into the future, much like the Native Americans when they talk about seven generations. What are we going to do today and how is that going to affect the seventh generation? Women think about that all the time.

The Center for Health, Environment and Justice works with thousands of communities across the country and around the world on campaigns. It is exciting to sit at one of these coalition meetings with someone from another country, or a homemaker from Pennsylvania, or people who head regional organizations. Everyone has come to the table to figure out which part of the bake sale they can take on. And the woman who is a homemaker is as respected as the person who runs the regional organization. There is a sense that we really are sisters, who are not into power plays, not into personal glory. We're figuring out how we can protect our world, our country, our state, our communities, our children and our families.

#### **POINTING NO FINGERS**

By the time my four children grow up, I hope they won't have to struggle as we do. I hope that these industries and corporations actually see the light, whether that's through people putting bags on their heads or otherwise. I hope that education and health care are available to everyone. That we have the world that we all envision. I believe we can get that world. I think we have to stand together, however, and we have to be fair to each other. We cannot point fingers at each other.

Women around the world will take the lead on the security of our planet and human life, our children's future, equality, power and resources.

I was at a meeting in New York City of a women's group and they were talking about how a woman at another table was a Republican. They were all looking to find what's wrong with each other. We have to see the things that we do agree on. Not every woman believes in choice. But if they believe in a sustainable economy, is it okay that we work with them? We don't talk to those people about choice if we're on the other side. We ask only what they can add to this movement, what cake or cupcake they can give us.

We always talk about it in theory—that blacks and whites and Asians and Native Americans should work together. But in reality, women are just as bad sometimes as the men. We have to get over that. It's okay to work with a Republican. It's okay to work with somebody who is pro-life. It is okay to work with someone who has different feelings on other issues, as long as you both agree on the piece of the work that you are doing together. If we really are about justice,

democracy, and people's rights and freedoms to speak and feel and practice religious and other beliefs, then we cannot be pointing fingers at each other when we don't agree.

I believe women can do this. Each of us has to figure out what is the cake or even the cupcake that we can give to an organization or an issue. And maybe that cupcake is just a letter, or \$10, or sending your old computer because they don't have one. You should talk to the leadership and say, I can't do much, but I can give you a cupcake. What flavor do you want? You can't act unless you know how to act and you can't do that unless you talk to the leadership.

I also believe in acting locally and globally. Everything that is done locally will, in fact, impact globally. When we stopped medical waste incinerators in this country and linked up with people in other countries, then suddenly medical waste incinerators began dying all across the world. It's not because there was a problem with them in the financial sense. It was because women were getting together and saying medical waste incinerators are killing our children, they are polluting our breasts, they are harming the children that we are carrying in our wombs, and they must be stopped. And the same thing is happening around a number of other issues. This is the result of everybody giving a cupcake, while only a few people do the bake sale and the larger effort.

We can do it again and again. We are more powerful than we were before, we are more powerful than Bella Abzug was speaking many years ago. And we will grow in this power. As we do, we will make a better world for all living beings. ●

**Lois Gibbs is executive director of the Center for Health, Environment and Justice and speaks with communities nationwide and internationally about dioxin and hazardous waste pollution.**

# women demand action

**W**omen, in all their diversity, came together at the WASTE Summit to develop policy recommendations for the U.S. government. As citizens, activists, scientists, service providers, students, mothers, artists, non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives and members of networks, associations, labor and trade unions, they believe that the United States has the power, technology, and resources—and that U.S. citizens have the will—to contribute positively to world peace, women's equality and sustainable development. Women's views must be heard at local, national and international forums—wherever policies are made that could affect the future health of our planet. Armed with the following recommendations, women are spreading the word in their communities, building coalitions, lobbying and insisting on action from the state and federal government.

## environmental health



Observe the internationally accepted Precautionary Principle, which identifies precaution as a key principle in guiding policies ranging from chemical regulation to climate change.

Invoke the Precautionary Principle in the siting of all industries or in the production and use of chemicals, radiation or other potentially harmful agents, and place the burden of proof about the safety of these industries or harmful agents on those who advocate their siting, production or use.

Investigate and confront the environmental health risks associated with rising rates of cancer, particularly among women.

Eliminate the high levels of toxic contamination in our water, food, air, breast milk and ecosystems, as well as the large amounts of global pollution and dumping generated by the U.S.

Provide disaggregated data on gender and the environment, particularly on women and children's health, at the local and national level.

## population & consumption



Reduce the unsustainable consumption level in the U.S. which exceeds 85 percent of the global share at the expense of present and future generations.

Promote alternative energy research and development, use alternative energy sources in government buildings and facilities, and establish incentives for using sustainable energy resources.

Fulfill leadership obligations to ensure conservation and management of environmental resources and the promotion of sustainable development.

Establish, amend and enforce national and international right-to-know laws on hazardous substances and the practices of U.S. corporations.

Hold corporations accountable for their toxic dumping and hazardous waste instead of requiring taxpayers to pay for their negligence.



## decision-making



Ensure women's leadership at the regional, national and international level by setting benchmarks for women in decision-making positions with the aim of including a critical mass of women at every negotiating table and on every governing board and integrating a gender perspective in all policy-making.

Build alliances that include diverse ethnic and racial groups, civil society and non-governmental organizations that are often excluded from decision-making processes.

Provide gender-sensitive training on sustainable development within local and national government agencies and engage youth by sponsoring programs on gender and sustainable development.

## economics



Reform international trade and financial institutions to become transparent, accountable and participatory.

Ensure that trade agreements and economic programs promote environmental sustainability, gender equity and pro-poor development.

Recognize that environmental norms and agreements supercede trade agreements.

Conduct gender and social development impact assessments of trade agreements.

Address the negative impacts of globalization and the growing gap between rich and poor in this country and among nations.

Insist that the lending programs of the International Financial Institutions promote genuine environmental sustainability, such as renewable energy.

## sustainable development



Decrease the U.S. military budget and increase spending on health care, education and sustainable development.

Increase Official Development Assistance (ODA) for sustainable development.

Establish a national office of sustainable development to promote policies and develop long-term planning for people-centered, gender-sensitive development domestically and abroad.

Support the United Nations through the prompt payment of dues.

Implement Security Council Resolution 1325 on women and peace.

Ratify and adopt key international treaties and commitments on human rights and the environment.

