

A Wake-up Call For Women

BY ANNA GROSSMAN

Women around the world are no longer basking in the glow of the hard won victories at major United Nations conferences of the past decade. Instead, they find themselves defending against the harsher elements of conservative forces that threaten to roll back women's rights.

It's easy to feel pessimistic in the current global reality of increased militarization, rising fundamentalisms, widening gaps between rich and poor, and environmental degradation. That's why it came as no surprise when, in November, the Bush administration threatened to withdraw support from yet another international agreement—this time, a pledge to provide poor women with family planning and reproductive health services.

This disagreement with the Programme of Action, developed at the landmark 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, is only the most recent example of U.S. efforts to

undermine, and in some cases renege on, United Nations commitments of vital concern to women. Other examples include the decision to defund the United Nations Population Fund, the failure to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and the Administration's regressive policies on reproductive health at the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children (UNGASS) and the International AIDS Conference in Barcelona.

The Bush Administration is systematically undermining women's rights, waging a full scale offensive against any language or programs interpreted as supporting abortion. Furthermore, while it is widely accepted that raising the status of women is one of the most effective ways to lift countries out of poverty, the behavior of the U.S., as well as other conservative forces, directly contradicts the logic behind poverty alleviation strategies.

These contradictions were very much on display at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa this past August, where thousands of government officials, NGO representatives and members of civil society gathered to review progress since the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

Many of the NGOs attending the conference hoped that the ten-year anniversary of UNCED would serve as a wake-up call on a wide range of development and sustainability issues.



Women stand their ground at the WSSD.

But despite some important gains, such as the landmark recognition of women's right to inherit land and the setting of sanitation targets, the Summit fell short of expectations.

Early on, it became apparent that keeping references to human rights and corporate accountability, among other basic prerequisites for sustainable development, in the final document, would require a long and continuous fight.

And that is exactly what happened. Intense lobbying efforts by the women's caucus may have yielded 30 gender references in the final document, but the Plan of Implementation fails to make gender equality a central component of sustainable development.

In fact, many of the gender references in the document simply reaffirm previous international commitments, while paragraphs on globalization, energy, capacity-building, and science and technology don't even mention the central role women have to play in those areas.

Women in Johannesburg worked particularly hard to expose the negative impacts of globalization, linking the neoliberal economic model to

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News&Views

WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

355 Lexington Avenue, 3rd floor
New York, NY 10017-6603, U.S.A
Tel: 212-973-0325; Fax: 212-973-0335

E-mail: wedo@wedo.org / Website: www.wedo.org

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

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INSIDE

WE DO

Spotlight

Congratulations to Country Women Association of Nigeria (COWAN) on their 20th anniversary. WEDO's long-time Vice-President Chief Bisi Ogunleye is national coordinator of COWAN and a prominent advocate for rural women in Africa.

Jocelyn Dow, WEDO President and founding member of Red Thread in Guyana, was presented the Institute of Caribbean Studies 2002 award for Outstanding Contribution to International Development in Washington D.C.

WEDO extends a special thanks to friends and partners Janice Goodson Foerde (KULU, ICDA) and Litha Musyimi-Ogana (ACEGA) for their work as senior program advisors. Janice was a key contributor to our social and economic justice program and Litha contributed to both our governance and sustainable development programs.

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In an effort to reduce the costs of distributing *News & Views* to more than 20,000 organizations and individuals worldwide, print copies of the newsletter will no longer be mailed in the U.S. Overseas distribution of the newsletter will continue but we will be cleaning out our database. To continue your overseas subscription send an e-mail to newsletter@wedo.org. *News & Views* will be available at no cost on our website (www.wedo.org). If you wish to receive a free copy of *News & Views* via e-mail, send a message to the e-mail address above. U.S. contributors of \$50 or more will receive a print subscription of *News & Views*.

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WOMEN SAY NO TO WAR!

WEDO joined over 100,000 protesters in Washington D.C. on October 26 to oppose military action in Iraq. The demonstration, which corresponded with weekend marches across the nation and around the world, was the largest anti-war protest in the U.S. since the Vietnam War.

The two-mile wall of marchers around the White House took the vital opportunity to express views otherwise absent from policy discussions and media reports. But despite the enormous turnout, which drew people of all ages and backgrounds and from as far away as Nebraska and Florida, the mainstream media barely covered the event.

In particular, *The New York Times* published a biased report that put numbers in the low thousands—contradicting police estimates and other news media, including *Pacifica*, which put the turnout at over 200,000—prompting people around the country to flood the newspaper with e-mails and letters expressing their outrage. The result was a Wednesday, October 30th article with the headline “Rally in Washington is Said to Invigorate the Antiwar Movement.”

Speakers at the peace rally, where demonstrators packed together under blue skies and sunshine, included Rev. Jesse Jackson, actress Susan Sarandon,

singer Patti Smith and former Attorney General Ramsey Clark.

Additional protests are being planned for January 18-19 in Washington, to coincide with the commemoration of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday and the 12th anniversary of the start of the Persian Gulf War. Women are also organizing Women's Peace March to take place in Washington D.C. on International Women's Day, March 8, 2003. A women's peace petition, “Listen to the Women” is available for signature at www.unitedforpeace.org. For more information, contact: women@unitedforpeace.org.

For additional articles, information and photographs of the October 26 National March in Washington D.C., visit www.InternationalANSWER.org.

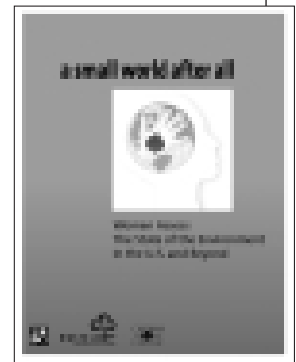
Taking the U.S. To Task

WEDO has recently stepped up its advocacy work around U.S. policymaking with the aim of promoting multilateralism. In two new publications WEDO examines U.S.

policy as it relates to global interdependence.

• **A SMALL WORLD AFTER ALL**
This report focuses on building a new U.S. domestic and global policy agenda for sustainable development based on world peace, human rights and women's equality.

Compiled from the presentations of leading activists at the 2001 summit Women Assess the State of the Environment (WASTE), which was organized by WEDO and the Rachel Carson Institute at Chatham College in Pittsburgh, the report emphasizes the importance of international processes such as the 2002 UN World Summit on Sustainable Development.



• **THE UNITED STATES WAGES CONVENTIONAL WARFARE AT THE UNITED NATIONS** This 2002 WEDO fact sheet reviews U.S. failure to ratify key UN human rights and environmental treaties, exposing a double standard when it comes to compliance with international rules and standards.

Check out these and other WEDO publications at www.wedo.org/publicat/publicat.htm. ■

U.S. Flirts with Ratifying Women's Convention

Last July, the U.S. government moved one step closer to ratifying the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The convention, which calls for equality in all aspects of social, economic, political, and cultural life, has languished in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for 22 years, facing continuing harsh opposition from conservative committee members.

Hopes were raised this past summer that the U.S. would join the 170 countries that have ratified the convention—the U.S. is the only industrialized country that has yet to do so—when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, with

bipartisan support, finally sent the convention to the Senate to be voted on.

CEDAW must receive approval by two-thirds of the Senate to be ratified. But delays in the Senate, coupled with a political environment dominated by the war on terrorism and the recent leadership change in Congress, make it unlikely that ratification will be a priority when Congress resumes session in January 2003.

In response, activists across the country are stepping-up lobbying efforts to keep CEDAW on the political agenda. CEDAW supporters are also being encouraged to lobby at the local and state levels. As of

August 2000, 16 states, 16 counties and 34 cities had passed resolutions urging U.S. ratification of CEDAW.

In 1998 San Francisco became the first and the only city in the U.S. to pass an ordinance implementing CEDAW at the municipal level. Other cities, including Seattle and Chicago, are exploring doing the same, and preliminary discussions are underway in Boston, Atlanta and New York City.—Doris Mpoumou

For further information on the ratification campaign of CEDAW visit: www.WomensTreaty.org or www.wildforhumanrights.org/cedaw_around_us.html

A WAKE-UP CALL FOR WOMEN*Continued from page 1*

widespread and growing poverty, violence, and environmental degradation.

But the outcomes of two recent global meetings, the United Nations Financing for Development conference in Monterrey and the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial conference in Doha, lowered the bar for negotiations on finance and trade.

As a result, the negative effects of globalization—including inequitable distribution of wealth and resources, and privatization of public services and resources—all of which have a particularly harmful impact on women, were not properly addressed.

While governments committed to corporate responsibility and accountability for the first time, the Johannesburg plan calls only for voluntary action and lacks an enforcement mechanism. The plan offers an opening for civil society to push for greater accountability but it does not challenge the primacy of the WTO in its cooperation with UN bodies.

Peace and human rights have become central issues for women as more of the world's resources are devoted to military and anti-terrorist expenditures. However, the final plan makes no reference to de-militarization

or the transfer of resources from military to social budgets. Meanwhile, the United States—by far the world's highest military spender—has yet to commit to the 0.7 percent target of GDP for Official Development Assistance.

As early as 1972, a strong connection between environmental conditions and basic human rights emerged but at the WSSD, governments failed to use human rights as an overall approach for sustainable development.

But perhaps what angered women most at the WSSD was the amount of energy they were forced to spend holding the line on gains from previous UN conferences, especially in the realm of reproductive health and women's rights. The last debate in the final hours of the Summit centered on paragraph 47 on women's health, which included references to national laws, cultural and religious values, without reference to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

This proposed language, which echoed the position of the United States and the Vatican at the 2002 Children's Summit, backtracked on landmark commitments to women's reproductive and sexual health. It posed a serious threat to women's rights in every region of the world, making women and girls more vulner-

able to harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation, forced and child marriage, honor killings, death by stoning, and gang rape.

Stepped-up lobbying by the women's caucus, in collaboration with intense rallying by supportive governments and other major caucuses and NGOs, and a swiftly organized demonstration outside the Sandton Convention Center where negotiations were being held succeeded in securing language on human rights.

This political victory meant, that at least for the time being, agreements made in 1994 at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, and in 2000 at the Beijing+5 meeting were safe from renegotiation. In this political climate, holding the line over the opposition of the U.S. must be considered a victory.

But many wonder when and where the next offensive will be launched. Women around the world view efforts to undermine reproductive rights as part of a larger trend as conservative forces, with the U.S. at the helm, threaten to undermine multilateral efforts for women's rights, peace, poverty eradication and a healthy planet.

In particular, women have learned

Women Demand a Peaceful and Healthy Planet

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, women officially launched "Women's Action Agenda for a Peaceful and Healthy Planet 2015" (WAA 2015)—a comprehensive blueprint of their visions and goals for the future.

Used as a lobbying tool throughout the Summit, WAA 2015 puts forth a platform for sustainable, gender-sensitive, people-centered development built on principles of peace and solidarity; equity and shared power; environmental integrity; social justice and respect for human rights and cultural and biological diversity.

Updated from the original version, which was released in 1992 at the UN Conference on Environment and Development, WAA 2015 evolved over two-years of consultation, facilitated by

WEDO and REDEH (Network for Human Development, Brazil), that involved connecting with women's networks and organizations from around the world and meeting with women at UN preparatory meetings and at other national and regional meetings.

The launch of WAA 2015 was attended by approximately 300 Summit participants, including government delegates and several ministers, NGO and women activists, and the media. Presentations were made by Thais Corral, REDEH and WEDO; Irene Dankelman, University of Nijmegen; Jocelyn Dow, WEDO; Rachel Kyte, World Bank; Brownie Ledbetter, WEDO; Annekathrin Linck, Heinrich Boell Foundation; Vandana Shiva, author and activist; and June Zeitlin, WEDO.

Each section of WAA 2015—covering peace, globalization for sustainability, access to and control of natural resources, environmental security and health, and governance—includes a set of concrete recommendations for moving beyond WSSD.

In the post conference period, WEDO will be working with its partners to implement WAA 2015 at the local level by developing appropriate policy tools, such as gender budgeting, engendering Local Agenda 21 and the 50/50 campaign.

Women's Action Agenda 2015 is available in brochure format and in a longer version at www.wedo.org. Print copies in brochure format can be ordered in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese from the WEDO website.

that the gains of the past decade cannot be taken for granted. International commitments are not set in stone—they are vulnerable to the pressures of external forces and the competing interests of states, especially those that wield tremendous influence and power.

For this reason it is critical that women continue to stand their ground in the UN and other international forums to prevent erosion of their rights. But women cannot succeed without the backing of supportive governments that are willing to stand fast on the legitimacy of existing international agreements, while halting policies and practices that contradict established norms.

We know that when governments demonstrate the political will to unite on an issue they can succeed. This was the case in Johannesburg, when Canada, the EU and some G77 countries combined forces to save paragraph 47 on women's health. More recently, concerned governments on the Security Council succeeded in gaining unanimous support for the weapons inspection process in Iraq, upsetting the U.S. drive toward war.

On many fronts, women are experiencing a backlash with their concerns either ignored or addressed peripherally. In order to turn back the tide, it is critical that women intensify their engagement not only with governments but also with NGOs and international institutions such as the WTO, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Women must also bring their views into alternative arenas—arenas that may not always have an obvious role in promoting a gender perspective.

This involves building alliances to collectively expose the ties between social, environmental and economic crises and their root causes. It means connecting with other civil society groups, such as peace groups, environmentalists and economic justice groups that share a vested interest in promoting multilateralism.

In particular, activists must hold the United States accountable for its role in perpetuating global injustices, while the UN, as the world's most open and democratic international



WSSD Secretary General Nitin Desai shows solidarity

Peace Boat



A few of the festive

Marta Benavides, El Salvador



(L-R) Jocelyn Dow, Thais Corral, June Zeitlin, Nitin Desai

Oksana Kisselyova, Ukraine

Women's Action Tent

A vibrant space for women to come together, the Women's Action Tent organized by WEDO and the South African women's organization Ilitha Labantu at the NGO Forum of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, withstood some blustery winds, technical difficulties and a less than ideal location (the NASREC Expo Center was, on a good day, an hour long commute from the official conference site). It did, however, succeed in capturing the spirit of the global women's movement—over 150 women's groups from around the world participated in tent activities. The tent offered women, both those accredited to the official proceedings and those who were not, a space to share and assess progress over the past decade and strategize beyond WSSD. With each day devoted to one of the five themes of Women's Action Agenda 2015 (See Box page 4), women covered a multitude of topics under the umbrella of sustainable development. During the closing ceremony at the tent women presented Women's Action Agenda 2015 to WSSD Secretary General Nitin Desai and South African Deputy President Jacob Zuma. To view the entire program of tent activities visit the WEDO website.

body, must be promoted and strengthened. Acting collectively, civil society can rise above the dominant global forces to generate momentum to fuel progressive change.

A complete gender analysis of the WSSD Plan of Implementation by Irene Dankelman, Senior Advisor on

Sustainable Development and Rebecca Pearl, Sustainable Development Program Associate, including a list of all gender references in the text, can be found at www.wedo.org. ■
Anna Grossman is WEDO Communications Associate.

Mixed Results for Gender Parity in France

BY DORIS MPOUMOU

It's been two years since a powerful grassroots movement spurred France to adopt a constitutional amendment mandating an equal number of women and men run for public office. Since then, the new law has been put to the test twice—once at the local level during the March 2001 municipal elections and once at the national level in the June 2002 legislative elections—with very different results.

In the municipal elections, political parties actively recruited women can-

didates in order to comply with the requirement that party lists be gender balanced. As a result, the percentage of women in decision-making roles in municipalities leapt from 21 percent to almost 48 percent.

legislative elections one year later was much less encouraging. The major parties deliberately ignored the spirit of gender parity, preferring to pay a fine rather than obey the law.

For example, women candidates

Women believe that the parity law is an important step forward in the struggle for gender equality in politics.

comprised only 20 percent of the major republican party's list. The socialist party did slightly better with 36 percent representation, while the majority of the smaller political parties and groupings, whose representation in parliament heavily depends on

government subsidies, avoided the financial sanctions. As a result, the percentage of women in parliament increased only by 1.1 percent from 10.9 percent to 12.1 percent.

But the outcome of national

Women Make Peace a Resolution

In October 2002 the world celebrated the second anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the first resolution to specifically address the impact of war on women and girls.

The anniversary was marked by the release of the Secretary General's Report on *Women, Peace and Security (S/2002/1154)* and UNIFEM's document *Women, War and Peace*. Both reports recommend that gender be more effectively mainstreamed at all levels of peace operations and post-conflict reconstruction to ensure that the needs, interests and expertise of girls and women are at the core of peace operations. Other recommendations include increasing the number of women serving as high-level representatives in conflict resolution and appointing more women as special representatives.

As part of its global Gender Balance Campaign in all spheres of decision making, WEDO urges the Secretary General to consider applying Resolution 1325 to the Security Council, the heart of all peace operations, when writing its 2004 follow up report. For further information on women peace and security visit: www.unifem.org/resources/assessment/index.html or www.peacewomen.org/un/UN1325/NGOreport.html



50/50 UPDATE

Nearly three years into WEDO's global campaign *50/50 by 2005: Get the Balance Right!* over 15 countries have launched campaigns pushing for women's complete and equal access to all areas and all levels of public life. For a look at some recent 50/50 happenings in Namibia, South Africa and Zambia log onto WEDO's website: www.wedo.org/balance.htm.

The differences in election results exposed some inherent weaknesses in the parity law, making gender parity at the national level, where political and financial powers are concentrated, more difficult to achieve.

But despite these difficulties many women believe that parity remains an important step forward in the struggle for gender equality in political and public life.

Furthermore, they believe that this imbalance, which stems from different standards of enforcement, can be remedied. The rules governing local elections stipulate that political parties whose lists don't comply with the parity law will not be registered, making them ineligible to take part in the race. This was true even for parties that were willing to face financial sanctions such as reduction or withdrawal of campaign funding support from the government.

This rule for local elections does not apply to national contests. The solution is to make enforcement measures consistent across the different power levels.

That is exactly what a group of women hope to achieve in the near future. Together with Françoise Gaspard, leader of the parity movement in France, the women are submitting a set of recommendations to the National Assembly on enforcement of the gender parity law. ■
Doris Mpoumou is Gender and Governance Program Associate

Reinventing Globalization

BY NADIA JOHNSON

The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) hosted their ninth International Forum October 3-6 in Guadalajara, Mexico. Held every three years, the AWID Forum is the largest international conference on gender equality outside of the United Nations system, offering women's rights advocates the opportunity to share ideas and experiences, build skills, and further develop strategies and alternatives for advancing the common goals of gender equality and social justice.

More than 1,000 participants from around the world gathered to tackle the theme, *Reinventing Globalization*. Participants analyzed current approaches to economic and political change, weighing successes and developing new strategies to address the challenges that lie ahead.

The forum also highlighted the difficulties women face in an increasingly hostile geo-political climate that is marked by growing militarization, rising religious and market fundamentalisms, the globalization of economic neo-liberalism, the weakening of economic and social rights, and U.S. unilateralism.

Participants at the forum stressed that within this volatile environment, more research on the differential impacts of globalization is critical. Other recommendations for remedying global imbalances and injustice included stepped-up monitoring of the global institutions involved in economic policymaking.

Facing these needs, WEDO convened a workshop entitled "A Better World is Possible: Financing for Sustainable Development" to discuss the state of women's advocacy and monitoring of the UN and global trade and finance institutions.

Drawing from recent experiences at the UN International Conference on Financing for Development and the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development, the workshop presented lessons learned on implementing government commitments towards sustainable development.

June Zeitlin of WEDO moderated the workshop; panelists included Laura Frade, Women's Eyes on the Multi-laterals, Mexico; Elaine Zuckerman, Gender Action, U.S.; and Nelcia Robinson, Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA), Trinidad and Tobago.

The difficulty of implementing UN agreements was a recurring topic. In particular, women noted that, thus far, the UN has failed to challenge the inherent problems of globalization.

Advocates also expressed concern over the growing number of partnerships between the UN and the private sector, fearing that corporations and the international trade and financial institutions will use these partnerships to promote an

FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT TOOL BOX

Check out these and other publications on the WEDO website at www.wedo.org/publicat/publicat.htm:

The *Financing for Development Gender Policy Briefing Kit*, a joint project of WEDO and UNDP, is a comprehensive resource for mainstreaming gender in economic policy making.

Women Challenging Globalization, a joint project of WEDO and UNIFEM, reports on the 2002 United Nations Conference on Financing for Development from a gender perspective. A valuable tool for policymakers, academics and women's rights advocates, the report advances understanding of the gender dimensions of the FfD process. The report also examines women's role in the global economy and the innovative strategies women have used to bring their perspectives to economic policy making. It is available in English, French and Spanish.



agenda contrary to the democratic principles of the UN.

For more information on the 2002 Forum, visit www.awid.org. ■
Nadia Johnson is Economic and Social Justice Program Associate.

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Peace Train Arrives at Full Steam

With the whistle blowing full steam ahead, the Women's Peace Train rolled out of the Kampala station in Uganda on August 16 for a ten-day historic journey to bring a message of peace to the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Women's Peace Train was coordinated by the African Center for Empowerment Gender and Advocacy in Kenya with help from more than 70 women's groups. At each of the 18 stops in cities in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa, the Peace Train was met by large, exuberant crowds of government dignitaries, representatives of non-governmental organizations and the general public. Carrying a Peace Torch to demonstrate Africa's commitment to ending war and conflict, the women succeeded in mobilizing over 10,000 people. On the opening day of the

Summit, First Lady of South Africa, Zanele Mbeki, was on hand at the Johannesburg rail station to welcome the women who had traveled thousands of miles to bring their message to the world. Upon greeting the women, First Lady Mbeki remarked that if African women could enjoy their rightful place in society, they would deliver the dream of a peaceful and prosperous Africa. The Peace Torch continued to burn throughout the WSSD as a reminder of the sacrifices African women have made in the pursuit of peace. At the closing ceremony of the Women's Action Tent at the NGO Forum, the torch was presented by Mandisa Monakali of Ilitha Labantu to Deputy President of South Africa Jacob Zuma and WSSD Secretary General Nitin Desai.

Passing the women's peace torch to Jacob Zuma, deputy president of South Africa.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE WOMEN'S PEACE TRAIN CONTACT:

Litha Musyimi-Ogana
The African Center for Empowerment
Gender and Advocacy (ACEGA)
UN Avenue, Opposite United Nations, Gigiri
P.O. Box 60375, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 254 - 2 - 520247
Fax: 254 - 2 - 710305
Email: acega@insightkenya.com

PHOTO: VANESSA VAN VREDEN

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