



# Women's Environment & Development Organization

A women's global advocacy organization working towards a just world that promotes and protects human rights, gender equality and the integrity of the environment



WEDO believes that women's empowerment and leadership are key levers of change. It mobilizes and facilitates women's participation and perspectives in global, regional and national policy-making spheres – particularly for sustainable development and effective global governance. Across all areas of WEDO's work, women's organizing is key: the power of women's capacity to act, speak, innovate and lead drives change – and drives the mission of the organization.

## Mission

To contribute toward its vision for the world, WEDO's mission is to ensure that women's rights; social, economic and environmental justice; and sustainable development principles—as well as the linkages between them—are at the heart of global and national policies, programs and practices.

## Approach

WEDO views strong and diverse partnerships and alliances as integral to meeting its goals. It allies with women's organizations and networks; environmental, development and human rights organizations; governments; and intergovernmental organizations, including the United Nations, to achieve its mission. WEDO's core competency has been high-level advocacy in international arenas, while building bridges among a range of stakeholders.

## Goals

In 2011-2015, WEDO prioritizes its work around three interlinked strategic goals:



## How We Work

WEDO strives for flexibility to be able to respond to urgent women's human rights, environmental and development issues. As such, WEDO pursues action research on a range of themes; regularly conducts trainings and other capacity building activities, especially on gender and sustainable development issues, across local, national and international levels; and targets awareness-raising, coalition-building and advocacy in critical decision-making spheres with civil society, government and United Nations allies.

# What WE DO

WEDO works on complementary projects that collectively contribute to each of its strategic goals. Major current projects include:

## ■ **Advocating for gender-responsive action on climate change**

In 2007, at the UN climate change conference in Bali, WEDO joined with UNDP, UNEP and IUCN to form the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA), an international network of now more than 60 NGOs and IGOs, including more than a dozen UN agencies, working together to ensure climate change policies and programs at all levels are gender-responsive. On behalf of the GGCA, WEDO hones advocacy strategies and facilitates a diverse international team of gender equality advocates at every major UN climate change meeting, providing technical support to more than 100 governments and liaising with a wide range of stakeholders. To contribute to advocacy positions, WEDO and partners conduct research, design and implement trainings and other capacity building activities, and network with women and women's organizations from every region of the world. A recently launched network of regional focal points ensures on-the-ground realities are reflected in every aspect of climate change advocacy.



## ■ **Empowering women decision-makers for sustainable development**

The Women Delegates Fund (WDF) is a program to support and enhance the participation of women leaders in the UN climate change negotiations. Since its inception in 2009, the WDF – another project under the GGCA – has evolved from a travel fund to a comprehensive leadership and capacity-building program for a group of core participants, organizing networking events, communications opportunities and trainings on a range of issues, from technical climate change themes to diplomacy, legal language, negotiating techniques and liaising with media. The WDF has supported more than 25 trips to major negotiating sessions for women mostly from least developed countries, increasing the quantitative and qualitative impact of women leaders in UN spheres.

## ■ **Protecting and promoting forests by protecting and promoting women**

WEDO, in partnership with CARE and other international and national agencies, is conducting ground-breaking action research in four countries on a climate change mitigation mechanism intended to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation – REDD+. With potential for profound risk and negative impacts, as well as opportunity to advance women's rights when addressed from a gender perspective, REDD+ presents a range of implications for local communities, and particularly for women. By working directly with women in forest communities, WEDO is revealing that indeed grassroots solutions to climate change are possible, already exist, and need to be scaled up. But effective standards and safeguards need to be in place at every stage, or REDD+ and other mitigation mechanisms could do more harm than good.



## ■ **Promoting women's diverse leadership for a healthy, peaceful planet**

Focused uniquely on the intersections of women's rights and sustainable development, WEDO is one of the only women's organizations mobilizing consistent, progressive, rights-based action around all three major environmental conventions – those on climate change, biodiversity and combatting desertification (UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD) – and broader sustainable development spheres, such as the recent Rio+20 conference and its follow-up. Facilitating diverse teams of gender advocates at major meetings, such as the 11th Conference of Parties to the CBD, WEDO and partners tailor technical tools to promote gender-transformative policy-making and support national implementation of gender equality and sustainable development mandates.

# And what WE could DO - with YOU

WEDO has exciting initiatives at nascent stages. From scaling up and replicating successful projects, to turning valuable lessons learned into powerful action, WEDO welcomes partners to further develop its newest work, including:

## Empowering the next generation of leaders for sustainable development

With twenty years of experience in global advocacy spheres, WEDO recognizes that a powerful constituency demands specific attention: young women. Millions of dollars are invested in young women's education initiatives around the globe, including in the U.S. – but few training programs integrate perspectives and information on major global issues such as climate change, biodiversity or food security. WEDO is partnering with organizations and networks to develop training tools and networking opportunities for young women to lead the way toward a sustainable and equitable world. In 2012, this is a commitment WEDO made as a new member of the Clinton Global Initiative.



## Mobilizing a rights- and sustainability-based post-2015 agenda

Harvesting experience, information and positions from across our work, and mobilizing a diverse base of partners from around the globe, WEDO is joining with other women's rights and social justice allies to form a Women's Coalition, ready to influence the post-2015 development agenda. Linking post-Rio+20 sustainable development spheres with broader MDG development arenas, and liaising between civil society, UN and government, WEDO is uniquely positioned to foster collaborations across sectors and across levels. Especially focused on multi-directional information-sharing and forming positions from the ground up, WEDO envisions a transformative agenda firmly anchored in human rights and sustainable development principles.

## Fostering enabling national environments for gender equality and sustainability

Action research across eight countries in the last two years has revealed an important trend that WEDO aims to champion, supporting nations to turn policy commitments into real action. To advance both gender equality and sustainability, countries need a tri-fold enabling environment: gender-sensitive policy frameworks, active women's networks from grassroots to professional levels, and civil society and government stakeholders armed with information and technical support. This sets in motion a willingness and ability to act – and WEDO intends to pilot specific action on climate change in four countries next year.



## Finding out what works: documenting best practices for gender equality and sustainable development

Countless case studies and assessments have emerged over the years, identifying, for example, the gender impacts of climate change, the gender dimensions of sustainable development and the importance of meeting commitments to women's human rights. But what is actually working at the national level? In time for the Beijing+20 and MDG reviews, which will necessarily impact the post-2015 framework, and coinciding with the post-Kyoto Protocol and post-Hyogo Framework for Action timelines, WEDO will conduct a review with partners from around the globe to document best practices in implementation. A follow-up report to WEDO's 2005 Beijing Betrayed, this one will focus on replicable solutions.



## More about who we are

Founded twenty years ago by U.S. Congresswoman Bella Abzug, along with feminist journalist Mim Kelber and an extraordinary committee of international women leaders, including Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai (Kenya), Vandana Shiva (India) and Thais Corral (Brazil), the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) remains a leading women's global advocacy organization, uniquely focused at the nexus of women's rights, environmental sustainability and development.

WEDO is headquartered in New York, with program staff in Latin America and West Africa and an International Board of Directors based around the world. As a women's organization, WEDO strives to 'walk the talk' – exemplifying the principles of empowerment it endorses, including by respecting and promoting each other, valuing teamwork and leadership both, and championing diverse, multi-stakeholder contributions and positions. It holds its partners to the same standards to which it holds itself: WEDO's partner policy includes mutual accountability, transparency and open communication, participatory decision-making, commitment to joint learning and problem-solving, and upholding independence.



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