



Women's  
Major Group

# Gender Equality, Women's Rights and Women's Priorities:

Recommendations for the proposed Sustainable  
Development Goals (SDGs) and the Post-2015  
Development Agenda

September 2013



## **Preface**

### **Aim of this report**

Governments and UN Agencies are busy preparing their priorities for a framework of goals and targets for development, following the Rio+20 summit in June 2012, as well as the post-2015 follow-up of the Millennium Development Goals. Many priorities are already being formulated in the first months of 2013. It is essential that the analysis and recommendations from the perspective of civil-society women's and gender organisations is taken into account.

The Women's Major Group was created to assure effective public participation of women's groups and other organizations and social movements striving for gender equality and gender justice in the United Nations policy process on Sustainable Development. This report provides a compilation of position papers on different elements of the post-2015 agenda and proposed Sustainable Development Goals written by a very diverse group of active members of the Women's Major Group.

While the individual position papers do not necessarily reflect the views of all members of the Women's Major Group, they are marked by a clear common vision on the root causes of the unsustainable development that has triggered the ecological, social and economic crises the planet is facing today, and the structural, transformative changes that are needed to address these crises.

### **The authors**

The authors of the position papers are women's movements' representatives and gender experts, mainly from the Global South, who have taken the lead in developing their views and priorities, which formed the basis for the consultation and input from all members of the women's major group. A summary with the key recommendations from all chapters forms the overall Women's Major Group position paper.

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## 1. About the Women's Major Group

The Women's Major Group was created as a result of the United Nations 1992 Rio Earth Summit, which recognized women as one of the nine major groups of civil society whose participation in decision-making is essential for achieving sustainable development. Its fundamental role is to assure effective public participation of women's groups and other organizations and social movements striving for gender equality and gender justice in the United Nations policy process on Sustainable Development.



The Women's Major Group (WMG) is organized globally with over 390 representatives of non-governmental organizations. Two organizing partners (Women International for a Common Future, WICF, and Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, DAWN) and two core group members (Women's Environment and Development Organization, WEDO, and Global Forest Coalition, GFC) coordinate the WMG<sup>1</sup>.



Participatory hygiene training enabling poor rural women to attain a sustainable livelihood by showing them ways of improving their living health conditions. Photo: WECF/WICF

<sup>1</sup>More information available at [www.womenrio20.org](http://www.womenrio20.org) and <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=157>

## 2. Introduction

In 2015, the United Nations will review the Millennium Development Goals, and adopt a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thus establishing the broad framework for the global development agenda for the next few decades. The possible outcome of this negotiation process is being discussed under different institutional arrangements, including the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals of the General Assembly (OWG SDGs), the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (Post-2015 HLP), the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), the UN Global Compact (UNGC) and the UN Development Group. Civil society organizations and social movements face many challenges in finding meaningful channels of participation in all these processes. This publication aims to summarize contributions by WMG members to this discussion. It collects the key recommendations made by women activists, advocates, practitioners and academics that are part of the WMG<sup>2</sup>.

### **The Politics of Gender and Sustainable Development, and Women's Movement Resistance to a Corporatized Development Agenda**

Well before 1992, and the now-famous Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, women's groups in every region of the world have been leading work on all areas that contribute to sustainable development - social, environmental and economic - particularly focusing on gender equality and human rights. Feminist groups and the wider Women's Movement were absolutely key to transformative shifts bringing together these issue areas, both through the work of the 'Planeta Femea' at the Earth Summit itself<sup>3</sup>, and in subsequent decades of advocacy and activism, including long-time efforts of the WMG.

The 1992 Rio Earth Summit also gave added recognition to structural inequalities in the global system, connecting this to the growing environmental crisis. Through strong lobbying, civil society gained recognition to participate in official UN processes on sustainable development through structures referred to as Major Groups. The nine groups established include social rights holder groups like farmers, trade unions, indigenous peoples, women, and children and youth, thus creating a formal mechanism for social groups to have representation in the follow-up activities of the Commission on Sustainable Development convened under the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

The 1992 Earth Summit, including efforts by women advocates and allies to integrate gender equality and women's rights through Chapter 24<sup>4</sup> of Agenda 21, also provided a global momentum for other integrated frames of human rights and sustainable development in global, regional and national policymaking. One such process is the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) that moved from a prevalent Malthusian focus on demographic targets through population control, toward a perspective recognizing human rights, women's right to decision-making over their bodies and reproductive choices and sustainable development. The WMG continues today to prioritize integration and interlinkage of sustainable development and other global intergovernmental processes such as the Post-2015 Development Agenda, ICPD Beyond 2014, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the UN Convention on Biodiversity (CBD).

However, twenty years after the Earth Summit in Rio, there has been far too little progress. Sustainable consumption and production, and equitable inter-state and intra-state resource distribution have not been ensured. Instead, there are exacerbated structural obstacles in the form of unequal trade and finance regimes impeding growth in developing countries. In all States today, there is need to urgently reduce the levels of environmental destruction and degradation, to address climate change and biodiversity loss, and to address persistent inequalities preventing the realization of individual and collective rights, including women's rights.

Gender equality and women's rights are being inadequately framed as 'mainstreaming' concerns, rather than as a transformative necessity for the realization of sustainable development. The recent report of the HLP on the Post 2015 Development Agenda shows a heightened and disturbing re-orientation of development toward the interests and priorities of corporations, further marginalizing and minimizing the concerns of women all over the world, as well as their communities.<sup>5</sup> It is of utmost

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<sup>2</sup> More information available at [www.womenrio20.org](http://www.womenrio20.org)

<sup>3</sup> Nayar, A and Sen, G. 2012. Population, Environment and Human Rights: a Paradigm in the Making, in *Powerful Synergies: Gender Equality, Economic Development and Environmental Sustainability* (Sept 2012), UNDP,

<sup>4</sup> Chapter 24 of Agenda 21, "Women in Sustainable Development"

<sup>5</sup> Women's Major Group, Reflections on HLP post 2015 report: by far not good enough! (June 2013). Available at [http://www.womenrio20.org/docs/Women\\_MG\\_analysis\\_High\\_Level\\_Panel\\_post\\_2015\\_report.pdf](http://www.womenrio20.org/docs/Women_MG_analysis_High_Level_Panel_post_2015_report.pdf)

concern that corporations now have unprecedented levels of access to United Nations and State decision-making processes. In this period of economic, finance and other crises of human rights violations, militarism, food, fuel, climate change and environmental degradation, the influence of transnational corporations has never been as strong nor as networked in its resolve to protect profits above all else, and preserve structural inequalities that secure such gains.

Twenty years after the Rio Earth Summit, the world finds itself in the biggest recession since the 1930s, set off by global crises triggered by capital-hungry and risk-taking actions by international financial institutions that spread into the real economy, and leading to social spending cuts and privatization of public services entrenching the influence of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). This is largely a repetition of structural adjustment policies, which three decades ago imposed a regime of inequality and high unemployment together with precarious labor conditions that have been further increased. Environmental destruction, and more specifically, the climate crisis, has also worsened.

In response, a corporate driven agenda for a green economy was debated strongly in the Rio+20 Summit in 2012. Such a marketized system seeks to legitimize strategies such as geo-engineering, the bioeconomy and market-oriented emissions reduction schemes, which may include carbon trading, the Clean Development Mechanism, (CDM), REDD+<sup>6</sup> and more, and do not address unsustainable consumption and production. Developing countries and some civil society groups have countered this by demanding recognition of Agenda 21 and other long-fought principles of sustainable development such as common but differentiated responsibilities, technology transfer, and 'free, prior and informed consent' of indigenous peoples and communities affected by development plans by States and private sector.

However, these more progressive positions too often still invisibilize and minimize gender equality and justice, and women's rights concerns. Thus, instead of these concerns being priorities at Rio+20, women's bodily autonomy and integrity was used as a bargaining chip by some states to win concessions in what they considered 'strategic areas', while sexual and reproductive health and rights was attacked by a small but powerful group led by the Vatican, Russia and some Middle East and North African states. Meanwhile, South and North countries that are traditionally seen as allies in support of sexual and reproductive health and rights, did not adequately hold the line and instead focused on other priorities such as the green economy and market-based financing mechanisms. It was only at the very end of the process that the G-77 block broke on this point, but it was too late to include this language in the final text.<sup>7</sup> Thus, this laid a basis to further erode gains made in other arenas such as the ICPD.

In this politicized context of international, regional and national negotiations on sustainable development, the members of the WMG strongly propose sustainable development to redistribute wealth, assets, and power to achieve social, economic and ecological justice; to tackle intersecting inequalities and multiple forms of discrimination based on gender, age, class, caste, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disabilities, and other status.

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<sup>6</sup> REDD+ stands for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and enhance forest carbon stocks.

<sup>7</sup> DAWN, Analysis Paper on the Rio+20 Process and Outcome Document, <http://www.dawnnet.org/advocacy-cso.php?id=254>

## **Feminist visions of structural transformations for achieving women's human rights and gender equality in the 2014 development agenda<sup>8</sup>**

**21 March 2013, Bonn  
Statement**

We caution against developing another set of reductive goals, targets and indicators that ignore the transformational changes required to address the failure of the current development model rooted in unsustainable production and consumption patterns exacerbating gender, race and class inequities.

We do not want to be mainstreamed into a polluted stream. We call for deep and structural changes to existing global systems of power, decision-making and resource sharing. This includes enacting policies that recognize and redistribute the unequal and unfair burdens of women and girls in sustaining societal wellbeing and economies, intensified in times of economic and ecological crises.

Any Post-2015 development agenda must be based on the principle of non-regression, firmly rooted in human rights obligations and commitments from the UN conferences of the 1990s and gains made through their follow up processes at regional and global levels<sup>9</sup>. They must also proactively address increasing inequalities within and between countries, feminization of poverty, discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity, commodification of natural resources, threats to food sovereignty, global warming, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation.

We insist that the Post-2015 development agenda must not be driven by the donor or corporate sectors. Rather, it must be articulated through a progressive policy framework that aims to fairly redistribute wealth, assets, and power to achieve social, economic, ecological, and erotic justice. It must also tackle intersecting inequalities and multiple forms of discrimination based on gender, age, class, caste, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and abilities.

### **The Post-2015 Development Agenda must:**

- Prioritise gender equality and women's human rights throughout the framework.
- Ensure meaningful participation of women's and social movements in the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programs.
- Use the human rights architecture as its basis and include concrete means of implementation that prioritize public financing over public-private partnerships in order to realise states obligation to allocate the maximum availability of resources.
- Promote innovative, democratic financing mechanisms, including long-term, flexible support for civil society organizations, including women's organizations.
- Recognize that there are ecological limits to the 'growth' paradigm and that sustainable development must be safeguarded from corporations and States that prioritise profit over all.
- Respect and build upon then overarching principle of equitable sharing of atmospheric space, between and also within States, taking into account intergenerational justice. It also implies respecting the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, which considers historic economic, ecological and social debt responsibility.
- Urgently reform monetary, financial and trade rules globally in line with human rights obligations, that

<sup>8</sup> The Women's Major Group convened by Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) and Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) facilitated the development of this statement from feminist organizations and allies attending the Bonn Conference "Advancing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda" from 20-22 March 2013.

<sup>9</sup> This includes the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, International Covenant on Economic Cultural and Social Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on Biodiversity; Convention on the Law of the Sea; the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development; Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women; Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development; UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development; Maputo Protocol and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (Convention of Belem do Para) and more.

ensure policy space at the national level to implement macroeconomic policies, trade and investment agreements to achieve gender and social justice.

- Create global and national binding rules and safeguards including by applying the Maastricht Principles on Extraterritorial Obligations of States in the area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. For instance, this is central to the protection of bio-cultural users of land and natural resources from negative impacts of extractive industries, and large-scale monocultures.
- Ensure that Agenda 21 and Rio+20 commitments on technology transfer, monitoring and assessment, skills development and research are explicit in all investment and trade regimes, and in line with the precautionary principle and principle of free, prior informed consent as critical ecosystem protection.
- Reaffirm the moratorium on geo-engineering in order to prevent the unsustainable technological and market based fixes that attempt the large-scale manipulation of the earth's climate such as managing solar radiation, extracting carbon from the atmosphere, and modifying the weather.
- Phase-out, eliminate financial support, and impose moratoria on harmful economic activities which affect the health of people and the environment, particularly in the areas of mining, nuclear energy, and chemicals.
- Promote safe and sustainable energy solutions that prevent negative impacts on the health of people and of the planet and that do not further deplete existing community resources.
- Re-orient national agricultural plans from extractive industries and export-oriented agribusiness toward local women-led and small-holder agro-ecology practices.
- Include strong protection of local free seed supply and distribution systems in order to reverse the environmental and social impacts caused by food insecurity, soil degradation and land grabbing, on all affected communities including migrants, fisher, forest and indigenous peoples, pastoralists, and many other marginalized communities.
- Guarantee women's equitable access to and control over resources that promote fair asset redistribution among different social groups regarding the use of land, ocean, credits, technology, intellectual and cultural property.
- Affirm the human rights of women, girls and people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities to bodily integrity. Eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence based on misogynist, homophobic, lesbian phobic, and trans-phobic ideas. Specific attention is also needed to address the violence faced by women human rights defenders, sex workers, and women working in conflict and militarized contexts, among others.
- Guarantee sexual and reproductive rights and universal access, to quality, comprehensive, integrative sexual and reproductive health services, including contraception, safe abortion, STI and HIV prevention and treatment, and maternity care with an emphasis on equity and respect for diversity.
- Recognise that care and social reproduction are intrinsically linked with the productive economy and therefore fully reflected in macroeconomic policy-making. States should guarantee universal access to public care services and private sector regulation to ensure quality and decent working conditions and income for care providers. The post-2015 agenda should promote policies that shift patriarchal cultural norms in order to promote equitable distribution of care work between men and women and diverse families.
- Ensure equitable and universal access to formal and popular education throughout the life cycle that includes comprehensive sexuality education, gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability.
- Tackle gendered labour market segregation, and ensure universal and affordable access to social protection and public services including housing, education, water and sanitation, health care and unemployment benefits.

**We demand a transparent and democratic process in the development of the Post 2015 agenda where feminist, human rights, environmental and social justice movements' claims are prioritized over politically and economically dominant elites and States.**



### **3. Eliminating root causes of inequalities, human rights abuse, unsustainable development and destruction of the environment. Lessons learned from past development goals**

By Simone Lovera<sup>10</sup> and Sascha Gabizon<sup>11</sup>

#### **The economic root causes of human rights abuse and environmental destruction**

The main lesson learned from past development goals is that we need to understand the root causes underlying the current unsustainable and inequitable system in order to develop a new economic paradigm that allows for the survival of the planet as well as a more equitable social order.

Unsustainable development, inequality and the violation of the human rights of women and men are closely linked. In fact, they are different faces of the very same problem. Respect for human rights, including in particular the right to non-discrimination prescribes that every human being, regardless of his/her sex, race, religion, age or sexual preference, has an equal right to enjoy the natural wealth of our planet. This equal right to ecological space, not only of current generations, but also of future generations, is at the heart of sustainable development as well.

As the Brundtland report already noted in 1987:

*"inequality is the planet's main 'environmental' problem; it is also its main 'development' problem."*

For that reason, the Commission concludes that sustainable development does not only mean poverty eradication in terms of "meeting the basic needs of all" but also that "those who are more affluent adopt life-styles within the planet's ecological means."

#### **Women are the majority of those living in poverty**

Women form the majority of the world's poor.<sup>12</sup> The root causes of this unequal access to the world's wealth are both economic and cultural. These causes are also embedded in deeply rooted patterns of discrimination, causing women to receive lower wages, own less property, and be more vulnerable to the hardships of poverty and environmental degradation.

#### **Women are disproportionately represented in the care economy**

The care economy, which encompasses paid and unpaid work, tends to rely on women's cheap or invisible labour. We believe that the provision of care is central to our livelihoods and should be a collective responsibility that involves not only women, but also men; not only families and households but also communities, the public sector and the private sector. This does not imply the monetarization of unpaid care work, but certainly it calls for its effective redistribution.

#### **"Gender-blind" economic indicators**

Women's unpaid contributions to our economies are not valued nor measured. The main economic indicator used for policy decision-making, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), is 'gender blind'. It does not reflect the unpaid contribution of women or the unvalued contribution of nature to our economies. In the words of Robert Kennedy, the GDP "measures everything, except that which makes life worthwhile". According to some estimates, women's unpaid labour is equivalent to at least half of a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The unpaid labour performed by women is a large part of the so-called 'care economy'. It involves the unpaid work usually performed in the domestic sphere providing direct (feeding, clothing, cleaning and caring for the ill, young and vulnerable) and indirect care (wood collection for energy purposes, seed collection for self sustenance, etc.) that enables others to take part in the economy and generate income. "If the care economy sputters, it will have

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<sup>10</sup> Simone Lovera is executive director of the Global Forest Coalition (GFC), an international coalition of 54 Indigenous Peoples' Organizations and NGOs that strives for socially just, rights-based approaches to forest conservation. She also works as a volunteer forest campaigner for Sobrevivencia/Friends of the Earth-Paraguay

<sup>11</sup> Sascha Gabizon is the executive director of Women International for a Common Future (WECF) and co-facilitator of the Women's Major Group. WECF is an international network of more than 150 women and environment organizations in 50 countries working locally for sustainable development and influencing policy globally for a healthy environment for all, see [www.wecf.org](http://www.wecf.org)

<sup>12</sup> UNICEF, 2007. Estimates that globally women account for 70% of poor are also based on a combination of assumptions based on e.g. women's land ownership (1-2%), property ownership, income levels (up to 80-90% lower for the same job than men in some countries). See UNDP human development report.

serious consequences for both society and its productivity as it is losing its most important resource and value generator – people.”<sup>13</sup> Gender-aware indicators that reflect the value and persistence of this work should be implemented in all economic and policy planning, advancing already existing statistical advances such as time surveys and satellite accounts and incorporating their data in the development models.

### **Gender inequalities represent a vicious incentive for economic growth**

GDP growth does not necessarily mean more jobs and wellbeing. There have been many cases of GDP growth linked to increasing inequity, depletion of the economy's natural resource base, growth which did not benefit women, and even unemployment growth, as shown in numerous country specific research on 'jobless growth' in e.g. South Africa, India and the Philippines.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, gender inequalities can be a incentive for economic growth that counters any form of social justice. The gender pay gap, which is present in most countries around the globe, represents a vicious incentive for foreign direct investment in the global South because of their unskilled female labour. This is evident in the prominence of women labourers in the tax-free zones around the global south.

### **Ecosystems essential for poor people's livelihoods**

The contribution of nature and ecosystems also remains invisible in the GDP. Intact ecosystems assure the survival of the poorest people, who depend for up to 80 per cent of their livelihoods on functioning ecosystems.<sup>15</sup> Given women's unequal care responsibilities their dependence on natural resources for survival in the form of water and wood gathering for their households in rural and urban poor contexts (just to cite two examples) makes them more vulnerable to the depletion of natural resources. If rivers are dried up women and girls in poverty have to walk longer distances to collect water for their families. This is the same if forests are depleted and women need to collect wood to cook and warm up their houses.



Photo: Miguel Lovera

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.undp.org/women/CD-Gender-and-Budgets-2004/3.1-care.htm> - Both these concepts (Social Capital and Care Economy) essentially capture the 'values' of human investment and activity in the economy.

<sup>14</sup> Sources: United Nations, World Economic and Social Survey 2006, UN, New York. Asian Development Bank, Key Indicators 2005: Labor Markets in Asia: Promoting Full, Productive, and Decent Employment International Labour Organization (2004), Employment Trends, ILO Geneva. Developing Member Countries (DMC) of the Asian Development Bank.

<sup>15</sup> TEEB (2010), The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity. Mainstreaming the Economics of Nature, Synthesis of approach, Recommendations and Conclusions of TEEB. <http://www.teebweb.org>

### **Economic growth leading to growing pollution and poverty**

The reports on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) show that its goal has been achieved, and almost 50% of people have been lifted out of extreme poverty in the past decade. However, the economic growth that has allowed poverty reduction in the emerging markets, has come at an environmental cost. The latest Human Development Report, however, warns that if environmental degradation continues at the current rate, these gains in poverty reduction will be entirely turned back, pulling over 3 billion people back into extreme poverty.<sup>16</sup>

### **Economic growth leading to growing inequalities**

Poverty reduction is unequally distributed among countries. Most of the poverty reduction comes from countries like China, South Africa, Turkey, Indonesia, India and Brazil. Poverty levels in least developed countries have hardly decreased if at all, and in certain cases they have even increased. The majority of the world's poorest people are women and girls. It is estimated that women account for two thirds of the 1.4 billion people currently living in extreme poverty and make up 60 percent of the 572 million working poor in the world. Research in Sub-Saharan Africa has revealed that women are more likely to live in poverty than men in 22 out of the 25 countries for which data is available.<sup>17</sup> Inequalities have increased in the emerging markets together with economic growth. There are more billionaires than ever both in the North as in the South. The 100 richest people in the world added 240 billion dollars to their wealth in 2012. The top two percent of the world's population (60 million people) now possesses as much wealth as 2.5 billion people. The top 0.01 percent (600,000 persons) has as much wealth as two billion people.<sup>18</sup>

### **Women's movement perspectives**

The current economic system creates greater inequities. While the wealthy consume more natural resources and are responsible for increasing levels of environmental damage, the poor are suffering from degradation of their agricultural land, forests, water supplies and biodiversity, and alteration of natural weather cycles due to climate change. Too much public funding goes to perverse subsidies for unsustainable and speculative activities such as the fossil and nuclear energy sector.<sup>19</sup> In times of economic crisis, austerity measures are often a greater burden on women than on men<sup>20</sup>. Current prices of natural resources, energy and consumer products do not include externalities and future costs. The current economic decision-making is too short-term<sup>21</sup>; long-term benefits are not valued. Military budgets and tax-spending for bailing out banks are taking away necessary funding for social development and environmental protection. Already in preparation of the first Earth Summit, the Women's movement formulated its frustration with this type of unsustainable and inequitable development. In 1991, the women's movement developed the *The Women's Action Agenda for a Healthy Planet*, or "WAA21". The WAA21 sounds as if it had been written today:

*"We, women of many nations, cultures and creeds, of different colours and classes, have come together to voice our concern for the health of our living planet and all its interdependent life forms. As long as Nature and women are abused by a so-called "free market" ideology and wrong concepts of "economic growth," there can be no environmental security".<sup>22</sup>*

### **People's Forum Rio+20: anger and outrage at the current inequalities**

The most authoritative declaration produced by civil society groups and social movements at the Rio+20 World Conference on Sustainable Development was undoubtedly the Final Declaration of the People's Summit, in which more than 50.000 people participated. The declaration which was adopted by consensus at the final plenary assembly of the People's Summit, provides the following analysis of the root causes of unsustainable development:

<sup>16</sup> UNDP, Human Development Report 2013, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/>

<sup>17</sup> Sharon Smee and Jessica Woodroffe, The Gender & Development Network, Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Post-2015 Framework, January 2013

<sup>18</sup> ISP, March 17 2013, Roberto Savio "Switzerland sets example for income equality" <http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/03/switzerland-sets-example-for-income-equality/>

<sup>19</sup> An estimated 700 – 900 billion USD of subsidies go to support fossil and nuclear energy annually, see UNEP report towards green economy 2011, some 1 billion USD per day (!) goes to subsidies for unsustainable agriculture (bad for public health, bees, ecosystems, soil, biodiversity).

<sup>20</sup> A 2011 study by the UK trade unions show that 70% of the austerity measures are a greater burden on women than men

<sup>21</sup> The pressure of quarterly reporting for companies registered on the stock exchange makes long-term transition to e.g. more environmental friendly core business areas almost impossible. The company Unilever took the decision to no longer report quarterly to its shareholders, amongst others based on environmental sustainability arguments (see [www.unilever.com](http://www.unilever.com) - As from the start of the 2011 financial year Unilever will release a quarterly trading statement for quarters 1 and 3 instead of publishing full financial results.).

<sup>22</sup> From: Preamble, WAA21 (Source: <http://www.iisd.org/women/action21.htm>)

*"The multiplicity of voices and forces who have converged around the People's Summit denounce the true structural cause of the global crisis: the patriarchal, racist and homophobic capitalist system (...) The transnational corporations continue committing their crimes through the systematic violation of the rights of the people and nature with total impunity. At the same time, their interests are advanced through militarization and the criminalization of the ways of life of the peoples and of social movements, promoting deterritorialization in the countryside and the cities.*

*....We likewise denounce the historical environmental debt that primarily affects the oppressed peoples of the world, and for which responsibility must be assumed by the highly industrialized countries, since they are ultimately to blame for the various crises we are facing today.....Capitalism further leads to the loss of social, democratic and community control over natural resources and strategic services, which continue being privatized, turning rights into merchandise and limiting people's access to the goods and services needed for survival".<sup>23</sup>*

### **It is time to take effective steps towards gender and economic justice**

Governments must protect all people from violence, exploitation and poverty. In practice, that means that we need full implementation of the Convention to Eliminate all Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its optional protocol in all countries. Parties to the Convention need to integrate and materialize in their national legislation the provisions from the Convention, especially in regards to Articles, 3, 13, 14 & 15. Targets can be set, for example, significantly increasing the proportion of women in leadership in private and public sector and eliminating the wage gap.

Sustainable development and women's full participation in society and economy is only possible when all women's rights are ensured, including sexual and reproductive Rights. All adolescent girls and boys, women and men should have the knowledge and the skills to know their bodies and their rights, negotiate sexual and reproductive decision-making, access health services, and are free from violence and discrimination. This can be done through ensuring comprehensive sexuality education in and out of schools, and to provide adolescent girls with the sexual and reproductive health services that they need while respecting their privacy and confidentiality.

A pre-condition to achieve gender and economic justice is that no-one should be excluded from resources which are essential to their livelihoods because of e.g. patenting of seeds, or privatization of water. Also, public services cannot be left to the market alone. Governments need to create models of public participation in the decision-making and management of public services.

Public budgets need become transparent and need public debate, moving towards including social, environmental and gender justice in all the phases of the budget and policy cycle. Gender-budgeting should be a fixed part of developing public budgets.

Furthermore, we need social protection worldwide: a "global social protection floor" – a basic income for women, men and children. The social protection floor will assure women's access to basic services, health care, food, water, energy, housing and employment. In many countries, including developing countries, a social protection floor already exists. Brazil has made great advances in poverty reduction with its "Bolsa Familia," where women in the households obtained a social protection payment. India has agreed on a "human rights based" approach in development policy, giving women and men in rural areas the "right to employment" – at least 100 days of guaranteed employment. A global social protection floor would cost between 1-2% of global GDP. The time has come for a Global Social Protection Floor, financed amongst others through additional funding in particular the Financial Transaction Tax.

### **Governance of the environmental commons**

A governance system that values the contributions of nature does not automatically mean that we need to "monetarize" nature. Other ways are possible. As a minimum, countries' constitutions should acknowledge the value of nature, to protect natural resources from short-term exploitation. Some countries go even further, and have enshrined the "right of nature" in their constitution. Governments should manage common natural resources in the sole interest of the population, including future generations. There exist different instruments for this, for example Public Trusts to govern global commons beyond national jurisdiction. The basic concept is that certain common natural resources

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<sup>23</sup> <http://cupuladospovos.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/FinalDeclaration-ENG.pdf>

cannot be subject to private ownership and instead are held within a Public Trust. The United Nations resolution on the Human right to water and sanitation in a way already prepares all countries for a change in their legislation, to recognize that water cannot be treated as just another commodity. Water, forests, oceans, soils and climate should be excluded from privatization, and legal instruments should ensure their protection and equitable sharing. In practical terms, immediate steps should be a global moratorium on the opening of new mining sites and other extractive operations, both in the sea and on land. The rush for resources which is causing such great irreversible damage – from destruction of primary forests and their biodiversity, to the irreversible pollution of rivers and oceans – should be halted and policies for to decouple resource use and economic growth should be put in place.

### **Protection from hazardous substances should be a priority**

Our grandparents still believed that the placenta protected the developing child from all unhealthy influences. Now it is known that children can suffer lifelong irreversible health damage from contamination with heavy metals, chemicals and radiation occurred during pregnancy. From the “Minamata disease” caused by exposure to mercury during the child’s development, to DES children without arms due to side-effects of a medicine, to children with reduced IQ due to lead in petrol and paint, to the latest alarming studies on endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) which effect the hormone system and are related to a range of chronic diseases including diabetes, obesity, ADS, to cancer and infertility. Such EDCs as Bisphenol-A, Brominated Flame Retardants, Phthalates are found in every day consumer products, and in pesticide residues. The developing child is most vulnerable to these harmful substances due to a number of biological reasons, and even the smallest doses can cause irreparable harm. The slogan “the dose is the poison” is no longer valid.

Research also shows that women and children are at great risks from nuclear radiation. A recent study<sup>24</sup> suggests that children living near nuclear power plants have higher levels of leukemia (blood cancer) – but no legal measures are taken to protect them. Research also gives rise to concerns regarding the widespread use of GMOs (linked to cancer development) and Nanotechnologies (some nanomaterials might have same health effects as asbestos).

### **Halting unsustainable technologies before market access**

We are all involuntarily part of a global experiment by industries that put new substances on the market without having to prove that these substances are not harmful. Human health is not sufficiently protected by law. Only the European Union has made first steps with its “no data no market” and the reversal of the “burden of proof” principles as the basis for its chemicals safety regulation.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, there is the need for an independent technology assessment and monitoring organization at the national and global level.

In the negotiations on the Green Economy at the Rio+20 summit, there were calls for “technology transfer” and the development of “green technologies.” But who decides what is “green technology?” Is it geo-engineering, which is already happening in large-scale experiments above the Pacific Ocean? Women worldwide want responsible technologies and they have also been the majority to say no to nuclear energy and genetically modified organisms.

Unfortunately, little has been learned from previous health disasters. Many governments still allow lead in petrol, which has led to generations of children with damaged health<sup>26</sup>. Many countries continue to sell and use chrysotile asbestos, a recognized killer responsible for over 100,000 deaths each year<sup>27</sup> – completely unnecessary, as asbestos can very easily be substituted with safe alternatives.

Genetically Manipulated Organisms (GMOs) are another example where increasing research shows that firstly, they do not have the desired effect; secondly are linked to increased cancer risks; and

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<sup>24</sup> The International Journal on Cancer, published in its January 2012 magazine a new study from France, carried out by the national French institutes l'INSERM, de l'IRSN in cooperation with the national child cancer registry of the hospital of Villejuif, including 2753 child leukaemia cases diagnosed between 2002 and 2007 and a control group of 30,000. The addresses were geocoded around 19 nuclear power plants

<sup>25</sup> REACH is the European Community Regulation on chemicals and their safe use ([EC 1907/2006](#)). It deals with the **R**egistration, **E**valuation, **A**uthorisation and **R**estriction of **C**hemical substances. The law entered into force on 1 June 2007. [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/reach/reach\\_intro.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/reach/reach_intro.htm)

<sup>26</sup> World Health Organisation see a.o. [http://www.who.int/bulletin/archives/80\(10\)768.pdf](http://www.who.int/bulletin/archives/80(10)768.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> World Health Organisation and International Labour Organisations reports on chrysotile asbestos victims, see a.o. [http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_076282/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_076282/lang--en/index.htm)

thirdly, make small farmers dependent on expensive and harmful foreign technologies. Unfortunately, the GMO industry is replacing public official development assistance as a source of development funding. These new funding sources come with a nasty hook: promoting unsustainable technologies and dependency on Northern corporations. The Women's Major Group at Rio+20 called for moratorium on nuclear energy, geo-engineering, synthetic biology, GMOs and nanotechnologies, and asks to first have a proof of no harm, and a full analysis of future costs to society.

### **Support Food Sovereignty - not agro-industrial corporations**

At the start of 2013, the EU agreed on the next multiannual budget for its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The CAP is probably one of Europe's most unsustainable policies, opposed to the entire concept of a sustainable development. The European agricultural policy promotes industrial large-scale farmers that use unsustainable practices like industrial livestock farming, pollute the groundwater with harmful chemicals, produce food with pesticide residues, and deplete soil quality with a negative impact on biodiversity. Small farmers and organic farmers, who protect water sources, biodiversity, soil quality and human health, who create more and healthier jobs, and who cause less green house gas emissions, receive little or no support, but have to compete with the agro-industrial farmers whose products are subsidised.

Furthermore, outside Europe, European agricultural trade policies are leading to cheap imports of unsustainable products with which local producers cannot compete. The CAP has been given a "green" edge, with a small increase for environmentally friendly farming, however this does not offset the effects of excessive funding towards subsidies for unsustainable agriculture.

A transformation towards a sustainable inclusive economy should start with a decision to phase-out subsidies to agro-industrial agriculture and to transform trade rules for unsustainable agriculture products. In addition, financial support schemes for unsustainable industrial biofuel and forestry production should be phased-out, including loans from the World Bank as well as carbon credits. International agreements should keep environmental services and forests out of carbon-markets and other market-mechanisms since they promote privatization and restrict access to forest users.

Today, land grabbing is one of the most urgent issues that need to be addressed and halted. At the same time, legally binding safeguards for traditional users of land should be implemented for all investments, in order to protect them against this practice.

Globally, women own 1-2% of land.<sup>28</sup> In most developing countries, women assure food security, and in Sub Saharan Africa they are often responsible for 80% of food production. Often, women farmers do not have land titles and with the increased demand for agricultural lands, they are pushed off the lands owned by the male family members, onto more and more marginalized lands.<sup>29</sup> States need to assure women's land tenure rights, if needed with a reallocation of lands. Also in the EU, land ownership remains in majority in the hands of men.

WECF France has started an "incubator" for start-up women farmers, who focus on sustainable food production and processing.<sup>30</sup> Sustainable development policies should reward women for their biodiversity stewardship – especially regarding saving seeds and nurturing trees. Support for Indigenous peoples' and local communities conserved territories and areas (ICCAs) should also be increased.

In addition to the agricultural sector, the fishing sector is another stronghold of the "brown" economy. If the fishing sector continues business as usual, it is estimated that global fish-stocks will be depleted in the next few decades<sup>31</sup>, causing millions of small fishers to lose their jobs and livelihoods. The political deadlock is caused by a very powerful large fishing fleet lobby, which refuses a transformation. A new economic paradigm needs to eliminate subsidies for industrial fishing fleets and encourage community-based governance models of marine protected areas. Policies are necessary that set targets for implementation of the International Guidelines to secure small-scale sustainable fishing.

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<sup>28</sup> Food and Agricultural Organisation, FAO, Gender report 2011

<sup>29</sup> Op cit

<sup>30</sup> WECF France, women and agriculture project, and agricultural incubator projects, see <http://www.wecf.eu/francais/projets/femmes-rurals.php> and <http://www.wecf.eu/francais/projets/InitiaTerre.php>

<sup>31</sup> United National Environment Program, 2013, Global Environmental Outlook 5, Nairobi, Kenya

### **Putting our money where our values are – examining the financial system and re-regulating corporations and banks**

When asked, most people don't want to put their money into activities which kill other people, or which destroy their own health or environment. Nevertheless, almost all of us do. When analysing the investments of the major retirement funds, these funds invest in companies that are directly linked to undesirable products and processes, such as the tobacco industry, oil, gas, mining, uranium, pesticides and even arms. The investment and banking sector is probably the main driver for unsustainable development and indirectly, human rights abuse. At the same time, financial speculation with commodity prices has increased the number of hungry people in the world<sup>32</sup>. The extractive industry sector and the chemical industry sector have made their greatest profits ever last year, in the middle of the financial crisis, with the largest corporations making 30-50 billion profits per company in one year, even though they are responsible for among the greatest environmental harm in the world, - and in most cases they are not paying for the damage and clean-up. Clearly our financial system is a barrier to a sustainable and equitable economic system. Governments need to re-regulate corporations and the banks, going well beyond the first steps taken by the EU on bankers' bonuses.



Women implementing energy saving measures at a school in Kyrgyzstan, by building solar collectors and training on sustainable insulation methods. Photo WECF/WICF

### **Fiscal reform for a sustainable and equitable development<sup>14</sup>**

A transformation towards a sustainable economy needs a combination of financial and fiscal measures, from regulating commodity markets to limit fluctuations in food prices, the closing of tax havens, and a global financial transaction tax. Furthermore, subsidies should be redirected away from unsustainable activities, such as industrial fisheries, agriculture, chemicals and extractives, to investments in local sustainable value chains.

For example, G20 countries are discussing how to divert their fossil fuel subsidies worth USD\$ 300 billion annually, which could increase investments in other areas, such as e.g. direct social and

<sup>32</sup> Many research studies have confirmed this link see a summary overview in a.o. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/speculating-with-lives-how-global-investors-make-money-out-of-hunger-a-783654.html>

environmental protection measures<sup>33</sup>. A global tax on chemical industry of 0.01% would bring 4 billion per year and could contribute to the health costs of the estimated 2 million people who become ill each year due to contamination with pesticides and other hazardous substances.<sup>34</sup> A reduction of 30% in all national military expenditures would bring an additional USD\$ 500 billion per year. Also a tax on extractives would be probably the most beneficial, following the examples of Norway, which taxes oil revenue at 80%, generating resources that go into a 'future' fund for social wellbeing, and recently also Bolivia and Ecuador with taxes on extractives of about 50%.<sup>35</sup>

We can learn from successful local sustainable investments in Europe. In Germany citizens or citizen's organisations own 40% of renewable energy investments, while farmers own 11%<sup>36</sup>. Instead, large energy companies own only 6% of these investments. It's people who want the energy turn around, so they need instruments to help them and municipalities to have access to funds to invest in sustainable energy production. Key instruments are Feed in Tariff legislation to assure a safe and long-term investment by citizens and small investors and low-interest rate loans for local authorities and cooperatives, including cooperative banks. Moreover, many municipalities in Denmark have access to almost 0% interest loans from the state, which makes long term investments in housing, energy, schools becomes affordable. Policies should support citizen-owned investments and cooperatives and where legislation for cooperatives does not yet exist, this should be introduced including for cooperative banks and the green and social banks.

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<sup>33</sup> See various calculations on savings from elimination of fossil fuel subsidies, a.o. <http://www.environmentalleader.com/2009/09/25/g20-leaders-debate-ending-fossil-fuel-subsidies-to-curb-global-warming/> and <http://www.environmentalleader.com/2013/03/28/imf-ending-fossil-fuel-subsidies-could-cut-co2-13>

<sup>34</sup> UNEP Overview of Economic Instruments <http://www.chem.unep.ch/unep/sectors/economic/instruments/>  
mainstreaming/CostOfInaction\_IntegratedGuidance\_April2010/Integrated%20Guidance\_1st%20EG%20meeting\_April2010\_Overview%20of%20Economic%20Instruments%20Guidance.pdf

<sup>35</sup> See a.o. <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/blog/2013/08/can-taxation-reduce-inequality-lessons-from-ecuador>

<sup>36</sup> German agency for renewable energy 2011, <http://www.unendlich-viel-energie.de>



## 4. Resources and gender equality

### 4.a Food Sovereignty and Women's rights

By Azra Sayeed<sup>37</sup> and Norma Maldonado<sup>38</sup>

Women's rights have been severely curtailed by the industrialisation of agriculture. The Green Revolution of the 1960s exposed small and landless farmers across the South, especially in Asia, to a wide range of negative social and ecological conditions, and compounded the exploitation experienced by women under existing feudal and patriarchal systems. Subsequent trade liberalization policies imposed on developing countries have exacerbated the situation, putting small and landless farmers, especially women farmers, at risk in multiple ways. The current economic, ecological and food crises are now pushing women and their families to the limit, with the starkest impacts being felt by the poorest, hungriest households.



Sapara woman, Ecuador.  
Photo: Indigenous Peoples Biocultural Climate Change Initiative. See <http://ipcca.info>

The Green Revolution effectively forced farmers in developing countries to accept a technological food production revolution, mechanising many systems of cultivation and food processing. This had significant negative impacts on people and communities dependent on traditional agricultural practices for both food and income, with women bearing the brunt of these impacts. This was felt particularly keenly in post-harvest processing jobs, with machines operated by men undertaking jobs — such as the de-husking, threshing and milling of rice — that were previously performed mainly by women.<sup>39</sup> This loss of access to food and financial resources, required to buy food and meet other household needs, contributed to declining food sovereignty at the household and community level. Food sovereignty is the preferred term here, over food security, as food sovereignty implies local control and sustainable production, independent of imports and agroindustry.

Subsequent neoliberal agricultural trade policies — which are ostensibly about liberalising trade in food and agricultural products — have, focused on supporting industrialised agricultural production by transnational corporations from the North by opening up many protected domestic markets in developing countries. In the food and agriculture

sectors, this has had huge impacts, including on access to land resources, local food production, and the production of healthy food.<sup>40</sup> Liberalisation also includes the dismantling of state institutions and interventions in the food sector, including subsidies and price setting,<sup>41</sup> all of which would previously have been in place to protect and promote food production security.

Structural adjustment policies and bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations have forced developing countries to open up their domestic markets as well as to focus of producing food for export rather than for domestic consumption. Cheap imports from the North have depressed food prices in the South reducing the earnings of many local farmers. These policies have prioritised the allocation of

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docrep/x0171e/x0171e04.htm>

<sup>40</sup> More general information is available here: <http://www.criticalcollective.org/publications/food/>

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.accordsdepeche.com/fichiers/docs/bibli\\_07/160.pdf](http://www.accordsdepeche.com/fichiers/docs/bibli_07/160.pdf)

land to export-oriented agriculture, hence decreasing land availability for small farmers and weakening food security.

For example, the North American Free Trade Agreement between Mexico, the US and Canada, which came into force in 1994, 'locked in' various liberalising reforms affecting peasant agriculture in Mexico. Anxious to increase exports to the US and Canada, the Mexican government, agreed to completely liberalise its agriculture in 14 years. The overall result is that Mexico's imports of basic foodstuffs such as corn (including genetically modified corn) escalated dramatically, whilst Mexico exports a much smaller quantity of non-staple foodstuffs such as beef, fresh and canned fruit and vegetables, shrimp, beer and tequila. In other words, Mexico surrendered its ability to provide basic food products to its people and now depends on food imports. In addition, many small farms collapsed due to their inability to compete with cheap imports from the US.<sup>42</sup> According to a study commissioned by the Mexican government, the number of agricultural households diminished from 2.3 million in 1992 to 575,000 in 2002.<sup>43</sup>

*"Mexico's inability to compete with the US in the agrifood sector has spurred the recurrent migration of farm workers and threatens to eliminate the future generation of farmers."<sup>44</sup>*

The liberalisation of agriculture has also had severe impacts on indigenous peoples, especially women, in Guatemala. These policies undermined the traditional system of 'milpa' agriculture, used to produce corn, beans and squashes, in which women have a prominent role. Mayan women also cultivate medicinal plants, vegetables, fruit, aromatic and food herbs on their patios, and have done so for hundreds of years: they know how to collect all the nourishment needed by their families. Despite all this precious knowledge, 49.3% of children below five years old suffer from chronic malnutrition; of those, 69.5% of indigenous children suffer from malnutrition<sup>45</sup>.

Over the last two decades, the Guatemalan government policies have focused on promoting the more profitable cultivation of vegetables, with the imposition of new technologies that have caused pollution soil and water depletion. As with Mexico, this situation was locked-in following the signing of the US-Central America Free Trade Agreement, commonly referred to as 'CAFTA,' in 2003. This reinforced the role of Guatemala as an export producer, and many producers, motivated by the opportunity to increase their profits, stopped growing corn and beans, the local staple foods. Indigenous people, especially indigenous women, have been heavily affected by this change, and have had to look for alternatives to provide the nourishment needed by their families.<sup>46</sup>

In the same way, neoliberal policies implemented by the International Monetary Fund in cooperation with Central American governments have also affected people's access to water. Women, who are directly involved in the use and management of scarce water resources, have been the most affected. The San Pedro Carchà region in Guatemala, provides a good example for this. It is rich in water where rain is constant for nine or ten months per year with a rich tropical forest that provides wood, where coffee and cardamom are cultivated. However, on the back of this wave of structural adjustments and privatisations, governments sold the rivers to private firms. Even though some of the local communities, after years of fighting for their territories, have won their lands back, they still have no water. As a consequence, Q'eqchies women have to walk for four hours a day to collect two and a half litres of water. Paradoxically, they walk along the river, but they cannot get water from it. The only way to reach water is literally to dig down into the ground, to a depth of seven metres, risking their lives and their daughters' lives. These women have sent many petitions to the local authorities, but their protests and needs have so far been ignored.<sup>47</sup>

The ongoing trade liberalisation process has prised open so many national trade barriers creating a global economic system in which large corporations can trade and invest in many different countries

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.bilaterals.org/spip.php?article15259>

<sup>43</sup> José Romero and Alicia Puyana, Diez años con el TLCAN, las experiencias del sector agropecuario mexicano [Ten Years of NAFTA: Experiences of the Agricultural Sector in Mexico] (Mexico: El Colegio de México), p. 227.

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.bilaterals.org/spip.php?article15259>

<sup>45</sup> GRAIN, 2011. The great milk robbery: How Corporations are stealing livelihoods and a vital source of nutrition from the poor." GRAIN, Barcelona, 2011.

<sup>46</sup> <http://wideplusnetwork.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/ec-alt-eng2012thirdenglish.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> Sources: The geopolitics of food and water in Guatemala: scarcity in a country with abundance. Norma Maldonado y Anaite Roulet Economic Alternatives for Gender and Social Justice, Voices and Vision from Latin America, WIDE 2011, <http://wideplusnetwork.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/ec-alt-eng2012thirdenglish.pdf>

much more freely than they could before. Typically these companies will be continually on the look out for new and profitable markets, and cheaper ways of producing their food products.

This process now characterises milk production, for example, with a global battle underway between small producers of 'people's milk' and giant dairy and food transnationals like Nestlé and Danone. Small producers face the twin challenge of trying to compete with cheap imports of powdered milk in newly liberalised economies; and threats to ban their own unpasteurised product for being 'unsafe'.

According to Grain (2011):

*"Corporate control over the world's milk supply has been accelerating in recent years alongside the globalisation of the industry. The twenty largest dairy companies now control over half the global ("organised") dairy market and process about a quarter of global milk production. Just one company, Nestlé, controls an estimated 5% of that global market, with sales of US\$25.9 billion in 2009".*

Again, this changing dynamic has huge implications for women. With urban markets taking up more and more of the milk being produced by rural communities, there is a huge pressure to sell all available milk. Rural women are generally the main caretakers of all livestock, including milk-giving animals. They have to cut and carry huge amounts of fodder from farmlands, prepare the fodder for the animals and finally milk the animals. At least prior to liberalization, much of this milk was kept at home yielding many sources of nourishment from milk, to buttermilk, butter and butter oil. But with milk, yogurt and other milk byproducts having become a lucrative source for affluent urban markets, milk for rural consumption has become a scarce commodity.

#### Case study – Flower industry in Uganda

"In the cut flower industry, for example, data provided by the Ugandan National Union of Plantation and Agricultural Workers affirms that the majority of casual workers are women. Over 70% of this workforce is casually employed without job security and other benefits such as annual leave. The women workers are mostly employed in harvesting and in the grading sections. A full-time worker is paid a total package of 70,000 Uganda shillings (\$35 US) per month while a casual worker earns 1,500 Uganda shillings per day (75 cents US). The trend towards casual and temporary labour is encouraged by, amongst other factors, unpredictable weather conditions, unstable market demand for produce, and labour laws which require that certain benefits, such as notice pay, leave allowances, and medical attention, be provided to seasonal and permanent employees."

Source: FAO et al., 2007

Competition for land, already an issue under the Green Revolution and trade liberalization policies, has increased further with the advance of the so-called Green Economy. This has included the proposed transition to using biofuels — more accurately known as agrofuels because of the industrial scale of production — to provide liquid fuel for transportation.

Demand for these fuels has increased competition for land and 'landgrabbing', including supposedly 'marginal' lands that biofuel producers argue are not used for producing food.<sup>48</sup> However, as FAO has acknowledged,<sup>49</sup> women in rural areas are likely to be hit hardest by the industrial scale production of biofuels, since 'marginal lands' provide key subsistence functions to the rural poor. They are particularly important for women, who may not have access to more fertile agricultural lands. Furthermore, in countries where agriculture is a key income-generating activity for women, such as Benin, the implications of the spread of biofuels feedstock monocultures such as oil palm and sugar cane<sup>50</sup> are bleak, with communities being forced out of their territories. In general, women are the

<sup>48</sup> For some specific examples of landgrabbing to grow biofuels in West Africa, see:

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/biofuel/Econexus%20Briefing%20AgrofuelsMarginalMyth.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> "Gender and Equity Issues in Liquid Biofuels Production – Minimising the Risks to Maximise the Opportunities." Andrea Rossi and Yianna Lambrou, FAO, April 2008, quoted in

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<sup>50</sup> <http://www.grain.org/article/entries/4575-land-grabbing-and-food-sovereignty-in-west-and-central-africa>

<http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/Global/usa/planet3/PDFs/Forests/PalmOilsNewFrontier.pdf>

hardest hit by the new agrofuels phenomenon, as it hinders their ability to pursue traditional livelihoods.

Waged agricultural workers have been made particularly vulnerable by the current state of affairs: "Waged agricultural workers do not own or rent the land on which they work, nor the tools and equipment they use. In these respects, they are a group distinct from farmers. Yet these workers remain invisible in terms of the goals, policies, programmes and activities to eliminate poverty and to strengthen the role of major civil society groups in promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD), world food security (WFS), and sustainable development (SD)."<sup>51</sup>

This situation has worsened even further in countries strongly affected by climate change, such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and the Philippines. The continuing onslaught of floods and heavy rains has led to massive internal displacement, as people are forced to seek alternative homes and livelihoods. Generally, this migration increases women's likelihood of experiencing hostility and sexual violence. The alternative for many women is to seek work as domestic servants in urban centres. This option may place them in a situation of verbal and physical abuse, as well as sexual violence, in their bid to support their families at home.

Industrialised agriculture has also had major environmental impacts that have particularly impacted women. Traditionally responsible for securing food and medicines from local sources under, women find that land and biodiversity is being lost to agriculture in an industrialised process in which men are more likely to be employed. This form of agriculture places an ever-increasing burden on ecological systems through intensive use of pesticides; large-scale degradation of agricultural land; deforestation to clear land for crops; production of monocultures of agrofuels crops including oil palm, sugar cane and jatropha; and the use of genetically modified seeds.

#### Case study – Male migration in the Khulna-Satkhira region, Bangladesh

Women also experience differentiated impacts of climate change even if they do not migrate. After natural disasters such as Cyclone Sidr, the population of Khulna-Satkhira had to struggle to find food, clean water and housing. This situation led to consequent outbreaks of illnesses and diseases such as diarrhea, cholera and malaria. Women, frequently responsible for the provision of food and water, were amongst those hit the hardest. Many of them also lost their shrimp-farming livelihoods because of flooding; and others found themselves in competition with migrant male shrimp-workers looking for work because their own lands were degraded.

Source:[http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/publications/briefing\\_papers\\_and\\_reports/climate\\_change\\_drivers\\_insecurity\\_and\\_global\\_south](http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/publications/briefing_papers_and_reports/climate_change_drivers_insecurity_and_global_south)

Genetically modified cotton provides a specific example of devastating hazards. In addition to questions surrounding the potential health impacts of GM products (which could impact on people using GM cotton products,<sup>52</sup> and on animals grazing on cotton)<sup>53 54</sup>, rural communities have been impacted directly by being encouraged to cultivate hugely expensive GM cotton varieties sold by Monsanto and Bayer CropScience. This has contributed to the tragic phenomenon of farmer suicides, with many farmers taking their own lives when the crops fail to deliver as promised,<sup>55</sup> because they have no prospect of repaying the debts they incurred to buy seeds and associated chemical inputs in the first place. The wives of these farmers and their children are left to fend for themselves.<sup>56</sup>

The cultivation of monoculture cash crops and tree plantations that are water intensive, like sugar cane, bananas and eucalyptus, is also highly problematic for women. With water becoming an increasingly scarce resource and growing pollution, women have to walk longer distances that, often

<sup>51</sup> [http://www.fao-ilo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/fao\\_ilo/pdf/engl\\_agricultureC4163.pdf](http://www.fao-ilo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fao_ilo/pdf/engl_agricultureC4163.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.greens.org/s-r/26/26-15.html>

<sup>53</sup> [http://indiagminfo.org/?page\\_id=238](http://indiagminfo.org/?page_id=238)

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.gmwatch.org/latest-listing/49-2010/11872-bt-cotton-and-livestock-health-impacts-dr-sagari-r-ramdas>

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/agriculture/article3248530.ece>

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.i-sis.org.uk/IndianCottonFarmersBetrayed.php>, <http://www.i-sis.org.uk/farmersSuicidesBtCottonIndia.php>, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/may/15/india-gm-cotton-bayer>

carrying heavy loads, to fetch water for household consumption and bathing,<sup>57</sup> as well as to wash clothes in rivers and streams.

The current proliferation of bio-gas powered tube wells for the irrigation of industrial-scale agricultural production, is likely to make animal dung harder to come by and more costly. This is normally used for free by rural women as a source of fuel and fertilizer. Once again, the commodification of a natural resource will impact rural communities negatively, especially women.

### Case study – The impact of migration among Nepali small farmers

In Nepal, women are also finding themselves left to shoulder the burden created by climate change. 80% of the population are dependent upon farming. However, their farming activities have been weakened by the increasing male migration to neighbouring India in search of work, which decreases the labour power available to farm. This is aggravated by drought and failing crops in Nepal's Western Hills. The women must remain at home and manage the farms as best they can, praying that the monsoon will bring plentiful rain.

Source: <http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/06/nepals-female-farmers-fear-climate-change/>

Another dynamic that is having a severe impact on food prices, and thus on women's ability to feed their families, is increased volatility in food prices. The price of traded food becomes ever more important to women as they lose access to lands and territories previously used for gathering or cultivating food for free, or because they have been forced to take up work, probably as agricultural labourers, to generate a financial income and have little or no time to farm.

High and volatile food prices are a result of many factors, such as the deregulation of agricultural markets and the dominant role of a few large traders on world markets. Other determinants of the volatility of food prices are the increasing demand for land and water for animal feed and agro-fuels and the more frequent climate change-related crop failure. The strong tie between agriculture and energy prices through the increasing use of energy intensive inputs and the use of agro-energy as a substitute for fossil fuels has also played a relevant role for this phenomenon.

Growing financial speculation in the agriculture and food sectors has also had an important impact on food prices' volatility. Investors and banks are increasingly turning to these markets as a means of generating profits, a shift which was facilitated by deregulation in the US in 1999 (which removed caps on how much investors could engage in the food commodities markets). In 2012, for example, it was found that Barclays Bank had made some £500 million in 2010/11 from betting on the price of basic foodstuffs such as wheat and soya.<sup>58</sup> These investors are betting on prices of food, by trading in derivatives called 'futures', and they stand to make a handsome profit during devastating food crises, when food prices peak.

There are also indications that these companies' activities are driving the price of those foodstuffs up. Although the world of financial speculation is extremely murky, and it is hard to tell precisely what *is* being privately traded, it seems that investors betting that food prices will increase encourages food traders to hold back supplies of storable commodities with a view to selling them later when the price is higher. This restricts supply and pushes food prices up.<sup>59</sup> It seems that this is what happened during the Mexican Tortilla Crisis in 2007, when corn prices were high. Agribusinesses such as Cargill are alleged to have hoarded corn in 2006 and early 2007, claiming stocks were limited; they then sold their stock later at vastly increased prices. As a result, the price of tortillas, a basic foodstuff in Mexico, increased by more than 40%.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.fao.org/sd/fsdirect/fbdirect/FSP003.htm>

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/barclays-makes-500m-betting-on-food-crisis-8100011.html>

Find World Development Movement report and reference.

<sup>59</sup> New Internationalist report on speculation <http://www.newint.org/features/2011/11/01/food-speculation-commodities-trading/> and wdm webpages

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.bilaterals.org/spip.php?article15259>

**The only viable alternative: to move toward the food sovereignty paradigm together with an effective advancement in women's rights.**

The only viable response to the current economic and food crisis — which has been triggered by twenty years of neoliberalism — is the full implementation of the food sovereignty paradigm.

The term 'food sovereignty' was coined in 1996, initially as a position by the international peasant farmers' movement, La Via Campesina. The term was brought about in response to trade liberalization in the agricultural sector, which was being pushed hard by industrialised countries in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Food sovereignty takes a rights based approach, encompassing the right of self-determination, and the right to food and decent work. It drives an anti-colonialist agenda in food production and consumption, upholding the right of small producers to have access and control over their productive resources including land, forests, water sources, and seeds. It emphatically acknowledges the central role of women as producers across various sectors including agriculture and fisheries. These conditions are critical to ensuring access to affordable, safe and nutritious food for all, including urban marginalized communities.<sup>61</sup>

In particular, food sovereignty emphasises domestic production based on traditional agro-ecological methods of food production, ensuring household and community food security first, and *then* distribution to wider domestic markets. It also emphasizes cooperation — rather than competition — in food and agriculture trade, rejecting and resisting trade liberalization as a means of controlling the production and livelihoods of small farmers producing for local markets. It also advocates a spirit of cooperation with respect to food aid, especially in the face of natural and climate disasters, and rejects the use of food aid as a means of controlling food and agriculture commodities markets.

This transformation has to come about together with the effective advancement of women rights. Overall, governments need to:

1. Reject industrial-scale agricultural production as advocated by agro-chemical/biotechnology firms, including imports, exports and organic production, that conflict with the pursuit of food sovereignty.
2. Reverse the concentration and misappropriation of land, redistributing lands held by feudal landlords, transnational corporations and financial investors to small and landless farmers, with women as key beneficiaries.
3. Ensure that, as small producers, women have equal rights to access and control productive resources such as land, seed, water, and forests.
4. Ensure that women have access to locally-produced, nutritious food free from chemical hazards. This should include special food rights for pregnant and lactating mothers.
5. Facilitate food production by small farmers, including women, that is based on sustainable agriculture and agro-ecological production processes, assuring that nutritious food is available to communities.
6. Provide financial support, including subsidies and interest-free loans, to encourage local, sustainable, organic agriculture that promotes food sovereignty;
7. Recognize food and agricultural production as part of the formal sector, allowing workers in this sector to enjoy the rights recognized under formal International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions, and giving women full recognition as part of the food production work force in all sectors, including agriculture, fisheries, livestock production, forestry and dairy.
8. Ensure women workers' right to bargain collectively, which will enable them to secure policies relating to equal opportunities, equal pay for work of equal value, maternity leave and benefits, child care, and reproductive health services.

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<sup>61</sup> For a fuller definition of food sovereignty see: <http://www.foodsovereignty.org/FOOTER/Highlights.aspx>

9. Reinvigorate and facilitate the continued maintenance of traditional seed banks by women, and support the reclamation of genetic resources from multilateral institutions.
10. Involve women in decision-making processes relating to food production, distribution and consumption, at the community, provincial and national level.

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Kuna Yala women involved in decision-making process, Panama.

Photo: Indigenous Peoples Biocultural Climate Change Assessment Initiative. See <http://ipcca.info>

## **4.b Fisheries and gender equality** **By Vivienne Solis Rivera<sup>62</sup>**

Poverty, limited access to all types of resources, and political, social and educational constraints are deeply interrelated to the discrimination against women. For example, these interlinkages are reflected in their scarce access to natural resources and land. This leads to enormous differences in the power relations between women and men, as well as to an unequal distribution of the benefits that derive from the use of natural resources. These inequities need to be confronted on the road to fair and sustainable development.

Women are involved in the diversification of production in the agriculture, forest and fisheries sectors, with important implications for food security and food sovereignty, and the management of coastal, marine and forest resources. They are specifically involved in natural resource-related knowledge transfer, decision-making at both household and local levels, and managing the sustainable use and conservation of scarce natural resources. Also, they play a relevant role in maintaining food security and adapting food production in response to climate change.

Notwithstanding, women's intense work in natural resource-related production and survival, their work is barely recognized and often neglected. This is reflected in the fact that women have restricted access to the spaces where environmental and economic policy decisions are being made.

These factors all need to be acknowledged and addressed. The direct relationship between the use, deterioration and reduction of existing natural resources, and the unequal power relations, in which women find themselves in subordinate situations, underscores the importance of addressing the relationship between gender, environmental sustainability and development. It also highlights the fact that this is a particularly important avenue for poverty eradication and social justice.

### **Women in fisheries<sup>63</sup>: Present and yet invisible**

Coastal regions are amongst the most productive ecosystems in the world. In these areas, important cultural biodiversity intertwines with the richness of the sea and its resources. For women and men living in coastal and marine communities, fisheries are much more than just a means of employment. Small-scale fishing is a source of food for their families, and supplements their earnings from other activities such as farming and tourism. Fish is caught, processed, consumed and sold. Fishing provides food security, contributes to food sovereignty and a productive way of life, as well as an important nutritional service for non-coastal communities.

However, given that there are very few sex-disaggregated statistics available about the number of women involved in fisheries-related work, and it has been difficult to introduce the concept of gender to any relevant decision-making platform. Furthermore, the data that *is* available fails to capture the multidimensional nature of the work. This is surprising since women engage in a wide range of activities in the fisheries sector and in fishing communities all around the world. They engage.<sup>64</sup>

- as workers (paid and unpaid) within the fisheries, in pre- and post-harvest activities, including seafood processing plants
- as the main fishers in inland fishing and aquaculture in many countries around the world
- as caregivers in fishing families and communities, maintaining social networks and cultural identity
- as workers in non-fisheries sectors supplementing the household income from fishing, which is often erratic
- as members of fishworkers' movements and fishers' organizations

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<sup>62</sup> Costa Rican biologist. She is founder of CoopeSoliDar R.L. CoopeSoliDar R.L mission is oriented towards proposing new and creative alternatives to reach that the cultural and biological richness contributes to the improvement of the quality of life or population with justice and equity, through accompanying participative processes for decision making from individual and collective spaces, at the local, national and international levels.

<sup>63</sup> The information included in this section has been adapted from the meeting organized by ICSF in June of 2000. "Proceedings of the workshop on Gender and coastal Fishing communities in Latin America. Prainha do Canto Verde Ceara, Brazil. 10-15 Junio 2000 ( 2002) 152 pags. Information has been enriched by other sources cited in the references.

<sup>64</sup> Adapted from ICSF web page [http:// www.icsf.net](http://www.icsf.net)



While the exact nature of women's work differs by culture and region and between rural and urban areas, the common factor is that it is rarely seen as 'productive'. It has low social value and is normally seen as an extension of the 'domestic' space.

In general the characterization of men as fishers and women as fish processors and sellers is largely correct, but a closer examination of gender in fisheries reveals a more complex situation according to local and cultural contexts. In some countries, for example, it is common that women fish or collect seafood, such as mussels and clams, in coastal or inland waters. This is sometimes done as a side-activity but is very important for the nutrition of their families. Women also participate as entrepreneurs and as fish buyers; it is not unusual for them to advance money to finance fishing trips or give loans to fishers against a guaranteed supply of fish when the catch is landed.<sup>65</sup>

However, these important roles are often overlooked when it comes to resource rights and decision-making and women's role in small-scale fisheries continues to be hidden. In many national laws, for example, women are not considered artisanal fishermen, because the definition of this activity usually excludes the pre- and post-capture activities in which women are actively involved.

*"In the case of marine customary rights, gendered aspects remain silent either because the marine domain is historically considered as an exclusive male domain or due to the stigmatized nature of certain coastal property, e.g., the mangrove clam gathering areas used by women in Ecuador".<sup>66</sup>*

In most cases, the role of women in small-scale fishing communities is limited to the domestic arena, and their work is hardly recognized as productive. Traditional so-called 'ancillary' jobs include preparing and baiting the fishing lines (by 'lujadoras' in Costa Rica, and 'encarnadoras' in Chile), beachcombing, and collecting shellfish and seaweed. In some coastal communities, women also sell and process fisheries products and keep account of the resources generated by the sales. This might include cleaning shrimp and crab, for example. In more recent years women have also found employment in aquaculture, including fish farming (see Case Study 3 below).

In general, however, women are not rewarded financially for their work, or they are extremely underpaid, even though they usually work for extended periods of time. In Mexico for example, women may work 18-hour days<sup>67</sup> and in Costa Rica the 'lujadoras' are paid minimal wages (see Case Study 1). In addition, women near the coasts and sea have generally had to assume the position of 'head of household' and take on the additional role of food providers during the prolonged absences of the fishermen while they are at sea.

#### Case Study 1: Women line organizers ('lujadoras') in Tárcoles, Costa Rica

The organization and baiting of the fishing lines is a slow and hard job. In this community, located on Costa Rica's Pacific Coast this pre-capture job is the work of women and young girls. It is a low-paid job and the women rarely have access to social security. Remuneration is only on the basis of fishing trips undertaken and is dependent upon the catch. Because of these uncertainties the job is not highly valued. Nevertheless, a large number of the lujadoras are also heads of household. In addition to the low pay, these women have no legal or social support, and most of them are not part of a union or cooperative (which would help to protect their interests and facilitate their access to various support systems).

Source: CoopeSoliDar R.L, 2008

Furthermore, the deterioration of coastal ecosystems and lakes affects communities' quality of life. Women and men experience this phenomenon differently. The reduction in income due to declining fish stocks, as a result of pollution, overfishing, climate change, among other consequences of the depletion of natural resources are felt most keenly by women, who are already in a more vulnerable position financially. Women and their families may also suffer ill health as a result of the pollution of

<sup>65</sup> Westlund, Holvoet, & Kébé, 2008. In ILO-FAO, 2011

<sup>66</sup> Kuhl and Sheridan, 2009

<sup>67</sup> Salazar, 2000

lakes and seas. There are serious health problems amongst the women of fishing communities located in oil-producing areas for example.

### Case Study 2: The role of women in Senegalese fishing communities

Research undertaken in September 2011, amongst twelve fishing communities, compares and contrasts the conditions facing Senegalese women trading and processing fish in Dakar, La Petite Cote and Sine-Saloum. The study recorded an increase in the numbers of women involved in trading and processing fish, even though the type of fish traded and processed has changed from species such as the grouper and croaker to the less profitable sardinella. It found that women's income is essential to meeting the costs of basic needs. The study also found that women have little or no access to the formal credit system. Improving leadership capacities as well as organizational and communication skills are viewed as important priorities. One of the key suggestions from women in the fishing communities was for outreach aimed at building leadership at the community level.

Source: Rajagopalan Ramya, 2012

### Recommendations on women's rights and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources

It is already known that achieving genuine gender equality can be a real driver of change and efforts to achieve sustainable development (IUCN, 2008). Women — in all their cultural diversity as indigenous people, afrodescendants, peasants and fisherwomen — have a collective but differentiated traditional knowledge about natural resources that is crucial to the future sustainable management and conservation of those resources. This expertise has been built upon years of often invisible or unpaid work, that has been key to the livelihoods of entire communities.

### Case Study 3: Female labor in industrial fish plants in Peru

(Women work in large numbers in factories canning tuna and sardines, and filleting, salting or shelling fish and shellfish. Women get paid either a minimum wage or by piece-work. Women working in these processing plants suffer sub-human conditions, with a workday that can stretch up to 24 hours, with shifts day or night, including holidays.

Source: Nizama, 2000

At the same time prioritising sustainable use approaches,<sup>68</sup> including community-based natural resource management and policies that give resource and tenure rights to women, is vital for women. This would allow them to increase the benefits they derived from natural resources, with significant implications for poverty reduction. This approach involves promoting conservation based on a long-term vision of the sustainable use of nature, maximizing the value of common pool wild resources, and increasing local governance over natural resources.

There is also a specific need to recognize women as important participants in small-scale fisheries, not only because of their unrecognised or under-rewarded fisheries-related activities, but also because of their role in maintaining the social and cultural activities of fishing communities (Salazar Hilda, 2000). This recognition becomes effective through initiatives that provide women with credit, training and leadership development improve the efficiency, profitability and sustainability of their activities.<sup>69</sup> Women also benefit from more secure access to resources for tourism and craft-making, establishing small- and medium-sized enterprises; this in turn leads to more sustainable use of mangroves and other types of wetland areas, and protection for fish breeding grounds and wetland recovery.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>68</sup> "Use, if sustainable, can serve human needs on an ongoing basis while contributing to the conservation of biological diversity", Sustainable Use Policy Statement, IUCN, 2000, [http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/sustainable\\_use\\_and\\_livelihoods\\_specialist\\_group/resources/res\\_supolstat/](http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/sustainable_use_and_livelihoods_specialist_group/resources/res_supolstat/)

<sup>69</sup> Adapted from ICSF web page <http://www.icsf.net>

<sup>70</sup> Adapted from ICSF web page <http://www.icsf.net>

To this end, there is an urgent need for better data. Baseline studies with a gender perspective provide more exact and precise information about the use of coastal and marine resources, allowing planners and policymakers to make better decisions. The importance of using gender-based demographic and production data, especially for development projects and programs in artisanal fisheries and marine conservation needs to be recognized.<sup>71</sup>

It is also crucial that women are involved in decision-making processes related to these issues, based on the recognition of their knowledge and work related to biodiversity. Women have strengthened fishworkers' organizations and broadened their agendas. When fishers' organizations include women in decision-making and leadership roles, the organizations are more likely to include activities like the provision of childcare, which benefit all members of the organization.<sup>72</sup> Even more significantly, apart from bringing in issues of concern to themselves as fisheries workers, women have raised concerns about the quality of life in fishing communities, focusing on access to health, sanitation and education.<sup>73</sup>

Effective governance and respect for women's rights are key prerequisites that enable women to engage in these processes. A serious shift towards sustainable development requires gender equality and an end to persistent discrimination against women at all levels of biodiversity and cultural resources use.



Sapara woman. Ecuador. Photo: Indigenous Peoples Biocultural Climate Change Initiative. See <http://ipcca.info>

<sup>71</sup> Adapted from ICSF web page <http://www.icsf.net>

<sup>72</sup> Adapted from ICSF web page <http://www.icsf.net>

<sup>73</sup> Adapted from ICSF web page <http://www.icsf.net>

At the global level, there are two key agreements that need to be taken into consideration when discussing gender issues related to fisheries. One is the Convention on biological diversity: Marine conservation, the Aichi biodiversity targets and ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs). The second is the International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries (SFF Guidelines), by FAO.

## **Final recommendations**

### **On women's rights and equity issues, we must:**

1. Highlight the contribution of women in fisheries and within the community, recognize the multidimensional nature of their work, and facilitate legal recognition of women workers in this sector. This recognition should be done through effective means such as credit access, funding for women-led projects, as well as advocacy campaigns, among other means.
2. Take measures against the exploitation of women in their workplace, ensure social security, unemployment and insurance benefits for women and their families, and work towards putting an end to domestic and sexual violence.
3. Encourage and facilitate processes so that women register their organizations so that they have the necessary means to access credit and participate in development programs, and also as a way of making their work visible in the economic and political sphere.
4. Strengthen the implementation of international conventions relevant to the elimination of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and relevant ILO conventions (including with respect to informal sector household chores).
5. Ensure the implementation of child labour legislation through the use of incentives, disincentives and enforcement mechanisms.

### **On sustainable use and conservation, we must:**

1. Promote ecosystem-based marine and coastal management, and recognise and promote sustainable use as a valid strategy for the adequate conservation of natural resources.
2. Promote the role of women in the management of such zones and areas, and their participation in programs focusing on the conservation and restoration of coastal ecosystems. Facilitate information exchanges amongst them.
3. Generate gender specific proposals that will permit women and women's organizations to implement their ideas and actions related to conservation and sustainable use.
4. Encourage information exchanges amongst involved women, and training programs for communities, especially gender-related events and others that enable fishing communities to carry out their own surveys and produce their own documents, so that they can maintain and improve the responsible management of their resources.
5. Base the description of areas that meet the criteria for EBSAs on traditional knowledge as well as scientific and technical expertise. This should be done with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge (including women). Indigenous peoples and local communities must be involved in the process of describing EBSAs, by inviting them to regional workshops and consultations. These processes must contemplate social and cultural information relevant to any subsequent step in the process of selecting conservation and management measures.
6. Promote the participation of fisherwoman in all relevant fora to discuss global and national actions concerning the conservation of marine ecosystems.
7. Support the process for the approval of the FAO International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries.
8. Eliminate subsidies for industrial fishing fleets and encourage community-based governance models for marine protected areas.

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## 4.c Forest, biodiversity and rural and indigenous women's rights

By Isis Alvarez<sup>74</sup>

Forests are extremely diverse ecosystems on which many creatures depend, including human beings. Protecting forests helps ensure a supply of safe, clean water including for people living in large cities. Whether for direct or indirect use, people — and especially rural and indigenous women — rely on the functions forests provide and their associated biodiversity. Yet the world's forests are being destroyed at an alarming rate.

Rural and indigenous women, often heads of households,<sup>75</sup> are particularly dependent on free access to resources including fuelwood, medicinal plants, fodder, fruits, nuts and seeds<sup>76</sup>. Furthermore, during conflicts and natural disasters, displaced rural people become even more reliant on freely available forest products and services,<sup>77</sup> and this again applies in particular to women. As a result, women are recognized as being more severely impacted by environmental degradation.<sup>78</sup> In fact when rural women's access to forest resources is improved, their income increases and they are most likely to spend this income on their children's education, health care and feeding the household.<sup>79</sup> Women's access to forests and associated biodiversity therefore has a direct bearing on poverty alleviation and the well being of families.

Furthermore, when women's involvement in related governance processes is restricted this in itself serves to perpetuate the problem, since they are unable to improve associated decision-making systems and processes. Land tenure is a critical example of this. Women often cultivate lands that they do not own, and gather resources from forests to which they lack titles. Even where there are land tenure policies in place, some patriarchal cultures will not consider women's land tenure rights,<sup>80</sup> thus leaving women and even families landless. There has been a growing realization that insecure tenure rights are a key cause of forest degradation as forest users have few incentives — and often lack legal status — to invest in managing and protecting forest resources that they do not own<sup>81</sup>. Failing to tackle such causes of deforestation and forest degradation aggravates negative impacts on vulnerable groups, such as women and their children who depend on forests for their livelihoods. However, many land policies and agrarian reform programs, whether they are redistributing land or reforming tenure rights, have overwhelmingly granted these rights to men, which in turn contributes to continuing discrimination against women.<sup>82</sup> This is confirmed by Lastarria-Cornhiel<sup>83</sup>, who observes that one of the main characteristics found in land tenure reform and redistribution programs across the world is that they have tended to ignore gender.

Indeed, in spite of women's extensive traditional knowledge of forest management and sustainable resource use, they seldom have a voice in decision-making. Poor education and invisibility in public affairs, as a result of gender inequalities, often bar them from having a voice in decisions on land use and forest management<sup>84</sup>, and from accessing new knowledge, technical capacity and other related educational opportunities. Thus, men are more likely to be able to access and control resources and derive improved income, particularly by engaging in commercial activities.

These problems are compounded by escalating global demand for timber, other wood-based products and non-timber-forest-products (NTFP), and agricultural commodities grown in previously forested lands, including for use as biofuels. Current climate change policies are also focused on and limiting access to forests and biodiversity greatly.

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<sup>75</sup> Women's increasing responsibility in reproducing and maintaining the family has increased over the last decades because, among others, societies and resource-poor households become more economically vulnerable to global market forces (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2009).

<sup>76</sup> WRM, 2002.

<sup>77</sup> Source <http://www.fao.org/gender/gender-home/gender-programme/gender-forests/en/>

<sup>78</sup> Shiva, V. cited in Leach, M, 2004: 291. Source: <http://www.biblio.colpos.mx:8080/jspui/handle/10521/534?show=full>

<sup>79</sup> See Adedayo 2010, Blumberg 1991, Von Braun et al 1994, Hirschmann 1984 - In Lastarria-Cornhiel (2009).

<sup>80</sup> e.g. In countries like Albania or Kyrgyzstan, property rights in land and inheritance practices will conform to patrilineal custom, regardless of formal legislation that espouses gender equality of rights.

<sup>81</sup> A. White & A. Martin (2002).

<sup>82</sup> In Mexico's ejidos, for example, only persons who have *ejidal* rights to land are considered *ejido* members with the right to vote on community issues. When women are denied equal property rights, they also experience reduced social, economic, and often political status.

<sup>83</sup> Lastarria-Cornhiel (2009)

<sup>84</sup> Sun *et al.* (2012)

In general, forests are increasingly considered a valuable global commodity and private companies, backed by governments, are rapidly ramping up related commercial activities. In addition to commercializing timber and non-timber-forest-products, they can now buy and sell the carbon stored in trees through the introduction of market-based mechanisms focusing on payment for environmental services (PES), which are deliberately intended to create new and profitable opportunities for the private sector. These include schemes such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and enhancing forest carbon stocks (REDD+).<sup>85</sup>

Crucially, however, these schemes are based on the current UN definition of forests, which equates plantations with forests. This allows the conversion of real forests into monoculture plantations, including alien tree species, oriented towards the global market, thus leading to further biodiversity loss, soil erosion, and depletion of water sources, and other social and ecological impacts<sup>86</sup>. All these further compound the disproportionate impacts on women. It remains vital to understand that forest resources are key for the survival of people who depend on them in a context in which industries are seeking more profits

In a vicious circle, forest commodification exacerbates discrimination against women. Women often earn less, and own less, having fewer capital assets such as land, and fewer land and inheritance rights. They also have fewer opportunities to access education. As a result, they are seldom engaged in negotiating deals or signing contracts. This has direct impacts on their ability to be involved in decisions about whether to accept the commodification of forest and biodiversity resources through projects such as PES and REDD+. Rather, it is men that are most likely to engage in these projects and benefit from them. In fact, a study conducted in three countries in the Congo Basin forest region, Cameroon, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo, to ascertain the involvement of women in discussions or decision-making on climate change and REDD+, revealed that women have had limited participation in discussions on issues of climate change in general, and for the most part have not been involved in discussions on REDD+. In fact, women's participation in government institutions, in general, was limited, and for the most part, gender concerns as a specific category were not evident.<sup>87</sup>

#### **Box 1: Chiapas, Mexico: From Living in the jungle to 'existing' in "little houses made of ticky-tacky..."**

In Chiapas, Mexico in 2011, indigenous communities from the Amador Hernandez region who have lived in the Lacandon jungle for generations, opposed the implementation of REDD+ projects in their territories –crucial for the California-Chiapas-Acre agreement. This agreement made during the Schwarzenegger administration between the states of California (US), Acre (Brazil) & Chiapas (Mexico) seeks REDD carbon credits generated for use as offsets in the Californian emissions trading scheme, set to have begun in 2012.

The Amador Hernandez communities do not agree with their government plans. As a consequence, they have been denied medical services and have suffered other consequences for not agreeing. The government has in turn offered them a new "life" in 'Santiago el Pinar', one of the "Sustainable Rural Cities", planned by the government for relocation of these communities. This where these indigenous communities have traditionally held a close spiritual and cultural relationship with forests, will be living in prefabricated houses far from their ancestral lands thus interfering with their traditional ways of life, cultural values and livelihoods.<sup>88</sup>

Source: Climate Connections

<sup>85</sup> Further information on REDD/REDD+ see <http://www.redd-monitor.org/redd-an-introduction/>

<sup>86</sup> For further information regarding the social and environmental impacts of forest conversion into plantations read the report: B. Karumbidza & W. Menne. 2009.

<sup>87</sup> Peach-Brown, C. 2011.

<sup>88</sup> The communiqué issued by the indigenous communities of the Amador Hernandez region can be read in full via <http://climate-connections.org/2011/09/05/communique-from-the-communities-of-the-amador-hernandez-region-montes-azules-lacandon-jungle/>.

In addition, the increasingly prevalent use of individual property rights and denial of collective access to forest resources makes women even more vulnerable.<sup>90</sup>

### Box 2: Ethiopia - Case Study by Patricia Howard<sup>89</sup>

In Tigray Region, Ethiopia - one of the poorest regions in the world – there is a highly significant correlation between extreme poverty and households where the head of the household is a woman. Belonging to such a household means one is 35% more likely to be poor, compared to 8% of households led by a man. In addition, women heads of family often lack land ownership, and where they do own land, 70% of the women are obliged to rent the land out, losing close to 50% of the harvest, because they lack enough workers or working animals to help them with direct harvesting. Thus, many households headed by women depend on food aid. Additionally in this area, there is limited access to forest and agricultural resources, which are also key for their livelihoods, because it is an area severely affected by soil erosion, deforestation and overgrazing. Access has also been deteriorating, due to physical delimitation with fences and monoculture plantations. Cultural prejudices also affect women in Tigray: there is a high divorce rate fragmenting agricultural activities as “getting a divorce and building a new family, especially for men, is a new way of accessing additional land.” Despite this situation, the Ethiopian government has recently been involved in providing access to extensive areas of land to foreign investors, causing further harm to its people.

Source: Oakland Institute, 2011

Ownership of forests and the sale of forest products are largely under the control of men throughout the whole chain, thus, women's needs and concerns are neglected. As a result, they have little involvement in or influence over the way in which development activities are determined.

Furthermore, most rural women depend on subsistence farming, whereas privatization and market-oriented policies have tended to benefit larger farmers, increasing inequalities between them and smallholder producers<sup>91</sup>. The relatively recent trend towards privatizing more and more land, included as part of a process of ‘market-assisted land reform’ has not given women legal and equal rights to land in rural areas.<sup>92</sup>

Communities in Africa and Latin America are increasingly being evicted from their ancestral lands, especially where property rights have not been clearly defined,<sup>93</sup> often to make way for extensive agroindustrial plants and plantations, as well as for carbon offsets projects (see Box 1 below). This is also known as land-grabbing.<sup>94</sup> Women, usually small-scale farmers who used to grow their own food, now see their food security undermined: they cannot feed themselves and their families properly any more. In some cases, they are forced to depend on food aid (see Box 2 below). Other consequences may include women having no choice but to migrate to cities,<sup>95</sup> adding to the thousands of people living in poverty; many of those who migrate, end up in sex work or other low-paid jobs.

### Conclusions and application to SDGs/post-2015

Women play an important role in feeding their families and hence, in the reduction of poverty. Although both men and women have differentiated roles with respect to the sustainable use and conservation of forest resources, women's roles are often ignored. Forest and land policies that are gender blind and do not take a rights-based approach will continue to marginalize women, both legally and socially, excluding them from decision-making and from benefitting from forest and land resources.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Howard and Smith, 2006

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Bryceson and Jamal, 1997

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> see for example Land-grabbing in Africa: A Review of the Impacts and possible Policy Responses, Kachika (2010).

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> El frente de la soja avanza: Inmensos monocultivos desplazan a los campesinos indígenas de la sabana chaqueña en Argentina <http://redaf.org.ar/noticias/?p=5577>

<sup>96</sup> Bandiaky-Badji, 2011



Environmental issues impacting women and other related subjects, such as health, should not be considered separately. According to Sun *et al*<sup>97</sup>, focusing on the interface between environment and health would offer a strategic opportunity to build on the strengths of forest-dependent women, mobilise support across sectors and political scales, and converge professional knowledge for forest governance that takes women's interests and needs into account. In addition, if women's land rights are improved this will progressively reduce discrimination against women, as they will have a formal right to voice an opinion about potential projects in their territories. To this end, women's access to information and capacity-building must also be ensured, to enable them participate in decisions regarding the sustainable use and management of resources, such as forests and associated biodiversity. This, of course, goes hand in hand with the need for governments to demand that companies implement genuine consultation processes that are also gender sensitive, in advance of projects being implemented and before contracts are signed.

### Box 3: Case Study – All Women's Forest Protection Committee in Dengajhari village, Nayagarh (India)

The Dengajhari village is situated in Nayagarh district of Orissa. These forests were once dense, but they were plundered due to the setting-up of heavy industries and the pressure on the forest resources due to population explosion; women had to walk as far as 12 km daily to collect firewood for their hearths, and villagers began migrating for employment. Faced with an impending ecological disaster, many villages in Ranapur initiated forest protection and regulated use of resources within and around their villages. There were few open-access forests left, leading to consequent clashes between the protecting communities and other users illegally accessing these areas.

Patrolling parties, all men, began to face serious threats from the timber mafia and villagers were discouraged to protect forests. Additionally, time spent on patrolling started affecting daily wages thus to compensate for the loss men were often compelled to fell a tree. In the meantime, Ranapur Federation started convening monthly meetings of the women from the member villages to elicit better participation of women in the decisions related to forest protection. After some deliberations, the women decided to take on the responsibility of forest protection.

Around the same time, on 26 October 1999, 200 people with 70 carts were seen entering the forest. All the village women gathered at the village temple, divided themselves into two groups, waited at the paths leading to the forest and besieged the offenders with spades and sharp weapons. The offenders, all men, were scared of retaliating to avoid undermining existing social reasons. They feared that they could get charged with violence against women—especially against, tribal women—which was legally a serious offence! The men ran off. Women then sent for members of the federation and forest officials. The felled timber was confiscated and sold by the villagers, and the money was deposited in the village fund. After this incident, women started patrolling the forests regularly.

As a result, Dengajhari itself protected about 80 ha of lush green forest and, if seen in association with protected forests of adjoining villages, the green patch is considerably larger, and possibly contains significant wildlife populations. Dengajhari is one village where the able support and intervention of the federation resulted in successfully thwarting external pressures. With that emerged a unique and powerful initiative by the women to become the caretakers of their forests.

Source: Pathak, 2005

The current shift towards a 'Green Economy' which promotes an economy based on bio-products (bioeconomy) might not bring such rights and opportunities to women or rural peoples depending on the well-being of and access to forest and biodiversity resources; conversely, processes of privatization in a number of regions have shown that women are the most affected,<sup>98</sup>. Thus, "the push for a bio-based economy comes with a call for market-based mechanisms, that is, the financialization of the Earth's natural processes, re-branded as 'ecosystem services,' which also encourage land and water grabs"<sup>99</sup>. Such emerging "alternative approaches" rather appear to be 'business as usual', and are in effect, socially and environmentally blind to the needs of women and rural peoples worldwide.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Pathak, 2005

<sup>99</sup> ETC Group & H.Boell Foundation, 2012



Women protesting against the commercialization of life at the Rio+20 Summit. Photo: Isis Alvarez

Therefore this maintains unsustainable consumption and production patterns, increasing environmental pressure as more and more biomass is required. Biomass requires the use of unknown and risky un-tested technologies that brings substantial profits to a few business-men and risk to the general population. A Post-2015 sustainable development agenda must include goals that strive for women's empowerment, and facilitate the conditions needed to promote and ensure women's autonomy and self-determination, ensuring opportunities for food sovereignty and lessening vulnerability to market forces, including those that promote working conditions close to slavery that not only violate labour rights but also increase inequality. It is necessary to protect women's traditional knowledge, and to promote its application/adaptation in sustainable development more broadly, since this knowledge has permitted the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources over many centuries. Sustainable production and consumption is not a myth, people have already cultivated and protected lands over millennia. Returning to locally-based economies that reduce resource consumption throughout the whole chain can bring possibilities for reducing the world's hunger and meeting the so-'longed for' Millennium Development Goals. MDGs initially aimed at eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education failed to address issues such as quality of education or rights to education. The development of the SDGs and the Post-2015 agenda thus represent an important opportunity to ensure that this first step in women's empowerment really happens, and that specific, realistic and clear targets to that end are set.

The implementation of rights-based projects that strengthen gender justice is critical to developing environmental and social benefits for all women and men.<sup>100</sup> "National subsidies for large-scale biomass and other unsustainable, risky investments should be replaced with public funding for sustainable and appropriate wind, solar and tidal energy. Governments should stop subsidizing industrialized food production and instead offer effective support to small-scale farmers"<sup>101</sup> and other locally-based initiatives, especially those benefiting women. Funds need to be invested in programs that directly support alternative rights-based forms of forest conservation and restoration that are already known to work<sup>102</sup>. These include Indigenous territories and community conserved areas (ICCA's) that can incorporate and ensure gender empowerment as depicted in the initiative of the box above (Box 3).

<sup>100</sup> See full final women's major group statement for Rio+20

<sup>101</sup> <http://globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/bioeconomy-flyer-ENG.pdf>

<sup>102</sup> Excerpt from the Women's Caucus statement during UNFCCC-COP16 in Cancun, 2010.

## Recommendations

1. The Rio+20 negotiations finished with very little progress for women's rights and rights of future generations in sustainable development. Strong commitments regarding women's rights to land, property and inheritance were lacking. In contrast, the sustainable development goals represent an opportunity by including specific reference to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and women's rights, thus:
2. Ensure that CEDAW is implemented and enforced without delay if forest dependent women are to be empowered, and if women's rights are to be genuinely considered. Parties need to integrate the provisions of the Convention into national legislation, especially Articles, 3, 13, 14 and 15 (see boxes in this document),<sup>103</sup> which - among others - refer to the right to access the same quality of education as men worldwide, enabling full and effective participation of women in the decision-making processes that affect them.
3. At the same time, gender issues should be streamlined to differentiate relevant international arenas such as the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF).

### Governments should ensure that they:

1. Define new goals for sustainable development (SDGs and others), and related legislation, that consider gender as a cross-cutting issue.
2. Commit to long-term actions on gender equality and women's rights and integrate the gender dimension in social, environmental and cultural indicators.
3. Pay particular attention to addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, such as consumption patterns and failed climate policies promoting false solutions to climate change, especially since these have a disproportionate impact on women.<sup>104</sup>
4. Urgently prioritise measures to halt resource grabbing (land grabbing, water-grabbing, minerals grabbing). Clearly — as noted earlier in this paper — the formal right to land influences women's rights to access natural resources. As a result, greater recognition of women's right to own land is paramount when it comes to halting land grabs and reducing poverty. Women constitute the majority of the world's poor, and are often heads of family, but without access to land and control over its use, they lack the means to generate food and income.<sup>105</sup>
5. Secure land tenure rights and retain free access and control to natural resources for the most vulnerable groups in society, including women and particularly indigenous women.
6. Keep environmental services and forests out of carbon and other markets.
7. Revise and redirect perverse incentives that harm forests and biodiversity and destroy livelihoods (e.g. biofuels).
8. Redefine the FAO's definition of forests where forests have a holistic definition which includes forest's complex processes and cycles that hold a high biodiversity of animal and plant species upon which many creatures and life forms depend on, including humans; Forests and biodiversity should not be considered as separate subjects in national and international legislation as both are inextricably linked and such division does not genuinely serve the interests of local communities and indigenous peoples.
9. Apply moratoria and bans on deforestation in those areas where unsustainable forest and biodiversity use occurs, taking into account the needs and uses of local peoples who are dependent upon those resources for their livelihoods and wellbeing.
10. Recognize women's traditional knowledge and cultural values linked to forests, which have long proved to be effective in the conservation and stewardship of natural resources, as well as the right to fair and equitable distribution of benefits derived from this knowledge and/or the resources generated by the lands they tend (even though it is not formally theirs because of the lack of land tenure). Incorporate this knowledge into current forest policy and highlight its important role in forest conservation, protection and sustainable use.
11. Reward women for their biodiversity stewardship — especially regarding saving seeds and nurturing trees — through targeted and effective public governance measures — and recognise their work through awards and other measures that publicly highlight their efforts.
12. Prioritise biocultural approaches and initiatives such as Indigenous and local communities conserved territories (ICCA) and the implementation of UNDRIPs in every decision-making step.

<sup>103</sup> <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#article3>

<sup>104</sup> During the last UN climate change negotiations, an important decision regarding gender balance was achieved: "Promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of Parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol." Full decision in [http://www.wecf.eu/download/2012/december/gender\\_balance.pdf](http://www.wecf.eu/download/2012/december/gender_balance.pdf)

<sup>105</sup> Access to other productive resources such as water, irrigation systems, and forest products is also tied to land tenure (Meizen-Dick et al. 1997 in Lastarria-Cornhiel 2009).

13. The Preamble of the Convention on Biological Diversity shows a commitment to gender equality by, "*Recognizing also: the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and affirming the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation for biological diversity conservation.*" In addition, Aichi Target 14 makes a clear gender reference: "*By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable*".
14. Hence, national-level interventions for sustainable development must recognize the different situations of women's role in forests in each country and design strategies to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment; country specific needs and realities need to be taken into account in international goals, for instance with the mainstreaming of gender into NBSAPs.
15. Women's access to a fair and equitable distribution of the benefits generated by their land should also be bolstered by the ratification and effective implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS), and the enforcement of the United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIPs).
16. Increase women's participation, capacity building, and other empowering strategies that allow them to gain greater control and power, and a stronger voice in decision-making processes. This would be facilitated by the development of care services that would reduce women's gender roles in this regard and free up time for their participation in different processes and activities. Only then could women be aware of their rights, as well as being able to access qualitative information in order for them to understand how any planned activities can affect or benefit them.
17. Prioritise small-scale, community-led initiatives that have proven to be effective for income generation, food and energy sovereignty and *buen vivir* in general. A gender specific mechanism for improving women's contribution in sustainable forest management is desired.
18. Improve monitoring systems for foreign and local investment of the corporate sector and its social, economic and environmental impacts. Include and prioritise mechanisms for ensuring the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of rural and indigenous women and their communities.



Woman from an agroecology farm in Lebrija-Santander, an area heavily affected by pineapple monocultures, where the community, including women's groups, have gathered together to restore the ecosystem by using traditional practices and using environmentally friendly techniques. Colombia. Photo: Isis Alvarez.

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## 4.d Safe and Sustainable Energy for All – Gender Equality in Choice, Access and Control

By Kalyani Raj<sup>106</sup>, Nozipho Wright<sup>107</sup> and Sabine Bock<sup>108</sup>

*“A change in the energy production paradigm is necessary, and women should be at the forefront of the energy revolution.”<sup>109</sup>*

Energy is a fundamental component of daily life. Absence of sufficient energy can drastically and adversely affect every society across the world. On the one hand, the current energy cycle based on fossil fuels and nuclear often leaves a trail of devastation behind. Fossil fuel is one the main causes of global warming. One the other, the use of traditional biomass can have negative impacts on people, ecosystems and the planet. Another issue of concern is violent conflicts caused directly or indirectly by quest for energy resources, and the negative and often traumatic impacts on women and children.<sup>110</sup> We, therefore, need to change the way we use energy, apply energy saving and energy-efficiency measures and utilise renewable energy. We also need to create access to safe and sustainable energy all over the world as an essential driving force for sustainable development.

Access to modern and reliable energy services remains essential for sustainable development, economic growth, higher quality of life, and better delivery of education and health services. Hence, access to energy is essential to reducing poverty. In the absence of energy services, the rural poor must resort to the use of traditional biomass sources—such as wood, charcoal, dung, and waste materials—for cooking and heating. The IEA estimates that 2.5 billion people in developing countries continued to rely on traditional biomass to meet their energy needs in 2004; more than half of them are in the People's Republic of China (700 million) and India (565 million).<sup>111</sup>

In most developing countries, women spend longer hours than men in survival activities such as fuel, fodder and water collection. They are also more involved in the utilization of natural resources. Most women in developing countries have expertise and practical experience on how different fuels burn and how to use them optimally. Yet, in many cases they face energy poverty more severely than most men do. While men and women benefit equally from energy inputs, the reasons why they need energy and the ways in which they use it differ considerably. While most countries provide equal individual rights for men and women with respect to their access to energy resources, there are barriers when it comes to their actual realization. Women's rights to clean and safe energy are mostly suppressed due to unequal gender relations.

The gradual depletion in biodiversity, decrease in agricultural income and ambitious urban opportunities leads to rural men's migration in search of greener pastures, leaving women to take on the additional burden of finding alternate means to meet their family's energy and economic needs. However, the domestic activities performed by women, being unpaid family labour, are not quantified or measured and do not find a place in the energy system. While women's energy related requirements and activities were traditionally well recognized, they were not highlighted in energy policies until the last decade. Women themselves mostly underestimated their contribution and the importance of their own health while catering to the family needs. Moreover, educational constraints, cultural barriers and economic dependence also result in the unequal distribution of control and benefit between women and men in the energy sector.

This paper shows the importance of integrating gender in energy policies and bringing women's perspectives and the need for clean, sustainable and safe energy access for women all over the world. This chapter also includes some examples of women's resistance against harmful energies, as

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<sup>108</sup> Sabina Bock is director of WECF Germany and WECF/WICF Coordinator on Energy and Climate Change. Sabine Bock has worked for 16 years in the field of sustainable development, safe energy and climate protection.

<sup>109</sup> The Hon. Ms. Elizabeth Thabethe, Deputy Minister, Department of Trade and Industry, Republic of South Africa, speaking at the 'Power Kick for Africa 2011' conference held in Nigeria, in June 2011.

<sup>110</sup> <http://www.ippnw.de/frieden/energie-krieg-frieden.html>

<sup>111</sup> <http://www.adb.org>

further explained in the chapter on unsustainable energy. It presents background information on the indicated issues and closes with policy recommendations to feed into the global process of developing Sustainable Development Goals.

## Global Energy Access

### *Africa*

A large segment of the African continent's population, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA hereafter) and in the rural areas of the continent's middle-income countries, lives in conditions of acute 'energy poverty'. Less than 10 percent of the SSA rural population has access to modern energy services. Just over 20 percent of the population overall is connected to electric power supply. Biomass provides over 80 percent of total domestic primary energy supply across the sub-region – even in major petroleum exporting countries. Electricity contributes less than 3 percent of total final energy consumption<sup>112</sup>. In SSA, about 7 million people use improved cook-stoves. Although this seems like a large figure, 615 million people still rely on traditional biomass and only 132 million have access to modern energy ([www.cleancookstoves.org](http://www.cleancookstoves.org)). The continuing dominance of biomass – wood fuel, dry shrubs, agricultural residues, and sun-dried animal dung – is due to the limited access to electric power supply.<sup>113</sup>

### *Asia*

In Asia, seven hundred million people have no access to modern electricity, compounding the problem of widespread energy poverty across the region. Meeting the energy demand and providing access to modern forms of energy to all represents a major issue. About 1 billion people in Asia and the Pacific lack such access.<sup>114</sup>

### *Latin America and the Caribbean*

Latin America and the Caribbean are rich in energy resources including hydrocarbons, hydroelectricity and biofuels. However, this wealth is unevenly distributed. Approximately 40 million people lack access to modern electricity services, and fuel imports consume a growing percentage of smaller countries' budgets.<sup>115</sup>

### *Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*

The use of nuclear energy has caused huge problems in this region in terms of radioactive contaminated areas. Moreover, as it is the case across the planet, women and men rely on energy and benefit from safe energy access in unequal ways. For example, in rural areas of Ukraine, women spend 10 times more time than men on getting enough hot water to fulfil household duties (washing dishes, laundry, feeding animals, hygiene, etc.).<sup>116</sup> If a household has access to safe and sustainable energy, women and children benefit more as they:

- spend more time inside the home;
- undertake general household chores including cooking, and suffer therefore less diseases linked to indoor air pollution as well as coldness and dampness.

Source: AfDB, 2008, <http://www.adb.org> and <http://www.iadb.org>

## **The relationship between energy and health**

In many developing countries, culture and other societal structures have assigned women the responsibility to collect fuel and water for household use, together with childrearing and many other household chores. Energy-related hardship is more exacting on women than on men due to the nature of their domestic duties. On the other hand, in many developed countries women, men and children face health risks because of high-risk technologies such as nuclear as well as pollution from fossil fuels. Several problems arise as a result of lack of, inadequate access to modern energy, as well as

<sup>112</sup> AfDB, 2008

<sup>113</sup> AfDB, 2008

<sup>114</sup> According to the ADB, clean energy investments in 2010 reached \$1.76 billion with access-to-energy projects exceeding \$950 million, up from \$418 million in 2009. Between 2003 and 2009 such assistance connected 1.27 million households to electricity (<http://www.adb.org>).

<sup>115</sup> <http://www.iadb.org>.

<sup>116</sup> <http://www.wecf.eu/english/articles/2011/10/solarcollectors-ukraine.php>

use of inferior fuels for cooking and space heating in developing countries. The following sections will explore them in some detail.



“Stop polluting our children’s bodies”. Creating a better health and environmental protection for children. Protest by parents and Children during the Children’s Environment and Health Plan for Europe Conference in Hungary, Photo WECF/WICF

### Indoor air pollution

Everyday, women and children in developing countries are exposed to pollution from indoor cooking smoke in the form of small particulates that are up to 20 times higher than the maximum recommended levels of the World Health Organization (WHO). Smoke from cooking fuels is estimated to account for nearly 2 million deaths, more than 99 percent of which occur in developing countries. This means that cooking smoke causes a significant percentage of the annual burden of disease. This affects mothers and their young children more than any other household members because it is them who regularly breathe such cooking smoke.<sup>117</sup>

In many rural communities in South Asia, wood for fuel remains the prime source of energy and women often walk great distances to gather increasingly depleted supplies. Exposure to wood smoke in kitchens seriously affects women's health and their ability to earn an income.<sup>118</sup> Children's safety and family health are primary concerns of women. Their routine work such as food preparation exposes them to indoor air pollution and food pathogens. Home maintenance makes them more vulnerable to energy pollution and waste contamination. The use of traditional fuel-wood, dung and waste (tar, plastic and other waste) as energy source for the cook stove in the home, creates indoor pollution.

### The link to education

A joint study undertaken by Jyoti Parikh, Soudamini Sharma and Chandrasekhar Singh<sup>119</sup> in Himachal Pradesh state of India shows an interesting link between illiteracy and health problems. “*Illiteracy*

<sup>117</sup> World Bank (2011)

<sup>118</sup> [www.adb.org](http://www.adb.org)

<sup>119</sup> [http://www.saeethz.ch/events/cleancooking/Energy\\_access\\_and\\_its\\_implication\\_for\\_women\\_IRADE\\_Chandrashekhar\\_et\\_al.doc](http://www.saeethz.ch/events/cleancooking/Energy_access_and_its_implication_for_women_IRADE_Chandrashekhar_et_al.doc)



*apparently influences respiratory health, even in households using clean fuels, with illiterate women being at greater risk (12.5 % with symptoms) than literate women (5.2 %)*". Himachal Pradesh is one of the progressive states in India where the status of empowered women in family/community decision-making capacity is comparatively higher than other states. 91 percent of the surveyed area have infrastructure for clean fuel and 49 percent of the households have the facility to use the clean fuel through a public distribution system. However, only 31 percent of the households were actually using it. Out of the total families surveyed, 64 percent of households were of the view that clean fuels are very expensive, 22 percent were scared / hesitant to use them while 12 percent said that fuels were not always available. Linkages between health impacts and gender for various age groups have also been established. The study has revealed that girls below the age of five years and females in the 30-60 years age groups (who are usually the chief cooks in a family) are at higher risks than males in the same age groups.

### **Outdoor Air pollution**

Outdoor air pollution is a big health threat in different parts of the world, e.g. in China and Europe, causing premature deaths and chronic bronchitis just to give two examples<sup>120</sup>. There could be a link between exposure of women to outdoor air-pollution and the too low birth weight of their new-borns.<sup>121</sup>

### **Environmental pollution**

The nuclear energy chain destroys lives and habitats. It can irreversibly damage our health and our genes and therefore the next generations to be born from women and men exposed to any amount of radiation. Nuclear energy is neither clean nor sustainable, as the many nuclear accidents and disasters have already so painfully shown.<sup>122</sup> Too many people live in radioactively contaminated areas, like those in Bryansk, Russia where hundreds of thousands of people still inhabit this largely agricultural area, and the greatest danger they face is the ingestion of radioactive particles (or radionuclides) that have accumulated in the meat, fat, and milk of local cattle, as well as the produce from local farms and gardens. In some provinces over 20 percent of all dairy milk is dangerously contaminated. Children receive the highest exposures to caesium, as they tend to ingest more dairy products than adults and their still-growing bones absorb more pollutants from their food.<sup>123</sup> Women and children are at significantly greater risk of suffering and dying from radiation-induced cancer than a man exposed to the same dose of ionizing radiation. There is no country to date where women and children's increased risk is sufficiently taken into account in current regulation<sup>124</sup>. There is no safe dose of radiation. Studies agree upon strong gender differences in the attitudes towards nuclear energy use worldwide. The strong rejection of nuclear energy by women is based on their higher risk perception<sup>125</sup>.

### **Energy access and poverty**

There is also a strong link between energy access and cost, depending on the geographical location, size, structure, income and expenses. In some countries, the cost of energy constitutes a significant portion of household expenditure, whereas, in other places energy is considered a part of overall rural existence and its access/cost is not identified as a separate issue.

Biomass use is closely intertwined with poverty. As their incomes rise, households in developing countries generally switch to Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG hereafter) fuel and various types of specialized electric cooking appliances. Thus, income increase is one obvious answer to the problems of biomass energy use in developing countries. However, a doubling of typical incomes in a country would reduce the number of people dependent on biomass energy for cooking by only 16 percent, suggesting that the use of biomass fuel among developing country households will continue for years to come.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>120</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2685855/>

<sup>121</sup> <http://www.myhealthnewsdaily.com/3507-air-pollution-low-birth-weight.html>

<sup>122</sup> Women Major Group Statement

<sup>123</sup> <http://www.blacksmithinstitute.org/projects/pollutants/radio>

<sup>124</sup> See the chapter on unsustainable energy and Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation (BEIR) VII, Phase 2 report by the National Research Council of the National Academies, Health Risks from Exposure to Low Levels of Ionizing Radiation, published by the National Academy Press in 2006, Washington, D-C.

<sup>125</sup> [http://www.iaea.org/OurWork/ST/NE/NEFW/WTS-Networks/DISPONET/disponetfiles/TurkeyTC2012/TurkeyTC-UnderstandingRiskPerception\\_Zeleznik.pdf](http://www.iaea.org/OurWork/ST/NE/NEFW/WTS-Networks/DISPONET/disponetfiles/TurkeyTC2012/TurkeyTC-UnderstandingRiskPerception_Zeleznik.pdf), page 29

<sup>126</sup> [www.cleancookstoves.org](http://www.cleancookstoves.org). Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves. Household Cookstoves, Environment, Health, and Climate Change – A New Look at the Old Problem. The World Bank, 2011

## Energy and Land

The extraction of fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas) causes negative impacts. Land is destroyed, people have to resettle,<sup>127</sup> the environment becomes polluted e.g. in the case of groundwater via oil fracking (hydraulically fractured). On the German-Polish border area, the land of the ethnic group the Sorbs, 25 thousand people had to resettle because of the extraction of brown coal during the last 100 years.<sup>128</sup> But also the transition to renewable energy has to be done carefully as a massive increase in mega hydro projects, biofuels and biomass from new monoculture plantations can cause displacement, food insecurity, human rights abuses and deforestation. This has been the case in countries like Guatemala where green economy activities include planting commercial crops for 'clean energy', such as African palm, which contribute to destruction of forests.

### Case Studies in Africa

*BPC Lesedi (Botswana):* This company uses a franchisee system to distribute renewable energy technologies such as solar home systems, lanterns and improved cooked stoves (ICS) in the country. Three out of nine entrepreneurs are women franchisees. Services are extended to many households that are not covered by the grid.

*Developing Energy Enterprises Programme (DEEP) (Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda):* DEEP programme is working with micro enterprises. Most of these enterprises are non-registered (informal) businesses. Their owners have little formal education (usually less than secondary school level) and lack entrepreneurial and business know-how. The main technologies covered by DEEP are improved cook stoves, solar and briquettes. There are country level differences with regard to type of energy products and services sold or provided by the DEEP EA entrepreneurs. Almost 59 percent of entrepreneurs in Kenya, 35 percent in Tanzania and around 36 percent in Uganda deal with ICS products while Uganda has the highest number of briquette entrepreneurs (41%). 51 percent of Tanzanian entrepreneurs are more inclined to solar technology, as opposed to 16 percent in Kenya and 15 percent in Uganda. Female entrepreneurs are generally less mobile than male entrepreneurs and tend to be engaged in businesses that do not need a high level of capital, use low technology and deal in products that can sell to immediate markets (GVEP). Thus, men have a higher level of access to information and ability to source products for sale.

*Solar Sister (Uganda):* Uses a direct marketing system made up of Solar Sister Entrepreneurs (SSEs). SSEs are primary marketers and sales agents of solar lanterns and other solar technologies in rural areas. Solar Sister has an explicit focus on women in every stage of the technology supply chain (except for production), and its organizational mandate is to engage and empower women. A Solar Sister is an integral part of the supply chain, and sources, distributes and sells the solar products. The products are either fully manufactured and assembled abroad (d.light) or manufactured abroad and assembled in a local warehouse in Uganda (Barefoot Power). Their product distribution mechanism is centered on women's existing networks (GVEP).

*TATEDO (Tanzania):* TaTEDO created one of its "for-profit" arms, SEECO (Sustainable Energy Enterprises Company), which manufactures and sells cookstoves and baking ovens. From 2000 through 2009, TaTEDO sold: 1,886,051 fuel-efficient cookstoves ; (about 70 percent of buyers were female), 122,680 fuel-efficient baking ovens (about 70 percent of buyers were female) and installed 212 solar dryers for which an estimated 60 percent of recipients were female. While women's engagement is primarily as end users, they also work in the SEECO factory and serve as individual technicians who manufacture the stoves and ovens. Women among TaTEDO's and SEDC's staff serve as trainers on the use of the solar dryers and baking ovens and business skills. TaTEDO's technology products have allowed women to be more productive in their existing income-generating activities (e.g., baking bread for sale). Additionally, the solar dryers (fruit & herbs) and baking ovens, in particular, provide women the opportunity to engage in new entrepreneurial work.<sup>129</sup>

## Energy and Climate Change

<sup>127</sup> [http://www.archiv-verschwundene-orte.de/de/ausstellung/die\\_ausstellung/69928](http://www.archiv-verschwundene-orte.de/de/ausstellung/die_ausstellung/69928)

<sup>128</sup> [http://www.archiv-verschwundene-orte.de/de/ausstellung/die\\_ausstellung/69928](http://www.archiv-verschwundene-orte.de/de/ausstellung/die_ausstellung/69928)

<sup>129</sup> Kirrin, G., 2012

## Case Studies in Asia

**Smokeless Improved Stoves (India):** During 1982-85, the Government of India initiated a national programme on Smokeless Improved Stove to get over the energy crisis in rural India. The programme was implemented at villages where women used firewood or cow dung cakes for cooking. A training module comprising of the concept, construction, maintenance and repair of the improved stove was designed and the training was conducted in almost all states of India. All India Women's Conference, a national level NGO, was appointed the nodal agency for the government, for implementation of this project and they have been working on this project for the past two decades. This programme continues in a few states but notably in Andhra Pradesh, where tribal women are being trained and are earning decent income. This initiative has reduced the drudgery burden as well as opened up income generation opportunity for rural women.

**Other Asian examples:** A growing number of Asian Development Bank-funded small, off-grid clean, renewable energy systems are offering rural women new livelihood opportunities. Projects include the training of female technicians to run solar power systems in rural Bhutan, strengthening the community management of rural electrification in Nepal and helping Vietnamese farmers convert animal waste into biogas to cut fuel costs, improve health, and raise productivity.

Source: ADB<sup>130</sup>

Higher demand for energy must be met in a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable manner. The threat of climate change is real and increasing. The accelerating emissions of greenhouse gases, and their close link to average global temperature, are likely to result in significant changes in the average climate and its seasonal and annual variability. The impacts of rapid climate change are expected to be profound in Asia and the Pacific. From the Himalayan highlands to the rich tropical forests of Southeast Asia, and in the Pacific islands, many natural ecosystems are particularly vulnerable as some will probably be irreversibly damaged. The poorest people within the large populations of both sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.<sup>131</sup>

Fossil fuels made the development possible for industrialized countries but have caused global warming and are a threat to the planet. Women have less means to protect themselves against the impacts of global warming as they represent approximately 70 percent of the world's poor. Also findings about the impacts of black carbon on climate change<sup>132</sup> adds to the importance of improving the situation of women's access to safe and sustainable energy, as a lot of black carbon is emitted for household and cooking purposes.

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<sup>130</sup> <http://www.adb.org>

<sup>131</sup> <http://www.adb.org>

<sup>132</sup> <http://www.c2es.org/publications/black-carbon-climate-change>

## Case Studies in Europe

The phase out of nuclear energy in Germany: Germany was impacted by the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe in 1986. Since then the awareness of the German people about the threat nuclear energy poses to life has been always very high and the anti-nuclear movement very strong. Women have been always very active of rising awareness of the risks of nuclear energy<sup>133</sup>. Given women's responsibility to care and feed their families in the predominant gender order, they confronted the risks of radioactive contamination every day. After Fukushima and the protest of German citizens, the government officially announced the process of assessing the risks of nuclear energy under new criteria developed after this crisis. They called for an ethical council. This council also came to the conclusion that nuclear power is a too risky technology considering also the fact that other, safer technologies are available. On the June 6<sup>th</sup> 2011 the phase out of nuclear was decided, with support by all governing parties. Since then the German energy turnaround gets attention and needs to proof that the transformation from a nuclear and fossil fuel based system is possible.

Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA): Women and men need to be good team players if it comes to the solar energy project of WECF and partners in the EECCA region. The project uses a quota system to have a balanced participation at the trainings on how to build, monitor, maintain and use a solar collector. The training concept consists of raising awareness about the benefits of solar energy; as well as on technical knowledge about how to build energy collectors and on benefit analysis, monitoring skills, maintenance and use. The choice of which workshops to attend is open to men and women, but usually, according to their gender roles, men chose to focus on the construction and women on monitoring part. Our goal is to show that both aspects are important, the trained people team up for the follow-up of the training, building and monitoring of the solar collectors. By doing so WECF raises awareness about the possibility of choice and makes skills available to men and women. The beneficiaries of the project are the whole household as families save money, but especially women as they are the ones traditionally in charge of household expenses.

Source: WECF<sup>134</sup>

### **How to address women's inadequate access to energy: recommendations**

In order to deliver on the promises made at the Rio+20 Conference in June 2012 and to contribute to the development of gender sensitive Sustainable Development Goals in the energy sector, we propose the following:

1. We call for development and implementation of specific programmes targeting women currently without access to clean and safe energy.
2. We propose to promote the development and use of sustainable renewable energy sources and appropriate technologies in all countries. We also propose to eliminate indirect subsidies to unsustainable energy, fossil and nuclear. We call for development of binding safeguards to avoid negative impacts from renewable energies including pollution with agrochemicals and displacement of local communities and indigenous peoples.
3. We call for provision of adequate financial resources, of sufficient quality and delivered in a timely manner, and a precautionary approach to the deployment of new technologies to developing countries for providing safe and efficient and wider use of diverse and appropriate energy sources, assuring specific capacity building and funding windows for women's access to safe and renewable energy.
4. We call for removal of constraints limiting the ability of women to take advantage of business opportunities offered by new energy options, including legal and cultural barriers that limit their property rights, land tenure, and access to credit.
5. We agree that each country should work towards low-carbon development. We encourage more widespread use of energy planning tools to provide a robust framework for donors and partners to coordinate their development cooperation efforts. We call for full cost accounting of the life cycle of energy sources, including all externalities, from mining clean-up and closure to safe reuse of waste for all energy options.

<sup>133</sup> <http://www.muettergegenatomkraft.de/kurzvorstellung.html>

<sup>134</sup> <http://www.wecf.org>

6. States must take decisive positions from immediate decommissioning to phasing out of nuclear energy, and take the path of promoting the use of renewable energy. A legally binding mechanism to address the cost of decommissioning and clean up of nuclear power-plants, nuclear waste and uranium mines should be committed. Redress and clean-up should be financed according to the polluter-pays principle. The entire nuclear cycle is threat to our generation and to that of our children. A UN rapporteur on uranium and nuclear risks should be agreed upon.
7. Women are greatly concerned by the technological solutions offered to climate change, including geo-engineering, many of which are motivated by profit. We request to include participatory and transparent mechanisms for assessing these technologies, using the precautionary principle and a gender perspective to examine, the dangers.

The specific gender-sensitive, binding international and national measures below would greatly improve women's energy situation in developing countries and lead to sustainable energy for all:

1. Development of binding policies that ensure healthy and sustainable livelihoods for women, by halting use of unsustainable, radioactive and harmful substances and technologies.
2. Access to clean, efficient and safe energy, for all, especially for women.
3. Access to energy services and technologies that can make household tasks less arduous.
4. Establish an independent technology assessment organisation with the mandate to assess, control and, where necessary, limit use of technologies before widespread use, based on the precautionary principle.
5. Development and implementation of global mechanisms for the protection of the global commons, including clean-up of harmful pollution.
6. Upscale decentralized energy technologies by global and national institutions.
7. Develop and implement specific targets for women with regard to technology training, business management skills and extension services.
8. Create extra funding windows to address access to safe and climate friendly energy options at the household and community level with a focus on women to improve their situation and to address the problem of black carbon.



Demonstrating affordable and sustainable ways towards improved living conditions in rural areas of Kyrgyzstan, Photo: WECF/WICF

## **Conclusion**

Clean and safe energy needs to be considered an essential human right, taking into account that it is interlinked with the prevalent cultural and social norms that shape rights for women and influence legal frameworks. In 2010 UN Secretary General's Advisory Group on Energy and Climate Change (AGECC) called for commitment and action on two goals; "universal access to modern energy services and reduction of global energy intensity through energy efficiency measures". There needs to be a concerted effort from regional, national and global agencies to ensure equitable policy framework for fair disbursement and judicious consumption. Advocacy among women in rural regions on equity, energy resources and options is most essential. Renewable energy techniques, which are also linked to income generation, should be further subsidized and popularized.

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#### 4.e Unsustainable Energy - nuclear energy: women and men's different health risks from nuclear radiation

By Karin Wurzbacher<sup>135</sup>, Yukiko Oda<sup>136</sup>, Sascha Gabizon<sup>137</sup> and Elina Doszhanova<sup>138</sup>

Nuclear energy presents a highly significant health and environmental risk. Human health is impacted negatively by exposure to nuclear materials at all stages of the nuclear cycle, from the mining of uranium, through to the production of atomic weapons, the generation of nuclear power and the storage of nuclear waste.

Ionizing radiation is able to damage chemical structures of human cells. When cells or their DNA are damaged, the natural cellular process tries to repair the damaged areas. The mutated cell may die, or if successfully repaired and survives, but the mutated DNA can accumulate in the body through subsequent cell divisions that can potentially lead to cancer.

The way in which radiation affects health is dependent on several factors relating to exposure, the type and intensity of radiation, as well as the length of stay in radiated areas. The level of exposure relates to the proximity to the source of radiation and to weather conditions. After nuclear accidents most health effects appear a number of years later, often in the next generation. In fact, the lower the levels of radiation a person is exposed to, the longer the latency period, and the later the disease is likely to be detected.

Ionizing radiation has both direct and indirect health effects, which are known as 'deterministic' and 'stochastic' effects respectively. For deterministic effects there is a direct link between cause and effect. For example, in Chernobyl, 28 power plant workers died after massive exposure to radiation (0.8-16 Gy). Stochastic (or chance) effects entail a latent response in which the probability of developing a disease, such as cancer, cataracts, heart or vascular disease, increases later in life. However, the origin of the disease is difficult to trace back to radiation, because these diseases can also have other causes. The largest stochastic effect in Chernobyl was the dramatic increase in thyroid cancer in the area surrounding the power plant.

Equally dangerous impacts include non-carcinogenic diseases. For example, the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) estimates that between 30,000 and 207,500 children have been born with genetic mutations due to nuclear radiation from the Chernobyl disaster, since 1986.

##### Women and children are at greater health risk

It is notable that women and children suffer greater health damage from radiation. One specific consequence of radiation is its effect on reproductive health. After Chernobyl a lower fertility rate was observed in affected areas, while the number of stillbirths increased dramatically. Additionally in remote areas of Poland, there were fewer live births in 1986 compared to previous years. In the Chernobyl region there were also indications of many miscarriages, and the number of miscarriages in Western Europe also increased as a result of the Chernobyl disaster.<sup>139</sup>

Moreover, cancer incidence and death as a result of exposure to radiation is higher for women than it is for men.<sup>140</sup> The NAS<sup>141</sup>2011 report finds that the probability of women suffering from cancer are

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<sup>136</sup> Yukiko Oda is the Vice-convenor of Japan Women's Watch (JAWW). JAWW is a network of Japanese women's NGOs to work for the implementation of the BPFA (Beijing Platform for Action) and the MDGs. The JAWW covers all Asia. It works closely with APWW (Asia Pacific Women's Watch).

<sup>137</sup> Sascha Gabizon is the executive director of Women International for a Common Future (WECF) and co-facilitator of the Women's Major Group. WECF is an international network of more than 150 women and environment organizations in 50 countries working locally for sustainable development and influencing policy globally for a healthy environment for all, see [www.wecf.org](http://www.wecf.org)

<sup>138</sup> Elina Doszhanova is part of the Social-Ecological Fund in Almaty, Kazakhstan, which promotes safer environment and equitable development through activities on community, municipal, national, regional and global levels in the area of climate change, sustainable energy, water issues, nuclear and chemical safety, together with partners in the national EcoForum and other partner networks throughout the world.

<sup>139</sup> Korblein, 2001

<sup>140</sup> Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation (BEIR) VII, Phase 2 report, "Health Risks from Exposure to Low Levels of Ionizing Radiation," published by the National Academy Press in 2006, Washington, D-C.

50% higher than the comparable harm to men from radiation doses that fall within the legal limit to the public over a lifetime [p.1]. The risk depends on both sex and age at exposure, with higher risks for females and for those exposed at younger ages [p.7]. The risks appear to be higher in women treated for benign breast conditions, suggesting that they may be at an elevated risk of radiation-induced breast cancer. Radiation sensitivity depends on age and sex, and is especially high in females. The higher sensitivity seen in females is a result of, among others, hormones and cell growth in certain tissue, for example, in breasts.

The latest research clearly shows that current radiation protection is in cases where women are pregnant. Radiobiological research focuses mainly on malformations that may occur during the organ formation in weeks three to seven<sup>142</sup>; mental retardation, which usually occurs during week eight to 15 or in a weaker form in weeks 16 to 25<sup>143</sup>; and cancer, especially leukaemia, which may develop anytime during the pregnancy and is induced by low radiation doses.<sup>144</sup>

Children are especially at risk from radiation, because there is more cell division during childhood growth and development. Dividing cells are more susceptible to mutation than resting cells. In addition, growing children assimilate more nutrition into the body than is released, therefore substances which are contaminated will be more readily incorporated. For example, the thyroid gland of growing children quickly takes up iodide. UNSCEAR suspects that the consumption of radioactive iodide in milk is responsible for the high number of thyroid cancer cases diagnosed between 1991 and 2005 in children who were younger than 18 years when the Chernobyl disaster occurred. Moreover, an epidemiological investigation mandated by the Federal Office for Radiation Protection<sup>145</sup> focused on childhood cancer in the proximity of nuclear power plants concluded that the risk of developing leukaemia increases in relation to one's proximity to a nuclear power plant.

#### Perinatal mortality due to Chernobyl and above ground nuclear tests

A number of academic research projects have shown that the effects of low-level radiation on a foetus can be terminal. After the accident in Chernobyl, Germany witnessed a highly significant correlation between exposure of pregnant women to caesium and perinatal mortality seven months later. A local connection between caesium soil exposure in Bavarian districts and increase in rates of perinatal mortality in 1987 was reported. In one particular area of Bavaria, where there was a 0.5 mSv per year increased background radiation, infant mortality was significantly higher (15.7 %) than in the rest of the region. As a consequence of above-ground nuclear tests, West Germany also showed a marked increase in perinatal mortality around the year 1970, against an otherwise steady downwards trend. The deviation from the trend correlates with the calculated strontium concentration in the pregnant women.

Source: Korblein, 2001<sup>146</sup>

Radiation harm includes not only cancer and leukaemia, but also reduced immunity and fertility, heart disease, and birth defects including heart defects and other mutations. For example, radioactive contamination of pregnant women in Chelyabinsk, Russia, has resulted in mutations of chromosomes, which have been transmitted through three or four generations.<sup>147</sup>

Reproductive health risk from radiation exposure is different for men and women. Men's reproductive health must also be affected radiation but there is a need for more gender based research in this area.

<sup>141</sup> Olson, M., 2011

<sup>142</sup> Korblein A. 2001

<sup>143</sup> Douglas A., et a., 2007

<sup>144</sup> Korblein A. 2001 and Douglas A., et a., 2007

<sup>145</sup> Kaatsch et al., 2007 and Spix et al, 2007

<sup>146</sup> Korblein A. 2001

<sup>147</sup> Tomsk research quoted in WECF factsheet on nuclear industry and health: [www.wecf.eu/english/publications/index.php](http://www.wecf.eu/english/publications/index.php)



### Case-Control-Study: increased childhood cancer near nuclear power plants

The cancer rate in children under five living within 5 km of German nuclear power plants is highly significant at 60%, and the leukaemia rates are also significantly high at 120%. The risk increases significantly in relation to proximity to the site. These are the results of a case-control-study, the so-called German KiKK-study (Children near Nuclear Plants study: Kinderkrebs in der Umgebung von KernKraftwerken = Childhood Cancer in the Vicinity of Nuclear Power Plants). This study pinpointed the distance of individual case-homes from each of the 16 German nuclear power plants, meaning that it was better able to classify exposure than former ecological studies, which used approximate distances. When using the weaker ecological approach with the same data, one finds only a non-significant increase in leukaemia, in comparison to the highly significant 120% increase in risk found in the superior case-control analysis. Subsequent studies from other European countries suggest that children living near nuclear sites are at no greater risk than other children. The combined analysis of data from Great Britain, France, Switzerland and Germany yields a highly significant 44 % increase of leukaemia risk in young children within 5 km of nuclear power plants and a significant increase of risk with proximity to the site.

Source: Umweltinstitut<sup>148</sup>

### The situation of workers in nuclear mining and industry

The effect of low exposure is doubly underestimated. Recent studies confirm increased cancer development in nuclear plant workers. The life span working doses, that are permitted within the current threshold limits lead to increased cancer rates<sup>149</sup>. Increasingly workers in nuclear power-plants are hired on a casual basis from subcontractors, most of them are men and difficult to trace, and the health impacts from radiation are not registered.

Uranium mines pose a health risk for workers and surrounding communities, and can impact trans-boundary pollution. Although uranium mining releases less radiation than a nuclear accident, small doses of radiation can still affect health in the long run. The danger is magnified in cases where safety measures are inadequate (eg. there are underground mines with a lack of ventilation, radioactive raw metals, high amounts of uranium in drinking water, and open mining dumps). A study in Kazakhstan showed that the frequency of chromosomal anomalies in uranium miners was positively correlated with the duration of exposure.

### Radon and health risk

Lung cancer risk also increases in response to exposure to radioactive radon gas in houses. This type of exposure exists in many parts of the world but far too often inhabitants are neither informed nor aware of the risks. Radon is also often found in regions where uranium is mined. The risk from radon increases by roughly 8% per 100 Bq/m<sup>3</sup>. An increase of between 100 and 200 Bq/m<sup>3</sup> shows additional cancer illnesses.<sup>150</sup>

### Radioactive waste and health risk

Another large risk exists in relation to the storage of radioactive waste and slurry. In the production of yellowcake (yellow uranium concentrate), waste by-products called tailings are left over. Consisting of heavy metals, arsenic and other chemicals, tailings still retain 85% of the original radioactivity. When improperly covered, the surface of the tailings dries up, and uranium- and arsenic-laced dust can be blown across the landscape. Additionally, radon gas, a decomposition product, is released from processing facilities and radioactive waste dumps in significant quantities. Long exposure to radon gas can increase the risk of developing lung cancer and other types of cancer.

<sup>148</sup> Kinderkrebs in der Umgebung von KernKraftwerken, <http://umweltinstitut.org/radioaktivitat/krebs-um-atomkraftwerke/krebs-um-atomkraftwerke-50.html>

<sup>149</sup> ICRP, 2007

<sup>150</sup> ICRP 2007

### Case study - Nuclear weapons testing and nuclear waste in Central Asia

Nuclear Waste and uranium tailings: Inadequate storage of nuclear waste is a particularly prevalent problem in Central Asia. In Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, more than 812 tons of radioactive waste is stored in open and closed uranium mines. These tailings should be cleaned



up, but are not as it is extremely costly. Tailings are often found in the immediate vicinity of residential areas and some are even used as playgrounds, pastures or farmland. Unfortunately, people living in poverty are seen to scavenging for scrap metal in uranium tailing areas. The metal is radioactive but is then sold and used by people who are not aware of the health risks, which they are bringing into their lives. Unfortunately, the Kazakh government has ambitious plans to increase mining of uranium and nuclear power plants construction, thus further increasing the health risk and damage to livelihoods of people living in the proximity to these nuclear sites.

Source: Socio-Ecological Fund, Almaty

“Stalkers” in area of uranium tailing: Kadzhi-Saj (Kyrgyzstan). Locals gather metal at the old mines of uranium to survive in conditions of poverty. Photo: WICF

#### **Use of depleted uranium by military, an unacceptable health risk**

Military operations using depleted uranium (DU), which is a by-product of enriched uranium production, also have significant negative impacts. Uranium itself is a toxic heavy metal, which accumulates in the bones and can induce a variety of diseases such as cancer, genetic disorders, and the disruption of function in the kidney, liver, and lungs. DU induces both chemotoxic and radiotoxic effects on the body. The former predominantly disrupts liver and kidney functions, while the latter can induce chromosomal and genetic disorders, for example, chromosome breakage. People mainly affected by this are soldiers and civilians in war zones. Projectiles that do not reach their target stay in the ground where the effects are unknown. In addition, after the use of uranium munitions in military operations, radioactive DU particles are released into the air and water. These particles affect people directly, but also enter into the food chain and bio-accumulate in animals and people. The exact effect on human health is uncertain.

### Case Study – Pollution from nuclear weapon testing in Central Asia

During the Soviet period, Kazakhstan's steppes with rural indigenous population were used as the nuclear weapons test site - the Semipalatinsk Polygon. The cumulative dose of radioactive fallout is estimated as equivalent of 2500 bombs dropped on Hiroshima by the US Army. In fact, the real levels of radiation are not known till present days as most of the data was classified as secret and cannot be retrieved up to date. As this catastrophic legacy of the Soviet Union continues, the victims of radiation in the second generation suffer even more than the first generation victims. The mutated DNA structures carry on from one generation to another. Recently there were attempts by the Kazakh government to proclaim the lands of the former Polygon again suitable for agriculture and inhabitation. Luckily, this initiative was stopped by civil society organisations. The current radiation and problems continue and will be borne by future generations for ages to come.

Source: Socio-Ecological Fund, Almaty

### **Lack of radiation protection**

Regulations and institutions mandated to deal with radiation protection are weak. In most countries, radiation protection regulation is based on the recommendations of the International Commission for Radiation Protection (ICRP). Unfortunately, the ICRP is too slow when it comes to updating its recommendations in relation to new scientific evidence concerning radiation health damage. Also, a 50-year old agreement between the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which has turned into a lobby group for the nuclear industry, means that there is now a lack of international guidelines on the protection of health from radiation.<sup>151</sup>

The ICRP bases its recommendations on the dose reduction factor DDREF (dose and dose-rate effectiveness factor). The factor (DDREF = 2) halves the risk per unit dose at low doses or low dose rates. Unfortunately, the use of dose reduction factor DDREF is not based on scientific findings and not based on observed data of cancer induction. The rate of cancer induction at low doses and low dose rates is estimated by extrapolation from observations at high doses. A simple extrapolation estimate is provided by the widely adopted no-threshold "linearity hypothesis", according to which the risk is proportional to the radiation dose. Only linearity allows averaging the dose, which is widely practised in radiation protection.

For example, the ICRP has only provided an estimation of the slow-burn stochastic radiation risk of induced cancer and leukemia (and it has not even provided this for other diseases). New data on atomic bomb survivors, diseases observed in the Chernobyl region or on patients after therapeutic radiation exposure has led to reconsideration of other possible impacts, such as radiation-induced cardiovascular disease and circulatory disease. It is also known that the threshold dose of radiation-induced eye cataracts is now considered to be about 10-times lower than formerly estimated, although it may now be recognised as a malignant stochastic effect of radiation exposure.<sup>152</sup>

### **Women's rights and radiation protection**

In all countries, regulation of radiation and nuclear activity ignores the disproportionately greater harm experienced by both women and children.<sup>153</sup> Current radiation protection fails to take into account the fact that women have a 50% higher risk from radiation than men. Instead, an 'average' sensitivity is calculated which is considered equally applicable to men and women. In reality this means that women are being afforded less protection than men. A more sensible approach would be to differentiate between men and women within the calculation.

Women should have effective protection under the law that accounts for the higher risks that they face. Regulation should be strengthened to protect those most at risk from ionizing radiation. Women's right to know about the health risks they are faced with when exposed to ionizing radiation and how to protect themselves from this harm, should also be implemented.

It is wrong to argue — as some regulators do — that if women were subject to different threshold limits they would be discriminated against in their profession. The right to equal opportunity would be breached. This is absurd. Correctly interpreted equal rights can only be achieved through better protection of women. Women are being discriminated against if the variation in radiation sensitivity is *not* included in radiation protection.

### **Conclusions**

Energy policy decisions, especially on nuclear energy, should take into account the costs and risks in the entire process from mining to final disposal. Externalities have to be included. Women and especially those who are pregnant have a high risk of developing cancer from exposure to radiation. Considering the lessons-learned from nuclear accidents it has become evident that nuclear energy cannot respect the human right to life and to health, not for today's generations nor for future generations. Women play a vital role in these discussions and their voices need to be equally reflected in energy policy decisions. Radiation risks resulting from unsustainable economic and political activities can be and should be reduced. It is vital for legislators to realize that there is no 'safe' level of radiation. It harms people and all living beings for centuries, and no short-term economic or political

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<sup>151</sup> Appeal by Health Professionals for the Independence of WHO, launched in 2007, <http://www.cwhn.ca/en/node/40679>

<sup>152</sup> Bouffler, 2012

<sup>153</sup> The background for some recommendations include calculations of the different radiation effects on women and children but the final 'allowable' doses to the public do not incorporate this information.

benefits can justify the sacrifice of life and health. Therefore, a global phase-out of nuclear energy and prevention of nuclear arms proliferation is the only acceptable path to true sustainable development of the global community. The following steps have to be taken by the governments immediately:

## Recommendations

1. Strengthening radiation protection legislation, taking into consideration the higher radio-sensitivity of women who are working in radioactive areas, and the likelihood of other non-malign illnesses being caused by chronic radiation exposure.
2. Revise the threshold dose limits in line with current radiobiological knowledge especially in relation to radiation-induced cancers.
3. Abolish the scientifically unproven dose-reduction-factor DDREF in low-dose ranges as used by ICRP. Instead adopt a linear dose-response-relationship (until the scientific knowledge brings new evidence).
4. Implement women's right to know about the health risks associated with women's exposure to ionizing radiation and how they might protect themselves from this harm.
5. Regulate the nuclear energy sector to increase protecting of workers in particular interim workers from subcontracting companies.
6. Provide full information on costs including externalities of the entire nuclear energy cycle, including the costs of decommissioning nuclear power plants and long-term safe storage of nuclear waste, as a basis for energy policy decisions.
7. Hold nuclear polluters accountable, ensure full redress and damage payment to affected populations, apply the precautionary principle, abolish legislation which frees nuclear industry from insurance payments for accidents and ensure equal participation of women and men in decision making.

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## 4.f Climate Change and water

By Carmen Capriles<sup>154 155</sup>

*Principle 20: Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.*  
 (Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Earth Summit, 1992)

### Introduction

During the 1992 Rio Earth Summit (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, UNCED), climate change, desertification and the loss of biodiversity were identified as the greatest challenges to sustainable development. Since then, despite three United Nations conventions — the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) — and other efforts, results are minimal and each threat remains decreasing the likelihood of a sustainable future.

An unstable climate resulting from carbon dioxide emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>) and a growing lack of productive land and loss of species work together in a feedback loop, increasing the related negative consequences, which can include lack of food security and availability of clean water. These impacts have a gender dimension and contribute to increasing poverty, particularly among the poorest, where women make up the majority. The post-2015 framework and sustainable development goals must address this interrelationship.

### The climate science

The greatest contributor to climate change is CO<sub>2</sub>. The world must lower its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to a concentration of approximately 350 parts per million (ppm) to stabilize the planet's temperature (Hansen, 2009) and therefore the climate. Data shows that atmospheric concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> hit a new annual average in 2012 (393.81 ppm), which is an increase of 2 ppm per year during the last 10 years and 40% greater than preindustrial levels (Table 1).

**Table 1: Annual average of concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere**

Year	Annual average of CO <sub>2</sub> (ppm)	Notes
2013	400.03	First time readings cross 400 ppm 9 May, WMO, Mauna Loa, Hawaii.
2012	393.81	Rio+20 Summit
2009	387.37	Copenhagen Accord (UNFCCC)
2007	383.76	Bali Action Plan (UNFCCC)
1997	363.71	Kyoto Protocol
1992	356.38	Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro
1987	349.16	The last year when annual average CO <sub>2</sub> level was less than 350 ppm
1959	315.97	The first year with comparable data

Source: Annual CO<sub>2</sub> Data from the National Ocean and Atmosphere Administration, USA (NOAA): NOAA-ESRL Found in: <http://co2now.org/Current-CO2/CO2-Now/noaa-mauna-loa-co2-data.html>

In 2010, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions primarily came from two sources: the burning of fossil fuels and land use change (deforestation and logging, and intensive agriculture).<sup>156</sup> Historically, the major emitters have been developed countries, but as of 2009, some emerging economies were emitting more than developed countries. For example China now emits a larger amount than the US (although the US still emits far more than China on a per capita basis)<sup>157</sup>. In addition, as several studies show, the steep rise

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<sup>155</sup> Acknowledgments to Eleanor Blomstrom, Rachel Harris, Isis Alvarez, Simone Lovera, Osprey Orielle Lake, Lorena Terrazas, Mirna Fernandez

<sup>156</sup> [http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/images/headlines/ngeo\\_689\\_aop.pdf](http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/images/headlines/ngeo_689_aop.pdf) and <http://www.pnas.org/content/104/47/18866.abstract>. See also [http://unfccc.int/files/methods\\_and\\_science/research\\_and\\_systematic\\_observation/application/pdf/iucn\\_houghton.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/methods_and_science/research_and_systematic_observation/application/pdf/iucn_houghton.pdf)

<sup>157</sup> [http://unfccc.int/files/methods\\_and\\_science/research\\_and\\_systematic\\_observation/application/pdf/iucn\\_houghton.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/methods_and_science/research_and_systematic_observation/application/pdf/iucn_houghton.pdf)

in Chinese emissions is a result of manufacturing goods for consumption in foreign markets<sup>158</sup> which begs the question: who is responsible for these emissions?

### **Historical and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities**

It is vital to take into account the principles of historical and common but differentiated responsibilities, when considering future action. This principle addresses the fact that today's temperature rises are a result of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that occurred in developed countries years ago during and after the industrial revolution; it is the developed countries, therefore, that are responsible for addressing the current climate change challenge. In practical terms this means developed countries have an obligation to repay the ecological debt they owe to developing countries, which are already facing the negative effects of global warming. This debt is to be repaid in the form of financial resources from public sources and the effective transfer of appropriate technology that will facilitate adaptation to a changing climate. Developed countries are also expected to reduce their consumption patterns and establish mitigation strategies with a view to stabilizing the climate. In order not to make the same mistakes that industrialised countries have made in the past, developing countries including emerging economies should try to adopt low carbon approaches in their bid to meet the fundamental needs of their populations on the basis of sustainable development.

This principle also has an important gender dimension that needs to be understood. Women are more severely affected by climate change and natural disasters, especially because of impacts on food, health, housing, and women's allocated responsibilities in this regard within their homes as well as small-scale farmers. Women are also more at risk because of gender discrimination and poverty, which makes them disproportionately more vulnerable in the first place and less able to recover from natural disasters.<sup>159</sup>

Women generally contribute less to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as well. For example, women are over-represented as heads of low-income households and underrepresented in high-income groups. In this respect, gender inequalities resulting in differentiated income levels have also played a role in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.<sup>160</sup>

Gender equality should be recognized and supported as a key factor in the drive to achieve climate justice. Women and men, as a result of their differentiated economic and social roles and experiences, also have differentiated responsibilities and capacities in terms of adapting to and mitigating climate change. Women have significant contributions to make, based on their involvement in areas such as sustainable agriculture to take just one example, but are often overlooked in related decision-making processes.<sup>161</sup> Future strategies need to focus on women as vital development agents, especially when deciding on measures to adapt to and face climate change. This should also bring along investment in capacity building, as well as funding and other resources that would enable women and other civil society organizations to identify alternatives and implement them. This responsibility relies not only on the States but also at other levels of society.

### **Climate impacts are gendered**

Besides increasing average temperatures, climate change manifests itself through increased and more intense storms and floods; long droughts and forest fires; less reliable or loss of seasonal crops due to changing distribution and intensity of rain; melting glaciers; the migration of species and resultant shifting disease vectors; and loss of biodiversity. Impacts will be felt everywhere, from big cities to small villages, from the poles to the deserts, in developed and developing countries, at the coasts and up in the mountains. However, the intensity and characteristics of these impacts will vary from region to region,<sup>162</sup> and the most vulnerable will be least able to deal with the changes that climate change is bringing.<sup>163</sup>

Climate change will result in imbalances in the availability of water, food and energy resources. This will be significant for all, but particularly for women. For example, in areas affected by floods, such as Bangladesh, women may be in a more vulnerable situation due to lack of information, an inability to

<sup>158</sup> [http://unfccc.int/files/methods\\_and\\_science/research\\_and\\_systematic\\_observation/application/pdf/iucn\\_houghton.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/methods_and_science/research_and_systematic_observation/application/pdf/iucn_houghton.pdf)

<sup>159</sup> [http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/climate\\_change\\_gender.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/climate_change_gender.pdf)

<sup>160</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/themes/gender-equality/themes/climate-change/>

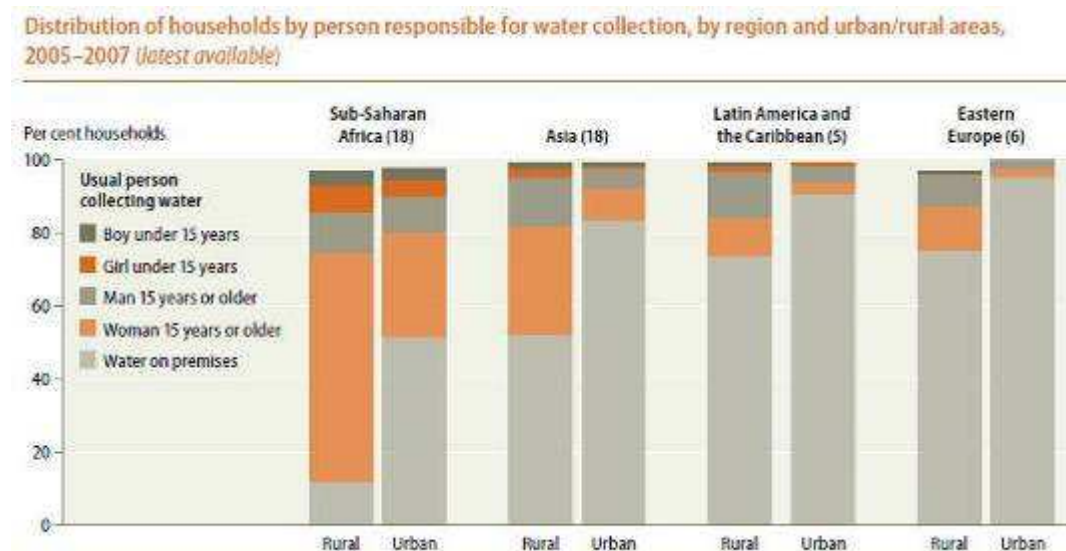
<sup>161</sup> <http://www.unwomen.org/focus-areas/climate-change-and-the-environment/>

<sup>162</sup> <http://co2now.org/Know-the-Changing-Climate/Climate-Changes/ipcc-faq-regional-climate-variations.html>

<sup>163</sup> [http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/Climate\\_Change\\_DFID\\_draft.pdf](http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/Climate_Change_DFID_draft.pdf) (see p11)

swim or cultural restrictions on movement.<sup>164</sup> Women are also generally the ones responsible for fetching household water (see Table 2); when water is scarce or contaminated, women and girls spend many hours on the task — decreasing available time for school or other livelihood/employment activities.

**Table 2: Distribution of households by person responsible for water collection**



Source: (The) World's Women 2010. Trends and Statistics. UNDESA, 2010  
 In <http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/gender.shtml>

Contaminated water may be a result of poor sanitation or the destruction of water systems during climate-related storms, which results in water-related illnesses and diarrhea; and it is often women who spend time and energy to take care of the sick. Water quality and availability issues may increase malnutrition, which puts everyone's health at risk, in particular girls and pregnant women. Rising sea levels and coastal flooding can also result in seawater intrusion into fresh water sources. This can have significant health impacts. In Bangladesh for example, women who drink water with high salt content experience reproductive health impacts such as eclampsia, miscarriage and stillbirth twenty times higher than in other areas of Bangladesh.<sup>165</sup>

During long walks for water or in camps and shelters after storms, women also face increased levels of physical and sexual violence. Limited water also means less water available for productive purposes. Women, especially heads of households, will therefore have to deal with higher food prices, lower incomes, decreased ability to feed their families (especially rural women who play a primary role in household food production) and increased time poverty. In tending to basic needs, education will become less of a priority, contributing to cycles of poverty and challenging efforts to meet goals of universal education. In short, the consequences of climate change impact almost all aspects of women's daily lives and long-term development, which in turn affects the entire community.

Furthermore, productive systems are beginning to deteriorate and eventually whole ecosystems may collapse. Such impacts post a huge challenge, particularly to those relying most on natural resources, such as local populations that rely on native flora for resources that do not need to be paid for, especially women using them for household needs. It is critical to build resilience to the impacts and to mitigate the causes of climate change; women play a pivotal role in both adaptation and mitigation and their contributions should not be underestimated. New policies on climate change must incorporate measures consistent with the reality of women, especially in the most vulnerable sectors, such as rural areas.<sup>166</sup>

<sup>164</sup> [http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/Climate\\_Change\\_DFID\\_draft.pdf](http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/Climate_Change_DFID_draft.pdf) (see p6)

<sup>165</sup> Islam, 2013

<sup>166</sup> Capriles, 2010

### Responding to the challenges of climate change

The threats of climate change have a strong gender impact, thus mitigation and adaptation strategies should incorporate gender considerations in order to move beyond the status quo, transform the current dynamic, and improve the state of gender equality. Countries should make sure mitigation and adaptation strategies take into account the rights and needs of women as well as ensuring the equitable sharing of the costs and benefits of these approaches, not only between countries and generations but also between men and women.

Furthermore, current mitigation strategies are often based on market or payment-related mechanisms which lack a gender or long-term social justice perspective. For example, the current promotion and use of biofuels has been taken forward without gender and environmental analyses that might have predicted their high social cost when they compete with food crops or are grown for industrial uses that do not contribute to development of the local community; and that their production can be just as bad for the climate when full lifecycle emissions are taken into account. Other mitigation strategies that prioritize carbon sequestration may also affect the relationship between women, especially indigenous women, and the forest, especially if access to traditional territories is restricted or banned for conservation purposes.<sup>167</sup> Many such strategies fail to prioritize local community benefits or consider the implications for women in terms of unequal land tenure rights. Ultimately they are likely to reduce access to forest resources, include water, food, fuel and other resources necessary for sustainable livelihoods.



Participants in an action led by Women and Gender NGOs at COP18 in Doha, Qatar, decrying the lack of sincere and effective actions on the part of the countries from the Global North.

Credit: Andrea Quesada-Aguilar

### Climate change links with CEDAW and women's rights

Women's rights and gender equality must be guaranteed in order to achieve sustainable development. This means that climate change must be addressed in a way that ensures women's rights are taken into account, and that women are not further jeopardised by the proposed solutions.

Existing legal and normative frameworks guide the connections between gender equality, women's rights and climate change. The three Rio Conventions and/or their resulting decisions– UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD – all include references to women or gender equality. CEDAW addresses the connection, for example, in Article 14, " *the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work*

<sup>167</sup> <http://globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Impacts-marketbasedconservationmechanisms-on-woman41.pdf>



*in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas”.*

Some governments have taken an approach that addresses both adaptation and mitigation; the Bolivian proposal on Integrated Forest Conservation Policies, for example, takes into account the multiple functions forests provide. This includes livelihoods for local communities, as well as biodiversity, food security and access to water resources. Nevertheless it should still be ensured that all approaches are fully in line with CEDAW and also take into account women's rights and needs and the vital role women play in biodiversity conservation. According to WEDO (2007) *“Women are often perceived primarily as victims and not as positive agents of change. However, women can be key agents of adaptation and mitigation to climate change. Their responsibilities in households, communities and as stewards of natural resources position them well to develop strategies for adapting to changing environmental realities”*. Thus we need a framework that addresses all these various dimensions of climate change.

### **Conclusions**

A post-2015 framework that moves towards achieving sustainable development must address climate change in a way that recognizes that climate change, like other global crises, is not gender neutral. Addressing climate change requires an equitable approach that protects and promotes human rights in order to ensure sustainable livelihoods, and as part of this approach protects and promotes women's rights, with a view to achieving gender equality. The role of women should be central in any proposed goals, taking into account that they have a strategic role to play in achieving real solutions to the climate crisis, from both an adaptation and mitigation standpoint. As climate change and gender equality are addressed hand-in-hand, it is also important to create policies that are flexible enough to adapt to women's varied and changing roles in society – to avoid locking women into specific gender roles that ultimately thwart the goal of transformative change. The costs and benefits posed by adaptation and mitigation strategies must also be addressed through a gender-sensitive lens in order to strategically tackle some of the equity and equality gaps that are delaying the achievement of sustainable development.

As the threat posed by increasing concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere has not resulted in a strong political response, it is clear there is a lack of political will to commit to lowering emissions and stabilizing temperature. Therefore real change may best be based on something more tangible and visible – the impact on people's lives, homes and businesses – coupled with the scientific facts. Linking climate change to the post-2015 development agenda and the SDG process means focusing the world's attention on issues that are directly affected by climate change such as water access, supply and availability, food security and sovereignty, as well as alternative, renewable, sustainable and low-cost energy sources. In all cases, goals should focus on integrating women into key roles and ensuring women and men have the necessary information, the appropriate technology and the resources they need to face these challenges.

### **Case Study 1: Financing for Climate Change Mitigation and adaptation in the Philippines: a Pro-poor and Gender-sensitive Perspective**

This study shows that it is women who have led their households and communities in the development of agricultural coping strategies including food preservation, mixed cropping and crop diversification, water harvesting and irrigation, growing reliance on wild fruits and forest products, and cultivating at higher levels. Financial coping strategies include shifting from crop production, taking out loans, selling off livestock, seeking government financial assistance, reducing food consumption, and migrating to find other sources of work and income. Drawing from a rich body of local and traditional knowledge, people in the countryside have begun to adjust to extreme weather variations using a variety of adaptation and coping strategies (not all of which are sustainable), with limited resources and support. Women farmers are organizing and strategizing in order to secure their livelihoods and access to basic needs, and are increasingly engaged in organic farming initiatives, integrated pest management programs, agro-forestry, and tree-planting projects. Currently, the Philippines financing policy framework has limited focus on women's concerns and minimal women's participation. For example, in assessing the Philippines national financial regime, the study found a lack of recognition of links between climate change and the financing of overall development goals, including gender equality; an inordinate reliance on market-based solutions that do not account for

gender roles and the feminization of poverty; and a lack of consultation and participation of women and women's rights advocates.

Source: Athena Peralta

<http://www.wedo.org/prototype/wp-content/uploads/genderandclimatechangefinance.pdf>

## Case Study 2: Women and Climate Change in Los Andes

The Andean region has a high level of ethnic and cultural diversity and includes countries that emit very low levels of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, such as Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia. It is also an area currently threatened by global warming. Almost 10% of the freshwater reserves in the world are within the Andean region; it is the second largest reservoir of freshwater on the planet. Much of this fresh water is in the form of glaciers. The increase in global temperature has already led to the loss of permafrost in several summits, and the Chacaltaya glacier located at 5,200 meters above sea level has been gone since 2009. This alarming fact has a big impact on the people who depend on water from snow-ice melting for domestic supply, productive activities and in many cases, power supply. In the Andean highlands, agriculture is the one of the most important activities and is based on irrigation by gravity, which leads to an inefficient use of water. Irrigation is one of the main activities and takes a great deal of time; the participation of women is low, mainly due to the fact that harnessing irrigation waters from melting glaciers is both tedious and harsh. The climatic conditions, loss of fertility and related socioeconomic factors are contributing to male migration to urban centres in search of a better life. Women are left behind in the communities, which results in an increase of responsibilities for women and a feminization of the rural areas. More women are now dealing with rising temperatures in places where radiation is one of the highest on the globe, while at the same time they have less access to any kind of resources and struggle to produce sufficient food on infertile land.

By Carmen Capriles

## Recommendations

1. Design and implement rights-based, socially just, gender-responsive and coherent ecosystem-based approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation.
2. Integrate gender-sensitive solutions to climate change into the post-2015 framework and SDGs to ensure gender equality, and ensure that women's rights and empowerment are fundamental cross-cutting goals when addressing the climate crisis and sustainable development.
3. Address common but differentiated responsibilities from a gender perspective, women have a lower impact on the environment, as long as equity and equality are not achieved, we must recognize that women have less responsibility.
4. Promote the capacity-building of women in relation to skills that facilitate the development and use of adaptation technologies, especially those that have co-benefits such as improving resilience and ensuring livelihoods.
5. Engage women leaders and facilitate women's equitable participation in decision-making processes at all levels.
6. Recognize and take into account women's specific needs and abilities, and women's human rights ; policies should focus on ensuring that women have and adequate access to education, to health as well as justice, participation and information in order to have a wider possibility to decide of her future, otherwise women rights will not be achieved.
7. Incorporate solutions that go beyond current economic models, which are often based on privatization strategies that do not promote gender equality.
8. Promote different means of information sharing, to ensure that women have timely access to relevant and quality information; and integrate this within all the goals.
9. Maintain flexibility to account for local realities and practices, and draw upon successful practices of promoting efficient resource use in different social contexts when designing adaptation and mitigation strategies.
10. Support and engage in research into the experiences of women, including through the collection of sex-disaggregated data that identifies concrete problems, sustainable and unsustainable coping strategies, and potential solutions.

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Integrate gender-sensitive solutions to climate change and facilitate women's equitable participation in decision-making processes at all levels. Photo: Indigenous Peoples Biocultural Climate Change Assessment Initiative. See also: <http://ipcca.info>

## 5. Women's Human Rights and the transition into a Sustainable Economic system

### 5.a The case for gender equality and rights in the SDGs

By Eleanor Blomstrom<sup>168</sup> with contributions from Marcela Ballara<sup>169</sup>

*"...the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields" -CEDAW, Art. 3*

Gender equality is a widely recognized global goal. It is not yet reality – and will not be as long as violence, discrimination, restricted rights and access to services and decision-making spheres persists. Reaching the goal of gender equality will require transformation of laws, policies, institutional and societal norms as well as behaviours.

Achieving gender equality is intrinsic to the advancement of human rights. Women's rights are human rights and must be respected, promoted and protected by all actors in all sectors. Neither gender equality nor human rights can be separated from sustainable development, which has interlinked social, economic and environmental dimensions. Gender equality is a driver of sustainable development – and sustainable development should be a driver of gender equality.



Women delegates to the UNFCCC in a learning exchange, Cancun, Mexico, 2010.  
Photo: Andrea Quesada-Aguilar

#### The policy framework

Strong international normative and legal frameworks exist for gender equality and sustainable development. Over 150 governments have signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the three sustainable development conventions

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on biological diversity, desertification and climate change. These Conventions and their follow up protocols, decisions and action plans have established some normative connections between gender equality and sustainable development.

However, while sustainable development agreements should take a gender-sensitive human rights approach to promote more effective policy and fulfill globally agreed obligations, in the past 20 years, "a gender-sensitive understanding of human rights has only been inconsistently integrated into sustainable development agreements".<sup>170</sup> The lack of attention to the social dimension has been common in environmental and sustainable development policies, and it could be a potential gap in the post-2015 and post-Rio+20 discussions. This shortcoming is often falsely justified by silo-ing the social impact from what is otherwise deemed a scientific or technical issue. For instance, while climate change is recognized as a human induced problem, the response to it has typically lacked a social component, leading to measures that are not safeguarded and that can be more harmful than effective.<sup>171</sup> To stop this trend governments and women's rights and gender equality advocates should take measures to include gender equality and social justice as central components in future sustainable development agreements.

As the world discusses and formulates a post-2015 global development framework, which is planned to integrate and be coherent with a set of sustainable development goals, it is critical to recognize and draw upon the existing policy frameworks (see Appendix). Continued support of spaces for participation and inclusion of diverse women stakeholders who are advocates, organizers and experts must be brought to the forefront in these discussions; their leadership and participation are crucial to successfully developing and implementing a post-2015 development framework.

### **Women's Rights, the Environment and a Sustainable Development Agenda**

As codified in the Beijing Declaration<sup>172</sup>, women's rights are human rights. Human rights include the right to food, water, shelter, security, freedom from gender-based violence, etc., as well as the right to political participation and access to information and justice. The current development framework, specifically the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), falls short of addressing human rights and comprehensive structural issues. However, in setting goals to address issues of gender equality and women's empowerment, the success of the MDGs necessarily relies on rights being respected. For example, the MDG3 indicator on education for girls is theoretically a good measure (although assessing achievement needs to be based on quality, attendance and future schooling as opposed to simply enrolment), but promoting equal access/enrolment in school is difficult when rights to water and food are violated due to privatization of water sources or land grabbing and insecure land tenure.<sup>173</sup> At the same time, people may not be well equipped to fully exercise their rights without quality education, including access to lifelong learning (see Box 1). The complexity of linkages between rights and sustainable development goals must be incorporated, and human rights need to be the basis of any new framework.

The distinct, compartmentalized ("siloed") nature of the MDGs has drawn much criticism. Environmental sustainability (MDG7) is a cross-cutting issue like gender equality. It merits a goal – or even several – to focus on key environmental issues that contribute to sustainable development. But additionally, the fundamental understanding that resources are limited and must be managed with a sharp focus on intergenerational equity and justice<sup>174</sup> needs to be integrated throughout a post-2015 sustainable development agenda and any development goals. The agenda also needs to tie in the concepts of sustainable consumption and production, including the different responsibilities for action in different countries. A new agenda will need to track the progress toward environmental sustainability, recognizing the intricate relationship to global poverty, education, health, food security and marginalization of populations. For example, as biodiversity and forest cover are lost<sup>175</sup>, forest dependent people's livelihoods are jeopardized as they become less resilient and more vulnerable when they lose access to ecosystem services such as traditional foods, lands, seeds and customs that sustain communities, and are further marginalized as they continue to be excluded from land use

<sup>170</sup> Ruane, 2013

<sup>171</sup> Schaletek, 2012; WEDO, 2013

<sup>172</sup> <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>

<sup>173</sup> AWID, 2008

<sup>174</sup> Gender equality, women's rights and sustainable development are intertwined with the concept of intergenerational justice. Looking holistically necessarily means making changes in laws, policies and attitudes today that will bring about a world where gender equality is a reality, where rights, access and control over natural and financial resources is sustainable and a given for all.

<sup>175</sup> Especially as a result of human activity, see for example <http://cop10.biodiv.be/cop10-10questions/cop10-10questions/#Q2>

planning and decision making that does not recognize or value their needs, preferences and unique knowledge of the resources, including sustainable management. It is important to continue to work toward achieving MDGs 3 and 7, but the limited indicators and targets hamper understanding the nuanced layers of gaps and achievements.

Women's rights and gender equality advocates and activists ask what is the value in a new set of goals? Are they truly "sustainable" development goals if they are implemented within a system that perpetuates social, political and economic inequalities within and between countries? if they are goals that legitimize inequitable power structures, that prioritize economic growth and corporate profit over development and well-being? Or if they are goals that insist on trade restrictions and perverse subsidies that penalize local (sustainable) production and innovative solutions from the ground up? These questions are not new and women's rights and gender equality advocates have been posing them for several years in an effort to transform what has become a neo-liberal norm into a human rights-based and social justice agenda.

### The role of lifelong learning

*"Only when adults have agency as learners, will we get good nutrition, clean water, improved health outcomes and better governance. Therefore, lifelong learning, as a human right demand, should be an integral part of the definition of a new development paradigm" – Marcela Ballara, ICAE.*

When discussing women's leadership and participation, education and learning are central. Lifelong learning incorporates traditional education but extends beyond it to encompass all forms of education (non-formal and popular education) and the different learning needs at different stages of the life-cycle. Learning and education have links to economic power; women in the informal economy are least likely to have access to literacy or lifelong learning.

Adult learning plays a catalytic role in the achievement of sustainable development for all, including for models of consumption and production that foster gender, social and environmental justice. Lifelong learning policies and practices are inevitably involved in responses to all of these issues, and a fundamental pre-requisite for the achievement of a range of other social policy goals. When recognizing and assessing learning needs, central goals will be equality of access for women, for indigenous peoples, and for all at risk of discrimination.

Education has proven to be a key issue for poverty eradication and an accelerator for development especially for groups that face multiple forms of discrimination. To ensure gender equality, women's rights and empowerment, education must be included as a cross-cutting issue for the post-2015 development framework and the SDGs, with lifelong learning explicitly included.

#### Recommendations

1. Include a lifelong learning target that covers each of the phases of the education life-cycle: early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary, as well as adult and young people's education
2. Recognize the different learning needs at different stages of the life-cycle
3. Recognize the need for equality of access for women, for indigenous peoples, and for all at risk of discrimination.

Source: WEDO

#### Checking the box: gender equality

Advocates, strategically working with government and UN allies, have carved out a place for gender equality to be considered, described, written into international policies and agreements and then implemented.

As gender equality becomes a ubiquitous phrase, it offers great opportunity for women and men and is testament to the advocacy of women and gender activists at all levels and in all sectors. Bringing gender equality as a priority in the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals can be positive, as long as the rights component is not lost. Including and aiming for gender equality can have great impact when women are explicitly recognized and can participate as leaders,

change agents, decision-makers and beneficiaries of policies and programs. Actions in this direction imply, among others:

1. Raising awareness and bringing women's traditional and expert knowledge to policy and community discussions
2. Improving educational opportunities and quality for women and girls,
3. Improving access to health services
4. Providing better support for those caring for children, the sick and the elderly,
5. Focusing on household energy, increase market access
6. Pushing for development of transport alternatives
7. Transforming information sharing
8. Prioritizing safe and sustainable technology development
9. Ensuring safe spaces for women to speak their minds
10. Funding projects
11. Securing access to and control of credit – beyond microcredit
12. Securing land tenure rights
13. Expanding social protection
14. Improving access to decision-making and participation as decision-makers.

Such actions would bring about positive outcomes that are important for women and communities at large. Because of socialized gender roles and inequalities women are often not ensured of their rights, are burdened with care work in addition to any other productive or reproductive work, suffer gender-based discrimination in different spheres and levels, and experience sexual and physical violence. However, complex systems of inequalities and multiple discriminations based on race, ethnicity, class, geography and ability impact on all people's experiences. A gender equality and human rights lens will foster action that addresses these intersecting inequalities.



Children from Gorkha Community Forests, Nepal.  
Credit: Andrea Quesada-Aguilar Photo: Isis Alvarez

The ubiquity of the term 'gender equality' also brings risks. Implementation is lacking for gender equality, as evidenced in scores of reports, including those on MDG3. Women's human rights are not always understood as a component of gender equality. Even as the phrase becomes more accepted by governments worldwide, (including conservative ones), it may be losing its power. Gender equality risks becoming a phrase to be added to a list and checked off when it is included in text or when a

woman participates in a meeting – even if that woman has little to no background in the subject or process and does not contribute a gender perspective. Gender equality also risks being essentialized as it is often relegated as a goal of interest only to women, or even results in a backlash against and undermines women who challenge the status quo. Advocates and activists for gender equality must engage men and boys—as this addresses their socialized roles as well—and ensure that gender equality is understood as a means to better the lives of all of society. Further, gender equality risks becoming equated only with women's participation and gender balance. They are not one and the same. Gender balance or parity is a tool; it is part of a set of equity measures to transform the current patriarchal power structures. Other tools are necessary – like many in the list of actions proposed above.

The current trend to 'check a box' for gender equality is reductionist, and it threatens hard-fought gains by advocates and allies. Including the phrase in policies and programming still offers great opportunity to actually mainstream gender and make progress toward equality, but success will not be possible without the transformative measures recommended throughout this compilation.

### **Participation and Leadership**

Although Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration from 1992 states that “Women have a vital role in environmental management and development” and that “Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development,” women's full participation is yet to be achieved. Thus sustainable development is yet to be achieved. Full participation implies inclusiveness, impact and leadership, which are crucial to shift policies, laws, norms and behaviours. One only needs to look at statistics of male and female leaders to see that structural sex discrimination exists and that, as a result of social inequities, women are in a different space in terms of political power at all levels, from parliaments to local municipalities.

Gender balance, without complementary and targeted efforts to achieve gender equality, will not necessarily promote gender equality or women's leadership, accomplish fundamental changes in human behaviour, nor lead to substantive progress in policies, programs and practices that benefit both women and men. The rationale in aiming for gender balance must be unpacked. On a gender-balanced committee, just as in any committee, the members need to be aware of the subject at hand and able to access relevant information in order to take leadership and effectively participate. When women are routinely denied access to education and opportunities for community engagement because their rights to food, water and sexual and reproductive health services are not fulfilled, effective participation suffers. Thus, to support gender equality and women's participation and leadership, as rights are being fulfilled, a concurrent effort must be capacity building including content, technical issues, business practices and finance. And women (and men) need to be supported in their efforts by financial contributions for travel and per diem, and by redistribution of responsibilities, e.g. child or elder care.

### **In Focus: UNFCCC and gender balance**

With the 2012 UNFCCC decision, “Promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of Parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol”, the UNFCCC has taken an important step forward in recognizing that women's participation is a key element to success in addressing climate change and in broader decision-making, and that gender-sensitive policies must be developed. However, it is just as important to understand that the decision does not go far enough.

Source: WEDO<sup>176</sup>

<sup>176</sup> For analyses of the UNFCCC [Decision 23/CP.18](#), see [http://www.gendercc.net/fileadmin/inhalte/Dokumente/UNFCCC\\_conferences/COP18/Press\\_statement\\_Doha\\_GenderCC.pdf](http://www.gendercc.net/fileadmin/inhalte/Dokumente/UNFCCC_conferences/COP18/Press_statement_Doha_GenderCC.pdf) (genderCC), <http://www.wedo.org/news/the-doha-gaps-seeking-miracles-solidarity-and-good-old-fashioned-hope-to-fill-them> (WEDO), <http://us6.campaign-archive2.com/?u=512f29767f8439084da9be65e&id=f578b28192&e=f347865875> (GGCA), <http://www.unwomen.org/2012/12/cop-18-adopts-a-decision-promoting-gender-balance-in-climate-change-negotiations/> (UN Women).



## Looking ahead

The post-2015 and the rio+20 development framework have to include gender equality universally and comprehensively, encompassing much more complexity than the MDGs. Goals and targets for gender equality will need to recognize the different starting points of countries and the different paths necessary, while also recognizing common manifestations of inequality. Indicators will need to capture the degree of inequality or equality that women encounter at sub-national and local levels to provide a more nuanced understanding. Almost all countries see gender inequality and discrimination in the pay gap, concentration of poverty among women and children, violence against women, lack of women in leadership roles, the unequal care burden, uneven childcare and maternity/paternity leave. Some countries may have additional gender issues linked to resource access and gender roles such as time for and quality of education, access to sexual and reproductive health care, time spent fetching water, food and fuel, incidence of respiratory disease and death from indoor air pollution.

Daily life on this planet is a global concern incorporating a multitude of ecosystems, peoples and cultures. As such, it requires collective input in its management, protection, and ultimately, its sustainability. While there is not one specific women's interest in terms of sustainable development, it can be argued that "*the variety of women's interests [in sustainable development] does not refute the claim that interests are gendered*".<sup>177</sup> Women do not necessarily have specific leadership skills that will transform sustainable development,<sup>178</sup> but greater diversity and different perspectives in all levels of decision-making lead to more effective and sustainable outcomes. Thoughtful, inclusive, rights-based development of the Post-2015 framework and any new sustainable development goals has the potential to move the world forward to a just, equitable and healthy existence for all.

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<sup>177</sup> Phillips, 1995

<sup>178</sup> Phillips, 1995

## **5.b Women's sexual and reproductive rights and health: critical investments for achieving sustainable development**

By Alexandra Garita<sup>179</sup> and Ximena Andión<sup>180</sup>

As a global community, we have miserably failed to provide women, particularly poor and marginalized women and adolescents, with the sexual and reproductive healthcare, information and education they need to live fulfilling, just and healthy lives.

The condition of subordination and inequality often experienced by girls and women can deny their humanity and place them in situations where their sexual and reproductive rights are violated. Furthermore, gender discrimination limits their freedom to acquire knowledge about their bodies and their rights, and to claim them. Despite some progress, girls and women still lack the information and means to realize their personal and bodily autonomy.

For these reasons alone, the international community has, as a moral imperative, to secure women's sexual and reproductive rights and health. This can be done by measuring the effectiveness, accessibility and quality of women's health programs but it also necessitates participatory and social accountability approaches, so that women are able to influence those areas that require sustained political, social and financial investments.

In the Post-2015 sustainable development agenda, a gender perspective must be grounded throughout. Women caution against a set of reductive goals, targets and indicators that ignore the necessary changes required to address current failures rooted in unsustainable production and consumption patterns which in turn exacerbates gender, race and class inequities.<sup>181</sup> Rather, ambitious and transformative global agreements must be developed in ways that respond to women specifically (as are outlined in other chapters of this book) through a defined course of action that challenges the current development paradigm towards a more equitable and just one based on gender equality and human rights. One of these tenants must be to secure women's bodily autonomy through ensuring their sexual and reproductive rights, and in so doing achieve their equitable access to quality sexual and reproductive healthcare. This will undoubtedly impact a whole range of development outcomes positively, as well as contribute to economic, gender, ecological and erotic justice.

### **Women's reproductive rights**

Sexual and reproductive rights are human rights. The International Conference on Population and Development's Programme of Action (ICPD, 1994) recognized that the right to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights are enshrined in international human rights treaties already adopted by the international community. The bodies that monitor compliance with international human rights treaties (such as the Committee on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights) have since expanded the content and scope of States Parties' human rights obligations related to sexual and reproductive rights and health. Furthermore, governments agreed during the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing, to ensure that women have the right to control all aspects of her sexuality, including her sexual and reproductive health, free from violence, discrimination and coercion.

Under international human rights law, violations of women's reproductive rights constitute violations of human rights, including the right to information, the right to life, the right to non-discrimination, the right to health, and the right to be free from torture and cruel or inhuman treatment. The primacy of international law imposes an obligation on States to protect, respect, and fulfil these by all necessary means.

Reproductive rights violations lead to negative development outcomes because they fuel gender, economic and social inequalities. These violations include preventable maternal mortality and

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<sup>181</sup> Women's Major Group (2013) "We Will Not be Mainstreamed into a Polluted Stream: Feminist Statement on the 2015 Development Agenda", Women's Major Group statement read at the international NGO conference on 'Advancing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda: Reconfirming Rights – Recognising Limits – Redefining Goals' was held from 20-22 March 2013 in Bonn, Germany. Available at <http://www.dawwnet.org/advocacy-appeals.php?signon=293&id=293>, retrieved on June 10<sup>th</sup> 2013

morbidity; forced sterilizations and forced abortions performed on women belonging to different ethnic minorities and also on those who are HIV positive; lack of effective access to safe abortions where they are legal due to non-regulation of conscientious objection, among other factors; lack of informed consent and choice over contraceptive methods; harmful practices such as honour killings, female genital mutilation, and early and forced marriage; and sexual violence.

Securing women's sexual and reproductive health and rights is not only a fundamental goal in its own right; it is also critical to achieving social, economic and environmental development, the three pillars of sustainable development.

### **Women's access to quality sexual and reproductive health care services**

There has been little progress in achieving Millennium Development Goal 5 (MDG 5) on improving maternal health,<sup>182</sup> which requires a 75% reduction in maternal mortality and morbidity and aims to guarantee universal access to reproductive health through realizing the unmet need for family planning and reducing the number of adolescent pregnancies. Indeed, MDG 5 is one of the Millennium Development goals that is most off-track, and the UNDP 2012 MDG Progress report<sup>183</sup> notes that the international community is far from achieving it. In addition, achievement of MDG 6, on halting the spread of HIV,<sup>184</sup> has been insufficient in regards to reaching girls and women with necessary prevention.

In 2015 we are still likely to be far away from achieving these goals, because even now:

- Eight hundred women still die from pregnancy-related causes every day.<sup>185</sup>
- Over 220 million women (who are married or living in union) in developing countries want to prevent pregnancy, but lack access to effective contraception — resulting in 80 million unintended pregnancies, 30 million unplanned births and 40 million abortions — half of them unsafe and life-threatening.<sup>186</sup>
- Since the 1990s progress has slowed with respect to increasing contraceptive use, with unmet need for family planning remaining persistently high in some of the poorest regions of the world, including Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>187</sup>
- Nearly half of all people living with HIV globally are women.<sup>188</sup> Young women aged 15-24 are most vulnerable to HIV with infection rates twice as high as in young men; they account for 22% of all new HIV infections.<sup>189</sup> Every minute, a young woman is newly infected with HIV.<sup>190</sup>

Maternal deaths are the result of a combination of poverty, social exclusion, inadequate access to quality health services, and gender discrimination. The main medical causes are haemorrhage, obstructed labour, sepsis and eclampsia, and unsafe abortions.<sup>191</sup> Nevertheless, wider causes of women's deaths during pregnancy and childbirth have to do with structural discrimination — poor nutrition, anaemia, early marriage and child-bearing, violence and low female educational attainment (Sen, 2009). Furthermore, it is estimated that giving women in developing countries access to modern contraception would prevent at least 79,000 pregnancy-related deaths a year.<sup>192</sup>

Addressing all of these socio-economic and cultural determinants require strengthening health systems, particularly at the primary health care level, so that they can adequately provide women with comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, including: safe contraceptives and fertility regulation methods of their choice; HIV prevention (and treatment in high burden countries); and maternity care, including antenatal care, skilled birth attendance, and emergency obstetric care. It also means training health providers to be sensitive to the needs of poor women.<sup>193</sup>

Ensuring women's access to quality reproductive health care also entails addressing the structural,

<sup>182</sup> <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/maternal.shtml>

<sup>183</sup> UNDP, 2012

<sup>184</sup> <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/aids.shtml>

<sup>185</sup> WHO, 2012

<sup>186</sup> Guttmacher Institute and UNFPA, 2012

<sup>187</sup> Gita and Nayar, 2012

<sup>188</sup> UNAIDS, 2012

<sup>189</sup> UNAIDS, 2011

<sup>190</sup> Murray et al, 2010

<sup>191</sup> WHO, 2012

<sup>192</sup> Guttmacher Institute and UNFPA, 2012

<sup>193</sup> OHCHR, 2010

legal, gender and economic barriers that keep women from accessing or using the information and services that they need. This can be done by including a range of related factors when developing targets and indicators concerning women's health, including the prevalence of: intimate partner violence; early and forced marriages; unequal power relations; discrimination by health care providers; spousal and parental consent laws; conscientious objection clauses; user fees in health care services; and sexual and reproductive preferences and intentions.

**Prioritizing women's sexual and reproductive rights and health in the Post-2015/Sustainable Development Framework is critical because:**

**a. Preventing and combating illness among women and girls leads to a healthier and more productive population.**

1. Reproductive ill-health constitutes a significant part of the world's total ill-health: one-third of all deaths and disabilities among women of reproductive age and one-fifth of the total global burden of ill-health.<sup>194</sup>
2. Disease and ill-health diminish people's personal capacity and their ability to contribute to their household, resulting in lost incomes and lower productivity.
3. Poor health, poverty and social inequalities are intrinsically linked. Investments in better health, including sexual and reproductive health, are central for individual security as well as for reducing mortality and morbidity, which in turn improves a country's productivity and development prospects.

**b. Investment in women's sexual and reproductive health provides economic benefits for governments.**

1. Sexual and reproductive ill health burdens national budgets, and lost incomes and lower productivity slow down economic development.
2. Investment in women's sexual and reproductive health and rights consolidate investments made in education and employment and reduce future demands on government budgets.
3. Providing women with the contraceptive method of their choice, along with wider investments in women's health, education and economic livelihoods, can reduce fertility levels and facilitate the demographic transition in developing countries, offering opportunities for economic growth, job creation, women's employment and poverty alleviation.<sup>195</sup>

**c. Securing women's health is critical for their agency and human rights, as well as their families' well-being**

1. Denial of women's sexual and reproductive rights undermines women's opportunities for education and employment, driving gender inequalities and poverty.
2. If women can make decisions about their sexuality and reproduction they can decide more fully with respect to their lives in general, contributing to social and economic development.
3. Women can break out of the poverty trap more easily if they are healthy and able to manage their family size.
4. Enhancing woman's individual financial security and earning power means that families benefit from a more stable income.
5. Gender equality and inclusion also contributes to promoting social justice.
6. When women can negotiate their reproductive health decisions with men, this exercise of their rights leads to increased decision-making roles within families and communities that benefits all.

**d. When women are empowered and informed, they make responsible choices over their reproduction and contribute to stabilizing population growth and increasing prospects for sustainable development.**

4. As the Cairo Programme of Action established "*universal access to reproductive health information...can affect population dynamics through voluntary fertility reduction.*"<sup>196</sup>
5. Many women prefer to have fewer children, but are unable to control their own fertility. Women that are empowered to control their fertility and reproduction will make informed and responsible choices that will ultimately contribute to stabilizing population growth and to advancing environmental, social and economic sustainability.
6. Alongside efforts to reduce unsustainable and inequitable patterns of consumption and production in general, providing women with the contraceptive method of their choice at the time that they

<sup>194</sup> Guttmacher and UNFPA, 2012

<sup>195</sup> Canning and Schultz, 2012

<sup>196</sup> IPCD, 1994

need it and respecting their human rights would help stabilize population growth and associated resource demands.

**e. Investing in the human development and human rights of the largest generation ever of young people, particularly adolescent girls, means investing in the future and in sustainable development.**

1. Lack of information about their bodies and their rights makes young people, particularly girls, vulnerable to violence, early and forced marriage, early and forced pregnancies and child-bearing, sexual coercion, unprotected sex, HIV/AIDS, unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions.
2. Guaranteeing the health and rights of adolescents, including to comprehensive sexuality education and to sexual and reproductive health services that are appealing to them and non-judgmental, is critical to ensuring that they can actively participate in social and economic life.
3. Investing in the health of adolescent girls and respecting their rights ensures the well-being of a whole generation.

### Investing In Women's Human Rights Is Caring For The Future: Prioritizing Indigenous And Afro Descendant Women In Latin America And The Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean is the most unequal region of the world. Indigenous and afro-descendant populations register the worst human development indicators: life expectancy, access to education, morbidity and mortality, among others.<sup>197</sup> Indigenous and afro-descendant women and girls suffer from ethnic and gender discrimination, often live in poverty and face great barriers to access culturally appropriate health services, as well as to control their sexuality, fertility and reproduction. In Brazil, for instance, an afro-descendant woman is four times more likely to die during pregnancy and childbirth than a white Brazilian woman.

In Mexico, indigenous peoples represent at least 10 per cent of the total population and half of these are women. The rates of maternal mortality and adolescent pregnancies are much higher than among white and mestizo women. Sexual violence is rampant as well as other harmful practices such as early and forced marriage and early pregnancy. All of this points to a constant violation of indigenous women's sexual and reproductive rights, as well as insufficient and inadequate resources and programs available to them.

A critical component of ensuring the sustainable development of indigenous communities resides in listening, attending, and responding to the needs and human rights of indigenous girls and women. This includes fulfilling their collective and individual rights so that they can control their bodies, have access to quality sexual and reproductive health information and services and protect their lands and resources free from violence and discrimination. Women in indigenous and afro-descendent communities are critical actors for development. Their voices must be heard and their recommendations acted on.

*Source: RESURJ*

## Conclusions

As the failure to fulfil the relevant Millennium Development Goals has already demonstrated, there is a need to have a much more holistic approach to development. In the case of women's health, this means not only a focus on maternity care and contraceptives, but ensuring that women in all their diversity and throughout their life cycle receive comprehensive, integrated sexual and reproductive health information, education and services that are of quality and respect their human rights.

Particular attention must be made to the principle of equity (focusing on the ones who need it most and are most marginalized), as this is critical to bridging the development gaps within countries as well as among countries. This means allocating sufficient budgets to the poorest and most marginalized women and finding the best ways to reach them, meet their needs, and fulfil their human rights.

<sup>197</sup> UNDP, Human development Index

As Agenda 21 notes *“The growth of world population and production combined with unsustainable consumption patterns places increasingly severe stress on the life-supporting capacities of our planet.”*

Furthermore, as civil society has already voiced, during a consultation with the High Level Panel on Eminent Persons for designing the Post-2015 framework, *“harsh economic conditions interact with long-standing social inequalities, biases and discrimination, as well as with key aspects of population dynamics such as migration, urbanization and changing age structures (towards larger numbers of young people in some cases and many older people in others) to determine who is most severely affected. This includes children, girls and women, subordinated and oppressed castes and racial/ethnic groups, indigenous or disabled people, people living with HIV, sexual minorities, migrants and sex-workers, as well as widows, and older people. The existing social and economic inequalities faced by these groups as well as by pastoralists, small-scale farmers and informal traders are being intensified by current growth models. It is these people whose capabilities need to be supported. Their human rights, including their economic, social, cultural, sexual and reproductive rights need to be protected, promoted and fulfilled”*.<sup>198</sup>

Integrating a human rights approach in the Post-2015 sustainable development framework is critical to transform the development paradigm and make it more effective. A human rights perspective allows us to look at the underlying causes and systemic obstacles to achieving development outcomes. For instance, a country could have invested a lot of money in creating systems to deliver emergency obstetric services for women in labour, which indeed is fundamental, but women may still not be accessing the services due to geographical, cultural or financial barriers. This may be caused by issues related to inequality and discrimination against women within the family such as not being able to leave their homes without their husband's or in-law's permission. Others also have inadequate information and education so they do not know that that the service is available. In addition, poor social services such as lack of potable water and poor sanitation systems, to name only a few, undermine women's access to health services. If we only focus on the immediate impacts on women's health, without considering the underlying drivers, we lose the capacity to have sustained and effective results that can really change people's lives. Human rights are based on the principles of non-discrimination, participation and accountability. These are key principles that should be integrated into the efforts to achieve any sustainable development agenda, particularly if we are to reach the poorest and most marginalized.



Photo: Jose Rodriguez

<sup>198</sup> CSO Communiqué to the High Level Panel, Monrovia, Liberia, February 2013

## Recommendations

1. Create a set of 'principles' that will define the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda. The principles of non-regression, human rights, equity, equality, non-discrimination, accountability and participation are paramount.
2. Proactively address increasing inequalities within and between countries in access to health care. Prioritise women and young people, and their human rights in these responses. Focus on ensuring equitable and universal access to integrated sexual and reproductive health services within primary health care, with quality of care and fulfilment of sexual and reproductive rights. To secure this there must be greater meaningful participation of women in the design and implementation of projects related to social services and other development related projects, particularly at the local level.
3. Ensure that adolescent girls and young women have the knowledge and the skills to know their bodies and their rights, negotiate sexual and reproductive decision-making, access health services, and be free from violence and discrimination. This can be done by ending early and forced marriages, ensuring comprehensive sexuality education in and out of schools, and by providing adolescent girls with the sexual and reproductive health services that they need while respecting their privacy and confidentiality.
4. Ensure that women in all their diversity, and their sexual and reproductive health and rights across their life cycle, are central components to any health, population, and gender equality agreements that emanate from this development framework.
5. Focus on the prevention of ill health and disease: providing women of all ages, especially girls, with the information and programs they need to claim their rights and stay healthy. This includes information and education about sexuality and reproductive health, and about the health risks associated with the abuse of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol, as well as poor nutrition, in order to prevent non-communicable diseases, among others. This must be connected strongly to significant improvements in water, waste and sanitation systems, in both urban areas and rural communities.
6. Provision of sexual and reproductive health services and psychosocial care in conflict, emergencies and fragile states, particularly for women, girls, boys and men who are victims of sexual violence and those living as refugees or that are internally displaced.
7. If the conversations are reduced to setting goals and targets<sup>199</sup>.
8. Build on accelerating progress on unfinished health MDGs
9. There be a goal that strives to ensure healthy lives and wellbeing, and indicators are developed that:
  - Provide access to quality health services by reducing inequities in health access and achieving equity by increasing access of disadvantaged groups: women, adolescents, indigenous people, migrants, people living with HIV, AND by paying attention to their differentiated health needs.
  - Strengthen health systems, enable free access to all who need it, and secure quality of services and care
  - Utilize population data for health and development planning: age distribution, urbanization, migration
10. Require the elimination of laws and harmful practices that criminalize women for accessing sexual and reproductive health care (abortion,



Photo: Jose Rodriguez

<sup>199</sup> Presentation of RESURJ and the Women's Major Group during the 4<sup>th</sup> Open Working Group Session on the SDGs, June 19, 2013.

emergency contraception, HIV services)

11. Implement safeguards in the delivery of services to ensure women's and girls' voluntary and informed consent and freedom from violence, coercion and discrimination in access to health
12. Include targets that seek to address inequalities and achieve universal, comprehensive, integrated and quality health services through primary healthcare, including access to contraceptives, maternity care, safe abortion, STI/HIV services, and prevention of non-communicable diseases; that remove laws that criminalize adolescents and women from accessing healthcare; ensure universal health coverage; improve the social and environmental determinants of health.

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## 5. c Gender, poverty and the need for a social protection floor

Giulia Massobrio<sup>200</sup>

Defining the post-2015 development agenda has precise implications for women: given the structural gender discrimination that pervades the current system, any 'new' model will be just as gender-unequal as the current one unless there is a concerted and proactive effort to reverse this trend.

The link between gender equality, poverty eradication and social protection is crucial. The current model is characterized by the feminization of both poverty and exclusion from social protection. To be a woman not only means that one is more likely to be poor; it also means being less likely to be covered by social protection in terms of income security, access to essential services, and formal employment-related benefits. As a consequence, women are disproportionately vulnerable in social, economic and environmental terms, and this manifests itself in the form of increased poverty, social exclusion and inequality.

Social protection is a set of policies aimed at protecting people from the unexpected contingencies that occur in life, by providing basic income security and access to essential services throughout life. Social protection is also a core human right under international law,<sup>201</sup> as well as an extremely powerful tool for combating poverty, promoting income distribution and building resilient societies. This is why the Women's Major Group considers the extension of social protection for women to be an essential element of the Sustainable Development Goals

As a first, urgent step in this process, the Women's Major Group is calling for the implementation of national Social Protection Floors, in order to guarantee that all women in need have the right to income security and access to essential services (such as health, including sexual and reproductive health, education, housing, and water and sanitation). Social Protection Floors provide a useful and effective tool to help reverse gender-based power imbalances.

### **To be a woman means to be poorer and to have lower social protection**

The feminization of poverty remains entrenched in our societies. Despite Millennium Development Goal 3's focus on women's empowerment, gender inequality persists, and women are still fighting against poverty and hunger, even when there is only three years to go until the 2015 deadline for meeting these goals.<sup>202</sup> As the OECD points out, "women account for roughly half of the world's population, but comprise the majority of the poor and excluded."<sup>203</sup> Worldwide seven out of ten people living below the poverty line (US\$1.25 per day) are women; the same is true for seven out of ten people dying from starvation.<sup>204</sup>

Women are overrepresented among those living in poverty, and the current economic predicated on power imbalances system perpetuates this situation, making women more vulnerable from the social, economic and environmental points of view. From a social perspective, this model perpetuates a system of gender-based stereotypes, which often generates discrimination in terms of responsibilities assigned, access to and control over resources, and decision-making opportunities. From an economic perspective, it produces employment discrimination and segregation, often confining women to reproductive and care-related work, concentrating them in jobs that are poorly remunerated, while men are more likely to be in charge of productive, remunerated work. Finally, from an environmental perspective, disparities in access to and reliance on natural resources increase women's economic vulnerability and exposure to environmental disasters.

The feminization of lack of social protection also remains as a critical challenge. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948),<sup>205</sup> the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural

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<sup>200</sup> Giulia Massobrio (Italy), Sustainlabour and ILO consultant interested in the link between International Labour Rights and Sustainable Development. Currently responsible of development cooperation for the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA). [www.sustainlabour.org](http://www.sustainlabour.org).

<sup>201</sup> Under human rights law, States are legally obligated to establish social protection systems. This duty flows directly from the right to social security, which is articulated most prominently in Article 9 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).  
<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/EPoverty/HumanRightsApproachToSocialProtection.pdf> (see p20)

<sup>202</sup> UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report, 2012.

<sup>203</sup> OECD, Promote gender equality and empower women, 2010, p. 11.

<sup>204</sup> UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report, 2011.

<sup>205</sup> See art. 22 and 25 of the Declaration of Human rights (1948).

Rights (1966)<sup>206</sup> and other major United Nations instruments recognize Social Protection as a fundamental human right. With particular reference to women's rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) explicitly recognizes women's right to social security, including unemployment benefits, occupational safety and health, maternity protection and maternity leave, and the right to social services to enable family-work conciliation.<sup>207</sup> Yet despite such recognition, only 28% of the global population has access to comprehensive social protection systems.<sup>208</sup> Within this alarming scenario, women tend to be quantitatively and qualitatively worse off than men. Fewer women are covered by adequate social protection and — even when they are covered — they are usually provided with a lower set of social protection benefits.<sup>209</sup>

Worldwide fewer women are employed than men (47.6% and 75.3 % respectively),<sup>210</sup> and women's working lives are generally tougher. Women's work is more likely to be in the informal economy, their jobs are less remunerative and more precarious, and their careers are often interrupted for maternity or care responsibilities. As a consequence, their contributive capacity is lower and they may well, as a direct consequence, have less access to contribution-related benefits (which may include sickness, injury, unemployment, family, maternity, old-age, invalidity, and/or survivors' benefits).

Moreover, given that access to social protection usually depends on a formally recognized employment relationship, women — who are more likely to be working in the unrecognised informal economy, as casual labourers or homeworkers, or in care work and/or self-employment — are again more unlikely to be entitled to any social protection coverage.

Overall, unemployment and underemployment affect women's income security throughout life and, as a result, limit their ability to pay for essential services such as health, education and housing, among others. Women face higher financial barriers to access health care and they are more dependent upon their families.<sup>211</sup> In addition, there is continuing gender disparity in access to primary, secondary and tertiary education,<sup>212</sup> and in accessing clean water and improved sanitation.<sup>213</sup>

### Case study: Lack of decent work and social protection for Bangladeshi women in the garment industry

Many of the world's biggest apparel brands have turned to Bangladesh as a low-cost production base. As a result, 80% of Bangladesh's economy (worth US\$24 billion) is dependent upon the export of ready-made garments. Such revenues are generated at the expense of the three million plus people employed in the sector, which generally fails to meet minimum labor standards such as social protection, occupational health and safety, and freedom of association. Women are particularly affected, as they represent over 70% of ready-made garment workers. The majority of them are poor women from rural areas that, due to the limited options open to them in terms of rural livelihoods and urban formal work, are an easily accessible pool of informal labor that can be exploited in unsafe circumstances. Lack of compliance with basic labor standards has exposed workers to several fatal accidents over the last few years, as exemplified by the fire in Ashulia, an industrial zone north of Bangladesh's capital, on 24 November 2012, when the Tazreen Factory was destroyed and more than 122 workers, most of them women, lost their lives.

Source: Munima Sultana, "Negligent auditing kills over 120 workers in Bangladesh", ITUC Equal times, 26/11/2012. Tripti Lahiri and Syed Zain Al-Mahn Mood, "Bangladesh: how rules went astray", Wall Street Journal, 5/12/12.

<sup>206</sup> art. 9 of the Covenant.

<sup>207</sup> See art. 11.

<sup>208</sup> ILO considers as "comprehensive social protection systems" those covering all branches of social security as defined in ILO Convention n. 102. Data is provided by the ILO World Social Security Report 2010/2011, [http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS\\_146566/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_146566/lang--en/index.htm) See p.1.

<sup>209</sup> The last ILO World Social Security Report 2010/2011 shows a significant gender gap everywhere: for instance, in nearly all countries elderly women are covered to a much lesser extent than elderly men. [http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS\\_146566/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_146566/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>210</sup> UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report, 2012.

<sup>211</sup> ILO World Social Security Report, [http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS\\_146566/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_146566/lang--en/index.htm) See p.69.

<sup>212</sup> UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report 2012, goal 3, p. 20.

<sup>213</sup> Human Development Report summary, 2011, Introduction.

As mentioned above, gender discrimination in social and economic roles also exacerbates women's environmental vulnerability. Women are at a higher risk from and are disproportionately affected by climate change and environmental degradation, because they have access to fewer resources — including land, credit, agricultural inputs, technology and training services, and participation in decision-making bodies — and this impedes their ability to avoid or adapt to various situations.<sup>214</sup> The lack of basic social protection increases women's dependency on natural resources and decreases the likelihood that they can overcome environmental distress.



WECF partner Katachel prepares women and families in Kunduz for the winter by organizing a sewing project in Kunduz, Afghanistan. Photo: WECF/WICF

### **Reversing the trend: why social protection is crucial for gender equality**

Social protection is a fundamental right that applies to all human beings. At the same time, it is an economic and social necessity for development based on social justice. Aiming at protecting people from the unexpected contingencies that occur in life, social protection constitutes a major driver for poverty eradication, because it reduces inequality and social exclusion, and promotes equal opportunities including gender equality.<sup>215</sup>

Moreover, social protection constitutes a fundamental pillar of decent work and a core tool for income distribution. In fact, one of the objectives of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda at the national level is "to achieve the extension of social security to all and to ensure a just share of the fruits of progress", together with promoting rights at work, employment creation and social dialogue.<sup>216</sup> Gender equality is included as a cross-cutting issue within this Agenda, in order to assure its concrete mainstreaming in any program aimed at promoting decent work.

Lastly, social protection contributes to long-term resilience to the current multiple crises, by acting as an automatic social and economic stabilizer<sup>217</sup> and by protecting people in the planned transition to sustainable development, which will imply adjustments in the labour market. Social protection systems

<sup>214</sup> See Aguilar, L., Is there a connection between gender and climate change?, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Office of the Senior Gender Adviser, quoted by ILO, Green Jobs: Improving Climate for gender equality too, p.2.

<sup>215</sup> Preamble of ILO Recommendation 202. [http://www.ilo.org/brussels/WCMS\\_183640/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/brussels/WCMS_183640/lang-en/index.htm)

<sup>216</sup> ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008.

<sup>217</sup> ILO Global Jobs Pact, where the role of social protection in economic and social recovery was highlighted.

can contribute by minimising the risks of change, optimising gains for all workers and their communities, and providing decent job opportunities for women.<sup>218</sup> Once more, this function is particularly relevant for women's resilience, as they are among the most affected by these crises and the most vulnerable in terms of facing environmental distress.

Given the alarming picture on social protection coverage worldwide, and the specific lack of coverage with respect to women, we strongly support the urgent implementation of Social Protection Floors (SPFs) at the national level, as promoted by the ILO and the WHO and supported by the European Commission,<sup>219</sup> the United Nations, the G20,<sup>220</sup> numerous governments and civil society organizations.

This global initiative is aimed at guaranteeing the right to basic social protection coverage to all in need. In this sense, the Floor is a strategy for the horizontal extension of coverage on the one hand (that is, to increase the quantity of people covered by basic social protection guarantees, to cover all those in need). On the other hand however, it must also be a first step towards vertical extension (that is, a step towards progressively increasing the quantity and quality of social protection benefits being provided).<sup>221</sup>

As agreed in the recently adopted ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation (No.202, June 2012) guarantees should ensure, at a minimum, that all in need have the right, throughout their lives (youth - old age), to basic income security, as well as the right to access essential services as defined at the national level, including health, water and sanitation, education, food security, and housing.<sup>222</sup>

Recommendation 202 makes explicit reference to gender equality as a key principle in terms of implementing social protection floors. National floors can be extremely powerful tools for reversing gender-based power imbalances both in terms of access to resources and in roles assigned. As affirmed by the Bachelet report,<sup>223</sup> *"the social protection floor provides an opportunity for a comprehensive review of the basic social protection systems in any country, and hence new means of addressing the spectrum of problems outlined above, many of which reflect the traditional power imbalances that have characterized gender relations throughout history"*. Being gender informed, social protection floors facilitate women's transit from the informal to the formal economy, and provide access to decent job opportunities.

In defining the floor, it is crucial to distinguish between the social protection approach and the safety-net approach. Safety nets are temporary relief programs, aimed at mitigating the transitory adverse effects of certain contingencies. They are needs-based, in the sense that they target the determinate needs of specific groups faced with the contingency; they are not integrated into the whole social protection system.<sup>224</sup> On the other hand, the social protection approach is rights-based: its prerequisite is the recognition of social protection as a fundamental right to be guaranteed to everybody, starting from the basic social protection rights included in the floor. Thus, while the net provides temporary relief to target groups because of an emergency, the floor is aimed at guaranteeing basic social protection to all beyond contingencies. Moreover, unlike the net, the floor is conceived as the first step of a comprehensive social protection system; it has to be linked with other social, labour and economic policies within an integrated national development strategy.<sup>225</sup>

Given these key differences, we advocate for a rights-based floor based on the social protection approach, rather than the safety-net one. This must be a first step towards developing comprehensive social protection systems that effectively include the gender perspective and promote women's empowerment.

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<sup>218</sup> Sustainlabour, Background document to the Madrid Dialogue – A new paradigm for employment, social inclusion and poverty eradication in a sustainable planet, 2011.

<sup>219</sup> European Commission, Social Protection in European Union Development Cooperation, 2012.

<sup>220</sup> G20 2012 conclusions referring to SPF.

<sup>221</sup> ILO, Social security for all. Building social protection floors and comprehensive social security systems, 2012.

<sup>222</sup> According to R. 202, art. 5, the SPF should comprise at least access to essential health care, including maternity care; basic income security for children, in order to access nutrition, education and care; basic income security for the elderly and for persons of an active age who are unable to earn sufficient income (in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability).

<sup>223</sup> ILO WHO, 2011, p. 59

<sup>224</sup> An example is given by the social safety nets promoted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the context of market-based structural reform programs in Latin America and East Europe. See ILO WHO, 2011, p.13.

<sup>225</sup> See ILO WHO, 2011, p. 13.



Traditional cloth weaving, Thailand. Photo: Indigenous Peoples' Biocultural Climate Change Assessment Initiative. See <http://ipcca.info>.

The SPF-Initiative is both fair and feasible. ILO studies show that it is globally affordable at virtually any level of economic development, even if less developed countries need international support to implement it gradually.<sup>226</sup> For example, El Salvador, Benin, Mozambique and Vietnam could provide a major social protection floor for as little as 1-2% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP); and Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nepal, Senegal and Tanzania could provide a universal basic pension for just over 1% of their GDP. In Brazil, the conditional cash transfer 'Bolsa Familia' already covers 46 million people, at a cost just 0.4% of its GDP.<sup>227</sup>

Moreover, the cost of *not* acting to extend social protection will be much higher. As pointed out by the European Commission, "*the cost of a well-designed floor is small if compared to the cost of failing to provide social protection,*"<sup>228</sup> in terms of increased social, economic and environmental vulnerability.

With respect to financial responsibility for the floor's implementation, on the one side we recognize the overall and primary responsibility of the State; on the other side, we call for the establishment of a Global Fund for Social Protection, to support poorest countries in implementing the SPF. Such a position is coherent with ILO Recommendation 202, art. 12, which states that "*national social protection floors should be financed by national resources. Members whose economic and fiscal capacities are insufficient to implement the guarantees may seek international cooperation and support that complement their own efforts.*"<sup>229</sup>

### **Conclusions and Post-2015 recommendations: social protection for all with gender equality**

The global extension of social protection is an essential tool for overcoming women's social, economic and environmental vulnerability, including in the light of promoting sustainable development. In this framework, ensuring universal access to basic social protection guarantees constitutes a human right,

<sup>226</sup> According to ILO costing studies related to low-income countries in Africa and Asia, the cost of a basic set of social transfers (excluding health care) that enable people to access or purchase essential services was estimated to be in the range of 2.3 to 5.7 percent of GDP in 2010. See Cichon, 2011, p. 9.

<sup>227</sup> Data are provided by Cichon, 2011, p. 9, as quoted by the International Trade Union Confederation- ITUC, *The social protection floor: made simple*, 2012, p. 2.

<sup>228</sup> European Commission, *The 2010 European report on development, social protection for inclusive development*, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, 2010, in ILO WHO, 2011, p. 47.

<sup>229</sup> The proposal is also supported by the Workers and Trade Unions' Major Group. See ITUC Briefing Position paper "Post-2015 UN development agenda: towards decent work for all and universal social protection".

as well as being a direct and efficient way of reducing gender inequality, and a key tool for building resilient societies.

For this reason, we strongly support the ILO-WHO Social Protection Floor Initiative. In such a framework, *we recommend a goal of 'Social Protection for All with Gender Equality', to be reached by 2030, at least at the level of national Social Protection Floors (SPFs).*

The national floors have to be rights-based (avoiding the safety-net approach based on temporary relief programs), and they have to be designed as part of comprehensive social security systems. This way, the floors will be an instrument to extend protection to all in need (horizontal extension), as well as a first step towards progressively higher protection levels (vertical extension).<sup>230</sup>

The national floors have to be implemented according to ILO Recommendation 202 principles, which include universality of protection; entitlement to benefits prescribed by national law; special attention to the informal economy; realization with targets and within time frames; accountable financial management; financial, fiscal and economic sustainability based on social justice and equity; coherence with social, economic and employment policies; and high-quality public services to enhance the delivery of social security systems.

In coherence with the principle of "*non-discrimination, gender equality and responsiveness to special needs*" as recognized by ILO R.202, we call for the inclusion of all women in need among the priority groups covered by the national protection floors, in order to guarantee their income security and access to essential services (health, including reproductive health, and education, housing, water and sanitation). Moreover, we call for the effective crosscutting inclusion of women's needs and priorities in the design, implementation and evaluation of the SPFs, starting from guaranteeing women's participation in the related decision-making processes. This is the only way to design floors able to take into account and reverse gender-based discrimination (in access to resources, employment opportunities and social welfare systems) and sexual division of responsibilities (including care and non-remunerated work).<sup>231</sup>

Concerning the floors' financing, again in coherence with ILO Recommendation 202, art.12, we recognize the overall and primary responsibility of the State in guaranteeing the Floor's affordability; at the same time, we call for the establishment of a Global Fund for Social Protection, in order to boost SPF implementation in the least developed countries.

## Gender Equality Targets

Accordingly, we suggest the following gender equality targets:

1. Essential services: universal financial and geographic access to essential services (health, including reproductive and sexual health, and education, housing, water and sanitation) for all women in need by 2030.
2. Income security: universal provision of social transfers, in cash and in kind, for all women lacking minimum income and livelihood security, to be established by 2030 (prioritising single parent-households headed by women).
3. Vertical extension of coverage: there should be a 30% increase in the number of women able to access social protection benefits beyond essential services and income security (as set out in targets 1 and 2 above), in accordance with ILO Convention 102 standards (that is, higher levels of protection in the branches of medical care, sickness benefit, unemployment benefit, old-age benefit, employment injury benefit, family benefit, maternity benefit, invalidity benefit and survivors' benefit), with particular attention being paid to women's emancipation from traditional job-related roles (such as domestic workers, self-employed workers, and at-home care workers).
4. Gender-disaggregated data: the goal should include a target promoting the universal use of gender-disaggregated data, statistics and indicators for the design, implementation and evaluation of social protection systems, including the national floors, in coherence with ILO Recommendation 202, art.21.

<sup>230</sup> The reference for the minimum standards of social protection is ILO Convention 102, 1052.

<sup>231</sup> See ILO-WHO, 2011, p. 60.

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## 5.d The politics of Social protection: fundamental issues of care and development alternatives from a South Feminist Perspective<sup>232</sup>

By Masaya Llavaneras Blanco<sup>233</sup>

*"Anyone who believes that design choices in social protection programmes ... are purely pragmatic technical issues... is missing the point... Which choices are made, and for what reasons, reflects the kind of society that policy makers and technocrats with power to direct social policy wish to promote... Social protection is self-evidently about a vision of society..."<sup>234</sup>*

There has been a long historical discussion around what is social protection and social security. This discussion has been determined to a large extent by diverse understandings, the agents who are responsible for such poverty and deprivation and hence who bears the responsibility of addressing poverty. Welfarist approaches for example, focus on the individual as the main responsible actor for his or her own poverty, and the issue is addressed through actions of philanthropy of non-state actors. Others are centered on the need for action towards growth or governmentality, and welcome action from private and public actors in the name of self-interest in building the conditions for common good (i.e. public goods instrumental rationale for collective action). Finally, there are perspectives based on human rights that focus on systemic causes including power relations based on gender, caste and class, exceeding individuals and households and requiring central action from the state with some collaboration from non-state actors.<sup>235</sup> Indeed the perspective that the SDGs and the Post2015 development agenda take regarding social protection renders a profoundly political question.

While most countries have some form of social protection or social security systems, most do not guarantee a social protection floor, or a set of rights to protect people from the unexpected contingencies that occur in life. In fact, according to Isabel Ortiz, 80 percent of the world population is left out of these social security systems.<sup>236</sup> It is in this context that the International Labor Organization's (ILO) put forward recommendation 202 (R202) in 2012. According to the R202, social protection floors should contemplate four minimum social security guarantees: 1) essential health care that meets criteria of availability, accessibility and quality; 2) basic income security for children including access to nutrition, education and care among others; 3) basic income security for persons in active age that are unable to earn sufficient income, paying particular attention to sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability; as well as 4) as basic income security for the elderly.<sup>237</sup>

Although the need to provide basic rights is undisputed, in this age of increasing inequalities and multiple interlinked global crises, there is the significant risk that our discussion will be limited to a set of minimums that do not address broader structural limitations responsible for the status quo. Some of these limitations are reproduced through a welfare system in which it is assumed that "*normal economic or life-cycle situations do not require social protection*".<sup>238</sup> This assumption becomes ever more problematic considering that a) some countries in the South have not implemented any social security system, and b) we increasingly find ourselves in contexts in which wages and worker benefits are eroded by the process of informalization and weakening of labour conditions that often entails plummeting wages, insecure tenure and absence of health coverage. Given the current state of labour deregulation, in which women tend to be overrepresented among the informal, precarious or unpaid workers, social security is already failing a large proportion of the working population. Hence a transformative approach to social protection should have an universal approach, which prioritizes those marginalized due to their sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, place of origin, ethnicity,

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<sup>234</sup> Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2007, p 2 quoted by Sen and Rajasekhar, 2012

<sup>235</sup> Sen and Rajasekhar, 2012.

<sup>236</sup> Ortiz, 2013

<sup>237</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:3065524](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:3065524), retrieved on June 7th 2013.

<sup>238</sup> Sen, 2011.

race, religion, or age, etc. Moreover a transformative approach necessarily involves a critical examination and transformation of the labour market.

A critical transformation of the labour market requires at least that the following three issues are addressed: First, the prevalent model of export-led development that encourages and imposes varying degrees of deterioration of labour standards as an entry ticket to high growth path, or at least to stay competitive, as is the case with many high income countries as well. It is necessary to question this growth model as well as to dismantle the "ideal worker" paradigm that obscures the costs behind labour sustenance. This paradigm entails a full-time employee that works after hours and devotes a very small amount of time to household maintenance or to providing care for family members.

Second, the gendered nature of labour markets penalizes care and reproduction, makes it difficult for women to access jobs as well devalue "feminized" jobs. This brings about vertical and horizontal segregation, assigning certain kind of jobs to women or men, while making it difficult for women to reach top executive or managerial positions. This is compounded with the prevailing wage gap present in all societies, which has been found to function as a vicious stimulus for economic growth in the case of some semi industrialized countries. In these economies the development strategy was based on export-oriented manufacturing, which is a sector with a high concentration of female labour. In this context, low female wages encouraged export growth and stimulated investment and the import of technology at the expense of women's rights and social justice.<sup>239</sup>

The third issue to be addressed is the paradox of systematic undervaluation of care and discrimination against those who provide care in economic systems that rely heavily on unpaid work provided mainly by women. Not only does such unpaid work sustain and reproduce the labour force through its nourishment and care, but it also absorbs the 'invisible' costs of poor infrastructure and service provision when governments are unable to provide them. Such costs are manifested for example in the time devoted (mostly by women and girls) to fetch water or collect wood or other sources of fuel in rural and poor urban areas where services are not provided. Effects of climate change, ecological damage and extreme weather conditions further exacerbate such tasks. The dimensions of the unpaid economy should not be underestimated, as an increasing number of household satellite accounts continue to prove that it is comparable to the main economic sectors for most societies.<sup>240</sup>



Chenchu mother and daughter, Andhra Pradesh, India. Photo: Indigenous Peoples Biocultural Climate Change Assessment Initiative, See <http://ipcca.info>

<sup>239</sup> Seguino, 2000.

<sup>240</sup> For example, in Uruguay in 2007 the value of unpaid work is between 26.6% and 30% of Gross Domestic Product, representing the largest economic sector of the country if measured in monetary terms. See: Salvador, Soledad (2009), *en Las bases invisibles del bienestar social El trabajo no remunerado en Uruguay* INE, INMUJERES, UDELAR, UNIFEM. Montevideo, Uruguay: Doble clic Editoras.

## Policy implications

All countries have hitherto had different social policies in place, and most count on one or more social security or social protection programs. The paradox linked with these social policies is that they are often funded through national incomes produced via extractive industries that are often responsible for environmental degradation, deterioration of living conditions, and internal displacement of rural and indigenous (and increasingly also urban) populations. Sometimes these social policies are cited as forms or entry points to a social protection floor as proposed by the ILO with R202. This is the case of the Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs).

CCTs are present in a large proportion of countries in the world, Latin America being the region that arguably has been implementing them for the longest time.<sup>241</sup> Such policies vary from country to country according to their own political and social contexts. In most cases, they are cited as effective interventions that increase human capital accumulation mainly (but not only) through school enrollment and attendance.

Nonetheless, CCTs' benefits are relative and even questionable depending on the country and the way in which transfers are developed. The main concerns about these policies relate to: 1) the ability of these programs to maintain sustainable results over time; 2) the ability of these programs to really pull households out of poverty of income; 3) the contradiction between the emphasis on targeting and conditionality with the principle of universality, given that these policies apply temporarily to a specific sectors of the population<sup>242</sup>; and 4) these programs tend to strengthen traditional gender roles by which women are assigned the responsibility of meeting these conditionalities, hence increasing their load of unpaid work. This mal-distribution of responsibilities reproduces the conventional sexual division of labour and institutionalizes new forms of "social maternalism" whereby women are turned into instruments of social policy and their autonomy is once again limited by government policies.<sup>243</sup>

Another important criticism to the current approaches to social protection policies is that different programs often coexist in the same settings without being integrated at all. Therefore, these often burden beneficiaries (particularly women) with more unpaid work and maintain a fragmented approach to the provision of certain entitlements and sometimes, even, the fulfillment of rights.<sup>244 245</sup>

The inclusion of gender equality and care work in the discussion about social protection requires that both indirect and direct forms of care be included substantively.<sup>246</sup> Care work includes indirect care activities such as household and community cleaning; the fetching of water or wood for household cleaning, washing, heating and cooking; food preparation; among others. It also includes direct care such as caring for the elderly, sick or differently abled, minding children, among others. Including both types of care guarantees that women in the global South are represented. In turn, this ensures a better foundation to improve these women's situation through policies that provide services, create and maintain infrastructure as well as redistribute care responsibilities within families and between household and state, including publicly-regulated contributions from the private sector.

A deep understanding of these policy implications is vital to the discussion on social protection. Any policy proposal that does not discuss the deteriorating conditions of the labor market, its deeply gendered nature and its interdependence with unpaid (and underpaid) care work would simply entail opting for basic survival instead of the constructing more equitable societies.

## Policy Recommendations

Building firmly on the human rights/solidarity perspective, and given that social protection is a human right according to article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we believe that states have

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<sup>241</sup> Fiszbein and Norbert, 2009.

<sup>242</sup> Some Cash Transfers are implemented without conditionalities. This is the case of South Africa's Child Support Grant. See: Samsom, 2013.

<sup>243</sup> <http://www.eldis.org/index.cfm?objectid=786D3E9B-9FF2-DDCD-4444BEDDE425D65A#UbYD3uub-TY>, retrieved on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

<sup>244</sup> CEPAL, 2013. Los Bonos en la mira: Aporte y carga para las mujeres, [http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/7/49307/2012-1042\\_OIG-ISSN\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/7/49307/2012-1042_OIG-ISSN_WEB.pdf), retrieved on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

<sup>245</sup> Esquivel, 2011..

<sup>246</sup> Sen and Rajasekhar, 2012.

<sup>246</sup> Although this distinction might seem rather obvious for some, it has generated important discussions in policy and research groups from the economic North and the economic South. See for example: Razavi, 2007 and Wood, 1997

the fundamental responsibility to guarantee social security and social protection for all.

As DAWN and the WMG established in the Thematic Consultations and reiterated in the High Level Panel on the Post 2015 Development Agenda meetings, the agenda must be based on principles of non-regression and recognition of universal human rights, not some notion of 'basic rights' that is harder to define, and even harder to measure. Rather, women's rights and gender equality advancements must be firmly rooted in human rights obligations and commitments as agreed by States from the UN conferences of the 1990s, and gains made through their follow up processes at national, regional and global levels. Governments cannot pick and choose which rights to respect and promote and which not.

Within this framework, the following policy recommendations should be contemplated:

1. The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing and the OWG of the SDGs contemplate concrete means of implementation that prioritize public financing over public-private partnerships in order to realize states' obligation to allocate the maximum availability of resources.
2. It is Paramount that the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing and the OWG of the SDGs propose a goal to implement equitable and ecologically sound trade, investment and financial rules in order to preserve national policy space for governments to fulfill their human rights obligations.
3. The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing and the SDGs should contemplate targets that ensure progress on financial regulation as essential to protect decent work and steer finance towards productive and socially useful activities that create jobs.
4. The SDGs should pursue universal frames that take into account the diversity of needs and constraints through the intersecting nature of inequalities based on gender identity, age, class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and abilities among others. This means that rights and services should be guaranteed and universal while prioritizing and accounting for the specific conditions that compound social exclusion. This also implies that all indicators and targets must include the most relevant disaggregation levels such as sex, age group, rural/urban, ethnicity, among others;
5. The SDGs must encourage States to guarantee universal access to public care services for children and adults in situations of dependence due to age, illness or other reasons. This is intrinsic for the development to a transformative and gender-aware Social Protection system. It has the potential of improving both the lives of those directly benefiting from the services as well as women (as the main care providers in most societies) if high and equal quality standards are guaranteed for all. The absence of these services contributes to the pre-existing gender and income inequalities, both between women and men as well as among women themselves;<sup>247 248</sup>
6. The SDGs must encourage States to provide public care services that are not limited to the formal labour sector. These services should be available at community levels emphasizing rural communities as well as urban communities in poverty. This would facilitate the access to those in situation of dependence as well as facilitating labour participation, access to rights-based formal and popular adult education, and political participation for the main unpaid care providers;
7. The SDGs must encourage States to implement fatherhood leave where unavailable. This should facilitate that male workers take their parental leave and increase their share of unpaid care work while distributing the hidden costs attributed to maternity leave for women. This should aid the reduction of the prevalent globalised gender pay gap;
8. The SDGs must encourage States to ensure the gender pay gap is reduced, but not on the basis of reducing wages for middle and low-income male workers. Such reduction of wages increases the cost of living on households and families which in turn increases the burden on women as wage and unpaid workers. Women workers wages should rather be increased to ensure there is equal pay for equal work;

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<sup>247</sup> Salvador, 2007.

<sup>248</sup> Salvador, 2009.

9. The SDGs must promote the regulation of care services to ensure quality and decent working conditions and income for paid care providers.<sup>249</sup>This necessarily requires taking specific measures to make visible and improve the situation of many informal domestic workers that are often neglected in labour legislation, taking into consideration the vulnerable situation of migrant and undocumented workers;
10. The SDGs must encourage States to implement labour regulations specific to the informal labour market. This requires:
  - Improving registries and other information systems of informal workers;
  - Facilitate and protect the formation of trade unions and give recognition to interventions and demands;
  - Create non-profit driven contributive systems that facilitate saving and access to credit for informal workers.
11. The post-2015 agenda should promote policies that shift patriarchal cultural and social norms in order to promote equitable distribution of care work between all genders and diverse families;<sup>250,251</sup>

The advancement of these recommendations should be measurable through indicators based on household surveys present in most countries, the system of national accounts together with periodically updated satellite accounts. Time use surveys, which are becoming more common in recent years, should also serve as relevant tools to monitor and advance these demands. Where such surveys are not already in place or are ad hoc in nature, there must be determined efforts and resources to create, upscale and further refine existing models.

#### **Basic indicators to consider**

- % of men versus women who spend at least 20 hours per week performing care activities  
Proposed source: Time Use Surveys
- % of individuals without income, disaggregated by sex, age and rural/urban  
Proposed source: Household Surveys & National Household Expenditures Surveys
- % of population with access to any source of social insurance, disaggregated by sex, age, rural/urban, private/public insurance  
Proposed source: Household Surveys & National Household Expenditures Surveys
- % of children between 0 and 4 with access to early education services, disaggregated by sex, age, rural/urban, private/public education  
Proposed source: Household Surveys & National Household Expenditures Surveys
- % of GDP (national and local) destined to direct care services (preschools, daycares and other alternatives).  
Proposed source: System of National Accounts
- % of GDP (national and local) destined to indirect care services (direct access to clean running water, access to clean energy for cooking).  
Proposed source: System of National Accounts

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<sup>249</sup> Esquivel, 2010

<sup>250</sup> Women's Major Group (2013) "We Will Not be Mainstreamed into a Polluted Stream: Feminist Statement on the 2015 Development Agenda", Women's Major Group statement read at the international NGO conference on 'Advancing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda: Reconfirming Rights – Recognising Limits – Redefining Goals' was held from 20-22 March 2013 in Bonn, Germany. Available at <http://www.dawnnet.org/advocacy-appeals.php?signon=293&id=293>, retrieved on June 10<sup>th</sup> 2013

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## 5.e Decent Work for Women

By Kate Lappin, (APWLD)<sup>252</sup> with inputs from SustainLabour

*"Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his (sic) family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection."  
Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 23(3)*

### Women workers and decent work

Given its crucial role in eradicating poverty and empowering societies, the International Labour Organization's Decent Work Agenda<sup>253</sup> was added to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2008 (through the addition of a target 'b' under Goal 1, which is to "Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people)."<sup>254</sup>

According to ILO, the Decent Work Agenda should have four strategic objectives, with gender equality as a cross-cutting objective. These objectives are: creating jobs (generating opportunities for investment, entrepreneurship, skills development, job creation and sustainable livelihoods); guaranteeing rights at work (including workers' representation and participation); extending social protection (guaranteeing a minimum living wage, safe working conditions, and essential social security to all in need) and promoting social dialogue (through workers' and employers' organizations' effective participation).<sup>255</sup>



Female farmers in the ANDES. Photo: Miguel Lovera. See also <http://ipcca.info>

<sup>252</sup> Kate Lappin is the Regional Coordinator of the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), Asia Pacific's feminist, membership driven network. APWLD represents 180 member organisations across 25 countries of the Asia Pacific region.

<sup>253</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>254</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/empelm/what/WCMS\\_114244/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/empelm/what/WCMS_114244/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>255</sup> See 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization:

[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@cabinet/documents/publication/wcms\\_099766.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@cabinet/documents/publication/wcms_099766.pdf)

The late inclusion of the decent work agenda acknowledged the failure of the original framework to include employment in its analysis of poverty alleviation. While orthodox economic approaches assumed economic growth would lead to increased employment and wages, profit driven growth instead led to the phenomenon of jobless growth, reductions in real wages and a decrease in wages as a percentage of GDP.

While it was important to acknowledge work in the MDGs, the selected target only measures the proportion of workers receiving the pitiful amount of US\$1.25 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) per day. This indicator will provide information on how many workers receive starvation wages. The ILO estimates that 1 in 5 workers worldwide do not even earn this amount.<sup>256</sup> The target does not measure whether workers are being offered a dignified, living wage or other critical elements of the decent wage agenda.

MDG Goal 3 on gender equality<sup>257</sup> also includes a target measuring the percentage of women in the non-agricultural labour force. Yet once again, this target is not measuring the availability of decent work, appropriate wages or good working conditions; it also excludes the large majority of women workers employed in agriculture. Thus the target is failing to address the fact that jobs where the majority of women are working— worldwide and in all economic sectors —are characterized by lower pay, less skilled employment, precarious conditions, fewer employment benefits, fewer career opportunities, less involvement in decision-making and less unionization.

In light of the Sustainable Development Goals process, we need to make the link between decent and new sustainable economies, since the human and environmental sustainability of employment are interlinked<sup>258</sup>. It is important to bear in mind that economies, even those modelled on principles of sustainable development, are not socially- or gender-equitable by definition or default. To reverse the current inequitable dynamic, governments will need to take proactive measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in all economic models.

It will not be possible to eradicate poverty unless fair and just conditions of work, including proper remuneration, are established. A global calculation for a living wage is required, to ensure that workers and families can live on a wage with dignity. It is particularly imperative to articulate measures for decent work and living wages that apply to informal sectors and migrant workers.

If we take the example of the Asia Pacific region, women workers comprise the majority of workers in the garment industry, in domestic work, in service industries and in agricultural subsistence farming. But while women's labour market participation has grown, the conditions and wages that the majority of women workers receive are still below subsistence levels, and cannot be regarded as decent. The majority of women workers in Asia continue to be employed in 'vulnerable employment',<sup>259</sup> and in some countries the percentage of employment classed as 'vulnerable' is also increasing.<sup>260</sup> Asia has the highest gender pay gap in the world.

Globally, economic growth has largely been achieved by increasing the labour burden on women. Increasing participation rates and 'productivity' demands have resulted in the lowering or stagnation of real wages, whilst output has increased and cheaper products have been made available to consumers around the world. Again this dynamic is clearly seen in the Asian region, where inequalities have increased dramatically, alongside high growth rates, increasing profits, and increasing rates of labour productivity.<sup>261</sup>

By setting the target indicator for wages at the rate of US\$1.25 PPP per day, and at the same time tracking productivity increases (in the form of a target measuring Gross Domestic Product per employed person), the MDGs have effectively contributed to the freezing of real wages and increasing inequality: this low target justifies the payment of poverty wages and rewards governments even if

<sup>256</sup> The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2011. It should be noted that PPP (Purchasing Power Parity) equates to an equivalent purchasing power of USD1 in the USA. Therefore it measures global buying power based on a US benchmark. An example may be that if USD1.25 could purchase 2 bananas in the USA the local salary would be sufficient to purchase 2 bananas in local currency.

<sup>257</sup> <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/gender.shtml>

<sup>258</sup> Green Jobs and Women Workers: Employment, Equity, Equality; Draft Report, at: <http://www.sustainlabor.org/IMG/pdf/women.en.pdf>

<sup>259</sup> UN defines this as the percentage of own-account and unpaid family workers in total employment.

<sup>260</sup> See figure provided in ILO, 2011. Thailand and Malaysia have both increased numbers of vulnerable workers.

<sup>261</sup> Prabhat, 2009.



they are setting exploitative minimum wages. While wealth has increased exponentially in many countries there has been no corresponding increase in wages or decrease in unemployment, and no discernible decrease in the gender pay gap. Poverty-level wages continue to force workers to work lengthy hours of overtime, forgo health and safety standards, get into debt, and sacrifice their families' education, health and well-being.

### **The gender pay gap**

The 'gender pay gap' is an indicator of entrenched discrimination and inequality (as are sexual division of work, employment segregation, constraints on upward mobility, and the difficulties women face the unequal distribution of the requirements of home and working life). Gender differences in labor force participation rates, unemployment rates and gender wage gaps are a persistent feature of global labor markets.<sup>262</sup> Industries that employ large numbers of women are amongst the lowest paid, most insecure and most exploitative, and nearly two thirds of women work in 'vulnerable employment,' lacking basic security, benefits and conditions.<sup>263</sup> Domestic workers, for example, suffer the largest gender pay gap by sector.

This situation exists because of the systemic de-valuing of women's work and entrenched assumptions about women's dependency on men. The gender pay gap is also a result of employers' gender-based assumptions. Employers often deliberately employ women because of beliefs that women will not complain, are less likely to unionise, and are only working to derive 'supplementary income'. The gender pay gap occurs within industries and is evident in cross-industry comparisons.

### **A Living Wage**

A development framework that aims to ensure workers, families and communities can live in dignity must also incorporate a target that realistically values labour and aspires to improve living and working conditions. We propose that this target focus on a living wage.

## **The case of domestic workers**

The exploitation, systemic devaluing and abuse of domestic workers affects millions of women in developing countries. Up to 90% of domestic workers are women,<sup>264</sup> and domestic work is one of the largest drivers of women's labour migration in the world.<sup>265</sup> For example, domestic work is now the most common occupation for women in the Asia Pacific region accounting for around one-third of all female employment in Asia.<sup>266</sup>

However, the labour laws in most countries fail to recognise domestic workers as workers, resulting in denial of even the most basic labour and human rights. Domestic workers routinely work 16-18 hours a day every day of the week, are denied holidays, are underpaid or not paid at all for long periods, are abused, harassed, confined to the house, restricted from contact with family members and friends, and may find their employment terminated without notice. Migrant domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, with problems arising because of language barriers, discriminatory labour laws, predatory recruitment agencies, the withholding of documents by employers, and threats of deportation.<sup>267</sup>

The deficiency of legislative protections for domestic workers allows recruitment agencies and employers to exploit women with impunity. Furthermore, because they are denied the status of workers, many domestic workers are also excluded from national welfare systems, pensions, health insurance and unemployment benefits. Several countries also prevent domestic workers from unionising or using labour courts and tribunals. Any commitment to a new development framework that intends to benefit marginalised women must aim to elevate the rights enjoyment of domestic workers.

Source: AWPLD

<sup>262</sup> OECD, 2010.

<sup>263</sup> UN, 2009.

<sup>264</sup> National Domestic Workers Movement, 2010, available from <http://www.ndwm.org/> viewed 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010.

<sup>265</sup> United Nations Population Fund, 2006.

<sup>266</sup> Ip Pui Yu, 2010.

<sup>267</sup> Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, 2010.

A living wage is a wage that enables a workers and their families to live in dignity. A living wage should be calculated on the cost of a basket of goods that would include sufficient calories for a family (using the local dietary habits) and a similar amount for non-food costs including housing, clothing, energy and material goods.

While living wage calculations have previously expressly gendered and assumed an employment model of male breadwinner and dependents,<sup>268</sup> living wage targets in the new development framework should acknowledge the multiple forms of family, the reality that women provide for children, extended family and other dependents. A new model of employment is needed where both women and men can share in caring responsibilities. This model requires adequate wages as well as social and economic transformation.

The Asia Floor Wage campaign, for example, has developed an equation that provides for both food and non-food costs for a family. This standard should be used to guide the development of a living wage indicator.<sup>269</sup> A living wage is rarely available to workers in Asia Pacific. No major textile producing countries in the region have legislated for a minimum living wage, and<sup>270</sup> many garment workers are denied even the legal minimum wage.

A living wage also needs to assure workers' capacity to contribute to adequate social protection schemes, according to ILO Convention No.102. Moreover, it has to be supplemented by basic social protection guarantees for all in need, and good quality public services. The equation developed would also vary to take account of privatized or otherwise inadequate provision of services. Privatization increases the costs of energy, water, education, healthcare and transport, as do reductions in food subsidies and other initiatives focused on cutting public spending.

A common living wage or floor wage would have multiple development benefits. It would prevent capital flight in search of the lowest possible labor conditions. This would increase much needed tax revenue.

### **Proposals for the post-2015 process: goals and recommendations**

A priority for the sustainable development goals must be the inclusion of a goal to achieve full, decent work for all women and men seeking work. The principles of adequate and equal remuneration, accessibility and equal opportunities, accountability and social protection, and social dialogue should be integrated.

#### **Goal - Full and Decent Work for all women and men in all sectors**

1. Increase the number of workers receiving a living wage
  - Specifically target the increase in women workers receiving a living wage
  - Specifically target the number of migrant workers receiving a living wage
2. 100% of countries legislate for a minimum living wage
  - Measure the reach of minimum wage setting devices with the target to cover 100% of workers, particularly domestic workers, informal sector, migrant workers
3. Reduce the average gender pay gap to 0%
  - Increase the rate of women in employment as a percentage
  - Increase the number of women in trade unions, covered by collective bargaining and women trade union leaders<sup>271</sup>
4. Number of governments ratifying and complying with key ILO conventions including ILO Convention concerning decent work for domestic workers (C. 189) and related Recommendation n. 201

<sup>268</sup> The first arbitrated living wage case, the Australian Harvester Judgement, 1907, for example, expressly calculated the living needs of a male worker with 4 dependents. Women workers, it was assumed, did not require the same rate and was valued at 54% of the male wage.

<sup>269</sup> Asia Floor Wage, 2009.

<sup>270</sup> The Asia Floor Wage calculations updated in 2012 do not include the increase in the minimum wage in Thailand which will come into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013 and will be applicable to garment workers but not domestic workers.

<sup>271</sup> ITUC, 2012.

A separate Goal on Universal Social Protection should be included as well as one that allows states to have enough macroeconomic policy space for these goals to be achieved (further details in Chapter X on *Care and Development*)

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## 5.f The Gender Dynamics of Trade and Investment and the Post 2015 Development Agenda: A Developing Country perspective

By Ranja Sengupta<sup>272</sup>

In an increasingly globalised world, the impact of trade and investment liberalisation is an important area of policy focus. In the current context, the gender impact of trade policy must be paid serious attention especially as it is increasingly evident that trade policy is not 'gender neutral'. This is because women's economic and social positions are weaker, their rights are not well defined and a harshly competitive system hurts the weakest the most. The impact on women is partly general<sup>273</sup> and partly gender specific, determined by the way they are integrated into specific sectors.



All children, women and men should have access to safe, regional, diverse and affordable food, free of hazardous chemicals and GMOs, based on fair trade and produced in harmony with nature and landscape, protecting water, soil, air and biodiversity. Photo WECF/WICF

The nature of international trade itself is undergoing continuous changes, with autonomous liberalization undertaken by countries, multilateral commitments at the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as rapid advances in bilateral trade and investment agreements (FTAs) and Bilateral Investment treaties (BITs)/ Bilateral Investment Promotion Agreements (BIPAs). Globally 575 FTAs or RTAs were notified to the WTO (until July 31, 2013) of which 379 are in force. There are 3196 international investment agreements including 2857 bilateral investment agreements or bilateral investment partnership agreements (BITs/ BIPAs) in force globally (UNCTAD Trade and Investment Report 2013). With the growing coverage of trade agreements spanning agriculture, industry, services, intellectual property rights, investment, government procurement and other areas, the

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<sup>273</sup> The impact on poor rural women may be partly determined, for example, by the way all poorer farmers are affected.

interactions between provisions in the sector/area specific liberalisation policies create complicated and multilayered impacts. All these have a two-way interaction with women's access to critical physical, financial and human resources and access to basic services, with significant implications for their empowerment, livelihoods, health, socio-economic status and well-being. In many cases, the impact process is so complex that the gendered nature of it is apparent only after a deeper analysis.

An area of increasing concern with development analysts, NGOs and academics is that the trade and gender issues are not properly raised and debated in the public sphere, and do not feature prominently in development discussions. In particular, this discussion is of great significance for the post 2015 development agenda. It is obvious that issues such as poverty, inequality, gender empowerment, women's education and health cannot be addressed effectively unless structural issues are addressed. It is more important in the current context, as a *meaningful global agenda must address global level policy issues* which impact gender relations down to the grassroots. Goal 8 of the MDGs was weak in terms of implementation and accountability, and the current Goal 12 proposed in the HLP Report also has several shortcomings, including being gender insensitive. On the other hand, to address the gender impacts of international trade and investment requires an inter weaving of several areas such as access to health and education, to resources and to food with gender sensitive international policies. The Post 2015 development Agenda must therefore deal with these complex multilayered relationships if it has to indeed deliver on gender equality and women's empowerment. This chapter attempts to enunciate some of the gender related impacts of international trade and investment mainly in the context of developing countries.

### **Gender Inequalities and Vulnerability**

Gender discrimination is historically given in most countries; in resource ownership and control; access to finance; access to jobs and incomes; knowledge, education and skills; in accessing healthcare; in social relations and in several other areas. In fact it is not a developing country phenomenon alone, though it may be more prominent in less developed societies. In some regions, e.g. South Asia, Africa, Middle East, we see a prominent manifestation of gender inequalities.

It is well documented that women also face more poverty, including time poverty. Female headed Households (FH HH) have often shown higher poverty rates.<sup>274</sup> Working poverty is also high as revealed by country specific data, which shows a higher rate for women. For example, in India 86.4 percent of working women are poor compared to 81.45 percent of men (at less than USD 2 per day) and 36.1 percent of working women are poor compared to 30 percent of men (at less than USD 1 a day).

Given these inequalities, women are sometimes more vulnerable to the adverse impacts of macro and external sector policies which do not take them into account. At the same time, they may be less able to make use of the benefits that may accrue to specific sectors or economic groups. Women are also more vulnerable to shocks such as climate change, economic crisis, etc. These factors then can actually exacerbate the given inequalities further and can create unforeseen situations which are much more difficult to deal with.

### **The Gender Dimension of International Trade and Investment**

In the context of a larger than life influence of trade and investment globally, it is pertinent to ask whether these policies improve gender disparities or worsen them. We need to know exactly where and how they impact women's lives. The current trade paradigm is also supposed to increase growth, decrease inequalities in the long run, ensure full employment for all countries (especially so that developing countries can 'catch up') but this has been much discounted from the current evidence. Trade need not necessarily lead to growth, and can increase inequalities especially in the short run, especially across sectors, income, gender and social groups. In addition, economic growth, even if it did result from trade, does not always lead to gender equality, as seen in South Asia.

There are clear linkages through which policies of international trade and investment, whether autonomously driven or by specific commitments in international agreements, can affect gender dynamics. These may be categorised among the following areas:

- Work Sphere affecting employment and incomes, terms of employment, work conditions
- Access to resources (land, water, credit, technology)
- Access to basic services (e.g. health, education)

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<sup>274</sup> Chagatey, 1998.

- Home situation affecting care work, unpaid work, within household inequality/empowerment
- Migration including both domestic and international of both men and women
- Women as consumers
- Affecting the policy space for gender friendly policies, social policies.

In addition, several other areas may be affected in complicated ways some of which we may not have even begun to understand.

### **A Sector Wise Look: Agriculture**

Agriculture supports a large number of the world population, especially in developing countries. Women are particularly dependent on the primary sector and are engaged in crop cultivation and animal husbandry, which engages 44.4 percent of women workers in developing countries. Agriculture is a natural mainstay for women in developing countries because it can be combined easily with work at home, and requires less skill and financial resources. Women are willing to be in the informal economy and earn zero or low wages that this sector offers. Most important, women take the final responsibility to put food on the table for the family and staying close to food sources comes as a natural option. As producers and sellers of food, they also produce for home consumption and so livelihoods in this context also imply a direct access to food. However, they still do not have much control over productive resources such as land, credit, water and their decision-making powers are also limited. The agriculture sector also houses the largest number of poor and women among the poor.

Under the WTO, agricultural trade was opened up under the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) which involved providing market access to each other by capping (binding) import duties on foreign imports, laying down uniformly applicable (to all WTO members) standards & processes, laying down safeguard mechanisms for developing countries (Special Products or SP and Special Safeguard Mechanism or SSM) and eliminating trade distorting export and domestic subsidies which are given mainly by the developed countries. Interestingly the last has seen very little progress and developed countries such as the USA and EU have continued to give subsidies under various disguises threatening access for small farmers in developing countries, many of whom are women. At the same time subsidies which could be given by developing country members are mostly banned under the WTO rules, making it impossible for governments (especially in large countries) even to support food subsidy for poor consumers and price support for small farmers.

The AoA has been criticised for being gender insensitive and several gender related concerns have been raised by analysts. Criterion of using 'gender sensitive products' to protect products with high engagement of women from import competition has been suggested by gender analysts but has not gained much ground yet. Moreover trade liberalisation has not been able to control speculation (further boosted by the crisis in financial markets), concentration in global food markets and the resultant volatility in international prices has been hurting both poor farmers and consumers, and has threatened food security across developing countries.

With the advent of bilateral or plurilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), liberalisation has been deepened and widened at the same time. Under FTAs, Import duties on agricultural products are reduced to zero as opposed to simply binding duties as under the WTO. SP, SSM safeguards have to be negotiated hard, and some developed countries ask that export measures, left largely uncontrolled by the WTO, be eliminated. Interestingly, under FTAs, one area that cannot be touched is developed country subsidies, which are supposed to be negotiated multilaterally. These threaten market for women farmers and workers. However women have got jobs sometimes in export based agricultural sectors such as plantation products, processed food products, but the growth is still limited and it does take women away from basic food cultivation.

In addition, developed countries often demand WTO plus provisions in other areas. Under intellectual property rights (IPRs), patenting of life, control of seeds (through UPOV 1991), and pesticides (through data exclusivity) are brought in (see Sections on intellectual property rights below for more details). Strong investment chapters under such FTAs can give widespread access to land and natural resources. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) also leads to mechanisation in traditional agriculture, which may be good for productivity increases but it has a gender impact as such mechanisation takes away women's jobs from low skilled labour intensive segments. Service delivery mechanisms such as retail, credit and extension services may also be impacted.

## NAFTA and Women in Mexican Agriculture

- US subsidised corn and bean entered Mexico after NAFTA
- Devastated Mexican Agriculture, 1.3 million jobs lost mainly of small and subsistence farmers
- Women farmers are largely small: 70.8% of women farmers cultivated plots less than 2 hectares
- Poverty levels increased by 50% in female headed households
- Wage per hour fell from 10.3 pesos in 1991 to 1.3 Pesos in 2003 (at 1994 constant pesos), gender wage disparity increased
- Similar impact on wages in Andean Community (Peru, Colombia)

*Source: Speildoch, 2004*

It is clear that a full liberalisation of the agriculture sector through multiple mechanisms will reduce protection for women farmers and workers in developing countries. In addition, protective mechanisms such as sensitive products (using a gender criterion) and SSMs are being increasingly restricted. Women will also be hurt more as we liberalise investment, services, IP and public procurement. Their dependence on the resources threatened under these agreements is higher and their ability to shift out of agriculture is limited. Their role as food providers gets severely undermined not only by losses in production and livelihoods, but also from threats to natural resources, markets and technologies which are important for direct access to food as well as instruments for sustaining production and sales. Gender sensitivities need to be taken into account in all aspects of trade agreements, while combining it with gender friendly development policies.



Saint Louis, Senegal. Photo: Yolanda Sikking

### **A Sector Wise Look: Industry**

Trade liberalization has also taken place across industrial sectors across the developing world, following either autonomous, WTO promoted or FTA pushed frameworks. The WTO has pushed member states to cut duties according to a Swiss Formulae, and has increasingly linked duty cuts to the special and differential treatment developing countries can receive. Similar to agriculture, the industrial sector has witnessed deeper tariff cuts under FTAs on applied duties. Moreover further

liberalization by pushing for zero duties in specific sectors (Sectorals) and not permitting full exclusion of any sector (Anti Concentration Clause) is being promoted through both the frameworks. The North-South FTAs also often talk about labour and environment standards.

There has been a significant increase in women's employment in export-based sectors some parts of the developing world, especially visible in Asia; specifically in textiles and garments, leather, food processing and marine products. The export led growth in these sectors has often been ascribed to women. This has arguably led to a process that has been linked to women's empowerment.

However while acknowledging the positives of such job opportunities, the literature also points to significant concerns. The first issue is of sustenance. Seguino and Grown,<sup>275</sup> among others, have shown that semi-industrialized economies that emphasize export manufacturing have experienced a rise in the female share of employment, but only in their early phases of industrialization and this effect tends to reverse over the course of industrial development.

Second, along with gains in some industries, most of which are of low value, there has been simultaneous loss in uncompetitive sectors across Africa, Asia and Latin America leading to job and income losses. In addition, small suppliers have in particular been often hit (for example in Textiles & Apparels in Cambodia). Small enterprises find it more difficult to survive under strong competition as they often face discrepancies in access to credit, technology, infrastructure etc. This has a gender dimension as SMEs are owned by and employ more women worldwide.

#### Women and Employment in Africa: Some Cases

- In Nigeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Ghana, Senegal there was a decline in women's employment in manufacturing, especially in textiles.
- In Jamaica, jobs in manufacturing (textiles), services sector (a major women's employer, 72% of women), declined as a result of CARICOM, CSME. NAFTA shifted female jobs from export processing zones in Jamaica to Mexico. Consumption by FHHH fell by 14.5%, of MHHH by only 1.7%.
- In Madagascar, there was an increase in women's employment in textiles.
- 85% of women had never earned before. But in spite of comparable education, women were confined to unskilled jobs with low wages, as well as temporary jobs. Unskilled wages were stagnant and there was an increase in gender wage gap.

*Source: UNCTAD, 2009*

Third and of critical importance, while women have been hired, it has been on adverse terms. The work is mainly informal with increased casualisation all over the developing world, for example in Asia, in Mexican Maquiladoras etc. Employment has been volatile with higher rates of reallocation. Significant wage disparity and job segregation persists or even and labour saving FDI especially in labour-intensive segments have meant that women are the first to. Working conditions have been kept adverse, with minimum investment in providing better work conditions. Often no leaves are given to female employees, sometimes no toilet break, and workers often inhale materials with severe adverse impacts on health (as it is the case in the production of textile, garments, tobacco and chemicals). So while women have been ascribed the credit for the gain in exports, it is because they have been exploited and they have been used as necessary adjustors in a situation of volatile trade. Such conditions are not a fall-out but a natural driver of this kind of competitiveness and women have been used as pawns in this game of competition. Such conditions are perpetuating, as they are key to developing countries continuing to gain from trade. Simultaneously there has been increase in unpaid work, and self-employment.

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<sup>275</sup> Seguino and Grown, 2006



### Example of Asia: The Garment Sector in Bangladesh

- Domestic liberalization and the growth of the garments industry has led to increase in unskilled women's employment in garment sector
- 46% contribution to family incomes by females' employment leading to empowerment within HH
- Women's share in employment 90%, Wage Disparity 50%
- Women are limited to low skilled segments, whereas wages have grown more in skilled jobs
- Hazardous conditions of work, unhealthy impacts, sometimes not even toilet breaks are allowed
- Decrease in time for house work, leisure, education
- 40% of female workers do not receive medical treatment (33% for men)
- Only 35% of female workers got leave when asked (60% for men)

Source: Van Staveren et al., 2007

In sum, in sectors which do well, women gain jobs but gains are less than proportionate compared to gains for men.<sup>276</sup> Where sectors lose, women lose disproportionately and are the first ones to be fired. Women are used as a wedge to adjust to trade volatility, and under this logic they must necessarily not be given any rights. The gender wage gap increases growth in countries at low levels of growth. Skill and resource gap is only part of the explanation, social relations constitute the other major part as women have limited rights and men are seen as legitimate jobholders. It is positive that they get employment, but a lot more needs to be done to address disparities, both from equity and efficiency points of view.

Given this context it is not surprising that women lose disproportionately more in times of crisis. Women's jobs in export based sectors go faster (e.g. under the East Asian crisis, women lost 7 times the jobs of men in South Korea) and even when jobs are not cut, wages are cut further and the wage cut is higher for women.<sup>277</sup> Unpaid work also increases in times of crisis, together with significant worsening of conditions of work.

Another contentious issue is labour standards (LS) in North-South FTAs, which have been resisted most often by developing countries on grounds that these pose actually as non-tariff barriers for developing countries. LS can arguably help women, but can be tricky under bilateral trade agreements as several critical issues crop up. Will jobs go to another country that does not upgrade LS? Another question is whether developing countries become uncompetitive while supplying to developed partners who want these chapters. The overall impact on employment is therefore unclear.

The policy issues are complex in this context. It is important to remember that in many cases women have gained, yet gains are maximized where the government and NGO's have intervened in policy, for example, in the cases of Kenyan women workers in flower horticulture and Burkina Faso's women workers in the shea sector. It is also important to remember that policy can backfire and the opposite impact can occur. In the case of South Korea, a policy to address wage disparity led to older women workers being fired. In addition, policy space may be eroded by FTA/ investment agreement provisions on investment protection (for example: any labour law that reduces profits of investors), and therefore limit countries' capacities to intervene (see sections on investment below).

Finally, it is undeniable that to protect women workers, there is need for a comprehensive trade, macroeconomic and social policy package. A social security package is an important ingredient of this, which must be seen not only as a welfare measure but also as a boost for domestic demand.

#### **A Sector Wise Look: Services**

Global trade in services has witnessed a significant growth over the past two decades and several developing countries such as India, China, Philippines, are now important players in the world market. However, their competitiveness is often limited to a few sub sectors and developed countries are the ones that dominate services trade globally.

<sup>276</sup> UNCTAD, 2008.

<sup>277</sup> Hirway and Prabhu, 2009.

The service sector and trade thereof is actually one of the most critical drivers of gender relations in the world today. While a growing service sector can be a source of jobs for women, which sometimes can be specifically suited to women's needs, the sector must include critical provisions in health, education, water, energy and credit that are essential for basic human well being as well as for people's economic and social development. In particular, it has a clear gender-differentiated impact given women's critical need, but limited access to such services in developing countries. The impacts *vis a vis* employment and access to services reinforce each other and can help perpetuate or break a cycle of gender disparities.

The service sector and access issues also have important relevance for women's care work. Clearly, in the presence of affordable and well-distributed services in water, healthcare, education, etc., generally publicly provided, the burden on women to supplement these services with their care work is much less. Whenever there has been contraction of such services, whether under a crisis or under structural adjustment programs or due to other reasons, the burden of care work has increased. Trade in services takes place through four modes, each with its own gender dimension.

**Mode 1 refers to Cross Border Supply** (for example in sectors like Information and Technology (IT) ) of services. While this can offer significant opportunities to women, as in India, there are gender specific concerns as well. Because the jobs created in the IT sector are skilled, the number of jobs is extremely limited even in India which accounts for less than 3 percent of urban women's jobs and has no presence in rural areas. This sector is known for its adverse working hours for women, wage differences and job segregation where women cannot enter high-level jobs. For example, in India's IT sector women account for 40-50 percent in Business Process Outsourcing but only 25 percent for the higher value added software segments.<sup>278</sup> In addition, 70 percent of women workers feel work hours are unfavorable for women (especially for EU, US clients), and 94 percent of married women felt a negative effect on children's education.

**Mode 2 refers to Consumption Abroad** (for example in sectors like tourism). These sectors have offered women considerable job opportunities though issues such as sex tourism and medical tourism have been issues of concern. The rapid development of medical tourism, in several developing countries such as Thailand, Jordan and India, have created job opportunities for women health professionals but issues such as surrogacy which such tourism has tended to promote, have often worked against women's health and psychological well being. Regulation of these activities has also become increasingly difficult, often because of FDI related issues (see investment issues below).

**Mode 3 refers to Commercial Presence** (focused on investment in service sectors). While GATs (under WTO) has been limited by a voluntary offer- system, increasing pressure to open up Mode 3 is now exerted through FTAs, especially North-South ones. While FDI can ostensibly generate access where services are underdeveloped there are several challenges to consider. FDI in services can threaten access in critical services such as water, banking, healthcare and education by chasing out public investment, raising user fees and limiting business to "safe" urban areas without including rural areas. There is also evidence of FDI threatening jobs in gender sensitive informal sectors such as retail and waste. In addition there are serious regulatory issues, which are discussed below.

#### Banking Liberalisation in India and Credit Access for Women

- Foreign banks: 27.8% of activity in derivatives, stocks etc, 7.9% to credit
- Proportion of women account holders (23.8%) but disbursement lowest compared to all others (only 7.9%).
- Comparatively Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) do much better: 25.5% of accounts, 19.6% of credit to women
- Foreign banks avoid risk and concentrate only in metros (81.4% of branches) and in urban areas (17.9% of branches).
- Urban lending to women is only 24.4% of total lending to women and 21.1% of women borrowers
- Foreign Banks lending to Agriculture sector is 0.01% (2008, of their total credit), and to SMEs 1.2% (2007, % of total credit)

Source: Sengupta, 2011

<sup>278</sup> Sengupta and Sharma, 2009.

**Mode 4 or the 'Movement of Professionals'** is of great interest to women care workers. Currently the global arena has seen a significant increase in migration of nurses and women care workers. Most developing countries have a significant interest in this as remittances form an important chunk of their incomes. This also is meant to balance the anomaly in encouraging the free trade of goods but not of labour.

Mode 4 could in theory help women workers like nurses and caregivers by ensuring more jobs, incomes and better protection. However the framework under which this has evolved under the WTO and FTAs is very limited. First, Mode 4 is limited to *temporary* movement, often linked to commercial presence as a prerequisite. Second, it is limited to *skilled professionals only* and women domestic workers are not often considered skilled. As a result most that Mode 4 has seen in recent times is some very limited advancement in jobs for nurses (e.g. under India-Japan FTA) but nothing for care workers is on the card. Third, there are strict barriers in most countries (Economic Needs Test or ENT, language test, pre employment requirements, confinement to sector, and an absence of wage parity) which women migrants often find more difficult to meet. Fourth, most migrant workers have limited rights, work in the informal sectors and face exploitation both domestically and abroad (e.g. China's *dagonmei*, Mexican women workers in US) but Mode 4 is unable to address this aspect. There has also been criticism that Mode 4 has resulted in encouraging sex tourism.

While encouraging Mode 4 could have some benefits for women in developing countries, critics have also argued that there is a cost to the country of sending workers out. For example, when health workers go out there can be adverse impact on availability of health professionals and health services within a country. Women and the poor will likely suffer disproportionately from a constraint on quality health services. So Mode 4 must be promoted to be expansive and effective while keeping domestic needs in mind.

#### **Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) and Access to Medicines**

The WTO had established the TRIPs regime in 1995 and member countries have gradually enacted or amended their patent and other Intellectual Property (IP) laws in accordance with it. The increasing recognition of strong IP rights has already increased costs of many patented drugs. It has also threatened the cheap supply of medicines from the generic industry based in several countries such as India, China, Thailand, Brazil and South Africa. In developing countries, often with severely unequal health indicators and access, this threat to access to medicines is of critical concern.

Access to medicine and healthcare has a clear gender component. Women already face lower access to healthcare and medicines. High maternal mortality in Africa, South Asia and high undernourishment among women and children in Africa and Asia validate these concerns. So has been the increase in incidence of HIV/AIDS among women with lower access to treatment and discrimination. As costs go up women are often forced to forego treatment, as is clear in the case of HIV infected couples. Increase in fertility related treatment often at high prices has also been a specific trend. Prices of treatments for breast cancer has also increased prohibitively. For example, Trastumazab, a key medicine for breast cancer has been patented in India and is available at the price of Rs. 124,000 per month per person where the treatment must continue for 52 weeks. Women in developing countries both practice and use traditional medicines extensively which can also be impacted by IPRs.

**Under TRIPS**, governments were supposed to provide stricter protection of IP, which has increased medicine prices worldwide as well as affected access to them in cases of critical diseases. However innovation (the stated objective of stronger IPRs), especially in neglected diseases, has not been forthcoming. Still, the TRIPs framework did offer some flexibility such as provisions for compulsory licensing, parallel imports of medicines, *sui generis* protection for plants and animals, protection of traditional knowledge, etc.

However under **FTAs**, especially North-South FTAs, developed regions and countries such as the EU and USA often ask developing partners to make IPR commitments beyond the TRIPS agreement. As a result, the global IPR system may become even stronger. In addition, several flexibilities such as compulsory licenses offered by TRIPS are being continuously challenged, further aggravating the situation. The FTAs often include provisions such as data exclusivity (DE)<sup>279</sup>, patent term extension patent linkage (linking of the patent with marketing rights) and IP enforcement (including border

<sup>279</sup> Under DE, national regulators cannot refer to trial data submitted by the original manufacturer to grant marketing rights to a generic producer for a certain period of time. So generic producers will now have to submit their own data and repeat clinical trials if they have to enter the market.

measures that allow countries to seize critical medicine supplies in transit for alleged IP violation), among others. In Jordan, DE provision under an FTA with the US resulted in medicine prices being 200-600% higher compared to neighbouring Egypt, where DE was not in operation<sup>280</sup>.

### **Intellectual Property Rights, Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Biodiversity<sup>281</sup>**

Women are preservers of seeds, of traditional systems of cultivation, of biodiversity as they depend more on these traditional systems and also help to nurture their diversity. These are under threat from the current IPR systems. Even the way traditional knowledge is currently being 'protected' by the mainstream approach actually either takes access away from communities, or lures them into the IPR system in the name of rights, reward or recognition. The IPR system is inadequate to deal with people's knowledge systems, which neither privatised the knowledge nor were based on individual inventorship. For most local groups and women their know-how of the living world is intellectual heritage and not intellectual property. Despite what is said globally and nationally about patents, plant variety protection, geographical indications, etc. mere accommodating women within them does not effect real justice to them. For example, the relation of India's Biological Diversity Act with these IPR laws has to be critically viewed, as this conservation law is also fast becoming a venue to approve IPR applications on India's biological resources and related knowledge.



Sapara women, Ecuador. Photo: Indigenous Peoples Biocultural Climate Change Initiative. See <http://ipcca.info>

### **Conditions on Investment, Investment Agreements and Policy Space**

The sections above highlight how FDI can pose specific gender concerns in developing countries. However there are two important areas of concern related to FDI focused on the specific mechanisms through which FDI enters into a country. This relates to the terms and conditions of bringing in FDI which could be through investment protection agreements, trade and investment agreements, or through autonomous routes.

The first relates to the fact that conditions on FDI, referred to as performance requirements (PRS) are getting increasingly diluted globally, either through the governments' autonomous policies or through investment chapters in Free Trade Agreements. For example, in India the conditions imposed on allowing FDI into multi-brand retail (a recently announced and very controversial policy shift) are already getting diluted. Many governments have also increasingly removed conditions related to

<sup>280</sup> Oxfam, 2007

<sup>281</sup> This section draws on Bhutani, 2011.

mandatory technology transfer, very important for domestic growth and also for creating opportunities in SMEs where a lot of women work as entrepreneurs and employees.

The second concern stems from the rapid growth of Bilateral Investment Treatments (BITs) and Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements (BIPAs), which do not give market access to investors but gives them very strong protection and legal rights. While this is seen by many as necessary for attracting FDI, others argue that this has severely limited the policy space of governments to regulate in national interest. Under BITs / BIPAs, foreign investors have the right to sue national governments in secret arbitration cases in international tribunals if they perceive any violation of their investment. Several public interest regulations by governments across the world have been challenged. For example, Phillip Morris has sued a number of governments including Australia and Uruguay for trying to bring about plain packaging on tobacco packs. This is already acting as severe policy deterrence and has the potential to freeze policy regulation in the future and poses a significant challenge to future regulations that may adversely affect women's rights and space. For instance, it may become difficult for governments to bring in future policy regulation in areas where regulation is still weak, for example surrogacy laws and medical tourism, which impact women significantly.

Another critical area to be affected by BITs and BIPAs is natural resources, which women traditionally use and depend on. The majority of the known outstanding investor-state cases under US' FTAs and BITs (totalling \$11 billion in claims) relate to natural resource policies. Nearly half of the 129 cases pending before the World Bank's investment dispute facility relate to natural resources. Burlington Resources Vs. Ecuador, pending, reveals conflicts between government duties to protect human and indigenous rights, on the one hand, and obligations to protect foreign investors. Public health and environment regulations, areas on which women and children are critically dependent, are also being challenged globally. For example, in the case of Renco Vs. Peru, lead poisoning of 162 La Oroyan children led to the Peruvian government taking measures against the company but Renco sued Peru for 800 million USD under the US-Peru FTA.

### Policy Options

There is an increasing loss of policy space from various directions for governments to enact policies in social needs. For example, one might consider the loss of tariff revenue that can lead to lower spending on social sectors, or the loss of access for weaker sections of the population. Governments are also losing the space to protect natural resources and keep control in communities; among other relevant policy restrictions that impose pressure to ensure women's interests and their development.

From an overview of issues, it is also evident that while goods trade has its own challenges, trade's movement beyond goods may not always be beneficial to women, and gender insensitivity is often more intrinsic in these issues. There is therefore need for higher regulation and monitoring of these areas for gender impacts. There is a need to focus government policies to address disparities (in resources, skills, etc.) and protect sectors and workers until these are addressed. There is a dire need to address labour concerns and in particular the casualisation of work. There is also the need for social protection measures with gender specific focus. Finally it is of critical importance to assess what kind of development parameters we need in place before we can go in for rapid liberalization that affects specific groups in very particular ways. There are certain policy options that can be pursued at national or global levels in order to take these concerns into account:

- **Changes in trade and investment policy:** At national and global levels, monitor gender impacts and take protective measures where impacts are expected to be harmful; not compromise governments' policy space to regulate in interests of vulnerable sections; strengthen and implement countries' extra territorial obligations; identify and protect gender sensitive products; ease processes (waiving of license and other fees), create Research and Development resources for women entrepreneurs, credit and marketing facilities, etc.
- **Changes in domestic macroeconomic policies:** Create public employment; gender mainstreaming of macro economic policy design; implement preferential policies across sectors; planned investment in creating infrastructure; facilitate access to technology and ensure access to common natural resources
- **Changes in labour and social policies:** Update labour laws and labour standards including wage uniformity policy; implement regulations on working conditions, social security law for unorganised workers, maternity benefits, public facilities for *crèche* and schools for women

workers' children; invest in nutrition, health and education. These will also help boost demand and create market.

- **Need for deeper introspection for protection of women:** Implement policies focused on changing social mindsets through education, awareness building, etc.
- **Develop women's political empowerment and decision-making content in all forms of policymaking, especially external sector policies.**

### **Recommendations related to international trade and investment issues for a Post 2015 Agenda**

Based on the analyses above, some recommendations are provided below. The list is ambitious but the issues of international policy go to the heart of gender relations and impact multiple aspects of people's lives. Some indicators are cross cutting and may appear more than once. The recommendations place significant attention on the global policy framework but include national and local level interventions as well. The list is indicative and certainly not exhaustive.

#### **1. Framework**

- Inter-weave gender dimensions in all goals; and especially under global cooperation for development (MGD Goal 8) or under "Create a Global Enabling Environment and Catalyze Long-Term Finance" (Goal 12 of the HLP Report). Simultaneously interweave international components under the gender related goals (e.g. Goal 2 of the HLP Report) but also in other goals, for example, in goals related to employment (Goal 8 of the HLP Report), food security and nutrition (Goal 5) of the HLP Report).
- Address global framework and structural issues as intrinsic to attainment of all goals.
- Try to influence policymaking at all levels: National/state, trade policy/domestic policy, other Use indicators that lend themselves to more disaggregated analyses.
- Promote gender specific impact analyses and research on trade and investment policies.

#### **2. Specific Issues**

##### **Acknowledge and address the link between international issues and gender relations:**

- Strengthen Goal 8, make it accountable and undertake meaningful reform of global trade, finance, investment, IPR rules (and associated technology transfer arrangements) so that policy space of national governments to monitor and regulate such arrangements in public interest, e.g. protecting public health, environment, natural resources, and in the interest of gender and social justice is protected.
- Apply the Maastricht Principles on Extraterritorial Obligations of States in the area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the application of trade and investment agreements.
- Ensure Means of Implementation (MOI) with every gender related goal and target (as well as with other goals).
- Allow conditions (performance requirements) to be imposed on FDI, whether autonomous or through international agreements, so that it serves the interests of the host country, especially a developing country: FDI should mandatorily create jobs, transfer technology and transmit skills and practices from which the recipient population can benefit. Conditions can also be imposed to address the issues of inequalities that may stem from the natural operation of FDI (e.g. not going to rural areas).

##### **Women's work in sectors linked to international trade and investment:**

- Strengthen or add targets and indicators on wage inequality, job segregation, informalisation / casualisation of work, job benefits including maternity benefits in export based sectors.
- Ensure access to productive resources (physical, financial and human) such as land, water, credit, infrastructure, skills and technology for women by making public investment in these areas, if needed.
- Enact policies including external sector policies to protect and promote women's entrepreneurship especially in SMEs with access to credit, infrastructure, technology, and market access on fair terms.
- Recognise care work as critical to survival of the economy and society, and promote means to ease the burden of care work (e.g. by necessarily providing public services/sourcing of healthcare, education, energy, water).
- Provide strong social protection/security, safety net addressing the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups and provision of public services.



Thai daily life. Feeding the animals. Thailand. Photo: Indigenous Peoples Biocultural Climate Change Initiative. See <http://ipcca.info>

**Women's Access to Resources and Critical Services:**

- Promote women's equitable access to and control over resources regarding the use of land, property, water, ocean, forests, and other forms of natural resources.
- Ensure women's access to agriculture and food sources, including the access to seeds, to cultivate, to gather from common resources.
- Ensure women's access to knowledge, including traditional knowledge, intellectual and cultural property and therefore to develop national/ local IPR strategies in keeping with needs of specific groups.
- Ensure that trade and investment policies do not impede women's access to basic services including quality education and skill development opportunities; healthcare including access to medicines; women's sexual and reproductive healthcare including safe abortion, and maternity care, Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV prevention and treatment; to safe and accessible drinking water; and to sustainable and affordable energy sources.
- Ensure external sector policies and global rules do not impede on governments' policy space to support large scale public programmes to ensure basic human sustenance and well being, such as food, health, education etc, especially of vulnerable groups.
- Actively penalize harmful FDI in activities that affect the health of people and women, and the environment. Specific areas could be mining, nuclear energy, and chemicals.<sup>282</sup>

**Strengthen the Institutional Framework:**

- Include economic and democratic governance of international policies at both global, national and if needed, at local levels, and address gender specific concerns within this framework. This includes strengthening transparency, accountability and review mechanisms at national levels (such as local government review, parliamentary processes, independent review commission etc), as well as global levels (UN bodies, International Financial Institutions, etc.).
- Involve participation of CSOs, in particular, women's groups, in trade and investment policymaking and in the process of reviews.
- Design indicators such that policies that aim to achieve them do not have retrograde impacts.

<sup>282</sup> Women's Major Group (2013) "We Will Not be Mainstreamed into a Polluted Stream: Feminist Statement on the 2015 Development Agenda", Women's Major Group statement read at the international NGO conference on 'Advancing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda: Reconfirming Rights – Recognising Limits – Redefining Goals' was held from 20-22 March 2013 in Bonn, Germany. Available at <http://www.dawnnet.org/advocacy-appeals.php?signon=293&id=293>

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## 5.g Feminists and women's movements: Proposals toward post-extractivist, ecologically sustainable and just futures

By Noelene Nabulivou, Fiji<sup>283284</sup>

*"We reject models based on extractivism, and current production and consumption patterns that do not contemplate an integral vision of development ..."*  
*Young women advocates from the economic south, working on the intersections between gender, economic and ecological justice (GEEJ)<sup>285</sup>*

### Why does the issue of extractivist development matter to feminists and gender and sustainable development advocates? The global context of our work

In these SDG and Post 2015 Development Agenda multilateral negotiations some States, UN agencies and civil society are now explicitly including several aspects of long-fought sustainable development principles. These include issues of universal human rights and gender equality; equality across dimensions of social, economic and environmental development, addressing global poverty and persistent inequalities, and focus on means of implementation (MOI).

These are important gains but they run the risk of under-implementation, co-option and subsumption in the current complex context of global economic, food, finance, fuel, climate change crises and attendant responses; historical non-realization and additional cutbacks in ODA funding; and escalated fundamentalist and neo-conservative attacks on SRHR and gender equality. There is also an ongoing concern on the possibility of gender equality and human rights concerns being instrumentalised and used as a bargaining chip in Post 2015 Development agenda negotiations, just as in Rio+20 negotiations.

Secondly, in these multilateral UN negotiations we also see South governments pressing for stronger and generally extractivist economic policies and regulatory measures while de-emphasizing, if not rolling back, agreements on women's rights, gender equality and ecological sustainability. On the other hand, North governments are strongly proposing women's rights and gender equality as a conditionality of economic and political reforms, but simultaneously resisting necessary core structural changes to the development paradigm - thereby perpetuating and escalating global poverty, economic and ecological damage, and further degradation of women's human rights.

Thirdly, we urgently need a 'complex systems' approach to development where it is acknowledged that social, economic and financial systems function within a single planetary biospheric space, depending on the functions and service of such life-supporting ecosystems. Here, environmental degradation is no longer posited as an externality in economic, social development and human rights. Rather, it is clarified that there are inviolable biosphere boundaries within which all socio-economic-ecological development paradigms operate in order to avoid danger zones with large-scale and critical biosphere thresholds or 'tipping points'. Such biophysical boundaries potentially provide a useful framework for policy. But the work on this area must happen now and fast because, in the words of the original authors "(t)he governance implications of the planetary boundaries concept is a research challenge in its own right... where "the original framework cannot simply be taken off the shelf and translated directly to operational policy."<sup>286</sup>

It is time for a deep reframing process: In the context of our current ecological, social and economic

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<sup>284</sup> Contributions by Hibist Kassa, Ethiopia and Rosa Koian, PNG; and informed by collective work of DAWN EC members (past and present), south feminist groups and wider allies

<sup>285</sup> GEEJ Combined statement - Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean:

[http://www.dawnnet.org/uploads/documents/GEEJ%20Statements\\_Combined\\_PacAfLatC\\_2011-Jun-23.pdf](http://www.dawnnet.org/uploads/documents/GEEJ%20Statements_Combined_PacAfLatC_2011-Jun-23.pdf)

<sup>286</sup> Rockström, J., et al., 2009. <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss2/art32/> The planetary boundaries framework visibilities the role of biophere support as essential to all dimensions of sustainable development - social, economic and environmental. Nine biosphere processes referred to in the initial 2009 research on safe planetary boundaries includes as follows: Climate Change; Rate of biodiversity loss; Nitrogen cycle (Part of a boundary with the phosphorus cycle); Phosphorus cycle (Part of a boundary with the nitrogen cycle); Stratospheric ozone depletion; ocean acidification; global freshwater use; change in land use; atmospheric aerosol loading; and chemical pollution. More information: <http://www.stockholmresilience.org/21/research/research-programmes/planetary-boundaries/planetary-boundaries/about-the-research.html>

crisis, our aim is not anymore about sustainability in development. It is about urgent ecological repair. This includes ending extractivist-oriented development.

This chapter is therefore merely catalytic in nature, taking an urgent discussion forward in at least two ways: Firstly highlighting how some feminist and women's groups, civil society movements and south states are tackling conceptual, technical and political concerns, strategies and recommendations related to extractivism; Secondly, raising questions on how to advance long-fought gender equality and universal human rights, social and economic justice in this necessary but often cooptive global focus on economic and ecological sustainability.



Recognise ecological limits to the 'growth' paradigm. Senegal. Photo: Yolanda Sikking

### **The terrains of extractivism are many and linked, so too are transnational corporations**

Even further back than the Earth Summit in 1992, women advocates around the world framed the struggles for social justice, rights and sustainable development as being, "*on diverse territories and geographies including the body, land, oceans and waterways, communities, states, and epistemological grounds*". They recognise these terrains as, "*fraught with the resurgent forces of patriarchy, finance capitalism, neo-conservatism, consumerism, militarism and extractivism.*"<sup>287</sup>

So as states and corporations remain locked in often-times exclusionary and marketised development battles; feminist, women's rights and other wider social justice networks continue to excavate and explore the exact configurations, breadth and depth of crises and possibilities. They debate the adequacy or otherwise of current policy and movement responses; and also continually propose heterodox strategies by/for communities and states in these critical times.

Many in the women's movements also now situate individual bodies in structural arguments against malestream development. They assert that States must protect and promote the right of women to fully control their bodily autonomy and integrity, gender identities and sexualities. They also insist that large-scale land and ocean-rights acquisitions by states and private sector for mining, gas, oil and export-oriented agriculture should be re-examined in the light of human rights based, socially justice

<sup>287</sup> Joint Statement by Women Activists from the Economic South at Rio+20: 'Governments Gamble with Our Future. South Feminists Demand Responsible Action Now'. 22 June, 2012, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: <http://www.dawnnet.org/advocacy-cso.php?id=248>

framed which is also ecologically sustainable, with many outrightly rejecting any such development as ultimately unsound, and with huge costs to individuals, local communities and societies.

There is also an increasingly loud call led by south feminists for recognition of the deeper structural roots of the current crises caused by an anthropocentric capitalist development model rooted in unsustainable production and consumption patterns, and the financialisation, militarisation and extractivisation of an economy based on, and exacerbating a wide range of gender, ethnicity, class and other inequities.<sup>288</sup>

This becomes evermore urgent as transnational corporations tap the last drops of oil, gas, water and minerals from existing land-based supplies, and increasingly also oceanic supplies threatening food supplies, biodiversity, and ultimately global ecological balance, as never before. Private sector interests also use new and untested science to explore our land and oceanic depths for oil, gas, rare earth and minerals; and push multiple marketised geo-engineering technologies despite strong opposition from many local communities and civil society groups and networks.<sup>289</sup>

The interests of transnational corporations (TNCs) are particularly prominent in recent multilateral negotiations, offering considerable private sector resources but engendering few transformative results for local communities.<sup>290</sup> They offer slick corporatised development packages assisting states to tick boxes on gender equality, sustainable development and human rights; have also set their sights at watering down long-agreed Agenda 21 development principles; and attempt to synchronise and co-opt trade, aid and development agendas on an unprecedented scale. They are also behind the current push for voluntary and 'public-private' agreements, as against enforceable multilateral treaties, drawn down through regional political agreements, and with national-level legally enforced regulatory policy.

They also show a remarkable capacity to reinvent themselves time and again in various development tracks, to obscure the extent to which their subsidiaries are co-owned, and the extent to which they are already influencing global development processes. One piece of recent research, requiring urgent extension, shows a remarkable 'bow-tie' shaped network where the centre knot represents a core group of around 147 TNCs holding collectively four tenths of control over the economic value of all global TNCs. These top holders can thus be thought of as an economic "super-entity". Also of relevance, especially in light of the players in the recent global financial crisis, is that three quarters of that core, are in fact financial intermediaries.<sup>291</sup>

Just exactly how, when and where this core group of TNCs acts intentionally, is an urgent political and technical question for all stakeholders in this SDG and Post 2015 Development Agenda process, and especially feminist and other progressive and leftist social movements working for an end to extractivist development. One area of urgent examination would be the extent to which TNCs are still framed as somewhat singular and separate development actors, contrasted with their actual scope and effect as a key 'political' power bloc holding *de facto* and organised sway over economic and development agendas. More importantly, just as economists who normalised and ignored the signs of the impending global financial crisis - are States, UN agencies and civil society right now ignoring a global corporatized development coup? Is multilateralism in crises, and what are the appropriate responses, if this is true?

### **It's time for paradigm change— again!**

Hence the global women's movement, including the Women's Major Group is clear that any development agenda must go much further than 'business as usual' nor 'business as partner/funder of development' and that a holistic restructuring of the global development agenda is not just necessary, but urgent.

In a recent global statement women advocates from over 200 key organisations, networks and social movements asserted that, "*(w)e will not be mainstreamed into a polluted stream'* and called for "*structural transformations for achieving women's human rights and gender equality in the Post 2015*

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

<sup>289</sup> The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has instituted a de facto moratorium against ocean fertilization, one form of geoengineering, at its Ninth Conference of the Parties in Bonn, Germany in 2008. This moratorium was expanded to cover all geoengineering technologies at COP 10 in Nagoya, Japan held in October 2010. [www.etcgroup.org](http://www.etcgroup.org)

<sup>290</sup> Friends of the Earth International, 2012..

<sup>291</sup> Vitali, 2011. [http://arxiv.org/PS\\_cache/arxiv/pdf/1107/1107.5728v2.pdf](http://arxiv.org/PS_cache/arxiv/pdf/1107/1107.5728v2.pdf)

*development agenda*.<sup>292</sup> They also stated that all development proposals must be based firmly on non-regression and recognition of universally agreed human rights articulated through already agreed international law and agreements - not on notions of 'basic rights' and 'safety' that are hard to define and measure.<sup>293</sup>



Indigenous people in Mexico city. Photo: Orin Langelle.

Unfortunately, the recently-released High Level Panel of Eminent Persons Report on the Post 2015 Development Agenda falls significantly short in providing such substantive direction and support to Member states, instead providing a highly marketised development framework downgrading the importance of human rights and environmental sustainability in sustainable development, in favor of a model that reifies corporate driven economic growth, even emphasising a dangerous equivalency of people's rights and corporate claims.

This invisibilises the multiple and linked crises caused by a hegemonic, anthropocentric development model rooted in unsustainable production and consumption; overemphasises legitimacy of corporate voice in multilateralism; and overall weakens the social contracts between states and citizens. It also discounts the various social, structural and geo-political factors that create, sustain, normalise and exacerbate gender and other social, economic and ecological inequalities. This leads to strategies inadequate to address the scale and intensity of current biosphere-sized crises nor the persistent and

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292 [http://www.womenrio20.org/docs/final\\_Women%20Statements\\_Endorsements-2.pdf](http://www.womenrio20.org/docs/final_Women%20Statements_Endorsements-2.pdf)

293 As DAWN noted in their response to the High Level Report, titled, 'From People's Rights to Corporate Privilege', women's rights and gender equality advancements must be firmly rooted in human rights obligations and commitments by States even prior to the groundbreaking UN conferences of the 1990s, and gains made through follow up processes at national, regional and global levels. This includes inter alia, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and Optional Protocol, Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, International Covenant on Economic Cultural and Social Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers, Convention against Torture, Convention on Biodiversity; Convention on the Law of the Sea; Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development; Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1960, and the relevant conventions of the International Labour Organization; Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women; Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development; UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development. Also recognising the importance of the Yogyakarta Principles on the application of human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity.

worsening blocks impeding sustainable development and realization of universal human rights.<sup>294</sup>

Therefore, just as the feminist and women's groups around the world were key actors in shifting global trajectories on population development, environment and human rights in the 1990s<sup>295</sup>, the renegotiation of the Sustainable Development and Post 2015 Development Agenda, in the context of the climate change (UNFCCC) and SRHR (ICPDBeyond2014) negotiations are another vanguard moment for the Women's and other social movements.

There is great need of development solutions that are both pragmatic and realistic, but of sufficient transformative quality and scale to move us from these dangerous development paths of corporatised green economies, extractivism, geo-piracy<sup>296</sup> and dangerous untested technologies including experimental seabed mining<sup>297</sup> at the heart of unsustainable development. So while states, CSOs and social movements debate the exact nature and importance of various development proposals, a large number of recent progressive proposals including by the Women's Major Group are underpinned by a necessity to move away from resource-heavy, export-oriented and non-renewable extractivist development - and toward sustainable, renewable resource alternatives.<sup>298</sup>

As concerns extractivism itself, several key questions emerge, none of which can be answered here, but nevertheless usefully asked: Are states and social movements in agreement on non-extractivism as a conditionality for sustainable development? How do we move from the current realities of fossil-fuel driven development, and when? How can we build the required political leadership to take this forward as a global agenda? Are non-extractivist proposals finding support within the current multilateral negotiations? If not, how do we increase support? Most importantly, how is a post-extractivist future best framed as a gender equality, human rights and sustainable development issue, and how can the global women's movements move such a paradigmatic shift of global proportions?

What are women doing to transform development in this context? Firstly, they are the frontline resistance, and re/tellers of stories of dispossession. They are legally and otherwise challenging maldevelopment, and reframing extractivist debates with interlinkage analysis, advocacy, activism and policy development.

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<sup>294</sup> Women's Major Group (2013) "We Will Not be Mainstreamed into a Polluted Stream: Feminist Statement on the 2015 Development Agenda", Women's Major Group statement read at the international NGO conference on 'Advancing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda: Reconfirming Rights – Recognising Limits – Redefining Goals' was held from 20-22 March 2013 in Bonn, Germany. Available at <http://www.dawwnet.org/advocacy-appeals.php?signon=293&id=293>

<sup>295</sup> South feminist analysts Gita Sen and Anita Nayar of DAWN have recently re-examined key shifts in population, environment and human rights, focusing on the period since the pivotal United Nations Conferences of the early 1990s in Rio de Janeiro, Vienna, Cairo and Beijing, usefully highlighting the joint work of environmentalists and women's groups in the past 30 years to transform a then-hegemonic Malthusian approach to population and environment linkages toward one based on human rights, and cognisant of gender equality concerns. This is an identifiable moment where feminist work on women's bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights directly influenced wider development and human rights discourse. Secondly, they also describe the extraordinary catalytic quality of the immediate period leading into and at *Planeta Femea*, the women's tent at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. There, women's organizations thrashed out a consensus position on population policy that would bridge the considerable differences and mistrust that existed among groups from different regions and backgrounds.

<sup>296</sup> EtcGroup, 2010. <http://www.etcgroup.org/content/geopiracy-case-against-geoengineering>

<sup>297</sup> <http://www.deepseaminingoutofourdepth.org/tag/experimental-seabed-mining/>

<sup>298</sup> Includes: Compiled statements from Gender, Economic and Ecological Justice (GEEJ) Meetings of Young and Local Economic South based Women Advocates in Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Video interviews from the Asia and Pacific Consultations (2010-2013); 'Also The Future that Asia Pacific Women Want' (Nov 2012); *Bali Declaration by Parliamentarians and Civil Society on the MDG and the Post 2015 Development Agenda, Bali, Indonesia (March 2013)*; 'Bonn Conference Statement (see above April 2013)'; Outcome Document of the CSOs Monrovia Consultation for the Post 2015 Development Agenda (May 2013); 'Outcome Statement of Joint SPC-PIFS Civil Society Dialogue on Conflict, Peace and Security, to the Pacific Forum Regional Security Committee' (May 2013); and more.

## Dispossession and Women's Resistance to Extractivism: Pacific and Africa

### **“One day a mining company came knocking on our door...”**

*This is the story of Christina Kepma. Her struggle continues with others in her community including BRG as they actively resist mining on land and sea:*

Christina Kepma woke up very early one morning to the rude sounds of vehicle doors banging and angry shouts outside her family home in Vienevi village in Kurumbukare, Papua New Guinea. Through the holes in the wall she could see uniformed and armed policemen and their vehicles. Scared she threw the blanket to one side and ran out with her children and husband. “Out, Out, Out,” came the shouts. With guns pointed in her face and loud angry voices telling her to f\*\*\* off, Christina had to be strong. This was the eighth time they came. Each of those eight times she had faced the men in blue uniforms and told them this was their land, just like the Policemen being Papua New Guineans had their own land. She told them to put down their guns, go back and protect their own land!

Her words were only echoes that got lost in the beautiful plateau of Kurumbukare as it was ripped apart from the sides around Vienevi village. Christina’s family and clan, the Maure were holding up ‘development’. The miners wanted to get started as soon as a court injunction to prevent them from using the deep sea tailings placements (DSTP) system to dump mine wastes was lifted. So the Maure clan struggle was short lived. Along with other clansmen and women Christina and her husband Peter were forced out of their village and given blue tarpaulins to make their temporary shelter on their sacred mountain, and told to wait for their permanent houses. The thought of living in company-supplied houses sounded good but changes to hunting, food gathering and gardening worried the families: “We cannot make gardens and hunt over there. That is another clan’s land, it’s trouble,” said Peter. Christina also could not grasp why so many old trees were taken down and allowed to rot away as they passed their stolen land. “This is our hunting ground,” she said. “We come here to gather wild fruits and leaves for our meals. The men hunt for pigs, cuscus and birds.” She pointed back to where the company had set up camp, “That is where we went to collect eggs. They just don’t care. They’ve taken everything from us.” “We are not allowed to make gardens. We cannot cut down trees to build a house or make gardens. We even came here where they had already cut down the trees and started planting new food crops. Then they came and told us not to plant there as well.”

At the top of Snake Mountain, Peter joined the rows of tarpaulin shelters and put up one for the family. They hoped it was only temporary. Rations of rice, tinned fish, flour, cooking oil, instant coffee, tea and milk were supplied but only for a short time until other new food gardens could be harvested. This was hard for the now displaced Maure clan as they had large families who depended on fresh garden produce and food from the bush. Snake Mountain offered so little in the way of hunting and gardening grounds. So Christina's family clan stood firm and demanded they be taken care of, before mining began on their Maure clan land. They rejected small payments of “amamas moni” (happy money) and demanded houses and spin off contracts. These requests fell on deaf ears. China Metallurgical Construction Company (CMCC), the developer of the Ramu Nickel project didn't have time to deal with such landowner demands. They have 40 years to take the nickel and cobalt and leave. So despite promises of two townships and relocation of the local landowners in and around the mining lease area, CMCC has actually been able to deliver houses for only a handful of local landowners. Like all other women in Kurumbukare, Christina had dreamt of a better life with the arrival of CMCC - schools for their children, a well-stocked and staffed health centre, a good road system to transport their produce to the markets and above all, good houses. Despite the guns pointed in her face she remained hopeful that something good would come out of it. Her dreams fell further apart when her husband died suddenly two years later. Today Christina still lives in her tarpaulin shelter. Tarpaulins were not her dream.

Source: Rosa Koian, Bismarck Ramu Group (BRG), Papua New Guinea. Together with other diverse CSO and people's movements in the Pacific and globally, BRG are working on many legal and extra-legal contestation and resistance to multiple forms of maldevelopment, and working to assist their own and other small island states to move toward sustainable and just policies. They have already managed to convince the government toward a temporary freeze on one seabed mining initiative in their area.

## Extractive Industries in Africa: Marikana Women Fight Back

Dispossession is the first protagonist in the story of capitalist exploitation. Monopoly over the ownership of land, pits corporations against local communities. Obviously, corporations with billions or even trillions of dollars worth of assets are not on equal footing with local communities whose livelihoods still depend on the land, resources and territories, and have little financial and other resources with which to fight back. These unequal relations are clearly expressed when police or private security forces use brute force to protect corporate interests.

Despite this, resistance to the activities of mining companies are ongoing on various fronts across the world. Women's and feminist groups, landless peasant workers, national and local CSOs and indigenous people, are among those organizing on multiple fronts to resist ecological devastation, loss of livelihood, economic insecurity, and threats to social and cultural heritage and well-being.

On the labour front, mine workers around the world are more often now taking up struggles against exploitation, poor working conditions and unfair labour practices. The tragedy that became the Marikana massacre in South Africa captures one such conflict. From the late 1880s, mine workers, who had been dispossessed of access to fertile lands, had no option than to work in the mines (some as forced labour) where mortality rates were high. Resistance to mining companies by workers has persisted since then, even during the darkest days of apartheid.

In 2012, during a protracted labour strike in a platinum mine in South Africa, a coordinated attack on the strikers by police led to the deaths of 34 miners. In response, women from the mining communities demonstrated in support of the striking male miners.<sup>299</sup> They linked their struggles to that of earlier resistances of colonialism and apartheid through the 'toyi-toyi' dance, singing, waving sticks, whistling and ululating, with songs of mourning and defiance.

The provision of African women's unpaid and underpaid care services in homes, families and elsewhere, and as in Marikana as community advocates and human rights defenders, supplements the enormous gaps in overall social and economic services in mining communities around the world. Despite the fact that Marikana is amongst the richest platinum mines in the world, workers still live in nearby Nkanini settlement in cramped shacks with pit toilets and intermittent water supply. The women are primary carers for children, the aged, sick, and source food and water, and corporations benefit from such unpaid care work.

Such corporations not only impose low wages on workers, but also benefit by paying lower taxes to the state. Capital flight is particularly problematic in South Africa, where the liberalization of its financial markets has ultimately contributed to deteriorating public services. The provision of universal social protection, increased taxation and reregulation of financial markets, are therefore, also key demands.<sup>300</sup>

Therefore, it is clear that any meaningful new economic paradigm must lead to a rigorous rethink of development and toward a transformation of power relations that shape how production, reproduction and consumption is organized. This must be at the core of any development agenda, and pursued through a decent work agenda that emphasizes comprehensive and universal social protection, reregulation of financial markets and increased taxation on mining companies. The connections between these measures and respect of the human rights of local communities, indigenous people, workers and women must be understood and respected.

Source: Hibist Kassa, Ethiopia

299 David Smith, Miners' wives rage at South African police brutality after 'massacre'; <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/17/miners-wives-rage-south-africa-killings> 17th August 2012.

300 Blanco, M., 2013, March. The Paradigm of Care in Gender Justice. Paper presented as part of a DAWN organised session at the World Social Forum, Tunis. Unpublished, DAWN.



United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Brazil. Photo: Isis Alvarez

### **States revisiting, strengthening and transforming conceptions of wellbeing and development**

The extent to which post-extractivism is fully conceptualised within States and realised in policy and practice, is debatable. Indeed, some south ecologists and feminists point to current shifts as yet mainly 'neo' rather than post-extractivist, with major negative impacts on local communities; now state defended as 'anti-neocolonialist' and 'people-oriented' development.<sup>301</sup> So while some States such as Ecuador, Bolivia, Venezuela, Nepal, Vanuatu and others are held up as strongest promise of paradigm shifts on development, the closer picture is yet unclear, diverse, and in some cases, decidedly murky.

Some prominent Leftist analysts and Latin American politicians are overall resistant to any discussion of post-extractivism, maintaining that such claims feed directly into the hands of developed states and TNCs who use the controversy of still-brown, extractivist South states to position themselves as greener, more sustainable, and therefore to capture the new 'green economy' and its potential riches.<sup>302</sup>

Meanwhile, in other South states there are nonetheless major conceptual and policy progressions, and some early implementation of potentially transformative development policy alternatives - one launchpad has been the conceptualisations of 'buen vivir' or 'sumak kawsay' of the Quechua peoples of the Andes, describing a way of life where social, cultural, environmental and economic issues work together and in balance. Others are the Happiness and wellbeing indicators coming from work in Bhutan, Maldives 100% renewable energy plan, the Vanuatu alternative wellbeing indicators, and more.

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301 Buen vivir: the social philosophy inspiring movements in South America <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/blog/buen-vivir-philosophy-south-america-eduardo-gudynas> and

302 Linera, Álvaro García. Vice President of Bolivia. 'Once again on so-called extractivism', extracted from his article "Geopolitics of the Amazon: Landed-Hereditary Power and Capitalist Accumulation" (Trans. Richard Fidler) first published in *Climate & Capitalism* under a Creative Commons license. <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2013/gl290413.html>



## Vanuatu - Alternative wellbeing indicators in development, but not necessarily transformative for women

Prominent Uruguayan ecologist Eduardo Gudynas speaks of the dangers of shallow cooption of post-extractivist concepts, "It is not a slogan that is separate from rigorous reflection, rather it is nourished little by little by complex conceptual bases, which include contributions spanning from post-material economics to ecological anthropology... By the same token, Right Livelihood is much more than paying assistentialist bonuses, since it calls for profound changes in the economic dynamics and productive chains, and the redistribution of wealth."<sup>303</sup>

Such alternate livelihood paradigms may call for profound economic changes, but they do not implicitly measure nor address unfair distribution of wealth, assets, and power -certainly they can remain determinedly blind to persistent and intersecting inequalities and multiple discrimination based on gender, age, class, caste, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and disabilities.

Recent work by the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs and the Vanuatu National Statistics Office through the 'Alternative Indicators of Well-Being for Melanesia' project<sup>304</sup> is interesting in that it states that 95% of all households in Vanuatu (where 3 out of 4 Ni-Vanuatu reside) have access to customary land for housing and subsistence agriculture, and over 85% of those surveyed in Vanuatu saw these customary lands as providing enough to meet the needs of their families, contrasting strongly with Least Developed Country vulnerability measures for the island nation.<sup>305</sup>

There are strong and persistent socio-economic and environmental issues faced by Vanuatu as a small island Pacific state, so development of heterodox indicators to both complicate, nuance and further hone in on persistent inequalities (including those perpetuated by external as well as internal actors) as well as highlighting particular resiliency and social protection measures in such small societies, is something of particular interest to all small island states.

However, while there is high interest in the potential for these alternative indicator systems in the Pacific and beyond, there is also an urgent need for nuanced gendered and human rights analysis of this work in a region with among the highest per capita rates of sexual and gender based violence in the world.<sup>306</sup>

In 2011, the Vanuatu Women's Centre found, for example, that 60 percent of women in Vanuatu report experiencing intimate partner violence. So far any reflection of the extent and effects of sexual and gender based violence and discrimination, among other forms of societal, economic and other inequalities faced by ni-Vanuatu, are not yet included in the alternative wellbeing indicator project. Neither is it clear how the current set of wellness indicators can compare differences between those Ni-Vanuatu surveyed having continued access to their traditional land, as against wellness of those ni-Vanuatu who had already lost their land to external and State developers, etc. So, as the Melanesian Spearhead Group has now endorsed this indicator project with expected rollouts to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Fiji in 2013, there is urgent need for full and robust gender and human rights analysis of this project, in joint efforts by non-state and state actors on gender equality and women's rights in the Pacific.

Source: Gudynas, E. Quoted in Marrero, C.R. 'The New Latin American "Progresismo" and the Extractivism of the 21st Century. <http://www.cipamericas.org/archives/4025#sthash.qatl4j04.dpuf>

## Recommendations

303 Gudynas, 2012. See more at: <http://www.cipamericas.org/archives/4025#sthash.qatl4j04.dpuf>

304 Study can be found here: <http://pacificinstitute.anu.edu.au/outrigger/2012/09/20/alternative-indicators-of-well-being-for-melanesia-a-vanuatu-pilot-study/>

305 UNCTAD. Vulnerability profile of Vanuatu, 2012. [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/ldc/profile/vulnerability\\_profile\\_vanuatu\\_2012.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/ldc/profile/vulnerability_profile_vanuatu_2012.pdf)

306 Houg-lee 2012. <http://www.islandsbusiness.com/2012/4/cover-story/protecting-women-and-children/>

So the conceptual seeds of post-extractivist development are here, but bringing these futures into reality will be more fraught and slower than hoped, when considering the stressed state of planetary ecosystems and biosphere; human rights non-realization and even regression; and current proposed development paths. An interlinked approach as articulated throughout these various chapters is required. Also needed are specific recommendations focused on ending extractivist development.

**Therefore recommending the following to all development parties, and especially States, on issues connecting post-extractivism, ecological sustainability, gender equality and human rights.**

- Recognise ecological limits to the 'growth' paradigm and safeguard sustainable development concepts from corporatised frames and initiatives that prioritise profit over all;
- Resist globally networked corporate interests that have narrowed the substantive and state-agreed sustainable development frameworks of the Rio Earth Summits in 1992 and 2012 (Rio+20), toward an inadequate and distorting economic-focused framework of 'green growth';
- Specifically address the risks and burdens disproportionately borne by women and girls as a consequence of extractive industries and enabling systemic inequities of the international monetary, financial and trading systems;
- Fully and broadly recognise women as full rights holders, including economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights-holders, rather than merely portraying as impacted communities, welfare recipients and labour supply;
- Increase and link policies on food insecurity, soil degradation, land alienation, and other impacts on extractivist-impacted communities;
- Strengthen, link, and resource all multilateral development-related agreements including UNFCCC, UNCLOS, CBD, UNCCD and the CSD/HLPF and the Post 2015 Development Agenda, and with UN Human Rights agreements and commitments<sup>307</sup>;
- Urgently raise pre-2020 UNFCCC mitigation ambition through a results oriented approach focusing on specific and scalable mitigation actions and policies deployed immediately, and strategies to overcome implementation barriers including delivery of financial resources, technology and capacity building;
- All Parties to the Kyoto Protocol that have not joined the second commitment period do so immediately, with developed countries recognising their historical responsibility, and taking the lead by putting forward more ambitious mitigation targets using the 2014 Kyoto Protocol ratchet mechanism;
- Kyoto and non-Kyoto Protocol Parties to demonstrate comparable commitment to strongest and urgent mitigation and adaptation measures;
- Developed countries to re-pay their climate debt by transferring environmentally-sound technologies and financial resources required for south states to shift to low-carbon growth;
- End financialization of emissions management caused by trading, outsourcing, and subsidies;
- Strengthen accountability mechanisms, resources and capacity of the Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), as the primary international multilateral UN governance mechanism on oceans, including development of an international legal instrument on biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction with decision to be taken before the 69<sup>th</sup> UNGA;
- Targeted high seas closures to enable sustainable fisheries, and intensify efforts to at least meet the JPOI 2015 restoration targets through strengthening rights based management and equitable pricing for economic south fisheries states.
- Specifically addressing threats from Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU), overcapacity of external fishing fleets, inadequate enforcement of flag rules, and overall ending unsustainable fisheries management;
- Greatest responsibility for loss and damage through unsustainable, extractive fisheries to be paid by those large fishing nations with greatest economic benefit and consumption;
- Ongoing global ban on geoengineering, reiterating the decision of the 10th Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya;
- All states to strengthen the World Food Security Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests in the Context of National Food Security; and reconfigure toward enforceable multilateral agreements, including on responsible agricultural investment;<sup>308</sup>
- Strengthened regional trade and human rights alignments and agreements for strength to resist

307 GEEJ Combined statement - Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean:  
[http://www.dawnnet.org/uploads/documents/GEEJ%20Statements\\_Combined\\_PacAfLatC\\_2011-Jun-23.pdf](http://www.dawnnet.org/uploads/documents/GEEJ%20Statements_Combined_PacAfLatC_2011-Jun-23.pdf)  
308 2012 Global Hunger Index. Pg. 48

- extractivist and corporatised development, and for proposal of sustainable alternatives;
- National re-orientation of agricultural, forestries and fisheries plans from extractive and export-oriented agribusiness toward local women-led and small-holder agroecology practices, and including strong protection of local free seed supply and distribution systems;
  - National level prioritisation of renewable energy access for rural communities and the urban poor.

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## 5.h Emerging Technologies: Sustainability, Gender and the Need for Technology Assessment and Monitoring

By Neth Daño<sup>309</sup> and Kathy Jo Wetter<sup>310</sup>

### Unsustainable technology revolution

The past few decades have seen unprecedented technological advances, which are massively transforming the planet and impacting people's daily lives. While the dramatic leaps and bounds in information and communications technology (ICT) development are perhaps the most obvious, there are many other emerging technologies that are also impacting our world and shaping our future, just as significantly but much less visibly — and not necessarily in the direction of sustainable development.

Technological developments in molecular biology in the 1980s have led to a situation in which genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are now ubiquitous on farms and grocery shelves in many countries around the world. However, a more recent but related technology, synthetic biology,<sup>311</sup> has taken biotechnology a step further: it is now possible to shift from transferring single genes from one species to another to build made-to-order stretches of DNA, one base pair at a time. These novel genomes can transform microorganisms into tiny 'biological factories', which can process almost any biomass to make almost any bio-product (eg. grasses to diesel fuel, or maize to plastic). Furthermore, whereas it had taken 13 years and US\$3 billion to map the human genome just ten years ago, it is now possible to map a complex genome in 8 days for less than US\$10,000.<sup>312</sup> A new field known as 'meta-genomics' allows the sequencing of entire communities of organisms in one fell swoop in order to exploit the microbial functioning of ecosystems.

In addition, a suite of techniques to manipulate matter on the scale of atoms and molecules, referred to as nanotechnology, can dramatically transform the material properties of conventional substances by taking advantage of 'quantum effects'. With only a reduction in size (to around 300 nm or smaller in at least one dimension) and no change in substance, materials can exhibit new characteristics — such as electrical conductivity, increased bioavailability, elasticity, greater strength or reactivity — properties that the very same substances may not exhibit at larger scales. But the qualities that make nanomaterials so attractive to industry across a wide range of fields — their mobility and small size, on the same scale as biological processes, and their unusual properties — turn out to be the same qualities that can make them harmful to the environment and to human health. Nanoscale particles can easily enter most cells, often without triggering any kind of immune response. While there is great uncertainty about the toxicity of nanoparticles, hundreds of published studies now exist that show manufactured nanoparticles, currently in widespread commercial use (including zinc, zinc oxide, silver and titanium dioxide) can be toxic.

In tandem with these developments, new hyperspectral imaging<sup>313</sup> technologies — using satellites and airplanes — are making it scientifically and financially possible to map and measure unique biodiversity across the globe. The near-term possibilities include the aerial identification of proprietary crops or livestock with unique genetic traits or DNA markers, which could impinge on farmers' rights to save and/or improve genetic material through breeding. The risk of biopiracy also increases. On the planetary scale, geo-engineering — the deliberate large-scale manipulation of the earth's systems (by injecting sunlight-reflecting particles into the stratosphere, for example) — is being pushed as a technological 'quick fix' to the climate crisis and for other ecological crises, such as ocean acidification and water cycle imbalances.

In addition to the potential ecological and health issues that surround these untested technologies and products, there is a concern that they are collectively creating industrial platforms that demand entirely new production and/or processing systems. The most direct impact of new designer materials created using nanotechnology or synthetic biology, for example, is multiple raw-material options for industrial manufacturers, which could mean major disruptions to traditional commodity markets. It is too early to

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<sup>311</sup> "Synthetic biology is the engineering of biology: the synthesis of complex, biologically based (or inspired) systems, which display functions that do not exist in nature." <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2174633/>

<sup>312</sup> ETC Group, 2012

<sup>313</sup> Hyperspectral imaging is a process that maps not just visible light but the entire electromagnetic spectrum.

predict with certainty which commodities or workers will be affected and how quickly. However, if a new nano-engineered material or a new bioproduct created using synthetic biology equals or outperforms a conventional commodity and can be produced at a comparable cost, it is likely to replace the conventional commodity. Modern history is replete with examples of new technological products and processes replacing traditional commodities, causing massive displacements in livelihood and employment.<sup>314</sup>



Women's March at Rio+20. Photo: Isis Alvarez

The new technologies thus have the potential to have a profound impact on communities and peoples' livelihoods, including women in rural areas involved in commodity production and those in urban areas engaged in processing and manufacturing. Their suitability in terms of meeting national and local needs is also highly speculative. The global South and marginalized sectors, especially women, are already bearing the brunt of environmental deterioration and climate change and are also likely to be the guinea pig for testing these powerful technological packages.

The public and private sectors, mainly in rich countries, have poured staggering quantities of research and development funds into these technologies. For example, agribusiness invests at least US\$100 million to develop each herbicide-tolerant crop variety that is marketed together with the companies' proprietary chemicals. Global public investment in nanotechnology research has exceeded US\$50 billion since 2000, with more than 60 countries now having national nanotechnology initiatives.<sup>315</sup> The leading global investors and developers of synthetic biology products include six of the ten largest chemical companies, six of the ten largest energy companies, six of the ten largest grain traders, and the world's seven largest pharmaceutical companies.<sup>316</sup> Intellectual property rights that ensure monopoly control and profits protect all the processes and products developed by these companies.

<sup>314</sup> In the face of perennially low and volatile prices for primary export commodities, and the persistent poverty experienced by many workers who produce commodities, few would argue in favour of preserving the status quo; however, preserving the status quo is not the issue. The immediate and most pressing issue is that new technologies are likely to bring huge socio-economic disruptions for which society is not prepared.

<sup>315</sup> ETC Group, 2010

<sup>316</sup> ETC Group, 2012

Many governments in developing countries see access to new technologies as vital to their ability to respond to developmental and environmental challenges. They are therefore anxious to ensure that legal and institutional obstacles such as intellectual property rights regimes and licensing arrangements do not impede access. Technology development and transfer, however, do not necessarily involve assessment of the impacts that such technologies may have on human health, environment and livelihoods. Thus, as the tragic history of many technologies has already shown, technology transfer can amount to dumping unwanted and untested technologies from industrialized countries onto developing regions. Not recognizing the importance of technology assessment and mechanisms involves high economic and political costs for proponents and regulators respectively, and can often have irreversible impacts on human health and the environment.<sup>317</sup>

This is especially the case with these new technologies, many of which are being allowed to reach the market without long-term safety tests and/or regulations, and often without labels and adequate information about the processes and risks involved being made available to the consumer. Controversies over the adverse effects of GMOs on human health, biodiversity and the environment have been raging since the mid-1990s for example. Despite that, GM varieties of maize, soybeans and cotton are now cultivated on an estimated 160 million hectares of land in about 25 countries.<sup>318</sup> Similarly, by 2011, over 1,300 products of nanotechnology had come to market, with virtually no regulation in place despite dozens of scientific studies showing the toxic effects of some nanomaterials.<sup>319</sup> Ironically, low technology-awareness prevails in the age of high-tech.

More worryingly still, the UNEP Foresight Report, "21 Issues for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," notes that the pace of introducing new technologies has increased while the role played by regulatory bodies in protecting the public from the consequences of new technologies has actually diminished.<sup>320</sup> The situation is both ironic and alarming given the rapid introduction of new technology products into ecosystems and the food chain. These lapses in technology governance are happening at precisely the same time that citizen concern over the safety of technologies is growing and the public's lack of confidence in the ability of governments to protect its interests is increasing. Technology-related disasters, including 'Mad Cow' disease and Foot and Mouth disease (mostly in industrialized countries) and, later, the rapid spread of genetically modified crops, have contributed to this distrust (ETC Group, 2012). The meltdowns at three of Fukushima's reactors in 2011 did nothing to improve the situation. Meanwhile, unlabeled and untested products of nanotechnology have come to market, and products of synthetic biology will arrive soon.

The situation in the conventional chemicals sector is relevant and revealing. According to an OECD study cited in the UNEP Foresight Report, very few of the 1,500 most commonly used chemical substances in industrialized countries have been adequately assessed for their health risks; 10% have not been examined at all; and virtually none have been examined for their environmental effects.<sup>321</sup> Yet, global chemical markets, including agrochemicals/pesticides, are growing and becoming increasingly concentrated.<sup>322</sup> The ten biggest agrochemical companies control more than 90% of the global market, for example. A disturbing trend cited in the "OECD Environmental Outlook to 2030" is the shift of chemicals production from traditional hubs in industrialized countries to emerging economies in developing countries, where regulatory regimes are even less stringent and oversight capacity is much lower<sup>323</sup>

These developments and trends have understandably contributed to a widespread view that risks and unintended side effects multiply in parallel to scientific-technical progress and as a result of that progress.<sup>324</sup> As the recent history of global controversies over technologies involved in nuclear power, GMOs and industrial food production shows, different experts can hold different, often contradictory views while claiming a grounding in 'sound science,' leaving the public confused, feeling powerless and distrustful of the experts relaying the information. As a result, science is no longer regarded as a producer of unambiguous knowledge.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> ETC Group, 2012b

<sup>318</sup> ISAAA, 2012.

<sup>319</sup> Wilson Center, PEN online inventory.

<sup>320</sup> UNEP, 2012. P. 40

<sup>321</sup> UNEP, 2012. p. 40

<sup>322</sup> ETC Group, 2011.

<sup>323</sup> OECD, 2008.

<sup>324</sup> Maasen and Merz, 2006. P.10

<sup>325</sup> Grunwald, 2002 in Maasen and Merz, 2006

### **The invisible dimension: gender and technology**

Gender concerns in technology are often overlooked. As one feminist scholar has observed, the “*technology question in feminism is generally neglected*”.<sup>326</sup> Gender being a ‘non-issue’ in technological discourses is largely due to the pervasiveness of the concept of ‘technology neutrality.’

As the minority in ‘hard technology’ fields such as engineering, women are generally regarded as recipients of technology rather than creators of technology, while, conversely, they are regarded as nurturers of nature and the environment.<sup>327</sup> As a result, women’s power with regards to technology is relegated to exercising ‘consumer choice’ over products that are made commercially available to them.<sup>328</sup> But as consumers, women are being exposed to the risks involved in food and consumer products of genetic engineering, nanotechnology and synthetic biology, often with no or little information being provided to them by technology owners/sellers. Indeed, it is often the case that the adverse consequences of these new technologies are not known, and by the time unexpected consequences become apparent, the technology is already well-entrenched (referred to as the ‘Collingridge Dilemma’), often with irreversible impacts. This quandary is evident in the case of GM crops and foods whose risks to human health and the environment came to global attention only after the products had been introduced into the human food and animal feed supply systems.<sup>329</sup> The same story is echoed in products of nanotechnology, which are prematurely designated as ‘clean’ even though credible institutions have barely begun to look into the safety of the technology.

The new manufacturing methods involved in technology platforms such as nanotechnology and synthetic biology will also impact women in other ways as well, including through commodity replacement or displacement, as described above; choice of employment and manufacturing locations; and impacts on global markets for natural resources ranging from copper to cotton and from natural fibers to vegetable oils, on which the livelihoods of millions of rural women depend. In particular, as synthetic biology aims to produce high-value compounds through new bio-fermentation methods and nanotechnology aims to alter substances to exhibit new properties, the impacts of these technologies on the exporters of natural commodities (mainly produced in developing countries) could be profound, while the products themselves could end up being hazardous. The risk of livelihood displacement is especially relevant for women in developing countries: on average, women make up 43% of the total agricultural labour force in developing countries (although only 20% of landholders are women).<sup>330</sup>

### **Muted right: women and technology**

As the principal international legal instrument on women’s rights, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) enshrines the right of women in rural areas to access appropriate technology (along with access to credit and loans, marketing facilities, and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform and in land resettlement schemes). However, CEDAW is silent on the right of women in urban and peri-urban areas to appropriate technology and completely fails to acknowledge gender concerns in technology. With its silence on the relationship between technology and women, CEDAW implicitly perpetuates the prevailing condition of women being passive recipients of new technologies with no active role in decision-making with respect to the technology development process.

Just like all other intergovernmental agreements and processes that involve years of negotiations and compromises, CEDAW has greatly underestimated the speed of technological change and the impact some key technologies may have on the global environment, climate change, and the South’s economy. Even more so in fact, given that this agreement was negotiated and adopted by states in the 1970s when the impacts and influence of technological innovations were not as dramatic as they are now. The massive influence of new technologies in shaping today’s world economy and socio-political relations merits a review of CEDAW and other international legal instruments on the protection of the rights of women, taking the gender dimension of new technologies into account.

### **Facing a blank wall: where’s gender in technology governance?**

There is a consensus view among global institutions and experts that there is little substantive effort to

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<sup>326</sup> Faulkner, 2000.

<sup>327</sup> McIlwee and Robinson, 1992 and Edwards, 1996 in Faulkner, 2000.

<sup>328</sup> Faulkner, 2000. P.15

<sup>329</sup> UCS, 2004

<sup>330</sup> UN, 2012; FAO, 2010



assess, let alone try and control the introduction of new technologies to minimize harmful effects.<sup>331</sup> Technology governance is virtually absent in today's real world where the products of high technology dominate many peoples' lives.

Conducting a literature search on the gender dimension of technology governance can be likened to searching for the proverbial needle in a haystack. Scholarly writing or documentation of actual experiences and reflections on this topic is virtually non-existent – beyond the sparse literature on the gender question in technology in general and the more recent focus on gender and governance in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector.

Women are at the forefront of dealing with the unintended and unpredictable consequences of new technologies, but are not yet empowered to assess their relevance, alternatives and potential impacts. Gender concerns cannot be dismissed and women's rights as active actors cannot remain muted if technology is to become a tool to attain sustainable development.

### **Making technology work for sustainable development**

Many civil society organizations, including women's organizations and health movements, have called for a ban on GMOs and a moratorium on nanotechnology until the socio-economic and health and environmental implications are understood. Despite these calls, this new Industrial Revolution is marching ahead almost entirely unmonitored and unregulated.

It would be unforgivable for any post-2015 agenda to ignore, remain silent on or underestimate the importance of addressing technology issues. A relevant and forward-looking post-2015 agenda must include the following key strategies to ensure that technology will contribute to the attainment of sustainable development.

Firstly, strategies must be developed to integrate grassroots participation and gender concerns in decision-making in technology development, including in the design of technologies as well as in the context of their use. However, the increased and active participation of local people and women in decision-making about new technologies will lead to sustainable development only if it is linked to a radical vision and agenda for the transformation of technology into "*a practice that is more democratic and respectful of diversity, and with products which are safer, friendlier and more useful*".<sup>332</sup>

Second, technology assessment must be made an integral component of technology governance; and gender perspectives on technology must be integral to any such technology assessment framework. Women must be key actors in technology assessment at different levels and stages of the technology development process. To this end democratic mechanisms for assessing new technologies must provide meaningful opportunities for recipients and users of the technology, including women, to participate in the design, decision-making and assessment of the potential impacts that these new technologies might have on health, economy, livelihood, culture and the environment. These processes must be put in place at the local, national and regional levels.

Third, at the intergovernmental level, the logical prerequisite to technology development and transfer is the creation, by the United Nations, of a technology evaluation and information mechanism that is based on the precautionary principle and supports national sovereignty and technology policy choices. As reaffirmed in the Rio+20 outcome document, governments must go beyond rhetoric and operationalize the commitment to strengthen "*international, regional and national capacities in research and technology assessment, especially in view of the rapid development and possible deployment of new technologies that may also have unintended negative impacts, in particular on biodiversity and health, or other unforeseen consequences*".<sup>333</sup>

The UNEP Foresight Report itself urges policy makers to "consider organizing a new international governance system which would produce, and potentially oversee, new international procedures to identify dangerous side effects of technologies and chemicals before they are produced" (UNEP, 2012). It suggests that such a governance system would be anticipatory, impartial, aware of the need to deal with the risks arising from interactions among multiple technologies developed for different purposes, and universal. It must also ensure that individual countries and their corporate interests do

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<sup>331</sup> UNEP, 2012; ETC Group, 2011; Unger, 2002

<sup>332</sup> Faulkner, 2000. p. 18

<sup>333</sup> UNCSD, 2012: para. 275

not make decisions that can have global impacts unilaterally.<sup>334</sup> The report urges policymakers to work together with the scientific, environmental and other stakeholder communities to determine what a new governance system should look like.

### **Technology Assessment at the core of Technology Governance**

Technology assessment (TA) is a concept that originated in the early 1970s reflecting attempts to analyze and evaluate the impacts of applications of scientific-technical knowledge in modern society.<sup>335</sup> TA aims to address concerns about the unpredictability of technology impacts, and to address the lack of public trust that results from controversies over technologies. TA is regarded as a response to the Collingridge Dilemma mentioned above, which posits that by the time unintended and/or undesirable consequences are discovered, the technology is already well-entrenched meaning that control is extremely difficult and change is expensive and time-consuming.<sup>336</sup>

In order to be effective, technology assessment needs to be anticipatory, comprehensive, inclusive and oriented towards decision-making. Recent experiences and methodologies developed in some countries in Europe demonstrate that TA is not limited to considering the potential consequences of an emerging technology but also includes its social and cultural context and determinants of its emergence, acceptance and application.<sup>337</sup>

Interest in TA increased in the 1970s and through the 1980s, with the creation of assessment institutions in the United States and across Europe, but the trend reversed in the 1990s and interest declined throughout the decade.<sup>338</sup> Ironically, in the years after the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the capacity of governments and the international community to undertake technology assessment and evaluation diminished. Immediately following the Earth Summit, the UN Center on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD), first established in 1979, was drastically cut back from its significant New York offices to a small secretariat housed within UNCTAD in Geneva. Simultaneously, the UN Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC), which monitored the major industries developing new technologies, was eliminated altogether. Some national technology assessment facilities – existing mainly in industrialized countries – were also diminished or eliminated. In the mid-1990s, for example, the US Congress's Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) was shut down. The collapse in the ability of governments to assess new technologies took place at exactly the point in time when it was most needed – as the world moved to liberalize trade and financial systems in pursuit of economic growth and, as indispensable to that strategy, unleashed the most rapid, and broadest, expansion of new technologies in history.<sup>339</sup>

Beginning in the new century, however, at least a dozen industrialized countries have moved to resuscitate or strengthen their technology assessment capacity. Within the European Union, for example, the Science and Technology Options Assessment (STOA) organ of the European Parliament, which was established in 1987, was updated, in 2004 and in 2009. Assessment mechanisms in at least nine European countries — including Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, and the Netherlands — have been strengthened and upgraded to respond to the rapid advance of technological innovations and growing concerns among their citizenry about the consequences of emerging technologies.<sup>340</sup> It should be noted, however, that over the same period, other government bodies directly and indirectly involved in assessing technology impacts experienced diminished capacity or were eliminated altogether. In 2010, for example, the UK abolished its Sustainable Development Commission as well as the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution [RCEP]. A 2008 investigation by the Union of Concerned Scientists also revealed that more than half of the 1,600 scientists at the US Environmental Protection Agency reported political interference in their work during the previous five years.<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> UNEP, 2012.

<sup>335</sup> Maarsen and Merz, 2006. p. 11

<sup>336</sup> Collingridge, 1980 in Nordman, 2010. p. 5

<sup>337</sup> Maarsen and Merz, 2006. p. 11

<sup>338</sup> Unger, 2002.

<sup>339</sup> EEA, 2011

<sup>340</sup> ETC Group, 2012.

<sup>341</sup> UCS, 2008. p. 2



Maasai women, Kenya. Photo: Yolanda Sikking

Opposition to technology evaluation can be expected from some industries and governments. Arguments against undertaking technology assessments historically revolve around protestations that the assessments are premature – or, alternatively, too late – are too costly, or are not worth the potential delay in commercial deployment or risk to competitive advantage.<sup>342</sup> However, there is reluctant recognition from many parties, and within the UN, that ‘business as usual’ is not working. In the absence of any technology assessment mechanism to deal with intergovernmental concerns and transboundary issues, the UN has had no structural alternative but to adopt three moratoria related to new technologies since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, namely, on GURTs (genetic use restriction technologies, or Terminator seeds) in 2000; on ocean fertilization in 2008; and a general moratorium on climate-related geoengineering in 2010, which was reaffirmed in 2012 – all under the aegis of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

#### **From the UN to States: Building technology assessment capacity**

Rio+20’s outcome document, “The Future We Want,” reaffirmed the commitment of the international community in 1992 to strengthen the capacity of countries to pursue national and regional technology assessment initiatives (as embodied in Chapters 34 and 35 of Agenda 21). Nevertheless, the UN

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<sup>342</sup> ETC Group, 2012.

system has no credible capacity to evaluate technologies or to advise governments. Furthermore, the use and application of technologies will vary from country to country because of the extraordinarily different health, environmental and socioeconomic conditions that might apply. Thus there is an urgent need for both a global and national-level monitoring and information-sharing capacity that includes the full participation of civil society – especially the indigenous and local communities that will be affected, with a particular effort to include the views of women.

There are several ways to operationalize this commitment to move toward a technology assessment and information mechanism, which has remained unimplemented since 1992. One is through the establishment of a Technology Assessment Service under the strengthened UNEP, which could establish a dedicated secretariat to service the needs of governments. Another is by reinvigorating UNCSTD with more staff, resources and an expanded mandate to monitor technologies and share information under the guidance of an intergovernmental committee. A reinvigorated UNCSTD should serve as the key UN body that provides up-to-date information and capacity to regional and national institutions in terms of conducting technology assessments, and it should be adequately supported to operationalize its mandate.

It is important to note that the multilateral system's technology assessment capacity does not need to reside within an environmental network or institution *per se*. A more strategic approach would be the creation of an International Convention for the Evaluation of New Technologies (ICENT) under the UN General Assembly, which would have the advantage of being able to address the socio-economic as well as the environmental aspects of new technologies. ICENT should aim to create a socio-political and scientific environment for the sound and timely evaluation of new technologies in a participatory and transparent process that supports societal understanding, encourages scientific discovery and facilitates equitable benefit-sharing.<sup>343</sup>

Institutional capacity to identify and monitor significant technologies must include an evaluation of their social, economic, cultural, health and environmental implications. UN monitoring and assessment of new technologies must be based on the Precautionary Principle and assessments must be completed before a new technology is released.

In order to minimize waste and risk, the monitoring process should accompany the development of the technology from science to shelf. Any technology assessment body established (or reinvigorated) at the UN must have 'teeth' to assert the integrity of the multilateral community and to counter unilateral or 'coalition of the willing' impositions of dangerous or untested technologies with global impacts. This should include the establishment of a legally-binding prohibition on all forms non-UN-sanctioned deployments that have the potential to cause harm to the planet, such as geo-engineering technologies.<sup>344</sup>

At the regional, national and local levels, governments, civil society, social movements and communities must be encouraged and supported to establish technology assessment platforms or mechanisms that will allow key sectors and potentially affected communities to directly participate in the evaluation of emerging technologies. Gender perspectives must be integrated in the framework and approach of any technology assessment model.

A first promising mark on the current blank wall of gender and technology assessment is the proposal for a critical feminist technology assessment that seeks to extend existing technology assessment procedures to give full voice to the range of interested groups in technological design and to begin assessments with a critical debate about which technologies are needed and whose needs will be met by them, rather than focusing only on technologies already in use.<sup>345</sup>

A recent report submitted by the UN Secretary-General to the UNGA, in response to the request made by member-states in the Rio+20 outcome document, recommended the establishment of an international network of technology assessment centres and/or national and global advisory groups on technology assessment and ethics as important elements of a global technology facilitation mechanism.<sup>346</sup> Any such technology assessment platforms must be democratic, participatory, inclusive, comprehensive and proactive. Women, as key users and consumers of products of most

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<sup>343</sup> ETC Group, March 2012b.

<sup>344</sup> ETC Group, 2012.

<sup>345</sup> Morgall, 1993, cited in Faulkner, 2000. p.17

<sup>346</sup> UNGA, 2012. p. 16

emerging technologies, must be actively involved in technology assessment processes, as well as indigenous and local communities, which are generally the least prepared to deal with the unforeseen consequences of technologies and are virtually never consulted in the technology development process.



Gender Forum held in Nairobi in the context of UNEP's General Council, February 2013.  
Photo: Isis Alvarez

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## 6. Appendix: Relevant Conventions and documents

### Annex: Relevant Conventions and Agreements

#### Charter of the United Nations, 1945

**Preamble:** We, the Peoples of the United Nations, determined . to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small

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#### The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

**Preamble:** Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom ..

**Article 2:** Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status ..

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#### International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966

**Article 2.1** Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

**Article 3** The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in the present Covenant.

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#### International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966

**Article 2.2** The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

**Article 3.** The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set forth in the present Covenant.

**Article 7.** The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work which ensure, in particular:

(a) Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with:

(i) Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work; .

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#### Convention On The Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women, 1979

*The States Parties to the present Convention,*

Noting that the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women,

Noting that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the principle of the inadmissibility of discrimination and proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, including distinction based on sex,

Noting that the States Parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights have the obligation to ensure the equal rights of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political

rights,

Considering the international conventions concluded under the auspices of the United Nations and the specialized agencies promoting equality of rights of men and women,

Noting also the resolutions, declarations and recommendations adopted by the United Nations and the specialized agencies promoting equality of rights of men and women,

Concerned, however, that despite these various instruments extensive discrimination against women continues to exist,

Recalling that discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity,

Concerned that in situations of poverty women have the least access to food, health, education, training and opportunities for employment and other needs,

Convinced that the establishment of the new international economic order based on equity and justice will contribute significantly towards the promotion of equality between men and women,

Emphasizing that the eradication of apartheid, all forms of racism, racial discrimination, colonialism, neo-colonialism, aggression, foreign occupation and domination and interference in the internal affairs of States is essential to the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women,

Affirming that the strengthening of international peace and security, the relaxation of international tension, mutual co-operation among all States irrespective of their social and economic systems, general and complete disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control, the affirmation of the principles of justice, equality and mutual benefit in relations among countries and the realization of the right of peoples under alien and colonial domination and foreign occupation to self-determination and independence, as well as respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, will promote social progress and development and as a consequence will contribute to the attainment of full equality between men and women,

Convinced that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields,

Bearing in mind the great contribution of women to the welfare of the family and to the development of society, so far not fully recognized, the social significance of maternity and the role of both parents in the family and in the upbringing of children, and aware that the role of women in procreation should not be a basis for discrimination but that the upbringing of children requires a sharing of responsibility between men and women and society as a whole,

Aware that a change in the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality between men and women,

Determined to implement the principles set forth in the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and, for that purpose, to adopt the measures required for the elimination of such discrimination in all its forms and manifestations,

Have agreed on the following:

## **PART I**

### ***Article 1***

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

### ***Article 2***

States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:



- a. To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;
- b. To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;
- c. To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;
- d. To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;
- e. To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;
- f. To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;
- g. To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

### **Article 3**

States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

### **Article 4**

1. Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

2. Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity shall not be considered discriminatory.

### **Article 5**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

- (a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;
- (b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

### **Article 6**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

## **PART II**

### **Article 7.**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

- a. To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;
- b. To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;
- c. To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

### **Article 8.**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level

and to participate in the work of international organizations.

**Article 9.**

1. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.

2. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

**PART III**

**Article 10**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

- a. The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;
- b. Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;
- c. The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;
- d. The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;
- e. The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;
- f. The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;
- g. The same Opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;
- h. Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

**Article 11**

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

- a. The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;
- b. The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;
- c. The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;
- d. The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;
- e. The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;
- f. The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

- a. To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;
- b. To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;
- c. To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;

- d. To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.

#### **Article 12**

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

#### **Article 13**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

- a. The right to family benefits;
- b. The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit;
- c. The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

#### **Article 14**

1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:

- a. To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;
- b. To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning;
- c. To benefit directly from social security programmes;
- d. To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;
- e. To organize self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self employment;
- f. To participate in all community activities;
- g. To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;
- h. To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

### **PART IV**

#### **Article 15**

1. States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.

2. States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.

3. States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.

4. States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

#### **Article 16**

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of

men and women:

- a. The same right to enter into marriage;
  - b. The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;
  - c. The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;
  - d. The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;
  - e. The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;
  - f. The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;
  - g. The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;
  - h. The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.
2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

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### **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007**

#### **Article 22**

1. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration.
2. States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination

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### **Other relevant agreements:**

**Agenda 21, 1992. Chapter 24 on Global Action For Women Towards Sustainable And Equitable Development** <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>

**International Conference on Population and Development - Programme of Action, 1994** (A/CONF.171/13/Rev.1 -- Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, 1994) [http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2004/icpd\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2004/icpd_eng.pdf)

**Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, The Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995** <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

**Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on the Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action 1996-2009, 1997/1. Women and the Environment.** <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/agreedconclusions/Agreed-Conclusions-English.pdf>

### **Millennium Development Goals**

Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality And Empower Women

Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health

Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio

Target 5.B: Achieve universal access to reproductive health

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

**Outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want". (A/RES/66/288). 2012**

<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/476/10/PDF/N1147610.pdf?OpenElement>

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