

# WOMEN IN ACTION



international

4/92 & 1/93



## Women and Sustainable Development



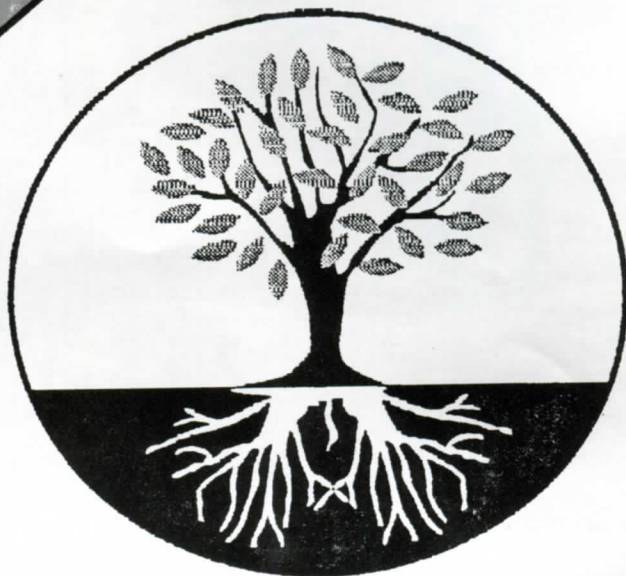
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## LETTER TO OUR READERS

**I**t seems as if everyone is talking about sustainable development these days, especially since the Earth Summit and Global Forum on Environment in June 1992 where the close connection between environment and sustainable development was emphasized.

*What is the meaning of sustainable development? How is the concept used by different people and groups? What are women's visions of sustainable development?*

One of the frequently used definitions of sustainable development is that presented in the 1987 report of the Brundtland Commission, *Our Common Future*: "Sustainable development is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs...Sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life." However, the Commission saw economic growth as the fundamental condition for sustainable development. It stated: "If large parts of the developing world are to avert economic, social and environmental catastrophes, it is essential that global economic growth be revitalized. In practical terms it means more rapid economic growth in both industrial and developing countries."

Women have been challenging this concept of development for years. What are women's visions of sustainable development? This issue of **Women in Action** brings together the analyses, perspectives and visions of women from different parts of the world. In the opening article Kamla Bhasin speaks about her vision of sustainable development which, like a tree, grows from below upwards. Other articles bring views of women and groups from both the South and the North -- sustainable development is an issue that links women around the world and one that women are tackling on a global level.

Are women's visions of sustainable development too idealistic, impractical, utopian? This issue looks at how women are putting sustainable development visions and strategies into practice. Kamla Bhasin, in her article, stresses the importance of all of us carrying out our small experiments in sustainable development. The important thing is not to do this in isolation but to network, so that these little drops will flow together into a stream and these streams into a bigger stream.

This issue of **Women in Action** is a contribution to the flowing together of women's many experiences of sustainable development around the world, and to the flowing together of our visions and strategies as well. We hope that this will promote further analysis and the continued development of strategies for sustainable development -- at the macro level as well as at the micro level and ultimately contribute to the empowerment of women.

We would like to thank Kamla Bhasin for the key role she played in the conceptualization and putting together of this issue. Sustainable development is an issue that will be with us for a long time to come. Please send us your feedback.

**Isis International Manila Collective**

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**Forward together, working together**

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Dear friends,

I remember with great pleasure my visit to Isis and meeting all of you. I was very impressed with the work being done and the wonderful working atmosphere.

I am enclosing a photocopy of the GROOTS newsletter. It will provide information for your data base on women's groups and news.

I look forward to visiting you all on my next trip and to strengthening the relationship between Isis and UUSC. It is through mechanisms like Isis that we find a positive direction for the future! Keep up the excellent work.

With warm regards to everyone there,

Shalini Nataraj  
Program Associate for Asia  
Unitarian Universal Service Committee  
130 Prospect Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139-1845  
USA

*☛ Thank you for the words of inspiration and encouragement. It is through women like you who support our work that make us move forward with determination. We look forward to continued networking with you.--Editors.*

**Indian sisters fight Norplant and  
enjoin all to organize and mobilize**

---

Dear friends,

We have been receiving your publications. We hope your work is progressing well and that you keep in constant touch with us as always.

Saheli has been actively involved in the campaign against the long-acting hormonal contraceptive Norplant and the work has been very hectic in the last few months. It is very encouraging that so many organizations have come together on this issue. We would like you to publish this pamphlet in your magazine and use other means if possible, to distribute it as widely as you can.

While fighting against the coercive policies of the population control establishment, it becomes imperative for us to inform women's groups all over about the work we are doing and our position, perspectives, etc. It is sincerely hoped that you will cooperate in our efforts.

With best wishes,

Ranjana Padhi,  
Saheli  
Women's Resource Center  
Unit above Shop 105 to 108  
Shopping Centre  
Defence Colony, Bridge (South Side)  
New Delhi-1100024  
India

*☛ The pamphlet is available at our Resource Center and we are sending it to women's networks through e-mail. Keep up the good work! -- Editors.*

### Getting the green message across with visuals in India

---

Dear madam,

The **Centre for Science and Environment** is a public interest research organization working in the area of environmental policy research. We have published a number of books like the **State of India's Environment, Citizen's Reports**, which have been widely received.

The Centre also has a large documentation cell which collects and classifies information in the field of environment. As part of this effort the Centre is currently working on the development of a video and film resource centre. The Centre gets requests from different voluntary agencies, schools and training institutes for resource materials. Given the demand the Centre's documentation unit is collecting films on various environmental and conservation issues. We have developed a system to respond to this need.

We have already collected around 140 video films of which around 60 have been included in a catalogue which is available to groups across the country. The films will be loaned to groups and individuals for non broadcast use.

We are writing to request you to send us a complimentary copy of your video cassette **Carrying a Heavy Load** which we saw mentioned in **Women in Action**.

We hope that you will be able to send us a copy of your film.

Looking forward to a favorable reply.

Yours cordially,

Ms. Nirupa Rangaiah  
Centre for Science and Environment  
F-6, Kailash Colony  
New Delhi - 110 048  
India

*We are interested in the issue of women and environment and would like to exchange materials with your group. The video, **Carrying a Heavy Load**, which we featured in **Women in Action 4/91** is available from the **Association of Development Agencies**, 14 South Avenue, Kingston 10, Jamaica. You can contact them directly for a copy of the film.-- Editors.*

## Tourism activists receive boost with new network

Dear friends at Isis,

Greetings from **ANTENNA**, the newly-formed **Asian Tourism Action Network**. We are writing to seek your support for and collaboration with the Network.

The Asia-Pacific region is today the fastest growth area for international mass tourism. As such, many of the issues emerging from tourism have been debated and confronted for nearly two decades by churches, academics, NGOs and others concerned with such issues within the region.

Given the increasing importance of tourism in the region, Asian activists have increasingly felt the need for a common platform from which to articulate their concerns, address the industry and decision-makers, and agree upon collective agendas for action. **ANTENNA**, the **Asian Tourism Action Network**, formally launched at a meeting of some Thai and Indian tourism activists in March 1992, now provides such a forum.

Among the initial tasks that we have outlined for ourselves are the following:

- ☆ to seek a broader range of membership from among tourism activists in Asia;
- ☆ to seek the support of concerned groups and individuals elsewhere, especially from the sending countries; and,
- ☆ to seek the involvement of people involved in tourism related issues, whether directly active in tourism or not, both within Asia and elsewhere.

Since tourism, as a global issue, has linkages with concerns such as those of the environment, human rights, neocolonialism, women, children, indigenous people, land rights and so on, we are keen to establish bilateral relationships with people working on such issues as well.

We would appreciate your assistance in publicizing **ANTENNA**. If you publish a newsletter, journal or other regular publication, please include a news item on **ANTENNA**, and let us know. If not, do refer **ANTENNA** to your friends and constituencies who you feel might be interested in our efforts. We would, of course, especially welcome information on groups and individuals in Asia who could join **ANTENNA** as members.

Thank you in anticipation of your support, and with all good wishes.

In solidarity,

Paul Gonsalves  
ANTENNA  
Asian Tourism Action Network  
15 Soi Soonvijai 8  
Petchburitadmai Road  
Bangkok 10310  
Thailand

*We have a wide network of women's groups who read **Women in Action**. We are sure that those interested in ANTENNA will get in touch directly with you. Good luck in your work! -- Editors.*

## Development activists in India

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Dear sisters,

**People's Action for People in Need (PAPN)** is a small group of developmental activists committed to the development of people in general and women and children in particular in the hilly and rural areas of Himachal Pradesh since June 1985.

Some of our present programs are - organization of village level women's groups to ensure their participation in developmental process, awareness generation projects for rural and poor women, development of girl children projects, non formal education for children of elementary age groups and environmental awareness camps and training of social animators at the grassroots level.

May we request you to please send us copies of the films entitled "**The Debt Crisis-An Un-Natural Disaster**" and "**Carrying a Heavy Load**" directed by Cynthia Wilmot. We intend to use these films as resource materials for training, staff development and awareness generating activities.

Thank you and we hope to hear from you soon.

All the best,

Kuldeep Verma  
Andheri-173 023  
Sirmour District H.P.  
India

*✉ Thank you for sharing with us the activities of your organization. We only have one copy of "The Debt Crisis" video in our Resource Center and do not carry the other title so we cannot send you copies. However, you may wish to inquire at the **Association of Development Agencies** - 14 South Ave., Kingston 10, Jamaica. Both videos are available there. --  
**Editors.***

## Communication strategies for reducing occupational segregation by sex

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Dear sisters,

The Training Policy and Program Development Branch is currently undertaking a review of experiences in using media and communication strategies and programs to broaden the training and employment options of women. This would include products or programs aimed at influencing employers, training institution directors, trainers and supervisors, vocational counsellors and placement officers, and women and their family members.

We would greatly appreciate your assistance in this endeavor. I would appreciate any information or examples of programs you may provide. If you have prepared materials, these would be of great interest to us. Just advise us of the cost, if any. We are particularly interested in information coming from the Asia-Pacific region.

One of the major factors limiting the entry of women to a narrow range of occupational areas is the persistence of stereotypes and biases regarding their capabilities, career-life motivations and their "appropriate" roles.

Research and programs in vocational, technical and management training clearly demonstrate that the opportunities of women in education, training and employment are influenced to a great extent by others: training institution directors, supervisors, trainers, vocational counsellors, placement officers, employers, and parents. These *gate-keepers* may effectively discourage or even prevent the entry of women to the full range of occupational areas and levels open to men.



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**Center focuses on development issues**


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Dear Isis network,

We would appreciate very much receiving a copy of **Women in Action** for sharing with individuals and organizations interested in development issues in Egypt.

**Center for Development Services (CDS)** is a nonprofit organization offering development assistance in the fields of small enterprise development, community health, agriculture, management and organizational development, training, development communication and environment. The main aim of the center is to strengthen the development community's capacity to foster self-determined and self-sustaining change in Egypt and the region. This assistance focuses on training, project support materials, resources development, and seminar facilitation.

Our Learning Resources Library is developing a large collection of references and practice-related materials, both printed and audiovisual, which are available to interested persons, including staff and trainees in our professional development programs, local university staff and students and local development practitioners from a wide variety of agencies and fields of practice.

We look forward to networking with you.

Warm regards,

Emad Morris  
Resource Officer  
4 Ahmed Pasha Street  
6th Floor, Garden City  
Cairo, Egypt

*☛ We will send you a copy of **Women in Action**. We hope that you will find the material useful. We are interested in the development work that you do in the area of women. Please send us information that we can share with our readers in the coming issues. - **Editors**.*

While the conditions under which gender stereotypes and biases decline and women's entry into non-traditional occupations (including higher, managerial levels) are not fully understood, steps may be taken to bring about change. In particular, mass media and communication techniques have been used effectively to raise awareness and to reach, inform and influence a wider public so as to facilitate women's access to critical resources and promote their entry and participation in key development processes.

We are not aware of the extent to which media and communication techniques have been used specifically to change attitudes and to promote women's entry into training and employment in non-traditional occupations. Yet we do know the implications of occupational segregation by sex, the ways in which training contributes to it, and the urgent need to redress the situation if equality of opportunity objectives in employment are to be achieved.

We look forward to your assistance.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Goodale  
Training Policy and Program  
Development Branch  
Training Department  
4 route des Morillons CH-1211  
Geneve 22 Switzerland

*☛ We are interested in the research on gender stereotypes and their relationship to the different occupational areas. We will send you information on the topic. Please keep us updated on the project. -- **Editors**.*

# SOME THOUGHTS ON DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

By Kamla Bhasin

## INTRODUCTION

**I**n these pages, Kamla Bhasin, Isis International associate from India, shares with us her ideas and reflections about what the problems of mainstream development, about what sustainable development really ought to be, and about what we can do to promote sustainable development. These ideas have come from discussions with friends and from different readings. She shares them with us to stimulate more discussion and refinement. They have, as she says, to be concretized by different groups according to their own specific situations.



## SOME PROBLEMS OF MAINSTREAM DEVELOPMENT

☆ The main model of development followed by our countries has focused on production of goods. It has been obsessed with material aspects, with economics, at the cost of all other aspects of life. This is why Gross National Product (GNP) is the main criteria for judging a country's development, people's well being. And GNP is calculated by anything that is produced and sold in the market. Liquor productions,

weapons productions, pornography -- all these go into the calculation of GNP. Can the number of weapons a country produces be a measure of its well-being?

Profit is the main God in this model of development; profit based on so-called "free market" and "free trade" principles. But actually the market and trade is neither being free nor fair. The weak and small always lose out to the strong and big.

In spite of the obsession with production, large numbers of



Photo: Carmen Carrascal

people are still hungry, malnourished, and under-clothed. For example, in spite of continuous rise in production in India, 17% of people are severely malnourished, 40% moderately malnourished, and 40,000 children become blind every year because of Vitamin A deficiency. This shows how socially unjust the growth in GNP has been. The rich are squandering the limited resources of the world while the poor do not have enough to survive in this system.

The present system has

- ❖ exploited nature, and people
- ❖ increased disparities at all levels
- ❖ created hierarchies of all kinds, in nations, people, cultures.

In this development, higher values like ethics, morality, justice have been forgotten or relegated to the area of the personal or religious life. Public life is purely for the pursuit of profit and power.

☆ Modern science considers man to be supreme, over and above nature, not part of nature. Nature has been plundered, forests disappearing, land, water, air have been poisoned by too much use of pesticides, fertilizers. Rivers and seas have been poisoned by factory effluent, oil tankers and all source of poisonous gases. This killing of nature affects women much more, especially rural women. If forest disappear, she is the one who has to walk longer to get water, fodder and fuel. the men in her

family are forced to leave the villages to go to cities in search of jobs. She becomes the head of the household, the sole caretaker. This kind of development based on greed and injustice is unsustainable. The life support system of tribals, peasants are disappearing. People's resources like common lands, forests have been becoming profit hunting grounds for industry and loggers.

☆ This present form of development has also marginalized women, disempowered them. Women were at the center of things when households were the center of production, center of health care. Women had knowledge and skills in agriculture, animal husbandry, crafts, medicine. When all these activities were

commercialized and industrialized, women lost out. Their knowledge was declared traditional, therefore unscientific and redundant. Because they lost control over production they also lost control over decision-making and power. The introduction of cash crops instead of food crops often meant that women did the work but men took the cash. Food crops fed families but crops which produce cash do not necessarily feed families. Cash can be and is often squandered by men on non-essentials. The present model of development has strengthened patriarchal ideology and system. Women continue to lose in this system.

☆ Development today has led to centralization of resources, and decision-making power. Originally more people controlled local resources, but slowly you find fewer and fewer people controlling more and more resources. Decision-making power is more and more centralized. Instead of decisions being made at the village level they are being made at the district level or country level or by international organizations or multinational corporations in some other country. Big companies come and exploit forests, mines, seas. The local people have no say. They become the victims of massive destructions. Their share in the profit is either nil or marginal. They lose control over their own resources. They become less and less autonomous. What happens to poor people



Source: Wide Bulletin 1992:2

also happens to poor countries; they also lose their independence and autonomy - economically, politically. In this top down system, money, resources and power flow from the weaker to the stronger, from the poor to the rich. Within the family women lose control, rural areas are exploited by the urban centers and poor countries subsidized the affluence of the rich nations.

☆ If you want to control people in their resources from the center you need ways to control and coerce; therefore militarization becomes essential. Huge amounts of resources are spent to develop systems to control people. We have seen the growth of armies, police, weapons all around us. Billions of dollars are spent even by poor countries on armies, police and arsenals. The problem is not just with the money and resources which are wasted but with the thinking that you have to control people with co-

ercive State power, and the bigger and richer the State, the more the power.

While 60 percent of the world's population lives in poverty, two million dollars are spent on weapons every minute. Militarization as principle of violence or control is closely connected to patriarchy and male violence. It is linked to the violence in the family. What is worse and more dangerous is that peoples' minds have been brutalized and dehumanized, they have been so shaped that they can throw bombs on cities, kill innocent people, or sit and watch violent sex without being incensed. Such consciousness is extremely dangerous because it enters our homes and personal lives. Again women are the worst victims of militarized and violent minds.

☆ This development brings about homogenization, which means moving towards one or fewer varieties, reducing diversity. Instead of different kinds of crops you have one kind, instead of different cultures, one culture. Diversity is being reduced in all areas. In agriculture multi-cropping (different kinds of crops growing together) was given up for mono-cropping because then it is easier to manage big plots, it is more efficient for profits. Instead of having thousands of varieties of rice and wheat we now have just a few varieties, those too increasingly controlled by a few companies. The

same is true in industry . For the market it is better to have standardization -- one kind. Instead of thousands of people making small things in every village, big companies take it over. The move is from small and many to big and few. Few people control and large numbers of people become mere employees. They sell their labour or brain. Their relationship to work changes. There is less and less creativity. Work becomes mindless. People lose their autonomy. There is increasing alienation, frustration. Human beings themselves become like machines.

The same thing is happening to culture everywhere -- the brahmin culture taking over the tribal culture. The culture of powerful countries, of dominant classes and castes spreads to all the others. It is seldom the other way around. Black people's jazz or Indian yoga may become popular elsewhere but these are exceptions.

Homogenization not only wipes away diversity but it is also states that third world, tribal or women's culture, industry, agriculture, medicine, science, is not efficient, not scientific, not good. The culture of the powerful is superior. Not superior, but declared superior because there is economic and political power behind them. In this it is always the minorities, indigenous people, the tribals, the women, and the third world countries who lose out. The rich and powerful are the winners, the supermen of economics, politics and culture.

☆ It is quite obvious that this profit and greed-oriented system is socially, economically, politically and culturally unjust.

This kind of mainstream development is not sustainable. The US and other industrialized countries cannot be the model for the so-called developing countries. There are no resources on planet earth for all the developing countries to have the standards of consumption which the industrialized world has and which has been showing as a dream to the others. If all the citizens of this earth consumed as much as average US or European citizens consume, life on would this planet come to halt. Visionaries like Mahatma Gandhi knew this 50 years ago. He warned the whole world but world leaders were too dazzled

by technology to heed a man like Gandhi who said, "Mother Earth has enough for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed." Once a journalist asked Mahatma Gandhi whether he wanted India to have the same standard of living which Britain had. Gandhi replied "To have its standard of living, a tiny country like Britain had to exploit half the globe. How many globes will a large country like India need to exploit to have a similar standard of living?" The planet earth belongs to the whole of humanity. It cannot be allowed to be plundered by the greedy rich nations and rich people. Excessive and wasteful consumption by some deprives the majority of essentials and it also destroys ecology. The problem is so serious that all of us have to act soon, before it's too late.



Yoko Kihira

## WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

The question is: what kind of development would be sustainable? What would be the main characteristics of sustainable development?

Lots of people everywhere are searching for solutions. These are people who are concerned, who care and who are brave enough to ask serious questions, brave enough to challenge the big and powerful, the greedy and ruthless. Isn't it incredible that the so-called educated, scientific, modern, rich people are leading the world to disaster and it is the poor, the so-called uneducated people who are shouting "Stop this madness". A Latin American activist/thinker said recently "My people do not want development. They only want to live."

One wonders who is more "advanced", those who are totally divorced from nature and who are destroying the planet with their unsustainable life style or those who are still trying to live in harmony with nature? Who are global citizens? The jet set types zipping across the world or those who consume little and do not contribute to ecological disaster? Who should be the experts now, the scientist, economist and politicians who have brought the world to the brink of disaster or those women and men whose knowledge, wisdom, life styles were declared "backward"?

What do we have to do so that everyone can live? Some things are already quite clear. They will get clearer as we move forward on the path of sustainable development. Our concern is not just for the present generation should hand over a better, more just and sustainable world to the next generation.

★ Development has to be in harmony with nature. It cannot be over-exploited. Nature sustains us so we have to sustain nature. We have to examine those cultures and religions which respect, worship or treat nature as a living system. We

have to look at and learn from people who are close to nature, like tribals, aborigines, and native Americans. We have to give nature as much as we take from it or more and treat her with respect. "If we look at our old traditional practices in all cultures we find that there were a lot of practices to make us live in harmony with nature. For instance most families I know do not pluck anything from the a tree or plant after dark; after dark we do not even pluck a leaf from a plant. God rested on the seventh day, therefore people must also rest. Originally people worked on



nature; work was cutting trees, taking trees from one place to another, hunting animals, building things; so rest on the seventh day is also giving nature rest. Similar notions lie behind many of our religious practices; on certain days we are vegetarian, we do not eat meat; these are ways to create harmony, to create space for the balance between nature and people to be rebuilt, which today we have completely wiped out. In the name of science, reason, in the name of being modern we do not respect anything that kept a delicate balance between nature and human beings. Reverence for life for all forms of life has to be created." (Vasantha Kannabiran)

★ Sustainable development has to be people-centered and people-oriented, not things-centered and things-oriented. People have to be the subjects and not objects of their development and in this model there are no hierarchies among people: Whites are not superior to Blacks. Brahmins are not superior to the uneducated. Every human being is respected and taken as an autonomous person and every human being is given respect. Development of human creativity, human potential, inner satisfaction, will be the prime moving principle. Well-being will not be measured by how many material things you possess but by how creative you are, how involved you are with what you are doing, how much dignity ordinary people have.

As Mahatma Gandhi said, our concern should be the "last man" (and woman), among the poorest in society there should be over-all well being.

★ Sustainable development has to be woman-centered. Historically and even today women take care of the basic needs of society like foods, fodder, fuel, shelter, nurturing. They are also more attuned to nature. As child-bearers they have had to be more in tune with their own nature. They have also been creating and nurturing. I am not saying men cannot do this. I am not saying women are biologically more caring and nurturing. It is because of women's socialization for centuries, and because of their preoccupation with sustenance, nurturing, and nursing.

Women, especially rural women, are the ones whose survival is most threatened by ecologically disastrous development. Women are the poorest, the most vulnerable. When forests, or lands or rivers, or wells die, these women mourn the most because they are the most affected. Because women know the pains of creation, they hate destruction most. This is why in struggles to save forests, struggles against pollution, in movements against militarization women are in the forefront. This is why women have to be at the center of sustainable development. Women are more likely to insist that basic needs be satisfied, that killings be stopped.

★ Sustainable development has to be basic needs-oriented. Sustenance for all rather than profits for a few. Majority of the people must first get sustenance, their basic needs must be satisfied before others make big profits and squander the limited resources of the earth.

Sustainability requires relinquishing levels of consumption of the rich. There is no way that the present level of consumption can continue without catastrophic outcomes. This is the most urgent action the industrialized world must take. However, lowering of consumption levels can be seen not as deprivation but as liberation: liberation from greed, want, competition, envy, perpetual, endless, mindless, and crippling desires.

★ Decentralization is another principle of sustainable development. We have to move towards decentralization in decision-making and in control over resources. Rich countries cannot plan and decide the fate of every region and community. Plans will have to come from people. More and more decentralization should take place in politics, in agriculture, in economics, and in industry. This decentralization will move away from homogeneity, it will allow diversity to flourish. Local people will live according to their own cultures and traditions.

★ Another principle which follows from decentralization is that, instead of representa-



Photo: Cynthia Cockburn

tive democracy (in which once in five years we vote the resourceful people into power), we must advocate grassroots democracy which is direct. Participatory democracy at every level of society will unleash the energies of people. We have to start demanding direct participatory democracy as against representative democracy which is actually still rule from above and not rule by the people. Poor people have no possibility of running our democracies. There is a need for democracies through smaller units, through decentralization.

★ Politics of peace, non-violence or respect for life is another principle we have to promote. There has to be politics of peace; and non-violence at every level: non-violence against nature, against other people, other races, other

classes, the other sex. This is an essential principle of sustainable development. Not only do armies and billion dollar weapons industries have to be dismantled but people's minds have to be demilitarized. Seeds of peace and non-violence have to be sown in all minds.

Sustainable development has to be like a tree. It has to grow from below upwards like a tree grows - in harmony with nature. At the moment development is coming from above. Things which are unsuitable are brought to people. If you consider development to be like a tree, what does it mean? It means, you can only select those things which are good for the local soil. You can only introduce those ideas which the local people want, understand, and can take care of; which can be sustained locally because

they are suitable to the local climate, people, their needs. Only those things which are suitable, which people believe in, and which can be sustained, can grow like a tree. If you bring a tree to this part from the Himalayas it will not grow. But we have brought ideas from all over the world and are trying to implant them here, impose them upon people leading, ultimately, to disaster. If we use the principle that development has to be like a tree, then we have to first understand the needs of the people, their resources, culture, management, capabilities, local conditions and only then can a new idea be brought.

For sustainable development, we need a different kind of political, economic, social and cultural system and a new value system.



**WHAT CAN WE DO?**

You may now ask - what can you and I, individuals, insignificant groups, do in our areas to make sustainable development a possibility? Let me tell you that if the present system is to change, it is small people like you and me who will have to change it. This may sound strange but it is true. This new kind of development can only be ushered in by millions of small people who do not have a stake in the present system can also join the struggle if we are willing to give up the advantages we derive from the system.

Unless small people, small groups do experiments in their small ways all over the world, sustainable development is not possible. So hope lies in small experiments like your own. All of us can try and do the following.

★ Let us begin with ourselves; let us women fill joy in our life and work. We have to look after our bodies and minds to feel strong and beautiful. We have to be SHAKTI (strength) and have to radiate this SHAKTI. Wherever we are we should support other women; give them strength; tell them they are important, their knowledge is important, they are the creators and nurturers. We begin with ourselves, our family, our daughters and mothers and then within our organization, in the communities where we work.

★ Wherever we are, whatever we are doing we should empower people; tell people they are subjects of their own development; treat them with respect, recognize their dignity, their wisdom, their time-tested knowledge systems, their staying power.

★ Support people's organizations because empowerment of the poor is not possible as individuals. Small groups have to become the training ground for grassroots level, participatory democracies. They can make people feel less vulnerable. Build people's self-confidence, self respect, management capabilities, creativity, inner strength, and inner beauty.

★ We have to practice democracy everywhere, in our family, our organizations. We have to tell our male colleagues or if we are the boss tell ourselves to be more democratic so that more and more people learn to practice, to respect, to love democracy; so that grassroots democracy takes root in our families, in our NGOs and in the communities we are working with. It is this practice which will create groups and people which are strong and autonomous and who will



Source: Sustainable Agriculture Newsletter



Source: The Tribune No. 47 Sept. 1991

allow no one to attack and rob their dignity, their economies.

★ In whatever we do we should try to move towards self-reliance, not just financial self-reliance but self-reliance in skills, knowledge, information; so that dependence on others, on the outside is reduced. Autonomous, self-reliant groups can safeguard their own interests. We have to move forward what Gandhiji called SWARAJ or self-rule at every level. The principle of SWARAJ is, if I want to rule myself I will not allow others to rule me; it also means that I cannot rule another person. So SWARAJ at an individual level--within the family, at the panchayat level, national level.

★ Moves towards self-reliance will require that we do experiments to develop things which are in harmony with nature, experiments in agriculture, experiments in health. Similarly we have to develop legal system, or media., which build on people's knowledge and traditions, which do not lead to unnecessary specialization, and fragmentation; which avoid knowledge going into the hands of few people, whether it is an agriculture or

industry, law or medicine or media. Many groups are reviving organic culture, herbal medicine, popularizing Ayurveda (a traditional Indian Health system), homeopathy, naturopathy, yoga. I am not saying we go back to what existed, because there were faults in our tradition also. For example, in our traditional caste panchayats women had no role. The new systems we evolve have to avoid these flaws, they have to rid the traditional system of caste, class, and gender bias. Similarly we have to develop traditional agriculture using whatever new knowledge we have. We are suggesting a creative mix of traditional and modern practices which ensures respect for nature, justice, equity.

★ All this big work done by small people like us requires wonderful networking. If all these small experiments are isolated and fragmented they will not mean much. Little drops of what mean nothing. It is only when they come together that they become a stream, when several small streams come together they become a big stream. So we need networking at different levels. At the village level you can see

networks between different families. Similarly you need NGO networks at the national and international levels. We need networking between different disciplines--economists, political scientists, lawyers, doctors, dancers, singers, poets. All these people need to come together to create a new world.

★ Wherever we are let us talk about and insist on values like justice, ethics, morality, beauty, love. Because people lost sight of these values, development lost its human face. We have to bring back these values into our private and public lives. Other values are reverence for all life, simple living in harmony with nature, respect for diversity. Wherever we find there is no justice, morality, ethics, we have to speak up, not keep quiet.

Large number of small groups are already doing what I have suggested here. Let us put in our bit to create a better world.

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# CONSUMPTION PATTERNS OF THE NORTH - THE CAUSE OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION AND POVERTY IN THE SOUTH

By Maria Mies

**T**he biggest problems the world is facing today, ecological destruction, hunger and poverty in the "Third World" and the danger of war, are an outcome of the prevailing development model of unlimited growth of goods and services, of money revenue, of technological progress and of a concept of well-being, identified as an abundance of industrially produced commodities. The **Limits of Growth** and the **Global 2000 Report to the President** show that this

model, which prevails in the affluent countries of the North, cannot be generalized to the rest of the world. And yet, UN commissions like the Brandt Commission and the Brundtland Commission describe the problems more or less adequately, but do not analyze them as a direct outcome of the growth model called industrialism or market economy, nor is there an effort to change this paradigm. An effort is made, instead, to remedy the disasters produced by this model by the means of this model.

When the Brundtland Commission introduced the concept "sustainable development" many people thought, that now, at last, the growth mania of the industrial system, its basic philosophy, would be openly criticized and abandoned. But when one reads the

report "Our Common Future" more closely, it becomes evident that the authors do not dare to take such a bold step. They do not propose a new economic philosophy as the framework for a concept of economic, social and ecological sustainability. The Brundtland Commission defines "sustainable development" as "development





Photo: F. Botts

that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations”, but as a solution to the global problems, the Commission proposes more global economic growth:

*“If large parts of the developing world are to avert economic, social and environmental catastrophes, it is essential that global economic growth be revitalized... this means more rapid economic growth in both industrial and developing countries, free market access for the products of developing countries, lower interest rates, greater technology transfer and significantly larger capital flows, both concessional and commercial.”*

This insistence on further, more rapid, global economic growth, both in the industrial and the poor countries, is evidence that the authors are not ready to see the connection between growth on one side and improv-

erishment on the other, between progress and regression, between development and de-development or underdevelopment. They are still wedded to the linear, evolutionist philosophy of unlimited resources, unlimited progress, and unlimited earth and to an economic paradigm of “catching up development.” This means the rich industrial nations of the North (North America, Europe, Japan) remain the image of the future for the poor countries of the South. “Global economic growth” is seen as the engine that will bring them up to the same standard of living, the same consumption patterns which prevail in the North.

**The First Global Revolution**, published by the Club of Rome in 1991, is even more explicit in describing the global ills of our planet and time: that the affluent societies of the industrialized North are consuming the bulk of the world’s resources, particularly

energy. Whereas before the Industrial Revolution the per capita consumption was more or less the same in the North and the South, the per capita consumption of energy and resources in the North is now 40 times that of the South. These societies produce about 80 per cent of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and an increasing amount of waste, including toxic waste. The Club of Rome points out that the concept of “sustainable development,” so optimistically proposed by the Brundtland Commission, is incompatible with the rate of growth in the industrialized countries, suggested by the Commission. In other words, the stimulation of permanent economic growth cannot be reconciled with a concern for conservation of scarce resources and a sustainable ecology and society. The present level of consumption, prevailing in the affluent countries of the North, cannot be generalized. The authors ask: Is the present level of material wealth in the rich industrialized countries compatible with sustainable global development? They admit that, sooner or later, governments will have to address the question of consumption. “We believe that consumption cannot survive in the present form, not only with respect to objective reasons, but even more so with respect to human values”.

But does this all amount to a radical critique of the basic philosophy of the market economy and its dogma of growth? One paragraph further we read:

"Here it should be emphasized that we are not in favour of zero-growth. According to our conviction it is indispensable to promote economic growth in the South, while the industrialized North, on the road to the postindustrial society rather needs qualitative growth."

This means, growth, permanent economic growth must be growth of quantitative material commodities in the South and of qualitative non-material commodities in the North. As the northern markets for durable consumer goods are largely saturated, new markets have to be created for non-material goods. Does this not amount to the same philosophy of "catching up development?"

### THE LIMITS OF GROWTH AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF CATCHING-UP DEVELOPMENT

The resource base within our limited globe is limited and the

economic philosophy of unlimited growth of goods and services, and hence money revenue, will necessarily reach the ecological limits of this planet. And yet, practically all conceptions and strategies of development, both national and international ones, are explicitly or implicitly based on the assumption that the poor nations will eventually reach the standard of living of the USA or Europe.

However, if we keep in mind that the 6 percent of the world's population who live in the USA annually use up 30 percent of the fossil energy produced, then it should be clear, that the rest of the world's population, of which about 75-80 percent live in the poor countries of the South, cannot also consume as much energy per person. (*Global 2000*). The people living in the rich industrialized countries - USA, Europe and Japan - who make up only one quarter of the world's population, consume three quarters of the world's energy production. The

world's population could be estimated at eleven billion by the year 2050. If these eleven billion people had a per capita energy consumption typical of Americans in the mid-seventies, conventional oil resources would be exhausted with four years. All energy resources would last only 34-74 years. (T. F. Trainer, *Development to Death: Rethinking Third World Development*, 1989).

Even if the world's resource base was not limited, it would take about 500 years for the poor countries to reach the standard of living prevailing in the rich countries of the North. And this would only be possible if the rich countries did not continue with this growth model. To catch up with this model of development is practically impossible for the poor countries of the South. It is not only impossible because of the limits of the resource base and the uneven distribution of their consumption. It is above all impossible because the growth model in the rich industrialized countries is based on a colonial world order in which the gap between the two poles is getting wider and wider, at least as far as economic development is concerned. The world is polarizing. The living standards in the rich countries of the North would not be so high if the colonized South had not been exploited and if this exploitation were not continuing. If all labor incorporated in the commodities sold in the rich countries was paid at the rates of a skilled male worker of Germany then most of these

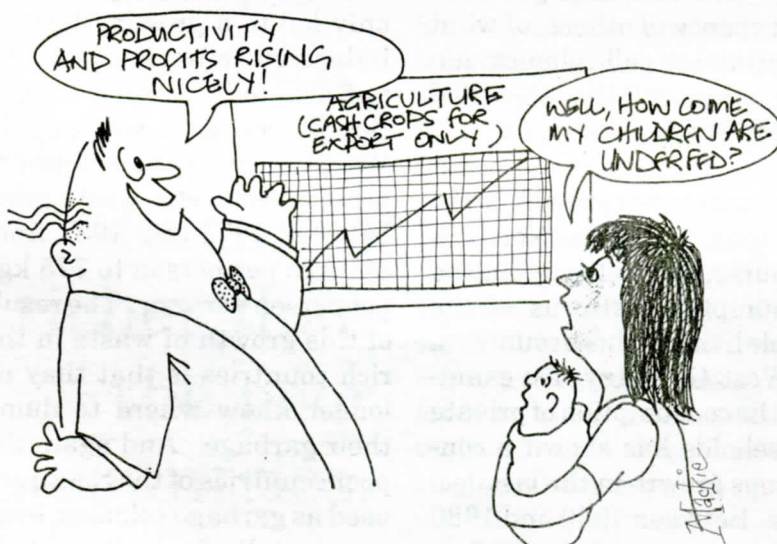




Photo: ILO

commodities would be so expensive that only a small minority could buy them. So-called development is not an evolutionary process from a lower to a higher stage but a polarizing process in which some are getting richer and richer because they make other poorer and poorer. Two hundred years ago the Western world was only five times as rich as the poor countries of today. In 1960 this relationship was already 20:1, and in 1983 it was 46:1, the rich countries being 46 times richer than the poor countries. The wealth in the rich countries grows ever

faster, and within a limited world this means it grows at the expense of others, of what I continue to call colonies: nature, women, the so-called Third World.

This continuous growth in the rich countries of the North is, of course, also reflected in the consumption patterns of the people living in these countries. In West Germany, for example, the consumption of private households has shown a continuous growth in the last decades. Between 1950 and 1980 private consumption grew five-fold. This continuous growth

of private consumption was accompanied by a change in the consumption patterns. Whereas around 1950 almost half of the expenses were spent on food, this proportion was only 23 percent in 1987. A much greater part of the income of private households could now be spent on leisure time activities and luxury items. There are, of course, also differences in this consumption patterns between lower and higher income groups, but compared to the poor countries in the world even these were relatively better off. Even the low income households spent 10.2 percent of their expenditure on leisure-time goods and activities. (Gisela Dorr and Karin Prinz, **Entwicklungstendenzen des Konsums privater Haushalte**, 1990).

The industrial growth model also produces ever increasing amounts of wastes of toxic garbage, destroys the ozone-layer and produces the hot-house effect. The continuous growth in the rich countries has not only led to a growing heap of industrial - often toxic - waste, but also to increasing quantities of domestic wastes. In West Germany the amount of private, domestic waste grew between 1971 and 1982 from 350 kgs per person to 775 kgs per person per year. The result of this growth of waste in the rich countries is that they no longer know where to dump their garbage. And again the poor countries of the South are used as garbage colonies, even or especially for toxic waste.

Two hundred years ago the Western world was only five times as rich as the poor countries of today... in 1983 it was 46:1, the rich countries being 46 times richer than the poor countries.

These examples and figures show that "catching up development" is not possible for the poor countries and that a conception like sustainable development for all is not compatible with a growth-oriented industrial world market system. This system is simply not sustainable. And it is not generalizable. Someone said that we would need two more planets if we want to try to generalize the living standard and consumption patterns of the rich countries to all people living in the world: one planet to get the necessary raw materials and the other planet to dump out waste.

The continuation of the industrial growth model will not only lead to further ecological destruction but also to more inequality, to more poverty. And this will affect women and children first.

If we aim for sustainability, we must transcend the industrial, world market and profit-oriented growth model. This transcendence is, as Vandana Shiva has convincingly shown in her book *Staying Alive*, for the poor, for women and children in the poor countries and regions a matter of survival. They fight explicitly against "development" and modernization because they know that this development will destroy their survival base, their access to the commons: land, water, air, forests, their communities, their culture. They are the ones who have to pay the price for urban and male development.

### "CATCHING-UP DEVELOPMENT" IS NOT DESIRABLE

Yet, if one tries to forget all considerations of equity and all ecological concerns one may ask whether this model of good life, pursued by the societies in the North, this paradigm of "catching-up-development" has at least made people in the North happy. Has it in fact fulfilled its promises there? Has it at least made women and children there more equal, more free, more happy? Has their quality of life improved while the GDP grew?

We read daily about an increase of homelessness, of poverty, particularly of women and children, or rising criminality in the big cities, of growing drug addiction and other addictions, including the addiction to shopping. Depression and suicides are on the increase in many of the affluent societies. Direct violence against women and children seems to be growing, both violence in public as well as domestic violence and sexual abuse. The media are full of all forms of violence. Apart from this, the urban centers are suffocating from car exhausts. There is hardly any free space left for people to walk and breathe, the cities and highways are packed with cars. Whenever they can, people try to run away from these urban centers and seek relief in the countryside or in the poor South. If the quality of life is so good, then why do people not stay in the

cities during their vacations? It has been found that the quality of life in the USA is today lower than what it was ten years ago. There seems to be an inverse relationship between the GDP and the quality of life: the more the GDP grows, the more the quality of life deteriorates. One example: growing market forces have led to the fact that food, which used to be prepared at home, is now increasingly bought in fast-food restaurants. Preparation of food has become a service, a commodity. If more and more people buy this commodity, the GDP grows. What also grows at the same time is the erosion of community, the isolation and loneliness of individuals, the indifference and atomization of the society.

With the growing number of ecological catastrophes, some man-made like the Gulf War or Chernobyl, material life deteriorates in the rich centers of the worlds.. The affluent society is a society, which in the midst of plenty of commodities, lacks the fundamental necessities of life: clean air, unpoisoned water, healthy food, space, time, quiet. This scarcity of basic common necessities for survival not only affects those who are poor but also the rich, although the poor are affected more.

The prevailing world market system, oriented towards unending growth and profit, cannot be maintained unless it can exploit external and internal colonies: nature, women

and other countries. But it also needs people as buyers who never say: IT IS ENOUGH. The consumer model of the rich countries cannot be generalized to the rest of the world, but it is not even desirable for the minority of the world's population who live in the affluent societies. Moreover, it will lead increasingly to wars about the ever scarcer resources. The Gulf War was also a war about the control of oil resources in that region. If we want to avoid such wars in future the only alternative is a deliberate and drastic change of lifestyle, a change of consumption quantities and consumer patterns in the affluent societies of the North, a deliberate and broad movement towards energy conservation.



Photo: I. Velez



Even if the world's resource base was not limited, it would take about 500 years for the poor countries to reach the standard of living prevailing in the rich countries of the North.

### VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY AND CONSUMER LIBERATION

The transcendence of the capitalist, patriarchal growth-economy model should start in the rich industrial countries. It is not acceptable to have two different sets of goals for the rich and the poor countries, or, for that matter, for men and women. As the path of "catching up development" is neither possible for all, nor desirable, the only solution to this dilemma is a voluntary reduction of the living standard and a change of consumer patterns in the rich countries and classes. If sustainability is a good thing for people living in the poor countries then it must also be a good thing for people living in the rich countries. A double standard is ethically not acceptable. We cannot preach to the people in Brazil not to destroy their rainforest while we in the rich countries continue to destroy the world's climate by an ever growing car industry and private transport system.

Many people have understood the necessity of this change of lifestyle. But usually they leave the responsibility for change to the politicians, to the governments. In democratic societies, however, the politicians are not better or wiser than their constituency. They will not introduce unpopular measures unless people are prepared to go along with them. Therefore the first policy recommendation of such a consumer lib-

eration movement is that it has to start from below, from the consumers themselves. Only when considerable numbers of people are prepared to change their lifestyles and to adopt different values than those of competitive consumption will the politicians and the entrepreneurs follow them.

Such a change of consumption patterns and of lifestyles will only occur in the rich countries and classes when people begin to realize that less is more, when they begin to define what constitutes a good life differently from what the managers of the corporations think. This new definition of "good life" will emphasize different values which in our consumer societies are underdeveloped or even destroyed like: self-sufficiency, cooperation with other people and nature instead of competitiveness, respect for all creatures on earth and their diversity, belief in the subjectivity not only of human beings but also of non-human beings, communality instead of "catching up with the Joneses" (particularly responsible for most of superfluous consumption in our societies) satisfaction and joy in one's work, happiness instead of standard of living, joy of life that springs from cooperation with others and an understanding of the meaningfulness of what one does. All these values can be brought to life if consumer liberation is correctly understood as a liberation and not only as a loss or an ascetic exercise. The aim of consumer liberation is an improvement of the quality of life.

The need for such improvement is felt by many people in the affluent societies although they may not yet see a clear connection between consumerism and deterioration of the quality of life - or see the possibility to change this.

A different definition of the "good life" and an improvement of the quality of life implies different forms of satisfaction of fundamental human needs. Max-Neef and his colleagues, who developed this concept of fundamental human needs in the workshop on Human Scale Development for Latin America, stresses that fundamental human needs are universal, but that their satisfiers, the means and ways by which these needs are satisfied, may vary according to culture, region, historical conditions. In capitalist industrial societies goods, commodities have become the determinant satisfiers. Max-Neef and his colleagues identified nine fundamental human needs: Subsistence (health, food shelter, clothing, etc.), Protection (care, solidarity, work, etc.), Affection (self-esteem, love, care, solidarity, etc.), Understanding (study, learning, analysis, etc.), Participation (responsibilities, sharing of rights and duties), Idleness (curiosity, imagination, games, relaxation, fun), Creation (intuition, imagination, work, curiosity, etc.), Identity (sense of belonging, differentiation, self-esteem), Freedom (autonomy, self-esteem, self-determination, equality).

As these fundamental human needs are universal, they are the same in rich and poor, "overdeveloped" and "underdeveloped" countries. In overdeveloped or industrial societies these needs are satisfied almost exclusively by satisfiers which have to be bought in the market, which are produced industrially, and which not only very often are pseudo-satisfiers, because they do not in the end satisfy the need - like cars which are bought for status purposes - or cosmetics, which are bought to satisfy the need for love, they are sometimes simply destructive. The arms race, e.g., is legitimized by the need for Protection, the need for Subsistence, the need for Freedom.

Consumer liberation and a change of lifestyle would mean that people begin to chose different satisfiers, which, as far as possible, are neither pseudo-satisfiers nor destructive ones, satisfiers which do not involve a further deterioration of the relationship between human beings and the ecology, which do not deteriorate further the existing patriarchal relationship between men and women, which do not put into jeopardy the living conditions of future generations, which do not enhance dependency, but promote self-reliance.

If we try to break out of the mental framework which industrial society has created and which it has exported to all poor countries we discover that there would be many different ways, many of them not de-

If sustainability and self-reliance are considered the correct path for countries of the South, then they must necessarily also be the correct path for the North.

pendent on the market, to satisfy those fundamental needs. Take the need for affection. Many women in the affluent societies try to satisfy their need for affection and recognition by going on a shopping spree. Many buy clothes to satisfy this need. They hope that by following the latest fashion they will win the affection of their partners, of their surroundings in general. The self-esteem of women in our societies is closely linked to their outward appearance. We also know that in spite of these efforts at compensatory consumption, this need for affection and self-esteem is never satisfied by buying new clothes. They are pseudo-satisfiers. The women compensate for a deep human need by buying a commodity. Within a consumer liberation movement one would have to find or invent new ways, particularly non-commoditized ways, to satisfy this need for affection. This could mean for children, for example, that one would spend more time with them or play with them instead of buying them ever more toys. Many of the non-commoditized satisfiers have the advantage of being synergetic. This means they satisfy not only one need but several at the time. If one takes time to play with children a number of needs are satisfied: the need for affection, for protection, for understanding, for idleness, freedom, identity. And this applies both to the children and to the grownups. If fundamental human needs are satisfied in non-commercial ways - I call

them subsistence ways - then these processes of satisfaction are often reciprocal ones. The one who gives something also receives something. A mother who breastfeeds her baby gives something and gets something. If such a change of lifestyle occurred in the rich countries on a big scale this would not only halt the destruction of the ecology and stop the exploitation of the "Third World," it would also change the model for imitative and compensatory consumption which middle class people in the North provide both for the lower classes in their own country and for people of the South. A practical critique of this model, coming from the affluent societies themselves is necessary if we want to break the fascination of "catching up development" and imitative consumption, because patterns of consumption of the North are imported into countries of the South and are imitated by political and economic power groups there. These consumption patterns then lead to more dependency, indebtedness, internal imbalances and a loss of cultural identity. Max-Neef and his colleagues stress the need to break away from these imitative consumption patterns in the "Third World" in order to free these countries from economic and cultural dependence and to make a more efficient use of their own resources for their own well-being. It is a necessary step for "Third World" countries towards self-reliance. In my view, however, a breaking away from the imposed consumption pat-

terns is also a necessary step towards a self-reliance of hitherto overdeveloped, affluent societies. Most of these depend, as we saw, to a very large extent on the exploitation of the "Third World" countries and their resources. If sustainability and self-reliance are considered the correct path for countries of the South, then they must necessarily also be the correct path for the North.

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*Excerpts from a paper presented at Challenges - Congress, Berlin, December, 1991*

# WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES: TOWARDS AN ETHICAL, EQUITABLE, JUST AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD IN THE 21ST CENTURY



Source: Graphically Speaking, 1979

By Peggy Antrobus and Judithe Bizot

**T**his paper is a compilation of women's ideas and actions. It is testimonial to what women are thinking and doing about the crisis in development and the environment. Its inspiration is drawn from the UNESCO courier "Women Speak Out on the Environment," March 1992, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) "Environment Development: Grass Roots Women's Perspective," and the Declaration by Women at the Global Forum, June 1992.

## THE STORY OF THE SACRED TREE

For all the people of the earth, the Creator has planted a Sacred Tree under which they may gather, and there find healing, power, wisdom and security. The roots of this tree spread deep into the body of Mother Earth. Its branches reach upward like hands praying to Father Sky. The fruits of this tree are the good things the Creator has given to the people: teachings that show the path to love, compassion, generosity, patience, wisdom, justice, courage, respect, humility and many other wonderful gifts.

The ancient ones taught us that the life of the Tree is the life of the people. If people wander far away from the protective shadow of the Tree, if they forget to seek the nourishment of its fruit, or if they should turn against the Tree and attempt to destroy it, great sorrow will fall upon the people. Many will become sick at heart. The people will lose their power. They will cease to dream dreams and see visions. They will quarrel among themselves over worthless trifles. They will become unable to tell the truth and to deal with

each other honestly. They will forget how to survive in their own land. Their lives will become filled with anger and gloom. Little by little they will poison themselves and all they touch.

It was foretold that these things would come to pass, but that the Tree would never die. And as long as the Tree lives, the people live. It was also foretold that the day would come when the people would awaken, as if from a long, drugged sleep: that they would begin, timidly at first but then with great urgency, to search for the Sacred Tree.

The knowledge of its whereabouts, and of the fruits that adorn its branches have always been carefully preserved within the minds and hearts of our wise elders and leaders. These humble, loving and dedicated souls will guide anyone who is honestly and sincerely seeking along the path leading to the protecting shadow of the Sacred Tree."<sup>(1)</sup>



***"Our first environment  
is our bodies  
our children  
and our families,  
the earth  
that sustains us and  
our communities."<sup>(2)</sup>***

***"What do forests bear,  
soil, water  
and fresh air,  
soil, water  
and fresh air,  
the basis of our  
lives."<sup>(3)</sup>***

Margarita Arias, the former First Lady of Costa Rica at the opening of the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet said that no one speaks out for the protection of the environment with greater moral authority than women. "Only those who have fought for the right to protect their own bodies from abuse can truly understand the rape and plunder of our forest, rivers and soils." She also pointed out that a world that spends over US\$1 trillion annually on armaments (US\$800 billion in industrialized countries and US\$200 billion in developing countries), a world in which 14 million children die yearly, is unable to raise US\$2.5 billion to eradi-

cate infant malnutrition. This is less than the amount spent on armaments in a single day. Ever since Costa Rica abolished its army back in 1948 it has been able to divert its resources from military spending to housing, education, health and, more recently, to improving the environment.

Mrs. Arias is a good example of what women, at all levels, are saying and doing around the world to survive and to improve the quality of living in their communities and in the world.

The above quotes are an example of how womens' perspectives are different. Whether

you look at them from the North or the South, women are listening to their inner wisdom created from centuries of experiences and observation, and they seek new involvement at all levels of society. They pooled their collective experiences and hopes and demands from the South and North into the recommendations of Agenda 21 presented and adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio, June 1992. Over 2,000 women (environmentalists, peasants, researchers, sociologists, writers, scientists, economists...) committed themselves to change, to a conviction that 500 years after Columbus and 40 years of post-colonial development, a new world order based on other

attitudes, values and behavior has to emerge.

The difference between women's and men's perspectives lies in the different gender roles. Gender is a social construct which assigns certain attributes, behaviors and attitudes to males and females. However, most societies are constructed in such a way that attributes, behaviors and attitudes associated with the female are considered of less value, of less importance. From birth, socialization practices are constructed to enforce gender differences.

Gender is thus an essential factor in women's subordination to men, and the subsequent devaluing of the femi-

nine in relation to the masculine. To the extent that the feminine values of cooperation, caring, compassion are important to achieving an ethical, equitable, just and sustainable livelihood, understanding gender-power relations is critical to understanding how we might make the necessary changes.

Women have brought a different perspective to the environment debate, because of their different experience base. Poor women's lives are not compartmentalized and their work is not seasonal. They therefore see the problem from a much broader and more holistic perspective. They understand more clearly than policy makers that economics and the

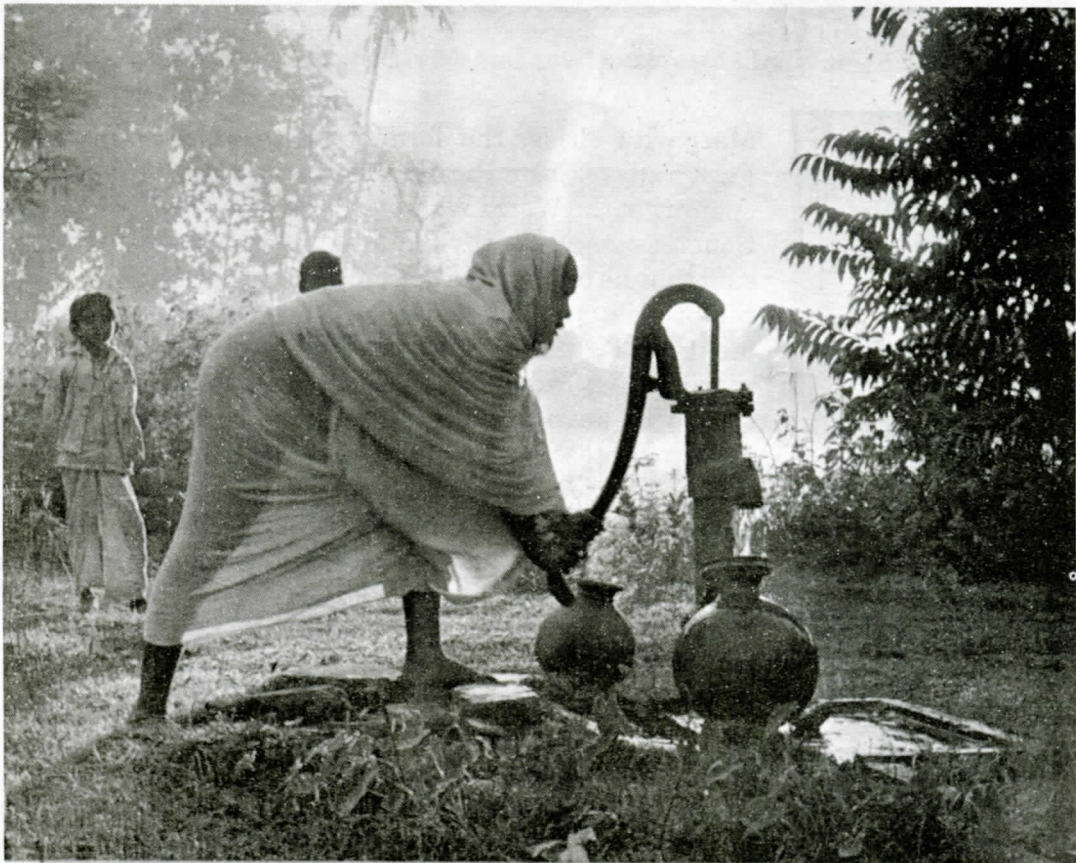


Photo: ILO

environment are compatible. Their experience makes this clear to them, because the soil, water and vegetation which the poor require for their basic livelihoods necessitates specific care and good management. Women from the South do not separate people from the natural resource base.

Because women and the poor have the biggest stake in the natural resource base and the best knowledge of specific local conditions, problems and needs, solutions cannot be left up to even the most enlightened state, business, institution or representatives of local government. These agencies and actors must be accountable to the community which includes the women. Because women's vantage point is different from that of men, and because women - as women - have been largely excluded from policy-making processes, their perspectives have to be specifically included and their involvement in decision-making institutionalized. Women's importance to environmental policymaking, planning and programming derives from the roles that they play in many sectors central to environmental planning and management, and the fact that they play an important role socializing the young and shaping societal values and attitudes to the environment. Their perspective is therefore crucial to planning, conceptualizing and implementation of effective environmental management programmes which can help to maintain the quality of life in the 21st century.

....a world that spends over \$1 trillion annually on armaments,.... a world in which 14 million children die yearly, is unable to raise \$2.5 billion to eradicate infant malnutrition.

An analysis from the perspective of grassroots women illuminates the linkages between the problems in development and those in environment, as no other analysis does. Starting with a focus on health and livelihoods of the poor, women's analysis takes us directly to a consideration of the macro-economic policies which affect health and livelihoods. This, in turn, leads to an understanding of the patterns of production (including the arms trade) and finance which also destroy the ecological system.

This analysis comes from a network of Third World feminists promoting Development Alternatives for a New Era (DAWN). On the eve of the conference marking the end of the UN Decade on Women (1975-1985), women researchers, activists and those engaged in policy formation and communication came together to

reflect on what they had learned from their experience of development during the Decade. The result was a feminist critique of the growth-oriented model of development, and an analysis of the inter-locking crises of food insecurity, environmental degradation, debt, deteriorating social services, militarism, and political conservatism.

From DAWN's perspective, growth-oriented development is fundamentally flawed for the following reasons:

- ✗ The exclusion of women's unpaid work from calculations of Gross National Product (GNP);
- ✗ Its failure to recognize the link between economic production and social reproduction;
- ✗ Its failure to acknowledge the existence of gender-based hierarchies in the household,

workplace, the community and society at large.

Internationally-influenced policies of structural adjustment, adopted by governments to deal with the debt crisis of the 1980s, are a good example of the kinds of policies and programs which emerge from this model of development. The cuts in social services, which are a prime consequence of these policies, emphasize economic production at the expense of the social sector (the separation of production from social reproduction), substitute women's unpaid work in the household for publicly-financed services in health and welfare and underline the powerlessness of women to secure benefits for those dependent on their care - children, the elderly and the sick. DAWN's vision is of "a world where inequality based on class, gender and race is absent from every country, and from the relationships among countries ...Where basic needs become basic rights and where poverty and all forms of violence are eliminated...".

In its analysis of environment and development, DAWN draws on local experiences of grassroots women living in the economic South. These experiences explode several widely believed and oft repeated myths of the environmental and development debate. Two which are most detrimental to the search for solutions are the following:

## THE MYTHS

*The Poor are Destroying the Environment.*

On the contrary:

- \* The poor have the biggest stake in protecting the natural resource base that provides the water, food, fodder and housing which are the basis of their livelihood.
- \* The state, using its legal power in collusion with big business contributes to damage to the environment which, both in terms of scale and quality of damage, has been unsurpassed.
- \* The data indicate that the interaction between people and their natural environments has been broken by forces external to the community. They include the globalization of capital and the incorporation of even the most remote areas into the global market. These factors combined with debt and structural adjustment policies have created major rifts within

communities and between people and their natural environments. Material poverty is increasing and, both globally and nationally, the gap between the materially wealthy and the material poor is increasing.

*Population is Responsible for Environmental Degradation.*

On the contrary:

- \* Areas of low population, falling population and decreasing fertility rates are examples of extreme and growing environmental degradation.
- \* As many case studies show, extremes of wealth and poverty leading to overconsumption by some and the erosion of livelihoods of others, skewed distribution and use of resources, and patterns of human settlement have a stronger demonstrable relationship to environmental degradation than population size per se.
- \* Research also indicates that fertility rates decline when

If all countries followed the industrial example, five or six planets would be necessary to serve as mines and waste dumps.





Photo: World Council of Churches

women have access to adequate reproductive health care and their livelihoods and basic rights are respected. This is extremely difficult to achieve in the current global and national context.

Anticipating the pervasiveness of the belief that population is responsible for environmental degradation, DAWN worked with the Social Science Research Council and the International Social Science Council to examine the scientific evidence of the relationships between population growth and the environment. Their conclusion is that the assertion of "population growth as a central variable in environmental degradation is not supported by research findings,"

and that "the focus on population growth as the key factor in degrading environment is thus misplaced."

DAWN's analysis of environment emphasizes:

- \* the need for greater community control in environmental management;
- \* the need for women to have access to education and health care (including reproductive health care);
- \* the need for sustainable development to be grounded in sustainable livelihoods defined to include sociocultural, spiritual and political elements along with material and ecological;

\* the need for a new international order based on justice and equity and respect for diversity of cultures, and for the identification of human development and sustainable livelihoods as primary objectives of development;

\* the need to alter affluent lifestyles and eliminate overconsumption.

"Some of the most serious environmental problems today facing the planet originate in the rich countries, and there is clearly a relationship between high levels of consumption caused by wealth and environmental degradation. It is also argued by some that profligate northern consumption in combination with the unequal



Photo: ILO

North-South political and economic power relations are underlying causes of poverty and environmental degradation in developing countries.<sup>(4)</sup>

In short DAWN reflects the growing awareness of women for an alternative development paradigm: one which focuses on social-cultural needs of people rather than on unlimited economic growth.

Within this paradigm, priority should be given to: health, education, housing over military spending; ecology and conservation over unlimited economic growth; local over global management; survival over destruction; justice over profit; peace over war; accountability to communities over accountability to international mar-

kets; bio-cultural diversity over imposition of one culture; living in harmony with one's needs over never "enoughness"; women's rights to control their own bodies over intervention from governments and agencies.

Although in today's world these choices may seem to be unrealistic, they are increasingly accepted as the vision expressed by expanding networks of a variety of people, including academics, scientists, scholars, activists and peoples' movements for peace, environment and "alternative development." They include youth, women, indigenous groups and others. Essentially, these people are all saying that no matter how powerless one feels, things could be different.

"In 1960, the Northern societies were 20 times richer than the Southern countries. In 1980, 46 times. It is evident that the gap is widening. It's not so much a question of injustice as it is of having lured all countries into the same development model. If all countries followed the industrial example, five or six planets would be necessary to serve as mines and waste dumps."<sup>(5)</sup>

Vandana Shiva, the Indian physicist and feminist who works with community action groups fighting against the dominant model of development and environment destruction, made her position clear on this point: "It should also be recognized that scientists are as fallible as anyone else and that science and its institutions are, more often than not, prostituted to economic interest, since the structure of power is so closely married to the structure of knowledge. Many technologies are used to serve the economic interests of the powerful, not choices based on ecology and ethics. Women have already made their choices on these issues."<sup>(6)</sup>

Today we are witnessing the collapse of both socialism and neoclassical liberalism paradigms. This collapse creates space for the emergence of new ethics and values and quality of life versus unlimited growth. It focuses on human and community development versus international aid and intervention.

# Money cannot buy the human gestures which confer respect and dignity.

If listened to and given the self-confidence, these women can help us to look more critically at ourselves, and question our values. We must learn to shirk our smugness, listen and search for the silenced voices. The process here is not so much one of women or men, but of values. Bringing out the values in all of us is what is essential. At the center of these values is caring, sharing, reciprocity. Money is not the only currency for women and the poor. Money cannot buy the human gestures which confer respect and dignity. Those seeking for alternatives today say that when economics and maximizing profits are put aside as central forces of existence, then we can find the seeds of change for the future.

For many, the major disappointment of the whole process leading to the Earth Summit was the failure to make the connections between the crisis in our ecological system and the crisis in our economic systems. In our view, the real differences at the recent events in Rio were not between the North and South (despite the clear differences between these two sets of governments), or between governments and NGOs, but between those who believe that the environmental crises can be solved by sustained growth, free trade, cleaner technologies and by better pricing of natural resources, on the one hand, and on the other, by those who believe that what is required is a fundamental shift in values, and a different approach to development. One which puts people at the center - a new paradigm of development.

The essential issue, however, is that women's perspectives have still not been adequately taken into account, incorporated into other networks -

thereby weakening the analysis. The call for a change in the "balance between assertiveness/acquisitiveness and cooperation... and the recognition... that this would be more easily achieved if feminine values were no longer subordinated to masculine ideas,"<sup>(7)</sup> requires an understanding of the imbalance of gender-power relations.

In the call for fundamental social change, it is grassroots women embedded in their cultures, lacking inhibitions, with nothing to lose, marginalized outside the system, who have the greatest potential to see things differently and to help change the status quo. "Why is it that women sense destruction faster and are more preserving in their struggles against destruction? Why do they carry on when everyone else is cynical and hopeless? The reason is that women have a distinctive perception of what life is, a sense of what is really vital, which colours their view of what is at stake in the world."<sup>(8)</sup>

#### Footnotes:

1. *An Inuit saying.*
2. *Caribbean Women, Environment and Development: Grassroots Women's Perspective*, by Rosina Wiltshire, DAWN for UNCED 1992 "Rio Listened".
3. *Chipko Women songs from the Himalayas.*
4. *This document was not available to the editors at the time the present document had to be finalized.*
5. *See note 4.*
6. *The phrase in double brackets is entirely the responsibility of the editors.*
7. *References will be provided later.*
8. *See note 7.*

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*Paper presented at the Pugwash Meeting, Berlin, August 1992. It has been abstracted in the SID/WID occasional newsheet WID Forum, No. 1 January/February 1993.*

WOMEN,  
WASTE  
AND  
PLANET  
SAFETY -  
PROPOSAL  
FOR A  
NORTH  
SOUTH  
ALLIANCE

By Devaki Jain  
Development Alternatives with Women for a  
New Era (DAWN)

**D**evaki Jain suggests that the understanding of gender in economic and social transformation indicates the importance of linkages, proximity, accessible accountability and self-determined development. She suggests that North and South can have a common agenda if it is built around waste (rather than energy), a respect for the territories of the poor, and for the wisdom of women.

**WASTE - NON-WASTE**

The world's nations and societies can be divided into three categories associated with waste.

★ *Waste-generating societies:* these are usually associated with affluence, with high-tech production, and until recently, with ignorance of processes of recycling material into consumable goods.



Kay Bishop

# ...industrialized societies are going back to low waste generating practices as well as rational distribution of waste.

★ *Waste-recycling societies:* where waste utilization becomes an art, a craft, a source of income and wealth creation. By and large these societies have low access to trade, to exchange. They have dispersed isolated populations.

★ *Waste-avoidance societies:* these are not dissimilar from waste recycling societies but they are usually at another economic and cultural plane. For example, in acute poverty, there is a perception of wasting as sinful. Scarce resources have to be stretched. Thus choices of both production and consumption are made that do not allow waste.

There is an associated, but not necessarily associated, culture of barring wastefulness as sinful, and taboos which bar people from use of certain materials and so on.

Non-wasting human habits are a part of a culture and built around nature. Every product of nature: water, soil, as well as what grows on the soil is used so that every part of the output is consumed leaving nothing to degenerate. This package can be called the culture of not wasting or waste minimizing and is embedded

in most of the early societies or civilizations. Some of these cultural mores continue to exist in the "less civilized" parts of the globe.

What is interesting to note is at this time, on the brink of the 21st century, most advanced, industrialized and wealthy societies are going back to low waste generating practices as well as rational distribution of waste.

For example, a woman in a village in India would divide her garbage to what could be fed to the animals, what could go into compost and what could go into her fireplace as fuel. A woman in Oxford in the United Kingdom separates her garbage into three or four garbage bins. One for organic waste in which she puts degradable organic material, another for glass and non-biodegradable plastics, a third where she puts bottles for recycling and a fourth where she keeps her newspapers for being recycled.

In the Bronx in New York, Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs - the American equivalent of NGOs) are pulverizing and processing household waste and refeeding this into production as an environment

friendly, income generating project. This is a long established business and income generating project in the South, except it is usually hazardous, and uses child labor.

It is interesting to observe that the old and the new have become one mode due to the alarm raised by environmentalists. At the same time, this similarity gives legitimacy to those old practices and perhaps the "new societies" can look deeper into the traditions of the old societies. They may want to examine, assess and perhaps emulate not merely the waste disposal techniques, but the techniques of lifestyles which *avoid or minimize waste*.

Thus we see that North and South can have similar agenda *if it is built around waste*.

## CONSUMPTION

The other side of the coin of waste making or waste avoiding habits is consumerism. A low waste society is often a low consumerist society - but again not necessarily. The habits may be designed to waste avoidance as unethical in a situation of pressure on resources. A desert camp may not want to follow water consumption prac-

tices which waste water. Nor, for example, would a dry farming settlement wish to consume grains carelessly.

Apart from restrained or careful consumption, there is also the choice of consumer products. Societies may choose to consume goods which are suited to their resource base, e.g. choose grains which are not only water minimizing, but also fodder or straw-generating, or they may choose products which give a package of by-products. For example, coconut trees give leaves and trunks for housing, coir for ropes, oil for cooking and body use, kernel for food and coconut water for drink. Banana trees gives fruit for eating, leaves for packaging, a trunk which is edible.

The culture of a society may demand not polluting sources of water, not polluting soil, not destroying trees. So consumption and through it, production choices may be geared to these cultural preferences. Thus consumption restraint, consumer preference leading to choice of production - both product and process or technology use in production - is another side of the issue of waste.

Today, one of the recognitions in the advanced countries is that "over consumption" is a major pollutant. There is a move to tone down lifestyles so that resources are saved and "waste" not generated in such large volumes. Green movements have quite naturally converged with the peace move-

ment as well as lifestyle change movements. The giant mouth and belly of consumerism - especially when it expresses itself in a plethora of accoutrements associated with comfort - gobbles up forests of trees, oceans of water-based species, and of course mountains of earth and wells of energy.

The techniques by which these resources are used often alienate them from nature. Too much is harvested and what is consumed adds to pollution, thus perpetuating a double crime.

There is a voice in affluent societies to simplify lifestyles - to eat less, to have less clothes, to consume less energy, less paper, a million things. But this is still a *nibble* - not even a bite. In the affluent North, the whole culture is based on consumption. The economy has spawned the culture even though its earlier Anglo-Saxon, and Judeo-Christian roots cultures extolled austerity and simplicity. St. Francis of Assisi is often recalled in environmental conferences.

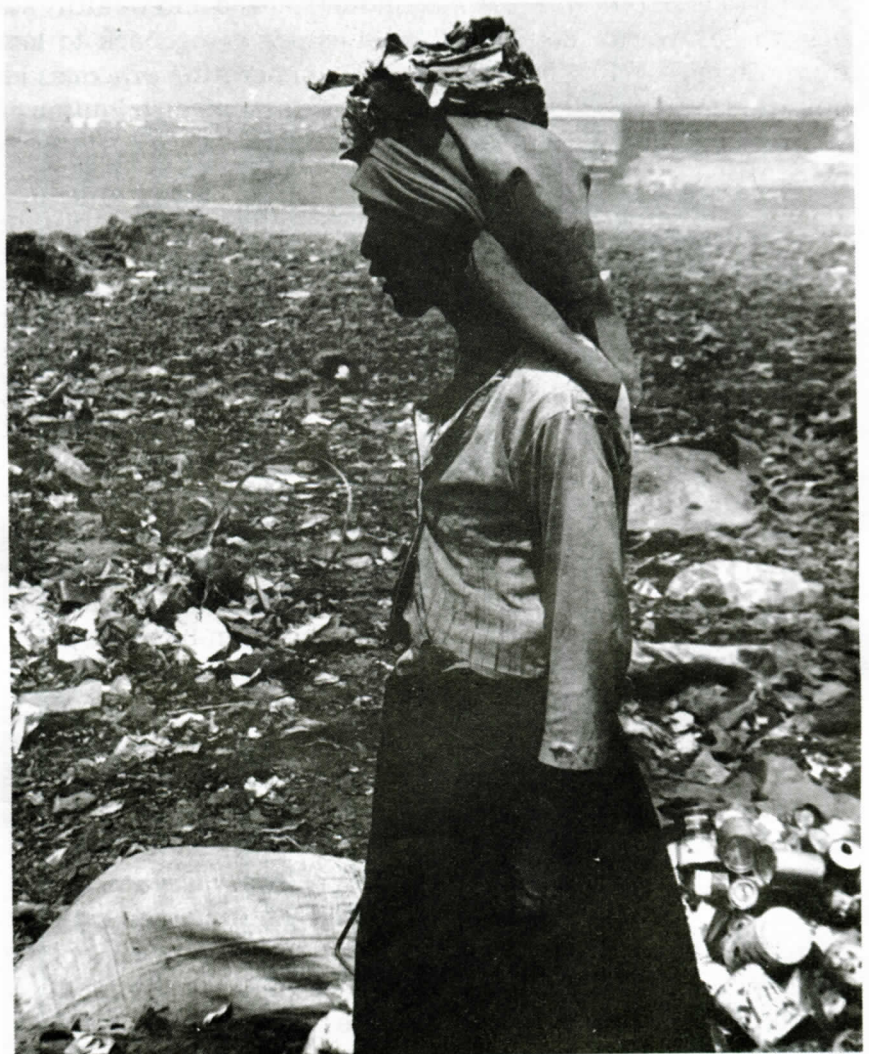


Photo: CWR

# Women are the predominant repositories of oral traditions...

In the old societies austerity, i.e. maintaining a strict discipline on consumption, was a common practice. Part of this restraint was imposed by the pressures of living in a less resource developed situation. Part of it was the social ethic of sharing of community resources. Thus it is not unusual to find very severe lifestyles in old societies.

Today, however, in the South, poverty imposes simplicity - or low consumption on the one hand and "exhaustion," over exploitation on the other. Low consumption is a hardship for the people - the "human resource" if you like. *The over utilization is of the rich material resources to deal with the poverty.* Caught between the two blades of the scissors of history, these countries are catapulting into disaster.

But attempts to inculcate low consumption lifestyles in the "poor" countries meet with many obstacles. Questions arise, such as are you asking the poor to tighten their belts on an empty stomach? Asking the less poor to become poor? Are you for miserabilization? Gandhi may be recalled, as St. Francis in the North, but the drums beat the other way.

Old-fashioned socialism, as was propounded in the former Soviet Union and China, "imposed" a certain type of austerity by reducing consumer choice by mass production and standardization of wage goods for all. But apart from many other reasons, the "new" wave towards a "market economy" knocks out that old orthodox pressure on consumption restraint.

Hence the prospect of voluntary lifestyle simplification whether in the South or the North seems dim. Yet this thick growth of resistance to "give up" a particular lifestyle has to be eroded, pruned, whittled away.

## TIDY - UNTIDY

A second type of categorization which seems relevant is of "visibly tidy" and "visibly untidy" societies, or organized or unorganized socio-economic patterns of behavior.

Some societies have activities well compartmentalized and separated. Production is a Box, which is quite distant from the Box of Consumption. Cooking is separate from eating. Waste is another Box not related either to production or consump-

tion, to cooking or eating. Garbage is another Box, and is thrown away to be bundled and incinerated, or buried. The garbage creator and the garbage disposer are not "connected." The abattoir (slaughterhouse) or the farm is invisible to the meat or grain eater: the origin is effaced. So the consumer has no responsibility for the origin or the process through which she/he consumes or disposes.

Tidy societies are usually the advanced societies and untidy, the developing. In untidy societies garbage is left on streets for people and animals and birds to recycle until it vanishes. Excreta is allowed to rot into the earth, simultaneously, polluting and enriching it. Every grain of material is visible from its inception to its disposal, to confront the community with its lifestyle.

This brings us to the basis of responsibility. Usually physical proximity is a troubling reminder, which generates a need for responsibility. When the producer is confronted and faced by the consumer, the waster by wastage, the resource user by resource, she/he feels a sense of accountability, which in turn can be used to



Photo: ILO

develop an active ethic of responsibility. In tidy societies this advantage is effaced.

But the politics of culture is such that the culture of the South is isolated into either the performing arts, or the ancient traditions including language and revered/worshipped for its antiquity and strangeness. The scientific and technological culture of the South is in museum archives and tourist spots, while the current idiom, or reference point for progress lies in North-based scientific and technological language, source and power. This flow of "Scientific

and Technological" knowledge comes with the cultures in which it is bred - which means compartmentalized "tidy", high energy consuming, wasting societies, distanced from responsibility for actions.

The counter culture is weak. The desert people of Rajasthan, China and Tunisia used similar water storage methods - we see and extol their intelligence. But when we are designing a water harvesting system for the desert today in Rajasthan we turn to the scientific North, to steel and cement and modern sources of energy. We drill and pump and it that is not

possible, we bend rivers away from their other roles of providing water, fish, livelihoods - and even if that does not work or is not possible, we let the populace migrate out of the deserts.

Everywhere people used to store rain water in homes sometimes in the basement, through a gutter running from the roof to a catchment under the house, sometimes in other holes drained from roofs. While these methods are extolled, when a new housing colony is built, say in the city of Delhi or in Madras which suffers from water shortage but has intense



# There is a need... to shift from ...what "others" have to do, to what *we*, "self" have to do.

seasons of rain, this simple technique of storing water is not "drawn into" the architect's design.

Grain storage, food processing, pest control - in so many areas tradition has found effective ways of efficient scientific management using local materials which are non-toxic and degradable. These have yet to be brought into modern currency.

But there is need to generate this filtered revival or sustenance of belief and practice systems where they still linger, as they are not only earth-sustaining but they also build confidence in politically devastated societies. They reveal to these societies their own cultural heritage with special reference to their scientific and technological heritage. Thus one important endeavor that needs to be undertaken in a systematic manner is the collection, collation, assessment, re-writing, of scientific and technological knowledge that is embedded in old societies. This knowledge needs to re-enter text books, training manuals.

At the end of this quest, lies a rich reservoir of practices which are planet-enriching in the fields of health, agriculture and

industry, of institutions and human relations, and of human psychology.

The discourse in this area should move from incantations, invocations romanticizing even glamorizing ancient hymns and rituals: it should move from the anthropologists paradise to a hard headed *utility* oriented educational renaissance of indigenous *scientific* and technological practices.

The women's movement has a significant role to play in making this knowledge available to the new societies. They would then in one stroke be empowering the large mass of women, and at the same time quenching the environment dried by "new" knowledge. Women are the predominant repositories of oral traditions as much because of their deep interest in efficient management of resources as because they are left out of *modern* educational processes. They are the catchment then for this stream of knowledge.

It is my view that in the global level discussion on environment, categorizing the globe in terms of waste, and its obverse, consumer-styles would give a more tangible *lever* to nudge societies into action. It is in

waste and consumption that alliance for just action can be developed.

These are also familiar areas for women, whatever the class or region. There is need to re-write the agenda of the North-South negotiations on environment. To shift it from talking of regulations and conditionalities, of energy and funds, from what "others" have to do, to what *we*, "self" have to do.

The women's movement can initiate this approach and even enact it. When we can use the Boycott against Apartheid, we can use the boycott against earth destruction. But as in the case of the earlier Boycott against South Africa it is of no value unless it is *massive, wide-spread* and *total*.

In evolving an Agenda for Environmental protection, the women's agenda can be more powerful than all the controls and conditionalities. But only if it becomes the global women's agenda.

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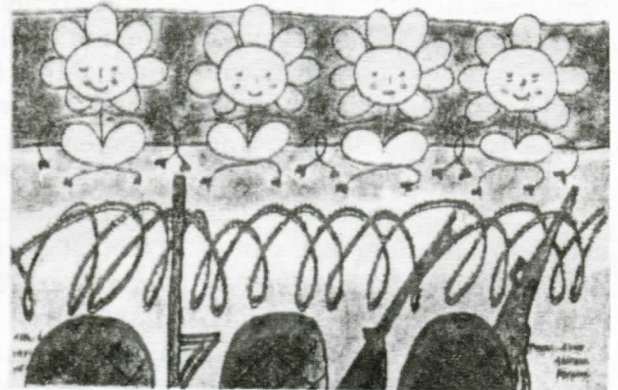
*Delivered at the Women's Dublin Global Forum, July 9-12, 1992. Printed in the WIDE Bulletin 1992:3, c/o SID, Palazzo Civiltà del Lavoro, 00144 Rome, Italy.*

# INTRODUCTION TO CASE STUDIES

In the next twelve pages are selected case studies which show different examples of what women around the world are doing for sustainable development. The case studies focus on stories and experiences of grassroots women from the south and the concrete and positive actions they have taken in their respective countries. These range from planting trees to soil and water conservation to salt production. Through the initiatives and efforts of these women, sustainable lifestyles become a reality.



*Thai women artists' vision for a sustainable future*



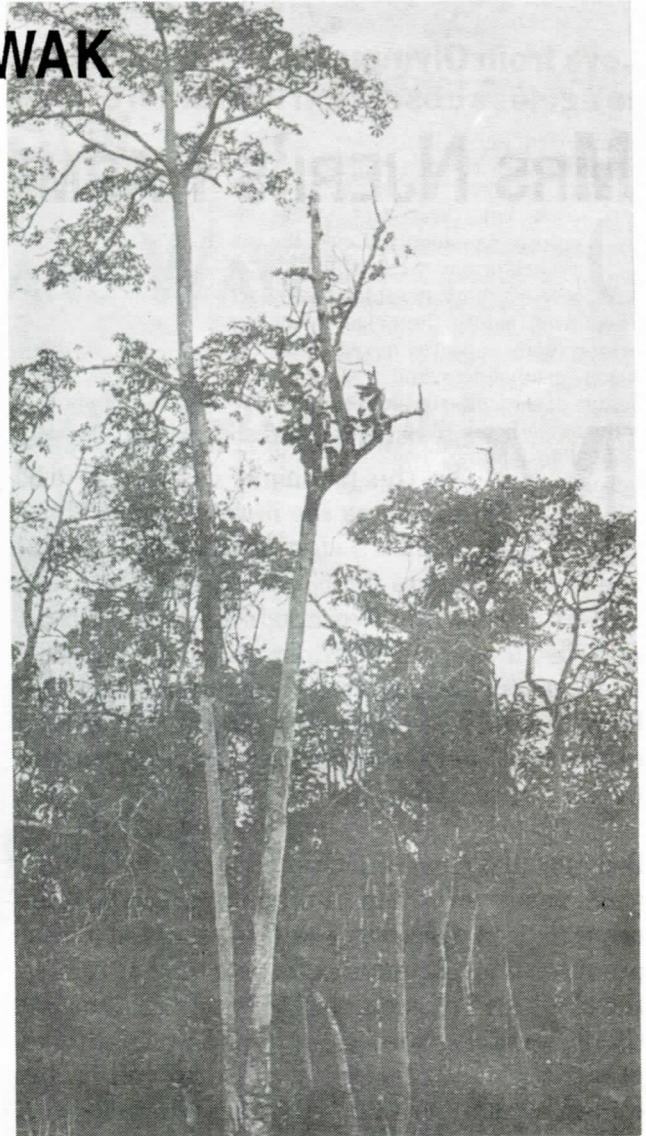
# THE PENAN OF SARAWAK

**F**or thousands of years the Penan have lived in harmony with the forest, harvesting and not destroying the forest which sustains their survival. This is a society where women and men participate equally in maintaining communal life in the forest.

In March 1987, thousands of indigenous people in Sarawak, Malaysia, formed human barricades across logging roads in the deep interior of the tropical rainforest. For more than 20 years, their forest has been ripped apart for logs which are predominantly exported to Japan.

Entire villages walked for days across the mountains to the logging roads which traverse their lands. While the men set up wooden fences and built rest shelters, the women wove leaves for roofthatch and organized food supplies. Breast-feeding mothers, old women, young children and men stood in vigil, stopping logging operations for almost seven months. The police and army forcibly dismantled the blockades and arrested some of the men. Blockades were set up again at the end of 1988, and in early January 1989, more than 100 Penan men were arrested under a newly created offence designed to criminalize the Penans' battle for their legitimate land rights. The women take over the responsibilities of the villages, seeking food and water supplies. Many have to stand by helplessly while their children have less and less to eat and polluted water causes diseases to increase.

The struggle of the Penan to maintain their culture and way of life is dismissed as 'primitive'. They are urged to join the mainstream and be 'developed'. But the reality is that no alternative is offered for the deprivation of their forest resources. Where resettlement has taken place in other native communities, the effects



have been negative, leading to a breakdown in the community itself and a dependency on the cash economy.

Meanwhile arrests and intimidations continue, but the Penan refuse to give up. As the forest dwindles, the Penan have to walk for days to seek food and clean water. The land is their life. 'If we don't do something to protect the little that is left, there will be nothing for our children. Until we die we will block this road.'

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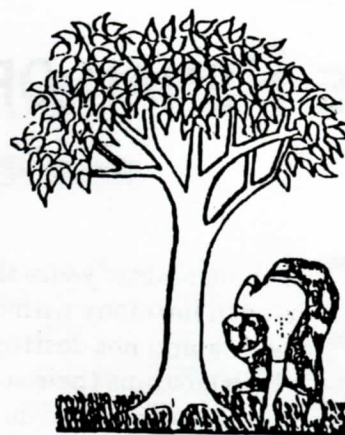
Source: *Women and the Environment*, Annabel Rodda, 1991. Zed Press, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 9BU, U.K.

# MRS NJERI'S FARM

**M**rs. Tabitha Njeri cultivates coffee as the principal cash crop, and maize as the main staple. There is also a significant proportion of the farm set aside for Napier grass, bananas, and fruit trees like avocado, mango and citrus, and also a number of minor crops. Trees grow in abundance amongst the crops and on the field boundaries. Near the living quarters at the top of the slope there is a rudimentary zero-grazing unit for two cattle.

But perhaps most importantly, the farm is very well conserved with a number of soil and water conservation structures and measures. There are retention ditches and *fanya juus* that reduce the slope and erosion, and aid water retention; there are sacks, stones, trash and live plants to prevent gully erosion; there are well-maintained bench terraces for the coffee; there are infiltration pits to again slow water flow downhill; and there are many *gravillea*, *mutundu* (*Croton macro stachys*) and black wattle trees which help bind soil with their roots.

Like many other farms in her village, there is extraordinary complexity in the crop-livestock-tree interactions. The cattle eat Napier grass grown on the retention ditches and *fanya juus*, and *paspalum* grass grown on the terrace risers. Both grasses also serve to stabilize the soils. The animals also consume maize stalks and stove, banana leaves and stalks, tree leaves and during the times of shortage wild plants such as *maegoya*, plus sweet potato vines, *cas-sava* leaves and tubers.



Source: Uganda Women's Tree Planting Movement

A number of plants are used as bedding for the cattle and for adding bulk to the manure. These include *euphorbia* and *gravillea*. *Euphorbia* can also be eaten by goats. In return, manures from the cattle are essential for maintaining soil fertility and structure.

Although Mrs Njeri applies inorganic fertilizers, she favors manures. But she does not have sufficient for her requirements. The priority crops for manures are coffee, followed by maize and then Napier grass. The shortage was aptly summarized when she said, "I wish you could come with a lorry load of manure. It would make me so happy."

In addition to these finely tuned relationships many of the individual components of her *shamba* are multipurpose. The squash plants provide food and are a medicine for the control of cattle intestinal worms. The lima beans supply food and fix nitrogen in the soil.

But perhaps the most diverse are the trees. All have more than one function, acting as sources of fuel, building materials, live-fencing, fruit, fodder, bedding material and shade. The attitude to trees here are expressed by the chief of the village - "That is a beautiful area", he said, "just look at all the trees."

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Source: *Women and the Environment*, Annabel Rodda 1991. Zed Press, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 9BU, U.K.

## SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION: MWETHYA GROUPS IN KENYA

**T**he Katheka soil and water conservation project is an example of a women's initiative to combat accelerated resource degradation. In this dry area, the terrain is rugged and difficult to work. The people lack access to basic services such as water and electricity. Although resource degradation began in the 1920s, it was in the 1970s that overgrazing caused massive soil erosion, putting lives at risk by declining food production.

Twice a week members of the 15 'Mwethya' groups go to work on one member's farm and once a week they carry out communal projects such as the construction of gabions or the rehabilitation of dams, or the maintenance of terraces to prevent land degradation. Each group repairs 1,500-4,000 meters of bench terrace a year. Another activity is water conservation, which has led to improved crop yields; tree planting is increasing. The women have also embarked on income generating activities such as basket weaving and brick making.

This success has been achieved without much external support and the technologies employed have been simple and maintained by local artisans. Recently the community has organized to resist an external threat from contractors mining sand from the river bed - which interferes with local water resources.

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Source: *Link in*, January-March 1992, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX, U.K.



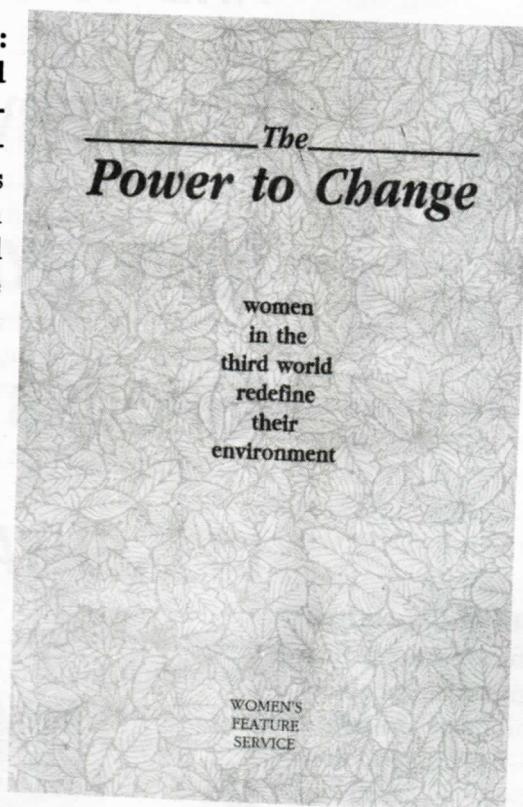
# WOMEN'S BOOK ON ENVIRONMENT LAUNCHED

**"Power to Change: Women in the Third World Redefine their Environment"** -- an anthology of environment features by women journalists from Latin America, Africa and Asia for Women's Feature Service (WFS), was launched in Manila recently.

Historical, socio-economic analysis of each region puts the features in the context of the present times in which women live. Beginning with the people themselves, the features make the connection between a problem, its causes, its solution and what is needed to change their lives.

Sustainable lifestyles or the search for them is a strong theme of many of the features. For example in Kenya and Zimbabwe, communities recommend reviving traditional diet of insects (mixed with sauces and eaten as a snack or a main meal) to overcome nutritional problems.

In the Philippines, Nanay Masang, fighting to keep her land from becoming part of an industrial complex called Calabarzon told the man who was pointing his gun at her "I'm not afraid of bullets because they can kill you fast. I am more afraid of hunger. It kills you slowly."



Published by Kali for Women, a pioneer publisher of women's writings, this book presents narratives of positive change brought about by women, in the face of the often negative impact of development in their lives and on their environment.

The Women's Feature Service is a news-feature service of views and analyses by women of development in their region. The WFS, through its network of over 150 women journalists, editors and translators from 60 countries, seeks to provide a realistic portrayal of local, national and international development in mainstream media.

On the following pages of this edition of **Women in Action** we have given you three extracts spanning three continents from the book. These case studies show the diverse ways in which women have taken a lead in their struggle to protect their environment from profit-hungry business and government.

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# INDIANS

## MARCH FOR

# SALT

By Angela Castellanos

**F**or the first time ever, Indians in Bogota, Columbia may strike up a business partnership with the government. And if the deal works out, it will be largely due to the untiring efforts of a 35-year-old Wayuu Indian woman, Rosario Epiyeu. Rosario, who belongs to the minority Wayuu indigenous group, whose 100,000 people live along the Guajira peninsula in northern Colombia, is representing her community in negotiations with the state-owned salt mining company, 'Ifi-Conseccion-Salinas.'

Salt production which has always been the economic mainstay of the Wayuu, was something they had developed to perfection long before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors in the 16th century. For Wayuu Indians, salt is the very basis of their existence. According to local folklore, Mareiwa, the creator of humans, also made the land and the sea. The Wayuu are here to harvest the salt. But this traditional belief received a shaking in September 1991 when the government of the South American country launched a salt production project and contracted the Colombian army to extend the dykes along the sea. Alarm spread throughout the Wayuu community because this project affected the 'ponds' or pools where the salt crystallizes, flooding the areas where the Wayuus work, extracting the salt.

The Indians were not going to take this lying down. They organized two protest marches to the town of Manaure, in which 4,000 women (and not a single man) took part. "But then we heard about the proposed privatization of the salt flats," recalls Rosario. "And this included our lands which are considered to be wasteland, despite the fact that we used this land long before they came along. So we decided to go to the capital to talk to the government."

The Indians' loss of control over the salt flats in the region has been very gradual. Even during the Spanish colonial period, some of the salt flats were appropriated by the Spanish crown. Much later, in 1968, the Colombian government took these over and established the Ifi-Conseccion-Salinas company to exploit the salt

deposits. The Wayuu were left high and dry, with just a few small ponds to harvest. "We've had problems with the company for years," complains Rosario. "About 20 years ago, they destroyed two marshes of nearly 4,000 hectares by turning them into artificial pools where sea water is collected for salt extraction. As a result of this we cannot fish anymore. They also damaged two freshwater streams and destroyed the forest."

Evidence of the ecological imbalance caused in the region is ample. Ten kilometers of a mangrove swamp were cleared, forcing the migration of many fish and bird species, including the stately flamingo. And over the last decade, the coast has visibly eroded. The local Indians - about 3,000 of them - who were hired by the state-owned company, were disgruntled. "They didn't even give us the necessary working tools and they paid us a pittance," Rosario recalls. But when the Wayuu Indians began to exploit their own salt pools, the company called in the police. "They would suddenly arrive, snatch our bags and throw them into the sea," say the Indians. In 1988, the company accused the Indians of competing against them, the Wayuu struck work and the company finally gave in to some of their demands of tools, drinking water and health services. "But now we have tuberculosis and the health centers don't have enough doctors or equipment to cope," Indian spokespersons point out.

The Ifi-Conseccion-Salinas salt production covers not only the needs of the 70 per cent of Colombia's domestic requirements and meets the demand of the country's chemical industry, but also leaves enough for export. Authorities admit that the Wayuu extract 200,000 tons of salt a year - half the amount registered by the state-owned company. So the Indians felt that they could work out some sort of a deal with the authorities. But there are several obstacles in the way. "We don't want to let go of our own traditions, and salt production is an integral part of it," explains Rosario. "Our argument is that the company owes us a debt for the marshes it took away from us which deprived us of income. So we're asking them to repay us by

Salt production... was something they (*the Wayuu*) had developed to perfection long before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors in the 16th century.



making us partners in the business." The Wayuu are also demanding property and ownership rights on the salt flats, compensation for "cultural damage" and a percentage of the profits from the salt exploitation.

"I've spent years working to help the community. I've even tried working with local politicians. But they only wanted votes. I would get them votes but they never helped us once the elections were over. Now Wayuu landowners have placed their trust in me to represent them," says Rosario. While they wait for the next round of negotiations, the Wayuu hope the government will realize that Indian groups and natural resources should not be sacrificed for economic development. But they also hope that salt can once more become the common resource it was before the Spanish came.

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Source: *The Power to Change: Women in the Third World Redefine Their Environment*, the Women's Feature Service, 1992. Published by Kali for Women, A 36 Gulmohar Park, New Delhi 110 049, India.



# GREENING TAKES ROOT

By Rebecca Katumba and W. Akute

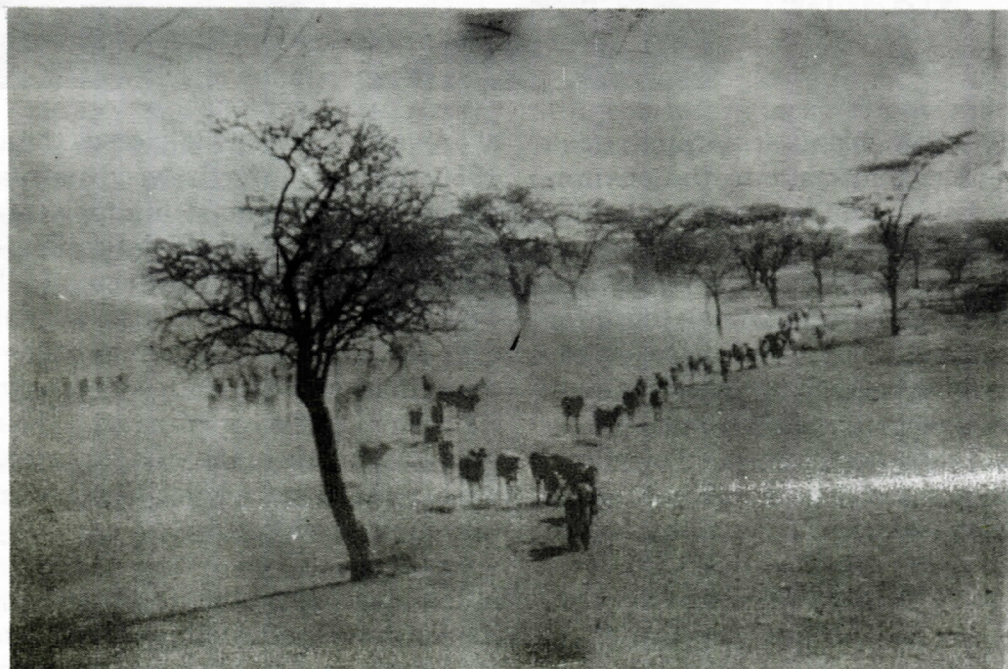
**N**airobi, Kenya - When Wanjiri Wang'endo was a child, trees were taken for granted. Not so any more. Now trees are something the 68-year-old Wanjiri treasures. She dedicates much of her life to plants, nursing seedlings and nurturing trees in her neighborhood. Once the small shoots sprout their first two leaves, she carefully uproots them and plants them in a field nearby. Wanjiri has already grown 70 trees from seedlings and says she will continue doing so until she dies.

Like thousands of other Kenyan women today, Wanjiri belongs to the Green Belt Movement, a community-based tree-planting campaign, which was started over a decade ago by a woman who could not bear to see the desertification of her nation. It was in 1977, that Kenya's first woman professor was moved

enough to abandon her prestigious job as head of the department of anatomy at the University of Nairobi, and launch the campaign. Initiating a simple tree-planting drive, the spirited Wangari Maathai spurred her fellow Kenyans to sit up and take note of the increasing barrenness around them.

"Since women use wood fuel for cooking and they also till the land, my focus was and still is on women," says Wangari. "We work together to conserve what is remaining of our environment."

The movement is now one of the most successful women's environmental projects in Kenya, with a membership of about 50,000 owning 1,500 tree nurseries. "We green beltters are humble people," Wangari remarks. "Many have no money and are semi-literate but we have man-



"Since women use wood fuel for cooking and they also till the land, my focus was and still is on women... We work together to conserve what is remaining of our environment."

Wangari  
Maathai



Photo: ILO

aged to come together and achieve our goals because of our commitment to the environment." Indeed, the group can boast of planting about seven million seedlings in 22 districts, and plans to cover the remaining 21 districts within the next five years. Although the Movement's headquarters is still a humble operation, it has involved over 600 women's groups, each of which has set up green belts with at least 1,000 trees. The women have also mobilized churches, schools and households in their efforts to halt deforestation.

Still, the task in Kenya, as elsewhere throughout the continent, is daunting. The quantity of firewood needed to satisfy Kenya's population

of around 17 million far exceeds the supply. In 1985, the demand for firewood had reached 24.5 million tonnes against a supply of just 19.1 million tonnes. And official estimates project that by the year 2000 the demand will spiral to 47.1 million tonnes while the availability will dwindle to 16.5 million tonnes. "The impact of environmental degradation hits our women and children most," says Wangari. "They are the ones who remain in the villages struggling with it while the men flock to cities in search of jobs they may never find."

In this Movement which is primarily made up of women directly affected by the problem, experts are largely kept out of the programme because,

as Wangari explains, "they have the tendency to work for the people rather than allow them to work for themselves." When organizations employ experts, she argues, "It does not encourage people to be masters of their own destiny. It disarms them, making them dependent, and at times apathetic." By contrast, the participatory approach makes women grow trees not just for the sake of trees, but because they want to.

The Green Belters plant and cultivate the seedlings, care for the trees and generate a source of income for themselves. Seedlings grown in nurseries are sold to the Movement and redistributed free to women for planting in fields on condition that they care for them under the supervision of a ranger.

The Movement pays for every tree that survives beyond the second month of replanting, and the price varies according to the type of tree. Women are advised to grow fruit trees to provide that extra bit of nourishment for their families. They are also encouraged to green any piece of land that they find lying idle - along roads, farm boundaries and market places.

But it has hardly been easy sailing for the Green Belt Movement and as Wangari can vouch, being an activist in Kenya has never been a simple task. Her struggles to protect the environment have, more often than not, landed her right in the middle of raging controversies. Towards the end of 1989, for instance, when she opposed the siting of the 60-80 storeyed *Kenya Times* complex in Uhuru Park, the only green belt left in the center of Nairobi, she sparked off furious debate. But the battle was hardly unique, says Wangari, as environmentalists all over the world have similar confrontations with politicians. "But what I was not prepared for," she adds, "were the personal attacks, insults, ridicule and victimization that were to follow."

Still, never one to give up, she took it as a lesson, thrilled that "the debate did not have any adverse effect on the Movement's activities. In fact, it boosted it and more people became environmentally conscious."

It also made Wangari keenly aware of the fact that leaders in the country need to be educated on environmental issues and that in Kenya, as elsewhere in the world, the government must integrate environment in its development plans. "Environment is yet to be taken with the seriousness it deserves. People must appreciate the linkages between environment, politics and the economy of a country," she says over and over again.

When Wangari was awarded an honorary doctorate of law by Williams College in Massachusetts, USA, for her role in environmental conservation, she saw it as yet another step towards a recognition of the environment.

Recognition for Wangari, meanwhile, has come from several other quarters as well. But what pleases Wangari as much as the international acclaim that has come her way, is the progress of the Green Belters in Kenya. The group soon hopes to construct its headquarters in Nairobi, with a training center where people from all over the continent can be educated on environmental issues.

The Green Belt Movement has already received a number of requests from other African countries for training their people, but, as Wangari explains, "We cannot train people at the moment because we do not have a permanent base."

Still, the future looks bright and she is convinced that the women are on the right track, as most of the goals they set in 1977 have been achieved. "They recognize the need to have a good and sound environment which they can bequeath to their children," she says. And if that knowledge is ingrained indelibly, that's half the battle won. But what's more, if, like Wanjiri, Kenyan women no longer need to walk long distances for firewood, because they now have enough around them even some to spare, that is an even surer sign of success.

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Source: *The Power to Change: Women in the Third World Redefine Their Environment*, the Women's Feature Service, 1992. Published by Kali for Women, A36 Gulmohar Park, New Delhi 110 049, India.

# RESISTING THE INDUSTRIAL INVASION

By Shree Venkatram

**B**angalore, India - Scientists have invaded the heart of a virgin rain forest, on the banks of a green river, to build a nuclear power plant in the south Indian state of Karnataka. The Kaiga nuclear plant is not the only instance of the industrial invasion of Karnataka's Western Ghats region. In Kusnur the government has also handed over 70,000 acres of village common lands to a company to grow eucalyptus trees to meet the raw material needs of a private mill.

Neither move has gone unchallenged in a state whose people are among the most environmentally aware in India today. Local agitations have sprung up to protest against these projects, backed by the expertise of environment groups in Karnataka and neighboring states. In Sirsi town, near the Kaiga plant site, a relay hunger strike has been going on for months outside a state government office. Literacy levels are high here and pro-environment ideas have spread fast.

Says Kripa, a woman activist of Citizens for Alternatives to Nuclear Energy (CANE), "The farmers are well informed about the hazards the nuclear plant will pose. They are educated and read local newspapers and tabloids which are highlighting the issue. We at CANE feed these small papers with the latest information on the nuclear front. Our supporters also distribute pamphlets."

Hundreds converged at the Kaiga project office at Karwar, demanding that work on the plant be abandoned. More than 300 people including many women and the religious leader, Swami

Vishweshar Teertha of Pejawar, courted arrest. Signature and newspaper campaigns, rallies and hunger strikes in the district and anti-nuclear marches and road shows in the state capital, Bangalore, have been the methods of protest adopted. The people question the wisdom of locating a nuclear plant in a remote forest, especially since it has high rainfall and wind velocity. Kripa points out, "During the monsoon rains, Kaiga is inaccessible. The government suspends even the normal bus service. But it expects to be able to evacuate the whole township in a matter of minutes should an emergency arise. Moreover, Kaiga is near seven dams and in a tectonically weak zone."

The unexpected resistance to the Kaiga plant is the result of environment consciousness created in Karnataka over recent years by dedicated activist groups. These groups are alarmed at the denudation of the 1,600 km long Western Ghats, a mountain range which runs along India's western coast, bordering the Arabian Sea. One morning, six years ago, a small but determined group marched from Sakalani village to a forest area 12 kms away where a contractor's men were felling trees. The 30-odd men and women, many with babes in their arms, rushed forward, each hugging a tree. The contractor's men ran away.

Inspiration for that non-violent attempt to save their trees had come from Sunderlal Bahuguna, a leader of the Chipko movement (the world famous ecology movement in north India's Himalayan belt). He had visited nearby Sirsi town and addressed a gathering a few days earlier. He had told them about how villagers

had clung to trees to save them from the axe. The people realized they too could prevent destruction of the forests; they knew only too well that because the forests had been ravaged women had to trek twice the distance to collect fuelwood and fodder. Herbs for treatment of ailments were becoming difficult to find, and water had actually become scarce in an area that received over 3,000 mm of rainfall a year.

The Kurbas, the traditional honey-gathers, and the Medars, who fashioned items from bamboo

and cane, had been driven to starvation, for the trees which sustained them had been grabbed by greedy outsiders. Timber contractors, rayon and paper mill owners had bought up whole forests to meet industrial and urban needs. Bamboo and softwood factories had denuded the mountains and polluted the rivers - the Cauvery, the Kapila and the Tungabhadra, to mention a few. Cattle which drank polluted water produced premature calves, fish died and people got skin allergies.



Terrance Cummings

...village  
women  
in Kusnur  
are  
in the  
forefront  
of the  
environment  
struggle...



Photo: Sheba

Further, the government's social forestry schemes only benefitted the rich. Eucalyptus was planted to meet the raw material requirements of the mills, it produced little fuelwood and did not allow undergrowth to grow for cattle to feed on.

Nagesh Hedge, a journalist who has long observed the environmental movement says, "Even before the Sakalani march, farmers had opposed eucalyptus by pulling out the saplings. Then in 1980, the Totgarh Farmers' Cooperative had stalled the Bethi Dam which would have submerged thousands of fertile acres under water. The Sakalani march, however, set the trend for villagers to gather at felling sites and protest 'Appiko' which means 'embrace' in Kannada. The Appiko movement spread, forest officers were picketed and the government forced to ban clear felling in the state.

In 1987 voluntary groups working with villagers in Karnataka and three adjoining states joined to organize the 'Save the Western Ghats' march. Two groups marched from the two ends of the Ghats, spreading the message of conservation and learning first-hand the extent of the deforestation and pollution. The marchers included several scientists.

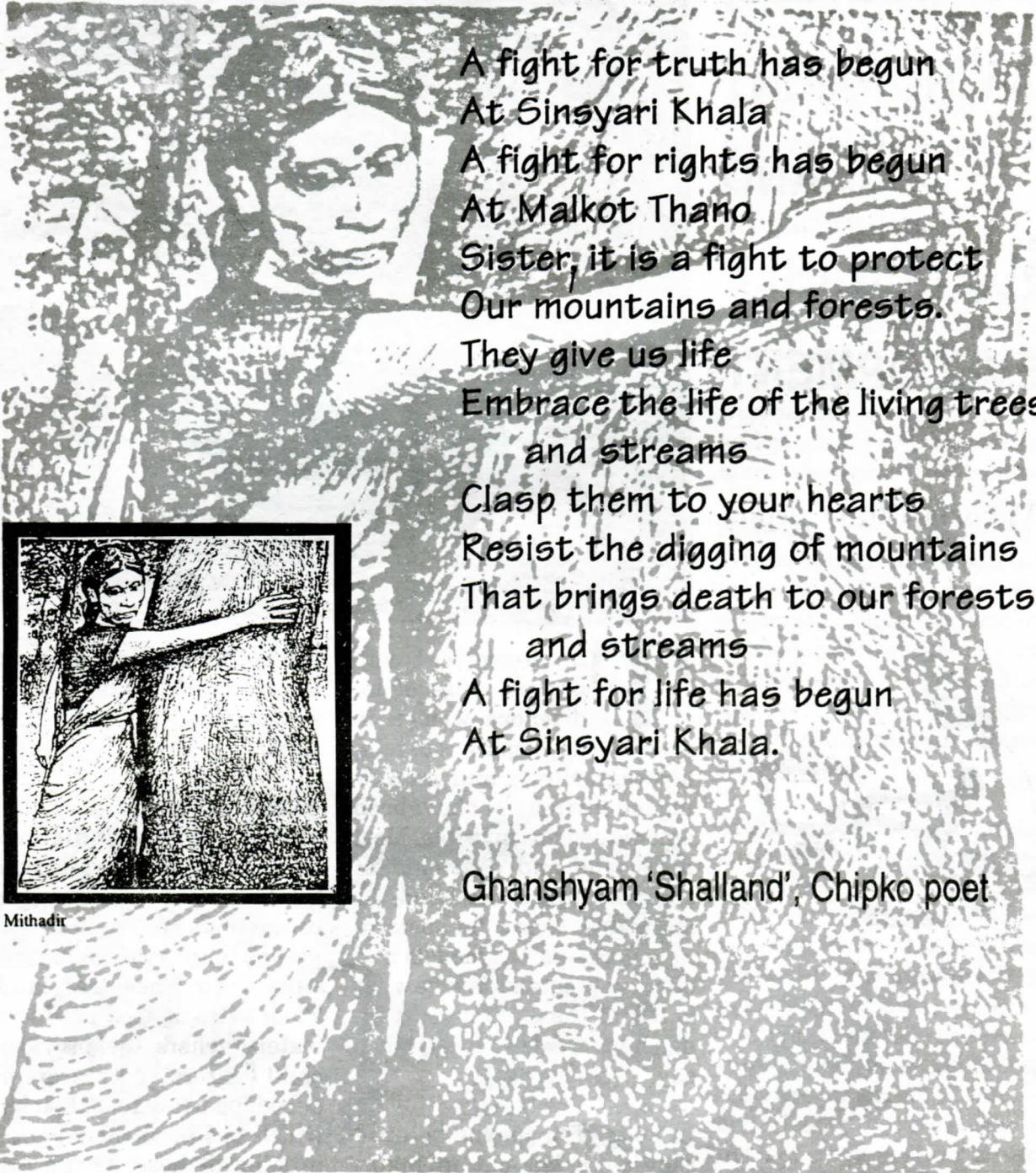
Today village women in Kusnur are in the forefront of the environment struggle, demanding that the 70,000 acres leased out for eucalyptus be returned to the people. Most villagers, being landless, depend on village commons for grazing cattle and gathering firewood and fruit from the trees. People have uprooted eucalyptus and replaced it with shady, fruit-bearing trees.

The Samaj Parivartana Samudaya, a voluntary group leading the protest has filed a public interest case against the leasing of the land, and the Supreme Court has stayed its transfer till the case is heard.

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Source: *The Power to Change: Women in the Third World Redefine Their Environment*, the Women's Feature Service, 1992. Published by Kali for Women, A 36 Gulmohar Park, New Delhi 110 049, India.

## THE CHIPKO MOVEMENT



A fight for truth has begun  
At Sinsyari Khala  
A fight for rights has begun  
At Malkot Thano  
Sister, it is a fight to protect  
Our mountains and forests.  
They give us life  
Embrace the life of the living trees  
and streams  
Clasp them to your hearts  
Resist the digging of mountains  
That brings death to our forests  
and streams  
A fight for life has begun  
At Sinsyari Khala.



Mithadir

Ghanshyam 'Shalland', Chipko poet

# INDIGENOUS WOMEN, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

By Victoria Tauli-Corpuz



Photo: F. Mattioli



**T**he historical and present roles of indigenous women in developing sustainable agriculture and protecting the environment have been ignored or made invisible. Most historians and development planners are gender-blind. In the frantic search for sustainable development models and effective programs to save what is left of the environment indigenous women have a lot to say.

In spite of or maybe because they were left out in main-

stream development programs, many of them held on to their sustainable development practices.

A serious look into history shows us how indigenous women all over the world struggled against logging concessionaires, mining companies and governments to save their ancestral lands. Their roles as food producers, water-fetchers, fuel providers, child bearers and rearers impelled them to defend their land which has been their partner in doing all these. They are the



ones who are in the best position to understand the value of nature and land. Since they have been working in close partnership with nature through thousands of years to sustain life, they have developed ecological consciousness which should be sustained and propagated.

### INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND NATURE IN ACTIVE PARTNERSHIP

Indigenous people regard their territories as their ancestral homelands, a concept which has historical, cultural and ecological implications. The defense of the ancestral homeland from forces of destruction is not just defending a territory but defending a whole lifestyle which is in close communion with nature.

In indigenous communities, it is the woman who is the primary food producer and her

awareness of nature is that of a living force which is her partner in the production of sustenance. Her productivity is directly proportional to the continuing capacity of nature to renew its forests, soils, and rivers. It is impossible for her to see food production as distinct from the forests, water and animal systems.

Indigenous women and men have maintained a deep reverence for nature. They worship the sun, mother earth, the trees, the forests, and the rivers. Their religious and cultural rituals are held to ask blessings from the spirits of their ancestors and goddesses and gods to protect these. These rituals are done to ask for a good harvest and to call the rains. Many of these practices still linger even if the Christian colonizers branded such as pagan and barbaric.

Indigenous women and men also have knowledge of tree

species which are water-conserving and those which are highly water-consuming. Water-conserving trees are regarded as sacred and should not be cut. Their knowledge of agriculture and forestry is very basic. The land and forest should not be abused. These should be allowed to rest for them to be able to regenerate.

### COLONIZATION, MARKET ECONOMY: IMPACT ON INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

With the industrial revolution, capitalist development and subsequent colonization, the prominent role of indigenous women as resource managers and protectors of the environment changed. Subsistence economies which relied on nature, on women for the satisfaction of basic needs had to be transformed into a market economy. Colonization was necessary to ensure the continuous supply of raw materials and develop markets to absorb the surplus products of rich nations.

The framework of industrialization and capitalist accumulation has rendered the wealth created by nature and women invisible. Economic growth and productivity is measured with generation of cash, profit and surplus. Therefore, nature and indigenous peasant women who are engaged in subsistence food production and do not generate cash or surplus



Source: Chaneg Vol. III No. 1 Jan-April 1992

are not considered productive. They are simply resource base, raw materials, labor power and inputs.

Development from the perspective of the western development experts and multinational corporations ensured the perpetuation of the economic and political domination of the developed nations over the Third World; the domination of man over nature and over women. The green revolution of "scientific agriculture" hastened the erosion of subsistence economies to be subsumed into the market or cash economy. Cash crop production took precedence over production for sustenance.

The symbiotic relationship of nature and women for the production of sustenance was disrupted. The management of food systems, forests and rivers were shifted from women to food and agri-business multinational corporations, and international lending institutions. The integrated functions of agriculture, forestry, animal raising, and water management were dichotomized and fragmented.

Forestry was treated independently of agriculture and the multiple functions and outputs of the forests were reduced into one - lumber for cash and profit. Oppressive forestry laws were enacted by colonial governments to facilitate the logging of the forests. Forests which are communally cared for by tribes and clans were declared government or public



Photo: World Council of Churches

lands and reservations. The military apparatus was used if the indigenous people defended their forests. The imposition of the western brand of commercial forestry in the Third World and in indigenous peoples ancestral homelands led to the massive destruction of forests which resulted to permanent destruction of the environment.

Forestry which propagated single species, single commodity production plantations destroyed the biological diversity and integrity of living resources in the forests. This biological diversity is crucial for soil and water conservation. It also meant deprivation of the traditional land use rights of indig-

enous women over the forests. While logging corporations and governments benefitted from this arrangement, the women became marginalized. The men in the villages became lumberjacks who were paid measly sums which went into buying alcohol and tobacco.

The green revolution has undermined the roles played by nature and indigenous women in sustainable agriculture. While before, the women were the ones who selected, stored and sowed varied indigenous rice varieties, this role was systematically removed from them. The control of seeds and crops, access to land use, forests and waters have shifted

from women, to multinational corporations, governments and international lending agencies. Renewable inputs from farms, forests and rivers are replaced by non-renewable inputs from multinational corporations producing fertilizers, pesticides, seeds and chemical animal feeds.

Irrigation water which originally came from natural rivers, streams and springs, had to come from man-made diversion dams. The indigenous irrigation systems which maintained sophisticated rice terraces and which were communally cared for was taken over by national irrigation agencies set up by the government, under pressure from the IBRD (International Bank for Rural Development) and the IMF-WB (International Monetary Fund-

World Bank). Flooding, drought, topsoil erosion and desertification has resulted from implementing development programs which violate the cycles of life in rivers, soils, mountains and forests. Cash cropping, logging, mining, and damming rivers have resulted in rivers and groundwaters drying up, and also in water and air pollution. Water-logging and salinization developed because of the diversion of water from its natural routes.

Commercial mining which is highly destructive to the land and the environment was imposed also through legislation and outright landgrabbing. Mining laws rode roughshod over ancestral land laws. Sustainable small-scale mining activities of women and men were prohibited through laws

and harassment by government and mining officials. The men were herded to mining camps leaving the women and the children to continue subsistence food production. Later the women were brought to mining camps to become housewives.

**MILITARIZATION AS A PARTNER OF "DEVELOPMENT"**

Militarization came along with all these attempts to wrest control over the land from the indigenous women and men. All throughout history, indigenous peoples were subjected to the worst forms of militarization for them to surrender their lands to colonizers and business corporations. The symbiotic existences of indigenous



Source : And She Said No! - Norman Buena

women with the land was destroyed all in the name of development.

The worst forms of destruction to the ancestral domain and environment were done by multinational corporations and government agencies. Open pit mining, indiscriminate logging, short-lived big-dam projects, and other destructive infrastructure were pushed through with the help of oppressive laws and militarization.

Several indigenous people's communities in the Cordillera have been subjected to severe aerial bombings and strafing. Marag Valley in Apayao where the last remaining tropical rain forests within the Cordillera are located is one of these places. It was learned that logging concessionaires supported these military operations because they would like to pursue their logging operations which were stopped by Aggays and Isnegs (indigenous people living in this area).

### RESPONSE OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Indigenous women in the Third World did not take all these lying down. While their roles in written history remained invisible, the women were in the forefront in many of the struggles launched against efforts of government or multinational corporations to dislocate them from their beloved ancestral homelands. The struggle against the World



Photo: Carlos Sanchez

Bank-sponsored Chico River Dam Project in the Cordillera region in the Philippines is just one of the many fine examples. The Chipko movement in India is another.

In the Chico Dam struggle, the indigenous women in the Cordillera organized themselves and trekked to the site where the surveyors set camp. They dismantled the tents of the men and carried these to the town capital. Together with men, they were detained several times in the military barracks because of their stiff opposition to the government project.

However, they did not allow themselves to be cowed and continued resisting until the World Bank and the Philippine government were forced to cancel the whole project. This experience was cited by Walden Bello in his book "Development Debacle" as one of the worst setbacks suffered by

one of the most sophisticated international financial institutions. This defeat was offered by pre-industrial tribal people.

The resistance offered by the Mainit women in the Cordillera against the biggest mining corporation in the Philippines, Benguet Corporation, is another. When they were offered cash by the company, the women and men discussed among themselves how to react to the offer. The women said that if they get the cash they may be able to buy what they immediately need. However, this will mean that their ricefields will be gone forever. Where will they get the next supply of rice when the cash runs out? They decided to stick it out with their fields and forests and fought the mining corporation. This also happened in the mid-70s. Up to now the mining corporation is still trying to convince them to have their land mined.

## CHALLENGE TO FEMINISTS, ENVIRONMENTALISTS AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVISTS

The conventional analysis of women and environment has always stressed women as victims of the degradation of the environment. Women have to walk further for fuel and water because of deforestation. The deterioration of their health multiplied several times over because of the increased burdens of having to carry heavy loads over long distances, and because of the increasing scarcity of food.

While it is important to put stress on this, it is more dynamic to show the central role that women will play in the environmental movement. The indigenous women who have been involved in struggles

against the destruction of their ancestral lands are speaking not only as victims but also as liberators. Their comprehensive knowledge and experience in the production and defense of life in the face of anti-nature and anti-women programs of government and other vested interests are very valuable.

The ongoing struggles which they are still waging up to the present need the support of those who are concerned for the environment and those who are against the increasing marginalization and oppression of indigenous women. By linking and identifying with their struggles, social activists in the First World and in the Third World will have the strength to resist the moves of vested interests to co-opt their movements. Presently, multinational corporations and the IMF-WB are trying very hard

to present themselves as equally concerned with the environment. While this attempt to posture themselves as such is an effect of the growing strength of environmental movement, we should never be deluded.

The dangers of being co-opted can be avoided if we do not fall into the trap of handling the issues of environment, development or women in a dichotomized or fragmented manner. The focus of movements working for radical change should be in finding common grounds among their seemingly disparate struggles and seeking strength from the most marginalized and oppressed sectors of people in the world: the indigenous women in the Third World.

The formulation of an alternative framework for development, in the face of the failures of the mainstream development model, should seriously look into what the indigenous women can offer. Those who have fought and struggled to maintain their ancestral domain and their environment at the expense of their lives are the environmental and development experts. Their roles in history should be made visible and their efforts to strengthen subsistence economies should be supported.



Photo: ILO

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*About the author: Victoria Tauli-Corpuz is the executive director of the Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Center, Inc., a service support agency for women in the Cordillera region.*

# WOMEN, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT FROM A NORTHERN PERSPECTIVE

By Wendy Harcourt  
WIDE Women and Environment Group

Our starting point for discussions in the WIDE women and environment group has been to look at how environment is both a northern and southern development issue. The present environmental and development crisis affects all of us, in different ways, and therefore all of us have to look to our own solutions as well as working with partners towards global solutions. This has been a subtle shift in our way of thinking where until very recently we saw our major role in development as northern women as an instrumental one in lobbying northern colleagues to be more aware of southern women's needs: ensuring that their concerns were on the agenda.

With the impetus of the environment crisis and in response to what we increasingly recognize as the lack of a northern women's voice on development alternatives within a global context, we are now moving towards a broader assessment of northern development issues

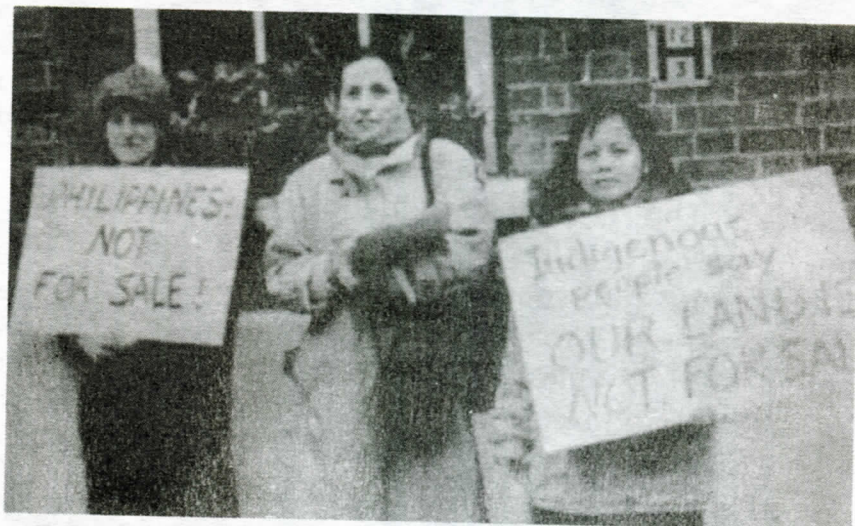


Photo: Gerry Atkinson

and learning from the reality of the changes in the world around us.

The UNCED process, building up to the Rio Earth Summit and beyond, has been part of the whole re-thinking in the 1980s of the costs of development - both as environmental and equity issues. The environmental crisis, what was once seen as a fringe "greenie" concern quite outside our social, political or economic life, had moved to centerstage and has to be seriously considered by politicians and people throughout the world, albeit with different emphases. Similarly, growing economic independence and the recognition that we have to share "one world's" resources for all of us to survive means that development issues are no longer just the terrain of the South.

In WIDE we are not "technical experts" in environment nor in linking women, environment and development do we plan to "add" women to the environmental equation along sectoral lines, but rather we can contribute to the debate our gender perspective to look at the changes necessary in our developmental approach to environment, economics, society and culture. From our various histories and politics we are reexamining the economic growth imperative, the legacy of positivist science and the costs of modernization for women, non-western cultures and peoples in order to create a comprehensive gender approach to northern develop-

We need to resist the universalizing model of development which is based on the uncritical belief of the manageability of people and nature..

ment policies within the context of the global environmental crisis. In this way we are seeking both to understand and to empower our own position as women working in the North and to contribute a set of gender literate, people focused, ecologically and culturally aware strategies to the worldwide movements seeking to transform the present iniquitous and damaging form of development.

## SEARCHING FOR A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

One of our first tasks is to disclose the stereotypes in which the debate is being carried out. One such stereotype is that women are closer to nature and therefore have a special knowledge to "save the earth". In WIDE we have been uncomfortable with that assumption partly because of its seductiveness, it would be nice to think we could save the world, but mainly because it seemed to leave women outside of the present attempts to change world development and to deny other group's, including men's, important contributions. The assumption that women are closer to nature, even if seen in a positive light, seems to echo some of the very prejudices we, as feminists, have been fighting. On the other hand the debates on environment certainly have marginalized women's contribution and many so called "experts" on environment do not see where women or a gender analysis enter the debate at all.

We have therefore thought it important not to dismiss the special appeal to women but to look in our search for a gender perspective on environment and development at the conceptual links between women, environment and nature and how they relate to economic development and the modernization project of science.

## POWER/KNOWLEDGE

Development in its historical context has been part of the modernizing project based on the rationale of unlimited growth and unlimited resources to economic and social progress, part of a world view which originated in the enlightenment and helped produce modern science and modern economics. Science and economics are powerful systems of knowledge and practice based on a system of dominance of men over women, of culture over nature, the rational over the irrational. Our current environmental and development dilemmas are founded in this world view. In order to formulate strategies to transform development we have to question the "neutrality" of this world view and look at the patterns of hierarchy in knowledge and power which are deeply inscribed into our thinking but are made to appear "normal," "natural," "neutral."

## GENDER AND NATURE

Feminism and ecology have revealed the hierarchies of thought and practices in our modern discourses on the feminine and nature. At the heart of the modern scientific discourse is the domination of women through gender relations and the domination of nature through a science base on the objectification and exploitation of natural resources. Since the enlightenment, science as the domain of men has excluded women as "the other"

as the "sex," the gender, more defined by her bodily functions not by her mind. Within the same reasoning nature, symbolic of the unknown, to be conquered and tamed became more and more the object and product of human scientific action. Images of nature as female, passive ready to be tamed and controlled parallel images of women as the objects not subjects of knowledge systems. In this way nature and

women are linked together as the objects of science and "man's" desire to transform and control the "natural" world. Hence women have become symbolic of nature and its oppression by men. Women are seen as more "natural," instinctive and caring but less rational, less able to be part of the scientific world of progress. The practice of science, of our modern systems of thought, in its very conception appear to justify hierarchical gender relations and neutralize other knowledges of nature.

...nature  
and women  
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and "man's"  
desire to  
transform  
and control  
the "natu-  
ral" world.

## QUESTIONING THE FOUNDATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

This system of thought based on the hierarchies of rational science over women and nature was translated into the project of development where rationality and progress have come to be identified with the science of economics. Through colonialism and development practice these hierarchies of western thought have been transported to the Third World where other ways of understanding nature and gender relations were excluded in favor of modern economics and progress. The scientific discourse of economics and development systematically devalues every "other" (difference) to the male, western, bourgeois self: women, other races, lower classes and nature are reduced to objects to be utilized and raw material to be reinterpreted through western knowledge systems. First through



colonialism and now through development cooperation, western power seeks to integrate all peoples and nature as human and natural resources for the universal modernizing project of economic progress controlled and determined by (and largely benefiting) the western powers. The ecological crisis can be seen as the inevitable outcome of the logic and practice of a development based on a science and technological expertise whose object since the enlightenment has been to turn everything into resources for appropriation and to dominate people and nature for economic reasons.

### MULTIPLE POSITIONED STRATEGIES

Going back to the question posed above about the appeal to women to save the world we can see that the fundamental concepts of the western world view leads us to see women as outside culture, the non-holders of scientific knowledge, linked to nature as the objects rather than subjects of western culture. Given the present environmental crisis and failure of development it is tempting to reverse the dominant hierarchies and argue that the excluded, women with their special relationship with nature, must now take the reigns of power. A strategy which has its use. But even if women could use some instinctive knowledge which could save the planet, how do we make men give up their power and change their whole way of see-

...how do we make men give up their power and change their whole way of seeing to a non-dominating, non-hierarchical world?

ing to a non-dominating, non-hierarchical world? It is perhaps a little too simple just to state that women understand nature better - this is after all what men have been telling us for a long time - can we just ask those in power to reassess the values they give to the "other" of nature and women?

What perhaps would be a more useful strategy is to try and change the knowledge/power base on which development is founded. This means looking at empowering women and nature not within the dominant hierarchies of power but from where we stand in our own locus of power and knowledge. We need to resist the universalizing model of development which is based on the uncritical belief of the manageability of people and nature by taking up our own power in our local context as women from the North, grassroots movements in the South, environmentalists, political activists, ordinary people in the South and North who are seeking change. We need to learn and devise strategies based on multiple realities and ways of seeing the world which break what are the apparent "truths" of our dominant knowledge system. In this strategy WIDE, as women from the North, would join with many others who are questioning the imperative for economic growth begun in the North and exported to the South and who are seeking to form alternative power/knowledges which challenges the deep male bias in western culture, the unthinking exploitation of nature and seek to restore the place of "the other."

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Source: *WIDE Bulletin* 1992:1, c/o SID, Palazzo Civiltà del Lavoro, 00144 Rome, Italy.

## CUSTOM

Custom  
is an English word  
English  
a confluence  
of streams of words  
is a reservoir  
of every shade  
nuance and hue  
sharply  
contrasting  
Melanesia's  
limited vocabulary  
supplementing  
non-verbal  
communication.

Inadvertantly  
misappropriating  
"Custom"  
misapplied  
bastardised  
murdered  
a frankenstein  
corpse  
conveniently  
recalled  
to intimidate  
women  
the timid  
the ignorant  
the weak.

"Custom"  
oft neglected  
by non-conforming  
advocates  
the loudest  
proponents  
empty vessels...

Theoretical  
"Custom"  
more honoured  
in omission  
than commission.

A word  
sandwiched  
between  
multifariously varied  
traditional vernacular  
and accidentally  
occidental  
franco-britannic  
life and lingo  
perplexed  
by pandemonic  
condominium  
complex  
Custom is  
as custom does !

Grace Meza Molisa

# AFTER THE EARTH SUMMIT, WOMEN PLAN ACTION

By Cristina B. Bontuyan

**F**our months after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) or Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, a meeting on Women, Environment and Development (WED) was held in October 1992 at the International Centre in Amsterdam. Initiated by **Both ENDS**, a Dutch NGO on environment and development, the WED Meeting was participated in by women from the different women's groups and NGOs worldwide. The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss and determine diverse actions and focal points for women's involvement in environment and sustainable development.

Five major focal points were identified and discussed, namely vision, approaches, methodology, tools for change and specific issues. For vision, the participants tackled: fundamental change of existing patriarchal development models and strategies, the need to further define WED and Women in Development (WID), sustainable livelihood and living, alternative analysis with women's perspectives. For approaches, the assembly identified the need to be aware of local context and local knowledge, clear linkages and awareness of groups working a given area, identification of op-

portunities for partnership to nature global sisterhood. In addition, approaches should be contextualized, decentralized, interdependent, a learning process and holistic. The methodology to attain the vision must be participatory in nature and uses the above-mentioned approaches. The gathering of women highlighted the importance of **Agenda 21** blueprint of post-UNCED scenarios in all area relating to sustainable development of the planet from now till the 21st century.

As the transition concerned every living inhabitant of this earth, it is necessary to examine, monitor its implementation, and work for its improvement. Gender balance in all newly created bodies like the Sustainable Development Commission and the Earth Council must be pursued. Enhance networking, research and other capacity building of women's groups in WED must be encouraged. Issues that need special attention like consumption and lifestyle must be tackled by WED groups. Lets get involved and participate in the 1994 UN Conference on Population and the Women's Conference in 1995 preparatory activities and voice our concern.

Also noted at the meeting was the importance of information sharing on population issues and

Global Environmental Facility (GEF) among others. The GEF is a created funding mechanism presently managed by the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Education Programme (UNEP). Its primary task is to ensure adequate financing for the implementation of **Agenda 21**.



Participating groups in the WED Meeting were: WorldWIDE Network, Women in Development-Europe (WIDE), YWCA/Y's Eyes, International Women's Tribune Centre (IWTC), Women's Environment Network (WEN), ELCI-WEDNET, WEDO, Isis International, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), REDEH, Both ENDS and observers from the Institute of Social Sciences (ISS) and Institute for Development Research Amsterdam (INDRA).

# UNCED ACCORDS: FOCUS ON WOMEN



## INTRODUCTION

The two-year UNCED process culminated in the signing of two conventions and two non-binding agreements. Women worldwide worked hard to get gender issues into these internationally-accepted texts., fighting for the specific attention and wording that, they hope, will provide the legal and moral foundations from which to press for changes within their countries and communities.

The non-binding agreements (the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21) belong to the category of "soft" law - internationally-accepted principles and plans that signal formal, rather than legal, commitments. This international consensus can then be used as the basis of moral arguments and the standard to which national practices should conform. Its impact is cumulative, as it guides the evolution of attitudes and practices that will, ideally, one day be accepted as customary.

## RIO DECLARATION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The Rio Declaration (originally called the Earth Charter), contains 27 principles, leading with: "Human beings are at the center of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature."

**Focus on women:** Principle 20 states: "Women have a vital role to play in environmental management and development. Their full participa-

tion is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development."

## AGENDA 21

This 800-page blueprint for action is a statement of international consensus. Its 40 chapters and more than 100 program areas are divided into four sections: 1) Social and Economic Dimensions of Sustainable Development; 2) Conservation and Management Resources for Development, covering environmental issues; 3) Strengthening the Role of Major Groups, focusing on women, youth, indigenous people, NGOs and trade unions; and 4) Means of Implementation, including financial resources, technology transfer, science, education, international legal instruments, etc.

**Focus on women:** Women are given specific attention in many sections of Agenda 21. Sections making special reference to women's needs are: Poverty (chapter 3), Demographic Dynamics and Sustainability (chapter 5), Human Health (chapter 6), Environmentally Sound Management of Biotechnology (chapter 16) and Global Action for Women Towards Sustainable and Equitable Development (chapter 24). The last chapter seeks to increase women's participation in sustainable development by implementing previous UN accords (i.e. Nairobi, CEDAW), strengthening special UN agencies (UNIFEM, INSTRAW) and empowering women at all levels of society.

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Source: *Women's Health Journal* - 3/92. Isis International Casilla 2067, Correo Central, Santiago, Chile.

# EXTRACTS FROM: *IF THE WORLD WERE A VILLAGE OF 1,000 PEOPLE*

By Donella H. Meadows

## If the world were a village of 1,000 people, it would include:

- 584 Asians
- 124 Africans
- 95 East and West Europeans
- 84 Latin Americans
- 55 people from the Ex-Soviets
- 52 North Americans
- 6 Australians and New Zealanders

## The people of the village have considerable difficulty in communicating:

- 165 people speak Mandarin
- 86 English
- 83 Hindu/Urdu
- 64 Spanish
- 58 Russian
- 37 Arabic

That list accounts for the mother tongues of only half the villagers. The other half speak (in descending order of frequency) Bengali, Portuguese, Indonesian, Japanese, German, French, and 200 other languages.

One-third (330) of the 1,000 people in the world village are children and only 60 are over the age of 65. Half the children are immunized against preventable infectious diseases such as measles and polio.

Just under half of the married women in the village have access to and use modern contraceptives.

In this thousand-population community, 200 people receive 75 percent of the income; another 200 receive only two percent of the income.

About one-third have access to clean safe drinking water.

Of the 670 adults in the village, half are illiterate.

The village has 6 acres of land per person, 6,000 acres in all, of which:

- 700 acres are cropland
- 1,400 acres pasture
- 1,900 acres woodland
- 2,000 acres desert, tundra, pavement, and other wasteland

The woodland is declining rapidly; the wasteland increasing. The other land categories are roughly stable.

The village allocates 83 percent of its fertilizer to 40 percent of its cropland - that owned by the richest and best-fed 270 people. Excess fertilizer running off this land causes pollution in lakes and wells. The remaining 60 percent of the land, with its 17 percent

of the fertilizer, produces 28 percent of the food grains and feeds 73 percent of the people. The average grain yield on the land is one-third the harvest achieved by the richer villagers.

The village has a total budget each year, public and private, of over \$3 million - \$3,000 per person if it is distributed evenly (which, we have already seen, it isn't).

## Of the total \$3 million:

- \$181,000 goes to weapons and warfare
- \$159,000 for education
- \$132,000 for health care

The village has buried beneath it enough explosive power in nuclear weapons to blow itself to smithereens many times over. These weapons are under the control of just 100 of the people. The other 900 people are watching them with deep anxiety, wondering whether they can learn to get along together; and if they do, whether they might set off the weapons anyway through inattention or technical bungling; and if they ever decide to dismantle the weapons, where in the world village would they dispose of the dangerous radioactive materials of which the weapons are made.



# STATEMENT ON POPULATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

**T**he current macro debate which portrays population growth as the central variable in environmental degradation is not supported by research findings. Extremes of wealth and poverty, leading to overconsumption by some and the erosion of livelihoods for others, skewed distribution and use of resources, and patterns of human settlement (including urbanization) have a stronger demonstrable relationship to environmental degradation than population size per se. In addition, macro/global economic strategies and policy decisions are increasingly affecting both people and the natural environment. These findings are supported in study after study, across a wide range of social and environmental conditions.

There has been a long tradition of people adapting to and shaping the natural environment through the accumulation of local knowledge and experience. This relationship has been increasingly disrupted as a result of external global forces, notably the globalization of capital, large-scale technology and communications, subordination within world

markets, and rising levels of consumption by the rich, particularly concentrated in industrialized countries. These processes have eroded livelihoods, the natural environment, and the interaction between people and their environment. The focus on population growth as the key factor in degrading the environment is thus misplaced.

Because poor women and children are the poorest of the poor, and because of the central role that women play in household and natural resource management, they are particularly affected by the erosion of livelihoods. It has been repeatedly demonstrated that fertility is determined by cultural and socio-economic factors such as women's economic autonomy, legal and political rights, education, and access to reproductive health services and health. Fertility decline is also related to the improved survival chances of offspring. However, general erosion of livelihoods as a result of global economic and political forces, and resulting national policies, are increasingly undermining women's access to health services (including family planning services) and education.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

★ Despite current ideologies and policies favoring trade liberalization free of state regulation, market forces cannot be relied upon to protect the livelihoods of people or the health of the environment.

★ The global community (including NGOs and international institutions), national and local governments have an obligation to protect the environment and to help to ensure the sustainable livelihoods of present and future generations.

★ The extractive industries including mining, logging and petroleum tend to disrupt both the physical and social environment. It is therefore recommended that:

- ❖ an international database of the social, economic and environmental effects of these traded resources be established;
- ❖ information drawn from the database be made available to local communities;
- ❖ social and environmental impact studies be commissioned by governments; and

❖ an international code of ethics for extractive companies be incorporated into all concessions and contracts.

★ Intensive agriculture, transformative industries and military activities that may produce waste and pollution as well as severe social and economic dislocation adversely affect the environment and the health of people. Critical assessment of the environmental and human effects of these processes is urgently needed.

★ In order to promote the sustainability of agriculture, international organizations, national governments, and producers' associations must develop and disseminate more careful guidelines and regulations. This would help to ensure that the use of modern agricultural technology such as fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, irrigation and machinery have the least deleterious impact on the environment and people.

★ There must be a reassessment of macro-economic forces such as debt, resulting structural adjustment programs, financial and trade flows and agreements, and national government interventions, to mitigate their dramatic and damaging effects on the natural environment and livelihoods of the poor.

★ In order to promote sustainable development in general and livelihoods in particular:

❖ Management of local resources and the definition of "environmental problems", must be democratized so that local communities can influence and invoke state regulations and policies which protect their access to resources.



❖ Women's entitlements and access to key services must increase, e.g.

- ✓ education
- ✓ employment/child care
- ✓ health care for themselves and their families
- ✓ adequate reproductive health services
- ✓ equal property and legal rights.

❖ Women must have a stronger role in decision making.

❖ Women and men must have increased access to information on the environmental damage of the industrialized products and processes which they encounter in every day life.

★ Governments, corporations, academic institutions and society must promote more environmentally-sound and sustainable forms of development and technology, including the transfer of environmentally-appropriate technology. To this end, innovative measures must be developed and implemented with respect to national income accounting systems, taxation and legislation.

★ There must be a concerted effort on the part of the local, national, and global communities to change values that have led to overconsumption, so as to promote a new ethic which attaches primacy to caring for people in harmony with the environment.

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*Concerned scholars participating in a SSRC/ISSC/DAWN workshop on population and the environment, Mexico, Jan/Feb 1992*

# A Declaration of Interdependence



*When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary to create a new bond among the peoples of the earth, connecting each to the other, undertaking equal responsibilities under the laws of nature, a decent respect for the welfare of humankind and all life on earth requires us to Declare our Interdependence.*

*We recognize that humankind has not woven the web of life; we are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. Whatever befalls the earth befalls also the family of the earth.*

*We are concerned about the wounds and bleeding sores on the naked body of the earth: the famine, the poverty; the children born into hunger and disease; the*

*destruction of forests and fertile lands; the chemical and nuclear accidents; the wars and deaths in so many parts of the world.*

*It is our belief that man's dominion over nature parallels the subjugation of women in many societies, denying them sovereignty over their lives and bodies. Until all societies truly value women and the environment, their joint degradation will continue.*

*Women's views on economic justice, human rights, reproduction and the achievement of peace must be heard at local, national, and international forums, wherever policies are made that could affect the future of life on earth. Partnership among all peoples is essential for the survival of the planet.*

*If we are to have a common future, we must commit ourselves to preserve the natural wealth of our earth for future generations.*

*As women we accept our responsibility and declare our intention to:*

*★ Link with others--young and old, women and men, people of all races, religions, cultures and political beliefs--in a common concern for global survival,*



★ *Be aware in our private, public and working lives of actions we can take to safeguard our food, fresh water, clean air and quality of life;*

★ *Make women's collective experiences and judgments equal to experiences and value judgments of men when policies are made that affect our future and future generations;*

★ *Expose the connections between environmental degradation, greed, uncontrolled militarism and technology devoid of human values. Insist that human and ecological values take absolute precedence when decisions are made in national affairs;*

★ *Change government, economic and social policies to protect the well-being of the most vulnerable among us and to end poverty and inequality;*

★ *Work to dismantle nuclear and conventional weapons, build trust among peoples and nations, and use all available international institutions and networks to achieve common security for the family of earth.*

*We also declare that, whenever and wherever people meet to decide the fate of the planet, it is our intention to participate on an equal footing, with full and*

*fair representation, equivalent to our number and kind on earth.*

*Drawn from the words and philosophies of the drafters of the US Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776); Chief Seattle to President Franklin Pierce (1855); Wangari Maathai, founder, Green Belt Movement, and Chair, National Council of Women of Kenya (1988); The UN Population Fund (1988); Women's Foreign Policy Council; The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987); Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders Global Survival Conference, Oxford (April 1988).*

*Source: Women's Environment and Development Program, Women's Foreign Policy Council, 1133 Broadway, Room 924, New York, NY 10010 USA. Tel.: (212) 691-7316.*



# THE UNITED NATIONS' APPROACH TO WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

**T**he United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has established a global **Women, Environment and Development Programme (WED)** which aims to give poor women in the developing world the support they need to establish sustainable relationships with environment. WED was established in 1990 to promote integration of women and development concerns in the global environment debate.

The WED programme aims to give women:

- ★ the means to farm more productively;
- ★ the knowledge and technologies to use and manage resources more efficiently;
- ★ the financial support necessary to act in their own self interest and in the interest of environmental sustainability; and
- ★ an effective voice in environmental decision making and the issues which impact on sustainable development.

Unifem's WED programme recognizes the powerful vested interest which women have in

the environment and helps to develop their potential both as producers and managers of natural resources.

The following projects are among those supported by UNIFEM's Women, Environment and Development action programme in keeping with the UNCED strategy for the 21st Century Agenda 21:

• In Mali, previously unemployed female university graduates received training, equipment and credit in 1988 to establish a waste disposal business in the capital city, Bamako. The business has prospered and currently provides garbage removal services for 18,000 residents.

• In 12 drought prone villages of Rajasthan, India, 500 village women have been encouraged to plant and harvest mulberry trees. The trees provide natural fencing and help anchor the soil against erosion but they also provide the women with income. The trees are regularly pruned to maintain a leafy shrublike shape and the cuttings are used for fuel. The berries are sweet and nutritious for human consumption while the leaves provide fodder for poultry and cattle as well as food for silkworms which

the women also raise (sericulture).

• In the community of Al-Habeel, Yemen, women have been shown how to construct biodigesters which produce gas for their cooking stoves and ovens. This basic biogas technology has spared nearby forests which previously supplied about 85 percent of Al-Habeel's energy and has relieved the women of the need to collect firewood for about three hours a day.

• In the northern Mexican country of Tempoal, women have been trained as mechanics to build hand operated water pumps. The project has grown from workshop to factory scale employing 250 women in the production of 5,000 units a year. The availability of low cost handpumps has greatly reduced the hours which many thousands of poor Mexican women spend collecting and carting water each day, while improving water quality and the health of those who drink it.

UNIFEM  
304 East 45th Street, 6th Floor  
New York, NY 10017 USA  
Tel.: (212) 906-6400; Fax:  
(212) 906-6705

# THE ENVIRONMENT, ECONOMY AND THE WELL-BEING OF PEOPLE - CANADIAN STYLE

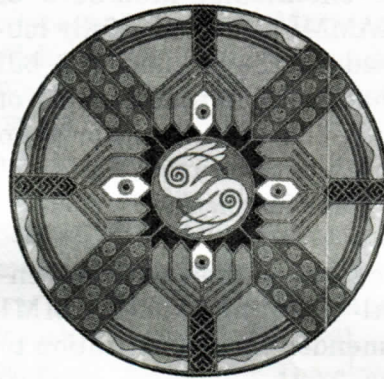
**I**nternational Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) is a response to rising global concern about environment, economy and the well-being of people. Its mandate is to promote sustainable development in decision making.

IISD's focus is twofold:

## Policy Research

To integrate environment, economy and social needs into decision making at all levels, including personal, community, national and international:

- ★ reforming public and private sector policies regarding budgets, trade, accountability and other key determinants of sustainable development;
- ★ influencing personal and community actions;
- ★ creating and modifying institutions for the transition to sustainable development.



## Communications

To engage people of all backgrounds in producing and sharing knowledge about sustainable development:

- ★ identifying locally generated knowledge and action for broader dissemination and integration into decision making.
- ★ exploring new ways to communicate sustainable development concepts and practices.
- ★ providing broad access to sustainable development information.

IISD works through networks and partnerships in a global effort.

It is forging partnerships around the world with international organizations, national bodies, businesses, universities, NGOs, local communities and others in seeking sustainable development solutions.

The creation of the IISD was part of Canada's response to the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Report), which called for cooperation among government, business, the voluntary sector and individuals toward the integration of environment and economy in decision making.

IISD was officially established in March 1990. It is located at:

161 Portage Avenue East -  
6th floor  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Canada R3B OY4  
Tel.: (204) 958 7700  
Fax: (204) 958 7710

# DEFENDING THE LAND, DEFENDING THEIR LIVELIHOOD - WOMEN OF KAMMI IN THE PHILIPPINES

**A** group of peasant women in the Philippines, organized under the Kababaihang Magbubukid ng Mindoro (Peasant Women of Mindoro) carry as one of their major concerns the issue of environment. Their activities include a campaign on sustainable agriculture, reforestation and coming up with an environment-friendly lifestyle.

Founded in 1987, KAMMI aims to enhance the peasant women's role in politics, economy, culture and other aspects of society. At present, it has 17 chapters in 8 municipalities in Occidental Mindoro. It has self-help livelihood projects and seminars and trainings on leadership, organizational management, peasant women's situation, feminism, sexuality and reproductive rights, women and land reform and women and the environment.

In their campaign on sustainable agriculture, the women have successfully asserted that they cut down their use of pesticides and refrain from spraying when transplanting is

about to start. This resulted in a decrease in the number of cases of dizziness and vomiting due to too much exposure to chemicals. Members of KAMMI also successfully lobbied for the passing of a bill that prohibits the burning of hay, leaves and other crop residues that causes the loss of organic fertilizers.

To focus on their environmental campaign, KAMMI amended their constitution to

include a committee for the protection of the environment in each chapter of their organization.

For more information about KAMMI write to :  
Mindoro Institute for Development, Inc.  
2896 Dagohoy St.,  
San Jose  
Occidental Mindoro 5100  
Philippines



Photo: Chaneg Vol. III No.1 Jan-April 1993

# LAW NETWORK ESTABLISHED

**W**omen in Law and Development Africa Region Network (WILDAF) with its headquarters and secretariat in Harare, Zimbabwe, was established in 1990.

To establish and facilitate communication among organizations in Africa working in the areas of women, law and development and specifically in the areas of legal education, law and policy, legal services and to further clarify and promote effective ways of using the law as an organizing and educational tool at the local, national and regional levels. It also provides training and advises local groups in designing and improving legal programs and strategies. It coordinates the compilation and exchange of case studies and legal research and also aims at establishing and maintaining a regional emergency response network to respond quickly to serious violations of women's rights.

WILDAF currently has a membership of 14 countries in both Anglophone and Francophone countries in Africa. Each of these countries has established

WILDAF at national levels with one member representing the country at the steering committee, the Executive body of WILDAF. Uganda's current representative is Ms Yeri Wakabi, legal officer of Uganda Women Lawyers Association (FIDA).

In Uganda the present members of WILDAF coordinating committee include The Ministry of Women, Culture and Youth, National Council of Women, Action for Development and FIDA. Membership is open to any organization or individual(s) working in the areas of women, law and development.

The committee meets once a month to discuss mutual areas of concern.

WILDAF between 22nd January and 3rd February, 1990 ran a training workshop in Harare with a view to training a team of WILDAF resource persons in the areas of popular legal education methodologies. This was the first of WILDAF activities which will in turn stimulate activities at national levels.

Two members from Uganda were trained namely; Alugresia Akwi Ogojo (ACFODE) and Ms Yeri Wakabi (FIDA), WILDAF - Uganda held a trainers workshop for its members in December 1991. The workshop aimed at establishing an effective strategy for coordinating activities of all organizations carrying out women, law and development related programmes and to strengthen the capacity of its members in carrying out legal education.

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Isis International is an international non-governmental women's organization, founded in 1974 to promote the empowerment of women through information sharing, communication and networking. Its network reaches over 50,000 individuals and organizations in 150 countries, from grassroots groups to policy makers. Isis International's activities include resource centers and information sharing, publications and communications, health networking, advocacy of women's issues and skills sharing. It has two offices, one in Santiago, Chile and the other in Manila, Philippines.

### **Isis International Resource Centers**

The Resource Center of each office houses a collection of documentation and information from all over the world on a wide range of development and women's issues. This information is processed by the Resource Center and Information Program of each office and incorporated into bibliographic, human resources and other databases. It is made available to all interested groups, institutions and individuals through information services and specialized publications including resource directories, bibliographic catalogues and publications on specific themes. The Resource Centers are also open to visitors. Regular Resource Center publications include the bilingual Base de Datos Mujer--Women's Data Base and Documentas, a bibliographic bulletin in Spanish, from our office in Chile; and Resource Update, a bibliographic bulletin and Information Packs on key issues, in English from our office in the Philippines.

### **Isis International Publications**

The Communication Networking Program of each office publishes a quarterly magazine: *Mujeres en Accion*, in Spanish, from our office in Chile and *Women in Action*, in English, from our office in the Philippines. These publications bring together information, analyses and perspectives about and from women around the world and serve as communication channels for sharing ideas, experiences and models of organization and action.

Books on key issues are published twice a year in Spanish through the Isis Internacional Ediciones de las Mujeres in Chile and on an occasional basis in English through the Isis International Book Series in the Philippines.

The *Women's Health Journal* in English is published by the Health Networking Program of our office in Chile with the collaboration of the office in the Philippines. The office in Chile also publishes the Spanish language *Revista de la Red de Salud de las Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe*.

*Women Envision*, a monthly newsletter in English is published by the Advocacy and Campaigns Program of our office in the Philippines. It contains information on activities leading up to the World Conference and NGO Forum in China 1995 and other international meetings and campaigns.

### **Health Networking**

The Health Networking Program of our office in Chile coordinates the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network while the office in the Philippines undertakes health networking activities in the Asia-Pacific region. Both offices offer health information services and resource materials.

### **Advocacy, Campaigns and Policy**

Our office in Chile coordinates the Information and Policy Program on Violence Against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Advocacy and Campaigns Program of the office in the Philippines produces Action Alerts on campaigns, actions and solidarity appeals of women's groups and networks around the world.

### **Networking Services**

Both offices offer referral and assistance to individuals and organizations, locally and internationally in linking with others around the world.

### **Training**

Both offices offer technical assistance and training in communication and information management, in organizing women's resource centers and in the use of new information technologies.

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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

*Sustainable development is described as efficient utilization of resources for improving the quality of life. The development should serve the needs of the present generation without impairing opportunities of future generations. Reaching the goal of sustainable development requires simultaneous progress along at least four dimensions: economic, human, environmental and technical.*

*Many experts share the view that sustainable development means different things for industrialized and developing countries, but in both of these countries environmental protection is a basis element of human development.*

*In developing countries, alleviation is a crucial dimension in environmental protection because there is a close link between poverty and environmental degradation.*

Source: Asian Conference on Religion and Peace (ACRP) Newsletter, Vol. 2., Sr. No. 1, Jan/Feb. 1993. Published by ACRP, P.O. Box 60, Ngam Wong Wan P.O., Nonthaburi 11000, Thailand.

