



# Women & Environments

international



## FLYING WITH A NET Women & Networks

- Inviting Partners to Partner
- Landdykes and Landscape
- Women at the Sustainability Summit
- Nigerian Women Take on Oil Giants
- Index of Articles - Issues 41 - 55

SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE - \$5.95



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**Mission Statement**

Women & Environments International is a unique Canadian magazine, which examines women's multiple relations to their environments – natural, built and social – from feminist perspectives. Since 1976, it has provided a forum for academic research and theory, professional practice and community experience. By volunteering their time to the collective editing and production of Women & Environments, Editorial Board members contribute to feminist social change. The magazine is associated with the Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Studies at New College, University of Toronto.

**Subscriptions:** Individuals – in Canada: 3 double issues (18 months) CAD \$22.00; 6 double issues CAD \$38.00; in the US or Overseas, please remit above rates in US funds or CAD \$33.00 for 3 and CAD \$57.00 for 6 double issues; Institutions and Businesses – in Canada: 2 double issues CAD \$35.00; in US and Overseas: US \$35.00 or CAD \$50.00

**Women & Environments International Magazine:** ISSN 1499-1993, was founded as Women & Environments in 1976. From Fall, 1997 to Summer 2001 it published under the title WE International. It publishes 2 double issues annually. Women & Environments International Magazine is a member of Best of the Alternative Press and is indexed in Alternative Press Index, Canadian Periodical Index, Social Sciences Index and Women's Studies Abstracts.

Articles in Women & Environments International Magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Board or Committee.

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e-mail: we.mag@utoronto.ca  
Website: www.weimag.com

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement # 40047569  
PAP Registration # 09211  
Printed on recycled and acid free paper

## Upcoming Issues

We are already working on the following issues themes:

**911 AND BEYOND** – women rebuilding their communities in conflict zones – the latest feminist research/theory. It will report on women's projects – successes/failures/barriers and gender implications. We will cover developments in the area of conflict resolution and community rebuilding – physical, socio-psychological, and environmental.

**WOMEN & HEALTH** – the social, environmental and economic dimensions of women's health; the issue will center around the 2002 International Women and Health Meeting, held at York University in Toronto. Presentations ranged from reproductive health to ecological links and effects of violence women's health.

**WOMEN & WORK - AN UNEASY UNION?** – explorations of women's work experiences in a rapidly changing environment and increasingly globalized market place. We will look at public, private, cooperative sectors, small/micro business ventures and organized unions from comparative and analytical perspectives.

**WOMEN GLOBALIZATION AND ACTIVISM** – the feminist and environmental politics of women, North and South, in the anti-globalization movement. How is that movement reflecting feminist and environmental/feminist positions?

**WOMEN & THEIR BUILT ENVIRONMENTS** – an update on women's projects and thinking to realize homes, jobs, services, ways of getting around and communities that meet women's needs.

Your ideas, participation in issue teams, contribution of articles, news and funds are a critical part of Women & Environments International Magazine.

## Thank You

The publication of this issue was carried out with the aid of a grant from International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa, Canada. Women & Environments International Magazine gratefully acknowledges the general support of the Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Studies, University of Toronto, and the financial support provided by the Publications Assistance Program (PAP) by sharing the mailing costs. Thanks also to the Huairou Commission and Bertha Modlich for their donations.



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**Irene Wamala**, editor with the University of Toronto Student Health Outreach Program while completing her BSc and now member of the Women & Environment Editorial Board, Irene has written numerous articles on a wide range of subjects.

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## Flying With A Net – A Word From This Issue's Editors

Exchanging experiences, information, and ideas — keeping in touch with one another — was a primary objective for the women who founded this magazine 26 years ago. Networking issues have been an integral part of the Women and Environments tradition. In an increasingly 'globalized' world, networking and mutual support amongst people with similar concerns has become a necessity as well as a pleasure. Over the decades we have seen networking immensely facilitated by the magic of our continually evolving electronic technology.

"Boys' networks" have existed throughout patriarchal history. They allowed men with privilege and power to exchange information and reinforce values. The challenge for women is not just to create a "girls' network" to match the "boys'," but to get "women's networks" that are capable of challenging mainstream values, proposing alternatives and implementing change.

In this issue, dedicated to networks, we include Jackie Leavitt's groundbreaking framework for the Huairou Commission, a world-wide coalition of grass roots women. Jennifer Hales presents the role of Feminist Popular Education in bringing about change. We talk to Joanna Kerr, a leader in the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AVID) on her views on feminist networking. Catriona Sandilands opens our minds to the unique community of lesbian separatists in Oregon. Prabha Khosla is bringing you a first hand report from Johannesburg on the World Summit on Sustainable Development, including women's efforts on issues challenging our human existence. Regina Cochrane analyzes the "new politics" of (eco)feminists at this year's G8 Summit in Calgary, Canada. Rachel Thompson allows us to witness the values and role of women in a traditional First Nations ceremony in British Columbia, Canada.

Additional reports cover the first international seminar on Women and Safety, Nigerian women taking on multinational oil giants, Jamaican women providing commu-

nity services, Ukrainian sisters struggling for clean drinking water and other reports from Greece and Turkey. They all reflect the powerful changes women can bring about when they work together.

In addition, this Networking issue features

our traditional list of women interested in staying in the circuit, profiles of some remarkable women, and an index of articles in our past eight double issues.

So dip in, surf on, and continue to keep afloat!

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Hi stranger!

So I finished my PhD in Hamilton and moved out here to the West Coast, been here for 5 years, loving it, living in a lesbian housing co-op with my partner of 14 years (all settled down). I worked for a few years with an NGO on safer communities stuff, made lots of contacts around the province and decided to go it alone. So now I am working for myself on various projects.

I'm in the midst of what has now become a five-year project on women and community safety in small, rural and/or isolated communities. We've been working with local government and women's groups in small communities to bring them together to think about planning for safer communities.

Most interesting and a little challenging, as you can imagine! So over the next three years, we are stepping back from the individual community work, to trying to work on some infrastructure that would make it easier for those women to do that work. So we're doing a bit of research, trying to develop pilot educational projects with some relevant institutions such as the School of Community and Regional Planning at UBC (get them while they are students), Planning Institute of BC (get them through professional development) and the Justice Institute of BC (where many feminist anti-violence workers go for training). We want to introduce them to the notion of the importance of community planning.

We're also trying to make small inroads into the Union of BC Municipalities, and develop a working group of folks at the provincial level who need to be part of the dialogue. We developed a manual this year basically a "how-to," targeted at local government and women-serving organizations. We are working together on violence against women, planning, women's safety, etc., starting with the good old women's safety audit tool as a community development mechanism. The beauty of it is that we are sending it to all 201 municipalities and regional districts, and all women-serving orgs in the province. In this way we are hoping that at least 30 of them run with it. As you know, it's step by small step.

Vancouver is a strange place for civic politics. There is no ward system and thus a terrible dominance by members of a right-wing party of councilors who all live on the west side. However, this year there could be some changes. I remember WPT did some great stuff around the elections. How could I get a copy of the election question booklets from 1988, 1991, and 1994? Also is there any chance of a copy of the shared experiences and dreams document?

Hope to hear from you soon.

Alli Grant  
(see also directory)

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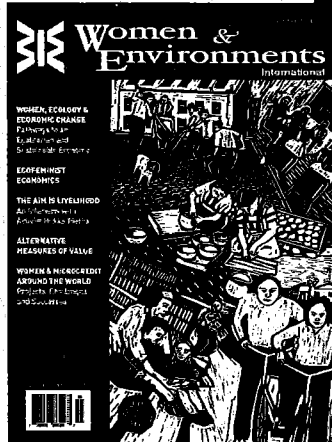
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Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Studies,  
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40 Willcocks St., Rm 2042  
Toronto, ON M5S 1C6

e-mail: [we.mag@utoronto.ca](mailto:we.mag@utoronto.ca)  
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# Features

## Inviting Partners to Partner

Creating a Partnership Learning Model and Code of Conduct

Jacqueline Leavitt

### Introduction

**I**t is 6 am and a woman steps out of her pavement dwelling in a bustling Mumbai neighborhood, her collection book and plastic bag at hand. Moving through a five block area in India's densest city, she marks down the savings, repayments, and loans, and puts however many rupees her neighbors feel they can afford to give her in a plastic bag. It is 9 am in a Stuttgart neighborhood when the German mothers and children arrive at a meeting at the office of city planning. The mothers are recipients of a grant to fund the building of an intergenerational center and are prepared to collaborate with the staff as the project moves through the various town planning approval stages. It is 10 am in Prague. The key organizer of the Mothers Centers in the Czech Republic is arranging for the arrival of an international delegation of grassroots women and their partners to meet with the Mayor at the historic town hall. It is 11 am in a Turkish suburb about an hour outside Istanbul, in a prefabricated unit that was put up after the earthquake. Some women are taking care of children while, in another prefab, women are cutting and assembling wood toys that will be sold to help support their activities. A delegation is on its way to confer with national agencies, armed with questions about the pace and quality of reconstruction. It is 2 PM in Russia. A group of women are in a seminar with academics from the local university about a trainer-organizer program in housing maintenance and building management. It is 4 PM in Manila and a community organizer leaves the university to meet with a group of women fighting eviction amid the larger political changes in the Philippines. It is evening in Montreal, Canada. Women from grassroots groups and within the local public authority are meeting together to plan for an international conference on violence against women. They are building on their successful organizing for a regional transportation safety and security plan. The next day, in Tanzania, it is morning and the poor women's foundation is preparing to meet and make decisions about funding grassroots women's work. The money comes from a pool to which women's organizations contributed. It is almost midnight in Bosnia and the women's support group has just closed its doors after a day of counseling women and helping them to find shelter. It is noon in Costa Rica, and along with delegates from Nicaragua and Honduras, women are reviewing their recommendations for land tenure. It is almost 3 PM in Nairobi and the Kenyan women, having spent the morning at the health clinic are getting ready to meet with the United Nations representative about the new AIDS Africa campaign.

**D**ay after day, around the clock, grassroots women work as paid and unpaid community developers. They are on the frontlines where community development and household life intersect. The stories of their projects tell us much about the meanings of community and the varieties of development.<sup>1</sup> They are Community Builders and they are pioneering a partnering process. Perspectives of grassroots women offer a partnership learning model that starts with issues and approaches on the ground. Their partnering practices suggest a code of conduct that enables positive and sustainable partnering in local communities.<sup>2</sup>



Huairou Commission leaders & activists

### A partnership learning model should benefit everyone.

Community-based knowledge, typically, is less respected than other types of learning.<sup>3</sup> The larger society generally views community development experts as people who go to college and university in order to learn about technical subjects. At the end of the academic course of study, the certified experts take jobs in government, foundations, media, academia, or nonprofit organi-



Grassroots activists in the International room at the Papua New Guinea conference site.

zational settings. Day after day, they spend time reviewing papers, writing reports, evaluating applications from individuals and organizations, answering questions, and going to back-to-back meetings. They make "field" trips to see the "results" on the ground. From these positions, professionals may have direct or indirect contact with grassroots women. The end product is usually a report that acknowledges grassroots women and evaluates a project. Sometimes participants are photographed, and award ceremonies are held that provide temporary acclaim.

Partnership relations of this type are flawed. Intentionally or not, women on the frontlines take on secondary roles. Knowledge about how communities function, the length of time grassroots women spend on projects, the grassroots assessment of needs, all of this is weakened. Grassroots knowledge becomes a faint shadow to traditional "professional" knowledge. From the grassroots women's perspective, this type of partnering rarely benefits them. Rather than supporting capacity at the grassroots level, the projects are weakened and the grassroots women may feel compromised. The professionals may not benefit from this either.

Professionals need support for partnerships to take root and flourish. As allies they may feel marginalized, isolated by their opinions about partnering. They may be confused about where partnering boundaries begin and end. Or the professionals may take the path of least resistance and become minimal partners, avoiding conflicts and spending the majority of their time processing papers. In this way, and unintentionally, a bureaucratic curtain is drawn, one that separates

those with more resources and power from those with less. Instead of a transparent process taking place, professionals function as gatekeepers, limiting or cutting off funds and reining in activities. Over time, the ideas of the grassroots groups may reappear in bureaucratic language that is out of context and that no one understands. As the ideas become assimilated, no one remembers the roots. A win-win process ends up as "we" and "they".

### Partnering has always been important to the Huairou Commission.

For the Huairou Commission, partnering is crucial and partnering always begins from the grassroots women's perspective. Integrating grassroots women into global events is a basic principle that began at the earliest meetings, from the Beijing Women's Conference in 1995 to the Commissions on the Status of Women to HABITAT, and continues today.<sup>4</sup> In 2000, in Germany, Huairou sponsored the Grassroots Women's International Academy (GWIA). Grassroots women's groups showcased best practices and used the peer-learning model. They taught their local technical knowledge to other grassroots women and their partners, in four weeklong sessions over four months. GWIA made clear that the practices of grassroots women that built from sustaining visibility to the outside world, and that rested on capacity building group-by-group, had reached a next stage. GWIA was and is about grassroots women making policy.

Partnering is more than being present. In less than a decade, grassroots women, drawing from solid and successful experiences in their communities, building on peer learning, and exchanges, have given life to a partnership learning model that rests on the following points: For partnerships to work, grassroots women have to:

- Be present at the table when policies are discussed;
- Participate in debates, especially when options are dismissed;
- Be the voices for their concerns and not

have others voice concerns for them;

- Offer their expertise; and
- Expect that partners will respect grassroots knowledge as valued expertise.

### Partnering takes different forms. One partnership formula does not fit all.

Grassroots women identify eight types of partnering, some occur at the same time, others change over time.

**Economic partnering:** Involve grassroots women equally in decisions about resource allocation.

**Political partnering:** Build access to civil society and government where grassroots women may hold governmental positions and grassroots women's new institutions gain support.

**Strategic partnering:** Strengthen capacity building among grassroots women and allow grassroots women's groups to advance policy.

**Financial partnering:** Provide funds, land, space, and tools for planning, projects, and policymaking.

**Emotional partnering:** Create spiritual space where listening is a tool in sustaining and supporting grassroots women's projects.

**Documenting partnering:** Provide and maintain visibility for grassroots women's plans and projects.

**Moral partnering:** Lend name and presence at public events.

**Assisted partnering:** Organize events that showcase grassroots women's projects.

### Examples of partnering include the following:

In the Philippines, a law requires that a percentage of the national budget is allocated to women's programs. Active NGOs sit on the National Commission for Women and make sure that proposals are submitted to claim the percentage.

In Uganda, secure positions for women in local government enable them to promote



## THE PARTNERSHIP CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Explicitly recognize inequalities of power, resources, and money.
2. Identify and be transparent about shared concerns, risks, and uncertainty.
3. Use language that everybody understands.
4. Regularly review changes and compare changes to the original partnership objectives.
5. Provide resources to grassroots women in order for them to document their projects, their sustainability and their transferability.
6. Create ways to link grassroots partners to opportunities for funding, sitting on boards, being appointed to advisory committees, and jointly issuing strategy papers.

Partners in government, business, foundations, media, and universities should:

7. Build capacity of their staffs, retain grassroots women's groups to train staffs, use the Huairou Commission's "Our Best Practices" as a learning tool.
8. Assist grassroots women's groups to package curriculum tools as an economic development tool and create a Grassroots Women's Development Trust Fund.

For its part, The Huairou Commission will:

9. Continue to work with grassroots women as partners in capacity building.
10. Prepare Partner Report Cards similar to the model Huairou Commission Report Card for the 2001 Istanbul + 5 Thematic Sessions.
11. Explore protection of grassroots women's intellectual property rights over local technical knowledge and methods.
12. Explore protocols about access to public space that local grassroots women's groups can adapt for their use.
13. Encourage dialogues through local Grassroots Women's International Academies and with all partners.



Groots and Huairou women linked for action in Papua New Guinea

budgets and be able to monitor where the resources are going.

In Germany, in the State of Hessen, legislation to provide funding for Mothers Centers used the language and concepts "exactly as the Mothers Center saw them . . . not bending the concept."

In Turkey, in the wake of the 1999 earthquake in the Marmara region, The Foundation for the Support of Women's Work negotiated to ensure that local administrators, chambers of commerce, and private sector representatives met with women in order to help them explore business potentials. The Foundation signed a protocol with the Tourism Department to support women's centers through marketing products in papermaking, carpeting, and toys.

In Montreal, Canada, Comité d'action Femmes et Sécurité Urbaine (CAFSU), women's groups, and local public authorities formed a Women's Urban Safety Action Committee in Montreal, Canada. They have raised issues about women's representation in local government among groups such as the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA).

### Grassroots women are able to make partnerships work because they:

- Distinguish between "theater acts" that occur when functionaries "meet and greet" but do not follow up in ways that support the grassroots women's projects.
- Recognize where gaps exist when governments are unable to address problems and

NGOs are able to fill the vacuum.

- Make use of opportunities when donors want to work directly with local NGOs and open doors for grassroots women's projects.

### The Partnership Learning Model begins when:

- All sides understand that tensions may arise from unrealistic expectations.
- All sides are open to changing attitudes about partners and roles. ❧

<sup>1</sup> Sangeetha Purushothaman and Monica Jaeckel, eds., *Engendering Governance and Development: Grassroots Women's Best Practices*. Bangalore, India: Books for Change, 2001; Monica Jaeckel and Andrea Laux, "Local Governance from the Bottom Up: Bringing the Habitat Agenda Home." Bangalore, India: Books for Change, 2000; Deborah Mindry, "Intergovernmental Organizations, 'Grassroots,' and the Politics of Virtue," *SIGNS* 26:4(2001):1187-1211.

<sup>2</sup> Jacqueline Leavitt, "Inviting Partners to Partner," this excerpt is from a longer report based on the Grassroots Women's International Academy, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Louise Grenier, *Working with Indigenous Knowledge: A Guide for Researchers*. Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> See *Huairou Newsletter*, Geertje Lycklama a Nijeholt, Joke Swiebel and Virginia Vargas, "The Global Institutional Framework: The Long March to Beijing," in Geertje Lycklama a Nijeholt, Virginia Vargas, and Saskia Wieringa, eds. *Women's Movements and Public Policy in Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean*. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1998, pp. 25-48.

Jacqueline Leavitt, PhD. is Professor, Department of Urban Planning, UCLA School of Public Policy and Social Research and author of numerous books and articles on issues about women, housing, and community development. Dr. Leavitt directs the UCLA Community Scholars Program that brings community and labor activists together with graduate and undergraduate students on applied research projects.

# Linking Networks



## The Huairou Commission's Global Network

Joyce Brown

Over the past seven years, women's global networks have come together in new and exciting ways to: work on common issues, share their expertise and resources, and have a strategic impact on national governments and the United Nations.

### What is The Huairou Commission?

The Huairou Commission (HC) is an international network of women's networks that focus their energies on both local and global issues. The mission of the HC is "to forge strategic partnerships to advance the capacity of grassroots women worldwide to strengthen and create sustainable communities." The goals of this network are to:

- promote the institutional transformation needed to engender local community development and governance;
- strengthen the capacity, resources (position), and collaboration of local women's organizations and their affiliated regional and global networks; and
- increase grassroots women's participation in the decision-making processes in their lives with a special focus on political participation.

### When and How Did It Begin?

During the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China 1995, grassroots women from around the world came together to develop a statement on women and human settlements. This statement connected the Platform for Action of the Beijing Conference with the then upcoming United Nations Conference on Human Settlements—Habitat II. The group representing a number of women's networks met in the town of Huairou, (why-row) where the NGO Forum was held. From this humble beginning, the Huairou Commission

(HC) has grown to become an effective participant in global meetings and a focal point for coalescing women's groups at these events. It now has a small staff, which works with seven member organizations and other partner groups.

The HC has participated in all the major UN conferences since 1995, including—The Habitat II Conference, held in Istanbul, Turkey in 1996, the UNDP Governance Conferences in 1996 and 1997, Beijing +5, Habitat II + 5, The UN Conference Against Racism in 2001, and most recently the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa in August 2002. Through the collaborative efforts of its member organizations, the Huairou Commission has had an impact on policy makers at local, national and international levels. Dr. Jackie Leavitt has documented this impact in the international arena. Leavitt's document: "Inviting Partners to Partner," is featured in this issue. Some of her findings will be presented at the Association for Women in Development (AWID) Conference in Guadalajara, Mexico in October 2002.

The HC has also focused on partnering with local authorities, academics and professional women. Grassroots women have had opportunities to network, participate in national and international exchanges and be heard at global forums. Grassroots Women's International Academies were held at Expo 2000 in Germany and at the U.N. Istanbul + 5 Conference in New York in 2001. Women's groups offered workshops on a variety of topics ranging from "coping with disaster and war," "AIDS," and "engendering local government," to the "establishment of mother's centers."

### Current Activities

With a working group on Women and

Disaster, women's groups from Turkey, India, Mozambique and Honduras have come together to learn from each other. In the aftermath of devastating natural disasters, it is often women who take responsibility for looking after their families and communities while men make policy and planning decisions. After major earthquakes destroyed towns and cities in Turkey in 1999, women from India who had lived through similar devastating natural disasters, came to Turkey to offer their assistance. They helped the Turkish women to become partners in the process of reconstruction rather than recipients of aid. In February 2002, five Turkish women who survived the Marmara earthquake traveled to six villages in Gujarat, India to observe the recovery process there. This process has now turned from one of involving women in reconstruction after disaster to ensuring that they participate in long-term planning and development. There have been other learning opportunities that occurred along the way. The Indian women have learned about housing co-ops from the Turkish groups, while the Turkish women have seen how Indian groups use savings and credit to organize and develop their political capacity. In addition to the learning that has come about through exchanges, women also strengthen their positions at home through the visibility they gain with their international connections.

Local to Local Dialogues on Urban Governance were initiated to support women's groups in making changes at the local level. Funded by UNIFEM and the UNCHS Women and Habitat Programme, the intent is to assist grassroots women in becoming more effective partners in local planning and decision-making. Over the next three years, women's groups in Argentina, the Czech Republic, Germany,

Kenya, the Russian Federation, Tanzania and Uganda will work with their local authorities to bring the perspective of women and their communities to the fore. In Kenya, the focus of the work is with women from Mathare Valley, the largest slum and squatter settlement in Nairobi. GROOTS (Grassroots Organizations Together in Sisterhood) Kenya in partnership with NGOs such as Shelter Forum and Pamoja Trust are organizing meetings between the Mathare women, local councillors and the Mayor. The women are deepening their understanding of governance issues and developing a non-combative way of negotiating with the City.

Over the past three years, the Huairou Commission has been documenting "Our Practices", solutions from the ground, the problem-solving strategies used by grassroots women. To date the work of 48 different groups has been collected for a database. While in depth material from five groups is being compiled in a book. New material is currently being collected about women's community based organizations that are partnering with local authorities on 1) women and safety issues and 2) strengthening the role of grassroots women in decision-making at the local level.

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**MEMBER NETWORKS**

**The Asia Women and Shelter Network (AWAS)** – AWAS, formed in 1995, works with poor women in Asia to generate awareness of gender issues in human settlements development and to promote support and mutual learning among its members. The network was founded by women who were part of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) and the Habitat International Coalition Women and Shelter Network (HIC-WAS) who saw a need to link the work of these two movements.



AWAS seeks to network with men and women who:


- wish to share experiences through which women's participation, and contribution is given central space in development strategies;
- want to build upon their own experiences so that women's needs, concerns and position is strengthening their work in various habitat areas of development; and
- seek to explore ways in which practices useful in one city can be transferred to other areas without losing their focus on women.

The Secretariat of AWAS is currently located in India and co-ordinated by Sheila Patel. AWAS is active in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, India, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam.

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**Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS)** – An

 international network of grassroots women's groups, GROOTS emerged from the Third United Nations Conference on Women held in Nairobi in 1985. Women in attendance recognized that the voice of grassroots women was missing from international gatherings and that there was a need to highlight and recognize the work of women at the local community level. Four years later, 20 community leaders from

around the world gathered in Kingston, Jamaica to launch GROOTS. Since that time GROOTS has expanded to 15 countries, hosting a grassroots women's tent at the Beijing Conference, fostering peer learning and exchange opportunities and participating in a number of global conferences and gatherings.

Although a small network, GROOTS Canada has been active in a number of national and international events. Much of the work of GROOTS Canada has focused on women's need for affordable housing. Members from GROOTS Toronto and GROOTS Vancouver attended the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) held in Istanbul in 1996, where they participated in workshops on housing and homelessness and lobbied for recognition of women's housing needs. After the Conference, they published *Keeping Canada's Commitment Alive: A Community Guide to Habitat II*". Between 1997 and 1999, GROOTS Canada participated in a series of exchanges involving grassroots women in Kenya, Papua New Guinea, the United States and Canada. (see *Women and Environments*, Winter 1999) In 2001 GROOTS Toronto hosted a national event for grassroots women leaders from across the country. Women from Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Alberta, B.C. and Ontario attended.

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**Habitat International Coalition – Women and Shelter (HIC-WAS)** – The Habitat International Coalition (HIC), with members in over 80 countries, is an international non-profit

coalition of organizations and individuals working in the area of human settlements. It promotes the legal right to housing and acts as a pressure group in defense of the rights of the homeless, poor and inadequately housed. As part of HIC, the Women and Shelter (WAS) Network focuses on women in human settlements, highlighting the importance of women's participation in all aspects of human settlements planning, development and implementation. Their publication, *Gender and the Habitat Agenda: Engendering Our Human Settlements* summarizes the gender content of the Habitat Agenda, the document signed by all governments in attendance at the 1996 Conference on Human Settlement in Istanbul. After a decade of work, the first priority of WAS is still to "ensure women's equal fundamental right to access, own, inherit and control land and property".

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**International Council of Women (ICW)**

– The ICW has been active for over 100 years, promoting and enhancing the welfare of women. There are councils in over 72 countries including Canada, working on a variety of issues at the local and global levels.


The Winnipeg Council of Women won the 1999 YM-YWCA "Women of Distinction Award" in honour of 105 years of service to the community. The Winnipeg Council has been active on issues of women's equality, health care, education (for women and children), housing, women and the arts, waste management, immigration, children's recreation, women and employment, women in politics and land use and sustainable development.

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**Women's Development and Environment Organization (WEDO) – WEDO was**

 established in 1990 by U.S. Congresswoman Bella Abzug and feminist activist and journalist Mim Kelber. It is an international advocacy network that seeks to increase the power of women worldwide as policymakers in governance and in policymaking institutions, forums and processes, at all levels, to achieve economic and social justice, a peaceful and healthy planet and human rights for all. This includes the promotion of women in decision-making from the grassroots to global arenas. WEDO

- advocates for women's equality in economic and political decision-making;
- seeks development solutions that are sustainable for women, communities and the planet; and
- promotes economic equity for women and increases public awareness about the negative effects of globalization on women, their families, their communities, and the environment.

WEDO played a leading role in organizing women for the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio. In preparation for this conference it organized the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet, bringing together over 1500 women from 83 countries to plan a joint strategy for the UN Conference. Since that time, WEDO has organized Women's Caucuses at UN conferences and other inter-governmental forums to suggest amendments to official documents, lobby government officials and coordinate political action.

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**Women in Cities –**

Women in Cities offers a forum for discussion among various partners concerned with gender equality and the place of women in cities. Women's safety has been identified as a priority issue for women in both the Northern and Southern worlds. In May 2002, the Women and Cities program in Montreal hosted an international conference on women's safety, attended by representatives from five continents, 27 countries and 55 cities (see "In the Field report 'From Making the Links' to 'Bridging the Gaps' on the first international Seminar on Women's Safety by Carolyn Whitzman, in this issue).

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**Women for Peace Network – The**

Network supports women in conflict and in reconstruction situations and advocates for peace, including the importance of adequate housing, as well as land and property rights for women.

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# Landdykes and Landscape

Reflections on Sex and Nature in Southern Oregon

Catriona Sandilands

In the winter of 2000, I went to Oregon looking for sex and nature. Much as I wish I could report hot and heavy encounters in the cool mists of Coos Bay, what I mean is that I went to the University of Oregon on a Rockefeller Humanities Fellowship to study sex and nature, specifically, to research the ways in which queer and ecological politics might have something to say to one another. In my proposal to the "Ecological Conversations" Fellowship Program that invited me to Eugene, I argued that there might be fruitful connections between lesbian/ gay/ bisexual/ transgender (l/g/b/t) struggles against modern regimes of bodily and sexual oppression, and environmental/ ecological struggles against modern regimes of bodily and nature oppression. In much the same way as ecofeminist and environmental justice movements have underscored the intersections of ecology with gender and race, I thought that ecological politics would be deepened and strengthened with the addition of some solid queer analysis.

What I found when I got to Oregon was a hotbed of l/g/b/t ecological activity. More accurately, southern Oregon is home to a number of rural lesbian separatist communities who have, since the early 1970s, connected their lesbian feminist philosophy with ecological politics in profound and complex ways. Although there aren't as many of them living communally on women's land as there were in separatism's 1970s and 80s heyday, there are still five or six (depending on who's counting) "core" collectively-maintained women's lands, and many, many more women in the surrounding counties whose lives continue to intersect with those vital, lesbian landscapes. These women are culturally active, politically committed, ecologically wise "land-



Separatist Landscape - Oregon - 1

C. SANDILANDS

Southern Oregon is home to a number of rural lesbian separatist communities who connect their lesbian feminist philosophy with ecological politics in profound and complex ways

dykes." For most of them, the intersection between lesbian philosophy and rural environmental practice is so much part of their everyday lives that it is difficult to talk about.

I interviewed eleven of these women at length, drinking herbal tea in their wonderful homes - some fabulously hand designed and built - and walking over their carefully-tended lands as they shared stories from nearly thirty years of living, as lesbians, in these rural places. These places that are not, I should add, always bucolically accepting. Rural Oregon is home to a considerable fundamentalist Christian population, complete with racist, anti-Semitic and anti-gay political initiatives. I also had access to an

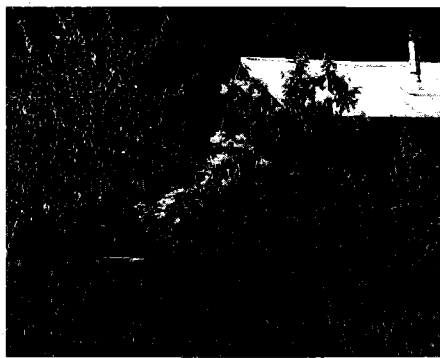
extraordinary wealth of archival material. Out of a growing concern that their contributions to lesbian feminist politics be remembered, many of the women had placed their personal and collective papers in the capable hands of the Special Collections librarian at the University of Oregon. Despite my own misgivings about lesbian separatist philosophies, I was bowled over with the richness of the women's analyses, the depth of their commitments, and the complexity of the tapestry they had woven of ecological and lesbian threads.

What I had originally considered to be a small part of a larger queer ecological project blossomed, and the Institute for

Women's Studies and Gender Studies at the University of Toronto graciously published a long manuscript documenting this distinctly lesbian ecological research.<sup>1</sup> What follows here is a revised excerpt from the conclusion of that paper.

One of the most obvious insights one can draw from the Oregon lesbian separatists' experiences on the land is, that their mode of living as lesbians has had a definite impact on the way they know and experience nature, and that this relationship is neither simple nor fixed. In some dimensions, their consciously political and systemic understanding of lesbian identity has been instrumental in shaping the physical and social organization of the landscape. Technological, architectural, productive and reproductive relations on the lands have been clearly influenced by strands of thinking that are strongly tinged with lesbian separatist principles, even as these principles are shaped by the particularities of place and change and shift over time. In other dimensions, a particular lesbian eroticism, spirituality, or collectively-developed cultural frame has had an enormous impact on the evolution of the meaning of the landscape, the public representation of its elements, and the nature practices that have developed within the community. In yet other dimensions, the social organization of a lesbian community, either within individual landholdings or across the network of Oregon country lesbians, has influenced both the perception and the experience of the land. Different meanings are circulated, different places mapped as significant to the community, even different physical modes experienced (e.g., lesbian sexuality, relatively ungendered labor).

It would be a mistake, then, to point to a single and defining difference that "being a lesbian" makes to either the Oregon separatists' relationships to their landscape or, more broadly, that sexual orientation makes to ecological thinking or practice. Just as the community shows no particular agreement on what it means to be a lesbian, so too is there no particular consensus on how that identity influences one's perception of the world. So ironically, perhaps, the women's accounts and experiences of their nature relations lead one away from thinking about



Separatist Landscape - Oregon - 2

Understandings of rurality as a space of innocence, individuality and freedom completely ignore the dramatic racial and class exploitations that have historically shaped and continue to organize rural life

a lesbian "standpoint" on nature. Rather one should think, about rural lesbianism in Southern Oregon as a particular culture of nature that combines intentional, political and analytic elements with others that have resulted from necessity, reflection, local interaction, organic transformation. The culture, despite its sometimes totalizing origins in 1970s radical separatist politics, is a flexible one, and the thing that holds it together is a sense of conversation and community that includes elements of shared meaning and practice as well as more material similarities or shared political goals. One might be able to say similar things about any discernible culture of nature, and perhaps especially about any intentional community. The difference with this one is that lesbian identity, sexuality and politics have been visible and defining, public and negotiated elements of that culture throughout its quarter-century of existence.

Lesbian identity, culture and community are also, however, crafted from other power relations. I have pointed, for example, to the fact that the community is largely white.

Not only does this reflect the racialized specificities of rural Oregon as a society and lesbian separatism as a political orientation, but it also reflects – and shapes – the particular views of nature that organize and appear in the communities. Although I think that an earlier lesbian feminist view of nature as a more feminine and innocent space in and upon which a utopian women's culture can be created is no longer the predominant one in the communities, it was certainly one that contributed to their origins. As many have pointed out, this view of nature is highly racialized. In particular, pastoral understandings of rurality as a space of innocence, individuality and freedom completely ignore the dramatic racial and class exploitations that have historically shaped and continue to organize rural life such as slavery, anti-Semitic politics, the decimation of aboriginal communities, the continued practice of toxic dumping. Lesbian utopian ruralities, even if founded on conscious principles of diversity and equality, thus reflect a founding gesture that derives from a very particularly racialized view of nature. Many of the women have learned this lesson and struggle in their own lives to think through the race and class relations of rural Oregon. Yet, the communities themselves are highly particular in their understandings and practices of politics, nature, and community.

So the Oregon separatists demonstrate that their culture of nature is both shifting and particular, both complex and limited. In other words, it is a living and situated tradition. But how does one speak, from this particularity, of a separatist ecology? Many of the individual elements of ecological thinking and practice I have outlined bear resemblance to other ecopolitical movements and currents. I would like to suggest that this lesbian culture demonstrates the contextually-specific intersectionality of the power relations of sexual orientation with ecology (alongside but not reducible to race, class and gender). The culture also illustrates the importance of politicizing these relations in order to understand and transform social ecological relations.

For one thing, the Oregon women disrupt, by their very public presence as rural lesbians, the essentialized narrative by which

rural, pastoral nature has been heterosexualized in North American culture. Although as queer theorist David Shuttleton has written, there is a complex and diverse queer history to rural sexuality, including a distinct gay pastoral tradition,<sup>2</sup> there is in North America a pervasive assumption that all gay culture is urban and all rural culture is resolutely straight. Apart from the self-fulfilling quality of this assumption<sup>3</sup>, the lack of a strong representation of queer rurality impoverishes both ecological and g/l/b/t/q culture and reinforces an articulation of queer-urban-artifice against straight-rural-nature. Country lesbians, to the extent that they are publicly queer and rural and have a well-developed and articulated sense of their collective presence, disrupt the association. In addition, to the extent that the women are willing to reject crude distinctions between nature and artifice, (a rejection often engendered by actually living off the land), landdykes also politicize the ecological relations of their rural community and disrupt the assumption that rurality is a site of pure nature and that queer "artifice" has no place in it. More than their mere presence, the separatists also disrupt conventional understandings of rurality by actively practicing alternative forms of family, community and property ownership.

The importance of this disruption for ecology is considerable. Environmental justice advocates, for example, have focused considerable attention on the ways in which the profound inequalities and exploitations of rural life – including the relationship between rural and urban communities – are hidden behind a screen of pastoral projection. Although these critiques have tended to focus on race and class, it would appear that the rural idyll also perpetuates a profoundly heterosexist narrative that impacts not only on queers but on those others whose lives are organized by a monolithic rural heterosexuality. Focusing attention on the sexual diversity of rural communities not only draws attention to the conditions of sexual organization in rural communities. It also demonstrates – perhaps especially with such a culturally visible lesbian community – that there are ways of living one's life sexually in rural nature that do not replicate heterosexist assumptions and practices. (On



Separatist Landscape – Oregon – 3

C. SANDILANDS

What does rural nature look like when it is seen and experienced in a very self-conscious (even if very particular) lesbian way?

the flip side of the same coin, of course, rural lesbian communities also demonstrate that there are ways of living as a gay person that are not directly tied to urban institutions; the greater the publicity of a rural lesbian community, the more vibrant the hybrid of rural with queer discourses, the wider and more visibly alternative the variety of queer possibilities.) The presence of a culturally active community that is consciously organized around political issues of rural capitalism and sees these as strongly tied to lesbian identity inserts a political articulation into rural discourses that offers a solid challenge to more dominant ones linking private property, capitalist extractive industry, and heterosexual nuclear families. Thus, as a spatial politics of ecology, rural separatists offer a challenge based not only on re-sexualizing nature spaces but on insisting on their public representation as queer.

A second dimension of a separatist ecology lies in the fact that these women have consciously taken on a lesbian identity and used it as an organizing principle in their interactions with the landscape. Theirs was – and is – an experiment in queer vision: what does rural nature look like when it is seen and experienced in a very self-conscious (even if very particular) lesbian way? This

culture has ended up as a hybrid of universalizing lesbian feminism and particularized local knowledge. There are also normative implications. On the one hand, the particularities of place – ecological relations, rural social and economic relations – have intruded on the utopian aspirations of lesbian feminism. On the other hand, the political and cultural intentions of lesbian feminism have intruded in the unfolding of the landscape. I would like to argue that this complex hybridity actually demonstrates that the Oregon separatists actively understand the precept that nature is a realm of interaction among a variety of human and nonhuman actors. That their separatist aspirations have changed in and for the place and remain separatist principles suggests a tremendous openness to the influence of the land, but not a rejection of politics. In other words, the active organization of nature that has accompanied rural lesbian separatism has historically included and continues to include a sense of the articulation between feminist and nonhuman voices.

Feminist theorist Stacy Alaimo insists that one of the most promising avenues for feminist and ecological politics lies in the reconceptualization of nature as an active presence in the world. This, which allows feminist politics to join women with nature in a way that does not condemn women to the status of object and resource. It offers, instead, a profound challenge to western hierarchical dualisms. Precisely by paying their hybrid attention to both lesbian feminist politics and the voices of the particular human and nonhuman actors by whom they are surrounded in their daily lives, the Oregon separatists demonstrate that ecological knowledges derived from particular bodily experiences of nature – be they work, spirituality, or sex – can actively shape and influence a political project without losing many of the elements of the political project itself. At the same time, they also show that ecological knowledges are actively influenced by social location, by political vision, by the material and cultural organization of productive, spiritual and erotic life. Theirs is thus a profoundly dialectical understanding. This understanding is actively cultivated in a number of practices that facilitate the development of

more and more complex knowledges of nature.

The final element of a separatist ecology to which I would like to call attention here concerns the importance of a public realm to the ongoing negotiation of sexual and ecological identity. The communities were founded with an idea of publicity at the center of their political vision. However impossible the original vision of processing and consciousness raising might have been, the tradition of discussion and public appearance has continued in a variety of ways. These have variously included potlucks, theater, writing groups, and land trust meetings. More important than the particular form has been the fact that, throughout the communities' history, they have cultivated a distinct orientation to the development of a collective identity and culture beyond the individual and even beyond the particular land. I understand this rural lesbian public sphere as a crucial component of their survival as a distinct lesbian culture. It is also a site in and through which their ideas of sexuality, identity, creativity, ecology and nature are presented, contested, negotiated and changed as a central dimension of lesbian culture. Their identity and history as lesbian separatists call them together as a meaningful and distinct group. Yet the meaning and opinions of that group shift and change – creating a living culture – because that culture has a series of built-in mechanisms through which to negotiate its ideas.

This ongoing negotiation of rural lesbian culture included a variety of definite disagreements over the meaning and significance of nature and ecological politics. One clear dimension of this disagreement concerned the relative merits of a scientific ecological understanding of forest practices versus a more animistic understanding of the trees as individuals experiencing pleasure, pain and preference. Another concerned the relative merits of a more materialist view on agrarian capitalism versus a more spiritual one on women's empowerment in land communities. It is clear that "nature" in general is an important topic of conversation in and for the rural lesbian community. Nature knowledges are shared from remedies and recipes to profound spir-

itual and erotic relationships. The degradation of rural nature at the hands of logging and mining companies (and individuals) is also an ongoing subject of discussion. Information-sharing across the lands helps to map the social-ecological impact of extractive industry. The potluck tradition moves the physical site of community meetings and discussion from one land to another. In this way, individual lesbian landscapes appear publicly to the community as a whole on a regular basis, allowing the particularities of each place to emerge into conversation and influence collective knowledges.

The Oregon separatists have, over the course of the last 25 years, developed a careful and principled lesbian ecological practice. This practice is filled, on the one hand, with intention, reflection and discussion and, on the other hand, with practical and visceral modes of knowing that derive from a particular embodied experience of place that includes labor, eroticism, and homosocial networks of meaning. Thus, I refer to their collective representations of these experiences and aspirations as a living ecopolitical tradition. It is given creative life by art, gardening, design, writing, theater, and ritual. The elements are not just there together in the same space, but serve to create and recreate the others in an ongoing process of synthesis and change. This culture is not utopia; in fact, it is more generative because of its complexities and contradictions. This culture is not revolutionary, but is rather a resistant hybrid combining elements of radical transgression with elements of local sustainability. Finally, this culture is not without its share of tensions, limits and contradictions. Many of the women are willing to think about them, discuss them, and reflect on them in both public and private. This reflexivity suggests a self-aware blending of cultural and ecological politics that cannot be adequately characterized as an artifact of an essentialist lesbian feminist "past." Its contradictions give it life and relevance; as one landdyke put it, referring to some of the ecological contradictions of her life choices, "it's an awkward place to be, but then, living on the planet is awkward as well." ❧

<sup>1</sup> I outline six distinct themes of separatist ecological wisdom in the longer paper. They are: The opening of rural land to all women by transforming relations of ownership; the active withdrawal of the land from patriarchal-capitalist production and reproduction; the feminization and reacculturation of the landscape, both ideologically and physically; the development of a holistic and gender-complex physical experience of nature; the experiencing and imagining of nature as an erotic space and actor; and the politicization of lesbian rurality and rural identity.

<sup>2</sup> Shuttleton discusses a distinct gay male Arcadian literary tradition, to which I would add that there is a distinct lesbian counterpart that includes such authors as Vita Sackville-West and Sarah Orne Jewett. Indeed, lesbian separatism drew on precisely this tradition in its formulation of nature as a creative space for the formation of a harmonious lesbian culture.

<sup>3</sup> In which rural gays and lesbians feel they must go to urban areas to experience what it "really" means to be gay and urban queers feel that the country has no gay culture in it so they avoid it except for well-publicized resorts and tourist destinations, or visit with the expectation of being closeted the whole time.

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#### References and Further Reading

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# Women at the Sustainability Summit

Shifting Parameters of Success in a Globalizing World

Prabha Khosla

**B**arely off the aircraft at Johannesburg airport, exhausted from a long flight, I was taken aback by a huge BMW bill board asking, "if whales can swim in emissions" and something vague about clean energy. Am I at the right Summit? Since when did BMW become the official welcoming committee of the WSSD?

My arrival for registration at Sandton and the Convention Centre, in the richest and whitest neighbourhood in Africa was the next shock. A summit on sustainable development in a rich, white shopping mall? I thought sustainable development also meant that we need critical and urgent action on consumption and production. Yet, the shops are loaded with stock for sales from the thousands who have come to attend the last UN conference of the decade. Announcing corporate commitment to sustainable development, huge banners advertising HP, KPMG, and the Rand Merchant Bank are draped over the tall and posh buildings of Sandton. Welcome to the World Summit on Sustainable Development! The conflict between this environment and the reality of women around the world struggling to survive, nurture their children while trying to hang on to some sense of human dignity made me wonder if I was at the right Summit. Yes, I am at the right Summit, but the Summit is being hijacked.

## The Background: the Rio Earth Summit

There have been dramatic changes in the world since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) of 1992, also known as the Rio or Earth Summit. The Earth Summit and the organizing that preceded it were a time of inspiration, hope, and global commitment to find a balance between development and



Corporate welcome to the WSSD

Am I at the right Summit?  
Since when did BMW  
become the official  
welcoming committee  
of the WSSD?

the environment. Hundreds of NGOs from around the world organized for over two years to build a mutually respectful link between the issues and priorities of the South and the North. Government leaders from around the world committed themselves to action. Women provided inspiring leadership to the Summit. They developed an action plan - Women's Action Agenda for a Peaceful and Healthy Planet well in advance of the Summit. The Action Plan was the result of the first ever-international women's environmental conference, held in

1991 in Miami, USA. The very process of the Summit changed the UN and opened some of its hallowed halls to civil society participation.

The Earth Summit also led to the founding of the Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO), an international network of women's organisations; and Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF), a pan-European women's environmental organisation. After Rio, we witnessed even larger numbers of women involved in issues such as water and sanitation, energy, trade and investment, biodiversity, sustainable communities, environmental health, climate change, toxic chemicals, and democratic governance. These women bring with them a gender analysis and a human rights framework to these issues.

Rio gave us five critical documents to begin the journey to reverse the damage to the planet and its various life forms. Multi-lateral environmental agreements (MEAs) such as the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) had the objective of stabilizing greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at levels that will not dangerously upset the global climate system. The Convention on Biological Diversity had three main goals: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources.

Rio also gave us two statements of principles: the Rio Declaration with 27 principles that define the rights and responsibilities of nations in enabling a new and equitable global partnership for development and the Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of all Types of Forests. Lastly, Rio produced Agenda 21, a 40-chapter blueprint for

action to make the planet socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.

## The Backdrop to the Johannesburg Summit

In the ten years since Rio, the world has witnessed a remarkable wave of corporate globalization. We have witnessed trade liberalization and new definitions of "free trade;" capital mobility and the impoverishment of people; the creation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the setting of new "trade" rules that are devastating the livelihoods of the Third World and also of many in the First. The world also saw a revolution in communication technology. How many in Rio were using e-mails and cell phones and talking about gender mainstreaming and the new meaning of "Seattle?"

The impact of globalization is being felt on national governments as well as the UN. National governments have provided a more supportive environment for corporations than demonstrating political will and commitment to implementing the Rio conventions and agreements. Governments of many Third World countries are coerced to do so, while countries of the North including the US and Canada are doing so for self interest. In fact, most governments are not living up to their commitments they made to the conventions of this decade's UN conferences.<sup>1</sup>

The United Nations is plagued by insufficient financial resources, not the least because the United States is renegeing on its payments. The UN is also under assault from large corporations. The "Global Compact" created in 2000, is a UN project to enable large corporations such as Shell, Rio Tinto, Nike, BP, etc. to engage with UN agencies and programmes. Rather than building corporate accountability to communities and the environment, Global Compact has provided a cover for corporations to continue their exploitation of humans and the environment.

What is at stake is global governance. Who should be the arbitrator and negotiator of international agreements? Should governments with the transparent and meaningful



UN WSSD conference site

PRABHA KHOSLA

## What is at stake is global governance. Who should be the arbitrator and negotiator of international agreements?

involvement of citizens determine the terms of governance or should trade organizations such as the WTO and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)? This assault by the corporate sector has left an indelible mark on the UN and the WSSD, and is attempting to override the call for a corporate-free UN. How will women be represented under corporate global governance? Women have consistently provided critiques of globalization demonstrating how structural adjustment and trade liberalization have increased women's work loads and furthered the feminization of poverty.

The role of corporations in the agenda for social justice and environmental defense and rehabilitation has caused fissures in the global NGO movement. Many women and NGO activists supported corporate involvement in environmental agreements. Others argued that corporate engagement is only acceptable if the terms of involvement are clear and if they are guided by the principles of sustainable development. This led to a call for a binding convention on corporate accountability. Reputable international NGOs such as the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and the

International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) have engaged in long-term collaboration on sustainable development with the Mining sector. Others, including the Indigenous Peoples Caucus have voiced strong warnings against such collaborations. They question if sectors such as mining and minerals would ever be capable of a sustainable practice. The Business Association for Sustainable Development (BASD) and the US government have played an active role in supporting corporate over environmental interests. In this way, corporations dominate the UN ever more effectively and overtly. National governments and civil society activists need to heed to this ominous development at the WSSD.

### The WSSD - Women Organizing

Women's organisations, too numerous to be mentioned here, have been organizing to implement the Rio commitments and have been documenting, and monitoring the outcomes of the Rio conventions and agreements. They also participated in the preparatory process for the Johannesburg Summit.

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The principle means of organizing at the preparatory committee meetings and at the Summit itself was through the Women's Caucus. It was facilitated by WEDO, and a host of other caucuses focusing on specific issues such as energy, water, human rights, consumption and production, etc. Women from around the world, those with years of UN experience and those new to it, all engaged in the many activities of the WSSD. The "Women's Tent," by now a tradition at UN conferences was the place for this work and also some fun. There were Multi-Stakeholder Forums and plenaries on Partnerships, Capacity Development, Governance, Water and Sanitation, Health, Agriculture, Bio-diversity, and Energy. Roundtables on the theme of "Making it Happen" – identified steps for the implementing the Johannesburg agreements. Women organized demonstrations and press conferences and spent countless hours fine-combing the text of the Plan of Implementation – the official output from the WSSD. Women provided and distributed documents with a gender analysis of the official text along with alternative language to enable gender and human rights integration. They spent endless hours lobbying government delegates to change the text to reflect the true reality of unequal power and distribution of wealth and the issues requiring urgent action to create a sustainable planet.

### Some Key Issues

Recognizing the failure to live up to the commitments of Rio, the focus of Johannesburg was on implementation. The implementation of Rio, the Millennium Development Goals adopted by most countries in 2000, the WTO Doha Ministerial meeting of November 2001, and the Monterey March 2002 Conference on Financing for Development were all rolled

into one Plan of Implementation – a veritable battlefield of conflicting constituencies. Entering this fray, women spent endless hours lobbying. To give you but a hint of this struggle, the results of women's efforts are indicated in brackets. They called on all states to :

- uphold the principle that, "States have common but differentiated responsibilities", so that Northern nations are reminded yet again of their unfulfilled commitments to sustainability; (issue was won);
- keep the focus on the "precautionary principle" and not "use precaution" as advocated by the US ("precautionary approach" was used instead of "precautionary principle");
- defend health care services, women's right to reproductive and sexual health services within a rights and freedoms framework and not "consistent with national laws and cultural and religious values" (issue was won);
- guarantee women's right to own and inherit land above and beyond "national laws and customs" (issue was won);
- set targets, deadlines, and monitoring of commitments (issue was partially won);
- accept accountability to ODA commitments of 0.7% of GNP; unconditionally cancel debts for more than the "least developed nations or the heavily indebted nations," phase out of harmful subsidies, open markets to products of developing countries, endorse fair trade, replace the neo-liberal paradigm with the sustainable development paradigm, and recognize the



The women's tent is the focus of women's activities.

primacy of MEAs over the WTO agreements (has never been implemented);

- back equal representation of women and men in all UN decision making forums and at all levels including UNFCCC, UNFCCC (convention on desertification), POPs (Persistent Organic Pollutants) and COPs (conference of parties on climate change);
- implement the New Partnership on Africa (NEPAD) through a participatory, equitable and transparent process with equal representation of both genders (issue was not won);
- adopt a binding UN Convention on Corporate Accountability and commit resources for a global gender monitoring facility on multi-lateral and financial institutions in regard to sustainable development (issue was not won);
- acknowledge the ecological debt of the North to the South (issue was not won);
- work for peace, end militarization and divert military budgets to sustainable development (issue was not won);
- adopt the Earth Charter (issue is ongoing);
- ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Optional Protocol, the Beijing Platform of Action and UN Resolution 1325 (issue is ongoing);
- focus capacity development particularly on girls and women (issue was won);
- channel 50% of the resources for HIV/AIDS in Africa through women's organizations (issue was not won).

Then there was the whole notion of "Partnerships" – hotly contested by the Women's Caucus. The UN proposed voluntary partnerships between any combination of civil society organisations, governments, UN agencies, and the private sector to implement projects for sustainable development. Women asked why the UN was so interested in supporting such a voluntary initiative? Who would identify the criteria for these partnerships and who would monitor and verify their credibility in terms of actually creating sustainability? Who would they be accountable to? And were they not a