



ngo forum on women '95 *bulletin*

The NGO Forum on Women is the official organizer of the parallel non-governmental forum to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women.

September/October 1994 Issue 5

Look at the World Through Women's Eyes

The NGO Forum on Women is launching a campaign to focus on how issues are transformed when seen through the eyes of women. "Look at the world through women's eyes" will be the over-all theme of NGO Forum activities leading up to the Forum in Beijing. The theme will also provide the framework for the program of activities being organized for the Beijing Forum from August 30 to September 8, 1995.

"Looking at the world through women's eyes means looking at issues from women's perspectives," said Irene M. Santiago, Executive Director of the NGO Forum on Women. "When you look at peace or work, human rights or health, food security or politics through women's eyes, it means taking into consideration women's strengths as well as women's vulnerabilities." Ms. Santiago said that the theme will enable NGOs to focus on their particular issue as part of a global public awareness campaign being undertaken by the Forum.

Already some NGOs are organizing activities around making media look at the news through women's eyes. Plans are being finalized to organize a day one week before the opening of the Forum where media organizations around the world will focus on news as seen through the eyes of women.

Nell Merlino, the Forum's media strategist, is heading the campaign. She is encouraging NGOs from all the five regions to initiate contacts with leading media organizations in their countries. A packet on the media campaign, the result of consultations with women media practitioners around

the world, is available from the Forum Office in New York.

NGOs are also encouraged to organize activities around their concerns using the Forum theme. Ms. Santiago said that activities could highlight such issues as human rights through women's eyes, and peace through women's eyes.

The perspective could also be applied to issues women have cared about, including education, literacy, economics, leadership, religion and spirituality, racism, violence, environment, family, media, science, technology, migration, disabilities, militarism, rural development, finance and credit.

NGOs planning activities linked to the "Look at the world through women's eyes" theme are urged to inform the NGO Forum Office in New York so that their activities may be shared with other NGOs around the world. ■

About the Forum Logo

The logo depicts eight women dancing. Each one has her own energy and dynamism. Each one is tied to the other through a common center. Thus, they all together generate more energy and power than each one of them could generate singly. The logo celebrates women as risk-takers, doers and active shapers of their own destinies. The red and white motif represents celebration.

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From left to right: Irene M. Santiago, Supatra Masdit, Maria Suarez, Gloria Careaga Perez and Mabel Bianco.

Thousands of Women Gather at Mar del Plata Regional NGO Forum

Fifteen hundred women representing NGOs from Latin America and the Caribbean met in Mar del Plata, Argentina from September 26 to 30, 1994 at the regional NGO Forum.

In her opening remarks, Khuning Supatra Masdit, convenor of the NGO Forum on Women, stressed cooperation between governments and NGOs. Autonomy, diversity and a change in the concept of development were among the "terms" she laid out for non-governmental and governmental interaction.

The NGO meeting successfully completed a draft regional Platform for Action based on national and subregional consultations as well as the proceedings of the regional Forum. The Platform addresses the major points of the official UN regional document while making key changes and recommendations.

The meeting was organized around several plenaries, which focused on such themes as structural adjustment, political participation and violence against women. Indigenous women and young women were particularly active. The latter presented UN delegates with their own recommendations.

After the NGO Platform for Action was officially presented by Virginia Vargas, Regional Focal Point, to the

UN delegates, women crowded the main conference room holding up the NGO document and the Forum's banner.

Young Women Highlight Their Concerns

Young women from about 25 NGOs from 12 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean joined the regional NGO Forum and the UN Conference in Mar del Plata to address their concerns and produce a document that highlighted the potential of youth, particularly young women, in eliminating the political, social and economic marginalization of women in society.

Participants discussed their specific concerns, needs and proposals around five areas: health, work, participation, communication and education.

They also talked about structural adjustment policies in relation to development and violence against women in relation to the concept of peace. They pointed out that economic structural adjustment policies have increased the exclusion and marginalization of the youth sector, making it difficult for them to have access to the labor market, health services and education.

For a copy of the young women's caucus document, which is available in English and Spanish, contact Zonny Woods at the NGO Forum on Women Office in New York. Copies of the Mar del Plata NGO Forum document and the latest draft of the ECLAC document are also available from the Forum Office.



Women's groups wave the NGO Forum Platform for Action and their banner after Virginia Vargas' speech.

Call for NGO Documents

The NGO Forum on Women Office will formally transmit NGO consensus documents to Mrs. Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women. These documents will be among those to be considered for the next draft of the Platform for Action. NGOs may send their documents to Soon-Young Yoon at the NGO Forum on Women Office in New York. Documents received before December 1, 1994 must have English abstracts attached if they are in other languages. Unfortunately, because of time constraints, the Forum Office will be unable to have them translated.

Lessons Learned from Mar del Plata

The following are some lessons learned from the Latin American and Caribbean NGO Forum, as compiled by the NGO Forum on Women Office.

✳ NGOs should be visible during the official UN meeting so that the UN delegates are informed about the NGO Platform. Ways by which this can be achieved include hanging a banner to identify the NGO Forum and designing activities for photo-taking, television and other media.

✳ An information table is a good point of contact for UN delegates, the NGO Forum and journalists. A "public relations" desk also establishes a visible NGO "presence."

✳ Media outreach is critical. Organizers must assist NGO lobbying efforts and in mobilizing those women unable to attend the meeting. Because the government meeting lasts for only a few days, NGOs must host a press briefing on the first day. NGOs with publications should obtain press accreditation in order to have access to computers and E-mail.

✳ Organizers should try to secure the meeting's budget way in advance. They should also have alternative plans in case funds are cut at the last minute. This may involve additional support from the national host NGO, such as enlisting more volunteers.

✳ Funds must include the interpretation and translation of discussions as well as documents. Handing NGO documents or presentations to the UN regional commissions does not guarantee these will be translated or reproduced for the delegates.

✳ Regions should work with each other and form "caucuses" to effectively lobby official delegates on their common agenda.

✳ NGOs might want to arrange a meeting with the chair of the drafting group, the Secretary General and others who can assist in facilitating the participation of NGOs in the process.

✳ The meeting must be monitored and evaluated halfway through. It is crucial that the organizers be available to participants for such a session.



Indigenous women's groups bring their recommendations to the Mar del Plata regional NGO forum.

✳ Regional meetings consist of two meetings held back to back, the NGO Forum itself and the NGO Forum with the UN. NGOs should have at least one day to plan for the second meeting with other groups. A meeting room large enough to accommodate a plenary should be set up.

* Appropriate space and infrastructure are needed during the UN conference for NGOs to hold meetings and briefings and have a space to call their own. Prior arrangements must be made for copying services and supplies, such as poster paper and markers. ■



Simultaneous translation was available during plenaries for the English-speaking women from the Caribbean.

Panel Examines the Linkages Between WCW and Social Development Summit

During the PrepCom of the Social Development Summit, four distinguished speakers discussed the linkages among the past UN conferences and the Social Summit to the Beijing conference on women. The panel, organized by the NGO Forum on Women, was headed by Minister Helle Degn of the Development Cooperation Ministry of Denmark.

In discussing the linkages, the speakers focused on ways to shape a comprehensive gender agenda for Beijing. Other speakers included Peggy Antrobus of DAWN, Bella Abzug of WEDO and Maria Suarez of FIRE, ISIS Latin America and the Latin American Women's Health Network.

Minister Degn said that the Social Summit presented a rare opportunity to get a clear political commitment from world leaders "to rectify the unequal balance of power" between women and men. "If we are to accord human dignity and security for all, we must get all actors—the UN, governments and NGOs—to work

together," she said.

She noted that NGOs have often expressed disappointment from the lack of results of past UN conferences. Minister Degn, who has participated in the past three UN conferences on women, said she believed that women would be worse off without these conferences. Beijing offers the opportunity to make men take greater responsibility for ensuring gender equality.

Since the third day of the Summit will fall on International Women's Day on March 8, she encouraged women to join the big march being organized in Copenhagen in order to get media attention for their issues.

Peggy Antrobus saw the importance of the Social Summit on women because of its main participants and its themes. Heads of States from all UN member countries will discuss solutions to poverty, unemployment and social disintegration.

Noting that the condition of women is worse than in the 1970s, Ms. Antrobus pointed to the need for analytical clarity to understand the links among the three themes of the Copenhagen Summit. She pointed to the need to make Beijing a "turning point" for the women's movement and the UN to make radical changes in the development model to be pursued in the 21st century.

Bella Abzug spoke of the "collective amnesia" of the UN when it comes to the promises it has made about improving the condition and status of women. "We're still asking the same things," she said. Ms. Abzug, the main organizer of the Congress for a Healthy Planet held in Miami prior to UNCED, said that the Women's Action Agenda prepared at the meeting was a holistic agenda for the next century. She said Beijing was a time to pull all the UN promises out again and "get them to keep their word."

Maria Suarez, in a moving speech, described the UN conferences on environment, human rights and population through images and symbols. She said that the "invisible powers" have controlled these issues. Calling them powers who operate without the restraints of geographical borders, she named militarism, the illicit drug

industry, media, religious fundamentalism and the IMF/World Bank.

"It is women who see them, who are talking about them and facing them," she said. "Beijing should expose them to the world for what they are doing to women."

Irene M. Santiago, who moderated the panel, spoke of the need to continue to define the links among the issues being discussed by the UN in order to develop a comprehensive gender agenda for Beijing. ■

NY NGO Committee on the Status of Women Plans for NGO Consultation

The New York NGO Committee on the Status of Women, in cooperation with the NGO Forum on Women office, has begun preparations for the NGO Consultation and the 39th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to be held from March 15 to April 4, 1995. The CSW meets every year to evaluate progress made on the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and serves as the last PrepCom to the Fourth World Conference on Women. The NGO Consultation will take place on March 13-14.

Both events will provide women's NGOs the opportunity to plan toward Beijing and make recommendations to the Platform for Action. ■

Countries Submit Their National Reports to UN Conference Secretariat for Beijing

As part of the preparations for Beijing, each member state of the UN has been requested to prepare a report of progress made in the advancement of women in their country. These national reports are crucial in the development of the Platform for Action, the document produced at the conclusion of the World Conference on Women. As of August, the Division for the Advancement of Women has received reports from the following countries:

Bangladesh • Barbados • Bulgaria • Burkina Faso • Canada • Cape Verde • China • Colombia • Comoros • Congo • Denmark • Ecuador • Egypt • Ethiopia • Finland • France • Gabon • Ghana • Haiti • Holy See • Indonesia • Italy • Kazakhstan • Republic of Korea • Liberia • Lithuania • Malawi • Mauritius • Nicaragua • Niger • Nigeria • Norway • Peru • Portugal • Qatar • Russian Federation • St. Christopher and St. Kitts • Senegal • Sudan • Sweden • Tanzania • Tunisia • Ukraine • Uruguay • Vietnam • Zambia ■

E-mail conferences through APC in the Latin America and Caribbean region focusing on Beijing:

mujer.cmm	planning and exchange of ideas on Beijing
cmm.org.doc	NGO documents on WCW
un.wcw.doc.esp	official documents on WCW
muj.beij95	ISIS international conference on Beijing
muj.com	exchange among communication networks in Latin America for Beijing
amlat.mujeres	exchange for women's NGOs
dh.mujeres	human rights and women

Regional Meetings

Africa NGO Forum

Dakar, Senegal will host the NGO Forum for Africa on November 12-15, 1994. The Forum, which takes place prior to the African Preparatory Conference convened by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on November 16-23, 1994, will include thematic workshops, round tables and video and film workshops. In addition, there will be a marketplace, cultural activities and artwork by young girls and boys.

Arab NGO Forum

The Arab NGO Forum will be held in Amman, Jordan on November 3-5, 1994. The Forum, which takes place prior to the Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting on November 6-10, will include workshops and exhibits.

Among the topics to be discussed at the Arab meeting are: Women and International Relations, Women's Rights and Human Rights, Women's NGOs' Role in Development, Women's Role in Islam, Women and Environmental Protection, Women in Special Groups, Women and Small Business Enterprises and Rural Women. Simultaneous translation from Arabic to English will be available to observers.

New Publications

- ☛ Preview '95
- ☛ Directory of National Focal Points
- ☛ Conference Calendar #3

To order, write to: International Women's Tribune Centre, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA.

US Regional Meetings In Full Swing

US regional meetings for the World Conference on Women are in full swing. Ambassador Arvonne Fraser, head of the US delegation, reports that a recent meeting in Tacoma, Washington brought together NGOs from diverse ethnic groups to discuss their recommendations. Reports can be obtained from Ambassador Fraser's office at the US Department of State. Fax: (202) 647-4628.

Pacific Island NGO Coordinating Group Set Up After Jakarta Meeting

After a lengthy discussion at the Jakarta meeting, Pacific women's NGOs appointed the Fiji National Council of Women (FNCW), Pacific YWCA and UNIFEM's Pacific office to act as the NGO

Coordinating Group that will be responsible for coordinating Pacific NGOs for the Fourth World Conference on Women and the NGO Forum.

Some of its tasks include conducting an analysis of the draft Platform for Action from the Commission on the Status of Women meeting in March 1994 to ensure that it reflects Pacific concerns, disseminate information regionally and internationally on preparatory activities related to Beijing and to prepare NGOs for the next session of the CSW in March 1995.

The NGO Coordinating Group will also produce publications to increase awareness on three specific Pacific issues to be addressed at the NGO Forum, which are indigenous people's rights, decolonization, a nuclear-free Pacific and militarism.

A Pacific regional workshop is scheduled for January 16-20, 1995 to prepare Pacific Island NGOs for the PrepCom in March. For further inquiries, contact UNIFEM's Pacific office at (679) 301178. Fax: (679) 301654. ■

NGOs Prepare Issues for Beijing

NGOs around the world are organizing around specific issues to be addressed in Beijing. Groups are encouraged to contact their regional focal points for more information. The issues and their respective regional contacts are as follows:

New York

Equality • Development • Peace • Employment/Management • Health/Mental Health/Population • Refugees/Migrants/Internally Displaced Indigenous Peoples • Media and Global Day • Women and Men in Partnership • Women and Spirituality • Community Participation and Sustainable Human Development • Food and Agriculture • Women and Human Rights • Task Force on Process • Education and Research • For more information, contact: Mary Power, Baha'i International Community, 866 UN Plaza, Suite 120, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel.: (212) 756-3500. Fax: (212) 756-3573.

Geneva

Employment • Refugee Women • Health • Nutrition • Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children • Peace • Girl Child • Forum 95 clearing-house and coordination group • Development Education for Women • Women and Decision-making • For more information, contact: Irene Hoskins, American Association of Retired Persons, Office E2-1, NGO Lounge, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Tel.: (4122) 917-4735. Fax: (4122) 758-0181.

Africa

Environment • Education • Legal/Law • Economic • Health • Women and AIDS • Girl Child • Peace, Disarmament and Refugees • Media • Research • Agriculture/Food Production • Women and Democratization • Population • Social Cultural Issues • Gender Sensitization • Empowerment • Rural Women • For more information, contact: Njoki Wainaina, African Women's Development & Communications Network, FEMNET, P.O. Box 54562, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: (254) 274-1301. Fax: (254) 274-2927. Or Soukeyna Ndiaye Ba, Réseau des Femmes Africaines pour le Développement et la Communication, 3 Avenue Bourguiba, B.P. 3921, Dakar, Senegal. Tel.: (221) 230-058. Fax: (221) 254-287.

Asia and the Pacific

Health • Labor • Agriculture • Culture and Education • Political Empowerment • Economic Empowerment • Violence against Women • Human Rights • Science and Technology • Indigenous Women • Family • Environment • For more information, contact: Sumalee Chartikavanij, Pan Pacific/S.E. Asia Women's Association International, 2234 New Petchburi Road, Bangkok 10310, Thailand. Tel.: (662) 314-4316. Fax: (662) 718-0372.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Equality • Development • Media • Employment • Education and Research • Human Rights • Health and Population • Women and Spirituality • Food and

Agriculture • Community Participation • Refugees • For more information, contact: Virginia Vargas, Flora Tristan, Parque Hernan Velarde 42, Lima 1, Peru. Tel.: (5114) 331-457. Fax: (5114) 339-500. E-mail: flora@geo2geomail.org. ■



Women Linking

Asia/Pacific NGO Symposium

The Asia and Pacific NGO Forum Working Group summary recommendations are now available. The full report of the Manila NGO Symposium held in November 1993 includes reports and recommendations on the 12 issues identified at the symposium. Contact: The Secretariat, 1145 J.P. Laurel Street, San Miguel, Metro Manila, Philippines. Fax: (632) 7125267 or (632) 8167528.

Social Summit PrepCom Women's Caucus

During the Social Summit PrepCom in August, women's NGOs actively lobbied and strategized for the inclusion of a gender perspective in the Summit's documents. NGOs organized a daily women's caucus to develop an alternative language to the Summit Secretariat's document. For a copy of the document, contact: WEDO, 845 Third Ave., 15th Floor, New York, NY 10022, USA.

Vanuatu Women's Centre

The Vanuatu Women's Centre recently hosted "Beneath Paradise," a regional project for grassroots Pacific women to document their work, experiences and issues. The project aims to prepare women's groups for Beijing by gaining media and documentation skills. Contact: Vanuatu Women's Centre, P.O. Box 1358, Port Vila, Vanuatu. Fax: (678) 23142.

Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission

An international petition campaign, "Put Sexuality on the Agenda at the World Conference on Women," has been launched by the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. It is aimed at mobilizing support for the inclusion of lesbian issues in the Platform for Action and other conference documents. Contact: IGLHRC, 1360 Mission Street, Suite 200, San Francisco, CA 94103, USA. Tel.: (415) 255-8680. Fax: (415) 255-8662. E-mail: iglhrc@igc.apc.org.

South Africa NGO Secretariat for Beijing

In South Africa, NGOs are holding workshops nationwide to inform and mobilize women and encourage the government to work with women's groups in preparation for the World Conference on Women. It will be the first time that the South African government will be attending a UN conference on women. Preparations are also focusing on the involvement of young women, women with disabilities and groups from rural areas

and other communities that have not been sufficiently targeted by the women's movement. Contact: NGO Secretariat for Beijing, P.O. Box 62319, Marshalltown, Johannesburg. Fax: (2711) 331-2363.

Permanent Forum on Gender Communication

In recognition of the strategic role media plays in the advancement of women, the Permanent Forum on Gender Communication was established in 1994 by women's NGOs in Latin America and the Caribbean in preparation for the World Conference on Women. To date, it has distributed conference-related material from NGOs and governments and created an E-mail conference (<mujer.com>) through APC. Contact: Irene Leon, ALAI, Casilla 17 12 877, 12 de Octubre 622, OF. 503, Quito, Ecuador. E-mail: mujeres@alai.exc.ec.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

Song Contest for Beijing

Community Aid Abroad in Australia invites women musicians and songwriters to write "A Song for Beijing" as an expression of women's strength and solidarity when they gather in Beijing in 1995. This song will be learned by thousands of women who speak a variety of languages, so the organization asks that songs in languages other than English be translated. Suggestions (in the form of words on paper and music on a cassette tape or paper) must be sent by the end of February 1995 to: Christine Wheeler, Community Aid Abroad, GPO Box 1000, Sydney 2001, Australia. Tel.: (612) 264-1399. Fax: (612) 264-1476.