

Women's declaration at the Global Forum on environment

A healthy and sustainable environment for all

10 June 1992

WE, THE WOMEN AT THE GLOBAL FORUM, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 3 to 14 June 1992

SPEAKING OUT on behalf of millions of women who experience daily such inequities as the violence of the environmental degradation, poverty, racism, misinformation, compulsory heterosexism, the exploitation of their work by not valuing their labor at all or unequally, and violence against their bodies;

CLAIMING the authority given us by those experiences and by our representation of more than 50 percent of the world's population and our special responsibility for the nurturance and continuance of life;

APPALLED by the failure of the governments of the world to either address the true causes of the planetary crisis or reach agreement on urgent actions necessary to save our planet;

EQUATING lack of political and individual will among world leaders with their lack of basic

moral and spiritual values, and an absence of responsibility towards the peoples they represent and future generations;

OUTRAGED that the UNCED agenda has ignored that some of the most critical factors contributing to people and environmental degradation are economic and military systems which use mechanisms such as debt, trade and aid, and military excesses such as nuclear testing, that exploit and misuse nature and people;

CONVINCED that the current consumerist, materialistic economic and cultural patterns set by the countries of the North are destructive and have bankrupted our peoples and planet, and opposed to any further pressures being placed on the countries of the South to adopt those patterns;

BELIEVING that a healthy and sustainable environment is contingent upon world peace, respect for human rights of all to survival, participatory democracy without fear of repression, the self determination of peoples at all levels and in their localities, value for the integ-

riety and autonomy of indigenous peoples, and the protection of all species;

PLEDGE OURSELVES to implement the Women's Action Agenda 21 adopted in Miami between 8 to 12 November 1991 on behalf of ourselves, our families, our communities and our planet, now and for the future.

APPEAL TO ALL PEOPLE to join in this call for profound and urgent transformation of the values that have brought us to this planetary crisis, and

CALL UPON THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT attending the Earth Summit being held in Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992 to commit themselves and their governments to a true implementation of the Women's Action Agenda 21 which was adopted by their officials without amendment on 6 June, including:

1. *The recognition of the centrality of women's roles, needs, values and wisdom to decision-making on the fate of the earth and the urgent*

need to involve women at all levels of policy-making, planning and implementation on an equal basis with men;

2. The adoption of a model of "sustainable development" based on sustainable livelihood for all people with full human rights including access to clean air and water, food, shelter, health, education, information, the enjoyment of civil liberties, and spiritual and cultural integrity;

3. Respect, long overdue, to the world's indigenous peoples, of their basic human rights including their rights to land and self determination, and for their vital wisdom and leadership in resisting the destruction of the Earth and its creatures and in creating a new life-affirming global reality;

3. The establishment of an alternative order of economic, social, cultural and political interaction based on gender balance, and equity and justice for all peoples, species and generations;

4. The acknowledgment, by their cancellation, that the so-called "debts" allegedly owed by countries of the South have been more than repaid by decades of slavery,

the inequitable prices paid for their labor and resources, the exorbitant interest charged, and the consequent impoverishment of their peoples and environment, and to ensuring that the benefits of such cancellation reach down to the people at the grassroots;

6. Ending the imposition by the World Bank-IMF on poor countries of all conditionalities and structural adjustment policies attached to loans and aid, except those which are founded on respect for peoples, especially women, and for the environment and abandoning anti-protectionist policies under consideration in the Uruguay round of GATT and similar negotiations where protectionist policies are genuinely necessary for the preservation of peoples and the environment;

7. The appreciation that a precondition to survival is the preservation of our natural heritage of biological diversity and that the harm that may be caused by genetic engineering of people, animals and plants and the release of genetically-manipulated organisms into the environment demands there be no further approval unless and until truly representational citizens' boards including women fully par-

ticipate in the process and that any resulting life forms or life form technology, should not be patentable;

8. The strict enforcement, guided by the precautionary principle, of obligations in national and international law for the protection of peoples, animals and the environment;

9. The immediate cessation of the militarization of space, the production and testing of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and the unjustifiable and unsafe generation, dumping and incineration of wastes whether toxic or non-toxic;

10. The adoption and implementation of codes of ethics respectful of all peoples, animals and environment, in scientific research and application;

11. The development of criteria for all technologies which insist that they be people and environment friendly, non-violent, appropriate to the culture and not tied to aid;

12. The empowerment of women by raising their economic, health, nutrition, education, and social status as their inalienable right, and in recognition that their empower-

ment is a prerequisite to healing and sustaining the environment;

13. The fostering of systems of information and exchange, both formal and informal, which adhere to principles of openness and inclusiveness, cultural diversity and integrity, and which are dedicated to the widest possible dissemination of information on environmental and developmental issues, including the effects of military, industrial, and agricultural by-products on health and environment, and to the promotion of harmony between all living systems and solidarity among peoples;

14. The condemnation of any attempt to deprive women of sexual preference, reproductive freedom or the knowledge and means necessary to exercise that freedom in accordance with principles of informed consent, the provision of comprehensive reproductive health care and family planning, including the right to pre and post natal care, safe and legal voluntary contraceptives and abortion, sex education, and information, the protection from racism and sexual exploitation of migrant women, the recognition of the existence of a global cancer epidemic which demands the removal from the envi-

ronment of carcinogenic substances, particularly those which have adverse effects on women and children, the systematic alerting and education of all to the danger of AIDS, the provision of programs that educate men on male methods of contraception and on their responsibilities, and the enhancement of efforts to eliminate occupational hazards in factories, offices and on farms; and

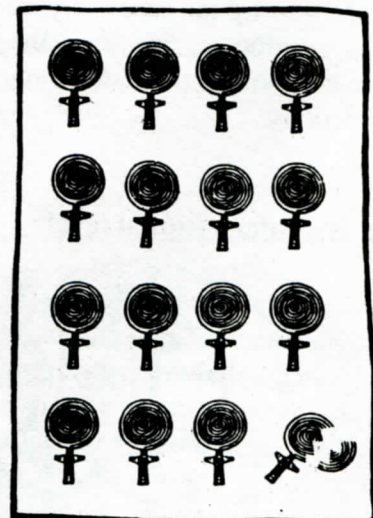
15. The adoption of forms of governance which are decentralized, and in which decision-making, including those on natural resource management are centered on people and communities both locally and generally.

This Declaration is a call to action initially mandated by women during panels and discussions at the sessions on Debt and Trade organized by DAWN at the Women's Tent on 5 June. Suggestions for a draft were taken on 6 June. The draft was amended and adopted by women at a special meeting to consider the draft on 10 June. It especially draws its inspiration from the Women's Action Agenda '21, DAWN's and also other women's views at the Global Forum.

About DAWN:

The DAWN network encompassing Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific was launched in 1984. It provides a forum for South women to formulate issues from a gender perspective, and provides a vehicle for influencing public policy.

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