



## World Social Forum and the Feminist Dialogues

The World Social Forum (WSF) developed as a response to the growing international movement to neoliberal globalisation. Known for its slogan “Another World is Possible,” it was conceived as an open meeting space for deepening reflection, the democratic discussion of ideas, the formulation of proposals, the free exchange of experiences and the articulation of civil society organisations and movements that are opposed to neoliberal globalisation and the domination of the world by capital and by any other form of imperialism. This open space, in accordance with WSF’s Charter of Principles is constituted as plural and diversified, non-confessional, non-governmental and non-partisan.

One of the spaces within the WSF was the Feminist Dialogues (FD) which discussed women and gender issues. The first FD was held in Mumbai, India in January 2004, highlighting issues such as women’s human rights, sexual and reproductive rights, inter-linkages between the local and the global and sexuality. It was attended by over 150 women from different parts of the world.

The first WSF was organised in Porto Alegre, Brazil, from 25 to 30 January 2001, marking an opposition to the World Economic Forum held in Davos, Switzerland that has fulfilled a strategic role in formulating the thought of those who promote and defend neoliberal policies throughout the world since 1971.

Excerpt of the “About WSF” from World Social Forum India, <http://www.wsfindia.org/?q=node/2> as well as “History from the Feminist Dialogues, [http://feministdialogues.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=27&Itemid=124](http://feministdialogues.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=27&Itemid=124)

Photo from the International Lesbian and Gay Association

*Men are patriarchal but I have seen many of them try. They are just completely in the hands of patriarchal values and unfortunately, women started thinking and challenging these much earlier. They have to recognise that bringing up children, being involved with household work can make them much better human beings.*

it turns them to less than humans. They have to recognise that bringing up children being involved with household work can make them better human beings. They have to deal much more with the whole notion of masculinity, the whole notion of power which they have.

They have not done it but we also have at times failed to help them with that.

*How would you assess the WSF as a space and its articulation of feminist visions?*

On the whole, it has been positive. The concept and implementation are quite amazing. There was a feeling that we have some connections with each other. We had our Feminist Dialogues there.

With the presence of feminists at all levels, the WSF managed quite well in having feminist thoughts articulated. And if some of these were missing, I feel that a global network can only reflect what the local and national networks are. If we had that gender equality everywhere, there is no way that the World Social Forum would not reflect it. When we come to a WSF, we do separate feminist meetings which means that there are no strong feminists roaming around in the other meetings. So I say that we need to do much much more work at all levels.

*What are the strongest points of convergence among the feminists from the South and the North?*

Most feminists have been concerned with the environment movement. They now call it climate change. I call it climate destruction. This whole concern about what we are doing