

A CALL FOR A NON-VIOLENT, JUST, EQUITABLE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

BY THE WOMEN OF THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION

Fourth Preparatory Meeting for the World Summit for Sustainable Development, Bali, Indonesia, 27-29 May 2002 and the People's Forum, 2-6 June 2002

We, the women from the Asia Pacific Region assert that globalization through liberalization, privatisation, and deregulation of national economies to facilitate the free flow of capital, goods and services have not only increased environmental degradation but created and maintained poverty among peoples, especially women who now comprise 70% of the world's poor.

Principle 1 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development states that "human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development". The Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific acknowledges that gender inequality remains an over-arching concern which needs to be addressed in the region. Equality between men and women in accessing resources has worsened in the 10 years since Rio, with women owning less than 1 % of the world's agricultural land while being responsible for majority of food production.

In the last decade, the Asia Pacific region has experienced devastating effects on the state of the economy, society and the environment. Market driven exploitation of natural resources has already led to deep ecological and social crisis in the region. Social and gender inequalities have increased between and within the countries of the region. The role and power of the States has been diminished by the heightened role of international financial institutions and transnational corporations. The export oriented development approach does not recognise the role and importance of natural resources for social and cultural survival, rural livelihoods and income for large numbers of people. It has failed to reflect the rich cultural diversity of the region. Increasing commercialisation of, and conflict over, natural resources has escalated. Militarization and financial allocation for it has sharply increased. Further, achievement of sustainable development is threatened by the US led global war on terrorism, supported by its allies. We believe that this development" is intensifying national, class, gender and racial oppression.

Statement for the Fourth Preparatory Committee for the WSSD, Bali, 27-29 May 2002

The patriarchal context of globalisation has led to increased women's multiple burdens in paid and unpaid work, severely limiting women's access to health care, education and other basic public services. Women continue to be relegated to casual or informal employment with lower wages, threatened job security and diminished workers' rights. Food security has drastically worsened due to monoculture cash cropping. As a result, health of millions of people is affected by the increased use of pesticide.

Women's contributions continue to be hampered by and discriminated against on the basis of sex, race, class and ethnicity. Women are denied access to full legal and social rights as human beings. The perpetuation of systemic use of violence against women, including rape, genital mutilation, forced pregnancies, sterilisation, trafficking, prostitution, violence against women is a blatant violation of their human rights. We assert that sustainable development, particularly economic, social and environmental wellbeing cannot be attained without gender justice.

These manifestations are the result of the policies enforced by governments and multilateral institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Market forces have led to the flexibilization and informalization of employment. Removal of State subsidies for basic services, erosion of food security result in absolute violation and denial of human rights. Subsistence farmers and indigenous communities have suffered displacement, loss of income, land and jobs.

The market-driven model of development should be dismissed and replaced by a genuine sustainable development. Diverse approaches from different cultures should be integrated in the development of this alternative framework. The current framework with the institutions whose policies result in environmentally unsustainable development, inequitable distribution of wealth and means of production, and social inequality are unacceptable. We reject the role of the WTO, the World Bank, the IMF and the profit driven transnational corporations in sustainable development. The role of the UN has been dictated by the G8 countries, especially the US, the Internatioanal Financing Institutions and Transnational Corporations which has undermined the spirit of World Summit on Sustainable Development.

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The women from the Asia Pacific Region are calling on the Governments for:

- Radical changes in the current development framework giving primacy to human rights, particularly women's human rights to attain sustainable development;
- Strong, truly democratic and accountable global, national and local governance that ensures access to information, public participation and access to justice to all, women and men;
- Gender Justice and mainstreaming to be made an integral part of the sustainable development. States should enact measures and allocate resources for the full recognition and realization of women's human rights;
- Recognition of local communities and indigenous people's as rights holders, not merely as stakeholders, to have their own form of development and to defend their local economy;
- Corporations and international financial institutions to be held accountable for t.he environmental and social impacts of their activities;
- Demilitarization in order to achieve peace and sustainable development.

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Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)

Korea Women's Association United

Rural Women's NGO (ALGA) - Kyrgystan

National Alliance of Women (NA WO) - India

Tamil Nadgjalit Women's Movement - India

Indigenous Peoples of Northern Thailand - IMPECT Foundation for Sustainable Development - Thailand

Kalikasan - Philippines

GABRIELA - Philippines

Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center

Umila Aryal - Nepal