NEW AID, EXPANDING TRADE:

WHAT DO WOMEN HAVE TO SAY?
New aid, expanding trade: What do women have to say?
A report of a WIDE’s annual conference, Madrid - 14-16 june 2007

Edited by Bina Srinavasan & Mandy Macdonald.

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Bina Srinavasan died during the course of editing this publication. She grappled all her life with the social and political impact of development, poverty and religious fundamentalism among Dalit, Adivasi and other economically vulnerable communities of women in communities in India, specifically in the western State of Gujarat where she lived. She tirelessly fought and campaigned for her sisters’ rights. And she brought that passion to the global level. She has been sorely missed.

The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and can therefore in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Community or WIDE.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

NB: This list does not contain the names of familiar UN organisations.

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<th>Description</th>
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<td>ACP</td>
<td>African, Caribbean and Pacific [group of states]</td>
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<td>BPIA</td>
<td>Beijing Platform for Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
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<td>CIS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<td>CONGDE</td>
<td>Coordinadora de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales para el Desarrollo [Development NGO Platform, Spain]</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>civil society organisation</td>
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<td>DAW</td>
<td>Department for the Advancement of Women</td>
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<td>DAWN</td>
<td>Development Alternatives with Women in a New Era</td>
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<tr>
<td>DBS</td>
<td>direct budget support</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPA</td>
<td>Economic Partnership Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDI</td>
<td>foreign direct investment</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>Free Trade Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>G8</td>
<td>Group of 8 [developed countries]</td>
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<td>GADN</td>
<td>Gender and Development Network [UK]</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEA</td>
<td>Gender Equality Architecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>GGD/CONGDE</td>
<td>Gender and Development Working Group of CONGDE</td>
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<td>GMO</td>
<td>genetically modified organism</td>
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<td>IFIs</td>
<td>international financial institutions</td>
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<td>IGTN</td>
<td>International Gender and Trade Network</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>INSTRAW</td>
<td>United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women</td>
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<td>IPR</td>
<td>intellectual property rights</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>NAMA</td>
<td>non-agricultural market access</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organisation</td>
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<td>ODA</td>
<td>official development assistance</td>
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<td>OECD/DAC</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<td>OSAGI</td>
<td>Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women</td>
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<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper</td>
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<td>SPS</td>
<td>sanitary and phytosanitary</td>
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<td>SWAP</td>
<td>sector-wide approach</td>
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<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>United Nations Development Fund for Women</td>
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<td>VAW</td>
<td>violence against women</td>
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<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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<td>WEDO</td>
<td>Women’s Environment &amp; Development Organization</td>
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<td>WIPO</td>
<td>World Intellectual Property Organization</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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WIDE’s Annual Conference 2007 on “New aid, expanding trade: what do women have to say?”, hosted by the Gender and Development Working Group of the Spanish Platform of Development NGOs (CONGDE) set up an important series of questions and concerns for all women working in gender, trade, development and social justice. The conference brought together women’s organisations from all over the world, North, South and East to examine how ongoing reforms on trade, financial mechanisms, and development are linked, and to advocate for change. The Spanish platform (CONGDE) who co-hosted the meeting with WIDE provided not only an excellent work space but also a convivial atmosphere of solidarity where reflections on women’s contribution to different development processes and strategies for alternative visions for feminist ways forward could flourish.

The conference scrutinized the profound changes in the nature of international trade policies, regulation of financial flows and investment and the new international development architecture. High on the agenda was whether the new aid modalities such as those outlined in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness will further sideline gender interests, shrink the spaces and resources available to gender equality and undercut efforts for women’s empowerment. As well as providing critical analysis on what is happening now in development policy the conference also looked at possible feminist alternatives and ways forward for gender equality and women’s rights. Such debates engaged participants in possible new advocacy positions and moved the discussions beyond the restrictions imposed by today’s inequitable and asymmetrical global development and trade architecture.

As the report sets out, it is critical that women’s organizations understand the impact of World Trade Organization (WTO), regional and bilateral negotiations for trade liberalisation on gender equality. The Millennium Declaration (2000), the Monterrey Consensus (2002) and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) are all essentially donor led agendas and have shaped a global development policy that is largely gender-blind and one that gives very little space for the voice of Southern countries, and even less to the voices of women advocating gender equality.

WIDE as a network based in Europe was particularly concerned to understand the aid, global trade and development agendas in the context of the complex integration process of Europe’s 27 member states. This European process of economic integration is changing not only the internal face of Europe but also Europe’s global face as foreign, security and development policy have entered into new relationships, for example in the European Neighbourhood Policy and related financial instruments. All of these changes imply shifts to European and global frameworks through which aid is delivered to Europe’s neighbours in the South and the East. As the conference report shows the impacts of these changes are difficult to gauge as they are unfolding still but they remain critical to future global gender equality and broader social and environmental concerns.

The report underlines that as well as coming to terms with new geopolitical realities due to changes in Europe, and to the changing economic status and power of India and China it is critical to understand why the aid and development agenda is floundering when it comes to gender equality. Reviews of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, Millennium Development Progress reports and analyses of sector-wide approaches (SWAPs) illustrate today’s development, trade and aid agendas despite commitments and promises (as well as strategies such as gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting) remain gender-blind and fail to translate gender analysis into implementation plans.

What emerges from the conference report is that gender experts and women’s organisations are demanding nothing less than a new aid, trade and foreign policy architecture to reinforce and support commitments to women’s human rights and gender equality undertaken by national governments and the international community. Together with other civil society organisations (CSOs), women’s organisations call for serious consultation and democratic accountability in the aid effectiveness agenda, as well as independent monitoring of state and donor practices. Women can benefit from development only if gender equality is recognised as a component of national development and poverty reduction policies. At the same time, the structural reasons for gender inequality in the macroeconomic context, in
the trade exchanges, in the framework of international development initiatives, and in the transfer of financial resources for development must be challenged and transformed.

The report sets out some ways in which WIDE together with allies in the South and East are to develop joint positions, strategies and entry points for women’s advocacy activities regarding upcoming high-level events (e.g. the XII UNCTAD Conference in Ghana in 2008, the third Review Meeting on the implementation of the Paris Declaration in Ghana in 2008, the Review Conference on the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in Qatar in 2008).

As the report attests, the WIDE’s 2007 Annual Conference facilitated the kind of learning, networking and strategising efforts needed to tackle such an ambitious agenda through capacity building, passionate and engaged conversations. And very importantly by providing the space to stand back, be critical and push forward with vision and hope. As well as setting out ways to monitor and influence international economic, trade and development policy and practice from a feminist perspective, the conference also brought to the forefront the search for alternative approaches to the economic mainstream and for gender equality and sustainable development. In those discussions women from Europe, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East and Asia came forward with critical ways to organise as feminists working for an equal and just future.

Christa Wichterich in her important plenary presentation on the second day of the conference linked the technical discussion on policy and aid with the political discussions about feminist alternatives.

As she stated the title of the conference should have been more precisely; “What do feminists have to say”. She asks that feminists unpack the development policy that is based on the assumption that market tools provide the solutions for everything, from trade in pollution rights to micro-credit as a vehicle for women’s empowerment and market integration. As she states “The market totalitarian mindset pushes aside alternative development concepts and economic structures like a care-and-provision driven economy in which women have traditionally been key actors.” And she asks that in response feminists should push for “interventionist reform in favour of poor people, social justice and gender equality on the one hand, and on the other hand fight against the overexploitation of human and natural resources, against the commodification and privatisation of everything, the destruction of livelihoods and alternative economic structures.”

We hope that this conference report begins to point the way on how we can begin to advocate and move forward in such crucial struggles.
1 Welcome and opening remarks

1.1 Wendy Harcourt, WIDE Chair

The WIDE 2007 Annual Conference by taking the provocative title "New aid, expanding trade: what do women have to say?" opens up a crucial debate about the impact on women of the current discussions in international trade policies, regulation of financial flows and investment together with international development policies. The meeting will provide the latest insights into the new aid and trade architecture from feminist perspectives starting from women’s local realities South, West and East.

With trade and policy experts from around the world we have a unique opportunity to examine critically how trade, debt, investment and financing for development reflect the structural causes of gender inequality. From our diversities we have the opportunity to come together to see how to forge gender equality, economic and social justice around the world. And most importantly we can come together to discuss alternative visions to mainstream policy in the area of trade, social and economic development. With over 40 countries represented in Madrid it is a unique opportunity to build common alternative strategies South, West and East.

In our last Annual Conference in 2006 held in Poland we looked at the changing nature of states and expanding markets. This year, in 2007, we deepen that debate looking at the new aid and trade agenda. We aim to unpack the Paris Declaration and related processes in the aid debate and examine the implications those policy agreements have for gender inequities. We need to understand if it is indeed addressing a new range of issues or if it is business as usual? Is there really something new about the “new” aid modalities? We need to work together to think about our strategies and alternatives. I look forward to this conference providing new insights into these crucial issues, and thank the Spanish Platform of WIDE for providing this splendid place where we are able to have these timely discussions.

1.2 Juana Bengoa, Chair GGD of CONGDE, WIDE Spanish Platform

It is an honour to represent CONGDE, the Spanish Development non-governmental organisation (NGO) umbrella organisation, which consists of 107 development organisations, and more than 400 if we sum up the organisations that are organised in each autonomous community of our country and whose coordination platforms are federated by CONGDE. We are glad to participate in the WIDE Conference, whose objectives concurred with the mission and vision of our own network.

Juana Bengoa welcomes the participants.
WIDE is a European network with partners throughout the world that promotes changes in international policies, especially development and trade policies, from a women's rights and social justice perspective. Working towards this aim CONGDE, through its Gender and Development Working Group, the WIDE Spanish Platform, has taken advantage of every opportunity to influence policy-making changes in Spain. For instance, as an umbrella organisation CONGDE, through the “Redes para el Cambio” (Networks for Change) working group, has brought together trade unions, youth associations, migrant associations, and women’s groups to enable common action towards policy change on international development cooperation. The “Alianza Española contra la Pobreza” (Spanish Alliance against Poverty) is a good result and example of this networking. And the most recent working group “Redes para el Sur” is now linking our work with networks in developing countries. We believe that our work should not be isolated from existing networks in developing countries.

As a member of the Board of CONGDE, I represent in particular the Gender and Development Working Group, which participates in all these common activities from a gender and women’s right perspective. We work towards influencing the Spanish government’s development policies from a gender perspective. In Spain, the government has established a new Directorate Plan, with yearly follow-up activities. This plan includes sectoral strategies focusing on gender equality, indigenous people, education, environment, culture and health amongst others, in which we have been actively participating. The Gender and Development Working Group is also involved in promoting gender networks, such as the African and Spanish women’s network initiative, with other actors. Thus to be part of WIDE is very important to us and a learning experience. We work on changing ourselves and also our organisations, to include a gender perspective as a strategy in our actions.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for being here.

2 SESSION: “Setting the scene” critical gender perspectives
Chair: Valérie Echard

Overview: General issues

The following two presentations laid the groundwork for subsequent discussion, describing and analysing the “new” aid and trade agenda at the global level and in the European Union (EU).

Mariama Williams argued that the global neoliberal trade agenda is in fact business as usual; the familiar preoccupation of global trade policy with profits rather than people remains unchanged. Macroeconomic policies have been reframed in a way that does not address structural inequalities, but instead applies a new sticking-plaster – poverty reduction. Even South-led agendas fall mostly within the neoliberal agenda, while heterodox and feminist alternatives are fragmentary and faltering. We need to come up with new and more radical proposals and to find ways of having greater influence.

Helen O’Connell outlined some key issues with regard to a number of the instruments and issues affecting the new EU policy and practice on aid and development: the Paris Declaration, the European Consensus on Development, the European Code of Conduct on complementarity and division of labour, the joint EU–Africa strategy, new aid volumes and actors, and the Gender Equality Communication 2007. Even if the principles of the Paris Declaration are as favourable as they claim to be, there is a disconnect between policy and practice as regards meeting the Paris commitments and in many other respects. The EU still does not see women’s rights and gender equality as a political project, even though the EU Consensus is the EU’s strongest statement yet on gender equality in development. Awareness-raising, lobbying and monitoring are all vital to ensure that women’s voices for building accountability and democracy are heard. It is high time for a new campaign around CEDAW – the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women!

From the floor, participants asked questions about ways of achieving change in the face of the fundamentally colonialist definition of development as poverty reduction, and particularly how the Gender Equality Communication can be used as a lobbying tool. Mariama suggested that the Paris Declaration at least offers the possibility of opening up the debate on gender, while Helen re-emphasised the centrality of human and women’s rights to development and the critical need for us to keep up the pressure on governments in the EU for the developments for which we want to advocate.
2.1 Aid, trade and the financing of gender equality for development and democracy

Mariama Williams, DAWN

Women face many challenges in the areas of trade, aid, finance and development. The new aid architecture that is evolving has many serious implications for women’s economic and social advancement. Over the last ten years in the international political economy there has been on-going struggle about and around economic development in the global south. At the heart of this struggle are contrasting points of view and actions by Southern governments, some Northern governments and civil society (nationally, regionally and internationally) on the vision and nature of economic development. This struggle is usually subsumed under the rhetoric of radical change in the international trade and financial architecture’, Mariama Williams.

Neoliberal development paradigms: not a panacea

The available data suggest that of the 54 countries that are poorer today than they were in the 1990s, 24 are in Africa and 15 in Eastern Europe (UNDP HDR 2003, http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr03_complete.pdf). Not so surprisingly, these are the very nation states that have been the focus of World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies. Two-thirds of the poor and two-thirds of the illiterate in these countries are women. Worldwide, half a million women die in childbirth and pregnancy. Increasingly, the face of the AIDS pandemic is that of a young African woman. The Doha Declaration on Aid-for-Trade and the Paris Declaration are clear admissions that the model promoted by the Washington Consensus has failed. A critical underlying assumption of this model is that trade and access to markets are critical for growth and will automatically lead to poverty reduction.

Trade has not promoted sustainable or poverty-reducing growth and development in many countries of the South. Statistics from the World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization show that between the periods 1960-1962 and 2000-2002, the income gap between developed and developing countries jumped three-fold. Between 1985 and 2000, only 16 developing countries grew more than three per cent, while 55 of them grew at less than two per cent per year and of these, 23 presented negative growth (WCSDG 2004, cited in Arizpe 2005).

Today, there are quite serious analytical tensions, contradictions, dilemmas and deeply embedded value conflicts about what is development, the vision for development and how the needs and priorities of citizens in developing countries are to be met. The rapid accumulation of foreign exchange reserves in countries such as China and India has not helped to significantly address these issues within these countries, which have been identified with successful global and trade integration. Indeed, the very instruments of expanding trade and growing foreign exchange have led to policies that exploit large numbers of women and girls as cheap labour. And inequalities have been exacerbated within nations and across nations. India and China’s main concerns with their high levels of foreign exchange reserves is whether to invest it in US treas-

1 Please see http://www.igtn.org for two pieces that deal more in-depth with these points: “Gender and Trade: impacts and implications for financial resources for gender equality.” And “The New Aid Modalities, Development, Democracy and Gender Equality: the role of civil society in the Implementation of the new aid architecture”.
ury bonds or the private equity market (see the growth of Sovereign Wealth Funds). Human development promotion is seemingly not a key priority, even though there is massive poverty in these countries. There is something fundamentally wrong with this.

What is development?

This is the fundamental issue. The international financial institutions (IFIs) have tried to deal with the frustrations brought about by their macroeconomic policy prescriptions by reframing the debate in terms of policy dialogues, national ownership and poverty reduction. However, this post Washington Consensus approach simply narrows the scope for radical change in the international trade and financial architecture. And it does not lend itself automatically to ensuring greater financing for gender equality interventions. In this approach development seems to be reduced to poverty reduction. On the positive side, the IFIs, in particular the WB and the IMF, after years of inattention are now focused on poverty reduction. Thus, the international political economy is witnessing a plethora of poverty-oriented interventions – the set of millennium development goals (MDGs), the Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers (PRSPs), the poverty reduction growth facility and assorted national poverty eradication plans and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

But, nonetheless, current economic policy approach engendered and promoted by the G7 and implemented via the IFIs and the ODA framework of the Paris Declaration is focused on targeting inflation and generating primary surplus (to pay off external debts), not on providing employment, nor on increasing financing for programmes for women and girls’ economic empowerment. The focus is on policy directives that promote unqualified deregulation, where essential public services are increasingly privatised. So ultimately, seemingly new approaches such as the Paris Declaration are grounded in neoliberal policies and do not bring any radically new elements into the discourse.

The WB and its cohort development banks undertake minor fine-tuning around poverty reduction, which is perceived as sufficient to tackle the issues of growing social and economic disparity and gender inequality. It is not acknowledged that poverty reduction cannot occur without real development or that poverty reduction does not by itself equal development. This is evident in debates in UNCTAD and the WTO and will be a big struggle in debates on the Paris Declaration.

As noble as many poverty reduction initiatives such the MDGs and PRSPs are, clearly any intervention would only be a short-term fix unless attention is paid to the structural nature and creation of poverty and inequality within and between nations. Such initiatives can only be sustainably achieved under an overarching framework of a well-thought-out and integrative development agenda.

The struggle around development

Such an integrative and real development agenda seems to be light years away. Unless women’s groups and gender activists can forward a more cohesive and powerful set of strategies and processes. It is quite clear that this will not arise solely from the actions of Southern governments.

Interlocked in the struggle around development is a somewhat confusing and often incoherent mix of South-led development agendas, and proposals from heterodox and feminist economists, which can be juxtaposed to the IFIs’ development agenda.

The tentative South-led (Brazil, India, China and South Africa – BRICSA) development agenda, which is emerging in an ad hoc manner, is also relying on some of the same pillars as the revamped conventional development agenda. The distinctive features of this approach, the calls for policy space, the renewal of the Global System of Trade Preferences (GSP for South-South trade) among developing countries and the call for a development agenda around intellectual property launched at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) meetings two years ago seem to be very much inter-linked with the Doha Agenda, the MDGs and the Monterrey Consensus. However, it is not quite clear yet how these will be melded together. Africa has to some degree already forwarded its own call for an African development agenda in the form of NEPAD, which could, absent other interventions, be complemented by Doha, MDGs and the Monterrey Consensus into some sort of a cohesive framework.

At the same time, Venezuela would seem to be the focal point of an alternative South-led strategy. But though posed in a clear confrontational manner, it has not evolved as a serious economic or developmental strategy.

Another strand of this struggle is represented by heterodox economists and policy-makers in key institu-

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2 Proposal by Argentina and Brazil for the Establishment of a Development Agenda for WIPO. Submitted to the 40th Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO and to the 31st Session of the WIPO General Assembly, 27 September – 5 October 2004.
tions who are reconstructing and developing a different framework towards an alternative “developmental” model. The emphasis here is on promoting social and public investment and enhanced social protection that is pro-poor and pro-employment. Such endeavours include the International Labour Organization’s Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization, the Helsinki process and the work of UNDP. Among academics the works of Chang, Ghosh, Makandawire, Rodrik and Stiglitz contribute toward the analytical framing of such an agenda.

Within this framework, feminist economists agree with the priorities of shifting fiscal and monetary policy to emphasise employment/decent work and a trade policy framework that is oriented towards sustainable development. However, they argue that 50 per cent of the population of most developing countries, and the detrimental effects of continuing pervasive gender gaps on women and girls’ social and economic advancement, are being overlooked in these models. In addition, the critical role of social reproduction to development and growth tends to be ignored.

The work of these feminist and heterodox economists is fragmentary and disconnected with no cohesive framework; hence, the impact is not as powerful as it could be. This progressive approach to rethinking development is also in direct competition with current attempts by the dominant policy making institutions to rework the operational pillars of the existing framework.

The challenge before us

The alternative approaches urgently need to be solidified, conceptually and operationally in order to have impact on the policy space. But, in order for this to occur there will need to be better and clear articulation of a cohesive set of principles along with clear strategic interventions for the new development agenda.

A real alternative development agenda must focus on getting back to basics. This means interrogating the vision for development and the key determinants of what will ultimately deliver development. Secondly, it must also shy away from constructing a one-size fits all blueprint that can work for everyone wherever and at all times. So, apart from some general principles that can guide policy-makers, the development enterprise as such must be custom-fitted to the particular geography, historical and present social and economic context of different developing nations. Development must be deeply rooted in the socioeconomic conditions of the nation. Thus development requires wide and deep discussion across a broad spectrum of citizens on the key priorities and principles to guide development and the nature of the shared sacrifices that must be undertaken and the burden-sharing around such sacrifices.

It is evident that at the present historical conjuncture, ending human poverty requires persistent attention to gender and other social inequities and that this is imperative for sustainable growth and development, especially in the poorest countries. Poverty, ethnic and gender-based inequalities and discrimination rob the society of the potential contribution of talents and skills in economic activities. It slows productivity, knowledge building and asset acquisition that could be a conceivable contribution to nation-building. Microeconomic empirical evidence and macroeconomic analysis indicates that gender inequality directly and indirectly limits economic growth, due to gender differences in economic options, incentives and productivity. In the context of rising HIV/AIDS, the stranglehold of chronic diseases, and the high cost of resolving ethnic conflicts, continuing with unproductive forms of discrimination that only work to further entrench poverty and social disintegration is a significant drag on the fiscal accounts but also on overall economic productivity.

Gender equality concerns and gender-based analysis must be included in the costing and the prioritising of macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programmes. This presupposes mutual respect for the interdependence and treatment of the different spheres of the economy – the household, informal economy, formal market and government.

2.2 Challenge of the European consensus on development and the new aid architecture

Helen O’Connell, One World Action, UK

There are currently different processes taking place internationally and within the EU that are shaping a “new” agenda of aid delivery.

The Paris Declaration

The Paris Declaration establishes some principles for new forms of aid such as direct budget support (DBS) which is broadly defined as joint donor/government mechanisms to permit external resources to be channelled directly through national budgets, using national allocation, procurement and accounting systems, to supplement public expenditure on nationally agreed priorities. Primarily, it aims for a transfer of resources and ownership to partner countries receiving aid. The principles of the Declaration also include clauses on how donors should come to an agreement on policies
and processes, how to ensure an alignment of priorities across the board, how to manage results and mutual accountability. However, DBS and other new forms of aid usually come with conditionalities. So, while they sound good in theory, we need to look to the political contexts in which these principles operate, particularly when it comes to mutual accountability, and to see how it works in reality and whether donor states are being held as accountable as recipient states.

**OECD/DAC Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness**

The Paris Declaration, endorsed on 2 March 2005, is an international agreement to which over one hundred ministers, heads of agencies and other senior officials adhered and committed their countries and organisations to support more ‘effective’ aid in the context of a significant scaling up of ODA. In 2008 the progress on the Paris Declaration will be reviewed.

**The five key principles of the Paris Declaration**

**Ownership.** Partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies, and strategies and coordinate development actions. **Alignment.** Donors base their overall support on partner countries’ national development strategies, institutions and procedures. **Harmonisation.** Donors’ actions are more harmonised, transparent and collectively effective. **Managing for results.** Managing resources and improving decision-making for results. **Mutual Accountability.** Donors and partners are accountable for development results.


The increasing volume of aid forms the background of the Declaration. Concurrently, within aid agencies we see that there has been a reduction of staff and a decrease in administrative expenses. We can infer, therefore, that one driver for reforming aid delivery is a pragmatic reason related to the transfer of resources from administrative spheres to other areas, even though many donor agencies are genuinely committed to transferring ownership.

There has been some civil society engagement in this process, but no CSOs have succeeded to introduce women’s rights or gender equality issues in this framework. In the Paris Declaration there is in total one reference to gender equality (article 42).

An OECD/DAC survey conducted in 2006 reveals that there is still long way to go to meet the Paris commitments, there is little coherence between headquarters’ policy and in-country practice, and donors have been using their own definitions of trade effectiveness, making comparability difficult. The 2005 baseline was set too high and donors placed themselves too close to the target, so it will be hard to show progress.

**The European Consensus on Development**

The European Consensus on Development was adopted by the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission (EC) in 2005. Eradication of poverty is stated as the ‘primary and overarching’ objective and development is seen as a goal in its own right. The Consensus maintains that sustainable development should include good governance, human rights, and political, economic, social and environmental aspects. Priority is given to low-income countries and it attempts to establish common values within EU member states and the EC (respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, peace, democracy, good governance, gender equality, the rule of law, solidarity and justice).

The Consensus understands gender equality and women’s rights as a fundamental human right in itself and as a question of social justice. It recognises the
promotion of gender equality as instrumental to the implementation of the commitments made at Beijing and Cairo and in CEDAW and the MDGs. It commits itself to a strong gender component in development policies and has been, in fact, the strongest statement on gender in development so far in the EU. However, many sections of the Consensus do not have a gender analysis, including the one on trade. Additionally, there is pressure on Southern countries to meet the MDGs, including on gender equality, but no corresponding pressure on donors.

The EU Code of Conduct

The “EU Code of Conduct on Complementarity and Division of Labour in Development Policy” was adopted in May 2007 by the Council. It stipulates that donor countries should coordinate more with other EU donor countries active in the same country to share or delegate for instance the task of dialogue with the government of that country. This coordination can prove to be a difficult task. In its six general principles, the Code of Conduct lays emphasis on partner country leadership as stressed in the Consensus. Aid should be based on country-level priorities and needs. The principle of comparative advantage (applying to geographical and thematic expertise, etc., as well as financial resources) also operates. Next to the six general principles there are 11 guiding principles. One example of these is: EU donors will aim at focusing their active involvement in a partner country on a maximum of three sectors to which in addition they can provide general budget support through DBS, support to civil society, and research and education schemes including scholarships. There should be a lead donor arrangement. Priority countries are to be established and neglected countries to be addressed. The focus is on coordinating in sectors and countries to make it easy – at least in theory – for partner countries to relate to fewer donor agencies, and to concentrate resources.

The Code of Conduct raises some challenges, in that it is voluntary and self-policing. Most EU donor countries have national interests and are accountable to their national parliaments and public. This clearly impacts on aid. For instance, if a donor country does not provide aid in key sectors or key countries then its parliament could be unsatisfied. These national interests may interfere with the principles of the Code.

The Joint EU-Africa Strategy

The EU Strategy for Africa formulated in 2005 was unsatisfactory, having been prepared too quickly with little consultation. A new strategy, a joint EU-Africa strategy is now being produced, geared towards the EU-Africa summit to be held 8-9 December 2007. The outline for the new 2007 strategy claims that the EU wants a real partnership “characterised by equality and pursuit of common goals”. There is a strong emphasis on governance and the consultation process has involved governments as well as civil society.

Aid volumes and new actors

The European governments met in 2006 their collective target of providing 0.39 per cent of their gross national income for ODA, but this was through “aid inflation”: a part of this aid was not new aid for 2006 but debt cancellation and for instance support for refugees in donor countries. At the 2007 G8 summit the old promises were reiterated. At the same time, there has been a proliferation of new vertical and separate funds, for example, global funds for HIV/AIDS, and a number of new donors, both governmental (e.g. China, India) and private (e.g. the Gates Foundation).

China is now a major player in the field of aid, especially in Angola and Nigeria, setting up hydroelectric schemes in Ethiopia and aid financing. It has pledged US$ 20 billion over next three years for financing for infrastructure and trade. This will be doubled by 2009. It has set up a US$ 5 billion Development Fund and will reduce tariffs on African imports. India too has huge investments and an engagement in Africa. In 1990 it pledged US$ 967 million; in 2006 this had grown to US$ 9.6 billion.

The EU is anxious about China and to some extent India. It has raised issues around a new debt crisis, loans that are tied to oil contracts, and too much influence with no regulation on the part of the new donor countries. However, the EU is open to charges of hypocrisy and faces criticism on that count. And as the Chinese bring in their own workers to aid-recipient countries, many African CSOs are anxious about job losses.

The Gender Equality Communication in Development Cooperation

The EC published this spring in 2007 a Communication on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Cooperation. Producing this has been a
long process, but the result lacks conceptual clarity, leadership and commitment. Ostensibly, it aims to “increase the efficiency of gender mainstreaming and refocus specific actions”. The Communication stresses that gender mainstreaming is required in three areas: political dialogue, development cooperation and institutional capacity building. Significantly, this is the first time political dialogue has been mentioned. The Communication promises action in the areas of governance, employment, education and gender-based violence. It also maintains that the EU will ensure gender equality and women’s empowerment in all country and regional strategies. It plans to monitor and follow up on action plans. It has some interesting statements on new aid modalities and aid effectiveness: it stresses, for instance, that ownership must be understood to mean ownership by women (through CSOs). It recognises the need for gender-sensitive indicators and for ensuring that partner country budgets are gender-sensitive.

**Gender equality: more invisible than invincible?**

There seem to be parallel universes when exploitation and sustainable development are placed within the same rubric. There is also obvious policy incoherence at many levels. Women’s rights and gender equality are not seen as a political project by the EU, and hence the analysis is limited and incomplete. However, support for women’s organisations can be sought through awareness-raising, lobbying, monitoring, making sure that women’s voices are heard, building accountability and democracy. We have been too quiet and too obedient and should begin a CEDAW 1979–2009 campaign. Thirty years is long enough!

**2.3 DISCUSSION & RESPONSES FROM SPEAKERS**

A number of key points were raised by the participants and discussed by the panel.

**Alternatives in new regional integration processes?**

One question was about the possibilities or alternatives that are offered by the new regional integration processes. Mariama responded by referring to the significant amount of work going on in the South on developing a progressive agenda. She highlighted one way of doing this by setting up regionally-based and Southern-controlled monetary and financial vehicles as opposed to international vehicles that are based on a post Washington Consensus framework. There is scope for a well-thought-out development aid framework, but there are many obstacles:

- The South’s dependence on government or private and government financing from the North;
- The influence of private capital and equity markets on developing countries. Private capital is written into the investment agreements. These clauses allow investors to opt out of Human Rights agreements or any rules to do with gender and social conditions and so there is a trend in these negotiations of refusing to take up responsibilities and refusing to acknowledge that they should even be asked to comply.
- The lack of central focus in the Southern agenda itself, leaving the balance of power in the hands of the IMF and WB, which have placed their pieces on the table and which operate with more closed and decisive processes. Also the Monterrey process and Doha process are important pillars for Southern governments and they will not walk away from them. The question for us is then, how do we introduce other pillars?

In this scenario – even amongst heterodox economists – there is no space or scope for a dialogue on women and gender equality. Neither governments nor civil society in the South have a gender equality agenda, while there is little gender presence in the integration of trade and finance. However, in the Paris Declaration there is scope for addressing gender inequality, not in terms of conditionalities, but in terms of opening up the debate. Debate is going on about policy coherence with respect to the WTO, the WB, and the EU, but we have not been able to enter it and raise the question of gender equality.
When looking at the Paris Declaration and other policy documents, they should not be viewed as individual declarations but as part of a broader governance framework that has been set in place with implications for women’s rights and women’s empowerment. We need to think of new mechanisms and sites of contestations. For instance, we now need to lobby ministers of trade and finance. And gender advocates need to be part of the discussions integrating trade and finance; so far there is no strong gender presence there, and the progressive discussion has been led by NGOs with no gender awareness.

A participant remarked that unless we have dialogues like this one, where people can inform each other with what is really going on in the world, people could still be caught in the mentality that Southern countries are just recipients of aid rather than actors and providers of cheap labour and resources which fuels trade and globalisation. It is important that we decolonise people’s minds. Also, the way we measure the quality of life is still very bound by economic categories. And what is being done about challenging the Western consumer-led development model in Europe and the failures of the Western way of life? Such discussions would mean a big difference to women in the South.

Mechanisms and means

Participants asked what mechanisms and means of achieving change can we marshal to design real development? Reversing aid conditionalities was singled out as a particular challenge, as was the issue of labour rights, in a context where China and India are both looking towards Africa as a source of cheap labour. Even using the price of oil as a means to gain leverage was suggested. On the price of oil, Mariama pointed to the implications for food security. Oil can be used as a bargaining device, but Southern oil producers might not be gender-sensitive or progressive enough to enable us to use oil in a strategic way. A better bet could be countries that have tremendous foreign exchange reserves. Regional and international organisations are a potentially viable way of reaching a development agenda, but this would mean a lot of organising between Southern and Northern NGOs.

She also pointed out that aid is crucial for women, accounting for 20–30 per cent of the essential services on which women critically depend in low-income countries. Women are therefore at risk if governments do not meet conditionalities and aid is frozen. And in this light it is important that donor countries keep their promises of forthcoming aid. Actually in a recent article about this southern governments were complaining that they did everything that was required of them and they have not yet seen the promised flow of aid.

Helen’s response focused on the centrality of human rights to real development, which would be characterised by equity in society and significant investment in social protection and sustainable employment, in both North and South. Aid alone cannot guarantee true development, even though significant sums are allocated. We should do our best to make sure that these significant sums are being used properly, since aid makes up also a significant proportion of Southern budgets. We need to track where the money is going.

She also agreed with one of the comments made about the importance to think more deeply about core labour standards and how people should strategise around this. She felt many NGOs pay lip service to core labour rights, but do not integrate them enough in their work. Women’s organisations should be thinking very hard on how to press for decent work.

Specifically for the EU it was asked how the new EC Communication Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Cooperation could be used as a lobbying tool for concrete programmes on gender and for gender mainstreaming in other policies of the EU. Helen replied that crucially, we have to lobby the EU institutions and the member states. Officials react to pressure. For EU countries, like other donors, women’s rights are not a political project; so we need to educate them. She also noted that the European Code of Conduct is about procedures, not quality, and so it contains nothing about gender or health. That is why she mentioned it, to keep us women alert on how aid money is spent and according to what policies.

WIDE has been consistently lobbying the EU and holding donors accountable, especially pointing out the massive gaps between policy and practice. The only way to move forward is to continue questioning, arguing and proposing political alternatives and policy options together with women’s organisations in Southern countries.

Overview: Regional perspectives

The next two presentations highlighted the effects of the EU’s current trade agenda and policies on gender equality in two regions currently of particular interest to the EU: Africa and Asia.

Zo Randriamaro gave a very detailed presentation on the new EU trade strategy and its impact and...
Implications from a gender perspective, with a particular focus on the Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations (EPAs) in relation to the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) countries. There are a great many ways in which the new strategy and the EPA negotiations not only fail to address real development needs but are also bad for women in ECOWAS countries. While the EU is ready to intervene in domestic regulation in ECOWAS countries, it says little about corporate social responsibility, ethical business standards or human rights and maintains its own protectionism. In fact, social justices issues are absent from the strategy, and therefore gender equality and the strategic interests of women as producers, workers and consumers are inevitably neglected. We must challenge the EU to live up to its own commitments and ensure coherence between its policies on development, trade, and gender equality. Zo concluded her presentation with a concrete list of suggestions for advocacy.

Christa Wichterich drew attention to very similar features in the recent EU trade negotiations and discussions with Asian countries, especially China. All these agreements are full of contradictions, ambiguities and double standards. Both inside and outside the EU the corporate-led agenda, fuelled by the logic of profit maximisation, is being pursued.

Discussion focused on the stark but nuanced inequalities between and within regions, and the contradictions of the EU’s pressure for ever more open markets abroad while protecting its own markets. Participants asked what advocacy strategies are appropriate for us. The speakers responded by identifying the need to:

- Increase and disseminate our knowledge of these complex issues;
- Be more confrontational in raising arguments about power inequalities at all levels;
- Develop a credible alternative to the current ‘development’ project.

2.4 EU trade “architecture”: current trends of the EU trade policy agenda

Zo Randriamaro, UNIFEM Senegal

Most ECOWAS countries are least developed countries. Thirteen of the fifteen ECOWAS countries are highly dependent on external assistance. They face increasing levels of poverty and women constitute the majority of the rural and urban poor. They export a narrow range of primary commodities (nearly 84 per cent of agricultural exports) with the EU as the main export destination.

Most of the countries enjoy complete duty- and quota-free access to EU markets under the “Everything But Arms” (EBA) agreement, with the exception of sugar and bananas. Agriculture is a key strategic sector for ECOWAS countries, providing jobs for as many as 65 per cent of the economically active population. Women constitute the large majority of the agricultural workforce and account for 70 per cent of total food production. They are involved in almost all stages in the production, processing and marketing of agricultural products and make up the large majority of informal traders of agricultural products and manufactured goods and services.

This year, the EU has intensified trade negotiations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. In 2000 the EU and participating ACP countries agreed to negotiate a separate set of treaties that would replace the Cotonou agreement that will end by 31 December 2007. Under the Cotonou agreement, ACP countries have high duty- and quota-free access to the EU without offering equal market access in return. The EU is now negotiating to change this arrangement to reciprocal trade agreements with different ACP regions, EPAs. For those ACP countries that are not least developed countries falling under the EBA agreement this will mean big trade regulation changes with the EU. Many civil society organisations, including WIDE8, have raised serious concerns about EPAs and pointed to the negative impacts they will have on people, especially the poor.

Key issues in the current status of the ECOWAS negotiations with the EC

The development dimension of the EPA negotiations is a major area of concern from a gender perspective because of the potential impacts on structural gender inequalities in access to resources, the specific challenges facing women under free trade with the EU, and the gender inequalities in access to and distribution of the benefits from existing EU support programmes.

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7 See for example the FAO website: http://www.fao.org/Gender/en/agri-e.htm
8 WIDE is part of the Stop EPA campaign.
The “sequencing of EPAs” is a major strategic challenge for ECOWAS countries, which need time to build the basis for their economic transformation and strengthen their own regional integration processes. In particular, the deadline for the negotiations (31 December 2007) and the preliminary tasks and measures to be completed at the different deadlines set for the implementation of the EPAs are critical to women as producers and consumers: they will need sufficient time, and specific flanking measures to enable them to adapt to increased competition with EU exports on local and regional markets.

The new category of sensitive products will affect women, especially if these products are in sectors of importance to them. This issue is compounded by the fact that women hardly participate in the definition of sensitive products by ECOWAS countries.

The potential restriction of market access in the EU resulting from the erosion of preferences under the EBA will disadvantage women in both their productive and reproductive roles. It will further reinforce the gender disparities related to the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and rules of origin issues. The implications of the EU Common Agricultural Policy reform and the WTO rules on Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) that requires the parties to the FTA to remove their internal tariffs and not to raise their external tariffs, as this would be akin to increasing trade barriers to countries outside the FTA, are also serious issues.

Except for the few oil-producing countries, the revenue of all ECOWAS governments depends largely on trade taxes. Women will be disproportionately affected by the fiscal costs of tariff liberalisation, which have already resulted in reduced government expenditure in social sectors and/or new forms of regressive taxation such as the generalisation of VAT at about 20 per cent in ECOWAS.

**Gender implications of the new EC strategy for ECOWAS**

The EU’s position in the EPA negotiations is part of an overall trade strategy to which the EU is committed. The conceptual framework of the new EC trade strategy, as laid down in the EC Communication “Global Europe: Competing in the world” (EC 2006), clearly ignores the lessons learnt from the developmental and gendered impacts of two decades of trade liberalisation on job creation and growth in developing countries, including ECOWAS. The strategy emphasises competition over cooperation and corporate-driven growth over public policy and the role of the state, which are crucial for ensuring gender equality in both the EU and ECOWAS.

The EC strategy is very likely to have a negative impact on the terms of trade of ECOWAS countries, leading ultimately to increased indebtedness with its detrimental impacts on poor people, most of whom are women.

There is every reason to believe that the new EC trade strategy will exacerbate the negative effects of increased competition with EU exports. These have been identified by various impact studies.

The emphasis on investment liberalisation potentially increases capital flight from ECOWAS countries, to the detriment of states’ revenue, national economies and local businesses. It also heightens the risk of financial

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9 In early 2007 the EC demanded in the negotiations that any EU market opening should take account of the EU’s sensitive products. This would leave most ECOWAS countries in the EBA category worse off with the EPA than they are now, chiefly because the EU would be able to exclude certain products from market access coverage, which does not fit with the terms of the EBA agreement. A new category of sensitive products, which the EU has not yet defined, will be a further erosion, since the existing language already foresaw only the “largest possible” market opening by the EU. This can be interpreted in any way. There are no agreed-upon criteria for the designation of sensitive products; the definition of “sensitive products” is therefore a key strategic issue on which WTO member countries are deeply divided in agriculture negotiations. The original list of sensitive products presented by the ESA region was judged too long by the EC. This original list was a compilation of national lists prepared by countries in the region.

10 Rules of origin are the criteria needed to determine the national source of a product. Their importance is derived from the fact that duties and restrictions in several cases depend upon the source of imports.
instability and crises, which have proved to have greater impact on women than men.

Because the strategy builds on the premise of a linear and automatic link between increased international competitiveness, job creation and growth, it ignores a number of real-life issues resulting from the neoliberal trade liberalisation agenda. For instance, openness can lead to economic expansion for some sectors, but also to contraction (mostly in sectors where women are present in high numbers) for some others. And such an agenda ignores the hidden costs of a “competitive” workforce, including the feminisation of labour in ECOWAS countries, coupled with the informalisation, casualisation and flexibilisation of work through the increase in precarious employment, reduction of the social wage and low labour standards.

The EC strategy focuses on intellectual property, services, and the “Singapore issues” (investment, government procurement, competition and trade facilitation). These are areas, which have always been rejected by developing countries and were among the major causes of the deadlock at the WTO conference in Cancún. With respect to the gender impacts on the specific areas targeted by the EC, all the issues that have been raised by gender equality advocates in relation to trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights, services and investment liberalisation are relevant to the analysis of the new EC strategy.

The new EC trade strategy implies further opening and deregulation abroad to promote unfettered trade and capital flows, while maintaining and refining the EU’s own trade “defence” instruments (EC 2006: 6). In other words, the strategy implies further reduction of the much-heralded “policy space” and of the discretion of ACP governments to manage trade and capital flows according to their own development imperatives. The ability of states to manage trade and foreign investment so that they support the achievement of their development goals is critical to ensuring women’s well-being and gender equity. There is reason to believe that the EC strategy could also affect the ability of states to take affirmative and anti-discrimination measures for promoting gender equity (for example, export credits and subsidies for small women producers and traders), as such measures would be considered as distorting trade.

At the same time, the strategy emphasises transparency, compliance with rules and standards in Southern countries, but says very little about corporate social responsibility, governance, ethical business standards or human rights as regards EU investors and businesses. In fact, the EC’s push for deregulation implies that the legal rules for foreign investors to comply with international conventions on labour rights would be further reduced. Women, who constitute most of the workforce in the sectors where Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is concentrated, will be hit hard by this kind of deregulation, in a context where competition for investment is increasing in ECOWAS countries.

Possible strategies for advocacy

Based on the above analysis Zo suggested the following strategies for advocacy centred around building knowledge, networking and advocacy.

1 Building a sound information- and knowledge-base on the gender dimensions of the EC trade strategy

• Assess the implications of the EC trade strategy for the informal sector and possible impacts on it, since women are mostly found in this sector.

• Make a systematic gender–trade impact analysis of the Singapore issues, especially public procurement and competition policy, which have been barely addressed or investigated by feminist researchers and activists.

• Develop our own specific criteria for defining a pro-poor and gender-sensitive list of “special products” without waiting for ECOWAS governments or the EU.

2 Advocacy, lobbying and capacity building

• Advocate and build capacity for the integration of intra-household dynamics into the impact studies carried out by different actors, so as to have a comprehensive understanding of the impacts on gender and power relations.

• Integrate gender perspectives and concerns into discussions and processes around corporate responsibility, governance and ethical business standards, since the EC strategy is mainly about the right of corporations.

• Challenge the EU to live up to its commitments and ensure coherence between its development and trade policies, especially with regard to its hidden

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11 The communication speaks of the “barriers to trade behind the border” or “non-tariff barriers”, such as unnecessary, “trade-restricting regulations and procedures” which “touch directly on domestic regulation”. 
protectionist measures (SPS and rules of origin are key constraints for market access for women to EU markets).

- Advocate for and monitor the effective implementation of the EC’s stated commitment “to take into account the development needs of our partners and the potential impact of any agreement on other developing countries, in particular the potential effects on poor countries’ preferential access to EU markets” (EC 2006: 12).

- Take advantage of the differing positions between the EC and parliamentarians for instance to call for the EU to factor development benchmarks and gender indicators into the “overall impact assessment that will be conducted”, (EC 2006: 12) before concluding an EPA.

- Demand increased participation of women’s organisations in EPA negotiations.

3 Networking

- Set up mechanisms to liaise with trade officials and negotiators.

- Network with national, regional and international movements working on EPAs, including organisations that work with men.

2.5 EU trade policies with Asian countries and their gender implications

_Christa Wichterich, WIDE_

This presentation takes a closer look at the EU’s external trade policies with so-called emerging countries in Asia such as the upcoming FTAs with South Korea, India and ASEAN. The EU policy paper on trade and investment with China, “Competition and partnership”, will be used as an example for the new trade paradigm.

In October 2006 the EC launched its new trade strategy entitled “Global Europe competing in the world”. It links internal liberalisation with a new focus on bilateral FTAs. With reference to corporations, trade commissioner Peter Mandelson has coined a slogan for the emphasis on competitiveness in the upcoming bilateral agreements: “Big in Europe, big in the world”. All the trade agreements currently being negotiated consists of four building blocks: 1) Market access for European business, 2) the so-called Singapore issues, which were rejected in Cancún by governments of the South, 3) intellectual property rights (IPR), 4) the service sec-

Contradictions and double standards

Different from the WTO agreements, the EU bilateral trade negotiations include along with the drive for market liberalisation and the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers, rhetoric about the environment, climate change and sustainable development as well as references to social and core labour standards, and decent work. Additionally, in its communication with China, the EU defines anew what is fair and what is unfair competition. Assuming that the EU itself competes on fair terms, China’s trade performance is depicted as unfair because of product piracy, violation of IPR, wage dumping, lack of social standards, lack of climate protection, and lack of legal protection of investors’ rights. However, while the EU blames China for unsustainable development due to overheating of the economy, environmental destruction and the overexploitation of natural resources for example for energy supply, the EU itself demands access to markets, resources and energy for EU business and investors, and thereby indulges in overinvestment, overproduction and overexploitation of resources.

At the same time there are double standards operating with regard to labour and social standards. The policy...
paper “Competition and partnership” maintained that China should introduce regulation for social standards with the help of corporate social responsibility, which is tantamount to the privatisation of regulation because it is left to the goodwill and voluntary implementation of corporations. But when the Chinese government proposed a new labour law to protect workers’ rights, the EU Chamber of Commerce – alongside the US Chamber of Commerce – criticised the law saying that EU investors need more flexibility and less regulation. In trade reality, very often export production by or for transnational companies is based on wage discrimination of women and migrants in manufacturing and on appalling Manchester-like working conditions.

Double standards are applied vis-à-vis social issues and social fairness alike. On the one hand, the EU expresses concern about “social, regional and gender imbalances” in China. However, the fact is that the EU’s trade and investment policies in China are based on and contribute to:

- The making of new classes, for example a low-paid migrant workers’ class without social protection;
- The rediscovery of gender inequalities such as gender-specific segmentation of labour markets and a growing gender wage gap;
- A shift of labour-intensive export production from the coastal areas to the countryside in China where there is cheap and docile labour in abundance and wages for female labour in manufacturing are below the poverty line of US$1 a day.

Gender difference and discrimination against women spell a comparative advantage in global competition. Greater participation of low-paid flexible women workers in the market is instrumental for the strategy of the global capital to minimise costs, maximise profit and increase trade. Gender works as a social category for the valorisation of work and as a vehicle for social stratification and increasing social polarisation.

Targeting domestic regulation and focusing on a predictable and legalised environment for EU-based corporations, EU trade policies reduce the space for policies oriented towards social development, welfare and public services. The legal rights of corporations and investors prevail over human rights, workers’ rights and women’s rights. EU policies facilitate a liberalisation- and corporate-driven market model in Asian countries, which uses gender differences for the purpose of competition and profit-making.

2.6 DISCUSSION & RESPONSES FROM SPEAKERS

Participants noted that huge challenges to labour rights exist in developed as well as developing societies and that women workers are overexploited not just in China but in rich countries such as Canada, where major violations of labour laws are reported. Increasingly unequal distribution of wealth is occurring even in the richest countries. In the EU, the informal economy is growing very fast, wages are plummeting, the gender pay gap is yawning, and the economic standards of a large majority of the population are falling.

Also part of the discussion was the role of corporations. One participant noticed that often strategies are proposed on the level of states or international institutions, and both inside and outside the EU when it comes to negotiations it is an agenda based on large corporations that is pushed. She asked if it is possible to develop strategies that combine or add pressure on corporations to influence such negotiations.

And the contradiction posed by the EU’s promotion of ever more open markets abroad but protectionism for itself was mentioned. We need to acquire a deeper, gendered insight into the EU’s “commercial defence tools”, and into all these contradictions in the globalisation of labour and production.

Alternatives

Christa replied to a question about alternative information systems that it is important to get alternative information disseminated in order to influence policies and to widen the cracks in the system and to highlight the contradictions. This is something we need to do immediately, because policymakers are always trying to create a sense of continually new euphoria about the policies they introduce and sustain. Like now they are saying we will have wonderful growth rates so that everybody starts to believe again in the neoliberal paradigm. We are caught up in a struggle over the minds of the people and about how to build consensus in society, therefore we have to play a role in knowledge building. Who else can bring in dissent?

She agreed that in the past feminists addressed mostly the state and that it is a much more complex picture and corporations play a very important role. She is not so optimistic that corporations can be influenced by policies like corporate social responsibility and codes
of conduct. We have to think of something more confrontational. Zo pointed out that as globalisation reconfigures and restructures society and global power relations, new forms of power inequality are emerging, and some existing inequalities are being exacerbated or new ones created. Both speakers agreed that we need to be less accommodating and more confrontational.

According to Zo, feminists have been unable to date to propose credible alternatives to the mainstream development model. We need to focus on both developing and developed countries in our analysis of globalisation. We need a holistic vision to see the links between the informalisation of work and restructuring of labour and production structures. She asked what kind of concepts and projects we have as feminists, and to what extent our existing focus is limited in terms of addressing the problems women face today. We too need to reconfigure our concepts. We have to be aware that the dominant and mainstream establishment has coopted many feminist and environmental concepts such as participation, transparency, coherence, and sustainable development. We are being manipulated at conceptual levels.

**Asian multinationals**

One participant commented that Asian multinationals are flooding markets with low quality products in Africa, especially in areas where women have traditionally dominated. Zo noted that this is indeed happening but not only by Asian producers. She gave the example of the collapse of the textile sector in West Africa, which was linked to the import of second-hand clothes from the EU and the USA. Many local traders and low-income consumers also benefited from this flooding of the market. This example shows that the picture is not black and white but nuanced.

**3 SESSION: Gender equality in this global context?**

*Chair: Ana Lidia Fernandez-Layos*

**Overview**

This session of presentations examined the specific attention being paid to gender equality in the context of the new directions in aid.

Zo Randriamaro presented a paper prepared by her UNIFEM colleague Rosibel Gómez on strengthening the Gender Equality Architecture (GEA) in the United Nations (UN) and the opportunities it offers for participation by civil society and women’s organisations. In particular she outlined the various proposals that have been made for merging some of the four existing instances for women’s rights in a new, independent women’s entity, in the context of the UN reform on ensuring system-wide coherence.

Nava San Miguel provided a general overview of the gender and development approach in an international framework, and described some of the knowledge of the new development agenda that we have acquired particularly since 2005. She rounded off her presentation by outlining Spanish development cooperation as a brief case study.

Brita Fernandez-Schmidt reported on a study being carried out by the UK WIDE platform Gender and Development Network linking gender equality, the new aid environment and the concerns and role of CSOs. 30 organisations in 10 countries took part, and a complex picture has emerged from their responses, reflecting some gains but many losses for women and gender equality, and concern about the impact of neoliberal macroeconomic policies in this respect. Though many donors seem uninterested in gender programmes, most African respondents have seen an increase in funding for women’s rights work. However, there is greater competition (and not always from gender-sensitive organisations) for these funds.

In discussion, participants noted the problems of incoherence and poor monitoring/evaluative capacity for the implementation of both the GEA as part of UN reform, and the Paris Declaration. The speakers highlighted several important needs for feminist advocacy, again stressing the need to gain and manage relevant knowledge, but also to seek financing for the feminist agenda. Some clarification was given on the workings of the Spanish cooperation system.

**3.1 The UN reform and opportunities for participation by civil society and women’s organisations**

*Rosibel Gómez, UNIFEM; presented by Zo Randriamaro, UNIFEM Senegal*

Women’s organisations have played a key role in demanding recognition of women’s equality; they have fought against discrimination and have been involved in promoting the legal and social progress of women around the world. The relationship between women and international bodies goes back to 1919, when the League of Nations was created. This first experience,
where women could participate in certain peace conference commissions, provided the opportunity to present proposals, gain experience and improve networking abilities. These and many efforts following have made women’s issues visible in the international arena.

**United Nations women’s committees and organisations**

In response to women’s demands, the United Nations (UN) has created different committees and organisations to deal exclusively with women’s issues. At present, there are four of these:

- UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women);
- DAW (Division for the Advancement of Women);
- OSAGI (Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women);
- INSTRAW (United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women).

Women’s struggles and their presence at the international level have ensured that the global agenda embraces declarations, conventions and programmes for the advancement of women. UN conferences and conventions for women's rights and gender equality have been a powerful force for giving an international voice and importance to local and national women’s organisations. They have provided a forum for women’s analysis and priorities to inform and mobilise national governments, bi- and multilateral agencies and CSOs.

Nevertheless, most of these achievements extend far beyond the existing laws and policies of many UN member states, or exist only on paper. National and local government responses to international instruments, such as CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Cairo Programme of Action and others, have been uneven and remain mostly unfulfilled. Most nations’ performance in implementing these conventions has been indifferent and it has been widely acknowledged that gender mainstreaming in the UN has not been implemented systematically and effectively and that the gender mainstreaming processes have never been adequately resourced. UNIFEM, for instance, does not have the status of an agency, and has a very small budget and staff.

Evaluations of UN organisations over the past ten years have consistently demonstrated inadequate leadership and/or staff commitment to the allocation of core resources to gender; internal conceptual confusion about gender equality as a goal and gender mainstreaming in terms of a strategy, despite considerable investment in training; and a failure to institutionalise accountability for gender equality in results-based management, evaluation, audit and performance systems.

To date, UN performance on gender equality in country teams or throughout the different organisations depends, somewhat haphazardly, on individual rather than institutional commitment. The performance of the larger UN organisations and UN country teams is uneven. There is a strong consensus within women’s organisations that women lack an independent, women-specific entity with the power, resources, operational capacity, and mandate to drive the gender agenda. It has been suggested that a lead entity for the advancement of women, well resourced and with the capacity for effective mainstreaming efforts, is needed.

**Ensuring system-wide coherence**

On 16 February 2006, the United Nations appointed a new High-level Panel on UN Systemwide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment. This panel comprised twelve men and only three women. It was tasked with recommending changes to the UN with reference to a broad range of structural, operational and policy issues related to these areas.

National and international women’s groups lobbied Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General at that time, for the inclusion of crosscutting gender and women’s rights issues in the panel’s responsibilities. The panel has made ten recommendations, including one on gender equality.

**The UN GEA recommendations**

- Consolidate UNIFEM, DAW and OSAGI into an enhanced and independent gender entity that has a strengthened normative and advocacy role combined with a targeted programming role;
- Head the new entity by an Executive Director with the rank of Under Secretary-General appointed through a meritocratic competition demonstrably open to those outside the UN;
- The gender entity must be fully and ambitiously funded;
- Gender equality would be a component of all UN One Country Programmes;
- The commitment to gender equality is and should remain the mandate of the entire UN system.
UNIFEM considers that UN reform can be good for gender equality. It is an opportunity to ensure that the reformed UN system can deliver better for women. Like the MDGs, promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment should be both a goal of UN reform in its own right and central to all other aspects of UN reform.

The idea of “one UN” – particularly at the country level – is a desirable goal if it
(i) reduces tensions and ambiguities amongst UN organisations;
(ii) builds on the comparative advantage of each UN organisation;
(iii) strengthens coordination, support and resources for progress towards gender equality;
(iv) hinges on a Resident Coordinator system that is enabling and rights-based rather than one that consolidates power and control on the basis of hierarchies rather than competencies.

The current institutional arrangements for support to gender equality in the operational system – and the gaps between the operational and normative system – tend to marginalise and fragment rather than strengthen action on women’s rights and gender equality. UN reform should address this. How it could be done depends on what shape the reform takes. In the end the organisational structures for gender equality will need to be aligned with the larger reform decisions. However, the criteria should be that, in a realigned UN, gender equality and women’s empowerment receive adequate resources, status and authority commensurate with the resources and position that other critical issues receive. This is the only way to address the current fragmentation of institutional responsibility for gender equality and women’s empowerment, and the only way to ensure that there is a powerhouse to drive the mainstreaming agenda throughout the system.

The High-level Panel on UN Systemwide Coherence included in its recommendations many suggestions made by women’s organisations. There is still room to discuss and set recommendations for the new entity and for mainstreaming gender equality across the entire UN System. It is time to build new alliances and to create a new global feminist articulation.

We need to remind ourselves that, in the words of the Declaration of Latin American and Caribbean Feminists regarding the UN and a possible new agency for women,

“The United Nations Organisation was founded with the aim of building harmony between peoples; this harmony will not be possible as long as injustice and inequality define the relationships between persons and between countries. The challenge to build a democratic world involves us all, and we are all committed to this search.”

3.2 The impact of New Aid Modalities on organisations working for gender equality and women’s rights
Brita Fernandez-Schmidt, UK Gender and Development Network

This paper is based on research carried out by the UK Gender and Development Network (GADN). The research originated in concerns with the changes in the aid environment, in particular the shifts in bilateral and multilateral funding from supporting projects to supporting government policies and capacity through PRSPs, DBS, and SWAPs. The Paris Declaration principles also played a role, as did the shifts in funding for CSOs away from service delivery and towards consultation, advocacy and holding governments to account.

The key questions that formed the research are:
• Is the claim that the new aid environment is good for women’s rights and gender equality rights based in reality?
• Is funding for gender equality and women’s rights reducing?
• What are the effects on CSOs working for gender equality and women’s rights?

So far we have conducted a literature review, prepared a background paper and a questionnaire for Southern partners of GADN members working on gender equality, women’s rights or empowerment. The questionnaire asks about donor and government funding, involvement in activities to influence government and donors and the impact of aid on women’s lives.

The research is extremely ambitious and many of the findings do not simply relate to the new aid modalities but to wider development patterns. So it is difficult to come to broad conclusions and it is important to look at country-specific contexts, for these vary greatly. Equally importantly, we need to understand who is answering the questions and in what context, and to complement the picture given by organisations from

13 To read and download the publication: http://www.gadnetwork.org.uk/index.html
14 A developed SWAP involves all stakeholders (including Government, donors and NGOs) committing to using their resources in the sector only through the Sector Investment Programme.
the global South with the experience of those from the
global North.

Thirty organisations responded to our questionnaire. Of
these 13 were from Africa (3 Ethiopia, 3 Ghana, 3
Mozambique, 1 Uganda, 3 Zambia), 12 from Asia (7
Bangladesh, 2 India, 3 Nepal), and five from Latin
America (3 Bolivia, 2 Nicaragua). They were partners of
five GADN partners – ActionAid, Care, INTRAC, WOM-
ANKIND Worldwide and One World Action. The
respondents represent highly disparate organisations
operating in very different aid environments: their
annual budgets range from US$ 25,000 to US$ 2.1 mil-
lion. Some are involved in advocacy, some with com-

munity work, and some both. They include organisa-
tions with individual members, feminist groups, and
mainstream development groups.

The emerging picture is not a clear one. The messages
are often conflicting. There have been some gains and
many losses. A group in Mozambique says: “More
donors are talking about gender and HIV issues and
there seems to be more interest in figuring out gender
in Mozambique.” On the other hand, a group in Ghana
reports that “to implement good and effective gender
equality programmes is expensive and long-term.
Donors prefer fast-moving projects, and gender equal-
ity objectives need to be addressed over a long period
of time.”

There are many differences among regions and within
regions and countries. It seems that if you are an
organisation of the right size in the right place at the
right time, it is relatively easy to get funds, otherwise it
is not. Most of our African respondents – large nation-
al NGOs engaged in policy work – have seen an
increase in funding for women’s rights work.

There is a clear shift away from core funding for CSOs
towards short-term, activity-based funding. As one of
the respondents says: “Work that is long-term, risky or
intangible becomes increasingly difficult to get funding
for, and most work with women and on women’s rights
falls into these categories.” Large NGOs are able to
access funding more easily than small ones. According
one group in Uganda: “With increased interest in vio-

lence against women (VAW) more funding is now
available, but there is also increased competition for
these funds – especially by larger international organi-
sations who are now beginning to work on VAW.
Traditionally, this has been the domain of local women’s
organisations and now large institutions are picking it
up as an issue. We have seen this has serious implica-
tions because many large agencies are seeing VAW as
an economic or health issue and they are not
approaching it with a gender-based/rights-based per-
spective. Thus there is concern within the feminist
movement that VAW is being addressed in ways that
are actually doing harm to women because these
organisations do not necessarily have a women’s rights
perspective.”

There is a marked increase in competition for
resources within a narrow economist framework, and
this has harsh implications. “As a result of decentrali-
sation of aid, there has been an increase in the competi-
tion of North and South NGOs, with the North captur-
ing funding in-country”, as one group feels. And: “With
a focus on results based management and narrow

economist criteria, women’s rights and empowerment
work is being squeezed out.”

Together with this goes a clear lack of government will
and/or capacity to implement gender equality and
women’s rights commitments. Another group in
Mozambique feels that: “implementation is still a cru-

cial issue. Monitoring schemes are very important but
they don’t exist at the moment or they are not effec-
tive.” A group from Bangladesh echoes this: “at local
level, government doesn’t demonstrate commitment
according to the policy.”

There is little evidence that organisations feel able to
influence donor policy on gender equality and women’s
rights. One group reports: “Our experience has been
that most donors do not open channels for influencing
their own policy and practice. They put out their policy
and CSOs either fit within that or don’t.”

Clearly most groups are concerned about the negative
impact of neoliberal macroeconomic policies. An Indian group: “We see neoliberal economic policies, the undermining of the institutions of governance, the militarization of society and the resurgence of fundamental ideologies linked by their use of women’s bodies as areas of contestation and instruments for ideological control. Together these processes have led to a shrinking of democratic spaces and legitimised violence and subordination of women.”

There is also a move away from service delivery and towards good governance, democracy and HIV/AIDS. In Nicaragua, one group says: “We have noticed that donors are talking about advocacy, that is important, but what women want are tangible answers to their needs, employment, better health care, access to education.” Another concern is that donors are becoming increasingly removed from the realities of poor women and men’s lives. Yet another group from Nicaragua reports: “Gender is considered as a cross-cutting theme and that’s really limiting because it can’t have the desired impact on the position and condition of women. The amount of money to work on strategic issues with women has gone down.”

The capacity of many women’s organisations to engage in national policy debates and budget processes is often limited. Thus: “It is questionable to expect women’s organisations to hold governments to account in countries where democracy is fledging and governments are focused on donor agendas”, according to one of our respondents. There is no distinction between funding from bilateral and multilateral donors and funding from international NGOs.

Here are some recommendations that have come from responding organisations:

- “Recognise that change takes time.”
- “Avoid using gender as a solely technical term.”
- “Seek to understand and foster the growth of national women’s/social movements.”
- “There should not always be a uniform modality for every organisation or country.”
- “A new paradigm for economic development is needed. This means that neoliberal economic frameworks should be interrogated.”
- “Avoid running after funding as this splinters your organisation and ultimately does little good in the community.”

We plan to conduct further research and seek future collaboration. We also plan to undertake joint questioning of governments and donors. The Paris Declaration is portrayed as a public administration tool but the picture that is emerging seems to suggest that it has turned into a new development paradigm that is defining and constraining development thinking and action.

3.3 Gender and aid in the current development agenda and in the Spanish context

Nava San Miguel, Gender Department at the General Directorate of Planning and Assessment of Spain

The year 2005 was a significant one for the gender and development discourse. The Beijing conference had been held ten years previously, and in 2005 the “Beijing +10” meeting, and the five-year review of the MDGs (“MDG +5”) was held. Another important development was the ongoing discussion on UN reform in which it seemed that gender had become a priority. And the Paris Declaration was signed that year, and since then a series of meetings on the subject of gender and aid effectiveness have been held.

The MDGs set aside the human rights approach that had characterised development debates during the 1990s; however, the MDGs proposed to include gender equality in the development agenda. And at the MDG +5 meeting, feminist organisations were able to include sexual and reproductive rights on the agenda to be covered under the topic of Women’s Health and Development. They also stated that gender mainstreaming is important for implementing this agenda. Although the MDG gender goals were insufficient, the
participation of women's organisations enabled these aspects to be included.

At the Beijing +10 meeting it was clear to most participants that the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) was far from being fulfilled. With regard to the Paris Declaration, there is one reference to gender equality in article 42 in the section "Promoting a harmonised approach to environmental assessments": “Similar harmonisation efforts are also needed on other crosscutting issues, such as gender equality and other thematic issues including those financed by dedicated funds”.

**Linking gender and aid effectiveness**

In 2005 the OECD/DAC Gender Network (Gender Net)\(^{15}\) met and discussed the Paris Declaration. There was a general consensus that gender was not treated substantively in the Declaration. This marked the beginning of the debate on how to link gender and aid effectiveness. A meeting was held in Brussels in October 2005 to identify links between these issues and to analyse the existing opportunities to include gender in the Paris Declaration.

In 2006, the annual Gender Net meeting discussed again gender perspectives in the Paris Declaration. It was agreed that more work needed to be done and that gender could not be left out of the general agenda of the Paris Declaration. Two task teams were set up to look into aid effectiveness and to update and revise the DAC directives and guidelines. The task team on Aid Effectiveness is involved in the preparatory work for the OECD 2008 High Level Forum, which will take place in Ghana. This group has also organised other meetings, for instance a workshop\(^{16}\) for multilateral and bilateral donors, partner countries and CSOs in April 2007 to discuss applying the Paris Declaration to advancing gender equality, environmental sustainability and human rights.

As a result of all this work, Gender Net began to deepen its thinking on the relation between aid effectiveness and gender equality while member states began to include it in their practice. The EC has asked Gender Net and the member states to provide insights on how to achieve aid effectiveness.

**Lessons from the OECD/DAC Gender Net meetings in 2005 and 2006**

The Gender Net meetings tried to come up with a constructive criticism of what had gone wrong with the gender mainstreaming approach. What were the mistakes? Why had the BPfA not achieved as many results as it had done before? One of the main conclusions was that when the mainstreaming strategy is no longer combined with empowerment strategies a drastic change of direction occurs. It is important to combine these two again, as the BPfA recommended. Few budgets take gender into consideration and there is little clarity on the gender approach. Though there has apparently been wide consensus on the importance of gender equality, the “women and development” approach is still too often used rather than that of “gender in development”. There continues to be confusion on what constitutes gender mainstreaming in practice. Specialist staff is needed to reconnect feminist and gender theory with institutional practice. Agencies reflect the culture in which they are located, and institutionalised male chauvinism continues to be seen in their understanding of, and approaches to, gender issues.

The meetings also recognised that the gender mainstreaming approach originated from feminist theory and that there have been advances in diagnosis and in supporting formal equality initiatives, although gender-disaggregated data are still insufficient.

Another recurrent trend recognised as particularly relevant to women’s empowerment was work on respecting women and their leadership. It is important to overcome learnt misogyny and encourage sisterhood.

**New developments and their implications**

The new development agenda brings with it new ways of funding, organising and coordinating work among agencies and structures in reflection and transformation. The MDGs in particular have introduced gender equality into the current agenda. The current context has generated new opportunities and new prospects.
for working from a gender perspective. One insight is that we need more precision in our approach if we are to reclaim the double priority of gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment. We have some experience in working with mixed sectors and agencies in society at large, but a higher level of political involvement is required, independent of funding. For instance, sexual and reproductive rights issues are a key element in gender equality, but one that is not addressed critically within donor agencies.

The Paris Declaration is based on self-criticism about the failure to achieve more results in development. It is important to bear this in mind because the Declaration is intended as a way to improve resources and coordination, and a way to align with different country policies and respect their decisions regarding development. The new instruments reinforce policy coherence. The Declaration promotes harmonisation. It is important to promote harmonisation of development policies in the context of gender among all organisations, agencies, government institutions and in civil society. “Mutual responsibility” is a key concept. It is also important to build alliances in this context.

**Spanish cooperation: a case study**

Spanish development cooperation is undergoing a transformation in all respects. Gender equality is now a political priority for the Spanish government and is reflected in its cooperation policy. A strategy has been developed with a gender and development perspective that combines strategies of mainstreaming, women’s empowerment and sectoral emphasis.

The Spanish Cooperation Agency has passed the “declarative” stage and has reaffirmed its political commitment to gender issues. It has redefined strategies politically and conceptually, overcoming traditional approaches, combining new strategies and learning from experience. A very significant change has been the increase in funding. For gender matters, there has been a 341 per cent increase between 2004 and 2006.

The Agency is working for better quality aid, coordination, harmonisation, and higher policy impact. The strategy contains a new objective on aid effectiveness. To achieve this goal, the Agency proposes actions aimed at achieving gender equality not only formally but in reality. The strategy reintroduces human rights for women. The general objective is to promote women’s citizenship and women’s human rights; it deals with objectives separately and assigns concrete actions for these. However, I believe we still need to work more on gender mainstreaming follow-up and assessment.

As regards to harmonisation, the approach is to adapt to the Paris Declaration, to be a reliable and quality partner of feminist and women’s organisations, and to promote a debate that combines traditional international instruments with new ones. The Spanish model currently combines both mechanisms as it provides decentralised support and funding to NGOs.

In an international context, our gender strategy is meant to be a catalyst for knowledge and to promote active and strategic multilateralism. The Spanish Agency now operates more in an international framework; it contributes to the DAC’s gender guidelines with knowledge acquired from our experience. The Agency seeks political harmonisation and coherence. It intends to create a Gender Development and Aid Effectiveness Network in order to transfer information and good practices. It is also adapting to changes both within its own organisation and promoting them in the UN.

**3.4 DISCUSSION & RESPONSES FROM SPEAKERS**

Participants emphasised the importance of the GADN research, not just because consultation with partners in recipient countries enables the results of aid and cooperation to be evaluated but also because it reminds us how very small current aid disbursements for work on gender equality are.

Responding to the discussion and queries, the speakers highlighted a number of important imperatives for feminist advocacy. Some of them were:

- To seek funds for the feminist agenda. Such funds do exist, as evidenced by a foundation in England that reported that they have almost doubled their budget for international work on women’s rights but have not found organisations to which to channel them.
- To unite to seek financing, participate in multilateral initiatives, and be alert to required guidelines for accountability. We can align with present strategies, but we can also debate or question what is going on within traditional frameworks that are familiar to organisations, and to transfer the current agenda on aid effectiveness to them.

**UN reform**

The discussion about the UN reform focused on the processes of UN reform in practice, where the concepts of effectiveness, harmonisation and alignment are already being taken into account, and the cooperation framework is currently being put into practice in eight pilot countries. Those links are not at all clear in
though the UN has an ongoing reform process, there is a problem related to the different multilateral systems. The only organisation with an effective dispute settlement is the WTO. Is it possible to create an independent body that could resolve socially relevant issues without subordinating those to the trade agenda? There have been talks about the WTO having to account to the ECOSOC. The UN and the ECOSOC are the legitimate spaces that could serve as decision-making bodies. But unfortunately, the governments that form the constituency of the UN have not decided if they can give the UN the power it needs. Meanwhile, demands on the UN are increasing, and it does not have resources or power commensurate with them.

Spanish cooperation

With regard to Spanish cooperation Agency, participants asked how strategic planning will be implemented and transferred to NGOs, the agencies’ technical staff, and politicians, and how the Agency will move from its good strategy document to practical considerations such as financing the training of technical and specialised staff and conducting a follow-up evaluation.

Nava stated that NGOs have been involved since the beginning of the Directorate’s planning processes. New planning procedures are being implemented to improve management quality and favour participative processes.

As regards the gender strategy, the Agency’s Council Women’s Group includes representatives from the CONGDE gender group and the NGO ACSUR plus three other experts. CONGDE’s recommendations have been taken into account when creating the strategy document. The document has a section on the application of strategies, with guidelines on diffusion, planning, management, and the extent and potential target groups for funding.

Institutionally, the Spanish Agency now has a person in charge of gender and also gender focal points within different General Directorates. And in terms of follow-up, the General Planning and Assessment Directorate is creating a mechanism for assessment adaptable to the whole process of transformation of planning, by establishing protocols that provide follow-up for both Country Strategy and Sectoral Strategy documents.

3.5 OPEN SPACES

Overview

In this participatory session, five workshops or mini-seminars were held. Each focused on a different aspect of the challenges and opportunities facing feminist advocates for gender equality and women’s rights.

The workshops addressed:
1) The problems and successes of women’s organisations in financing their work;
2) Some conceptual issues around feminism in its historical context;
3) The UNDP’s new gender manual as a practical tool for mainstreaming;
4) The UN GEA recommendations; and
5) Current progress in setting up gender equality machinery in the government of Afghanistan.

Reports from the workshops can be found at: http://www.wide-network.org/index.jsp?id=354
4 Introductory reflections: looking back, looking forward

Wendy Harcourt opened the day’s proceedings by reviewing the previous day’s discussions. Before inviting Christa Wichterich to speak about her work at the Alternative G8 Summit she explained how the programme was designed so that in the first day there had been a detailed series of discussions on trade and development policy from a gender perspective. Now in the second day the focus would be on women’s own realities and knowledge; this was the moment to look at what women have to say critically about the current aid and trade agenda. The second day would look at feminist strategies from the South, East and West in forming alternatives to these agendas. Global capitalism is not a monolith: there are many alternative economies where women and men are living and surviving. The second day would focus on these experiences and knowledge. Working from these diverse experiences we can see not only the damage of neoliberal globalisation but also how to work beyond it. It is important to realise that alternatives do exist and that women play a crucial role in building these alternatives. The second day is therefore devoted to feminist visions for transforming the trade and development policies we spoke about yesterday. She then introduced Christa Wichterich and invited her to speak about her own experience at the alternative G8 Summit and some of the alternative ways of analysing global capitalism that as a feminist working in Germany in solidarity with women in the South and East she could bring to the discussions.

5 Feminist visions for transforming power

Chair: Wendy Harcourt

Overview

Four presenters spoke from their own experience as feminist activists and researchers. For all four the need to build a feminist political agenda was urgent. Rosa Cobo stressed the importance of an understanding of history to explain the new global economic and political scenario and to craft a political response to patriarchy and economic globalisation. Christa Wichterich concurred, saying that we need a political programme that embraces governance, poverty eradication, democratisation, social justice, and human rights, and seeks coherence between them.

Bina Srinavasan and Jivka Marinova brought telling examples from India and Eastern Europe. Bina’s report of Gujarat showed how women suffer when party politics creates conflict and suggested that we need to make links with women in local struggles whether or not they define themselves as feminist. Jivka spoke of a lack of feminist and gender-aware people at higher decision-making levels in Eastern Europe, and reiterated that there too women need to be more politically visible, even though new networks and gender-related bodies are springing up.

Diversity among women and women’s organisations was also seen as a key issue. It is possible to create a common political agenda among women despite this diversity because violence and poverty are persistent patriarchal structures in both developed and developing countries. Christa recalled the many young women among the protesters at the latest G8 meeting who did not identify themselves as feminists but shared our fundamental critique of the neoliberal development agenda. She noted that women are heterogeneous groups working in micro contexts within a larger macro context, so we must not lose sight of the big picture. Bina also pointed out how women are not a homogeneous group but are stakeholders within different religious, social and cultural communities. We need to identify common goals and to discuss how we can use our diversity to the best advantage.

5.1 Feminists, the G8 agenda and the new aid architecture

Christa Wichterich

As we want to unpack the new aid and trade architecture I would like to link this conference to the recent G8 summit in Heiligendamm, in Germany, and the protest movement around the summit. At the G8 summit the new global power configurations were very visible: the self-declared government club of the world, the G8 states plus – for the first time – representatives of the
new global powers: China, India, Brazil, and South Africa. The overall objective of the summit was “growth and responsibility”, and therefore the powerful governments were flanked by some token presidents from Africa as representatives of those for whom the G8 wants to show responsibility in terms of aid and trade. The main topics – protection of investment for example for extractive industries in Africa, protection of IPR, more private/corporate aid, public-private partnership – indicate the focus on the privatisation of investment, resources, knowledge, and aid while neither the G8 nor African states will be able to meet the MDGs in 2015 through public investment and aid.

In whose interest will the new funds be invested which are promised for development in Africa? Does Africa need more money for the current development paradigm, for the same aid and trade regimes? Is a Green Revolution, which is now promoted by the Bill Gates and the Rockefeller foundations, in the interest of the majority of the African people who still live in rural areas?

The heterogeneous protest movement around the G8 summit resounded of a critique that the global neoliberal development agenda based on liberalisation, competition, privatisation and leading to a growing gap between wealth and poverty in all countries is fundamentally flawed. It was interesting to see that many young women who do not have a feminist perspective but shared our fundamental critique of the neoliberal development and trade agenda were part of this protest movement. The voices of dissent from Africa were very clear in their demands: an end to the same development strategies which have destroyed livelihood resources of Africans on a large scale, cancel the debt, cancel agricultural subsidies by the EU, and stop the EPAs.

While unpacking the new aid and trade architecture at this conference, how do we relate to the new global power configuration? Where does WIDE as a political actor position itself in the diverse scenario of protest and dissent? Do we still perceive ourselves as a network for change?

First, I would like to propose to make the title of this conference more precise: “What do feminists have to say” about the new aid and trade architecture. In my view, feminists have to adopt an intersectionalist approach which takes into account a) that neoliberal development and trade policies divide women and make for the growth of social disparities between women, and b) that apart from gender other social categories such as class, caste, age, race, etc., play a very decisive role in the lives and perception of women. Feminists should take those differences between women as entry points for a critical analysis.

Second, we should start the unpacking of policies by challenging notions and not taking language for granted. Language coin concepts and aims at building consensus.

• The objective of “poverty reduction” replaced “poverty elimination”.
• A crucial criterion for “good governance” as phrased by the WB is the accountability towards donors, and the compliance with debt repayment and structural adjustment.
• “Ownership” – as used in the Paris Declaration – can be read as an internalisation of decisions made by donors and taking pro-actively the responsibility for implementing those decisions.
• The objective of “effectiveness” gives a positive connotation to aid. Nobody wants to waste funds and energies. However, if we narrow the issue of aid down to a question of “effectiveness” we focus on technical aspects rather than the political content. After having experienced a shift from political to technical issues for example regarding gender mainstreaming we should be aware of the threat of depolitisation.

Third, the new aid and trade architecture facilitates a process of integration of different governance regimes, of different economic systems, of different actors into the market framework. The global market is supposed to be the best place for the allocation of resources and for win-win-situations, including gender equality. Market tools promise to provide solutions for everything, from trade in pollution rights to micro-credit as a vehicle for women’s empowerment and market integration. This market-totalitarianism, a one-dimensional mindset, generates a new coherence between policies, the coherence of giving preference to competition over solidarity, to corporate rights over human rights, the coherence of subordinating provision to profit, public interest to private interest. The market-totalitarian mindset pushes aside alternative development concepts and economic structures like a care-and-provision driven economy in which women have traditionally been key actors.

Fourth, our discussions about the new aid architecture reflect that even we, in this conference room, are a heterogeneous group working in different micro contexts, which determine our perspective. Some of us rejected the principles of the Paris Declaration saying that they replicate earlier aid concepts using only a bit of new language. Many others prefer to identify entry points for intervention and windows of opportunity for reform on behalf of poor women and gender equality, in partic-
ular to get a bigger share of the financial pie. If WIDE wants to make a difference and advocate change can we then afford to do one thing and leave aside the other?

a) A liberal perspective of gender equality is a legitimate and indisputable human right but feminism has to go beyond this in an intersectionalist way.

b) Feminists should adopt complementary strategies of inside and outside, meaning: interventionist reform in favour of poor people, social justice and gender equality on the one hand, and on the other hand fight against the overexploitation of human and natural resources, against the commodification and privatization of everything, the destruction of livelihoods and alternative economic structures.

c) We cannot afford to lose sight of the bigger picture and confine ourselves to technical questions. We have to analyse the new aid and trade policies within the neoliberal development framework. At each point in time we have to reflect on our approach: do we accept and legitimise policies, their language and principles when we get involved in order to improve them? After many of our alternative ideas, concepts and language got hijacked or coopted by mainstream policies, we have to ask: can we use those policies for our objectives or do they use us?

I am sure that at the end of the day we will take up different policy options. Some of us will focus on widening the cracks and exposing the contradictions in the mainstream paradigm, strengthening the dissent against the neoliberal consensus, creating space for transformative policies and practices on the ground. Others will pragmatically focus on damage control and partial improvement of the aid and trade architecture so that women benefit more.

We are not here to cover up the differences between us but to identify common values, goals and visions, and to discuss strategies on how to make use of our diversity. We have to be pragmatic and visionary at the same time but link and coordinate the different strategies. At the alternative summit near Heiligendamm, John Holloway said that we have to work in global capitalism, against it and beyond it. I hope that feminists will manage to do this.

5.2 Feminisms and diversity
Rosa Cobo Bedia, University of La Coruña, Spain

Events such as this WIDE conference are important feminist spaces for reflection and intercultural encounters. These two things are prerequisites for the construction of a political subject, one that is global, collective, and feminist, with the capacity to establish political agreements and strategies in a globalised context.

As a militant feminist and researcher, I try to have good listening skills in order to find out the critical issues that concern women, and to know what is going on. To understand what is happening in the present day we need a historical time frame. Historical distance is necessary for a precise analysis. We can say that currently we face a new global, international and political scenario. New social hierarchies, social relations and social stratifications are being created in which women have a crucial role. Feminists need to build a political agenda, and for it to be effective it must be related to the diagnosis of the current situation.

Besides stating that we face a new global situation, it is necessary to point out that all significant social changes, such as changes in the fundamental structure of capitalism, pose a question for us: what have these things to do with women? All changes redefine the situation of women in the social and international order. One crucial element is the tendency to globalise neoliberal policies. Globalisation could be many things, but it is mostly neoliberal, and it affects women from developing countries in very specific ways. However, it also affects women in developed countries. The feminisation of poverty as a global phenomenon has been caused by neoliberalism. It has appeared in Europe as well and it is now at the centre of “welfare states”. The feminisation of poverty may seem irrelevant because it is invisible. However, it is growing.

Global disorder mostly affects the oppressed. This has been stated by both the right wing and the left wing.
Global disorder is caused by neoliberal politics and its correlate is the feminisation of poverty. Vulnerable populations that face higher inequality are hit by these policies in a stronger way. And women in Europe face many inequalities.

Another element is the presence of new forms of patriarchal violence, for instance, the rates of femicide in Latin America, especially Mexico and Central America. We tend to believe that femicide is a tragic and macabre form of patriarchal violence that happens only in certain parts of the world. But we should consider that this form of violence does not respond to local contexts but to global structural causes. The toughening of patriarchy in such regions is related to the prevalence of sweatshops, which are a consequence of neoliberal globalisation. We need to consider that these renovated patriarchal pacts imply a new reconfiguration of patriarchy.

My first thesis is that women’s situation is marked by diversity in the political, economic, and cultural contexts. It is possible to create a common political agenda because violence and poverty are patriarchal structures that affect women in both developing and developed countries. Indeed, these structures affect women in different degrees and in different ways. Yet, there are commonalities. Feminists should ask themselves if women’s emancipation is possible in one continent. It is certainly not possible to have women’s emancipation in half a continent. The marked oppression, exploitation, violence and poverty affect us all.

Thus, European women should not assume that we are excluded from what happens in three-quarters of the world. This contradicts the historical logic of oppressed groups.

Fortunately, Europe is a multicultural continent today. However, the “culture” variable is being used and instrumentalised. We should think about what patriarchal privileges are embedded under the “cultural” variable. Shall we respect all practices that are explained by people as part of “their culture”? What are the limits? All cultures are worthy of respect but not all cultural practices, not if they do not promote or respect human rights and equality. We should be clear about this.

European feminists have reached a consensus in understanding that political power has to undermine patriarchal power. We share a distrust and suspicion of patriarchal structures. Political power is the means to introduce agreements that carry with them real changes for women. Women need to deepen their thinking around diversity from a strategic point of view. Only by basing a framework on those elements that unite us and not those that separate us will a common political project be constructed.

5.3 Politics, neoliberalism and religious fundamentalism in South Asia

Bina Srinavasan, independent researcher/writer, India

South Asia is a region riddled with many contradictions. In the name of development, devastation is inflicted on women’s lives and bodies and on many communities. Within South Asia, three key issues must be fore grounded, as they are linked to each other and feed into each other. These are: religious fundamentalism, militarism and neoliberal globalisation. Patriarchy overarches these processes. In South Asia class, caste, ethnicity and religious identities compound realities. Women are not a homogeneous group; they are part of these communities and are stakeholders within them. These factors are part of their identity and the struggle they are engaged in. All of this adds a complex edge to the existence and political actions of women.

Gujarat is the crucible of the Hindu right wing, which is a conglomeration of many organisations. The RSS (The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) is the ideological fountainhead of Hindutva, the movements advocating Hindu nationalism. Their project is to create a Hindu nation— for which it is important to create an enemy that has to
be driven out of the country and indeed from large parts of South Asia. That is their game plan. So who are these enemies of the Hindu Rashtra? In India, it is the minority communities: Muslims and Christians. The year 2002 saw the culmination of a long-term project in Gujarat – the transformation of the state of Gujarat into a Hindu Rashtra. There was large-scale destruction of Muslim property, and women were subject to the most brutal kinds of sexual assault and humiliation. The aim was to decimate the entire community – culturally, economically and socially. We saw the collapse of state institutions – the police, local-level political bodies, and the bureaucracy. The state collapsed into a Hindu Rashtra set of institutions, and the Muslim community was brought to a point where it lay outside the mainstream, on the periphery – much more so than it had been to begin with.

The Muslim community in India is largely urbanized and is largely economically vulnerable. In that context, this kind of political plan brings about a situation of desperation. Gujarat in 2002 also saw the silencing of many voices, including those of NGOs and women’s groups in Gujarat and outside. The threat of the Hindu Rashtra was so strong that there was a complete breakdown of political solidarity. There was solidarity, but within a small circle. It taught us many lessons. When push comes to shove, we now know who we can count on.

Since this crisis, there have been a series of incidents not in Gujarat alone, although they are concentrated in a very brutal way in Gujarat. We have seen a nearly complete erosion of civil and human rights; dissent is being attacked. To be a Muslim woman and poor means that you are living through very hard times.

Many things work in conjunction in this situation. Gujarat is a rich, industrialised state. Yet there is a contradiction here, because tens of thousands of people are being consistently marginalised through economic processes and the project of development as it is conceived today. The state has given over huge economic processes and the project of development to which they have traditionally had access, while on the other right-wing forces give them some sort of legitimacy in a context where the state has failed to protect their status as citizens. Right-wing forces confer this legitimacy in a much distorted way.

It is a complex situation and women’s groups are faced with many challenges. We have been trying to make alliances with other social movements, since women are also part of these movements. When there is an attack on resources, an intense struggle ensues. We do try to work on these issues, and with other movements – not with much success, but the attempt is there. At a conceptual level, we need a nuanced understanding of the changing nature of the nation state. We also have to acknowledge that there are many feminisms; there is a plurality of perspectives out there. There is a search for alternatives and it is a positive thing. We need to link up with women in local struggles even though they might not necessarily be feminists. This positive search for alternatives means that feminist groups can play a very important role, for we have a fundamental analysis of society that includes class, caste, religion and all the different layers that make up society and women’s locations in it.

What is happening in the name of culture today is dangerous and insidious. Women too are finding themselves within cultural spaces and gaining legitimacy within cultural practices. Women exercise agency when they say that they are choosing to be part of culture. These are difficult moments and contexts. We need to find ways and strategies, a new political language, analysis and an entirely new vision to be able to grapple with this.

5.4 The challenges to feminism in Eastern Europe and the CIS

Jivka Marinova, KARAT Coalition, Bulgaria

Since very early childhood I have been in a kind of competition with boys: my brother, my classmates, my husband, and my male colleagues: at school, in the university, in the computer science research institute, all the time I had to prove that I am as good as they are or better than them to have the right to continue. Actually I was so busy with these efforts that did not even think that it was unjust.

17 Hindu Rashtra means literally “Hindu polity”. As Hindu Rashtra is not a religious concept, it is also not a political concept. It can be associated to the notion of “nation”.
The political climate I was born into was so hopelessly certain and rigid that I could not even have hoped for change. But it has changed, very quickly and very dramatically. The certainty of our lives disappeared in less than one year, the artificial balance was broken and our brains started to be filled with the opposite ideological views. That was when we began to look for different solutions. The first steps of democracy, pluralism and the voice of civil society, unemployment, deep economic crisis, obvious poverty, all that was hidden before. The new images of housewives appeared quickly everywhere… and things did not really become better: there was enough motivation to work as a feminist. However there was something important that we tend to forget – the new information channels, the flow of accessible information, the internet, and the possibility to exchange freely opinions, views and news, to learn quickly what is going on in the world, to engage in unbelievable actions.

Women from Eastern Europe have joined feminist movements because they offered space for us to voice our own opinions, to break gender stereotypes, to speak on gender issues, and to be part of a circle of women where similar views are expressed and where new, non-conventional ways of working are offered along with the belief that true engagement will change society.

Working within civil society was an eye-opener. In the mid-1990s women’s NGOs started up with great enthusiasm and with limited funds or without any funds at all. They had big causes to defend – first of all the need to be independent, to provide a safe space for women and to struggle for self-determination in the international arena. However, we are now witnessing some kind of a withdrawal from feminist activism. At the national level it is difficult to organise and attract younger women. Are we tired, have we lost our energies, illusions and hopes? In Bulgaria there is a lack of engagement: most women’s NGOs have lost their activist profiles. There is a clear lack of feminist and gender-aware people at higher levels of decision-making.

What are our hopes then? Do we still have hopes? We hope to live better, to live a life free of all kind of coercion. We hope there are alternatives to the neoliberal development model and capitalist society, that social justice is possible. We hope the new European reality will bring more opportunities for cooperation instead of creating new borders and new restrictions.

If I have to give a more regional prospective however, things can be very different in different countries. If we take Poland as an example, Polish women have a huge cause yet to defend. Legal abortion is a political issue that costs women’s lives. Despite the tireless work of women active in this field and pressure by the international community, this issue seems to remain and to become more and more sensitive. I wonder what is the power and the meaning of all EC equal opportunity directives and acts when women continue to die from illegal abortions in the centre of Europe, and in Portugal women are condemned for having provided abortion services.

Looking closely at the hopes of different women’s groups I will refer to a needs assessment of women’s NGOs from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), performed by Karat last year (http://www.karat.org). Clearly women are shifting their priorities towards economic empowerment and economic opportunities. In most of the CIS countries women still bear the burden of the transition to market economy and they are looking for sustainable economic initiatives. They are very much concerned with the isolation of the CIS region from international activities and the lack of gender strategies and national plans of action. Concern is raised about insufficient access to finances and information and the insufficient networking and coalition work in the CIS region. Some of the best feminist centres, such as the Center for Gender Studies in St Petersburg, have been closed. Sometimes local and national cooperation is very difficult because of the competition for funding. This makes the movement weaker. Women’s groups are now more interested in international cooperation. But with the new division of Europe it becomes difficult.

Women from Eastern Europe have joined feminist movements because they offered space for us to voice our own opinions, to break gender stereotypes, to speak on gender issues, and to be part of a circle of women where similar views are expressed and where new, non-conventional ways of working are offered along with the belief that true engagement will change society, Jivka Marinova.
As regards how feminists organise themselves to resist power, and how they have taken power, there are positive trends in regional and international networking. Formal and informal women’s networks have been built. Eastern Europe is a strange region; we are still not fully perceived as Europeans. At Beijing, Eastern Europe was a non-region. At Beijing +5, Eastern Europe had already a substantial presence. Our networks have put in huge efforts to create a regional identity and respond to common interests and the efforts have led to substantial achievements.

Many countries in the region have passed equal opportunity laws. When most women’s NGOs started working, violence against women was a taboo topic and trafficking in women was simply not an issue. Women’s political participation was seen as the caprice of angry militant feminists and the professional career-building was a kind of stigma for women without family life. Now, however, legislation on violence against women has been introduced in most countries because of massive women’s campaigns. Trafficking became an international issue because of women’s activism. Many political parties have set up women’s caucuses to create a gender balance. But despite these advances, women are not welcome in decision-making bodies. Governance remains a male realm. Nevertheless women and women’s organisations have become important actors in building democracy and challenging patriarchal power.

We often think that everybody knows what we know, because we have learnt what we know due to personal interest and not because we are professional philosophers… This is one of our big mistakes: it is amazing how low the gender awareness of women in decision-making positions is. I wonder how many women have ever heard about for instance the new directives on gender equality. And even if they have heard something, all these wonderful documents will remain strictly on paper for many long years.

In Eastern Europe, especially in Bulgaria, institutions dealing with equality issues are under-resourced. Traditional women’s organisations are often as patriarchal as other organisations. Therefore feminists’ political spaces are mainly outside the institutions. Mostly, they operate within the civil sector, in NGOs. Therefore, they are not visible enough and not influential enough. True political space for women is a space where knowledge is created and disseminated. Feminist groups are active during the diverse election campaigns, they organise trainings for candidates and for voters, they run campaigns. But unfortunately all these activities have not resulted in more women in higher decision-making positions.

What are the alternatives? We have to use male strategies. We need to learn to be fighters, but in the good sense: to use all the opportunities to push for and promote our claims, our rights. We have to use technology as men do, to take advantage of it to create alternative media and information systems, to give them life for the benefit of women. Women need to share, to communicate, and to warn each other. We have to build our self-confidence and to break the myths. Feminism is still not popular and we need to prove that it is viable. Women in our region do not want to be labelled as feminists, especially those who have decision-making power. They like being supported by women’s NGOs but they forget the women’s cause very easily. Therefore the question is whether women in power have used the movement or whether the women’s movement can rely on them? For the moment I think they are using us.

5.5 DISCUSSION & RESPONSES FROM SPEAKERS

A detailed discussion after the presentations drew comparisons between different countries and regions and raised some points of common experience. The political and economic limitations on opportunities for women flow from the same neoliberal framework. And a common trend in the South, East and West is the privatisation of governance and services. In many countries, particularly in the Middle East and in Latin America, governance is being not only privatised but militarised. Mexico was mentioned as an example. As the military plays a more important role, democratic spaces shrink and the state comes to play a controlling role ensuring that the neoliberal agenda is “effectively” implemented. All this is relevant to the aid agenda and has an impact on our work, as social dissent is increasingly penalised and criminalised.

The example of Gujarat showed how complex a situation could be for development work after an outbreak of violence, where rehabilitation has to take centre stage for some time and NGOs find themselves forced to postpone attention to political issues.

The diversity of women’s situations and needs was discussed, and the difficulties of strategically addressing the different needs of diverse groups of women – something that is essential if we are to mobilise women en masse. Diversity needs to be seen as strength. All cultures have practices that are negative for women, and we need to find ways of managing diversity and power inequality while also focusing on the shared problems – such as the economic exploitation of women from the South and immigrant women in Europe, who form a very vulnerable group.
The strategic value of sending messages of hope, peace and love in a context where it is all too easy to concentrate on negative impacts was also mentioned. Some useful examples from Latin America were given. A challenge for feminism is to overcome the alienation young people feel as a result of neoliberalism. In Brazil, contradictions have emerged: there is a Women’s Ministry and Secretariats throughout the country, yet many women have adopted patriarchal ways of working and feminists sometimes seem unwilling to enter into a dialogue with them. In Peru, where women are struggling against neoliberalism-driven cutbacks in food and social programmes in the context of state reform, feminists are working to connect with popular women. Building bridges to work with grassroots women was seen as essential to be able to connect local and regional matters to global causes, but also for feminism’s own legitimacy. Indigenous women in Bolivia, for instance, have a critical view of the feminist movement and argue that it consists only of middle-class, white women. So it is necessary to create a movement that is inclusive. Many feminists are macro-economists and we need to build bridges with social movements in order to connect with the interests of women and to repoliticise the feminist movement on the basis of women’s lived experience.

It was suggested as a strategy to connect women’s movements more strongly with political parties. In order to do so it is important to recognise the range of ideological differences among women’s movements (radical, social, liberal, environmental etc.) and how these differences can be positioned within today’s mainstream political groupings.

The speakers responded briefly to this rich discussion, mostly agreeing with participants’ views and emphasising that all the issues raised – the militarisation of governance, rehabilitation after disaster or conflict, religious fundamentalisms – are all political issues, which call for a political response from women. Women’s groups themselves are part of the political and developmental project, so what kind of ideological stance can we agree on? How do we see our roles? WIDE has to be a feminist leader in linking East, West, and South.

6. WORKING GROUPS: OUR FEMINIST STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Overview

The final three working groups aimed to pull together the many insights and suggestions from the conference’s previous sessions so as to propose strategic directions in the areas that now seem of paramount concern for feminist advocacy: the EU trade policy with a special focus on the WTO, the new EU aid and trade agendas, and concepts around alternatives.

On strategies for advocacy around the stalled WTO negotiations, good information, raising public awareness, and effective international networking were identified as key if we are to help keep the concerns of developing countries and women in view.

On EU aid effectiveness, accountability was emphasised strongly, and a holistic and coherent approach to aid, trade, development, and global governance was recommended as a way of improving the quality of aid.

The third working group, looking at specifically feminist alternatives, shared strategies and best practices for building feminist alternatives. It was emphasised that we need a multipronged strategy to encompass our diversity, but at the same time should reclaim the word “feminism”, for it exemplifies bridge-building, and it is anchored in grassroots experience.

6.1 Strategies for WTO

Facilitator: Barbara Specht; resource person: Graciela Rodriguez

Barbara introduced the discussion with an overview of the current state of WTO negotiations, which have been deadlocked since 2006. In July 2006, the Doha Round was suspended, when an agreement could not be reached on the draft modalities on agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA), with the EU

18 NAMA refers to all products not covered by the Agreement on Agriculture. In other words, in practice, it includes manufacturing products, fuels and mining products, fish and fish products, and forestry products. They are sometimes referred to as industrial products or manufactured goods. Over the past years, NAMA products have accounted for almost 90 per cent of the world merchandise exports. Despite significant improvements in market access for NAMA products that previous GATT – General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade – rounds and the Uruguay Round produced, tariffs continue to be an important barrier to world trade, as tariff peaks, high tariffs, and tariff escalation remain.
and the United States completely unwilling to change their agricultural policies and abolish their huge agricultural subsidies. In mid-June 2007, a meeting of the G4 (United States, India, Brazil, and the EU) in Potsdam, Germany, was scheduled to bring G4 delegations together to discuss how to close key gaps between them, especially on the important issue of tariff cuts for industrial goods as well as agricultural subsidies. Finally, in September 2007, a final outline for modalities in the Doha Round would be presented by the Chairs of agriculture and NAMA. Meanwhile the suspension of the negotiations is being used by the US and the EU to push bilateral free trade agreements forward.

It is important for activists to follow these developments in trade negotiations, but it is more crucial to build alternatives together. As time goes by, the general feeling is that WTO negotiations are in a dead-end phase; hence many NGOs have stopped monitoring the Doha Round. Timing is essential, as bilateral agreements (China-Philippines, US-Brazil, etc.) are in the midst of being negotiated, as governments will give in more easily during bilateral agreement negotiations. Stances on the issue of agricultural subsidies and the definition of “special products” vary from one country to another but constitute the main basis for the stalemate in the agricultural negotiations of multilateral agreements. For instance, Brazil would be relatively keen to move the WTO agenda along but it cannot do so because the pressure from MERCOSUR is too high.

In this context our strategy should be to put pressure on our national governments both in the North and in the South not to push through with either multilateral or bilateral agreements. Southern countries must be allowed the chance, policy space and time to reflect and develop their domestic economies and define their own development strategies. Women’s advocates should exert more pressure on Northern governments to promote the Southern agenda.

Also, there is a need to focus more on NAMA, where an important share of the female labour force is involved in the production of goods. At the same time, it is important to understand the specific situation from one country to another related to NAMA and their right to flexibility. Only when CSOs in the EU have developed a common strategy will they be able to lobby non-aligned government delegations. A strengthened and more coherent position of EU civil society depends also on the knowledge NGOs share among civil society and their own accurate understanding of the situation in the South, including country-specific situations.

At present there is a sense that advocacy could be improved if relevant information was better disseminated and public awareness-raising improved (including even NGOs’ awareness in some cases). We urgently need literature on this subject that would present strong arguments against studies such as the EU sustainable impact assessments on the quality of FDI. Both the public and government officials in the South need to be better informed about the increased impoverishment of small farmers and the dangers agro-fuels pose to our future livelihoods.

Women need to develop alliances on the one hand with “good” politicians and governments in the North and the South, and on the other hand with European feminist groups. We also need to “harmonise” the advocacy positions of Northern and Southern groups, always with care to strengthen the position of the South.

At the end of the workshop, Graciela gave insight into new alternatives coming out of South America, namely new regional integration schemes and a new development bank, the Banco del Sur (Bank of the South). The Banco del Sur represents an alternative to the process of globalisation proposed by the international monetary

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19 The meeting ended with no agreement and the focus moved to Geneva.
20 Mercado Común del Sur (Southern Common Market), South America’s leading trade block, made up of full members Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela and associate members Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru.
and trade institutions. It is still in its early stages, as it has been only recently agreed that there will be equal representation and financing from all involved countries so as to ensure an equal share of power.

Some NGOs will be able to play a role in the evolution of the Banco del Sur, but current developments are unknown to the public and it seems that the richer countries (Venezuela and Brazil) will have a stronger hand in decision-making. If Latin American civil society is to be included in these debates, how can feminists from the North, East and South work within new alternatives such as the Banco del Sur?

6.2 Gender and aid effectiveness

Facilitator: Nerea Craviotto; resource person: Lydia Alpizar Durán

This group divided into subgroups to discuss the Paris Declaration and opinions on it. The following points summarise the discussion:

- The participants noted that the aid effectiveness agenda has been constructed from a donor perspective. We, as gender advocates, need to return to our own objectives rooted in women's organisations and develop a critical analysis from a women-oriented and feminist point of view.

- Women's organisations understand “national ownership” differently from governments. In solving the issue of aid conditionality and external debt, national ownership is only possible with the active participation of social and women's movements that defend our priorities. Only with this participation can ownership be assured. As gender advocates have learnt from experience, poverty reduction strategies do not offer such ownership.

- Mutual accountability is very important in this respect. The participants believed that donor countries are accountable not only to their own citizens or to the governments receiving aid, but also to citizens in developing countries.

- Governments should build on their previous commitments to gender equality and women's rights, for instance as regards funding the implementation of their national commitments under CEDAW and the BPfA.

- Women are also concerned about the quality of aid. To work on this we need to strengthen dialogue and set up a common agenda from a feminist point of view. On this agenda we should include aid, trade, development, and global governance in a holistic way. The fact that the current aid agenda is donor-driven makes this a useful entry point for discussing these issues.

- As a European network based in Brussels WIDE has a key role to play in sharing and facilitating information. It is also well-placed to play a key role in advocacy at the EU level.

- There is a need to create an “inside-outside” agenda, both standing outside official processes as independent actors (CSOs, NGOs) and by participating in official processes through being part of official delegations or by identifying allies inside the process (e.g. the DAC Gender Net, and officials dealing with gender issues in the EC). It was stressed that women should participate in both: in spaces parallel to the official meetings such as the CSO Forum in 2008 in Ghana to review the Paris Declaration, but also in the official spaces (OECD 2008 High Level Forum).

- We need to stimulate greater commitment to creating closer political links with developing countries and be more aware of the situations in the South and share such experiences. It is not commonly known what European transnational companies impose on developing countries. And we need to disseminate our experiences because they contribute to the whole picture and can also serve as an inspiration to others. The work in the EU must be seen in conjunction with what is being done in developing countries. For this it is necessary to support organisations there.
6.3 Alternatives: Feminists transforming the world?
Facilitator: Wendy Harcourt; resource persons: Maeve Taylor, Mariama Williams, Pam Rajput

The resource persons put forward some key questions and insights:

• How do we build bridges between grassroots women and feminist groups? Maeve of Banúlacht, WIDE’s Irish platform, gave the example of Banúlacht’s work with marginalised women in poor communities in Ireland, with a critique of development through a community development process.

• For Mariama, a cohesive, comprehensive stance on the various reforms and a firm bottom line on what is acceptable and what is not, is the basis of building an alternative development model. The WB says gender is “smart economics”, but we need to counter this cooptation of gender mainstreaming with a critical, feminist approach.

• Pam focused on the need for feminists to build alliances with other social movements and to get involved in political processes. Bina added that we actually need to overcome the mutual distrust between social movements and feminist movements and make spaces such as the World Social Forum more feminist-friendly. We cannot always restrict ourselves to dialogue with the likeminded.

In the following discussion it was noted that building bridges requires quite a lot of work: understanding the different language and processes of feminist and social movements, exchanges between activists from social movements and feminists, reflection and analysis as well as activism, narrowing the gap between rural and urban women. One participant issued a reminder, however, that we should not necessarily assume that bridges do not already exist. We should remember that feminist theory came from grassroots experience, and that we are a part of the discourse we are talking about.

However, the division between gender theory and practice has to be looked into carefully. Feminists from the South offer in this respect more practical definitions for feminism. Yet together we should be capable of linking practical and strategic needs, throwing light on the structural causes of gender inequalities. Economic literacy has a key role to play here.

Other points, some of them rather familiar, were raised:

• Trade and globalisation are not seen as “women’s issues”, and women’s organisations are still fighting for their analysis of these issues to be taken seriously.

• There is a serious worry about women’s funds, which are diminishing in many places.

• Language is important in the effort to make gender concepts widely understood, especially at the grassroots. Mainstream media has far greater outreach than alternative media. We know that neoliberal economists and development experts are appropriating our language, so we need to create an alternative language and alternative means of communication (feminist radio programmes, fiction). We need also to communicate with men so as to engage them in our struggles.

• In particular, one speaker commented that feminist thinking had contributed a great deal to knowledge building on unrecognised or even invisible issues such as unpaid labour, reproductive rights, etc., but underlined the importance of not losing the initiative where feminism has gained it as we move towards alliances with other social movements. She suggested establishing a working group to discuss how to strategize about working together with trade unions, land rights groups, and other groups in the social movements, from a gender perspective.

Some comments indicated that more than one concept of feminism was present even within the working group. There was some concern about feminist value judgments and the need to consider how to open up to a more moderate feminism. Other voices suggested that our strategy has to be practical rather than ideo-
logical, and that gender economics is different from feminist economics just as gender equality is different from feminist equality. The resource persons’ responses reaffirmed this, and drew attention to the different feminisms emerging from different parts of the world. We need a multipronged strategy to encompass our diversity, but we should reclaim the word “feminism”, for it exemplifies bridge-building, and it is anchored in grassroots experience.

An example of a useful strategy is the Feminist Dialogues that emerged from the World Social Forum process when 12 networks came together to start a discussion. We can no longer work in isolation. Alone, how can we address the fact that more and more women are being marginalised? How can we deal with religious institutions like the church or the temple, which are being used to violate women’s bodily integrity? How do we apply broad feminist perspectives to fundamentalisms and militarism?

There was a shared understanding on the continuing need for us to comprehend and demystify macroeconomics. In democratic countries we need to educate people to hold policy-makers accountable. We need to have a feminist network with regard to peace and militarism. Making the concept of feminism “digestible” is still a challenge, but we need a more aggressive feminist approach to institutions such as the WB. It is time we talked about mainstreaming feminism, not gender mainstreaming. Nonetheless, the WB is an easy target. The hard targets are our governments and our corporate agencies. We need keep questioning our governments on many issues.

After the three working groups had reported back on their conclusions and key points from their discussions, there was a brief plenary session in which mainly information was shared about new resources, ongoing actions and campaigns in various countries.

### Announcements

The European Feminist Forum (EFF) is a space for discussions on how to repoliticise the feminist movement in Europe and to explore feminist agendas needed in today’s Europe. The forum is committed to fostering an open and diverse dialogue among European feminists and aims to create a space for feminists to come together, meet each other and bring about change in Europe: http://europeanfeministforum.org/

WIDE asked participants to support a letter WIDE had drafted with other European NGOs to the EC, members of the European Parliament and the EU Presidency to ask the EU to support actively a stronger gender entity at the UN and related recommendations to strengthen gender equality at the UN.

The letter got a lot of support from participants: http://62.149.193.10/wide/download/UN%20reform%20letterEUmission.pdf?id=439

The International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN) informed the participants of some of its recent work. IGTN is a network of feminist gender specialists who provide technical information on gender and trade issues to women’s groups, NGOs, social movements and governments. IGTN acts as a political catalyst to enlarge the space for a critical feminist perspective and global action on trade and globalisation issues: http://www.igpn.net/.

Women’s Worlds congress is an international interdisciplinary congress on women held every three years. The focus of the congress is gender research and interdisciplinary scholarship. The 10th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women “Women’s Worlds” with the theme “Moving Forward: Migrations and Dislocations” will be held 3-9 July 2008 in Madrid, Spain: http://www.mmww08.org/.

AWID, the Association for Women’s Rights in Development, announced its upcoming 11th International Forum, to be held 14-17 November 2008 in Cape Town, South Africa, where up to 1,500 women’s rights leaders and activists from around the world will converge to discuss the power of movements: http://www.awid.org/forum08/.

### 7 Closing session

#### Chair: Wendy Harcourt

#### 7.1 Impressions of the conference

**Four Wise Women**

Continuing what has become a tradition at WIDE annual conferences, Wendy called for impressions of the conference to be given by four “wise women” representing different generations and different parts of the world.

*Sara Schillinger* from Switzerland, attending the conference for the first time, expressed her pleasure at the opportunity the conference offered to meet feminists from all over the world. She considered that the work
done over the two days on the evolving EU and international policies on aid and trade was extremely important, but saw a possible danger in being drawn too far “inside” the institutions one is criticising. Speaking from her experience in mobilisations against the G8 and at the European and World Social Forums, she had been surprised at the level of confidence expressed in governments and institutions such as the UN and the EU, implicit in the discussion of entry points and “inside” advocacy. It is important to know what is going on in the big institutions, but we should never forget what the real power relations are at the global level and we should maintain our struggle. Conferences such as this one also help young women to feel that there are alternatives, and that “you don’t have to be a politician to change things”.

Norma Maldonado from IGTN Guatemala said that her initial impressions of the conference had been depressing, with discouraging news about the EU, globalisation and the North’s continuing exploitation of the South, and little in the way of a countervailing voice from us. However, she felt that the second day, with its focus on strategies, had injected welcome energy into the proceedings. She appealed to the young women present to take over the task and also give us energy and hope. Norma commented that the wide-ranging discussion at the conference had enabled us to think about the political implications of complex economic issues and their links to the power relationships between women and men. The conference had not come up with cut-and-dried solutions and answers, but had created debates, which also served to redefine or confirm our radical positions; our radical perspective for fighting the neoliberal model, and our radical feminist points of view, which today seem old in contrast to gender concepts. She identified some ongoing needs:

- To continue to work on the relationships between the state, the market and care work, and how they affect women in their roles as workers in the labour market, as home workers, and as citizens;
- Systematise and map experiences of articulation between feminist movements and movements in the rest of the social sectors such as the environmental movement, trade unions or indigenous peoples’ organisations;
- To foster knowledge exchange between academia and the social movements.

Finally, she acknowledged WIDE’s key advocacy role as regards European governments who are key actors in creating agreements and guidelines on the international organisation of trade.

Raluka Moneira from Romania suggested various ways to increase women’s voice. If strategies to adapt the aid architecture to the different situations of countries that receive aid are to be found, we must make sure that information disseminated to women’s organisations is adapted to the knowledge level of each organisation. Similarly, the gaps between different feminisms could be bridged by creating a theoretical and practical model with a universal language at a basic level, which could provide basic values while leaving room for differences to be expressed. She suggested that feminism should incorporate men. She had also been strongly impressed by the voices particularly from Latin America, and suggested that more time during the conference could be allowed for exchanging experiences.

Lastly, for Lina Abou-Habib, the conference had reminded her of what WIDE works for – not for donors, but for networking around about the politics of development and the politics of feminism, and for solidarity. As an example, she recalled that during the war in Lebanon in summer 2006, while international organisations and embassies were rapidly evacuating their staff, the only action of solidarity actually came from WIDE, AWID and IGTN. Solidarity springs from understanding that our concerns are shared, and the conference had enabled that shared understanding. On the other hand, she felt that WIDE was a very precious space which should become a space for confrontation – not violent confrontation, but confrontation at the level of ideas, with donors, our governments and private sectors, and international institutions, and also confrontation between our own different visions of what we should be and do. She felt more and more convinced that we can no longer consider reform from within institutions, that they are in fact no longer reformable, so confrontation is perhaps the only option. At the same time, she hoped for more engagement between feminists of the North and the South, and suggested that the conference should not always take place in Europe. As regards themes for future work in WIDE, she felt that militarisation around the world was a highly relevant issue that should be investigated further and that flowed naturally from the issues this conference had discussed.

7.2 Concluding remarks
Wendy Harcourt; Juana Bengoa; Enrique del Olmo, Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional

Six Messages for WIDE, Wendy Harcourt

WIDE is now moving towards a new programme for the next four years. This conference has been very helpful
in bringing out some of the key issues WIDE can take forward in that new programme. There have been many issues to emerge from our three days together. Wendy closed the conference with summarising the conference in six messages that WIDE should take into account to be a politically effective network.

First, WIDE needs to continue to understand macro-economic issues, particularly around trade and economic development from a feminist perspective. WIDE plays a central role as a European network that can investigate the trade and aid agenda. Crucially, WIDE needs to investigate European trade and aid policies and their impact on women. As feminists build a global level advocacy on the trade and development agenda it is critical that WIDE knows well the EU agenda and can contribute to global strategising from that knowledge-base.

Second, WIDE needs to cooperate with other women’s groups in the West, East and South in shaping a gender and development agenda. It is important that we continue to understand the different European (West and East) as well as the North-South dichotomies and the insights women from these different locations bring. WIDE in this sense may be embedded in the EU context but needs to listen to other women living in Europe in the neighbouring countries and also of course, as WIDE has traditionally, to women living and working in the South. This politics of solidarity is very important as we work towards a common agenda on how to tackle global gender inequities.

Third, it is clear that WIDE is not just about advocacy or mainstreaming gender in development. We are clearly also looking at how to work on alternatives, indeed we are self-critical of the gender and development agenda. WIDE needs to continue to look outside of the mainstream development debates for inspiration and vision. The diverse knowledge we have in this room is an important power-base to acknowledge and work with. Through networking across our different localities we are forming our own alternative knowledge and our own ways of working.

Fourth, there is the whole unsettling area of the link between migration and development. Based on both the last Annual Conference and this conference it seems that WIDE as a network of women working in Europe means we need to be more thoughtful about how we can work in solidarity with women from the South who have moved to live in Europe. We need to see how the international trade agenda has forced women to move from their homes to look for work.

Fifth, there are many issues that are related to trade and economic development that impact us here in Europe and WIDE needs to consider how to build allies among environmentalists and other activists as part of our political agenda. The issue of fair trade, the role of the consumer, biodiversity, climate change and GMO food, etc., are all key issues that overlap with WIDE’s main agenda. We cannot separate out trade and development in the international arena from these core issues in Europe nor from European responsibility internationally. We need to keep our core focus while looking at how we can understand how these realities impact on not only our lives but also women living outside of Europe.

Sixth, it is important to appreciate how creative participants, organisers and speakers have been together in these days. The herstory walk, the singing, the dancing, the telling of feminist histories. It seems that WIDE is also embracing more creative ways of communicating, not only writing advocacy documents, or good analysis, or tools for capacity building. WIDE is also exploring ways to communicate in new ways, whether through the web, video, songs or poems, these are all ways to celebrate and find our vision and in doing so reach out to other movements and allies.

These are some of the messages Wendy recommended for WIDE to take on board in its future programme of work. As always these WIDE events provide friendly spaces. This way of coming together to learn and strategise is at the basis of what Wendy calls the “politics of friendship”; WIDE Annual Conferences allow us not only to exchange ideas but also to meet face to face and take heart in exchanging views that we are passionate about in our lives. It is deeply satisfying to meet and exchange views with women from so many other countries: “We can return home knowing there are women with whom we can share vision and hope for the future. Thank you very much to all of you, and most of all to our hosts, the WIDE Spanish platform for providing so much of the atmosphere that allowed us to enjoy and I hope act from all we have learnt at this Annual Conference”.

Closing words of thanks,
Juana Bengoa and Enrique del Olmo

Juana conveyed particular thanks from CONGDE and its Gender and Development Working Group to the women coming from developing countries for their sisterhood, and emphasised CONGDE’s commitment to working alongside excluded people. She noted that we also count on alliances with men who believe in femi-
nism, and thanked Enrique del Olmo for his support as a representative of the Spanish Administration, through Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, when financing support was asked to organise this meeting.

Finally, Enrique del Olmo thanked WIDE for the opportunity to close the conference on behalf of Leire Pajin, Secretary of State for Development Cooperation in Spain who was not able to attend the closing session. He agreed that men need to get involved and learn from the women’s struggle. The struggle for women’s rights had been part of the struggle of the Spanish people against dictatorship, but after winning democracy it was still clear that a substantial element was missing in the process of change: equality for women. By struggling together we all have learnt that actions with women are more efficient in further deepening social equality, stressing the importance of women’s leadership. He explained how the current Spanish parity government is committed to gender equality: it has passed and implemented a law against VAW and every new law must report on its application of gender equality. There is clear recognition that support to women is crucial to development, so crucial that one could say, “Development has a woman’s face”.
Appendix 1

Conference programme

CAPACITY BUILDING DAY, 14 June 2007, Madrid

08.30-9.30   Registration

09.30-13.15   Session: Aid and trade: What’s new? A state of art
   Introduction and chairing: Bénédicte Allaert – WIDE Capacity Building Programme Officer

09.30-10.15   New aid modalities: changes in donor policy and practice
   Carmen de la Cruz – WIDE member
   Brita Fernandez-Schmidt – GAD Network, UK

10.15-11.15  Debate in small working groups

11.15-11.30   Coffee break

11.30-12.15  Trade liberalization and poverty
   Zo Randriamaro – UNIFEM Senegal
   Christa Wichterich – WIDE member

12.15-13.15  Debate in small working groups
   Lunch

14.30-17.15  Session: Impacts on the ground: country-specific situations
   Facilitators: WIDE Secretariat: (Barbara Specht, Bénédicte Allaert, Nerea Craviotto, Gea Meijers and Valérie Echard)

14.30-15.30  Characterise recent trends in macroeconomic and development strategies in a series of selected countries, and their impact on promoting well-being, social and climate justice and greater gender equality
   Presentation and discussion in working groups
   - Latin America: Brazil – Graciela Rodriguez, IGPN
   - Africa: Egypt – Josephine Kamel, GCAP-Egypt
   - Middle East: Lebanon – Lina Abou-Habib, Director CRTD-A, Beirut
   - Philippines – Alicia Raymundo, International South Group network, Manila
   - Central Asia: Uzbekistan – Gulnora Makhmudova, IGPN Central Asia
   - Asia: India – Pam Rajput, Center for Women’s Studies at Punjab University, India

15.30-15.45  Coffee break

15.45-16.30  Debate in working groups – Facilitators: WIDE secretariat

16.30-17.15  Session: Synthesis
   Report back by working groups
   Synthesis of key questions and issues – Carmen de la Cruz, WIDE member
**17.30-19.30**  
**Option A:** Steering Group meeting (closed session for the WIDE steering group)  
**Option B:** Mini seminar: Gender and ODM related to Spanish cooperation for development policy  
  Irene López – Chair Asociación Proyect, Consultant in Gender Politics and International Cooperation  
  *(Only for Spanish speakers)*  
**Option C:** Gender Budgets  
  Yamini Mishra – Coordinator of the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, New Delhi, India

**20.15**  
Dinner  
Reports of the Capacity Building day can be found at:  
http://www.wide-network.org/index.jsp?id=355

**CONFERENCE PROGRAMME, 15 June 2007, First conference day**

**08.30-9.30**  
Registration

**09.30-10.00**  
**Introduction and welcome**  
- Wendy Harcourt – WIDE Chair  
- Juana Bengoa – GGD/CONGDE, WIDE Spanish Platform

**10.00-13.30**  
**Session: “Setting the scene” – critical gender perspective**  
Chair: Valérie Echard, WIDE Coordinator  
- **Aid, trade, development, Finances: A feminist perspective on current global challenges**  
  Mariama Williams – DAWN  
- **European Consensus on Development and the new EU Aid Architecture**  
  Helen O’Connell – One World Action, UK  
- **Discussion & responses from speakers**

**11.45-12.00**  
Coffee break

**12.00-13.30**  
**EU trade “architecture”: Current trends of the EU trade policy agenda**  
Zo Randriamaro – UNIFEM Senegal  
- **EU trade policies with Asian countries and their gender implications**  
  Christa Wichterich – WIDE member  
- **Discussion & responses from speakers**

**13.30-14.30**  
Lunch

**14.30-16.00**  
**Session: Gender equality in this global context?**  
Chair: Ana Lydia Fernandez-Layos – WIDE Spanish Platform  
- **“The UN reform and opportunities for participation by civil society and women’s organisations participation”**  
  Rosibel Gómez – UNIFEM, Regional Office for Mexico, Central America, Cuba and Dominican Republic.  
- **“The impact of New Aid Modalities on organisations working for gender equality and women’s rights”**  
  Brita Fernandez-Schmidt – Gender and Development Network, UK  
- **“Gender and aid in the current development agenda and in the Spanish context of Spain”**  
  Nava San Miguel – General Directorate of Planning and Assessment, Spain

**15.45-16.15**  
Coffee break
16.15.-17.00 Questions to the panel and plenary debate
   Presentation of open spaces
17.15 – 18.45 OPEN SPACES: Workshops/mini seminars:
   Open Space 1: “Where is the money going for women’s rights in Europe?” AWID/WIDE workshop
   Open Space 2: “Feminist history and today’s challenges and perspectives”, Nuria Varela, journalist
   Open Space 3: “Open-mike for positive action”, GGD/CONGDE – WIDE Spanish Platform
   Open Space 4: “Towards gender equality? Implementing gender mainstreaming tools and practices”, UNDP
   Europe and the CIS – Barbara Limanowska and Nadja Dolata
   Open Space 5: “Gender Equality and UN reform”, Gea Meijers – WIDE Secretariat

19.00 Feminist walk in the city centre and free evening

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME, 16 June 2007, Second conference day

09.00 –10.30 Session: Feminist visions for transforming power
   Chair: Wendy Harcourt – WIDE Chair
   - Feminists, the G8 agenda and the new aid architecture,
     Christa Wichterich – WIDE member and independent writer, Germany
   - Feminisms and diversity,
     Rosa Cobo Bedía – Universidad de La Coruña - Teacher and Researcher, Spain
   - Politics, neoliberalism and religious fundamentalism in South Asia,
     Bina Srinivasan – Independent Researcher & writer, India
   - The challenges to feminism in Eastern Europe and the CIS,
     Jivka Marinova – KARAT coalition

10.30-11.00 Questions to the panel

11.15-13.00 Coffee break

11.15-13.00 Session: Our feminist strategies and actions
   Facilitated discussion in working groups
   - Strategies for WTO
   - EU aid effectiveness
   - Alternatives: feminists transforming the world?

13.00-14.30 Lunch

14.30-15.45 Session 3: Report back

15.45-16.00 Coffee break

16.00-17.00 Session 4: Closing session
   - Wendy Harcourt – WIDE chair
   - Juana Bengoa – GGD/CONGDE, WIDE Spanish Platform
   - Enrique del Olmo – Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional on behalf of Leire Pajín,
     Secretary of State for Development Cooperation in Spain

19.30 Dinner and farewell party
Appendix 2
Notes on speakers

Juana Bengoa

Juana Bengoa is a member of the board of the Spanish Development NGO Platform CONGDE, serving as the Platform’s Gender and Development representative (http://www.coordinadoraongd.org). She holds a university degree in Political Science and Sociology with a specialisation on Latin America, and a postgraduate degree in Political Science and Constitutional Law. From 2000 to 2005 she was the Executive Director of Solidaridad Internacional, a Spanish foundation for international development cooperation.

Rosa Cobo Bedia

Rosa Cobo Bedia is a Sociology professor at the University of Coruña, Faculty of Political Science and Sociology, and she also teaches at the Complutense University in Madrid. Her doctoral thesis was about patriarchal democracy in the work of J.J. Rousseau (Democracia y patriarcado en J.J. Rousseau).

Ana Lydia Fernandez-Layos

Ana Lydia Fernandez-Layos holds a Bachelor’s degree in International Relations from Sussex University, Brighton, and a Masters on International Cooperation from University Complutense in Madrid. She has been involved with international cooperation for development and gender for Spanish NGOs in Spain, Mexico and Guatemala and is currently working as a freelance consultant in Spain. She collaborates with WIDE on gender and development issues and is a member of the Gender and Development Taskforce at CONGDE.

Brita Fernández-Schmidt

Brita Fernández-Schmidt is currently Chair of the Gender and Development Network and has been active as its member since 1998. She is also the Head of Programmes and Policy at WOMANKIND Worldwide. Brita has worked in international development for the last 10 years with experience of working with organisations in Latin America, Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. She has followed the development of the gender equality and women’s rights agenda closely and has extensive experience advising organisations on gender mainstreaming. Her career started at the European Women’s Lobby in Brussels and she has experience of policy work at different levels. Brita is particularly interested in the impact of the changing aid environment and the wider financing for development debate.

Rosibel Gómez

Rosibel Gómez works at the UNIFEM regional office for Mexico, Central America, Cuba and Dominican Republic.

Jivka Marinova

Jivka Marinova is founder and executive director of GERT (www.gert.ngo-be.org). The mission of GERT is to initiate and implement, independently or in partnership with other NGOs, activities targeted to enhance gender equality and social & gender justice in all spheres of social life, including access to and benefit from new technologies. Jivka has a strong record of experience with information and new technology; she studied control engineering and communication and worked as engineer and information manager. In her previous job at the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation she was the education and publishing program director. She is also currently also a member of the board of KARAT, a regional WIDE platform and member of the WIDE board as secretary.

Helen O’Connell

Helen O’Connell has been working in the British NGO sector since 1980 and is currently Head of Policy at One World Action, a British NGO, which was launched in 1989. Her advocacy and policy change work focuses on democracy, governance, human rights and gender issues in the context of British and EU policy towards southern countries, with special emphasis on women’s rights, women’s political participation, and gender and development issues. She is active within BOND (the British NGO platform), particularly on EU policy issues. She is Irish and has lived and worked in London since 1973.
Leire Pajin

Leire Pajin is the Head of the State Department for International Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation in Spain. She holds a university degree in Sociology. She was the youngest elected member of the Spanish parliament (Deputy Congress) in 2000. She has been the Secretary of Education at the Youth Council in Alicante (1998), and Secretary of Social Movements and Relationships with CSOs in the Spanish socialist party. Since 2004 she has been in charge, as Secretary of State, of the State Department for International Development Cooperation.

Zo Randriamaro

Zo Randriamaro is a women’s rights activist and expert in gender, social and economic security and environmental and health issues. She has served as advisor, consultant and manager for numerous UN organisations such as UNDP, UNIFEM, UNEP, UNFPA and FAO as well as for development organisations such as USAID. Zo has participated in the conception, implementation and evaluation of many studies, programmes and projects in international development cooperation. She is the author of many publications on economic and trade issues, with a strong focus on gender perspectives. She has worked in numerous African countries and is currently based in Senegal as the Regional Advisor for UNIFEM’s Programme on Feminized Poverty in Africa. She is also member of the Board of Directors of the international women’s organisation WEDO (Women’s Environment and Development Organisation).

Nava San Miguel

Nava San Miguel is Sectorial Planning and Gender Coordinator in DG Planning and Evaluation for International Development Cooperation Policies in Spain. She holds a university degree in Political Science and Sociology with a specialisation on international relationships and political sociology. She has followed postgraduate courses in international cooperation, public policies on equality between men and women, and gender and development policies. She has wide-ranging experience on international cooperation at the national and international level, mainly in Latin America in countries such as Peru and Guatemala. She is the main responsible person for the Spanish Development Cooperation Gender Equality Strategy Paper.

Bina Srinivasan

Bina Srinivasan’s work as a writer and her activities in India ranged from her involvement with Swashraya, a Gujarat-based organisation that focused on women in shanty towns, the People’s Union for Civil Liberties and the Narmada Bachao Andolan. She was also an active writer and activist on the international level, for instance she helped to initiate the Feminist Dialogues processes that resulted in conferences before the past World Social Fora. Bina lived life intensely and passionately, and would readily jump into action in any situation of crisis, whether it was a slum eviction or communal violence such as that which has racked Gujarat since 2002. She died in the summer of 2007.

Christa Wichterich

Christa Wichterich holds a PhD in Sociology, and works as a freelance journalist, author of books, guest lecturer at universities and consultant in development cooperation. As a researcher and author, her main topics are globalisation and gender, economy and women’s work, ecology, women’s movements and international women’s policies. Her geographical focus is on South and Southeast Asia, East and Southern Africa. She is member of the academic council of ATTAC Germany, and of Women in Development Europe (WIDE).

Mariama Williams

Mariama Williams is an international economics and gender consultant. She is currently the Director of the Institute for Law and Economics, Kingston, Jamaica, the Research Adviser for the International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN) and an Adjunct Associate of the Center of Concern, Washington, D.C. She is also a Board member of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), and the Association for Women’s Rights and Development (AWID). She has been an expert consultant for UNIFEM, the UN Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, UNDP, the Canadian International Development Agency’s (CIDA-Kingston) Economic Reference Group, the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat and the Commonwealth Secretariat. She has published widely and has facilitated a number of high-profile workshops on gender, development and economics issues.