



Newsletter

WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN

Vol. 9, N° 1

May 2006



CONTENTS

- International Committee Meeting from March 29 to April 2, 2006, on Strategic Planning
- Women against Neoliberal Globalization, A Public Evening in Montréal
- International Secretariat Is Moving
- 6th International Meeting of the World March of Women, July 2 to 9* in Lima, Peru
- Countries Report
- Updating our Lists of Participating Groups
- Web Site Redesigned
- National Snapshots

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING FROM MARCH 29 TO APRIL 2, 2006

The International Committee has continued the strategic planning work approved in December 2004 at the 5th International Meeting of the World March of Women, held in Kigali, Rwanda. A first session took place in October 2005, in Dakar, Senegal. A subsequent consultation of national coordinating bodies (25 countries/territories took part) gave International Committee members a clearer idea of the challenges for the March from the organizational and political standpoints. During our meeting from March 29 to April 2, we put together a draft strategic plan for the March spanning the years 2006 to 2010. The draft was sent to the national coordinating bodies and will be discussed and decided on in July at the 6th International Meeting.

The aim of the strategic planning process is to make strategic choices to consolidate and develop the World March of Women movement. The process allows us to take another look at the basics, from our *raison d'être* to our values, actions, resources and structure.

We examined what the World March of Women is, the overall situation in which we operate, where we want to go, the ways to get there (development focuses), our objectives for the next five years, our means and actions to carry out.

Our Starting Point

We have many constitutional documents that define the March: the 17 world demands adopted in October 1998; goals and organizational values, adopted in 2001, our Constitution and By-laws; the declaration of our values, adopted in 2003; the Women's Global Charter for Humanity, adopted in December 2004. We took stands at various UN meetings where we represented the World March of Women; we mobilized our members during WTO and G-8 meetings; we put out a document on feminist economic alternatives, a critique of the Millennium Development Goals, and a CD on our participation at the World Social Forum; we denounced wars and armed conflicts, etc.

We took part in the World Social Forum from the very beginning (we were present for discussions on the need for such a forum), and many of our members participate actively in national or regional forums. We helped set up the Social Movements International Network and continue to be active in it.

We have staged many actions at the national and regional levels. In 2000 we delivered five million signatures to the UN in support of our 17 world demands; met with top officials from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund; marched in the streets of Washington and New York; and met with high-ranking UN officials.

Late 2005 saw the end of the Relay of the Women's Global Charter for Humanity after passing through over 50 countries/territories. Thousands of national actions were held to make the Charter known, to ask that it be implemented and to contribute to the solidarity patchwork quilt. We closed on October 17 with 24 hours of feminist solidarity.

Our actions have multiplied at the national and regional level since the year 2000. The aim of all of them was to advance our demands locally or nationally and to show the strength of our collective action. This history, the impact we've had and our gains will be our starting point to define more precisely what we are, to review our political objectives and to confirm our organizational values.

Similarly, in terms of our structure, we are updating our membership lists (see article below) and asking ourselves about our collectives' and working groups' operations, their composition and how we can support them.



Photo Chantal Locat

Participation in Street Actions

The World March of Women is an integral part of the international movement fighting for alternative globalization, in opposition to those who want to keep their money, property and power for themselves. Patriarchy, racism and capitalism form an offensive that manifests itself in different ways; for example, the heightened commodification of women's bodies, relations between people and with nature, religious conservatism, militarization, the criminalization of social movements, etc.

We are involved in the anti-war movement, in campaigns against free trade agreements and negotiations with the WTO, in the World Social Forum process and the creation of the Social Movements International Network. We work in alliances with other movements, particularly with Via Campesina.

The WMW is rooted in street mobilizations, popular education and building national coordinating bodies. Our challenge is to link discussions on the role of international institutions and the causes of poverty and violence (patriarchy, capitalism, racism) with grassroots women's daily lives.

This new strategy, embodied by an international movement like the World March of Women, is both a challenge and a way forward to new kinds of alliances among women that go beyond borders and differences. We believe in the leadership of grass-roots women in all their diversity to accomplish the social transformation we envision. We believe in the importance of acting based on our own political agenda and critically monitoring any form of institutionalization of the movement. The simple fact of the March's existence challenges the strategies of other feminist groups; alliances can sometimes be difficult, but over the years we have built solid alliances with some international feminist networks.

Some governments and development partners have come to acknowledge and provide funding to the WMW. However, there is a risk of attempts at political cooptation of the March's work by governments and big international NGOs. Because of this and because it has been hard for us to secure regular funding in the past few years, the need to develop a

self-financing policy is very pressing, especially since international financial aid has been shrinking.

The WMW's strength doesn't come from set structures. It stems from our political choices and successes, from our skill in forging an analysis and action that move women the world over. It comes from our ability to engage in dialogue and to build common positions in a universe that is so diverse (women from five continents) and yet so similar (women who want to change the world and change women's lives).

Our vision in the longer term is hopefully to see the World March of Women as a movement to be reckoned with at the national and international level. We would like to see the March become stronger and even more diverse as we develop our political identity. We want to resist more and more all offensives orchestrated by men who refuse to share their power or to commit to equality; we want to offer greater resistance to attacks by the wealthy and conservatives of all sorts who are apologists for individualism, exploitation of people and resources, and the "natural" domination of some groups. We want the Women's Global Charter for Humanity and the values it represents to become collective tools that will advance the rights of all women and men. Our 2006-2010 strategic plan will reflect this vision.

Diane Matte, Coordinator, International Secretariat

WOMEN AGAINST NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZATION, A PUBLIC EVENING IN MONTRÉAL

On Thursday, March 30, the International Committee members attended a public evening organized in Montréal by the WMW and the Fédération des femmes du Québec.

The evening echoed the impact of globalization on:

- The economy and women's work;
- Peace and demilitarization;
- Sexual trafficking and the commodification of women's bodies;
- Collective rights.



Photo: Chantal Locat

The Economy and Women's Work

Rosa Guillén, from Peru, challenged the capitalist and patriarchal economic model that prevails in her country. The transnationals try to turn human relations into merchandise and push for the privatization of public economic resources (water, electricity, communications). Women are the first to be penalized. In Peru, the March stages acts of resistance and acts with groups from the solidarity economy since it wants to build other economic models with them. In South Africa, Wilhelmina Trout explained, the government presented the opening up of markets as a way to improve daily life. What it has mostly led to however is casual jobs. Many women work as street vendors and have no benefits. The situation is not much better in Québec, Michèle Asselin, president of the Fédération des femmes du Québec, pointed out. She mentioned a study of the effects of globalization on Québec women's lives, noting that living conditions have not improved, that women earn only 70% of what men earn, that the jobs done by women are increasingly casual and that the gap is wider for immigrant women and women from cultural communities.

Peace and Demilitarization

For Awa Ouédraogo (Burkina Faso), globalization cannot and does not promote peace because peace requires heart. For now, what dominates is the quest for profit, even if it produces many victims among women. Women are used to settle conflicts. Rape is a weapon that humiliates the enemy camp. A key to the solution is for women to become aware of their rights. Emily Naffa, from Jordan, denounced U.S. imperialism in her region, its sole aim being to control oil resources. The United States uses international agencies in its pay (IMF, World Bank). We must have peace, and to have it, Emily said, we must act together and build strong alliances for demilitarization.

Sexual Trafficking and the Commodification of Women's Bodies

Caridad Ynares (Jing), from the Philippines, spoke of the struggle in the Philippines against the U.S. bases that were shut down in 1991-1992. Jean Enriquez, a member of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), pointed out that women involved in prostitution were poor women who had experienced violence and sexual abuse. Prostitution and the trafficking of women obey the laws of the market. We must fight against the demand for prostitution and strengthen women's sexual integrity and independence. Pimps and

traffickers of women must be brought to justice. For her part, Miriam Nobre (Brazil) described actions led by young women against the commodification of women's bodies, particularly where sexist advertising is concerned. Shashi Sail (India) denounced the way that fundamentalists redefine the role and image of women.

Collective Rights

Miriam Nobre (Brazil) defended the right to produce quality food for personal consumption, not for export. Land and water shouldn't become merchandise in the hands of transnationals. Peasants should also preserve intellectual property over seeds. Women play an important role insofar as they are the keepers of seeds. Shashi Sail (India) praised the experience of collective ownership of land and sharing of production. She also spoke of the postcard campaign that brought the March to her country demanding the implementation of the land reform (redistribution of land provided for under the *Land Ceiling Act*), the access to land being capital for women. Luisa Corvo, from Portugal, recalled the road travelled to secure lesbian rights since the Carnation Revolution of 1975, which put an end to the dictatorship in her country. The struggle against homophobia continues, however.

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT IS MOVING TO A COUNTRY IN THE SOUTH

In July 2006, the International Meeting of the March will have to choose the new location of the International Secretariat. In 2003, the decision was made to encourage the transfer of the IS to a country in the South. The national coordinating bodies of Brazil and Mali have applied to host the IS. The transition procedure is being set up to ensure the transfer of dossiers and the training of a new team.

INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN PERU

Our next International Meeting will take place in Lima, Peru, from July 2 to 9th. Its theme will be "*Change Women's Lives – Change the World.*"

The Meeting will mark the end of our strategic planning process. We will also review our 2005 world actions and adopt a strategic action plan for the World March of Women movement for 2006 to 2010. Your coordinating body's presence is extremely important since we are building up new momentum for our mobilizations and strengthening our movement. We will talk about the World March of Women's impact, our political goals for the coming years, future actions, and continuing and new alliances. Our discussions, ideas and exchanges will stimulate our feminist battles at the local, national, regional and global level. We are a movement of feminists that extends beyond borders and is engaged in social change. We are an irreversible movement, and now we want to make it one that can't be ignored.

May we remind you that you must go through your national coordinating body to access the international meetings. Remember too that each country is entitled to send up to three

delegates. We hope that your national coordinating body will be able to send delegates to this meeting, which will be a high point for our movement.

UPDATING OUR LISTS OF PARTICIPATING GROUPS

We recently sent a message to all participating groups to make sure we have the correct contact information for you and so that our lists of participating groups reflect the forces that are active now in the March.

Once our lists are updated, we will be able to distinguish active participating groups from organizations that are interested in receiving information about the March but cannot commit to organizing actions connected with the March (from now on called sympathizers).

Active participating groups: will include the groups meeting the following criteria:

- Be an autonomous women's group, a women's committee within a mixed group or a mixed organization that doesn't have a committee on the status of women but within which a group of women hold leadership for the March;
- Subscribe to the objectives, values and world platform of the World March of Women;
- Be ready to take part in the actions of national coordinating bodies, to incorporate the March's actions in its activity programs or to promote the World March of Women.

From now on, it will not be possible for a group to be considered an "active" participating group if it doesn't have ties with the national coordinating body of its country or territory, if such a body exists. The complete list of active participating groups will be published on the March web site.

If a WMW national coordinating body exists in your country or territory: If you participated in the 2005 actions in your country, your national coordinating body will automatically register you as an active participating group. The national coordinating body will contact the other groups shortly to find out whether they consider themselves as active participating groups according to the new criteria and to invite them to take part in the coordinating body's future actions. If you were NOT active in 2005 but would like to be active in the future, feel free to contact your coordinating body.

If a WMW national coordinating body does NOT exist in your country or territory: Participating groups wishing to remain active in the WMW should contact the International Secretariat and clearly indicate that you want to remain on the list of active participating groups. You are also strongly encouraged to set up a WMW national coordinating body in your country or territory. The International Secretariat can supply you with the old list of participating groups in your country or territory to help you do this; we can also send you more details on the roles and responsibilities of national coordinating bodies.

Sympathizers:

All groups that no longer consider themselves “active” and that have an electronic address will be included in a new distribution list of World March of Women information and news. We will use this list to distribute information such as the international newsletter, calls to mobilization, etc. Let us know if you don't have e-mail.

PRESENT AT WORLD SOCIAL FORUMS

In 2006, the World Social Forum was “polycentric,” that is, decentralized. In the Americas, it was held in Caracas, Venezuela (January 24-29); in Africa, in Bamako, Mali (January 19-23); in Asia, in Karachi, Pakistan (March 24-29). The World March of Women presented a workshop at each forum: “Women on the Move Change the World.”

In Bamako, the workshop and a discussion on forms of violence against women were held on the site of the Forum devoted to the Universe of Women at the City of Culture. Discussion touched on many topics: machista violence, excision (female circumcision), polygamy, prostitution, wars, diseases, illiteracy, difficult access to land ownership and to housing, defence of the solidarity economy, the need to strengthen grassroots women's skills and train women leaders. Women demanded respect for international documents on women and denounced rich countries' financial handouts. They want to develop women's economic, social and cultural rights and lead them to play a predominant role in using credible economic alternatives.

The World March of Women in Burkina presented the Charter and the caravan that went around the country making known the contents of the Charter. Its representatives pointed out that peace is an essential struggle. Since October 15, 2005, Ouagadougou has its Place de la femme pour la paix (Women's Peace Square) and Peace Avenue. Moreover, the March coordinator in Burkina Faso, Awa Ouédraogo, received the 2005 CIVIPAX award. Following the Relay, five organizations in Burkina (four of them collectives) decided to pool their efforts in the struggle against violence against women. An action plan for 2006 will be drawn up shortly.

In Caracas, in addition to the “Women on the Move Change the World” workshop, the March and other organizations organized a Women's International Tribunal against the Patriarchal Violence of Neoliberalism. Over 1000 people listened to the personal accounts of 26 women from 16 countries who denounced different forms of femicide, exploitation and sexual trafficking; they spoke of the fight against fundamentalism, sexual diversity, trade union battles, women living with HIV/AIDS, the militarization of Latin America, etc. The Tribunal proposed alternatives to “the culture of exclusion, to violence against women in wars and through the capitalist market. For its part, the March-Colombia organized a workshop on “Violence, Debt, Poverty and Militarization: A Perverse Relation.”

In Karachi, the Forum welcomed 40,000 people from 58 countries. It focused on the struggle against neoliberal globalization, war and militarization, neoliberalism and imperialism. The March's workshop was attended by 150 people, most of them Bangladeshi, Nepalese and Pakistani domestic workers and others bound to an employer to repay a debt in what

amounts to the form of slavery called bonded labour. In the absence of Indian participants who didn't obtain their visas, the workshop was facilitated exclusively by Pakistani women. They spoke about employment inequality, peace and demilitarization, discriminatory legislation, violence, education and research. The women then took part in a march organized with the help of the Rukhshi Foundation on Poverty.

Article based on information provided by Awa Ouédraogo (Burkina Faso), Nelly Martin (France), Saleha Athar (Pakistan) and the Feminist International Radio Endeavour (FIRE).

The March was also present at the 4th European Social Forum in May 2006. With the theme "Women on the Move, Let's Change Europe, Let's Change the World!" they organized nine seminars and many workshops of interest to feminists. The issue of gender was also present in many of the 210 other seminars and dozens of workshops at the Forum. The crowning point of it all was the great **Assembly of Women** on Saturday, May 6, at 10:00 a.m.

The seminars responded to four basic needs:

- 1) Creation of women's independent actions and mobilizations;
- 2) Working out strong, precise demands that are likely to be included in a political program;
- 3) Promotion of a young women's organization at the international level;
- 4) Systematic rapprochement, cooperation and networking with women from Eastern Europe.

In our view, these questions overlap with those of internationalist solidarity between women from each country and immigrant women, this being a basic principle of the feminist movement and at the same time a factor contributing to the success of our struggles.

The Assembly of Women of Europe wants to give a voice to dozens of European networks and make visible feminist work done within the European Social Forum. A draft women's European Manifesto has been circulating on discussion lists for the past two months. The long-term goal is to establish a broader dialogue within Europe among the various networks of feminist movements and include other social movements.

The World March of Women co-organized three seminars:

- "Women's Struggle against Gender Violence": The goal here is to examine how to organize a large-scale, Europe-wide united mobilization to protest violence against women.
- "Women and Working Conditions in Neoliberal Capitalism" will examine the strategies that trade unions and movements need to fight lack of job security, unemployment and the disintegration of the social state, which affects women first of all.
- "Being a Young Woman Today: Economic Independence, Sexism and Sexuality." In a world where work and life itself are increasingly precarious, young women's freedom is more and more limited. We demand, first and foremost, our economic independence to be able to build our personal freedom.

Sonia Mitralia, member of the coordinating body of the Greek network of the World March of Women

WEB SITE REDESIGNED

It's done! When you go to www.worldmarchofwomen.org you will access the whole web site. All the March's folders are there, from the beginnings to now. You no longer have to go to mmf.lecarrefour.org to read about the 2005 actions. This section has been incorporated into the new site under the title "Our Actions."

The list of folders is in the left-hand column. Here are the details.

1. Who We Are

- What is the World March of Women
- Our goals as adopted at the 3rd International Meeting, October 5, 2001
- Our values (Declaration of Values, adopted during the 4th International Meeting in New Delhi, March 2003)
- Women's Global Charter for Humanity, adopted during the 5th International Meeting in Kigali, December 2004

2. Our Demands

- 17 demands to eliminate poverty and violence against women, adopted in 1998 and revisited in 2001
- National demands adopted by the countries/territories in 2000

3. Structure of the WMW

- Internal Committees (IC)
- Collectives
 1. Alliances and Globalization
 2. Communications
 3. Peace and Demilitarization
- Working Groups
 1. on Violence Against Women and Sexual Trafficking
 2. on Feminist Economic Alternatives
 3. on the Rights of Lesbians
- National Coordinating Bodies and Participating Groups
 1. Africa
 2. the Americas
 3. Asia/Oceania
 4. Europe
 5. Middle East/Arab World
- International Meetings
 1. Montréal, Québec, 1998
 2. New York, United States, October 18, 2000
 3. Montréal, Québec, 2001
 4. New Delhi, India, 2003
 5. Kigali, Rwanda, 2004
 6. Lima, Peru, 2006
- International Secretariat

4. Main Issues of Interest

- Poverty
- Violence
- Peace and Demilitarization
- Sexual Trafficking
- Lesbian Rights
- Women and the Economy
- Alliances and Globalization

5. Our Actions

2000: - March 8, 2000, launching of the World March of Women
 - March 8 - October 17, actions in the countries
 - October 15, 2000, demonstration in Washington
 - October 16, 2000, meetings with the World Bank's president and the International Monetary Fund's managing director
 - October 17, 2000, meetings with the United Nations representatives and marches throughout the world

2001, Participation in the Second Peoples' Summit of the Americas

2002, Participation in the World Social Forum

2005: - Women's Global Charter for Humanity

- October 8 - March 17, 2005: World Relay of the Women's Global Charter for Humanity
- Patchwork Quilt: Squares made during the Relay of the Charter
- October 17, 2005: 24 Hours of Feminist Solidarity
- Solidarity Blog: October 17, 2005
- Writers' comment on the Women's Global Charter for Humanity

6. Members

- Become a member of the March
- Become a friend of the March

7. Links

- To the web sites of the coordinating bodies of the March
- To other web sites

8. Publications

- Advocacy Guide to Women's World Demands, 2000
- Changing the World Step by Step, 2000
- Sexism and Globalization, 2000
- Letter to the International Monetary Fund and to the World Bank, 2000
- Letter to Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the UN, 2000
- In the wake of the attacks on New York City and Washington: Appeal of the World March of Women for the Construction of a Just, Equal, Cooperative, Democratic and Peaceful World, 2001
- "What kind of financing for what kind of development?", 2002
- Women on the March, 2002
- G8 and Women: Worlds Apart, 2002
- Declaration: World Social Forum, Perspective of Women of the World March of Women, 2003

- The World March of Women against war in Iraq, 2003
- "Your money AND your life": the World Trade Organization's premise, 2003
- Women's Global Charter for Humanity, 2004
- Supporting Document 1 to the Women's Global Charter for Humanity, 2004
- Supporting Document 2 to the Women's Global Charter for Humanity, 2004
- Economic Alternatives
- A Change of Course, The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through the Lens of the Women's Global Charter for Humanity, 2005

9. Newsletters

All of the WMW International Newsletters since 1999

10. Multimedia, Pictures, Videos and Audiofiles of the March

- Songs of the March
- Photos illustrating the meetings of the March
- Photos illustrating the actions of the March (2000, WSF, etc.)
- Videos illustrating the actions of the March
- Others: PowerPoint presentations, posters, etc

11. Media

- Press folder introducing the World March of Women (for journalists)
- Press releases
- Downloadable audio interviews (for media)

12. Promotional Material

- Postcards for March 8, 2006
- Stickers
- Graphic elements
- Logo of the March

13. Contact Us

14. Site Map

15. Information on Each Country/Territory (under construction)

16. Search Engine (under construction)

COUNTRIES REPORT

Brazil: Support for Via Campesina Women

On March 8, 2006, at dawn, close to 2000 women who are members of Via Campesina staged an action against the company Aracruz Celulose, which operates in Rio Grande do Sul producing eucalyptus pulp, used in the paper industry. The protesters wanted to denounce the "green desert," created by agribusiness through the cultivation of eucalyptus, which needs a lot of water. Research shows that in areas where eucalyptus

is grown, the volume of streams and rivers has dropped. In short, here crops are subjected to the dictates of the international market (paper production is basically used in Northern countries); exports are given priority and labour is exploited.

“Aracruz goes against the peasant farming model we defend. We fight to defend a kind of agriculture that respects nature, that produces food to satisfy our needs and that maintains our food sovereignty,” the women from Via Campesina explained. “We are peasants, the daughters of this land in Brazil that for 500 years we have watered with the sweat, blood and work of so many generations of women and men from different ethnic groups. Even with all struggles of resistance by poor Indigenous peoples, black and white, our country continues to be a territory to extract wealth to swell the profits of large capitalist groups. Brazil is far from being a free and sovereign nation.”

Legal proceedings were taken against the women and peasant leaders. The March in Brazil launched a petition and other actions in solidarity with and to support the women detainees. The March is also demanding a discussion on the criminalization of social movements and the impunity enjoyed by transnationals.

Mozambique: Law against Domestic Violence

After four years of discussion, the Mozambican Parliament adopted draft legislation on domestic violence by acclamation. The March in Mozambique had demanded such a law in 2000. Civil society (women’s organizations fighting for their human rights) supported the demand and enlisted the participation of a number of public officials (department of public affairs, Supreme Court, units dealing with violence in police departments) and Parliament (Office/Group for Women’s Affairs).

The law stipulates that the State must take the lead in educating and training personnel in all institutions concerned with this matter, and health professionals must be made aware of it. The government must also support community groups that help women. The right to live without violence is recognized.

“We are glad; this is another step we have gained where women’s rights are concerned,” said Ximena Andrade, from the March in Mozambique.

Contributors

Thanks to this Newsletter’s contributors:

Ximena Andrade (WMW Mozambique), Saleha Athar (WMW Pakistan), Élise Boyer (English translation), Nancy Burrows (International Secretariat), Nicole Kennedy (English translation), Chantal Locat (photos), Diane Matte (International Secretariat), Sonia Mitralias (WMW Greece), Nelly Martin (WMW France), Miriam Nobre (WMW Brazil), Awa Ouédraogo (WMW Burkina Faso), Magaly Sala-Skup (Spanish translation), Brigitte Verdière (Communications).

Contact information

World March of Women 110, rue Ste-Thérèse, #203 Montréal (Québec), CANADA H2Y 1E6 Telephone: (1) 514-395-1196	E-mail: info@marchemondiale.org Web site: www.worldmarchofwomen.org
---	--

Le Bulletin est publié en français également. Este boletín está disponible en español.