

WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN

NEWSLETTER



INDEX

Editorial.....	1
1. Special Edition: VII International Meeting.....	2
- 2010 International Action Decisions.....	2
- Photo gallery.....	4
- Mass rape, murder and displacement: Renewed fighting in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo.....	8
2. Discussion about feminism, food sovereignty, and women's work in the Amazon in the W SF 2009.....	9
- Resistance to free trade in the Social Forum of the Americas in Guatemala.....	10
3. Combating violence against women in rural areas is the highlight of Via Campesina conference.....	11
4. Pakistan: civil society suggests amendments to Muslim Family Laws.....	12
5. WMW-Philippines debates feminisation of migration.....	12
6. II Hemispheric Meeting Against Militarisation.....	13
7. Brazil: Rural and urban women discuss food and energy sovereignty.....	14
8. Impacts of the food crisis on women's lives is the topic of debate in Quebec.....	15
9. Young Pan-Canadian Feminists.....	15
10. "Bridges, not walls".....	16
11. Book release.....	16
12. Agenda / Next edition.....	17
13. Contact Us.....	18

EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

We have reached the end of the year certain that our future challenges will call for much commitment and collective hard work, but happy in the knowledge that we have made progress in the achievement of our objectives. Throughout 2008 we discussed ideas for our 2010 International Action and, during our VII International Meeting in October in Galicia, we defined its general format and the principal ideas with regards to its political content.

From now on, with renewed energy, we are faced with the task of constructing the 2010 Action 'for real' at national, regional and international levels. In this process, we will once again show that we are women organised in a collective way, in associations, groups and movements, and that although we are women of diverse ages, experiences, political cultures and ethnic backgrounds, we have a common identity:

the desire to overcome the current unjust world order – founded on patriarchy, racism and capitalism – that provokes violence and poverty. An order that is in crisis – expressed in the recent food, environmental, energy, ethical and financial crises – but with the possibility of quickly recomposing itself.

That's why we continue to organise our resistance and construction of alternatives in all spaces, whether they be national struggles, regional and international processes, or in alliance with other movements. That's why we raise our voices in affirmation: "change the lives of women to change the world to change the lives of women..." That's why we will be on the march until we are all free!

Enjoy your end-of-year celebrations and Happy 2009!

The small town of Panxón, in the district of Vigo, in Galicia, was home to 148 women from 48 nations for eight days during the VII International Meeting of the World March of Women. From 14th – 21st October 2008, the contents of the 2010 International Action were debated in depth, as well as the perspectives and challenges of each region in this process of construction. The debate included discussion about the current financial crisis. Additional themes addressed in the meeting included the organisational life of the movement, such as communications and finance, and new members were elected to the WMW International Committee. Festivities, a public forum, a demonstration, youth workshops, and the release of a book about the ten years of the March all complemented the activities.

Congratulations to all our colleagues in the Galician National Coordinating Body who, through a great effort of activist mobilisation and fundraising, hosted an outstanding meeting for the whole March!

Following is more information about the 2010 Action and a photo gallery from the Meeting.

Marches and action in Sud Kivu (Democratic Republic of the Congo) will mark the 2010 International Action

Following intense Action Area and regional working groups, the plenary session confirmed on 17th October in Galicia that the 2010 International Action will take place from 8th March to 17th October 2010, with two moments of greater emphasis:

- The period from 8th – 18th March, with regional marches of different types, forms, colours, and rhythms that will also mark the 100-year anniversary of the Declaration of International Women's Day;
- Simultaneous marches and actions on 17th October with an international meeting point in Sud Kivu, Congo, as a way to strengthen women's protagonism in the resolution of conflicts.

The 2010 action will be centred on strong ideas that express the political contents to be addressed in the four WMW Action Areas (see boxes below). The focus of the actions in October will be organised around the themes of peace and demilitarisation.

A call to action for 2010 was approved in the meeting and can be used by the various National Coordinating Bodies (NCB) as a tool for the organisation of broad plenary sessions for debate and organisation of the WMW and the 2010 Action. Click on the links below to access them:

English

 <http://www.marchemondialesdesfemmes.org/structure/07internationalmeeting/2010call/en>

French

 <http://www.marchemondialesdesfemmes.org/structure/07internationalmeeting/2010call/fr>

Spanish

 <http://www.marchemondialesdesfemmes.org/structure/07internationalmeeting/2010call/es>

Common Good

- Affirm the principles of food sovereignty and the struggles against the privatisation of nature and of public services;
- Affirm the role of the State in guaranteeing rights (to health care, education, water...);
- Guarantee access to drinkable water and sanitation;
- Act in defence of public services and against privatisation;
- Act for changes in food habits, and for the promotion of healthy rather than junk food;

- Strengthen the bonds of exchange and knowledge between rural and urban women;
- Work on the issue of the access to, and consumption of, energy and promote alternative sources of energy (biodigestors, solar energy, wind energy...).

Peace and demilitarisation

- Show the complexity of the causes of war, which include the desire to control women's bodies, which are considered to be resources; religious fundamentalism, especially communalism ; and control over riches and natural resources;
- Make explicit the double violence suffered by women in situations of conflict, by members of the army and paramilitary groups as well as their own communities, who reject them and blame them after having been raped;
- Make visible the ideological manipulation surrounding war which, based on a series of social and cultural contexts, develops a discourse of combat against terrorism to legitimate the use of terror as a way to control women and resources and criminalize social movements;
- Based on the testimonies of women who have been victims and protagonists in the peace process, denounce the role of the United Nations, which in addition to not helping to bring peace, is an army that has brought more violence to women's lives;
- Work on training women to participate in peace process negotiations;
- Denounce the role of the arms industry in the continuation of conflicts and militarisation and the manipulation of government policies to this end (public budgets that include the purchase of arms and the installation of military bases; incentives for the manufacture and commerce of arms).

Women's Work

- Defend the rights of all workers – female and male – to social security and to wage equality, all over the world, without discrimination of any kind;
- Highlight the rights of female and male migrant workers, as well as domestic workers;
- Struggle for wage equality and for a fair minimum salary, also taking into account remuneration of rural work;
- Denounce the role of transnational companies in the exploitation of women's work.

Violence against women

- Increase awareness to prevent violence against women, showing how violence occurs, its causes, and how it manifests itself;
- Denounce the various expressions of violence in different countries, such as genital mutilation, forced marriage , violence perpetrated against female activists, women prisoners and lesbians;
- Make visible all forms of women's resistance – especially collective – to gender-based violence;
- Combat violence through actions to increase awareness in society, together with other allied social movements, and elaborate demands to present to the State, as well as popular education campaigns that favour feminist consciousness-raising.

PHOTO GALLERY



Communication workshop

Participants in the workshop on 14th October learned to update the WMW site as well as create blogs and carry out chats and Skype conferences. The VII International Meeting blog was created during the workshop:

 <http://viencuentrodelamarcha.blogspot.com/>

Regional working groups

On 16th October, with the aim of constructing the 2010 Action, each region discussed the current political situation, challenges they face, priorities for action, building alliances, as well as a work plan, regional communication tools, and financing, and also elected new members to the International Committee.



Africa - Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan and Rwanda



The Americas - Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Quebec and Uruguay



Asia/Oceania - Bangladesh, India, Nepal, New Caledonia, Pakistan, and the Philippines



Europe - Albania, the Basque country, Belgium, Catalonia, Denmark, France, Galicia, Greece, Holland, Italy, Macedonia, Portugal, the Spanish State, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom

The Middle East and Arab world- Only the delegates from Lebanon were able to attend; health and security problems prevented the participation of delegates from Iran and Palestine.

Allied movements and organisations were also present!

Friends of the Earth, Bartolinas (from Bolivia) representing Abya Ayala, CADTM, Focus on the Global South, and Via Campesina participated in all Meeting events, as did the following financial agencies organisations: the International Francophone Organisation, Oxfam Belgium, Oxfam-NOVIB, Entrepueblos, and the Basque government.




New and old members of the International Committee

Jean Enriquez (3rd from left to right) and Emilia Castro (3rd from right to left) were elected to represent the Asia and Americas, respectively, in the IC, substituting Rosa Guillén and Caridad Inares (Jing) who completed their three terms. Nadia de Mond will remain as a link with Europe until February 2009, when the next meeting of the WMW European Coordination will take place and new regional representatives to the IC will be elected. Many thanks to Jing and Rosa for all the efforts and energy dedicated to the IC!

The VII International Meeting in the media

The set of public activities prepared by the NCB of Galicia, and the intense work carried out with the alternative and mainstream media, resulted in almost daily coverage of the meeting. Local newspapers - Faro de Vigo and La Voz de Galicia - as well as El País, the principal newspaper of the Spanish State, dedicated articles and interviews to the meeting. Click on the following link to download some of the news coverage provided by these newspapers (in PDF):

 <http://www.marchemondialesdesfemmes.org/structure/07internationalmeeting/media/en/>

Activists in Galicia also guaranteed daily communications regarding the meeting, providing regular updates - texts, photographs, and videos - on their website:

 <http://www.feminismo.info/webgalego/>



Action on 18th October

Observers and invited guests and activists from Galicia and allied movements such as Friends of the Earth,

CADTM, Focus on the Global South, and Via Campesina participated in an action against the commercialisation of transgenic foodstuffs and in defence of food sovereignty.



Food Sovereignty Forum and Fair

On Saturday night, the 18th, conference participants from various countries spoke about how food sovereignty is a solution for populations and a tool for action for women. Women shared concrete work experiences related to the theme from Catalonia, the Philippines, France, Galicia, Mali, and Mexico. As well as the conference, a fair was organised on the 18th and 19th with expositions, workshops, and eating spaces.



Building a sculpture: the *milladoiro*

On the morning of the 19th, several pairs of clogs awaited participants in the square in front of the Mayor's offices in Vigo. During the performance, the clogs were placed in a circle: one delegate per country brought a stone from their country and they were invited to place it in front of a clog. According to ancestral Galician tradition, the stone is an offering to the gods for the protection of travellers; the clog is modelled on the shoes used by women in the fields. Next to the walkway, a small square is being refitted with a fountain; the WMW-Galicia hopes to be able to place the clogs around the fountain, with the stones from around the world encrusted in bronze, accompanied by a commemorative plaque of the International Meeting

The youth perspective

Approximately 70 people participated in the debate entitled "Young Feminists: New perspectives on International Feminism", which took place on the 19th with the presence of young women from the NCBs of Brazil, Quebec, Haiti, Galicia, and Portugal, as well as the independent feminist collective 'As Lerchas' from Ourense. Participants exchanged views on feminism, the challenges facing older generations, and their interest in developing educational activities and debates specifically for youth. On the 20th, one of the training workshops was dedicated to the experiences and challenges of working with young women.





Act of Demonstration

Immediately following the milladoiro, drums, music, slogans and an autumn sun livened up the crowd of more than six thousand women, men, children, youth, and older people from all over Galicia who marched in the main streets of Vigo in a lively demonstration against patriarchy, capitalism and racism and in defence of women’s autonomy and food sovereignty. A video of the event is available to watch on the site of the Galicia NCB, with scenes of the demonstration and the final act, which took place in the port of Vigo: <http://www.feminismo.info/webgalego/vii-encontro-internacional-vigo-2008.html>

Book Release

Popular songs and dances from Galicia set the stage on the 19th for the release of the publication “The World March of Women 1998-2008: A Decade of International Feminist Struggle”, in celebration of the ten year anniversary of the first International Meeting of the March, held in Montreal, Quebec, in October, 1998.



Interpretation and translation

Without the work of translators and interpreters, the existence of an international movement like the World March of Women would not be possible. Our team of 17 volunteer interpreters deserves our deepest thanks for their important contributions throughout the meeting to guarantee dialogue and debate among the participants in the plenary sessions and working groups. Aware of the importance of translation, the International Secretariat has taken concrete steps to



acquire technology known as the Alternative Language Interpretation System (ALIS), developed during the World Social Forum process. We sent a member to the European Social Forum in Malmo, Sweden, who in addition to helping with the logistics of the event, acquired knowledge about the management of language interpretation equipment (transmitters and receivers). At the end of the forum, we obtained equipment for four interpreting booths that were used in working groups during the meeting in Galicia and will remain in Europe to be used during the regional Secretariat meeting in February 2009.

Mass rape, murder and displacement: Renewed fighting in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo

Despite the signing of an 'Act of Engagement' committing government and armed groups to immediately end all atrocities in the region in January 2008, extreme violence has been escalating once more since the end of August in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), on the border of Rwanda, starting in North Kivu and rapidly spreading to South Kivu. The conflict continues between the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP) led by renegade General Laurent Nkunda, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and several local mayi mayi Hutu militia, and the regular Congolese army, each of whom declare that they are fighting on behalf of their people: the CNDP 'protecting' the ethnic Tutsis in the region; the Hutu extremists of the FDLR who have vowed to liberate neighbouring Rwanda from the Tutsis; the Congolese army 'protecting' Eastern RDC communities. But lies are rampant, as is the systematic rape, murder, mutilation, use of child soldiers and forced displacement of hundreds of thousands: Nkunda has been accused of war crimes and is the subject of an investigation by the international criminal court, and armed groups (including the FDLR) and government security forces continue to rape and sexually abuse women and girls, as well as killing and torturing child soldiers (Amnesty International Report, "North Kivu: No end to the war against women and children").

It is a region marked by the legacy of European colonialism, the Rwandan genocide of 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus in 1994 and the manipulation of ethnic divisions, the power struggle between nations in Central Africa, and – though this is always denied by the groups involved – by the fight for control of the large quantities of strategic natural resources in the region: coltan for mobile phones, cassiterite used in cans, gold and diamonds. Contrary to the claims of each side, a United Nations investigation

has declared that this war "is led by 'armies of business' to seize the metals that make our 21st century society zing and bling" (Independent, 30th October 2008). It is these metals, precious stones, and the rich potential for agricultural production and rearing of livestock in the region that make it such a target for control of armed groups, while those who bear the brunt of the violence are civilians.

Rape is used systematically as a weapon of war; in some Eastern regions of DRC as many as 70% of girls and women of all ages have been raped or sexually mutilated, and women and the children born of this violence are frequently rejected and ostracised by husbands, families, communities. "The sexual violence that we face in the DRC has no match anywhere the world [...] the number of cases, the brutality of the aggressions, the impunity... It is shocking" (John Holmes, general joint secretary of the UN in humanitarian issues, 2007). "Women, children, babies. Raped, tortured, mutilated. Many times in front of their families. Many times for days on end. They are gang raped. They are raped with objects. Sticks. Rocks. Bayonets. Guns. They are raped with the sheer intent to destroy - body and soul. Women have had firearms discharged into their vaginas, blowing out their female anatomy, yet surviving. Girls under the age of three, women over eighty. Women are left with wounds, infections, sexually transmitted diseases, and traumatic fistulas" (Rape as a Weapon of War in the Congo, 2007).

At an international level we reaffirm our solidarity and support for the women and men of the DRC, and continue to keep in close contact with WMW activists in the country and region. They have not lost hope that the national, regional and international negotiations and diplomatic actions taking place will reduce the levels of conflict. On the 25th November, European WMW activists moderated and spoke in a debate in Brussels (Belgium) entitled "Eastern Congo. Sexual Violence against Women: A War Weapon? Why this War? Why against Women?"

DISCUSSION ABOUT FEMINISM, FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, AND WOMEN'S WORK IN THE AMAZON IN THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM 2009


**fórum
social
mundial**




**world
social
forum 2009**
um outro mundo é possível

Once again, the World March of Women will be present in the World Social Forum (WSF). The next edition will take place from 27th January to 1st February 2009, in Belém do Pará, Brazil, two years after the last centralised forum, which was held in Nairobi (Kenya) in 2007. It will be an opportunity for movements, networks, and organisations from around the world to reflect on the challenges presented by the current historical moment marked by various crises – financial, energy, food, environmental – but also by the election of Barack Obama, the first African-American to be elected president of the United States. These themes will permeate various debates throughout the event, which will also emphasise strategic reflection of the WSF and the future of anti-neoliberal globalisation struggles. Various activities will also remember the 50 year anniversary of the Cuban revolution.

Reaching beyond Brazil, the 2009 WSF will be held in the Pan-Amazonic region, composed of nine countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guiana, Peru, Surinam, and Venezuela, as well as French Guiana. The region has the greatest biodiversity on the planet and is coveted by multinationals and governments interested in guaranteeing private control over its natural resources. At the same time, the forum will bring together a broad and diverse set of social movements, unions, associations, cooperatives, and non-governmental organisations struggling to build an Amazon founded on another model of development characterised by sustainability, solidarity, and democracy.

For the WMW, Belém will be the first big moment of international articulation and preparation for our 2010 International Action following the decisions taken during our International Meeting in Galicia. It will be a great opportunity for networking with all the movements, networks, and organizations allied with the March, and for our feminist vision to take root. At the time of publication of this newsletter, more than 3000 organizations from around the world were registered to participate in the event, with proposals for nearly 2,000 self-managed activities ( [click here](#) to see the complete list of proposals) .

The March in Brazil estimates that its delegation will be composed of 300 delegates, mostly from the North and Northeast, who will sleep in a public school in Belém. The idea is for the delegation to carry out regular organisational activities in this space prior to the self-managed activities of the day, such as rehearsals for marches and actions that will take place during the event.

The WSF program is organised around ten objectives of action ( [click here](#) to see the list). The various activities are distributed as follows:

27th – Opening march (afternoon)
28th – Pan-Amazon Day, with activities emphasizing 500 years of Afro-Indigenous and popular resistance, gains, and perspectives
29th – 31st – Self-managed activities under the responsibility of the various entities participating in the WSF, which will take place in three shifts: 8:30 – 11:30am, 12:00 – 3pm, and 3:30 – 6:30pm
1st Feb – Closing of WSF 2009 with decentralised actions and self-managed assemblies in which agreements and alliances built during the WSF will be presented (morning) followed by ‘an assembly of assemblies’ in the afternoon.

In addition to a workshop on the 2010 International Action, the March is organising a seminar entitled “Feminist Critique and Anti-systemic struggles” in partnership with *Pañuelos en Rebeldia*, of Argentina, and with support from the Rosa Luxemburgo Foundation. The first part of the seminar will address the challenges to the networking process and the second will address the recent trajectory in Latin America. In addition to women activists from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru, the participation of Janet Conway, of Canada, and Sonia Alvarez has also been confirmed.

The March is also co-organizing activities on food sovereignty in the face of the energy crisis, while on the 28th the emphasis will be on women’s work in the Pan-Amazon. More details about these activities will be available soon on the WMW site. The March will also participate in the Social Movements Assembly, planned to take place on 29th January, and the ALBA (Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas) Social Movements Assembly, on the 30th. Finally, we will participate in meetings of the WSF International Council from 2nd – 3rd February and the Liaison Group on the 4th, where themes related to the future of the WSF will be discussed.

For more information on the WSF 2009 in Belém:

 www.fsm2009amazonia.org.br

For information on the WSF process:


 www.forumsocialmundial.org.br

Resistance to free trade in the Social Forum of the Americas in Guatemala

Social movement organisations from throughout the continent met in Guatemala from 7th – 12th October for the III American Social Forum (ASF). The meeting was marked by networking and mobilisation to resist free trade. Threats at the current moment were identified as being, above all, the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) proposed by the European Union for Latin American and Caribbean countries. The EPAs include all the proposals contained

in the AFTA (American Free Trade Area) and the WTO (World Trade Organisation) that were rejected previously by the social movements. Therefore, a large protest against the EPAs was organized during the ASF.

In the Social Movements Assembly held on 11th October, in addition to affirming resistance to the privatisation of natural resources, militarization, and the criminalisation of poverty, what stood out was people’s commitment to building alternatives to neoliberalism, such as the fight for food sovereignty, agrarian reform, and women’s autonomy. The complete declaration of the assembly is available (in Spanish) at:

 http://www.movimientos.org/fsa2008/show_text.php3?key=13177

In the territory of the ASF, social movements also organised the Bolivian Solidarity Conference. Declarations of support from all parts of the Americas demonstrated people’s international solidarity and commitment to the changes in Bolivia.

The activities of the WMW in the Forum, together with REMTE, the women of CLOC/Vía Campesina, and other allied movements, emphasised the centrality of feminism in the construction of alternatives and the struggle for food sovereignty. In the activity that focused on peace and demilitarisation, the 15th March was declared as a day of protest against militarisation and for self-determination of the people.

Throughout the ASF, the Women’s Tent was up and running, with many debates and protests organised to defend the right to abortion and oppose the criminalisation of women.

Complete coverage of the SFA is available at:

 <http://www.movimientos.org/fsa2008/>

 <http://fsainfo.rits.org.br/>

COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS IS THE HIGHLIGHT OF VIA CAMPESINA CONFERENCE

The campaign to confront violence against women in rural areas was undoubtedly one of the more important points of the Via Campesina Conference that took place in Maputo, Mozambique, from 16th to 23rd October. Six hundred delegates, men and women from more than 60 countries, participated in the conference, as well as many organisations allied with Via Campesina, such as the World March of Women. It was yet another opportunity to build a common strategy and strengthen joint tools to construct a new world based on equality.

The campaign to combat violence expresses the consolidation of the alliance between the World March of Women and Via Campesina. According to Conceição Dantas (Brazil), who was in Maputo representing the WMW, “Via Campesina is an example to the world and confronts, with all of its revolutionary force, its own inequalities and its own contradictions. This campaign is already a victorious one and will be important for women of Via, will be very important for Via Campesina, and moreover, will be very

important for women all over the world and will greatly strengthen the international feminist movement”.

The Declaration of the III Assembly of the Women of the Via Campesina is available at: http://www.viacampesina.org/main_en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=620&Itemid=70

Alliance to change the world and women’s lives

It is mainly through concrete actions of confronting patriarchal capitalism and the construction of alternatives that alliances grow stronger. In Maputo, some concrete ideas were outlined to deepen the joint struggle against transnationals, to prevent these companies – which are a tangible expression of capitalism – from controlling territories through the commercialisation of the land, water, and seeds, and to impede their control of women’s bodies through the beauty and cosmetic industries and the medicalisation and commercialisation of life.

Finally, the strategy of daily combat

against free trade was strengthened, to prevent this system from transforming foods into merchandise or encouraging the trafficking of women for prostitution, which is a live expression of the commodification of people. The conference in Maputo reaffirmed the alliance between the WMW and Via Campesina, the women of Via, in particular. We guarantee that we will struggle together to



African Rural Women during Via Campesina Women’s Assembly’s Opening Ceremony

achieve a world without sexist violence.

See the websites below for texts and videos with coverage of the Via Campesina Conference:

 http://viacampesina.org/main_en/index.php

 <http://movimientos.org>

 <http://www.wsftv.net>

PAKISTAN: CIVIL SOCIETY SUGGESTS AMENDMENTS TO MUSLIM FAMILY LAWS

Law experts and members of civil society and women's organisations in Pakistan are making efforts to contribute valuable inputs to amendment drafts of the Muslim Family Laws. Although the Constitution provides for equality for women and men, these provisions are not often reflected in specific laws and are contradicted by many customary practices. These drafted laws and bills have been submitted to the National Assembly to pass and disseminate throughout the country.

The idea is to achieve legislative equality between women and men by the year 2010. This requires concerted efforts to strengthen constitutional guarantees for women's human rights and a systematic review and revision of all discriminatory legal provisions.

Suggested amendments to the Muslim Family Laws have been proposed in the marriage contract, such as: dissolution of marriage, dowry, maintenance, custody of

children, visitation rights of parents, and personal property rights of the wife. The amendments also recommend punishment and imprisonment of male adults of the family for child marriage, and suggest punishment if the husband does not receive permission from his first wife as a way to restrict polygamy. Finally, it was also recommended that family courts be created in each district, with deputy female judges to deal with and settle cases within prescribed lengths of time.

The bill for Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) was discussed with law experts and organizations from the civil society to protect women, children and other vulnerable persons against all kinds of domestic violence (injury, wrongful confinement, criminal force, assault, criminal intimidation, etc). Abuses, economical abuses, harassment and stalking are also considered. The draft bill recommends punishment for any person found guilty.

WMW - PHILIPPINES DISCUSSES FEMINISATION OF MIGRATION

On 24th October the WMW-Philippines and the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women-Asia Pacific held a forum to bring to light the exploitation suffered by women looking for work. The women's groups were joined by victims-survivors of sex trafficking to condemn the sending governments' - such as the Philippines - labour export policy

and the lack of a local full employment programme, which are resulting in increasing migration. In 2007, there were 1,077,623 deployed Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) according to data given by Batis Center.

The high number of female migrants is linked to the increase of the urban poor, labour and peasant sectors. Poorest women

are pushed to the edge and leave their families, given the lack of local job opportunities.

Migration has become a desperate option of women in the South for a better life, not just for them but primarily for their families.

This phenomenon has increased with neoliberalism, in a combination of socio-cultural, economic and political factors, like the

failure to address poverty and the unequal and low salaries paid to women.

Most women migrants do not have legal documents and are recruited to low paid reproductive work, suffer deskilling, intellectual stagnation, unrecognised educational level, and are often confronted by language difficulties. A lot of women are trapped by traffickers' chains for work in slave-like conditions or in prostitution.

The forum stressed that women and migrants are not commodities to be bought



Participants protest against the exploitation of female migrants at the Feminisation of Migration Forum, Philippines

and sold. It also emphasised the importance of women's collective organisation in working to convince the general public, other social sectors and social movements to support and institute the changes necessary for improving the status and living conditions of women and women's quality of life all over the world.

Read the full release on the forum on the link: <http://www.marchemonde.org/structure/cn-groupes/asia-oceanie/philippines/news12008/wmigration2008/en>

II ENCUESTRO HEMISFÉRICO FRENTE A LA MILITARIZACIÓN

The II Hemispheric Meeting against Militarisation took place from 3rd - 6th October in the city of La Esperanza, Honduras. It was attended by a delegation from the World March of Women composed of 14 delegates from Mexico, Peru, Brazil, Haiti, and Canada, as well as the women from Honduras. A total of more than 800 delegates from 175 organisations and 27 countries of the American continent, as well as native peoples of Indoamerica, participated in the meeting.

The World March of Women

denounced militarism as the maximum expression of patriarchy, wherein women are the principle victims: their bodies become the battlefield for the enemy; prostitution is intensified near military bases; and violence affects them daily. They also suffer the consequences of degraded living conditions resulting from increases in military spending and cuts in social programs.

Throughout the meeting, the WMW emphasised the women's point of view regarding militarisation. In the General Conference opening session on 3rd October,

speakers included Martha Figueroa of Mexico and Lorraine Guay of Quebec. On the same day, both women also participated in the round table session on patriarchy. In the days that followed, delegates from the WMW presented concrete examples of violence in their home countries (Peru, Brazil, Haiti).

The meeting ended with a demonstration at the U.S. military base in Palmerola. Participants marched along

the highway and protested in front of the entrance to the base for nearly three hours, denouncing the violence imposed by militarisation on the wall recently constructed by the base. Once again, the WMW proclaimed, "Women are not spoils of war!"

See the final declaration and additional information about the meeting at: <http://encuentro.desmilitarizacion.info/>

BRAZIL: RURAL AND URBAN WOMEN DISCUSS FOOD AND ENERGY SOVEREIGNTY

From 28th – 31st August 495 women from the city and from rural areas participated in the National Meeting of Women Struggling for Food and Energy Sovereignty in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. It was the first large meeting organised jointly between the World March of Women and Via Campesina women in the country, an important landmark for the alliance between women from the city and from the countryside.

Debates during the meeting

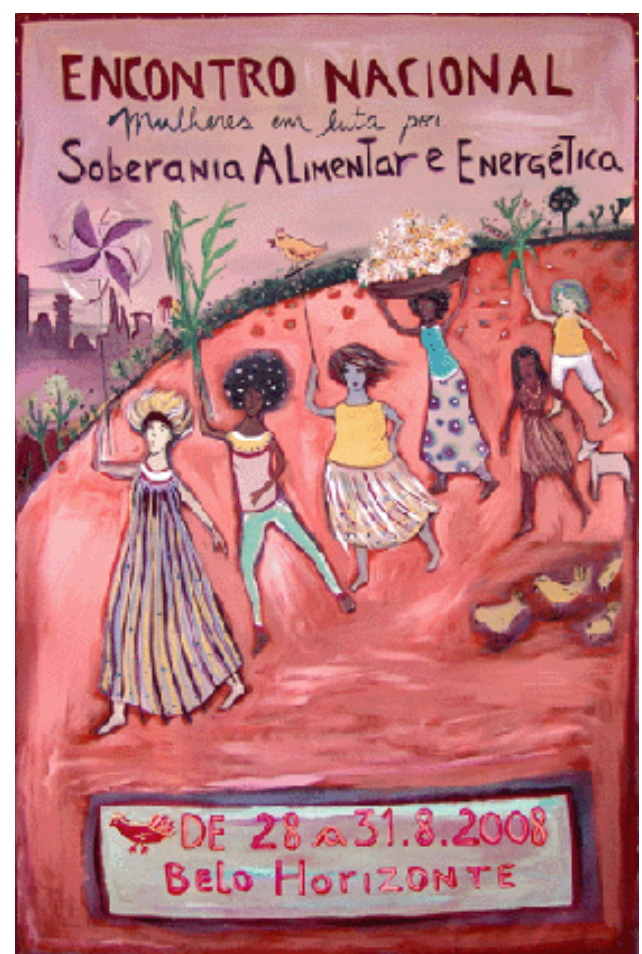
Based on the analysis of patriarchal capitalism, the critique of agricultural, food, and energy models was deepened. Reflection was also dedicated to the building of alternatives. A central point was the questioning of the model of production and consumption – based of dependence on petrol – and the false solution represented by agro-fuels, based on monoculture. With the advent of large-scale chains of production, like that of the food chain, considerable amounts of energy are wasted due to dependence on petroleum-derived pesticides and the transportation of food products over long distances, among others. The profits resulting from this process go to the transnational companies.

Alternative Experiences

The spaces for learning about alternative

experiences showed that women do think about, build, and propose alternatives. Some examples include: decentralised energy production, agroecology, solidarity economy production and consumption networks, construction of water cisterns, and others.

What these experiences have in



Meeting poster

common are the changes they bring to women's lives. They signify the construction of autonomy, breaking away from the idea of women's traditional spaces within the work place, and increased decision-making power in the family and the community. In political action to confront the transnationals, this signifies the occupation of public and political spaces with our own voices.

Challenges

The principal challenge is to bring together policies that make the transition to a sustainable energy model aimed at meeting local needs viable. The sustainability of human life, and not the interests of the market, should be at the centre of such policies.

IMPACTS OF THE FOOD CRISIS ON WOMEN'S LIVES IS THE TOPIC OF DEBATE IN QUEBEC

The various challenges faced by women in relation to the food crisis were presented by Miriam Nobre, Coordinator of the International Secretariat of the WMW, in a panel discussion on food sovereignty that inaugurated the "Quebecois international solidarity conference" in Quebec on 12th November. The panel was also composed of José Bové, French rural trade-union organiser, and André Beaudoin, general secretary of the Union of Agricultural Producers of Quebec, International Development section.

Miriam expressed her concern regarding neoliberalism that favours trade and commerce, vehicles for destruction of

feminist ideals with respect to women's relationship with food (anorexia, bulimia, etc.); she denounced the responsibility of huge farms in the food crisis, as they discourage small-scale family agriculture. She also pointed out the responsibilities that weigh more heavily on women when governments cut funding for education and health in order to invest in arms, for example, illustrating the vulnerability of women who are affected more severely by the crisis.

Read the complete article on the WMW website (in French):  <http://www.marchemondialedesfemmes.org/themes/biencommun/various/wquebec20081112/fr>

YOUNG PAN-CANADIAN FEMINISTS

From 11th - 13th October 530 women from all regions of Canada and Quebec participated in the Pan-Canadian Meeting of Young Feminists ("Waves of Resistance / Toujours Rebelles"), held in Montreal, Quebec. Young women from the WMW from South Africa, the Philippines, and Brazil also took part. The final manifesto of the meeting emphasised that many demands of feminism have yet to be met, and affirmed participants' commitment to building the movement.

The complete manifesto is available at:
English:

 <http://www.rebelles2008.org/en/manifesto>

French:

 <http://www.rebelles2008.org/fr/manifeste>

For additional information about the meeting:

 www.rebelles2008.org

Email: info@rebelles2008.org

The citizens' immigration summit entitled "Bridges, not walls" was held on 17th October at the Congrès de Montreuil Palace, in Paris (France) with the participation of a thousand people from more than 30 European and African countries. It was an opportunity for civil society to debate certain points of the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, ratified on 15th October by Interior and Justice Ministers from 27 member nations of the European Union. Finally this subject is no longer reserved for politicians alone; as the European Union proposes a common policy that is increasingly restrictive, it becomes indispensable for civil society to seize control of it.

On 18th October, the summit ended in a festive environment of solidarity with a protest march in the centre of Paris and a large free concert with various musicians in the Plaza of the Republic.

Represented by a French member of the MMF, the March participated actively in the workshop on 17th October entitled "Migrant Women", whose objective was to discuss, using concrete examples, the mechanisms that place migrant women in particularly precarious situations. The workshop also addressed specific persecutions suffered by women that are rarely recognised, whether in their countries of origin or on their migratory journeys, and analysed "systems of protection for victims" and anti-immigration laws that,

in the countries of the North, often have the effect of weakening such systems and making them more vulnerable.

In the debate that followed, with the intervention of four women, many important points emerged:

1. the question of framing the issue in terms of personal legal status rather than the status of "having the right to";
2. the need to apply the laws of the country of residence to women, in order guarantee respect of women's fundamental rights;
3. the need for asylum rights for victims of sexual violence and of aggression due to their sex or sexual orientation;
4. the need to fight against all forms of violence against women;
5. the struggle against prostitution networks;
6. to develop the rights of women migrants with regard to professional equality.

Read the Montreuil Declaration (in various languages) – for the respect of the universal right to freedom of movement (Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and for an approach to migration and development based on the mutual interests of migrants and the societies of the North and South – by clicking on the following link:

 <http://www.despontspasdesmurs.org/spip.php?rubrique20>

BOOK RELEASE

We are inaugurating a space on the WMW website and in the newsletter for the various National Coordinating Bodies to send news regarding activities they are carrying out relating to our book "The World March of Women 1998-2008: A decade of International

Feminist Struggle". Events could include book releases in different countries as well as debates about its contents (meetings, local and regional gatherings, fairs, etc.). To contribute to this section, send a small note about an event that took place, or is planned

to take place, to alessandra@marchemonde.org. Some of the places where the book has already been released include:

- *Galicia: The official release of the publication was held on 19th October during the VII International Meeting of the WMW (see note on page 2);
- *Guatemala: Taking advantage of the Americas Social Forum, a pre-release of the book was carried out on 11th October during the activity “WMW: Towards the 2010 International Action”;
- *Quebec: On 13th November in Montreal, with the participation of Miriam Nobre of the International Secretariat;
- *South Africa: The book was distributed in an activity parallel to the 11th AWID Conference - International Forum on Women’s Rights and Development, held in Capetown from 14th – 18th November.



Mafalda (Chile) during the WMW Book Release in Galicia

EVENTS CALENDAR

2009

27th January- 1st February 2009: World Social Forum 2009, in Belém do Pará, Brazil (Pan Amazon)

15th March - Day of protest against war, militarism, and for the self-determination of the people.

NEXT EDITION:

Special Edition: Report on the participation of the WMW in the World Social Forum

News of activities in South Africa

Please send us your news and photos of your NCB’s activities (including International Meeting follow-ups) and mobilisations by the end of January to be included in the first newsletter of 2009.

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