



WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN NEWSLETTER

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Editorial

Dominique Strauss-Kahn is accused of raping a young African migrant working as a chambermaid in a luxury hotel in the US where he was staying in May when he was still the International Monetary Fund director. During ongoing investigations, other cases of harassment and rape by this French politician have been made visible, all involving young women in subordinate or vulnerable positions.

There are moments in history when the links between patriarchy and capitalism are made clear, and it is at these times that women cry “enough!” They have denounced their aggressors and the systems that oppress and exclude them in the streets of Yemen and Syria, on the borders of Israel, and in the squares of Catalonia, Andalucía and Madrid where the Puerta del Sol (Door of the Sun, a central square in Madrid) warms our hearts and revives our hopes!

INTERNATIONAL

National Coordinating Bodies preparing for the 8th International Meeting in Quezon City, Philippines

To construct a political agreement for the strategies of the WMW as a permanent movement, with the capacity to influence the politico-economic context and to update our internal structure and how we function as a movement are the main goals of the 8th International Meeting (IM), to be held from November 20th to 25th of this year in Quezon City, Philippines. Its preparation was the main subject of the past WMW International Committee (IC) meeting, carried out from March 25th to 29th.

To give concrete form to these objectives, the meeting schedule will include a debate on the lessons learned from the Third International Action and the current socioeconomic and political context in which our struggles are taking place, which will allow us to identify working areas and plans for 2012-2015, as well as a revision of the WMW's statutes and by-laws. Preparatory documents for these debates were sent to the National Coordinating Bodies (NCBs) on June 1st.

Election of the IC and a discussion of alliances and of the process for the transfer of the IS will also be on the meeting agenda. Finally, as at past IMs, we will set aside time to dialogue with the feminist movement in the Philippines and, on the last day (the 25th), we will hold a demonstration and public forum in honor of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

Please contact your country's NCB to find out how you can participate in preparatory discussions for the



IC meeting held in Sao Paulo, March 2011

meeting or, if your country does not have an NCB, you can contact the IS directly: info@marchemondiale.org.

Current context: the feminist perspective

In addition to reviewing all aspects of preparations for the IM during their meeting in São Paulo, the IC also engaged in in-depth discussions on the current situation in the world. The text that resulted from this discussion was based on an interpretation of the present economic, financial and environment crisis and of the capitalist model for social reproduction, both of which are causing an increase in inequalities and contradictions. It reasserts the fact that society replicates patterns of violence against women as a tool for maintaining continuous control of their bodies and their lives. The idea is that this text will be discussed and expanded to include regional, national and local examples, working not only with the groups

participating in the WMW in different countries, but also with other movements and organizations that share our vision and our values. Click for the [full text](#) of this document.

The IC also had a strategic debate on the democratization of communication and the role of the

mainstream media in spreading ideas, values and an ideology that legitimizes a particular role for women in the world. A summary of this debate will be available in the next edition of the newsletter.

May 17th demonstrations: Stop lesbophobia!

WMW activists in various countries demonstrated on May 17th, the International Day Against Homophobia, Lesbophobia and Transphobia, denouncing the close connection between discrimination based on gender and on sexual orientation, and how these are expressions of hetero-patriarchal domination. Click to read the full text of the WMW declaration in [Portugal](#).

Also read the ¡Basta de lesbofobia! (“Stop lesbophobia!”) manifesto prepared by a WMW group in [Mexico](#), a country that boasts the second highest number of homophobia-related hate crimes in Latin America, after Brazil. Steps to change this situation have been taken in Brazil, with the May 5th approval of civil unions between same-sex couples.

AFRICA

Western Sahara: People’s self-determination. Women’s self-determination.

The VI Congress of the National Union of Saharawi Women (UNMS) took place between the 20th and 24th of April in the school named “27 de Febrero”, at one of the Saharawi refugee camps in the Algerian *hammada*. It is the most hostile part of the Algerian Sahara desert, south of Tindouf. Over 200 female delegates attended the congress. These women represented the five *wilayas* (provinces) of women living in exile as well as the communities from the Free Zone, the diaspora and activists from the occupied territory, which is illegally occupied by the Moroccan government. There were also 80 international guests from 15 different countries and different organizations; among others the World March of Women, Women International Democratic Federation and the Basque Network for the Support of UNMS.

The Congress was dedicated to the Gdeim Izik Camp, which had been built as a demand respect for political, economic and social rights, uniting thousands of Saharawis in the occupied territory, near the capital El Aiun. In October 2010, the Moroccan police dismantled the camp, using repression, bombardments, arrests and murders. On the 21st of April 2011, congress participants got the chance to celebrate the liberation of the young women Engua al Hawasi and Hayat Rgueibi (*photo*), who were imprisoned at the same time as the camp was dismantled.

The summit started with a demonstration in front of the wall of shame, a wall of sand, barbed wire and anti-personnel mines, built by the Moroccan government to



Over 80 international guests from 15 different countries took part at the UNMS Congress

separate the occupied territory from the Free Zone. The wall is 2.500 km long and is surrounded by four million anti-personnel mines. It is guarded by a contingency of over 150.000 soldiers and its maintenance costs Morocco and the international community a total of over 1 million euros a day.



Meanwhile, women find ways of living together as best as they can. The UNMS, which is immersed in an internal process to collectively strengthen and empower women, gave an account of the actions taken in politics, such as the increased women’s involvement at the political level, as well as the activities undertaken in language learning, IT, and driving lessons. They presented their side of the story by publishing a book entitled *The Strength of Women. The Saharawi Woman’s Experience*. At workshops, delegates further discussed issues

surrounding human rights, economic autonomy, internal codes and norms and communication and culture, while the international delegation visited other camps, schools and health centres. These institutions allow for the development of decent living conditions for the people as a whole.



Military spending (arms and troops) of over 1 million euros a day to keep Western Sahara occupied

The Saharawis count on international solidarity, particularly on direct support from the Basque governments and the brigades of Cuban doctors. Furthermore, many young students, male and female, who moved to Cuba to study, have since returned and taken charge of fields such as education and other posts of high responsibility. This is of extreme

DRC follow-up: international solidarity in action

Seven months on from the Closing Event of our 3rd International Action in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo, and our struggles alongside our Congolese sisters are continuing to gain shape and strength.

Since the March edition of our newsletter, sisters from several NCBs have been debating, planning and carrying out solidarity actions. French WMW and WILPF (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) activists, for example, are in regular contact with the International Secretariat (who are in turn in close contact with our WMW sisters in the DRC) to discuss possible actions in support of the women's movement in the DRC (to guarantee the construction of the multi-functional women's houses in Bukavu and Mwenga, for example). While 2011 NCB national meetings in Quebec have / will continue to include debates around possible actions related to Canadian mining companies active in conflict regions (including

importance when considered as a reflection of political solidarity, for their aim is to end this long conflict and to allow the last colonized country in Africa to recover its sovereignty.

The latest achievement of the UNMS is its participation in the World March of Women. At the congress, together with other international female delegates, we signed a letter to the General Secretary of the United Nations, Ban Ki Moon, in which we demanded, "all necessary measures be adopted, without further delay, to ease the suffering of the Saharawis". We believe that we have to put pressure on our governments and our diplomatic representatives in order to create the conditions that will allow for a referendum on self-determination as agreed under the 1991 cease-fire. We must also insist that those countries, which have not yet done so, recognise the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (see the list of 82 countries, which have already recognised the RASD: www.umdraiga.com).

You can see more information on the Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara and the living conditions of the camps in our [newsletter, volume 10, number 2](#), August 2007.

the DRC) and a working committee will be formed in September to support the process of planning and organisation;

In London, United Kingdom (UK), on the 4th May, the delegation of Million Women Rise to Bukavu presented their report and recommendations to MP's and Peers (House of Lords) at a meeting co-sponsored by Jeremy Corbyn MP, the Great Lakes All Party Parliamentary Group and the Million Women Rise UK delegation (including sisters from MWR, WILPF, Rape Crisis England and Wales, and Common Cause). The MP adopted the report recommendations (click for [more information](#)) and committed to putting forward the recommendations and a motion to the House of Commons.

Video

Another important tool for increasing the visibility of women's struggles in the DRC and international solidarity is the short film of interviews produced by Pierre-Yves Ginet (French photographer who accompanied the international delegation in Bukavu): http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xj1fcc_world-march-of-women-drc_news



Panel held in Bukavu

THE AMERICAS

Colombia: Training Schools and a Women's Court as follow-up on the Summit's agreements

The Women's Social Movement against War and for Peace in Colombia (MSM) followed up on the agreements reached at the International Women and People's Summit of the Americas against militarization, which took place between the 16th and 23rd of August. One of the commitments expressed in the final declaration is "to impulse, activate and support a Women's and People's Court from a local, regional, national and international level with the aim of recovering the collective memory of truth, justice and reparation and of avoiding repetition."

This was one of the main subjects of the meeting held by the political commission of the MSM, which took place at the beginning of June. The follow-up on the international solidarity missions was also another topic of discussion. These missions, considered humanitarian in their nature, were set up within the context of the summit and focused on communities affected by conflict. A female colleague is currently working on over 300 pages made up of different participants' and local witnesses' accounts. The goal is to develop a connecting thread for the ongoing mentoring of all communities within a common framework. This would strengthen our impact and help solve the many problems already mentioned.

Throughout 2011, the MSM continues its permanent Training School activities in the different regions, based on three focal points: women, land and territory;

women, war and peace; women and social movements. Furthermore, the MSM has debated on the proposal of objectives, contents and methodology for a Women's Court. The ideas debated are memory, the cases to be taken to justice and the drawing up of an agenda for peace, which considers the two subjects at the heart of the Colombian conflict: land-grabbing and violence against women.

At the World March of Women we are still present in this process. At the Americas Working Group meeting, which was held in January 2011 in Lima, Peru, we spoke about how to strengthen our solidarity for our colleagues in Colombia and their fight to recover their territory (physical and their body). Our action in Colombia was used as a reference as to what to do in Haiti, Honduras and Mexico, just a few of the countries with extreme situations. As an attempt to jeopardise the government's alternative popular projects in Latin America, capitalism and militarization is taking over in these regions for the benefit of transnational companies, thus generating violence, poverty and sexual violence added to a conservatives' attack against women's rights. Within our movements we understand that our task is to sharpen our anti-system (anti-capitalist and anti-patriarchal) vision whilst simultaneously proposing and building new elements.

Quebec: Feminist movement begins strategic discussions

On May 27th, the "State of Feminism" was launched in Montreal, Quebec, a process in which, over the course of the next two years, an assessment and discussions of the future of feminism and the challenges it faces will be taking place. This process will be unfolding in a very difficult climate in which, in addition to the already-active neo-liberal agenda, the women's movement is also fighting a conservative, anti-feminist, antidemocratic and fundamentalist government that is targeting the equal rights of women.

The event began with a round table discussion involving women from a variety of sectors (trade unions, youth, academia, grassroots women's groups and so on) and continued on Saturday, May 28th, with workshops covering diverse subjects. At the end of the day, a committee of representatives was elected, to develop a working plan in view of the workshop discussions, leading to a series of consultations culminating in a women's forum in Fall 2013. The first

committee meeting is scheduled for September, in Trois-Rivières.

During the workshops and the plenary session, participants stressed the fact that, despite legal advances, gender inequality persists, freedoms still remain to be won, and a number of pressures still persist, such as: stereotyped body images, sex segregation on the job,

racism and xenophobia combined with the sexism that confines women to low-ranking roles and low wages, violence among teens and in young couples, poverty among the elderly, over-medication, and more. While



it was only recently that the women's movement was fighting to obtain recognition of equal rights, feminists today are struggling for recognition of a woman's right to control her own life.

Quebec women will be invited to join in the discussions, particularly by commenting on texts and videos that will then be broadcast on social media. Please, click for [more information](#) (in French).

Mexico: Detainee suspected of attacking a humanitarian caravan

On May 12th, Rufino Juárez, leader of the Union for Social Welfare in the Triqui Region (UBISORT), was arrested on suspicion of involvement in the attack on the humanitarian caravan heading toward San Juan Copala, Oaxaca, in 2010, which resulted in the deaths of feminist Bety Cariño and Finnish activist Jyri Jakkola. The WMW in Mexico stressed that this is a first step toward re-establishing peace and dignity in the region. "This arrest was not achieved through the will of the government of Oaxaca, nor was it their victory. It was also the result of national and international pressure, which demanded justice for our sister Bety Cariño and international activist Jyri Jakkola. We call for a continuation of this pressure and for constant

vigilance with regard to this process, because we are all too familiar with the deception employed by the system to perpetuate impunity." Click to read the [WMW's public declaration](#) on the arrest (in Spanish).

The 60th broadcast of the program "Voz de los Movimientos" ("Voice of Movements", <http://www.radioteca.net/result.php?id=13030164>, in Spanish), includes an audio interview of Norma Cacho, of WMW Mexico, on recent actions in the country to demand justice and an end to impunity, and on the need to remember the many women killed during the war on drugs, which has led to more than 40,000 casualties and which is used as an excuse for the persecution of social activists, both female and male.

ASIA

Pakistan: Marchers demand social protection for informal sector women workers

Dozens of women activists, workers from different sectors and civil society representatives came together on the 1st May for a demonstration and rally to mark International Workers Day, organised by the Pakistani National Coordinating Body of the World March of Women (WMW) in front of a mall in Lahore. Holding banners and placards, the demonstrators showed their solidarity with informal economy workers, especially home-based women workers, domestic workers and peasant women workers. They shouted slogans such as "Stop domestic violence", "Stop economic exploitation of women workers", "End discriminatory laws against women", "Down with imperialism, international financial institutions and neoliberalism".

Pakistan's informal sector has grown about 20 percent in the last decade, thus giving rise to the exploitation of poor workers, especially home-based women workers who are engaged in informal work to supplement family incomes. Informal sector workers are invisible, highly vulnerable, underpaid and at the mercy of middlemen, contractors

and sub-contractors. They have no access to labour rights or other social security schemes, while the only interest of private investors is to vastly increase profits at the cost of these workers.

"The government must provide social protection to these workers", demanded the speakers. Bushra Khaliq, from the WMW-Pakistan, while highlighting that over 20 million women in her country are engaged in home-based work and that, though their contribution to economy is about 60 percent, informal women workers are still the most unprivileged workers of society. Their daily incomes range between 10 to 50 rupees (less than one dollar) with daily

working hours of 12 to 16 hours. They work in isolation and have no social and legal recognition as workers. Bushra therefore urged the women to forge unity and organise the struggle for their rights.

Please, click to read the [full report](#) of the demonstration.



EUROPE

The date of the Young Feminists Camp is approaching!

The third edition of the European Young Feminists Camp newsletter is now available online, with diverse logistical information and initial suggestions for the programme. The Camp will be held from the 9th – 17th July in Terreblanque, close to Toulouse, France. Please click on <http://www.marchemondiale.org/actions/2011/camp/bulletin/en> to access this and past editions of the camp newsletter. You can also access the article about the camp published in the [Liaison Newsletter n.1](#) (March 2011).

MOBILISATIONS AND ALLIANCES

October 12th: Movements in preparation for a day of global struggle

Various movements and organizations are beginning to discuss preparations for a day of action against capitalism, decided on within the context of the Assembly of Social Movements, during the 2011 World Social Forum (WSF 2011) in Dakar, Senegal. On October 12th, the different movements are invited to link their existing actions, relating to their own situations and priorities in national level, to a common framework, in order to make this international anti-establishment struggle more concrete and visible.

The choice of October 12th was a symbolic one. This is the date that marks the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas (in 1492) and one of the dates marking the beginning of the “Modern Age”, of the rise of capitalist “civilization”. In the Americas, it is the day of indigenous resistance, in defense of the rights of nature, on which the cry of the excluded – across the continent – has been celebrated since the 1990s.

Besides that, this day is right in the middle of a whole series of key action dates for social movements around the world (for women, trade unions, farmers, indigenous peoples, against debt, etc.), running from October 7th to 17th, including:

- October 7th: World Day for Decent Work
- October 8th-15th: Week of Global Action against Debt and International Financial Institutions (IFIs)
- October 15th: International Day of Rural Women
- October 16th: World Food Sovereignty Day
- October 17th: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, a historical date for the WMW

On May 18th, the WMW sent an initial request to the National Coordinating Bodies and other participating groups, asking them for their suggestions as to the concrete form that this day should take. Our idea is that, working jointly with other movements (rural, trade union, indigenous peoples, urban, solidarity groups, etc.) and based on our local resistance as women, we want determine how we can repudiate, in a variety of ways, this system that is sustained through the oppression of the people, especially women, and the exploitation of the natural environment, and

which is destroying everything in its path. For us at the WMW, our intention is to denounce the patriarchy (and give visibility to its close ties to capitalism, racism and colonialism) and to engage in this debate with society at large. A common call, issued by the movements about this day, will soon be circulated.

For more information, please write to: info@marchemondiale.org

A move toward coordinated struggles

The Assembly has developed in step with the World Social Forum, but has shown it is different by the fact that it is an open forum for building common agendas. It is a group of diverse movements with specific regional and national aims, but who want to fight together on a global scale, against neo-liberal, imperialist and militarist capitalism (permanent global war), against racism and against the patriarchal system. It aims to create a forum for all those who want to fight, in all their different shapes and forms.

As a means of building concrete and lasting bridges between struggles on a local and global scale and of providing global visibility to the demands of social movements, movements such as the WMW, Via Campesina, CADTM, and CUT (trade unions confederation) and the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST) in Brazil, among others, have driven the Social Movements Network since 2002. This network plays a crucial role in organizing days of global action, such as February 15th, 2003 (against the US invasion of Iraq), the preparation of January 26th, 2008 (Day of Global Action and Mobilization as part of the WSF process), actions denouncing the attacks against Palestine at the end of 2008, and the global week of mobilization and action against capitalism and war in March 2009. The latter event was the only worldwide call to action at the start of the crisis in early 2009, in which we asserted that we, the people, “will not pay for the crisis; let the rich pay for it instead!”

In 2010, the crisis situation and the advance of conservatism, combined with the offensive to criminalize social struggles, led the movements in the

network to begin to discuss the Assembly: how to make it a useful tool for coordinating our efforts. To this end, two seminars were given (one in São Paulo in January and another in Dakar in November 2010), renewing the debates that took place in a previous seminar (in Belgium in 2006) on the organization and operations of the Assembly (please, click to [read the reports](#) from these seminars).

This process resulted in one of the most important events of the WSF 2011 in Dakar, Senegal, and the adoption of the declaration setting the date of October

12th and defining common action areas of struggle for the various movements:

- Against transnational corporations;
- For climate justice and food sovereignty;
- Against violence against women; and
- For peace and against war, colonialism, occupation and the militarization of our lands.

Full text of the declaration and the action areas available at:

http://www.marchemondiale.org/alliances_mondialis_ation/asamblea-movimientos-sociales/declarations/dakar2011/en.

G8 dégage! (“G8, get lost!”)



The WMW was present for the demonstration and alternative people's forum (*photo*) held, respectively, on May 21st and 22nd in Le Havre, France, to denounce the

illegitimacy of the policies implemented by G8 Heads of State – representing the richest countries in the world – in response to the global crisis.

The demonstration brought some 7,000 people together for the inaugural event of a full program of actions in France, beginning with the G8 meeting and running through the G20 meeting next November. Click here to learn more about the people's approach: <http://www.mobilisationsg8g20.org>. Watch videos of the demonstration and rally at:

CNN - <http://youtu.be/D7-RDEk1M-o> (English) and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ubb0HEuCEE> (French).

These activities were followed by the meeting of the International Council of the World Social Forum (WSF-IC) in Paris, from May 25th to 27th. During this meeting, it was decided that the next global WSF event, scheduled for 2013, would take place in North Africa (decision still to be confirmed in the next WSF IC meeting). Along with representatives from other social movements, we took advantage of this occasion to discuss preparations for the day of global action on October 12th.

Domestic workers victory at the ILO



We are about to close this edition when we received – from the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union (SADSAWU), a group that is part of the WMW – the good news that domestic workers have secured an important victory at a specific convention at the 100th International Labour Organisation (ILO) meeting, held in Geneva, Switzerland. Click to [read more](#) about this struggle.

We welcome this victory – the result of ongoing international mobilisation – and commit to continuing our struggle to guarantee that legal rights become the reality for all workers in all corners of the world. We will continue to struggle so that we continue to win victories!

This **Newsletter** is edited by the World March of Women International Secretariat (IS) and distributed by email.

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