



WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN NEWSLETTER

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Friends and activist sisters of the World March of Women from around the world, we send you our heartfelt greetings from Mozambique - this piece of humanity on the eastern, Sub-saharian coast of Africa.

It is with many and diverse emotions that we write you via the newsletter. Approximately four months have passed since the International Secretariat officially began to operate in Mozambique. We are still feeling the emotions from our 9th International Meeting, where almost everything began. It is true that our candidacy to host the IS was a conscious act, but it is also true that every day, we wake up and understand better the challenge we have before us, now and in the future: to continue on with the feminist march to change the world. It is not a small, nor a big challenge; it is the size of our movement! Currently, there are two of us, Graça and Suzete, but we are fighting to integrate more collaborators to strengthen our team.

The context of the world we live in today is very complex and very frightening, as we can clearly see in all the information that you all have been sharing through the channels we have been building together over the years (like this newsletter). These channels are fundamental and strategic tools for the strengthening of our movement. It has also been a challenge for us, in the new IS, to properly manage this flux of information and to give the desired response on time - but we are learning to organize ourselves better!

We would like to share with you that the situation today in Mozambique is very alarming. With every day that passes, we are becoming increasingly terrified by the way the forces of patriarchal capitalism are taking over our bodies, our work, our natural resources and even our minds, by exerting control through violence. We need to engage in a constant struggle to ensure that this resistance stays alive. And this is where we can feel the role the World March of Women plays in our lives: through the March, we strengthen our struggle, build our alternatives and believe that another world is possible.

We are pleased with the IS transition process, as in February, we spent two weeks with Miriam Nobre and Nalu Faria from Brazil in a feminist political training session given from the World March of Women's perspective. It was an important moment for the strengthening of the new International Secretariat and the WMW National Coordinating Body in Mozambique. Now, our sister Alessandra from the former IS is coming to support us through a training process on communication, so that we will be able to better assume our role in this new position. In May, we will hold the first International Committee meeting in Maputo, the IS' new headquarters. The main point on the agenda will be the preparation of the 4th International Action.

We are very enthusiastic with all that is happening, especially since, as we can see by the news in this newsletter, there are many processes going on in many regions, which will serve to support the 4th International Action.

Comrades, sisters, conscious and united, we will continue to march until we are all free!

Graça Samo and Suzete Marques
WMW International Secretariat

INTERNATIONAL

March 8th: women always on the march

On March 8th, 2014, we, the women of the World March of Women, took to the streets once again to denounce the actors who sustain the world order that generates poverty and violence against women, to express our resistance and to defend our alternatives for social change. "Solidarity among women around the world is essential for the survival, defense and advancement of women and the peoples" (WMW International Women's Day Declaration, available at: <http://www.marchemondiale.org/news/mmfnewsitem.2014-03-07.5499765403/en>)

fighting to have the legalization and decriminalization of abortion included.

Violence against women was also the focus of protests in Zimbabwe, where, in alliance with women trade unionists, students and informal workers, we demanded that urgent action be taken. In the Western Sahara, women met to debate about training and self-organization. They also received a visit from a delegation of Algerian parliamentarians who came to express their solidarity in visits to the occupied territory and Saharawi refugee camps. Together, they marched to the wall of shame, which divides the Saharawi territory in two.

As for the Americas, in Argentina, we recalled the historical significance of March 8th as a day of struggle and affirmed, "neither flowers nor candy". We also demanded wage increases, a secular State and freedom over our bodies, while calling for the legalization of the right to abortion. In Brazil, actions on March 8th denounced violence against women, especially in the current context where prostitution and sexual tourism are on the rise due to the World Cup of Soccer. We also highlighted the organization of a referendum on replacing the current political system for one that is truly democratic and in which women are able to effectively participate. As for Guatemala, approximately one thousand women from various sectors participated in the March 8th demonstration. There, they denounced the problems women are facing and promoted the good life ("buen vivir") alternative as a proposal rooted in the diversity of the indigenous people in the country. The mobilizations also included decentralized activities held in 6 of the country's departments by organizations that are part of Sector de Mujeres, the WMW chapter in Guatemala. In Paraguay, we took to the streets to denounce the growing discrimination and violence toward women.



Mozambique

In Africa, we protested in Mozambique against the grave elements being included in the draft of the new Criminal Code (the previous one dates back to 1886). The main one is that the draft does not define sexual violence committed by a husband or partner as a crime (marital rape). By doing so, the law creates an environment that is more lenient towards rape and offers men who perpetuate this form of violence the possibility of avoiding punishment by marrying the victim of their crime. It also stipulates that the surviving victim or her relatives must file a formal complaint in order for a legal process to begin. In the process to reform the Criminal Code, our sisters are



Brazil



Paraguay



Guatemala

In Peru, we mobilized under the slogan, "Questioning the State and Fighting for Equality". We demanded that the State adopt concrete policies in favor of women, including compliance with gender quotas during elections, and policies to end violence against women and to reduce existing wage gaps between men and women.



Peru

On the other side of the world, in the **Asia-Oceania** region, women also demanded their right to their



Philippines

territories - that is, their land, bodies and homes. In the **Philippines**, we protested in front of the Supreme Court to demand that the

reproductive health law be implemented. The law was approved in December 2012, after more than 14 years of struggle. However, its implementation has been suspended due to pressure from more conservative sectors linked to the Catholic Church, which are contesting it in the Supreme Court. The questions they raise include allegations that the law will promote prostitution and spread illnesses. Philippine women also held an action in a shopping center owned by one of the largest real estate agencies in the country, which is grabbing land in urban centers, evicting the city's poor and demolishing their homes to build condominiums for the elite. They also denounced how these speculators are the same ones who set up corporations in rural areas, which only generates more

poverty and more violence against women. This violence is manifested in the form of trafficking and prostitution, and in the destruction of agriculture and indigenous communities.

In **Europe**, women's resistance continues to grow after years of dealing with the crisis of the capitalist order and the strengthening of neoliberalism and patriarchy. In **France**, we denounced austerity measures and expressed our solidarity with women living in conflict zones, like the Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Syria. In **Greece**, we took to the streets in Athens with women from the Ministry of Economy's cleaning staff who have been fighting against massive layoffs for months. With slogans, pamphlets and speeches, we denounced different forms of violence, and demanded autonomy over our bodies and an end to gender discrimination. We emphasized that women's demands are just as important as social change and that our demands and feminist proposals must receive equal treatment. As for **Turkey**, since June 2013, protesting on the main streets of Istanbul has been prohibited and brutally repressed. Despite that and also the rain, we challenged the conservative Islamic government by taking to the streets in a major demonstration, in which many young women participated. As one of the several points we defended, we denounced the government's attack on abortion, which is legal in Turkey. The neoliberal policy of cutting government spending on public health is converting this right into one that only the rich women are able to exercise in private hospitals.

The march was unable to reach its final meeting point due to interference from antifeminist groups claiming to be Marxist, who positioned themselves between the march and the police barrier.



Turkey



France



Greece

Finally, in Tunisia, in the **Arab World-Middle East** region, we participated in actions to denounce the conservative forces in the transition government, which are attacking women's rights and removing them from the new constitution.



Tunisian poster

The overall tone of our actions expressed what we have been accumulating in our analysis on how the capitalist system - sustained by patriarchy - seeks to save itself by broadening the range of mechanisms it uses for accumulation. These mechanisms were present in the system's origin and can be regrouped into four

interconnected processes: the appropriation of nature and its resources; the appropriation of workers' income and rights; control over women's bodies and lives; and militarization and the criminalization of resistance and violence. These are the main thematic axes that framed the debate during our most recent International Meeting and that will guide our Fourth International Action, to be held in 2015. To read more on our analysis of the current context, go to:

<http://www.marchemondiale.org/structure/9rencontre/context/en>

To listen to the audio program on the March 8th, 2014 mobilizations, go to:

<http://www.radiomundoreal.fm/7542-march-8-special-report-on-the?lang=en>

INTERNATIONAL

Actions held in memory of women workers killed in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh and Turkey, the World March of Women participated in street actions held in memory of the more than 1,100 women workers who died in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on April 24th, 2013 when the Rana Plaza building collapsed. The incident left another 2000 people injured. The building housed five factories that produced clothing for internationally renowned brand names, including Benetton, Carrefour and Walmart. The day before it caved in, workers had informed authorities of cracks in the building's structure, yet no precautionary measures were taken.

Violations of the building code - like building eight floors when only six had been authorized; the use of low quality materials; excess weight from the factories' machines, air conditioners, generators, boilers and the raw materials and finished products that were accumulating in the building - as well as the lack of

State inspections are all factors that contributed to the incident.

In the aftermath of the tragic event, a Rana Plaza Coordinating Committee was created, which brings together the main actors of Bangladesh's garment sector, the government, survivors and the victims' families and dependents. A series of agreements on improving conditions in the workplace were signed. A fund has also been set up to provide compensation to families and to cover the medical costs of rehabilitation treatment for survivors. Resources for the fund were to come from contributions from the transnational brand name buyers of the products in Bangladesh. However, as of early March 2014, no compensation had been paid to the victims and their family. This is why the "Clean Clothes Campaign" launched a call for action to pressure the brand names to pay their debt. The campaign includes an online petition. To sign on, go to: http://www.labourstartcampaigns.net/show_campaign.cgi?c=2200

For more information, visit: <http://www.cleanclothes.org/ranaplaza/pay-up>

Control over women's bodies and work in sweatshop factories

The case of the factories in Bangladesh is symbolic of how neoliberal capitalism allies with patriarchy to generate profit for a few and to undermine rights won through years of struggle by workers. Bangladesh is the second largest garment exporter in the world. The sector employs approximately 3 million people, of whom 80% are women - a situation that can also be found in several other countries.



The sweatshop industry prefers to hire women due to their skills such patience and accuracy. These traits do not come naturally to women, but are the result of gender socialization imposed to them.

The sweatshop industry prefers to hire women due to the traits they have, such as patience, dexterity, accuracy and discipline, which allow them to carry out delicate tasks for long periods of time. Contrary to what is

commonly believed, these skills do not come naturally to women; they are the result of gender socialization imposed on women. What is more, despite their greater capacity to do certain kinds of industrial work, women receive lower salaries than men who do the same work. The industries that produce clothing, fruit, vegetables, flowers, electronic components, disposable cups and plates, and other products, subject women - especially young women with no experience and, preferably, no children - to 12-hour workdays, paying them minimum wage and forcing them to work non-stop, under constant threats of sexual abuse, and with no right to health, social security or daycare.

There are other forms of organizing production that, like the sweatshops, contribute to the fragmentation of the workforce and increase flexibility in labor relations - namely those employed by outsourcing firms. These companies outsource certain tasks to women who work in isolation in their homes and earn very little. They do so in order to reconcile these tasks with their domestic work and caregiving. To add to all of this, any attempt to unionize is met with repression. Companies compile the names of activist workers on a list of people they do not recommend for hiring. When the



Turkey: "We do not want blood on our clothes" was the slogan of the actions made in a decentralized manner, in Muqla and Ankara, in front of well-known stores

workers of a given country strengthen their level of organization and their capacity to demand their rights, investors in the sweatshop industry threaten to close the factories and move to another country where they can continue to exploit workers and make more profit. Bangladesh's garment sector is facing this kind of threat at the current moment.

On the road to the 4th International Action

During our 9th International Meeting in São Paulo, Brazil, we agreed to organize another 24-hours of feminist solidarity on April 24th, 2015, on the two-year anniversary of the accident in Bangladesh. This will be a common day of action of the Fourth International Action and will allow us to denounce and expose the actors promoting oppression against women, especially transnational corporations that control our bodies in different ways and criminalize our resistance. Details on how we will organize the Fourth International Action will be defined at the International Committee meeting to be held between May 23rd and 26th of this year in Maputo, Mozambique.

AMERICAS

Women denounce coup attempts in Venezuela

The WMW in the Americas and the Network of Women Transforming the Economy (Red Mujeres Transformando la Economía, Remte) continue to denounce and repudiate the attempts by national and international opposition groups to destabilize the legitimately elected government of Venezuela. These initiatives are using a campaign of economic violence (issuing attacks on public services and provoking shortages of basic goods), armed violence (assassinations used to legitimize the discourse on intervention) and media violence (that propagates a given point of view via national, and especially international, media). They also strengthen imperialist violence, which uses all means available to recuperate and broaden its political, economic and cultural control over Venezuela and the region, and to try to

put an end to the Bolivarian Revolution and alternative integration processes.

We say NO to the violence of the forces behind coup attempts and we manifest our struggle to defend democracy and life. We call on all women from the region and around the world to engage in a permanent campaign to denounce these facts and their impacts on the life of Venezuelan women and people, to accompany our sisters who are fighting to defend the democratic and sovereign path to the Bolivarian Revolution and to provide unconditional support to the alternative of peace that the government and the people defend.

To read the declaration "Women with the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela", go to:

<http://www.movimientos.org/es/node/24970>

EUROPE

In 2014, Feminist Youth Camp will take place in Estonia

Young Feminists of the WMW Europe are preparing their 4th Summer Camp! New contacts in Estonia who took part of the camp held in Portugal last year were amazed by the experience and are now working hard to organize the next one: a women-only, self-managed camp, held in the middle of nature as a space to meet and share feminist ideas and practices with young

feminists from all over the continent. The camp will take place from August 2nd to 9th, 2014, and will be focused on issues related to our bodies. Many young feminist activists from the WMW and other groups have already shown interest in participating. A European team is supporting the Estonian sisters this year. For more info, write to: mmfjeunes@gmail.com

ALLIANCES AND MOBILIZATIONS

Forum in Bosnia-Herzegovina will discuss the culture of peace

A massive pro-peace event will be held in 2014, in Sarajevo (in Bosnia-Herzegovina), where the Austro-Hungarian Prince was assassinated in June 1914, fact that resulted on the declaration of the World War one hundred years ago. The international anti-war movement views this as a symbolic date in the fight for an end to the global dominance of structural and cultural violence and to transform our world from a world of war and violence to a world of peace and nonviolence.

The Peace Event will take place from June 6th to 9th and will host a youth camp, cultural activities and an international forum of more than 100 workshops, plenary sessions, conferences and round tables.

The World March of Women at the International Peace Event

As the World March of Women, we are organizing a workshop on "Women in Resistance to Militarization, Criminalization and Violence" in the lead-up to our Fourth International Action. As all other workshops, it will be self-organized and self-financed. Another workshop, proposed by the WMW in France is on peace and social justice, with a special focus on economic war (austerity measures). We will either merge both workshops or organize two workshops.

While deepening our discussion and our understanding on militarization, criminalization and violence - one of our action areas for 2015 - we will also exchange ideas and experiences with women from the Balkans, Europe, and participants from all over the world. Peace caravans are also being organized. They will depart from Trieste, Italy, and Istanbul, Turkey, and link up different places and struggles on the way to Sarajevo.

Information on registration, visa and logistics, and the full program are available at: www.peaceeventsarajevo2014.eu



Recent uprisings in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Last February, Bosnia and Herzegovina were swept by a wave of massive protests. These uprisings were already looming in September 2013, when miners barricaded themselves 250 meters below ground in a mine and spent two days in an underground protest to demand wage increases and that more workers be hired.

On February 5th of this year, protests over the closure and sale of local factories started in Tuzla - the former industrial center of Tito's Yugoslavia, which symbolizes today the destruction of the country's economy. Workers from several factories that had been privatized and went bankrupt united to demand jobs, payment of unpaid salaries and pensions - that is, basically everything the State and companies owe them. The workers were joined by students and political activists. The protests turned out to be the largest uprisings ever seen in the country, with protestors seizing government buildings and 200 people left injured.

The country's dramatic history makes us question the correlation between liberal freedom and fundamentalist oppression. We are not obligated to accept the liberal-democratic agenda and we should raise our demands for social transformation. We need to think and work on how to organize recent protests into new social movements - not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but everywhere - to change our world and our lives. (To read more: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/feb/10/anger-bosnia-ethnic-lies-protesters-bosnian-serb-croat>)

2014-2015 Calendar of Mobilizations

Throughout the year, the WMW will take part in various mobilizations at the regional and intercontinental level. We will take advantage of these moments to meet and exchange ideas and information on our actions and organize with allied social movements. A list of these moments follow below, but we hope that the NCBs will help complete this calendar by sending information on other initiatives to: info@marchemondiale.org

2014

June 6 to 9: Peace Event, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina. For more info: www.peaceeventsarajevo2014.eu

June 23 to 27: Week of Mobilization to Stop Corporate Crimes and Impunity: For more info: <http://www.treatymovement.com/>

August 2 to 9: European Young Feminists Camp, Estonia: mmfjeunes@gmail.com

August 21 to 24: Pan-Canadian Social Forum, Ottawa, Canada. <http://www.peoplesocialforum.org/>

End of November - beginning of December: parallel events at COP 20 (20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on Climate Change) in Lima, Peru.

2015

March: World Social Forum, Tunisia.

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

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