



WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN NEWSLETTER

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Editorial

It was almost a year ago that we came together in São Paulo, Brazil, surrounded by feminist solidarity, light, colour, diversity and inspiration. Together we celebrated our victories and carved out a new path for our movement: the transfer of the International Secretariat (IS) to Africa and Mozambique, and the construction of the World March of Women's 4th International Action! We, the WMW, consider this decision – that many could conceive as high-risk – as an opportunity to strengthen our movement. It is with this determination that we Mozambicans undertake this responsibility, with the support of the International Committee (IC), our African sisters and all of you who make the WMW the permanent, essential movement it is, through your actions and sharing.

“We have to end women's isolation, so that, together with them, we may strengthen our movement”, reminded Awa Ouedrago – IC member – during the Conference in Maputo, Mozambique in May that officially marked the IS transition. It is with these words that we rise and go to sleep every day, as we think of these women in Palestine, Nigeria, Nicaragua, Bangladesh and everywhere around the world. For all women and for ourselves, we reaffirm the importance of our struggles for a better world free of violence!

We are making a huge effort to prepare information, documents and materials that will serve as a reference for our 4th International Action. We recognise and value the collective processes of construction and organisation that are taking place in the different world regions, and continue to encourage you all in your work to mobilise other groups and National Coordinating Bodies (NCBs). In this way, our action will be ever more visible and we will be able to make a real impact in the lives of many women, and to influence national, regional and global politicians!

In this newsletter you will find information related to this preparation, such as the 4th International Action decisions taken during the IC meeting, an IS transition update, and other NCB and international information. We thank you for your contributions sent to us from different parts of the world, and we ask you to continue to share your actions with us.

Our struggle goes on, and we will continue on the march until we are all free!

INTERNATIONAL

IC makes progress in preparing the 4th International Action!

The members of the International Committee (IC) had their face-to-face meeting in Maputo, Mozambique 23 – 26 May, the first since their election in August 2013. It was an opportunity to meet, share expectations of the role of the IC, the challenges of the current context and to make progress with the strategic planning of the movement's actions, especially the 4th International Action which will take place between 8th March and 17th October 2015. Some of the objectives of the next International Action are grounding the WMW on a local level and strengthening the regions. This means that unlike other actions in 2015 there will not be an international meeting of a fixed duration, but there

will be regional meetings with the participation of representatives from various continents.

Present at the meeting were the following: representatives of the IC for the Africa, Americas, Asia–Oceania and Europe regions, members of the old and the new International Secretariat, the National Coordination of the WMW in Mozambique, and interpreters. Due to last-minute changes in the political context, we were not able to guarantee the representation of the Arab World-Middle East region at the meeting. A public event and a march including members of the WMW from various African countries on 27 and 28 May marked the official transfer of the IS to Mozambique (*see article further down*).

Content and slogan

In relation to the action content, the IC resumed the debate held in 2013 during the 9th International Meeting around the interpretation of the concept of 'women's territories'. This concept is understood firstly as related to women's bodies, and secondly as the place where women live, work, develop their struggles and build their community and history. This is linked to the definition of the slogan. After a long debate, the IC agreed to keep the slogan that has been used since 2008: "We will be on the march until we are all free!" but with a second line (sub-slogan) that integrates the other proposed slogans and makes a specific reference to the reality of each region. A request for the preparation of a document on the concept of "women's territories" has been set out from the IC as a task to be completed, and this document will be used to start the process of debate and reflection which will help the National Coordinations Bodies (NCBs) to deepen the scope of the debate with their grassroots groups.

Symbols and logo

It was agreed that designing the Action's symbol would be a collective process. Each region, with the support of the IS and the IC, will draw up a map in which the threats and resistance that women suffer in each region will be represented, and another with the alternatives put forward by them. These maps will all be assembled in 2016, during the 10th International Action. It was also agreed, on the basis of a proposal from Switzerland, to encourage countries to carry out symbolic sowing (of seeds, ideas, resistance) at the start of the action, in March 2015, and to have a symbolic harvest at the end of the actions in October. Additionally, the IS in Mozambique will create a common logo for the 4th International Action, which can be used for the NCBs in the different mobilisation materials they will produce.

24 hours of feminist action

During the 4th International Action, 24 April 2015 will be the date for collective action, between 12pm and 1pm (local time in each country). The date was chosen in memory of the thousands of women who



Comité Internacional reunido en Maputo

died in Bangladesh when the building they were working in collapsed (*for more information, see bulletin 01/2014*).

Our goal during this event is to go further than just solidarity, and carry out actions that question the actual model of development – capitalist, racist, patriarchal – that is not concerned by the death and exploitation of women, that burdens women with work – whether production or reproduction – to guarantee maximum profits for a small number. We will try, once more, to assert our alternatives for building a society that prioritises everyone's wellbeing. Furthermore we suggest linking this theme with

the historic struggles of the feminist movement. A declaration and other specific guidelines for the 24 hours are also being prepared.

Communication Strategy

The IS is preparing a set of tools – website, newsletters, social networking sites, as well as a common logo for the action, with the goal of giving visibility to the processes of preparing the action in the countries and regions. As these are not yet ready, we ask you to send news from your countries to these email addresses – info@marchemondiale.org and communication@marchemondiale.org. And please visit our website: www.marchemondiale.org

The action as a process

During the IC meeting, we stressed the importance of the Action of 2015 as being built by the NCBs as a participative process that should be properly recorded (including training activities dealing with the themes, mobilisation, preparation of the symbols, etc). A joint call and a range of topics are being prepared in relation to all the themes, which will be shared with the NCBs as soon as it is ready.

Nevertheless, the process was started at the end of 2013 and many NCBs are already holding meetings and creating their work plans. In **Brazil**, for example, the idea is to create actions in a decentralised form in different regions within the country, culminating in a unified national action. In



Reunión de la MMM en Ankara, Turquía

Mozambique, the organisation of a national caravan is being discussed. In **Switzerland**, the launching of the 2015 action will be organised at the end of August at the national meeting in Bern. Our colleagues in **Turkey** have already held a national meeting in Ankara, where they showed videos of the 2010 action, held a debate on the vision of the WMW and put into context how this is translated into their national situation. They also renewed the mandate of the national coordination. In all these countries, new coordination meetings on a national level will go into more detail regarding the nature of the action.

On a regional level, between 10 and 12 October of this year, the **European Meeting** will take place in Donostia

(San Sebastián), in the Basque country, where the final details of the European feminist caravan which will travel throughout the whole continent during the period of the 4th action, with a calendar and varied programme of feminist mobilisation and training activities will be decided. In mid November, the second WMW **African Meeting** is set to take place in Johannesburg, South Africa. In the **Americas**, WMW activists from different countries will use the continental meetings in preparation for the 20th Conference of the Parties (COP-20) on Climate Change, in Lima, Peru, to make progress in preparing our action on a regional level.

AFRICA

Transfer of the International Secretariat to Mozambique

Since 1 January 2014, the International Secretariat (IS) of the World March of Women has been based in Maputo, Mozambique, coordinated by Graça Samo. To officially mark this transition, our colleagues at the Women's Forum/WNW of Mozambique carried out a series of activities in May: didactic activities, planning the 4th action, debates, as well as mobilising people in the streets, on the 28th May Women's Health day. The meeting of the WMW International Committee (see related article) was also part of the transition programme of activities. Here are a few images of those moments.

International Conference "Building Alternatives to Feminism in Defence of Women's Human Rights"

The conference took place on 27 and 28 May including women from various African countries and other continents, and debated the strengthening of the feminist movement as a way of changing women's lives. It was organised by the Women's Forum, which coordinates the WMW in Mozambique. The debates also included workshops and panels on themes such as the impact of mining industry megaprojects on the life of women, the building of alternatives for economic autonomy, the egalitarian participation of women in decision-making processes and conflict resolution, the role of the media and the challenges of international cooperation, sexual and reproductive rights in the world today, the questioning of sexual and reproductive rights in the world, and heteronormativity.

At the end of the conference, a ceremony symbolized the transfer of the International Secretariat from Brazil to Mozambique, followed by a march where Mozambican women reaffirmed their commitment to continue on the march until all women are free!



Above, WMW activists from the African Central Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo and Mozambique debate the issue of militarization and conflict resolution. Our sister from WMW Philippines spoke about the struggle to implement reproductive rights in her country. The symbolic IS transfer ceremony from Brazil to Mozambique was followed by a demonstration.



The new team of the International Secretariat. From left to right: Suzete Marques, Liaison Officer; Graça Samo, International Coordinator; and Eva Anandon, Communication

Communication as a strategic tool

More than 20 women from different parts of Mozambique took part in the communication workshop, which took place in Maputo between 13 and 17 May. The programme of activities started with a discussion about the construction of the WMW as a movement which fights against all kinds of oppression suffered by women, which are the result of a capitalist, patricarchal, racist and colonial system.

During the debates, we discussed the different forms of oppression of Mozambican women, for example the violence exercised by the state through patriarchal rituals linked to the control of women, such as the “lobolo” (dowry that the groom’s family offers in exchange for the daughter), the “kutchinga” (where a widow is forced to sleep with the brother of her deceased husband, and the couple’s marital property is also transferred to him). From the analysis of texts and advertising in different media, we saw how these also help to perpetuate a culture that subordinates women and blames women for the violence that they suffer. We also discussed the characteristics of the kind of

communication that we want to build through feminism – emancipatory, egalitarian, libertarian, and open to debate. We see communication as a strategic tool for strengthening our movement.

After this, our group began a creative process of preparing texts, signs and street songs used in a protest organised by various social movements against the bill which allowed the benefits and privileges enjoyed by members of parliament and the government to increase.

This mobilisation was also a good opportunity to create media coverage alternative to that of the big commercial media stations, with text, photos and images. The result can be seen in this blog: <http://comunicadorasfeministasmocambique.blogspot.com.br/>

At the end of this bulletin, we received news from our colleagues in Mozambique that the President of the Republic had sent the bill back to Parliament. A victory of the mobilisation!



Reflection on how the media helps perpetuate patriarchy



Slogans created for the demonstration that was organized against politicians' privileges



Workshop participants also prepared posters for the mobilisation on the 28th May

African women from the WMW debate the next steps looking forward to 2015

Receiving the International Secretariat is a challenge for the World March of Women in the whole African region, not only for Mozambique. After the public event on 29 May, we made the most of the presence of some guests who were members of the WMW in Burkina Faso, Mali, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa to get an initial evaluation of the state of mobilisation in the region, exchange ideas about the preparation of the 4th International Action and discuss the best date for a regional meeting of the WMW on the continent, which was set as mid November. Our colleagues from Africa also will take advantage of civil society meetings in the SADC (South

African Development Community), the World Social Forum and International Francophone Organisation (OIF) meetings as a chance to meet each other and make progress in preparing the WMW 2015 actions.



AMERICAS

Tour in United States debates grassroots feminisms

As a result of years of dialogue and collective work in collaboration with the Social Movements Assembly of the World Social Forum and other international mobilisation agendas, the GGJ (Grassroots Global Justice) decided to take on the challenge of organizing the World March of Women nationally in the United States (EEUU). The decision was taken during their National Assembly, which took place in April 2014, where there was an in-depth discussion on why patriarchy is a system of oppression which should be combated in order to bring about effective social change. The GGJ is an alliance that brings together 50 mixed grassroots organisations in which women have a strong leadership presence.

GGJ stresses that “the work of building a World March of Women national chapter in the United States is a big task and will require in-depth discussions about different feminisms and gender justice in our organisations and communities, as well as widening our reach beyond our current alliances to build bridges and connect with other feminist groups and groups fighting for gender justice and women’s rights within the US.”

As part of this national collaboration, the GGJ organised a national tour between 18 June and 3 July under the theme “Reclaiming Feminisms at the Grassroots!”. Present was Sandra Morán, one of the Americas region WMW International Committee

members. The tour passed through seven cities and also included a videoconference so that people from other areas could interact and contribute to diverse themes such as: the intersections between feminism in the US aligned with the international movement, or how feminism could take a confrontational look at the current economic and environmental crisis, as well as imperialism.

As a result of the Assembly and the tour, the GGJ’s Gender Justice and Feminisms Work Commission will define the organisational form that they will take, the educational processes to put in place, and the actions that will be part of the march’s world action in 2015. For the World March of Women, it has been an important experience for the mutual recognition of the movements that we have built in the United States and in the world, and which can come together today to become stronger.

To obtain more details about the debate held by the GGJ in its assembly, see video (8 min): “Building Feminisms & Gender Justice at the Grassroots” (in English and Spanish), available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S03K8AbJeWA>.

To read the GGJ bulletin about the tour with photos and other links, click on <https://ggj.ourpowerbase.net/civicrm/mailling/view?reset=1&id=212>



Today, we are all Palestinian women!

We, women from the WMW in Brazil, Guatemala, Quebec, United States, Venezuela, and also in France, Galicia, Mozambique, the Philippines, South Africa, Switzerland and Tunisia, among several other countries, are mobilised in solidarity with our sisters in Palestine. They call on our sisters to increase their pressure on the State of Israel through BDS (boycott, divestment and sanction) actions. Learn more about BDS: <http://www.bdsmovement.net> Send us photos and other reports of solidarity actions in which the WMW in your country took part: info@marchemondiale.org



Commodification as a focus of actions during the World Cup in Brazil

Some of the fundamental themes in the debates and actions were the questioning of the transformation of women into objects used for sexist advertising to sell products, promotion of tourism and women as objects for men's sexual consumption: these were all discussed and the subject of actions carried out by the WMW in Brazil over the last months and during the World Cup which ended on 13 July this year.



Examples of sexist advertising conveyed during the World

In addition to reacting to projects that attempt to regulate prostitution, the WMW Brazil developed a feminist perspective that was able to provide a counterpoint to the liberal vision which prevails in debates about prostitution. The strategy sought to question prostitution as a patriarchal institution that is part of the current model of production and consumption. From here, the feminist debate on sexuality was taken up again, revealing how the oppression of women is related to capitalist accumulation in the sex industry.

The actions denounced the normalisation of prostitution and sex tourism as part of Brazilian society and the role of men and capital in controlling women's bodies. On the other hand, as usually happens in large sporting events, the offensive made by sex business owners and the demand for prostitution by tourists travelling to Brazil to watch the World Cup has been overwhelming. What followed was the normalisation of prostitution, in the streets of the host cities and in the media, which spread the news of Brazil's culture of prostitution worldwide.

Although we need to carry out a more in-depth evaluation of how the theme was treated within the framework of the World Cup, at first sight the common discourse was that of criticism of sexual exploitation of girls, and the normalisation of adult female prostitution (ignoring, or intentionally hiding, the fact that most of the adult women have been exploited through prostitution since childhood).

Women as subjects

Two more important aspects of the actions in Brazil were the necessity of overcoming the prejudices, marginalisation and stigmatisation of women in situation of prostitution, and to demand that the State play an active role in transforming the lives of female prostitutes. To learn more about the rich debate that was held in Brazil, read the text by Nalu Faria, "Who does the regulation of prostitution benefit?" available at: <http://www.sof.org.br/noticias/a-quem-serve-a-regulamenta%C3%A7%C3%A3o-da-prostitui%C3%A7%C3%A3o> (only in Portuguese)

Commodification of sport

The intense activism of social movements in Brazil, before and after the Cup, highlighted the role of FIFA (International Federation of Association Football) in the commercialisation of sport and in distancing it from its popular origin through imposing a kind of state that privileges a white public with higher purchasing power. Under the appearance of a non-profit organisation, FIFA protects the interests of corporations that sponsor it. As a significant result of the mobilisations during the World Cup in Brazil, we can highlight the debate which was put forward about the necessity of increasing democracy, promoting real involvement with the population in defining priorities for public finances, especially in organising mega-events such as this.

Criminalisation of the struggle

The actions during the World Cup also denounced the increasing criminalisation of resistance and social movements, which has been worsening since June 2013. In various cities which have football team headquarters, various activists were imprisoned during the Championship as a 'precaution', accused of such acts as: forming gangs, causing damage or inciting criminal activity. In Rio de Janeiro alone, under orders of the government at a provincial level, 19 people were detained on the eve of the championship. From this total, 13 obtained habeas corpus. According to defence lawyers, the detentions were made in an arbitrary fashion and were a way of discouraging protests.

Next actions

With the end of the championship, the militants of the WMW in Brazil have moved their attention back to the popular referendum about changing political system, which will be held in September. To know more, click here: <http://www.plebiscitoconstituente.org.br/>

EUROPE

Peace goes further than the absence of war



“To be a woman is to live in a time of war”: the Philippino poet Joe Barrios’s phrase was used by our colleagues from the WMW in Europe in the mobilisation opening the Peace event, which took place in the historical centre of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), to remember that the culture of peace goes further than the mere absence of war. “In order for peace to become a reality, we need to fight for a full and active recognition of women’s rights, equal participation of women in peace-building processes, the eradication of poverty, violence and exclusion, the promotion of solidarity, the existence of an

independent justice system and an education that does not place value on violence or sexist behaviour.” (WMW area action “Peace and demilitarisation”. Read more here:

<http://www.marchemondiale.org/actions/2010action/text/paz/en>

The WMW Turkey activists took advantage of the event caravan to hold a meeting with other colleagues from Thessalonica, Greece, to share information and discuss preparations for the WMW 4th International Action (picture below).



ALLIANCES AND MOBILISATIONS

For a people-centred development model

Discussing and denouncing a development model which prioritises profits over people was the focus of the activities that we took part in, in parallel with the VI Summit of heads of state from the BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa between 14 and 16 July in Fortaleza, Ceará (Brazil). This block is very important among ‘developing countries’, representing 40% of the global population, 26% of the global land mass, 27% of production and 21% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product). As a result of the official meeting, a development bank destined at financing large-scale infrastructure projects was created.

In the evaluation of social movements participating in the activities, it should be stressed that the BRIC bloc represents an imperialist integration which promotes the interests of large transnational corporations and exploits other countries for profit. It also inhibits the participation of civil society in decision-making. In



order to become a bloc that provides a real counterpoint to the most powerful countries in the world, it is important that the BRICS make progress in social context, at a grassroots level.

For the WMW, these activities were an opportunity to once again denounce the offensives of patriarchal capitalism against nature, workers’ rights and the control of women’s bodies and lives. “These offensives were concretised in proposals such as those of multilateral development banks that finance more and more megaprojects in which women are expelled from their lands by mining and agro-business companies” explains Isabelle Azevedo, from the WMW in Ceará who organised the event. For example this is happening with irrigation projects in the Apodi region, in the state of Rio Grande do Norte (Brazil), in which 800 families will be expelled from the lands where they live and work, to benefit six hydro-business companies.

Equally, in Cumbe (Ceará), wind energy production companies are also driving a large number of families from their lands.

Graça Samo, coordinator of the WMW International Secretariat, participated in the activities and shared valuable information with the rest on the negative impact of ProSAVANA in Mozambique. Using the argument of increasing output and productivity (monocultures of maize, soya, yuca, cotton, sugar cane etc., for export), this project attempts to integrate peasants in a production process which is exclusively controlled by large transnational corporations and

multilateral financial institutions, destroying family farming production systems. Graça emphasised that when we talk about women's rights, traditional cultural values are treated as sacred, but when it comes to expelling populations from their lands and giving that land to transnational corporations, those values are completely ignored.

In addition to the panels, we organised a workshop of feminist 'batucada' (drums), where we prepared our street protest under the theme of "Fighting is not a crime: against the BRICS and capitalist exploitation!".

On target for a treaty to dismantle corporate power

Between 23 and 27 June the World March of Women participated in the mobilisation week "Stop the corporate crime of impunity". This joint action between various social movements contributed to the UN Human Rights Commission (OHCHR) in Geneva (Switzerland) approving the creation of an intergovernmental group which will work on the proposal for a binding treaty which will force all transnational corporations (TNCs) to comply with the Human, Economic, Social and Cultural principles in the countries that they invest in. The group's first meeting will be in 2015.

An agreement like this would allow such corporations to be punished, like the Israeli company Mekorot, which exploits water sources in Palestine, or the Anglo-Dutch company Shell, which contaminates thousands of acres



of fertile land in Nigeria, making it unusable for agriculture, as well as countless other TNCs.

This decision met with fierce opposition from representatives of the United States and the European Union, given that the headquarters of many TNCs are located there. It is therefore necessary to remain on the alert and not stop the pressure.

One of the next steps in this joint struggle is to write a Treaty of the Peoples with regards to transnational corporations. The WMW was invited to contribute to this process, particularly the chapter on alternatives based on a feminist economy. We will send more news on this topic soon.

Click here:

<http://www.stopcorporateimpunity.org/> to read more about the Campaign "Dismantle corporate power and put an end to impunity".

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

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