



# WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN NEWSLETTER

Volume 17 - Number 3 – November 2014

## Editorial

Just two months left before the end of the year and, in the frenetic activity of these dates, we fix our eyes and put our energies on preparing for 2015. It will be an important year for our movement and will require our maximum energy and a lot of working together.

In the next year we will celebrate our 4th International Action and together we will raise our voices to shout "We will continue in the March until all women are free!!". Women from all regions of the planet, we redouble our efforts to coordinate our actions and planning activities. Coordination meetings occur in Europe, Africa, Americas... In Johannesburg, the International Committee will focus on the preparation of strategic documents that support our actions and social mobilization to ensure that we involve grassroots women in each territory.

Our diversity is our strength. Even with different disguises, we know that women suffer the same attacks by the capitalist and patriarchal system, and resist with very similar strategies. So we must continue to work in solidarity, communicating our feminist alternatives to the world and to the sisters of our movement, building our networks and strengthening our alliances and our feminist political formation. We hope that the news of this newsletter fill you with energy to continue the path with stronger steps ... From the International Secretariat, we encourage you to continue sending news and information on the different processes in which you are involved in so that together we can grow and make our 4th International Action a key moment in the history of the WMW.

### INTERNATIONAL

## Johannesburg hosts the next African regional meeting and second annual meeting of the International Committee

From 17 to 19 November over 30 delegates from 21 African countries will meet in Johannesburg, South Africa, to debate and discuss the progress of our movement in the region and preparation for the Fourth International Action on the continent. Under the slogan: "Building the feminist movement in Africa to transform the lives of women," the National Coordination Bodies (NCBs) will have an opportunity to present a report on the state of the WMW in its territory and reflect together on the opportunities of common work towards the mobilization of new participant groups, the creation of new NCBs and

exchanging ideas about the funding for WMW activities.

Following, on 20, 21, 22 and 23 of the same month, the WMW International Committee will meet at the second regular meeting of 2014. The main focus of the meeting will be the preparation of different aspects of Fourth International Action such as communication, regional plans, texts in support of the action, such as on the context etc. In addition, issues also critical to the movement, such as the Strategic Plan and future demands in relation to our strategic alliances, will be discussed during the meeting.



## Europe: feminist caravan, call to action and other advances towards 4th International Action

From 10 to 12 October 2014, 60 women from 18 countries took part in the WMW European Coordination meeting, held in San Sebastian (Donostia), Bask Country. The agenda of the meeting focused on the current socio-economical-political context in the continent; the situation of the WMW and preparations of the 4th WMW International Action in each country; the practical aspects of the caravan and the writing of a common call inviting women to join the action (click [here](#) to read it). The Turkish NCB presented their detailed plans and demand that the caravan departs from the Kurdish region on the 8 March (read further information below).

### Reinforcing and expanding the WMW

The organization of a caravan as part of the European action was a proposal presented during the 9th International Meeting in Brazil. Objectives were defined in October 2013, during the European meeting in Belgium. At the meeting in Bask Country, besides deepening goals, a concrete proposal developed by the Network of Young Feminists of Europe – WMW on the functioning of the caravan, was presented and discussed.

The caravan has three dimensions. A fundamental dimension are the local stops. These can be characterized by different types and sizes of activities built either by NCBs alone, or in conjunction with members of the caravan. The stop overs are important moments to advance activities such as feminist trainings around WMW struggles and action areas. Examples of activities during these stops are workshops organized with local women, street demonstrations, big plenary sessions, press conferences, cultural activities etc. A second dimension of the caravan is its living space, that is, the coexistence amongst those women who will be doing the ongoing work of collection and transfer of struggles. A third dimension are the caravans organized on a country level, which will be joined by the caravan that is travelling from one country to another.

Several working groups preparing the different aspects of the caravan were already formed by the youth network – such as communication, activities, and food sovereignty.

### Goals of the caravan\*

- Connecting groups involved in the WMW in different countries;
- Collecting the memory of the actions taking place and transferring it from one stop to the other;
- Collecting the memory of women's struggles, making them visible and showing that they are global and intergenerational struggles;
- Establishing connection with other groups of women who wish to actively take part in the WMW;
- The caravan also is a permanent process of learning, sharing and expressing creativity as well as a process of building alliances.

\*As discussed in Bask Country. For further information, refer to the report of European meeting in Belgium.

### Strengthening local struggles and alternatives

In the public forum 'Women Resistance to Austerity and Neo-Liberal Policies', on the night of 10 October, women from Basque Country, Greece, Kurdistan, Poland and Portugal presented how neo-liberalism and conservatism resulted in austerity politics which generates more poverty and violence against women. And, in return, how women are resisting and advancing alternatives to these austerity politics. Sultan Safak, from Amed (Dyabarkir, Turkish Kurdistan), reported about the resistance by the people of Kobane (Rojava), on the border between Syria and Turkey. They are struggling to maintain autonomy over their territory against Islamic State forces with the collusion of the Turkish government and Western imperialist powers. She shared how since July 2012 there has been in place in Kobane a system of peaceful coexistence amongst communities, building solidarity and broad involvement of women.

As a way to reinforce and make visible all these resistances and alternatives and express women's solidarity, WMW Turkey is working so that the European caravan can depart from the Turkish Kurdistan (in principle, from the city of Mardin), on 8 March 2015. From there, it will pass by different cities in Turkey until arriving around 15 March in Izmir. From here, the caravan will go to Greece and other countries of Western and Eastern Europe. Strong

## Galería de fotos del encuentro del País Vasco



Picture of the group at the meeting



Public Forum 'Women Resistance to Austerity and Neo-Liberal Policies'



Plenary meeting

international presence is expected at the point of departure, with delegations organized by WMW National Coordinating Bodies. More details on activities and participation at that moment will be shared in the coming months with the NCBs. Click to read the [WMW statement of solidarity with Kurdish women in resistance](#).

A camp for feminist activists, expressing the resistance against austerity measures and neoliberal capitalism exploiting womens' work - both formal and informal

(productive and reproductive) will take place in Poland during summer, probably in July.

The final stop over of the caravan will be in Portugal, around the dates of 12 to 17 October 2015. This will be the other main point of gathering of WMW in the continent. All European NCBs are expected to be present. More details of the program of these two key moments will be worked out by the Turkish and Portuguese NCBs.

### Caravan's itinerary and provisory schedule

After many consultations with NCBs, WMW Young Feminists Network presented a first draft itinerary and key stop overs of the caravan. NCBs shared their national plans and which moments they could receive the caravan. In general, six large routes are planned (for further information, see the maps):

More details about the 4th international action in Europe can be found at: <http://www.marchemondiale.org/actions/2015> (website link - provisional). For questions about how to engage in different moments of the caravan, write to email: [femvan@marchemondiale.org](mailto:femvan@marchemondiale.org).

### EUROPEAN CARAVAN'S PROVISIONAL ITINERARY

8-15 March	Turkey (Mardin, Diyarbakir, Antiokya, Antalya, Mugla, Izmir)
End March-April	Greece /Balkans/ Bulgaria/ Romania (The order still to be confirmed).
May - Jun	Italy > Switzerland (14-25 May) > France (6-7 Jun in Nantes) > Belgium
July - August	Poland (Feminist camp) > Germany (Women Festival in late July Franckfurt) > Austria
September-October	Italy > France (September 19, Marseille) > Catalonia > Basque Country > Galicia > Portugal
12-17 October	Portugal



To see the updated map: <http://mapq.st/1zNMAKO>

## ÁFRICA

### The World March of Women at the SADC People's Summit

The International Exhibition Centre in Bulawayo, the second largest city of Zimbabwe, was the venue for the latest South African region's People's Summit which took place on 15th and 16th August. Around 2,500 people from different grass roots organizations, movements and religious organizations, from different countries in the region, came together to debate, forge alliances and build alternatives collectively.

The People's Summit is takes place each year in parallel with the Summit of Heads of State of the region, to remind the zone's leaders, and the whole world, and you cannot have politics without citizen support.

Work began with a cultural session that welcomed all the participants, offered messages of solidarity to the Palestinian people, and to the many activists from Swaziland who remain in prison for expressing their political opinions and demanding the democratisation of the country.

The summit's slogan: "Reclaiming SADC for People's Development-SADC Resources for SADC People" expresses our political position, contrary to imposed regionalism, which imposes a development agenda dominated by the interests of large corporations and companies, and which renders people's needs invisible, as well as the human development of peoples. After the opening event came the work of the commissions, which was organized around the central themes of the region's agenda, and whose principal conclusions were integrated into the Summit Communiqué, which was handed over to the Summit of Heads of State, at Victoria Falls.

The World March of Women, through the National Coordinations of Zimbabwe and Mozambique, accompanied by members of the International Secretariat, participated in panels on "Feminism and Building the Movement in the Region", "Energy, the Mining Industry and Climate Change" and "Demanding Dignity for Women in the SADC Region". In the three panels several points in common stood out, including concern over the increase in gender-based violence, the irreparable consequences that forced marriages and teenage pregnancies have on women's lives, as

well as the seizure of land and other agro-projects that put the food sovereignty of communities and families at grave risk.

The commissions concluded with the formulation of a series of demands made to the Heads of State of the region from the women. The main message coming from the work groups was the demand for an end to the patriarchal system, and the sexist and discriminatory cultural norms that oppress women, limit their rights and make their empowerment difficult was the principal message from the work



groups. Furthermore, the importance of women's right to land ownership, as well as the availability of financial resources for the development of local agriculture and access to the markets was underlined, to promote in this way the economic independence of women, and the food sovereignty of families and communities.

In addition, the need to strengthen legislation to protect women, their bodies and their dignity was discussed, and the large gaps in the implementation of legislation and policies that promote gender equality and the protection of women and girls from violence were condemned.

The lack of progress in implementing the SADC protocol of free movement of peoples was strongly criticised, with the reporting of difficulties and harassment from customs and border officials, which greatly hindered movement within the region, in many cases hampering the work of the network and also the organisation of the movement.

Furthermore, the groups demanded from their leaders a real commitment to ending human and sexual

trafficking, which affects women and girls in a much more alarming way.

The summit ended on the 16th August, with the commemoration of the second anniversary of the massacre of Marikana, when 34 miners who had been protesting for a decent salary were brutally assassinated by the South African police. Next, the Declaration of Bulawayo was read, which ends with

words that reinforce our commitment to the fight until our demands are respected. Afterwards, the traditional People's March took place, along through the centre of the city towards the City Hall, with the objective of bringing our messages to the Zimbabwean government in the city. In this way

**“Women on the march, until we are all free”.**



## Saharawi woman, symbol of strength

Saharawi women in the occupied areas of Western Sahara have become targets of repression, suffering almost daily clashes and violence by the Moroccan army. Many women have been raped and then brutally murdered. Moroccan prisons are full of Saharawi women, whose only crime was to have organized peaceful demonstrations to defend their rights. Some sisters have been in prison for more than ten years, under inhumane conditions imposed on them. Many felt sick physically and psychologically.

In spite of this, women have shown great strength and courage. They reinforce their position every day about different spheres of life - social, economic and political. They contribute greatly to building Sahrawi society, advocating for more justice, participatory and social democracy.

In Sahrawi society, women have a prominent role in the fields of education, health and the management of refugee camps. They are the ones who manage the camps, clinics, kindergartens and schools and educate the children.

In the last decade, women hold more positions at the top of the Polisario Front. They have also reinforced their presence in decision making positions in the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) and significantly improved their educational and

professional level. This was possible, among other things, thanks to the changes lived within the National Union of Saharawi Women (UNMS, acronym in Spanish) which, alongside with the agenda for national independence, has targeted the specific needs of



women, the struggle for women's emancipation and for more equitable gender relations between women and men. Among others

For further information and to support the Sahrawi cause with demonstrations of solidarity, please contact Chaba Seny (email: [chaba.seiny@yahoo.es](mailto:chaba.seiny@yahoo.es)).



**“Saharawi women are prepared to live in peace, but as women there are still many things to achieve and consolidate”**

## Objetivos de la UNMS:

- Sensitize all women about their position in society and their role in national independence.
- Raising awareness about their social and political rights to promote their effective participation in the present and future.
- To fight for the emancipation of women, supporting them in deepening their knowledge and political and professional training.
- Orientating the women about the role they can play in the independent Sahrawi nation and in preserving the achievements of the process of national liberation.
- Deepening the role of family, especially around education, to ensure equal education for girls and boys, based on respect and equality in society.
- Educate women about the importance of health prevention.
- Promote actions of solidarity with compatriots in occupied areas, constantly facing the Moroccan aggression, victims of violence and human rights violations.

## EUROPE

### WMW in Switzerland: training, solidarity and action are axis of mobilization

Since late August, the WMW National Coordination in Switzerland is taking part in an innovative partnership project. The main axis is the exchange of capacities between activists from the South (WMW Brazil) and the North (WMW Switzerland). As part of this process, meetings with women's groups in Bern, Neuchâtel, Geneva, Fribourg, La Chaux de Fonds and Lugano were carried out. These meetings had different subjects, such as presenting and informing what is the WMW as a permanent movement, discussing concrete steps toward the actions in 2015, debating the national and global context and preparing WMW actions related to the Swiss context.

The Swiss women are preparing their 2015 action around four main moments: A national demonstration



on 7 March, at Bern (the capital); exchanging and planting seeds on 8 March, with a view to collecting the plants at the end of the action, on 17 October; actions on 24 April denouncing the role of multinationals in exploiting the workforce and undermining the rights of workers worldwide. And, finally, the reception of the WMW European feminist caravan, which will be in Switzerland from 14 to 25 May. The idea is that the caravan will be received on the border between Italy and Italian Switzerland and will pass through the German-Swiss (with actions to denounce transnational corporations and violence against women). From there, it will stop over in Geneva, where an important national WMW meeting will take place. At this event, training workshops, demonstration, cultural activities

and exchange with participants of the caravan will be held.

## Training and alliances

Training for action has been a key component of the meetings in Switzerland. In one of the workshops carried out, the focus was food sovereignty from a women's perspective. Here, it was discussed how women are responsible by selection, preservation and transmission of the diversity of seeds, which are a common good of humanity. Also it was demonstrated how such activity is threatened by the imposition of industrialized agriculture, based on the sale of transgenic seeds, the associated sale of pesticides and financing packages. All these mechanisms take away the autonomy of small farmers, establishing dependence.

Ulrika Minkner, peasant women member of Uniterri/Via Campesina, a WMW allied movement, was a key participant in the workshop. She reported how women farmers in Switzerland face violence in their homes, lack of access to means of production and how they are involved in the struggle for food sovereignty. In late September, the Uniterri launched a proposal for a national referendum



to inscribe food sovereignty in their constitution. This initiative aims to promote deep restructuring of land policy in the country in order to benefit local and small agriculture in Switzerland and worldwide. Over 120,000 signatures is needed so that demand can be carried forward. WMW actions from now until 2015 are moments of awareness and promotion of this initiative.

## “Batucada” (drums) to fight xenophobia

Another way to bring women together and discuss the national context were the “batucada” (drums) workshops, where women built instruments, slogans, songs and posters against the initiative called 'Ecopop'. Using arguments such as the defense of the environment and decrease of production, this initiative seeks to close the borders of Switzerland to the entrance of immigrants, especially those coming from poorest or countries under conflict. In the workshops, slogans were developed to deconstruct Ecopop false arguments, showing their racist, xenophobic, sexist and capitalist character. The same were sung in a big demonstration held on the 1st of November, in Bern.

## MIDDLE EAST- ARAB WORLD

### World Social Forum in Tunisia: preparations continues parallel to legislative elections

Tunisia, which will host the next edition of the World Social Forum (WSF), to be held between 24 and 28 March 2015, is living these days in a flurry of activity in the context of the legislative elections held on October 26, nearly four years after the start of the Arab Spring. These precede the presidential elections, which will take place in December. Nidaa Tounes, a secular party, was recently announced as winner of the election, against its main opponent, the Islamist party Ennahda. WMW in Tunisia, along with other organizations and movements of civil society, have been actively involved in the campaign as election observers, taking

part in solidarity actions with female candidates, promoting the mobilization of women to vote, etc.

Next WSF is under construction within this complex political landscape. On 31 October and 1st November, the WSF International Council (IC) met. Souad Mahmoud and Wilhemina Trout (via Skype) were our delegates at the meeting. Besides preparation of WSF event, the agenda focused on the history and development of the WSF, as well as on the organization and distribution of tasks among IC members and the WSF Secretariat.

## ALLIANCES AND MOBILIZATIONS

### Social movements mobilize: change the system not the climate!

Around 130 delegates from different countries and networks of social movements met from 14 to 18 July in Caracas, Venezuela, to discuss actions around climate change. Rosa Guillen (Perú) y Emilia Castro (Quebec) represented the World March of Women in this meeting. Recently, from 4 to 7 November, social movements met again in Caracas to follow up this process parallel to the United Nations countries meeting of ministers responsible for environment.

The National Coordination Bodies (NCBs) in Brazil and Peru, especially through Tica Moreno and Rosa Guillen, are actively contributing with analyzes, practices and

feminist guidelines to the debates emerging from this process. This will culminate this year with the 20th United Nations Conference of Parties on Climate Change (COP-20), to be attended by many heads of state, in Lima, Peru, from 9 to 12 December. In parallel to this UN meeting, a People's Summit will take place from 8 to 11 December and WMW, with our allied social movements, is working to advance our positions and guidelines issued in our international meetings.

For further information, click to read the Declaration of Margarita on climate change.

[http://www.precopsocial.org/sites/default/files/archivos/margarita\\_declaration\\_on\\_climate\\_change.pdf](http://www.precopsocial.org/sites/default/files/archivos/margarita_declaration_on_climate_change.pdf)



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