

The Women's International Democratic Federation held its XV Congress in Brazil in April 2012 and delegates from forty nine countries pledged to continue the fight for peace, full employment and equality. The final statement made it clear that the current world crisis is not simply one of debt or the failure of management by neo liberal or social democratic governments, but the crisis of the capitalist system itself.

The statement went on to deplore the destruction of the environment that exacerbated a food crisis particularly in Africa and Asia, and condemned continuing inter-imperialist aggression that increased the likelihood of war, with women and children being the first victims of wars and occupations.

The Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), founded after the Second World War, was the first women's mass organisation in history. It evolved as a result of the efforts of women worldwide to unite in the cause for an everlasting peace between nations and creating the conditions for guaranteeing real equality for women and for the protection of children. It inspired the creation of women's organisations in many countries and led to the formation of the National Assembly of Women (NAW) here in Britain.

As the only British affiliate to the WIDF, the NAW has been able to share experiences with sisters from all over the world by taking part in the UN 4th World Congress of Women in Beijing in 1995; participating in conferences in America, Cuba and China and sending delegates to last month's XV Congress of the WIDF in Brazil.

In summing up the WIDF XV Congress, the great American campaigner and WIDF delegate to the UN, Vinie Burrows said: " Our earth and all living things may be on the verge of extinction: climate change, global warming, and environmental degradation are real threats in a world of 9 billion people where one percent live lavishly and avariciously, consuming one-quarter of the world's total resources while the rest of us, the 99%, struggle along for work, for bread, for shelter, for dignity and for political power to change our lives".

She concluded by reading the words of the great Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish:

THINK OF OTHERS

As you prepare your breakfast, think of others

Don't forget to feed the pigeons. As you conduct your wars – think of others. Don't forget those who want peace

As you go home, your own home – think of others – don't forget those who live in tents

And as you think of others, think of yourself and say "I wish I were a candle in the darkness".