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THEME 1

Imperialist wars, aggression and Peace challenges

The history of imperialism is marked by aggression; the pretexts it claimed to launch its aggressive wars were the support of the principles of democracy and public freedom. As usual, women's loss was duplicated as a result of such aggressions.

In order to secure natural resources, European powers in the 19th Century and later on the USA started exploiting resources and people all over the globe, the pretext used then was civilizing and advancing other nations. Imperialism's tools have been developed over time to include direct occupation, aggravating regional conflicts, NATO forces, military basis, international economic agreements and preemptive wars.

This work sheet presents an overview of the different tools used by imperialist powers to take over resources and suppress any form of opposition. In addition, the paper makes clear that the Imperialism constitutes a real challenge to the world peace, especially to people's security.

Today, US- imperialistic policies are threatening national sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries. Almost all recent interventions of imperialists in all regions caused divisions of countries and separation of peoples by war and blood.

For instance, unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo has been the latest and dramatic example of the "divide and rule" policy of imperialism. Separatist ideas and movements are supported and manipulated by imperialism. The so-called independent states formed by division of present states turn out to be nothing but protectorates, which serve as bases for imperialistic activities. It is therefore important that the world peace movement take a firm stance against this "divide and rule" policy of imperialism and that the notions of national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the states should be more strongly emphasized.

Another threat for world peace and humanitarian values today is the strengthening of reactionary, fundamentalist, conservative and racist ideologies throughout the world, a development that is facilitating the rule of the capitalists and imperialists.

The global implementation of neo-liberal policies is worsening the economic situation of the working people and of the peoples in general in both developed and developing countries. The promotion of capitalist restructuring and neo-liberal policies with the withdrawal of workers' gains and the implementation of flexible forms of employment, the abolition of collective agreements and the generalized privatizations in all sectors are causing an increase in poverty, unemployment, hunger and misery. Social problems and tensions are on the rise.

International relations are becoming more and more militarized. The European Union is more frequently taking aggressive stances in its international relations vis a vis the resolution of latent and emerging conflicts, or prolonged and ongoing wars. The complicity of the European Union with NATO, a self-appointed aggressive alliance of world jurisdiction, is not only a danger to peace in the world but as well a dangerous and self-destructive policy for the peoples of Europe. Further, the NATO continues to be one of the greatest threats for the peoples of the world. Wherever NATO intervenes, basic principles of international law and the Founding Charter of the UN are being flagrantly violated. Yugoslavia had been the field for the application of the new NATO doctrine previously, Afghanistan occupation is undertaken by NATO troops. As you know, the expansion of NATO is threatening the whole world

Moreover, the concept of "war against terror", amongst others, is used by imperialists to limit the democratic right of the people especially in European and North American countries. In the recent period authoritarianism, policing and the offensive against democratic rights and liberties have become harsher with bloody attacks by the police and other repressive forces. The CIA activity has been officially disclosed, with its illegal abductions and arrests of hundreds of innocent citizens being made with the agreement of European governments, along with the use of European airports for their transport. A monstrous monitoring system has been set up, ranging from cameras spying on all of people's activities all the way to the establishment of databases including DNA files.

At the same time, the ideological offensive is growing and the falsification of history is being pushed so as to justify the crimes of imperialism. Any country that does not submit is considered, under imperialism, to be undemocratic and any person that resists is considered to be a terrorist. An attempt is under way to revive fascism in Europe.

As for the nuclear threat, peoples of the world are still faced with the threat of nuclear war,

represented by the US policy of pre-emptive nuclear attack. The so-called North Korean nuclear crisis also has clearly established the discriminatory nature of the NPT regime. With development and perfection of nuclear technologies and delivery systems by imperialism, the possibility of establishment of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones has become completely redundant. Elimination of nuclear weapons is an urgent task for all humanity.

US administration applies “double standards” for nuclear weapons in order to legitimize the aggression against Iran, although the alleged weapons programmer of Iran stands thoroughly exposed with the latest National Intelligence Estimates by the official US agencies, meanwhile Israel is left unquestioned about its nuclear arsenal.

Besides, the ongoing US and NATO military intervention in Afghanistan is a deliberate attempt to seize cross-roads of South, Central and Western Asia. The situation in South Asia is grave with the growth and intensity of religious fundamentalism and continuing ethnic conflicts. In most cases, in addition to the specific internal factors, the situation has been exacerbated by direct and indirect intervention of imperialism. The continued presence of NATO forces in Afghanistan has led to the disquiet of the people in parts of Pakistan, particularly in the Paki-Afghan border. The growth of fundamentalist forces on the one hand and the continued US support to the military backed presidency in Pakistan has led to the tragic assassination of Benazir Bhutto. In Bangladesh, also the demand for holding of democratic elections is being sought to be postponed by a virtual military backed administration supported by the US and other imperialist powers.

On the other hand, the occupation of Iraq is the best indicator of the imperialist barbarism and oppression imposed on mankind. Iraq has been turned into a war yard between political Islamic and Western governments and its allies. Both poles handed power to hostile forces that practiced oppression on people and women.

In Sri Lanka, the ethnic conflicts demand an early political solution. As imperialist machinations that divert attention through these conflicts and undermine the just quest for peace, unity and development the people of South Asia marked by intense poverty, hunger, illiteracy and unemployment. Also, the Nepali people's struggle for establishment of democracy and demands of the release of all political prisoners in Burma, Nag Sung Kyi .

In the same context, there is an on-going dangerous realignment of US forces in Asia including Japan, along with Okinawa and the Republic of Korea, with the aim of globalizing the US policy of pre-emptive war. So, the USA is attempting to make its allies in Asia and the Pacific work with NATO. Imperialist powers are also putting pressure to fail the Korean people's attempts to achieve a peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula according to the June 15th Joint Declaration made between North and South Korea, while the Vietnamese are still suffering where more than one million victims of the toxic “Agent Orange” used by the USA in their dirty war against Vietnam due to the use of chemical weapons.

In Latin America, the new political reality in the region is a growing stronghold of resistance against imperialism in the current world. After powerful social and political struggles undertaken against neoliberalism, the peoples inflicted significant defeats on imperialism. These processes have, as an aim, seeking for their own and sovereign paths by their nations and the confrontation to imperialist hegemony in the region especially the experiences came from Cuba, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia and others that face the open threats and intimidations from imperialism. Add to that, the acts of the reactionary forces of the local oligarchy to overthrow the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela in collaboration with the USA and its allies in the region and Europe. The secessionist intentions of the oligarchy in Bolivia aim to halt efforts for constructing a society of justice, peace, and solidarity in accordance with the wishes of the people. The attacks made by Colombia on Ecuador, which are explicitly the new phase of Plan Colombia, and which represent the attempts to impose US imperialism's strategy of pre-emptive war on the region.

The existence of foreign bases throughout Latin America, including the ones in Honduras (Forward Operational Locations) and the School of the Americas in El Salvador, the US blockade against Cuba, the ongoing captivation of the Five Cuban political prisoners held unlawfully in the USA, the escalation in the developments on the "imperialist chessboard" of the Balkans, with the separatist and unilateral declaration of "independence" of the Kosovo, the new act of violation of the sovereignty of Serbia as an independent state, and the flagrant intervention and support by the NATO and USA in the Turkish invasion on Cyprus are clear examples on the imperialist flagrant violations of the International law and the relevant UN resolutions.

In this regard, there is a certain weakness in the activities of the United Nations in the field of preventive diplomacy and mediation for the UN and the security council to play their part to build system of lasting international peace and security, avoiding conflicts that kill civilians and sacrifice the plant's sustainable development, it becomes necessary to redefine its structure and well-established mechanisms building mutual trust between states and peoples. Even the Security Council should incorporate the new non-military dimension of international security. The UN did not take any direct positive measures to deter the imperialist dominant ambitions; on the contrary, it was dominated by the USA which weakened its role, so the UN silence encouraged the hostile forces to expand its aggressive wars and interventions.

On the other hand, the deployment of US "Missile Defense Shield" of Poland and the Czech Republic is used as a pretext for its plans to construct US military bases of the missile defense system in the Czech Republic and Poland. The real reason is to gain ability to make its first strike without any fear of a counter-strike.

On the other hand, the U.S military are looking to stay in Africa under the "AFRICOM project-the United States Africa Command", presented by the U.S government as an effective restructuring of institutions as well as the program of aid to African government for humanitarian operations and security. However, it presents the institutionalization and increased funding of the model of bilateral military relations. Thus, the U.S.A will be increasingly involved in conflicts, strengthen their alliance with repression powers and excuse the violation of human rights instead of promoting viable multilateralism for the achievement and maintenance of peace in Africa.

The Pentagon has directed six commands of the geographical point of view, namely in Africa (AFRICOM), the Middle East and Central Asia (Central commandment CENTCOM), in Europe and former Soviet Union (European Command or EUCOM), in Pacific Ocean, East Asia and the South America (Pacific Command or PACOM), in Mexico, Canada and the United States (Northern Command or North Com) and in Central America and South America (South Command or South COM) as well as others who have functional responsibilities as the special force and nuclear weapons.

The most significant example of U.S military intervention in Africa was in Somalia, through the task force, command joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, with the presence of naval and air patrol in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden AND THE EASTERN Indian Ocean, whose purpose would be to prevent the activities of terrorist groups in the region.

However, permanent bases were established, one based on a naval base at Manda Bay, Kenya, and two in Hurso and Bilate in Ethiopia.

Africa is the target of new economic and political interference and exploitation by old and neo-colonial rulers, aiming in the further plundering of its resources and at the same time ground for distribution of new markets. The imperialist imposition of economic sanctions on countries which do not comply with the wish of the powerful regimes, under the pretext of lack of democracy, violates human rights, i.e. the economic sanctions imposed by the USA and the EU against the Zimbabwean people.

The presence of numerous European and military bases and increased deployment of military forces in Africa (namely the EU mission in Chad and the Central African Republic) are cases for deep concern considering the past and in view of future developments in that continent. Imperialism expresses a tendency to intervene in the region by using, as a pretext, the internal conflicts like what happened in Sudan.

Under the pretext of Freedom and democracy, the imperialist powers used the need of the Libyan people for protection and inserted its forces and plans to place military bases and take over the Libyan oil using the slogan of freedom and democracy. The war in Libya as well as the imperialist intervention of Libya in the 20th century were justified by the so called disregard of human rights; it was never clarified the central issue of who has the right to judge and arbitrate on that.

Palestine: Occupation, blockade and multiple losses for women

The Israeli blockade of Gaza Strip affected all the living aspects, the poverty and unemployment rates increased, Israel prevented the entry of funds to the Strip, the situation has been reached its peak since the begging of military operation against Gaza Strip in December, 27, 2008 until the announcement of the unilateral cease fire by Israel in January 18, 2009 and then by Hamas movement and other Palestinian factions. As a result of the war, 1314 were killed, including 412 children and 110 women, 5300 wounded, including 1855 children and 795 women.

Some indicators of the relationship between the occupation and discrimination in the social and economical fields are shown as follows:

*The registered refugees in UNRWA constitutes around half a million of Palestinians, the majority lives in refugees' camps in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Diaspora.

*Israel has detained more than 11 thousands of Palestinian prisoners including 350 children and 62 women.

*Israel has confiscated 256.878 dunms from the Palestinian lands and uprooted more than 1.189.412 trees from September 28 and November 2010. 12% of women are working in agriculture.

*Since 1987, Israel has demolished 4.361 houses and hundreds of buildings, made hundreds of our people displaced and homeless.

*The unemployment rate in the Palestinian territories reached 28% in 2008, taking into consideration the differences between the West Bank rates (20%) and Gaza Strip (45%).

*Although the unemployment rate amongst men (29%) is higher than women (23%), the detailed indicators show that the blockade impact affected women much more than men, women are in need to work, i.e. the unemployment rate amongst women in Gaza is 43% compared to 15% amongst women in the West Bank, it reached 21% amongst men in the West Bank and 45% in Gaza.

*Unemployment rates amongst refugees reach (31%) compared to non-refugees (26%). At the same time, the rural areas registered 53% in Gaza and 24% in the West Bank. The rate of unemployment amongst women in rural areas in Gaza is 47%. The rate of unemployment of single women in Gaza is 60% and 46% for the young women from (20-24yreaes) in Gaza compared to 40%, in the West Bank, for young men of the same age.

*The Israeli blockade increased the unemployment amongst men how have worked previously in the Israeli market, which forced them to return to the local market and compete women on the available low paid work. This problem led to the withdrawal of women from the market and face poverty one again. This replacement obliged women to work in home services with lower salaries and unfair conditions. As a result, men who left the market faced psychological and emotional crises that affected the family stability.

*The (700) Israeli chick points humiliated women; the Palestinian families hesitated to send their girls to schools especially those who came from marginalized and rural areas and were compelled to cross the check point.

*The statistics show that the Israeli check points which prevent women to access the hospitals for required treatment caused were the direct reason behind women death on chick points, where 69 women have gave birth on the check point, 37 aborted and 5 died.

Conclusion:

The imperialistic powers are pursuing polices of self-interest that causing huge miseries for peoples and nations. On the other hand, the armed conflicts and the foreign occupying forces intervention have dangerous impacts on the sustainable development, instability and the lack of peace and discipline which lead to the decline of economy, the destruction of infrastructure and the plans drawn by the state. The current situation atomically increased unemployment, poverty, and resulted in the halt of economic projects and the flow of capital to the local markets.

The people of the world need to continue to reject all forms of imperial hegemony over their states and nations, military direct occupation, and the UN selective implementation of sanctions that are used to oppress freedom seekers. Imperialism has different tools in different areas in order to force its project, it wants to control resources and keep people in poverty.

On behalf of the free people and nations all around the world, we demand the unconditional release of the 5 Cuban patriots, the lift of unjust blockades throughout the world, the closure of military bases and the cessation of foreign intervention. In its place, it is our hope that the culture of peace is adopted by all unconditionally so that all peoples can live in freedom and in harmony.

THEME 2

THE CAPITALIST CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT ON WOMEN

In our meetings at São Paulo on 2009 and Maputo on 2010 the economic crisis was identified as capitalist and inevitable in the course of capitalism.

The capitalist crisis which simultaneously occurred in imperialist centers such as the U.S., the EU, and Japan and embraced many capitalist countries was deep, while the weak recovery that followed leads to a new crisis.

It is widely claimed that this is a financial-debit crisis, a debt crisis, a crisis of mismanagement of public finances, casino-capitalism. Others argue, putting the blame on the peoples “who have taken loans and have spent money as greedy consumers”, etc.

In our opinion the question concerning the real character of this crisis can only be answered as follows: it is a capitalist financial crisis. What does this mean? Over-accumulated profits that cannot be invested in order to bring even more profits; Overproduction of goods that cannot be sold in a way that can secure a satisfying profit rate for the capitalists. This happens because the law and the driving force of capitalism are capital and profit. When these cannot be reproduced at an increasing rate, a crisis occurs. In capitalism, monopoly enterprises decide on the kind and the quantity of the goods to be produced according to the profit that will be cashed in. The crisis leads to partial destruction of capital and working forces. That is, on one hand we have enterprises closures, and machines become useless and on the other hand there is unemployment for thousands of workers.

It is not the first time, that the world experiences such a crisis. Crises of capitalism have also appeared previously. Let's remember the crisis of 1929-1933, at the beginning of the '70s, in 1997 with the so-called “Asian tigers”, in Russia in 1998, in Argentina and other countries of Latin America. The question is if a possibility for better management of capitalism exists, so that such crises can be avoided. Historical experience, that confirms the Marxist theory, proves that there is no such possibility, since, whichever management measures passed in the past by the bourgeois governments- either neo-liberal or social-democratic- did not managed to cancel the manifestation of new crisis circles that followed.

In the European Union that is currently experiencing a profound and prolonged crisis, the EU member states governments, the Brussels directorate, the Mass Media, they all claim that the problem lies in the “debt crisis”. Similar are the opinions expressed for the US economy in 2011. The claim of a “debt crisis” deliberately conceals the truth about the character of the crisis hiding its real substance.

In Greece, for instance, which was the first weak link of the EU, the enlargement of the public debt, is one of the consequences of the capitalist crisis. The public debt was enlarged due to the astronomical governmental funds and the tax exemptions for the big capitalists, the huge military expenditures for the NATO's plans, the huge expenditures for the Olympic Games and the exposure of the domestic production to the competition in the liberated EU market. Consequently, what happened is that the money was given out to the big capitalists and not to the workers. The manifestation of the capitalist crisis sharpens the consequences of the country's over-indebtedness. The same thing is also happening today.

In fact, it is the crisis emergence that has contributed both to the increase of the public sector annual deficit and the expansion of the public debt. This was effected through the reduction of tax revenue both due to the reduction of economic activity (e.g. reduced turnover, businesses closures, unemployment increase etc.) and due to the financial assistance packages provided to the banks and other monopolies.

The crisis effect to the public debt expansion is obvious throughout the entire EU since the total debt has increased by 34% in the last 4 years. The IMF notices in one of its reports that “*public debt in the advanced economies is expected to rise from the pre- crises level of 75% to about 110% of gross domestic product in 2014.*” It also points out that the major part of this increase derives from the reduction of state income due to the crisis and the state financial assistance packages provided to the financial sector. Those opinions that attribute the reasons of the crisis to management policies, blaming the neo-liberal management, they conceal the activity of the exploiting capitalist system law. Such voices attempt to hide the facts about the history of crises which prove that such crises occur in the course of the time regardless of the social-democratic or the neo-liberal management. Such crises express the intensification of the system's contradictions, the anarchy and unevenness of capitalist

production, the over accumulation of capitals collected in the upturn phase of economy by exploiting the labor power. In short, they attempt to hide the capital- labor contradiction.

How does the crisis affect the lives of the people?

Nowadays, the peoples of Europe face the most cruel, brutal and anti-popular attack against their rights by the plutocracy, the IMF, the EU and the policies of neoliberal and social democratic parties. These forces have declared a war against the peoples of Europe to promote harder and anti-labor measures.

We know that the anti-popular attack will not stop if the public debt is reduced or if there is a slight financial upturn, because both social democratic and neo-liberal governments follow the EU policies. **The EU strategy targets at obtaining cheaper labor force in order to support the profitability of its monopoly groups. This has started long before the outbreak of the current crisis. With the Maastricht Treaty, the Lisbon strategy and continues with a new strategy, the "Europe 2020" and the Competitiveness Pact (Euro Plus Pact). The EU objective is to enhance the competitiveness of the European monopolies, not only against those of the U.S., Russia and Japan, but also against the powerful forces of Brazil, India and China by providing much cheaper labor.**

The capitalists fortify the competitiveness of the capital while the working class has paid with their blood, sweat and tears during the period of high development rate and profitability, and they pay even more during the phase of the crisis. They pay both when the debt is high and when it decreases. Hence the escalation of the anti-popular attack and the promotion of restructurings, according to the strategy "Europe 2020" is now common in all the EU member- states and affects men and women workers: **in Germany**, where there is no financial derailment and the pace of financial recovery is slightly increasing; **in Britain and Denmark**- two countries that are not in the euro zone; **in France** - a country among the most powerful EU economies.

On the other hand, in Greece, Ireland, Britain, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Germany, there is reduction in salaries, thousands of workers are being dismissed and the social security benefits are being cut, while **the sum disposed as an aid to the European banks**, within two years¹, has exceeded 4.6 trillion Euros, and the European monopolist groups have 1.17 trillion Euros in cash².

But what does the "Europe 2020" strategy provide for? It provides for:

- The general implementation of the notorious "flexicurity" and job rotation (employment-unemployment), in conjunction with the so- called "lifelong learning", "training and retraining" and the "mobility" of workers
- The abolition of Collective Labor Agreements and the implementation of company and individual employment contracts
- The radical reduction in salaries and pensions
- The raise of the retirement age and generally the commercialization and privatization of Social Security, Health, Welfare and Education.
- The provision of capital massive sums from the State coffers to the capitalists in the form of subsidies and incentives and in the name of "green development"; the exemptions from tax and contributions, as well as through the intensification of the exploitation of workers etc.

The stress is particularly put on the so-called "**flexibility and security**". In the name of avoiding the risk of poverty, they propose to workers, and especially working mothers, to find flexible jobs, with less working and social security rights; through "lifelong learning", training and retraining, these workers will constantly change jobs and through mobility, they will change not only their employer, but also the place and country of work. They claim that in this way people can work and at the same time can meet their more extensive family commitments. Flexible working relations are presented as the solution for the women who have to combine family and working life, ignoring the fact that the working women survive on starvation wages, fail to collect the necessary social security points in order to retire and are exposed to poverty because of these employment policies.

In the headquarters of Brussels, they know that they are facing a deep capitalist crisis. They hide from the workers that the system that produces seeking for profit instead of covering people's needs, inevitably manifests a crisis of overproduction. This is why nowadays, for example, thousands of new

¹ Commission 2/12/2010

² Commission 2/12/2010

houses remain unsold in Greece, while, thousands of young couples face great difficulties in paying off the rent or the building loan.

For the monopolies, these measures, which increase the degree of exploitation and also create the potential for a sufficient profit for the capitalists through the privatizations, the “liberation” of key sectors of the economy, the selling of public land and property, are a one-way street.

The conflict between the member states of the Euro area has to do with how the losses caused by the crisis will be split within the leading class; namely which part of the capitalists is going to lose, which are the conditions of the controlled bankruptcy of the weaker parts of capital, so that the bigger ones can survive. This means the degradation of the weaker capitalists through merging and closing of enterprises.

USA

In the USA, the “debt crisis” is used as a weapon of mass disorientation. The Obama government leads an expansive management policy, whose basic feature is the give-out of huge governmental financial packages for the support of enterprises. It is a policy that leads to an increase of the debt and the deficit. In agreement with the Republicans, the government maintains, for another two years (2010-2011) the tax exemptions for the big capitalists, which will bring losses to the public income, as high as 700 billion dollars. At the same time, they decided on a temporary halt of the increase in public workers' wages during those two years, always in a tight agreement with the Republicans, using also the “services” of the compromised trade union movement. These measures affect 2,000,000 public workers.

The cuts prepared by the Congress and President Obama, regard mainly the social expenditures. There are 59 million uninsured people living in the USA today.

There is also an increase in children's mortality rate. The USA stands just before the last position in the list of industrially developed countries, where 7 out of a thousand children die at birth.

In 2009, 1 out of 5 children officially lived below the poverty level, while every 42 seconds, a child is abused or abandoned, this being another manifestation of the tragic consequences of poverty, inequality and the lack of social programs.

The rate of unemployment stands at 10%. In a total of 238.9 million workers, 108.6 million are either unemployed, or working part-time, or considered to be “outside the work market”.

There are 50 million Americans living on charity meals. The number of workers that have lost their houses due to unpaid bank loans, in the US, between 2007 and 2009, reaches 4 million.

According to estimations, this number increased by 1 million in 2010 and it is expected to rise by 20% during 2011, since another 4.5 million house mortgages are in the process of being seized. While the Obama government, like the Bush government previously, offers tax exemptions, along with pure money to the capitalists, the total wealth of the 400 billionaires in the USA, increases astronomically, reaching 1.5 trillion dollars.

During 2009 and in the middle of one of the greatest economic crises that the world has experienced, according to the “Fortune” magazine, the 500 biggest US monopolies have increased their profits by 335%, while their revenue went up to 391 billion dollars. That year, these same monopolies dismissed 821,000 workers. And while the US economy faces the greatest economic crisis since 1929, there is a shift in the global economy correlation of forces. Countries like China, India, Brazil and Russia presented big growth rates, especially when compared to the US and the EU, where the economic growth was moderate or anemic.

In different studies before the crisis, it was predicted, that if this trend continued, in 20 to 30 years, China would become the greatest economy of the world and new powers would eventually lead to new alliances and a new international balance.

These developments were accelerated by the capitalist crisis. The acceleration of the changes in the correlation of forces, brought on by the crisis, has not been stabilized yet, since many developments will depend on when and under which conditions there will be a real revitalization in the USA.

On the other hand, China, despite the international regression, shows an increase of more than 10% in its GDP in 2010 and has now become the second greatest economy in the world, whereas many of the most powerful “developing” countries are expected to have a greater growth rate than the USA in the next years. This shift in the correlation of forces leads to changes in the international imperialist alliances. This trend led to the evolution of G7+1 to G-20. A series of new decisions, made at international level, but also the most important issues that constitute the international meetings' agenda, are indicative of the constantly developing change in the correlation of forces.

In the USA, the “debt crisis” is used as a weapon of mass disorientation. The Obama government disposes huge state aid packages in order to support the enterprises, while in agreement with the Republicans it allocates enormous tax exemptions for big capital. At the same time, it reduces social security benefits and freezes the wages of the civil servants. Unemployment is very high (it has reached 10%), almost 60 million workers have no insurance, while 50 million Americans are fed with charity meals.

On the other hand, the developing capitalist forces, Brazil, Russia, India, China and S. Africa, all members of the BRICS, deal with the capitalist crisis by investing in favour of the capital and intensifying the exploitation of workers. These countries have had high growth rates during the last years, but under the pressure of the capitalist crisis the developments have become faster.

One could claim that the change to the correlation of forces brought forward respective changes to the international imperialist alliances. These tendencies led to the transformation of G7+1 to G20.)

Moreover, the difficulty of the capitalist system to deal with its crisis aggravates the inter-imperialist contradictions and intensifies imperialist aggressiveness. Thus, increasing the risk of new regional conflicts in Asia, the Middle East, the Korean Peninsula, Iran, Caucasus, the Balkans and other regions. Today, the African continent is in the center of a cruel competition among the imperialist forces, because of its natural resources and the energy and goods transport routes. In this framework lies the war and the imperialist intervention against Libya. The attack of the imperialists confirms that from Iraq and Afghanistan to Libya, the oil routes are spotted with blood.

Nowadays the risks are growing bigger, since international law is the law of the imperialist interests (as it is shown by the correlation of forces in the United Nations). The new NATO strategy, the strategy of this blood-shed mechanism of the imperialists, makes the risk bigger. The NATO Summit in Lisbon, in November 2010, clarified the objective of timely and effectively suppressing every movement that fights against imperialism, in order to protect the power of the monopolies.

NATO, with its new strategic concept, is clearly defined as the global policeman for the imperialist “wolf-alliance” and the preventive war against the peoples and the anti-imperialist movements.

BRICS

The developing capitalist forces, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, which constitute the BRICS, are trying to tackle the capitalist crisis by beneficial investments and by increasing the exploitation of workers. In their last meeting, in April of 2011, they reaffirmed their support to the G-20 group. It is significant, that, during that meeting, 20 agreements were signed between China and Brazil, the most prominent of which, was the one about Foxconn, which aims at investing 12 billion dollars in Brazil, by means of harder working conditions, that have already led to 12 suicides. India, one of the fast-developing countries, manifests along with the capitalist crisis, increasing poverty rates. The people of this country (1.21 billion people) are condemned to living in conditions of poverty and without any rights or benefits. In a country that presents a real development rate of 8%, even during the capitalist crisis, 37% of the population, officially, lives below the poverty level. In reality, this number is estimated to reach 77%.

Strategic agreements with the USA, Russia and China, are estimated to have brought tenths of billions of dollars that enhance the power of capital, while fairly significant are also the agreements with Washington, under the pretence of fighting against terrorism, giving a new role to the country within the imperialist game. In this framework and under the pretext of the capitalist crisis, the domestic inflation constantly sets a new record, affecting the prices of basic commodities, which rise by 15%, of food – by 18%, while the vegetables, that constitute the basic nutrition for Indians, went up by 71%.

In Russia, while the official governmental declarations underline that the crisis is over and that the Russian economy is recovering, that the prices of natural gas and petrol are high, thus increasing the state income from exports of energy, at the same time, it can be noted that the people living below the poverty level have reached 22,9 million, which is the 1/6 of the Russian population. The increase of the minimum income support by 17%, due to a proportional increase of the prices of food and services, has contributed to the raise of the above rate, while the income has stayed the same. It seems that the development claimed by the government, obviously has to do with the number of billionaires in Russia, who increased from 62 in 2010, to 101 in 2011. Of those, 79 live in Moscow, more than in any other city in the world, having acquired their commercial “empires” during the restoration of capitalism in the ‘90s, getting their hands on public property.

The impact on the people's strata of the EU and especially the women

According to Eurostat official data, in July 2011 22.711.000 men and women were unemployed in the EU. That is a percentage of around 10%. The lead is held by Spain with around 21% whereas Latvia, Lithuania and Greece are next on the list. The greatest increase of almost five percent in one year occurred in Greece. Registered unemployment reached 16% in July 2011, while it was 11% in 2010.. The unofficial unemployment is estimated to 20%. Of course, the record is held by the women with almost 18% unemployment. Particularly the percentage of unemployed young women aged from 15 to 24 soars up to 40%. The percentage of those who receive an unemployment benefit is only 27% in total.

The European governments implement programs, pretending to fight against unemployment and also pretending to support employment. They are programs that substantially led to the strike on workers' rights and social security benefits, contribute to the commercialization of social services and their being passed on to individuals through the so-called "social enterprises".

A typical example are the "stage" programs, which have to do with the "acquisition of working experience", due to which thousands of women were forced to work without insurance, with a salary of about € 400, and now, they are once again unemployed. Programs that were abolished in the public sector, but were maintained in the private sector, offer the employers very cheap working force. Nowadays, they are preparing to implement the "social work" program. It is a program, through which the workers will be paid a part-time salary, in order to work in services of the social sector, while their employers will only have to pay for the employees' insurance. For example, in Greece, an employee shall be paid € 625 for five months' work in the social sector, while the employers are exempted from paying for his insurance, which is paid by the Greek Unemployment Agency.

Today, the EU aims at increasing the employment of women to 70%. It sounds nice, but what does it practically mean for the women? It means flexible working relations and part-time work with all the effects mentioned above. In this way, the profits of the employers' increase, the unemployment rate is concealed and one work post is shared by two or three working women. Nowadays, it is observed that in the EU countries where the unemployment rates are low, i.e. United Kingdom, the Netherlands etc. the rates of part-time employment are the highest. However, which worker can live with 400€ per month? According to recent data, in "competitive and prosperous" Germany, they boast for their unemployment rates, while 7.5 million part-time employed Germans make a living on wages of hunger. Part-time employment means half job, half retirement, half life! But we want it in total and decent! This is why we fight against this policy!

The German state in order to increase the state income did not hesitate to install park meters for prostitutes on the streets. Similarly, the Greek government decided 10 years ago to establish prostitution as a profession and put cash machines in brothels!

European women of the working class and the people's strata share their life in production and family representing cheap, flexible workforce, often used as a backup, and on the other hand, bearing the burden of care for the family needs, and particularly for the most dependant members, that is the sick, the elderly, and children. In line with the EU directives the Governments of the Member States have paved the way for a number of measures which pass the cost of services and benefits in key sectors on working people and the burden on women.

Specifically, in **the field of education** the greatest connection between education and capital is a fact; in order to serve better the latter's interests. A detailed program is being formed to serve the objective of training and skills building rather than gaining knowledge based on the principles of science and developing a critical spirit. The unitary character of education is being fragmented, and the state funds are being reduced. The school evaluation is done on the basis of business criteria. Education is being modified with class criteria creating obstacles for the children of the people's strata. There is no network of public and free childcare which meets the needs of the working class families. Frequently, schools merge or even cease operating. As a result, students are packed in classes with too many children.

The world militant women movement should oppose to all these, fight for public and free education for all, an education that aims at the children's integrated education.

As far as the **field of Health and Welfare** is concerned, further commercialization and privatization of services is being promoted in all EU member states. They try to make the people's strata to accept the rationale that health and other social needs are an individual responsibility for anyone who must pay for them. It is a fact that the numerous anti popular measures taken lead to an accelerated deterioration of the workers' health, especially women's. On one hand there are the policy of reduced wages, the expensiveness, the expansion of household debt, the layoffs, the direct and indirect taxes

which massively condemn the working class families to poverty and very bad living conditions. On the other hand we have: the retirement age increase (which affects particularly women), the “working time arrangement” which disrupts women’s lives who often have a double and, sometimes, triple role, the intensification of work, the deletion of professions from the list of heavy and unhealthy jobs, the increase of work insecurity and the intensification of employers’ terrorism sharply increase the risk for occupational accidents and occupational diseases. Overall, the risks which lead to a premature deterioration of the workers’ health intensify. Alongside with all this, more measures are taken which drastically cut down the workers' right to services and health care benefits and especially the rights of the women who have greater needs.

As a response to all these, the global militant women's movement demands a free and public health and welfare system as well as the abolition of any business activity in these sectors.

The implementation of the EU strategy on **women** for the next years is presented on the resolutions and the decisions of the European Parliament, as well as on the policies followed by Member State governments in line with the EU Directives.

All these measures fragmenting the labor- and social security rights not only for women but for the whole working class are being adopted.

“The reconciliation of professional and family life” promotes part-time employment, hourly wages, relieving the state from the duty of a free social policy and loading the burden on the working class family.

The “informal care” exempts the state from providing free and public high quality health services and welfare, while it withholds by far the most underpaid / uninsured work posts for women while also lowering the unemployment rates and providing deteriorated health care.

Women will staff these work posts after a rapid training. As being unemployed for a long time it is easier to accept a reality that they should on the contrary oppose, fight against and abolish, demanding everything they are entitled as producers of the wealth.

The EU is providing full support and money to the NGOs which are making profit at the expense of people's needs and are used as imperialist interventions mechanisms, and under the pretext of combating violence or trafficking are flourishing, especially in the former socialist countries that have now joined the EU. Nowadays, NGOs are also vehicles of the EU policy and capitalist restructuring.

Regarding the **participation of women at the decision making centers**, the EU expresses the exaggerated opinion that “the crisis was caused because of the men- dominated credit-finance sector”. They placed a rhetoric question: “If Lehman Brothers were Lehman Sisters, managed by women instead of men, would the crisis have happened?” In reality, the capital’s assault on women’s rights takes place with the elaboration of bourgeois women participating in the national parliaments, in the European parliament in the EU members state governments and the administrations of monopoly groups. The major issue should not be the women percentage at the decision making centers, but the policy they promote with their participation. Is it in favor or against the women of the people’s strata? (for or against the women of daily strife?)

The impacts of capitalist crisis in Africa, Latin America-Caribbean and Asia

(the data contained in this section has been taken from UN and ILO documents)

Since the economic crisis more workers find themselves and their families living in extreme poverty. The UN is defined as “working poor” those who are employed but live in households where individual members subsist on less than 1,25 \$ a day. The largest negative impact is most likely to be seen in Sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia, South-Eastern Asia and Oceania. According the International Labor Office “the estimated working poverty rate at the extreme US\$ 1.25 level for 2009 is 20.7 per cent, which is 1.6 percentage points higher than the rate projected on the basis of the pre-crisis trend. This amounts to around 40 million more working poor at the extreme US\$ 1.25 level in 2009 than would have been expected on the basis of pre-crisis trends. The share of workers living with their families below the US\$ 2 a day poverty line is estimated at around 39 per cent, or 1.2 billion workers worldwide.” In Sub-Saharan Africa around four out of five workers living with their families on less than US\$ 2 a day.

In a last report of UNICEF it is mentioned that 146 million children are undernourished all over the world. The 28% of those children live in Africa, 17% in Middle East, 15% in Asia, 7% in Latin America and Caribbean, 5% in Central Europe and 27% in the other developed countries. Cuba, however, is an exception

climate change is simply global warming. In fact, global climate change is an integrated system of several atmospheric phenomena and their products. At the surface, concentrations of greenhouse or radioactive gases such as carbon dioxide, chlorofluorocarbons, methane and nitrous oxide have clearly increased since the onset of the industrial revolution.

Average global air temperature has increased by about 0.8°C above pre-industrial levels and a 2001 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projected a rise from 1.4°C to 5.8°C by the year 2100. While this prediction is extremely important, there is a significant amount of spatial variability in the air temperature. Local climate in different geographic areas may very well become warmer and drier, cooler and wetter or remain unchanged. Any change in the climate is expected to manifest itself as increases in the frequency of extreme events such as hurricanes, blizzards, heat waves and the number of days without precipitation during the plant-growing season (drought).

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines food security as a “**situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life**”. This definition comprises four key dimensions of food supplies: availability, stability, access, and utilization. The first dimension relates to the availability of sufficient food, i.e., to the overall ability of the agricultural system to meet food demand. Its sub dimensions include the agro-climatic fundamentals of crop and pasture production (2) and the entire range of socio-economic and cultural factors that determine where and how farmers perform in response to markets. The second dimension, stability, relates to individuals who are at high risk of temporarily or permanently losing their access to the resources needed to consume adequate food, either because these individuals cannot ensure *ex ante* against income shocks or they lack enough “reserves” to smooth consumption *ex post* or both. An important cause of unstable access is climate variability, e.g., landless agricultural laborers, who almost wholly depend on agricultural wages in a region of erratic rainfall and have few savings, would be at high risk of losing their access to food.

Climate change affects agriculture and food production in complex ways. It affects food production directly through changes in agro-ecological conditions and indirectly by affecting growth and distribution of incomes, and thus demand for agricultural produce.

Developing nations house 80 per cent of humankind but emit only 40 per cent of the world’s emissions, while 60 per cent of global emissions originate from the rich nations that house 20 per cent of the world’s population. Developing countries are constrained by their particular vulnerability to the impacts of fickle weather and climate. The poor in these countries are at a higher risk to future climate change, given their heavy dependence on agriculture, strong reliance on ecosystem services, rapid growth and concentration of population and relatively poor health services. Add to this gloomy scenario insufficient capacity to adapt to climate change impacts, inadequate infrastructure, meager household income and savings and limited support from public services and you have a veritable time bomb ticking away. About 99 per cent of climate change casualties take place in the developing world. While economic growth and development are priorities in all countries, the needs in developing and least developed countries are on a different scale altogether.

Climate change magnifies problems that already exist in many **indigenous communities**—problems of poverty, marginalization, land loss and degradation, social exclusion, and non-inclusion in national and international policy-making processes. Climate change is an issue of human rights and inequality.

The San, like other indigenous peoples, have had to devise ingenious strategies to cope with environmental change and its consequences, yet they are reporting that the character of such change is now different than many remember.

In the national, regional and international processes where climate change mitigation policies are discussed, negotiated and designed, indigenous peoples have found it very difficult to get their voices heard and their concerns taken into consideration.

The threat posed by rising sea levels has been the centerpiece of climate change negotiations, the main issue emphasized by **Small Island Developing States**, also known as the SIDS. The poorer countries flanked by large bodies of water—who have contributed the least to global warming, including rapid sea-level rise—now find themselves at the precarious mercy of the historical polluters. Developed neighbors in the global North are losing their credibility very quickly, Ambassador Ronny Jumeau, Permanent Representative of the Seychelles to the United Nations told the UN Chronicle.

At the United Nations, 43 of the world’s smallest island and low-lying coastal countries, representing the Member States most susceptible to change in climate, forged a coalition called the Alliance of

Small Island States (AOSIS). While AOSIS represents more than one quarter of the world's countries, together they account for less than one per cent of global carbon emissions.

The Present and the Future

It is very educative to examine the status of the present and projected global agricultural production within these overall scenarios. Currently the ratio of rural to total populations is for: the world - 52%, China - 65%, India - 79% and the USA - 20%. Similarly the ratio of agricultural to rural populations is for: the world - 80%, China - 94%, India - 73% and the USA - 10%. These are telling statistics of the major dependence of the two most populous countries in the world (China and India) and in addition, some others, on intense human labor for food production and sustainability, compared to the US.

Role of MNCs

The crisis in the capitalist system and the inability of neo-liberal economic policy to ensure and maintain the rate of growth of profit for the capitalists led to an ever increasing expansion and merger of business. This again led to acquisition of thousands of hectares of agricultural as well as forest land by these MNCs. They changed the traditional land use and converted this into a land for producing crops like the bio-fuel or for commercial purposes. It resulted in soil erosion, disappearance of pasture land for animals, drying up of water sources.

The Korean Company, POSCO acquired thousands of hectares of agricultural and forest Tribal land in Orissa, India and converted it for mining and for real estate business.

The COCO-COLA company acquired land and occupied river for the company in Kerala, India.

Both these incidents led to contraction of agricultural land for food crop cultivation and over exploitation of water caused draining of water sources polluting ground water.

This kind of aggression of the capitalist and the MNCs also threaten climate stability and thereby food security

Health & Climate Change

The health impacts of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#), projections include:

In **Africa** by 2020, reduced yields from rain-fed agriculture by up to 50%, which would further adversely affect food security and exacerbate malnutrition.

In **Asia**, increased endemic morbidity and mortality due to diarrheal disease primarily associated with floods and droughts.

In **Australasia** by 2030, decreased production from agriculture and forestry over much of southern and eastern Australia and eastern New Zealand, due to increased drought and fire.

In **southern Europe**, reduced water availability, hydropower potential and crop productivity due to higher temperatures and drought.

In **Latin America**, decreased productivity of some important crops and livestock, with adverse consequences for food security and increased number of people at risk of hunger.

In **North America**, decreased snow pack, more winter flooding and reduced summer flows, exacerbating competition for over-allocated water resources.

In **small islands**, increased inundation, storm surge, erosion and other coastal hazards due to sea level rise, thus threatening vital infrastructure, settlements and facilities that support island communities.

Africa

Africa is considered the most vulnerable region in the world in terms of climate change because of its physical and socioeconomic characteristics. Sub-Saharan Africa includes the mixed arid–semi-arid systems in the Sahel, arid to semi-arid rangeland systems and coastal areas of eastern Africa, and many of the drier zones of southern Africa. A large part of the population is engaged in subsistence agriculture and farm marginal lands under rain-fed conditions with relatively limited access to productive assets, inputs, technology, and services. Because of the fragility of its economy, Africa is disproportionately affected by adverse effects of climate change.

The African countries economies depend largely on agriculture, fishing, forest and tourism sectors which are particularly vulnerable to the environmental changes. Among these changes, the climate changes are those which cause enormous challenges to the sustainable development in Africa. The existence of dusts and determined practices such as the production and consumption of energy, were identified as being the main sources of emission of greenhouse gas which causes climate changes.

The majority of African communities are vulnerable to these impacts mainly due to high levels of poverty, dependence of agriculture of dryness, lack of access to technology and better culture practices. The consequences of climate changes could annulled the progresses done on poverty reduction and better food security as it points out the document presented to the African Regional Conference, hosted by Angola, and organized by the United Nations Organization for Agriculture and Food –FAO, in May 2010.

A third of the African population lives in zones threatened by drought and among them the ten biggest cities of the continent, six of them located at coastal areas according to the report, these two characteristics made these zones particularly vulnerable to the climate changes.

Evaluation studies of climate changes impact show that the climate is modifying all over Africa. Studies of chronological data from 1978 revealed that maximal and minimal temperatures changed with significant increases. Analysis of data from 1961 to nowadays, also revealed decreasing rainfall. The temperatures changes have been more stressed in high altitude areas then in low ones.

Climate Change-Sustainable Development & Food Security

The agriculture is the backbone of the majority of African economies and is responsible for around 40% of the total revenues from export and employs 60 to 90% of the total workforce in sub-Saharan Africa.

Around 50% of food needs of families and a significant part of the incomes are coming from agriculture. It is foreseen that climate changes could seriously compromise the agriculture production and food security in many African countries and sub regions. The adequate area for agriculture, the duration of seasons culture and a potential production particularly alongside the borders of semi-arid areas could diminished significantly. The supply of local food will also be affected in a negative way due to the decrease of fishing resources inn Great lakes because of the water temperatures rise.

Currently, most African countries are net importers, with over 50% and between 25 and 50% of the food requirement of North Africa and sub- Saharan Africa imported. In order to stabilize output and income, production systems must become more resilient, i.e. more capable to perform well in the face of perturbing events. More productive and resilient agriculture requires transformations in the management of natural resources and higher efficiency in the production system (e.g. water use, soil nutrients, and genetic resources)

In the case of Africa, it is estimated that by 2025 21 countries – nearly half of the continent – will experience water stress and 9 are facing extreme scarcity, with less than 1000m³ of renewable freshwater per capita available per year.

With a large part of the population lacking access to clean and safe water as well as a high dependence of African economies on water-intensive sectors like agriculture, water is the nexus of Africa's development challenges. Yet, water scarcity is currently becoming a crisis on the continent, and this is not only in relation to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) No. 7 on the environment, which includes halving the global population with insufficient access to water by 2015.5 Indeed, the impacts of climate change are likely to stall or reverse most of the progress made towards achieving the MDGs, and, in particular, achieving MDG No. 7.6 Figures 1, 2 and 3 below show populations using improved drinking water, respectively, a) disparities between Africa and the rest of the world; b) the percentage of the total sub-Saharan populations; c) and d) disparities between urban and rural populations. FIGURE 1 – Global population with access to safe drinking water.

It is shameful that the world which adopted the Millennium Development Goal of reducing by half the number of people who suffer from hunger by 2015, should see these numbers rise. It is shameful that in this productive and interconnected world a billion people go hungry. We know that many of these poor souls live in Africa, and with climate change adding to the severity of challenges on this continent, special attention is needed by the whole world to help Africa address this problem.

Asia

Asia-Pacific region accounts for 57% of the world's total and 73% of the agricultural population, with 1/3rd of global land. It is estimated that by 2020, food grain requirement in Asia would be 30-50%

more than the current demand and will have to be produced from same or even less land; that too with inferior quality of other natural resources. Hence, the world food situation will be strongly dominated by the changes that would occur in Asia because of its huge population, changing diet pattern and associated increase in demand for food, feed, fibre, fuel etc. Additionally, increased energy needs of Asian countries to sustain rapid economic growth in the years to come will have profound impacts on global climate change and energy security for the region and the world (USAID 2007; IEA 2006; Saha 2006).

The land availability per person is only about one fifth of that in the rest of the world. About 63% (640 million) of the world's hungry and malnourished, 50% (over 660 million) of the world's extreme poor (living on less than US\$ 1/day), and 70% of the world's undernourished children and women live in the Asia-Pacific region. Over the last two years, the number of hungry in the region has increased by about 11%. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially to reduce hunger and poverty to half by 2015 are no longer closer to be achieved despite all commitments and on-going efforts. The region is facing stagnation or slowdown of productivity growth rates, soaring food prices, increasing energy costs, diversion of area for biofuel production, consequences of the climate change and economic shocks.

The impact of climate change on agriculture is now real and without adequate adaptation and mitigation strategies to climate change, food insecurity and loss of livelihood are likely to be exacerbated in Asia. In this regard, the fourth assessment report of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), released in 2007, has clearly revealed that increases in the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) have resulted in warming of the climate system by 0.74°C between 1906 and 2005 and further projected to increase 2 to 4.5°C by the end of this century. The irrigated lands, representing a mere 18% of global agricultural land producing 1 billion tons of grain annually (about half the world's total supply), are likely to decrease or adversely affected by global climate change (FAO 2003). IPCC has predicted that sea-level rise and an increase in the intensity of tropical cyclones is expected to displace tens of millions of people in the low-lying coastal areas of Asia with expectation of around 17% land getting inundated in Bangladesh alone. On the contrary, the increased intensity of rainfall and contraction of monsoon period would increase flood risks in temperate and tropical Asia.

Tsukuba declaration on adapting agriculture to climate change

The IPCC has considered the developing countries of the Asia-Pacific region, Water is a key constraint in the region for attaining food production targets and will remain so in future as well. Steps are, therefore, needed by all the stakeholders to prioritize enhancing water use efficiency and water storage.

It was fully recognized that increasing food production locally will be the best option to reduce poor people's vulnerability to climate change variations and a concerted effort, backed by policy makers at the national level would be the key to enhance food security as well as ensuring agricultural sustainability.

It was also recognized that a reliable and timely early warning system of impending climatic risks could help determination of the potential food insecure areas and communities.

Governments of the region should collaborate on priorities to secure effective adaptation and mitigation strategies and their effective implementation through creation of a regional fund for improving climatic services and for effective implementation of weather related risk management programs. Active participation of young professionals is also called for.

Europe

On 28 April 2010 the Commission published a Recommendation which launched the Joint Programming Initiative on 'Agriculture, food security and climate change', bringing together 20 European countries. The Recommendation also committed the Commission to contributing to the JPI by supporting its secretariat and Scientific Advisory Board.

European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn says: *"Food security is a stark matter of life and death and without it there is no other kind of security. Quite rightly, billions of Euros are being invested by public and private sector in tackling this huge challenge. But no one Member State can succeed on its own. We can only get full value for public research funds by working together. This Joint Programming Initiative will help replace*

fragmentation and duplication with coherence and coordination and will therefore be a major contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy."

Climate change is among the main challenges to agriculture's ability to feed the world's population, projected to reach nine billion by 2050. This will increase food demand by 50% by 2030, just when demand for biomass for non-food purposes (e.g. biofuels) is predicted to grow strongly.

Challenges such as those linked with agriculture, food and climate change are of a European and often global scale. Total annual public investment in these areas in Europe is about €1.3 billion.

Latin America

Latin America is home to a number of rapidly developing nations and vast tropical forest reserves, putting it under the watchful eye of the international community. Four countries in this region make the global top 30 list of highest annual CO₂ emitters, namely Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, and Venezuela (using 2008 data). Brazil quickly rises to the top five if emissions from deforestation are included. The region also faces a range of climate impacts, including threats to drinking water resources due to the shrinking ice pack in the Andes Mountains and potential reductions in crop yields and flooding due to sea-level rise.

The melting of the Andean glaciers. Massive die-off of the Amazonian rainforests. Rising sea-levels and the inundation of low-lying regions on Colombia's Caribbean coast is a known factor. Less familiar, though equally serious, is the damage climate change could wreak on the region's agriculture.

The world's total agricultural production could decrease between 3 percent and 15 percent due to global climate change, according to the World Bank. Studies suggest those numbers could be much worse in the agricultural regions of Latin America's equatorial belt.

How severe the impact on agriculture gets will depend in part on the existence and the magnitude of the carbon fertilization effect. Carbon fertilization is an increase in crop growth due to greater atmospheric carbon interacting with sunlight through photosynthesis. Analysts concede that a carbon fertilization effect likely won't reach the levels many hoped for.

According to a study report, revenue losses in Latin America's agricultural sector could range from 12 percent to 50 percent by 2100, even after accounting for a certain level of technological adaptation to climate change.

The study suggests that total agricultural production in Latin America could, by the 2080s, fall by 12 percent if carbon fertilization takes place and as much as 24 percent if it does not. The models cannot account for the effects of hurricanes or droughts, which most climate models suggest are likely to occur far more frequently as the climate heats up.

Tropical deforestation is a major cause of climate change; and, unfortunately, Latin America is no stranger to this issue—more forests have been destroyed in this region than in any other since the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted in 1992. With 40 percent of its land mass covered by tropical forests, many Latin American countries have a tremendous opportunity to reduce their global warming emissions. Leaders on tropical forest management have emerged in the region and are advancing innovative solutions.

One standout is Costa Rica, which aims to be carbon neutral (have zero net greenhouse gas emissions) by 2021. Already a green leader with 96 percent of its electricity coming from renewable sources, Costa Rica has increased its forested area by 10 percent in the last decade. Another notable is Brazil, which has demonstrated the enormous potential of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation as well as the potential of biofuels for reducing emissions from vehicles. Detailed analyses of publicly available satellite photos show that Brazil has reduced deforestation in the Amazon enough over the past five years to lower heat-trapping emissions more than any other country on Earth.

Solutions to global warming across the varied countries of Latin America include pursuing new policies to curb deforestation and forest degradation; reducing emissions from cars, trucks and buses; and promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Rising food prices coupled with unprecedented natural disasters in 2010 have made food security "an immediate concern for the millions of people across Latin America the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's 2010 World Hunger map identifies many countries in South and Central America and the Caribbean as experiencing "moderate" levels of under nourishment.

USA

China, India and the US account equally for some 40% of the total area in the world under crop

production. Yet the agricultural production in metric tons per capita of the total population is for: the world - 0.26, China - 0.29, India - 0.20 and the USA - 1.4. The large difference between the statistic for the US and the others is due mainly to the use of complex and highly mechanized and managed crop production systems in the US, compared to the emphasis on manual labor elsewhere. In the US these types of statistics have led to some adverse, shortsighted consequences. There has been a progressive decline in the number of individual farmers and a converse increase in corporate mega farming. In addition fluctuations in the commodity prices, the so-called surplus food supply and imports of foreign plant products have worked negatively against the profitability of individual US farmers and thus, the decline in their numbers.

In general, the narrow genetic base and specific goals used in the breeding of virtually all modern crops make it unlikely that crop breeders will be able to accommodate large and rapid changes in the climate. Thus, there will be an increasing need for regions able to sustain high crop production in the future to distribute their surplus food supply to others subjected to adverse impacts, particularly to populations in dire need. That might prove to be a critical determinant of future world populations.

The US agriculture is influenced by: (a) increased urbanization, (b) increasing population migration from rural to urban communities, (c) farming by increased mechanization and consequently decreased dependence on labor, (d) increased area under cultivation of crops developed through the application of biotechnology and consequently better disease, pest and weed control, (e) gain of higher yields and (f) farm consolidation through mergers (mega- corporate farms). In contrast, factors influencing food security in the developing countries include: (a) increasing population, (b) rapidly growing urbanization, (c) decreasing crop land, (d) decreasing farm resources, (e) continuing crop loss, (e) declining crop production and (f) declining biodiversity.

Women

Women's vulnerability to climate change stems from a number of factors—social, economic and cultural.

Seventy per cent of the 1.3 billion people living in conditions of poverty are women. In urban areas, 40 per cent of the poorest households are headed by women. Women predominate in the world's food production (50-80 per cent), but they own less than 10 per cent of the land.

Women represent a high percentage of poor communities that are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood, particularly in rural areas where they shoulder the major responsibility for household water supply and energy for cooking and heating, as well as for food security. In the Near East, women contribute up to 50 per cent of the agricultural workforce. They are mainly responsible for the more time-consuming and labor-intensive tasks that are carried out manually or with the use of simple tools. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the rural population has been decreasing in recent decades. Women are mainly engaged in subsistence farming, particularly horticulture, poultry and raising small livestock for home consumption.

Women have limited access to and control of environmental goods and services; they have negligible participation in decision-making, and are not involved in the distribution of environment management benefits. Consequently, women are less able to confront climate change.

It is thus important to identify gender-sensitive strategies to respond to the environmental and humanitarian crises caused by climate change. It is important to remember, however, that women are not only vulnerable to climate change but they are also effective actors or agents of change in relation to both mitigation and adaptation.

Furthermore, women's responsibilities in households and communities, as stewards of natural and household resources, positions them well to contribute to livelihood strategies adapted to changing environmental realities of change in relation to both mitigation and adaptation. Women often have a strong body of knowledge and expertise that can be used in climate change mitigation, disaster reduction and adaptation strategies. Furthermore, women's responsibilities in households and communities, as stewards of natural and household resources, positions them well to contribute to livelihood strategies adapted to changing environmental realities.

Climate Change & Women's Health

Between 2004 and 2006, 70 percent of natural disasters occurred where the majority of the world's most vulnerable populations reside — Asia, the Pacific region, Africa and the Middle East.

During times of shortages and higher food prices — circumstances expected to aggravate with climate change — the health of women and girls is shown to diminish before that of males, due to

various social constraints and inequities. In India, for example, reduced rainfall is more strongly associated with deaths among girls than boys.

Some diseases that women and children are especially vulnerable to, such as malaria and diarrhea, are also expected to increase in prevalence as temperatures rise. In some regions, the estimated risk of diarrhea will be up to 10 percent higher by 2030, and temperature increases of two to three degrees Celsius may increase the risk of malaria by three to five percent.

Water shortages are also linked to increases in diseases, especially among children and the elderly, since hygienic practices are commonly sacrificed to more pressing needs for water, such as drinking and cooking. This includes an increase in diarrheal disease — a leading cause of death among children in developing states. Almost half of all urban residents in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are already victims of diseases associated with poor water and sanitation facilities.

Additionally, there is a strong correlation between gender equality in women's everyday lives and their survival rate in disasters. Women are up to 14 times more likely than men to die from natural disasters. Poverty and poor access to health care exacerbate these risks.

Case studies suggest that public shame, social and clothing inhibitions, and lack of survival skills (swimming, climbing trees etc.) contribute to a greater death rate of women compared with men in hurricanes and floods. Moreover, women often care for children, the sick and elderly, and may place themselves at higher risk to do so.

Women are more often found in structurally weak buildings at higher risk of collapse due to mud slides and other climate-related hazards, since they are prone to congregate compared with men in places of lower social value — such as in market stalls, schools and shanties.

Conclusion

Climate change will affect all four dimensions of food security, namely food availability (i.e., production and trade), access to food, stability of food supplies, and food utilization. The importance of the various dimensions and the overall impact of climate change on food security will differ across regions and over time and, most importantly, will depend on the overall socio-economic status that a country has accomplished as the effects of climate change set in.

Essentially all quantitative assessments show that climate change will adversely affect food security. Climate change will increase the dependency of developing countries on imports and accentuate existing focus of food insecurity on sub-Saharan Africa and to a lesser extent on South Asia. Within the developing world, the adverse impacts of climate change will fall disproportionately on the poor. Many quantitative assessments also show that the socio-economic environment in which climate change is likely to evolve is more important than the impacts that can be expected from the biophysical changes of climate change.

All quantitative assessments we reviewed show that the first decades of the 21st century are expected to see low impacts of climate change, but also lower overall incomes and still a higher dependence on agriculture. During these first decades, the biophysical changes as such will be less pronounced but climate change will affect those particularly adversely that are still more dependent on agriculture and have lower overall incomes to cope with the impacts of climate change. By contrast, the second half of the century is expected to bring more severe biophysical impacts. How strong the impacts of climate change will be felt over all decades will crucially depend on the future policy environment for the poor.

Adaptation to climate change needs to be integrated into developmental activities. Policies on adaptation should include changes in land use and timing of farming operations, adaptive breeding and technologies, irrigation infrastructure, water storage, and water management. In addition, long-term weather forecasting, dissemination of technology, creating drought and flood-resistant crop varieties, will require national and international planning and investment.

Economic diversification to reduce dependence on climate-sensitive resources is an important adaptation strategy. Improved food security through crop diversification, developing local food banks for people and livestock and improving local food preservation needs to be encouraged.

WIDF DEMANDS: A Gender Sensitive Response to Climate Change.

Four areas have been identified as critical building blocks in response to climate change: mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and financing. The first two blocks are linked to manifestations of climate change; and the latter two are linked to the means for achieving development goals.

Mitigation and adaptation efforts should systematically and effectively address gender-specific impacts of climate change in the areas of, food security, agriculture and fisheries; biodiversity; water;

health; human rights; and peace and security. Financing mechanisms must be flexible enough to reflect women's priorities and needs. The active participation of women in the development of funding criteria and allocation of resources for climate change initiatives is critical, particularly at local levels. Gender analysis of all budget lines and financial instruments for climate change is needed to ensure gender-sensitive investments in programmes for adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and capacity building.

Technological developments related to climate change should take into account women's specific priorities, needs and roles, and make full use of their knowledge and expertise, including indigenous knowledge and traditional practices. Women's involvement in the development of new technologies can ensure that they are user-friendly, affordable, effective and sustainable. Gender inequalities in access to resources, including credit, extension services, information and technology, must be taken into account in developing activities designed to curb climate change. Women should also have equal access to training, credit and skills-development programmes to ensure their full participation in climate change initiatives. Governments should thus be encouraged to incorporate gender perspectives into their national policies, action plans and other measures on sustainable development and climate change, through carrying out systematic gender analysis; collecting and utilizing sex-disaggregated data; establishing gender-sensitive benchmarks and indicators; and developing practical tools to support increased attention to gender perspectives.

The consultation and participation of women in climate change initiatives must be ensured, and the role of women's groups and networks strengthened. Currently, women are underrepresented in the decision-making process on environmental governance. They should be equally represented in decision-making structures to allow them to contribute their unique and valuable perspectives and expertise on climate change.

Appendix 1

Livelihoods In Peril: Indigenous Peoples and their Rights

By Mark Nuttall

Inuit hunters in northern Greenland are treading carefully on increasingly thinning ice, while at the same time the key marine species they depend on—seals, walrus, narwhals and polar bears—are moving away from the areas in which they are traditionally hunted, as they in turn respond to changes in local ecosystems.

In the high ranges of the Himalaya, Sherpa, Tamang, Kiranti, Dolpali and other indigenous groups are witnessing the melting of glaciers; the same is true in other mountain regions of the world such as the Peruvian Andes, where the indigenous Quechua report that they are worried when they look at the receding glaciers on their mountain peaks. In the Kalahari Desert, the San have learnt to deal with the periodic but all-too-frequent occurrence and experience of hunger and poverty arising from a combination of economic, political, environmental and climatic events. The San, like other indigenous peoples, have had to devise ingenious strategies to cope with environmental change and its consequences, yet they are reporting that the character of such change is now different than many remember. All over the world, indigenous peoples are confronted with unprecedented climate change affecting their homelands, cultures and livelihoods.

Indigenous peoples depend on natural resources for their livelihoods and they often inhabit diverse but fragile ecosystems. At the same time, many indigenous peoples remain among the world's most marginalized, impoverished and vulnerable peoples. They may be amongst those who have contributed the least to the greenhouse gas emissions that characterize anthropogenic climate change, yet they bear the brunt of the climate crisis and they often have minimal access to the resources and political and institutional support needed to cope with the changes. They have to navigate their way across the dramatically shifting environments of their homelands and to comprehend and find effective strategies that will allow them to respond to the changes happening—from the diminishing sea ice and reduced snowfall now characterizing the Arctic regions, to receding glaciers in high altitude regions, to increased coastal erosion and rising sea levels, to reduced rainfall in temperate ecosystems and increased fires in tropical rainforests.

Regional and global scientific assessments, such as the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment, have

stated unequivocally that the Earth's climate is changing in ways that could have irreversible impacts that will affect ecosystems, societies and cultures on scales that demand urgent global response and sustained action. But this scientific research merely confirms the experiences and the observations of indigenous peoples in many parts of the world, especially those living in the Arctic, high mountain areas, semi-arid lands and low-lying South Pacific islands—places which are all sensitive indicators of the profound impacts human activities are having on the world's climate. The Arctic's climate, in particular, has shown an unprecedented and alarming rate of change over the last fifty years and scientific research currently indicates a rapid reduction of multi-year ice cover in the Arctic Ocean as well as glacial retreat from Greenland's inland ice and other Arctic ice masses. High-resolution satellite laser measurements continue to show that Arctic glaciers and ice streams are rapidly thinning and speeding up in their flow. Residents of South Pacific islands do not need to be told about the links between this and the rising tides threatening to engulf their homes.

It may be more accurate to say that, globally, we are in the midst of a climate crisis. The need—and the opportunity presented—for a historic agreement on climate change in Copenhagen in December 2009 cannot be overstated enough. Yet climate change has a regional texture—its impacts are not universal. Some environments and peoples are more exposed to climate change, depending on their geographic, environmental and socio-economic circumstances and, as a consequence, are significantly more vulnerable to the impacts and long-term consequences of climate change than others. But as indigenous peoples experience the realities of climate change, it is not something which affects them in isolation from other kinds of changes and problems of pressing contemporary concern. Climate change magnifies problems that already exist in many indigenous communities—problems of poverty, marginalization, land loss and degradation, social exclusion, and non-inclusion in national and international policy-making processes. Climate change is an issue of human rights and inequality—it needs to be understood in the context of multiple stressors that already affect indigenous peoples and local communities.

The consequences of ecosystem changes have far-reaching implications for the indigenous peoples' use, protection and management of wildlife, fisheries, forests, mangroves, savannahs, wetlands, mountains and small-island ecosystems, and they have dramatic effects on the traditional and customary uses of culturally and economically significant species and resources. To indigenous peoples, climate change is, however, not simply a matter of physical changes to the environments in which they live. Many consider climate change a threat to their livelihood and they fear that their economy and resource use will be threatened, followed by an erosion of social and cultural life, and a loss of traditional knowledge. As the global discourse on climate change focuses on understanding how we can scientifically and technologically adapt to, as well as mitigate, climate change, indigenous peoples are faced with the prospect of climate change further challenging their abilities to adapt, respond to and cope with environmental and social changes. The key to effective and successful climate negotiations—and for agreement on climate change solutions—is to ensure that indigenous peoples can participate fully in them. But it remains that the crucial contributions indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge can make to global discussions and negotiations are often overlooked.

THEME 3

The Impact of Climate Change on Food Security

Introduction

Global climate change is one of utmost international concerns. There is a perception among many that global climate change is simply global warming. In fact, global climate change is an integrated system of several atmospheric phenomena and their products. At the surface, concentrations of greenhouse or radioactive gases such as carbon dioxide, chlorofluorocarbons, methane and nitrous oxide have clearly increased since the onset of the industrial revolution.

Average global air temperature has increased by about 0.8°C above pre-industrial levels and a 2001 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projected a rise from 1.4°C to 5.8°C by the year 2100. While this prediction is extremely important, there is a significant amount of spatial variability in the air temperature. Local climate in different geographic areas may very well become warmer and drier, cooler and wetter or remain unchanged. Any change in the climate is expected to manifest itself as increases in the frequency of extreme events such as hurricanes, blizzards, heat waves and the number of days without precipitation during the plant-growing season (drought). The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines food security as a “**situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life**”. This definition comprises four key dimensions of food supplies: availability, stability, access, and utilization. The first dimension relates to the availability of sufficient food, i.e., to the overall ability of the agricultural system to meet food demand. Its sub dimensions include the agro-climatic fundamentals of crop and pasture production (2) and the entire range of socio-economic and cultural factors that determine where and how farmers perform in response to markets. The second dimension, stability, relates to individuals who are at high risk of temporarily or permanently losing their access to the resources needed to consume adequate food, either because these individuals cannot ensure *ex ante* against income shocks or they lack enough “reserves” to smooth consumption *ex post* or both. An important cause of unstable access is climate variability, e.g., landless agricultural laborers, who almost wholly depend on agricultural wages in a region of erratic rainfall and have few savings, would be at high risk of losing their access to food.

Climate change affects agriculture and food production in complex ways. It affects food production directly through changes in agro-ecological conditions and indirectly by affecting growth and distribution of incomes, and thus demand for agricultural produce.

Developing nations house 80 per cent of humankind but emit only 40 per cent of the world’s emissions, while 60 per cent of global emissions originate from the rich nations that house 20 per cent of the world’s population. Developing countries are constrained by their particular vulnerability to the impacts of fickle weather and climate. The poor in these countries are at a higher risk to future climate change, given their heavy dependence on agriculture, strong reliance on ecosystem services, rapid growth and concentration of population and relatively poor health services. Add to this gloomy scenario insufficient capacity to adapt to climate change impacts, inadequate infrastructure, meager household income and savings and limited support from public services and you have a veritable time bomb ticking away. About 99 per cent of climate change casualties take place in the developing world. While economic growth and development are priorities in all countries, the needs in developing and least developed countries are on a different scale altogether.

Climate change magnifies problems that already exist in many **indigenous communities**—problems of poverty, marginalization, land loss and degradation, social exclusion, and non-inclusion in national and international policy-making processes. Climate change is an issue of human rights and inequality. The San, like other indigenous peoples, have had to devise ingenious strategies to cope with environmental change and its consequences, yet they are reporting that the character of such change is now different than many remember.

In the national, regional and international processes where climate change mitigation policies are discussed, negotiated and designed, indigenous peoples have found it very difficult to get their voices heard and their concerns taken into consideration.

The threat posed by rising sea levels has been the centrepiece of climate change negotiations, the main issue emphasized by **Small Island Developing States**, also known as the SIDS. The poorer countries

flanked by large bodies of water—who have contributed the least to global warming, including rapid sea-level rise—now find themselves at the precarious mercy of the historical polluters. Developed neighbors in the global North are losing their credibility very quickly, Ambassador Ronny Jumeau, Permanent Representative of the Seychelles to the United Nations told the UN Chronicle.

At the United Nations, 43 of the world's smallest island and low-lying coastal countries, representing the Member States most susceptible to change in climate, forged a coalition called the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). While AOSIS represents more than one quarter of the world's countries, together they account for less than one per cent of global carbon emissions.

The Present and the Future

It is very educative to examine the status of the present and projected global agricultural production within these overall scenarios. Currently the ratio of rural to total populations is for: the world - 52%, China - 65%, India - 79% and the USA - 20%. Similarly the ratio of agricultural to rural populations is for: the world - 80%, China - 94%, India - 73% and the USA - 10%. These are telling statistics of the major dependence of the two most populous countries in the world (China and India) and in addition, some others, on intense human labor for food production and sustainability, compared to the US.

Role of MNCs

The crisis in the capitalist system and the inability of neo-liberal economic policy to ensure and maintain the rate of growth of profit for the capitalists led to an ever increasing expansion and merger of business. This again led to acquisition of thousands of hectares of agricultural as well as forest land by these MNCs. They changed the traditional land use and converted this into a land for producing crops like the bio-fuel or for commercial purposes. It resulted in soil erosion, disappearance of pasture land for animals, drying up of water sources.

The Korean Company, POSCO acquired thousands of hectares of agricultural and forest Tribal land in Orissa, India and converted it for mining and for real estate business.

The COCO-COLA company acquired land and occupied river for the company in Kerala, India. Both these incidents led to contraction of agricultural land for food crop cultivation and over exploitation of water caused draining of water sources polluting ground water.

This kind of aggression of the capitalist and the MNCs also threaten climate stability and thereby food security

Health & Climate Change

The health impacts of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#), projections include:

In **Africa** by 2020, reduced yields from rain-fed agriculture by up to 50%, which would further adversely affect food security and exacerbate malnutrition.

In **Asia**, increased endemic morbidity and mortality due to diarrheal disease primarily associated with floods and droughts.

In **Australasia** by 2030, decreased production from agriculture and forestry over much of southern and eastern Australia and eastern New Zealand, due to increased drought and fire.

In **southern Europe**, reduced water availability, hydropower potential and crop productivity due to higher temperatures and drought.

In **Latin America**, decreased productivity of some important crops and livestock, with adverse consequences for food security and increased number of people at risk of hunger.

In **North America**, decreased snow pack, more winter flooding and reduced summer flows, exacerbating competition for over-allocated water resources.

In **small islands**, increased inundation, storm surge, erosion and other coastal hazards due to sea level rise, thus threatening vital infrastructure, settlements and facilities that support island communities.

Africa

Africa is considered the most vulnerable region in the world in terms of climate change because of its physical and socioeconomic characteristics. Sub-Saharan Africa includes the mixed arid–semi-arid

systems in the Sahel, arid to semi-arid rangeland systems and coastal areas of eastern Africa, and many of the drier zones of southern Africa. A large part of the population is engaged in subsistence agriculture and farm marginal lands under rain-fed conditions with relatively limited access to productive assets, inputs, technology, and services. Because of the fragility of its economy, Africa is disproportionately affected by adverse effects of climate change.

The African countries economies depend largely on agriculture, fishing, forest and tourism sectors which are particularly vulnerable to the environmental changes. Among these changes, the climate changes are those which cause enormous challenges to the sustainable development in Africa. The existence of dusts and determined practices such as the production and consumption of energy, were identified as being the main sources of emission of greenhouse gas which causes climate changes.

The majority of African communities are vulnerable to these impacts mainly due to high levels of poverty, dependence of agriculture of dryness, lack of access to technology and better culture practices. The consequences of climate changes could annulled the progresses done on poverty reduction and better food security as it points out the document presented to the African Regional Conference, hosted by Angola, and organized by the United Nations Organization for Agriculture and Food –FAO, in May 2010.

A third of the African population lives in zones threatened by drought and among them the ten biggest cities of the continent, six of them located at coastal areas according to the report, these two characteristics made these zones particularly vulnerable to the climate changes.

Evaluation studies of climate changes impact show that the climate is modifying all over Africa. Studies of chronological data from 1978 revealed that maximal and minimal temperatures changed with significant increases. Analysis of data from 1961 to nowadays, also revealed decreasing rainfall. The temperatures changes have been more stressed in high altitude areas than in low ones.

Climate Change-Sustainable Development & Food Security

The agriculture is the backbone of the majority of African economies and is responsible for around 40% of the total revenues from export and employs 60 to 90% of the total workforce in sub-Saharan Africa.

Around 50% of food needs of families and a significant part of the incomes are coming from agriculture. It is foreseen that climate changes could seriously compromise the agriculture production and food security in many African countries and sub regions. The adequate area for agriculture, the duration of seasons culture and a potential production particularly alongside the borders of semi-arid areas could diminished significantly. The supply of local food will also be affected in a negative way due to the decrease of fishing resources in Great lakes because of the water temperatures rise. Currently, most African countries are net importers, with over 50% and between 25 and 50% of the food requirement of North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa imported. In order to stabilize output and income, production systems must become more resilient, i.e. more capable to perform well in the face of perturbing events. More productive and resilient agriculture requires transformations in the management of natural resources and higher efficiency in the production system (e.g. water use, soil nutrients, and genetic resources)

In the case of Africa, it is estimated that by 2025 21 countries – nearly half of the continent – will experience water stress and 9 are facing extreme scarcity, with less than 1000m³ of renewable freshwater per capita available per year.

With a large part of the population lacking access to clean and safe water as well as a high dependence of African economies on water-intensive sectors like agriculture, water is the nexus of Africa's development challenges. Yet, water scarcity is currently becoming a crisis on the continent, and this is not only in relation to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) No. 7 on the environment, which includes halving the global population with insufficient access to water by 2015.5 Indeed, the impacts of climate change are likely to stall or reverse most of the progress made towards achieving the MDGs, and, in particular, achieving MDG No. 7.6 Figures 1, 2 and 3 below show populations using improved drinking water, respectively, a) disparities between Africa and the rest of the world; b) the percentage of the total sub-Saharan populations; c) and d) disparities between urban and rural populations. FIGURE 1 – Global population with access to safe drinking water It is shameful that the world which adopted the Millennium Development Goal of reducing by half, the number of people who suffer from hunger by 2015, should see these numbers rise. It is shameful that in this productive and interconnected world a billion people go hungry. We know that many of these poor souls live in Africa, and with climate change adding to the severity of challenges on this continent, special attention is needed by the whole world to help Africa address this problem.

Asia

Asia-Pacific region accounts for 57% of the world's total and 73% of the agricultural population, with 1/3rd of global land. It is estimated that by 2020, food grain requirement in Asia would be 30-50% more than the current demand and will have to be produced from same or even less land; that too with inferior quality of other natural resources. Hence, the world food situation will be strongly dominated by the changes that would occur in Asia because of its huge population, changing diet pattern and associated increase in demand for food, feed, fibre, fuel etc. Additionally, increased energy needs of Asian countries to sustain rapid economic growth in the years to come will have profound impacts on global climate change and energy security for the region and the world (USAID 2007; IEA 2006; Saha 2006).

The land availability per person is only about one fifth of that in the rest of the world. About 63% (640 million) of the world's hungry and malnourished, 50% (over 660 million) of the world's extreme poor (living on less than US\$ 1/day), and 70% of the world's undernourished children and women live in the Asia-Pacific region. Over the last two years, the number of hungry in the region has increased by about 11%. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially to reduce hunger and poverty to half by 2015 are no longer closer to be achieved despite all commitments and on-going efforts. The region is facing stagnation or slowdown of productivity growth rates, soaring food prices, increasing energy costs, diversion of area for biofuel production, consequences of the climate change and economic shocks.

The impact of climate change on agriculture is now real and without adequate adaptation and mitigation strategies to climate change, food insecurity and loss of livelihood are likely to be exacerbated in Asia. In this regard, the fourth assessment report of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), released in 2007, has clearly revealed that increases in the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) have resulted in warming of the climate system by 0.74°C between 1906 and 2005 and further projected to increase 2 to 4.5°C by the end of this century. The irrigated lands, representing a mere 18% of global agricultural land producing 1 billion tons of grain annually (about half the world's total supply), are likely to decrease or adversely affected by global climate change (FAO 2003). IPCC has predicted that sea-level rise and an increase in the intensity of tropical cyclones is expected to displace tens of millions of people in the low-lying coastal areas of Asia with expectation of around 17% land getting inundated in Bangladesh alone. On the contrary, the increased intensity of rainfall and contraction of monsoon period would increase flood risks in temperate and tropical Asia.

Tsukuba declaration on adapting agriculture to climate change

The IPCC has considered the developing countries of the Asia-Pacific region, Water is a key constraint in the region for attaining food production targets and will remain so in future as well. Steps are, therefore, needed by all the stakeholders to prioritize enhancing water use efficiency and water storage.

It was fully recognized that increasing food production locally will be the best option to reduce poor people's vulnerability to climate change variations and a concerted effort, backed by policy makers at the national level would be the key to enhance food security as well as ensuring agricultural sustainability.

It was also recognized that a reliable and timely early warning system of impending climatic risks could help determination of the potential food insecure areas and communities.

Governments of the region should collaborate on priorities to secure effective adaptation and mitigation strategies and their effective implementation through creation of a regional fund for improving climatic services and for effective implementation of weather related risk management programs. Active participation of young professionals is also called for.

Europe

On 28 April 2010 the Commission published a Recommendation which launched the Joint Programming Initiative on 'Agriculture, food security and climate change', bringing together 20 European countries. The Recommendation also committed the Commission to contributing to the JPI by supporting its secretariat and Scientific Advisory Board.

European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn says: *"Food security is a stark matter of life and death and without it there is no other kind of security. Quite rightly, billions of Euros are being invested by public and private sector in tackling this huge*

challenge. But no one Member State can succeed on its own. We can only get full value for public research funds by working together. This Joint Programming Initiative will help replace fragmentation and duplication with coherence and coordination and will therefore be a major contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy."

Climate change is among the main challenges to agriculture's ability to feed the world's population, projected to reach nine billion by 2050. This will increase food demand by 50% by 2030, just when demand for biomass for non-food purposes (e.g. biofuels) is predicted to grow strongly.

Challenges such as those linked with agriculture, food and climate change are of a European and often global scale. Total annual public investment in these areas in Europe is about €1.3 billion.

Latin America

Latin America is home to a number of rapidly developing nations and vast tropical forest reserves, putting it under the watchful eye of the international community. Four countries in this region make the global top 30 list of highest annual CO₂ emitters, namely Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, and Venezuela (using 2008 data). Brazil quickly rises to the top five if emissions from deforestation are included. The region also faces a range of climate impacts, including threats to drinking water resources due to the shrinking ice pack in the Andes Mountains and potential reductions in crop yields and flooding due to sea-level rise.

The melting of the Andean glaciers. Massive death of the Amazonian rainforests. Rising sea-levels and the inundation of low-lying regions on Colombia's Caribbean coast is a known factor. Less familiar, though equally serious, is the damage climate change could wreak on the region's agriculture.

The world's total agricultural production could decrease between 3 percent and 15 percent due to global climate change, according to the World Bank. Studies suggest those numbers could be much worse in the agricultural regions of Latin America's equatorial belt.

How severe the impact on agriculture gets will depend in part on the existence and the magnitude of the carbon fertilization effect. Carbon fertilization is an increase in crop growth due to greater atmospheric carbon interacting with sunlight through photosynthesis. Analysts concede that a carbon fertilization effect likely won't reach the levels many hoped for.

According to a study report, revenue losses in Latin America's agricultural sector could range from 12 percent to 50 percent by 2100, even after accounting for a certain level of technological adaptation to climate change.

The study suggests that total agricultural production in Latin America could, by the 2080s, fall by 12 percent if carbon fertilization takes place and as much as 24 percent if it does not. The models cannot account for the effects of hurricanes or droughts, which most climate models suggest are likely to occur far more frequently as the climate heats up.

Tropical deforestation is a major cause of climate change; and, unfortunately, Latin America is no stranger to this issue—more forests have been destroyed in this region than in any other since the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted in 1992. With 40 percent of its land mass covered by tropical forests, many Latin American countries have a tremendous opportunity to reduce their global warming emissions. Leaders on tropical forest management have emerged in the region and are advancing innovative solutions.

One standout is Costa Rica, which aims to be carbon neutral (have zero net greenhouse gas emissions) by 2021. Already a green leader with 96 percent of its electricity coming from renewable sources, Costa Rica has increased its forested area by 10 percent in the last decade. Another notable is Brazil, which has demonstrated the enormous potential of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation as well as the potential of biofuels for reducing emissions from vehicles. Detailed analyses of publicly available satellite photos show that Brazil has reduced deforestation in the Amazon enough over the past five years to lower heat-trapping emissions more than any other country on Earth.

Solutions to global warming across the varied countries of Latin America include pursuing new policies to curb deforestation and forest degradation; reducing emissions from cars, trucks and buses; and promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Rising food prices coupled with unprecedented natural disasters in 2010 have made food security "an immediate concern for the millions of people across Latin America the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's 2010 World Hunger map identifies many countries in South and Central America and the Caribbean as experiencing "moderate" levels of under nourishment.

USA

China, India and the US account equally for some 40% of the total area in the world under crop production. Yet the agricultural production in metric tons per capita of the total population is for: the world - 0.26, China - 0.29, India - 0.20 and the USA - 1.4. The large difference between the statistic for the US and the others is due mainly to the use of complex and highly mechanized and managed crop production systems in the US, compared to the emphasis on manual labor elsewhere. In the US these types of statistics have led to some adverse, shortsighted consequences. There has been a progressive decline in the number of individual farmers and a converse increase in corporate mega farming. In addition fluctuations in the commodity prices, the so-called surplus food supply and imports of foreign plant products have worked negatively against the profitability of individual US farmers and thus, the decline in their numbers.

In general, the narrow genetic base and specific goals used in the breeding of virtually all modern crops make it unlikely that crop breeders will be able to accommodate large and rapid changes in the climate. Thus, there will be an increasing need for regions able to sustain high crop production in the future to distribute their surplus food supply to others subjected to adverse impacts, particularly to populations in dire need. That might prove to be a critical determinant of future world populations.

The US agriculture is influenced by: (a) increased urbanization, (b) increasing population migration from rural to urban communities, (c) farming by increased mechanization and consequently decreased dependence on labor, (d) increased area under cultivation of crops developed through the application of biotechnology and consequently better disease, pest and weed control, (e) gain of higher yields and (f) farm consolidation through mergers (mega- corporate farms). In contrast, factors influencing food security in the developing countries include: (a) increasing population, (b) rapidly growing urbanization, (c) decreasing crop land, (d) decreasing farm resources, (e) continuing crop loss, (e) declining crop production and (f) declining biodiversity.

Women

Women's vulnerability to climate change stems from a number of factors—social, economic and cultural. Seventy per cent of the 1.3 billion people living in conditions of poverty are women. In urban areas, 40 per cent of the poorest households are headed by women. Women predominate in the world's food production (50-80 per cent), but they own less than 10 per cent of the land.

Women represent a high percentage of poor communities that are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood, particularly in rural areas where they shoulder the major responsibility for household water supply and energy for cooking and heating, as well as for food security. In the Near East, women contribute up to 50 per cent of the agricultural workforce. They are mainly responsible for the more time-consuming and labor-intensive tasks that are carried out manually or with the use of simple tools. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the rural population has been decreasing in recent decades. Women are mainly engaged in subsistence farming, particularly horticulture, poultry and raising small livestock for home consumption.

Women have limited access to and control of environmental goods and services; they have negligible participation in decision-making, and are not involved in the distribution of environment management benefits. Consequently, women are less able to confront climate change. It is thus important to identify gender-sensitive strategies to respond to the environmental and humanitarian crises caused by climate change. It is important to remember, however, that women are not only vulnerable to climate change but they are also effective actors or agents of change in relation to both mitigation and adaptation.

Furthermore, women's responsibilities in households and communities, as stewards of natural and household resources, positions them well to contribute to livelihood strategies adapted to changing environmental realities of change in relation to both mitigation and adaptation. Women often have a strong body of knowledge and expertise that can be used in climate change mitigation, disaster reduction and adaptation strategies. Furthermore, women's responsibilities in households and communities, as stewards of natural and household resources, positions them well to contribute to livelihood strategies adapted to changing environmental realities.

Climate Change & Women's Health Between 2004 and 2006, 70 percent of natural disasters occurred where the majority of the world's most vulnerable populations reside — Asia, the Pacific region, Africa and the Middle East.

During times of shortages and higher food prices — circumstances expected to aggravate with climate change — the health of women and girls is shown to diminish before that of males, due to

various social constraints and inequities. In India, for example, reduced rainfall is more strongly associated with deaths among girls than boys.

Some diseases that women and children are especially vulnerable to, such as malaria and diarrhea, are also expected to increase in prevalence as temperatures rise. In some regions, the estimated risk of diarrhea will be up to 10 percent higher by 2030, and temperature increases of two to three degrees Celsius may increase the risk of malaria by three to five percent.

Water shortages are also linked to increases in diseases, especially among children and the elderly, since hygienic practices are commonly sacrificed to more pressing needs for water, such as drinking and cooking. This includes an increase in diarrheal disease — a leading cause of death among children in developing states. Almost half of all urban residents in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are already victims of diseases associated with poor water and sanitation facilities.

Additionally, there is a strong correlation between gender equality in women's everyday lives and their survival rate in disasters. Women are up to 14 times more likely than men to die from natural disasters. Poverty and poor access to health care exacerbate these risks.

Case studies suggest that public shame, social and clothing inhibitions, and lack of survival skills (swimming, climbing trees etc.) contribute to a greater death rate of women compared with men in hurricanes and floods. Moreover, women often care for children, the sick and elderly, and may place themselves at higher risk to do so.

Women are more often found in structurally weak buildings at higher risk of collapse due to mud slides and other climate-related hazards, since they are prone to congregate compared with men in places of lower social value — such as in market stalls, schools and shanties.

Conclusion

Climate change will affect all four dimensions of food security, namely food availability (i.e., production and trade), access to food, stability of food supplies, and food utilization. The importance of the various dimensions and the overall impact of climate change on food security will differ across regions and over time and, most importantly, will depend on the overall socio-economic status that a country has accomplished as the effects of climate change set in.

Essentially all quantitative assessments show that climate change will adversely affect food security. Climate change will increase the dependency of developing countries on imports and accentuate existing focus of food insecurity on sub-Saharan Africa and to a lesser extent on South Asia. Within the developing world, the adverse impacts of climate change will fall disproportionately on the poor. Many quantitative assessments also show that the socio-economic environment in which climate change is likely to evolve is more important than the impacts that can be expected from the biophysical changes of climate change.

All quantitative assessments we reviewed show that the first decades of the 21st century are expected to see low impacts of climate change, but also lower overall incomes and still a higher dependence on agriculture. During these first decades, the biophysical changes as such will be less pronounced but climate change will affect those particularly adversely that are still more dependent on agriculture and have lower overall incomes to cope with the impacts of climate change. By contrast, the second half of the century is expected to bring more severe biophysical impacts. How strong the impacts of climate change will be felt over all decades will crucially depend on the future policy environment for the poor.

Adaptation to climate change needs to be integrated into developmental activities. Policies on adaptation should include changes in land use and timing of farming operations, adaptive breeding and technologies, irrigation infrastructure, water storage, and water management. In addition, long-term weather forecasting, dissemination of technology, creating drought and flood-resistant crop varieties, will require national and international planning and investment.

Economic diversification to reduce dependence on climate-sensitive resources is an important adaptation strategy. Improved food security through crop diversification, developing local food banks for people and livestock and improving local food preservation needs to be encouraged.

WIDF DEMANDS A Gender Sensitive Response to Climate Change Four areas have been identified as critical building blocks in response to climate change: mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and financing. The first two blocks are linked to manifestations of climate change; and the latter two are linked to the means for achieving development goals.

Mitigation and adaptation efforts should systematically and effectively address gender-specific impacts of climate change in the areas of, food security, agriculture and fisheries; biodiversity; water;

health; human rights; and peace and security. Financing mechanisms must be flexible enough to reflect women's priorities and needs. The active participation of women in the development of funding criteria and allocation of resources for climate change initiatives is critical, particularly at local levels. Gender analysis of all budget lines and financial instruments for climate change is needed to ensure gender-sensitive investments in programmes for adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and capacity building.

Technological developments related to climate change should take into account women's specific priorities, needs and roles, and make full use of their knowledge and expertise, including indigenous knowledge and traditional practices. Women's involvement in the development of new technologies can ensure that they are user-friendly, affordable, effective and sustainable. Gender inequalities in access to resources, including credit, extension services, information and technology, must be taken into account in developing activities designed to curb climate change. Women should also have equal access to training, credit and skills-development programmes to ensure their full participation in climate change initiatives. Governments should thus be encouraged to incorporate gender perspectives into their national policies, action plans and other measures on sustainable development and climate change, through carrying out systematic gender analysis; collecting and utilizing sex-disaggregated data; establishing gender-sensitive benchmarks and indicators; and developing practical tools to support increased attention to gender perspectives.

The consultation and participation of women in climate change initiatives must be ensured, and the role of women's groups and networks strengthened. Currently, women are underrepresented in the decision-making process on environmental governance. They should be equally represented in decision-making structures to allow them to contribute their unique and valuable perspectives and expertise on climate change.

Appendix 1

Livelihoods In Peril: Indigenous Peoples and their Rights

By Mark Nuttall

Inuit hunters in northern Greenland are treading carefully on increasingly thinning ice, while at the same time the key marine species they depend on—seals, walrus, narwhals and polar bears—are moving away from the areas in which they are traditionally hunted, as they in turn respond to changes in local ecosystems.

In the high ranges of the Himalaya, Sherpa, Tamang, Kiranti, Dolpali and other indigenous groups are witnessing the melting of glaciers; the same is true in other mountain regions of the world such as the Peruvian Andes, where the indigenous Quechua report that they are worried when they look at the receding glaciers on their mountain peaks. In the Kalahari Desert, the San have learnt to deal with the periodic but all-too-frequent occurrence and experience of hunger and poverty arising from a combination of economic, political, environmental and climatic events. The San, like other indigenous peoples, have had to devise ingenious strategies to cope with environmental change and its consequences, yet they are reporting that the character of such change is now different than many remember. All over the world, indigenous peoples are confronted with unprecedented climate change affecting their homelands, cultures and livelihoods.

Indigenous peoples depend on natural resources for their livelihoods and they often inhabit diverse but fragile ecosystems. At the same time, many indigenous peoples remain among the world's most marginalized, impoverished and vulnerable peoples. They may be amongst those who have contributed the least to the greenhouse gas emissions that characterize anthropogenic climate change, yet they bear the brunt of the climate crisis and they often have minimal access to the resources and political and institutional support needed to cope with the changes. They have to navigate their way across the dramatically shifting environments of their homelands and to comprehend and find effective strategies that will allow them to respond to the changes happening—from the diminishing sea ice and reduced snowfall now characterizing the Arctic regions, to receding glaciers in high altitude regions, to increased coastal erosion and rising sea levels, to reduced rainfall in temperate ecosystems and increased fires in tropical rainforests. Regional and global scientific assessments, such as the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment, have stated unequivocally that the Earth's climate is changing in ways that could have irreversible impacts that will affect ecosystems, societies and cultures on scales that demand urgent global response and sustained action. But this scientific research merely confirms the experiences and the

observations of indigenous peoples in many parts of the world, especially those living in the Arctic, high mountain areas, semi-arid lands and low-lying South Pacific islands—places which are all sensitive indicators of the profound impacts human activities are having on the world's climate. The Arctic's climate, in particular, has shown an unprecedented and alarming rate of change over the last fifty years and scientific research currently indicates a rapid reduction of multi-year ice cover in the Arctic Ocean as well as glacial retreat from Greenland's inland ice and other Arctic ice masses. High-resolution satellite laser measurements continue to show that Arctic glaciers and ice streams are rapidly thinning and speeding up in their flow. Residents of South Pacific islands do not need to be told about the links between this and the rising tides threatening to engulf their homes.

It may be more accurate to say that, globally, we are in the midst of a climate crisis. The need—and the opportunity presented—for a historic agreement on climate change in Copenhagen in December 2009 cannot be overstated enough. Yet climate change has a regional texture—its impacts are not universal. Some environments and peoples are more exposed to climate change, depending on their geographic, environmental and socio-economic circumstances and, as a consequence, are significantly more vulnerable to the impacts and long-term consequences of climate change than others. But as indigenous peoples experience the realities of climate change, it is not something which affects them in isolation from other kinds of changes and problems of pressing contemporary concern. Climate change magnifies problems that already exist in many indigenous communities—problems of poverty, marginalization, land loss and degradation, social exclusion, and non-inclusion in national and international policy-making processes. Climate change is an issue of human rights and inequality—it needs to be understood in the context of multiple stressors that already affect indigenous peoples and local communities.

The consequences of ecosystem changes have far-reaching implications for the indigenous peoples' use, protection and management of wildlife, fisheries, forests, mangroves, savannahs, wetlands, mountains and small-island ecosystems, and they have dramatic effects on the traditional and customary uses of culturally and economically significant species and resources. To indigenous peoples, climate change is, however, not simply a matter of physical changes to the environments in which they live. Many consider climate change a threat to their livelihood and they fear that their economy and resource use will be threatened, followed by an erosion of social and cultural life, and a loss of traditional knowledge. As the global discourse on climate change focuses on understanding how we can scientifically and technologically adapt to, as well as mitigate, climate change, indigenous peoples are faced with the prospect of climate change further challenging their abilities to adapt, respond to and cope with environmental and social changes. The key to effective and successful climate negotiations—and for agreement on climate change solutions—is to ensure that indigenous peoples can participate fully in them. But it remains that the crucial contributions indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge can make to global discussions and negotiations are often overlooked.

THEME 4

Women's Approach for Equality, Development and Peace

Introduction

Nowadays, there is no social issue, globally or nationally, that has not a feminine dimension whether it regards labor and social insurance, education, health, sport, culture, democracy and peace.

The unfavorable position of the female population or, to be exact, of the vast majority of the female population is absolutely obvious in every statistic regionally, nationally and globally. Unemployment, poverty, uneven wage, uninsured work, whether in times of economic growth or crisis, target women affecting them twice as much. The cases of dismissed pregnant workers are increasing day by day either because there is a gap in the legislation or because the laws are violated by employers. Women and children are the overwhelming majority of the victims in any military conflict in the world without them even being present on the battlefield, and are the main victims of war crimes and all war related sexual violence. The victims of domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment and abuse, are usually women. 140 million women and girls have suffered the torment of excision, millions are excluded from education and work, and thousands more are deprived of their right to move freely once "unaccompanied" and are even stoned to death when accused of crimes offending "honor". Tens of millions of women are bought and sold daily in the modern slavery bazaar of trafficking and prostitution. Worldwide, only 10 of the 151 elected heads of state, 11 of 192 heads of government, 16% of ministers, and 19% of parliamentarians are women, regardless of the fact that women are the majority of the population of the world. While the status of women continues to be the subject of the commercialization and devaluation of the dominant media culture and lifestyle, at the same time sexist stereotypes about the role of women in society, family, work, and interpersonal relationships are being reproduced even through the new generation.

It is important to reiterate these points because in the minds of many women, especially young women, the advances made regarding the social status of women during the last 30-40 years create a much distorted impression. The legal status of women, the massive access to the education system and new areas of work, and freedom in their private and family life nurtures the illusion that equality has been achieved and that the issue of gender inequity is not as acute as it was a few decades ago.

However, taking into account the relentless truths of numbers (because reality is usually more dramatic than the results of surveys) we will -pretty much- all agree on these conclusions. It is therefore imperative to understand how essential is the organized struggle of women in the effort to overthrow the factors which keep women oppressed economically, socially, and culturally and to eliminate all forms of discrimination, inequality, violence and oppression which target women or specific groups of women. So that women assume the role that in reality best represents their attribution prospects regarding development, progress and peace.

Before us lie the major responsibilities and the critical questions that we as the global progressive women's movement need to answer: Which demands and requests should progressive women put forward in order to meet the modern needs of women in the world? What means of struggle do we recommend? Who are our allies and comrades during this struggle? Where can we find the first link of all these chains that keep women captive, so that we can break it and once and forever free our sex?

What is the content we give to the terms 'development', 'peace' and 'equality', which are not abstract concepts but inevitably ideological and class related terms, depending on who and why uses them? What do we want? "Development" driven by profit, such as the BP development that caused one of the biggest ecological disasters on the planet? Or do we claim development that balances the resources of each country's wealth, to benefit the people and social prosperity in general? What sort of peace do we mean? The "peace" imposed by NATO when it levelled the Balkans? The "peace" that supposedly urged the U.S. to invade Iraq and Afghanistan? The "peace" espoused by Hillary Clinton, Condoleezza Rice before, and Israel's Livni? Or Peace founded on international laws and the laws of the people for freedom, independence and sovereignty?

What does the word equality stand for us, the World Federation of Democratic Women? Do we mean the supposed equality NATO declares promoting groups of women marines or programs that consolidate equal presence of women in the first line of fire during their imperialist interventions? Is unequal representation of women in decision-making centers a result of sexist stereotypes or of the absence of measures such as quotas? When for example the EU abolishes positive measures in social insurance in favor of the working mother because they allegedly consist discrimination against men, does this regard equality? Does leveling-down the rights of men workers to be matched with those of women amount equality as we perceive it? Do we strive for the same

equality as that of the supposed feminist ideologies, which demand that both sexes be treated the same in all matters, ignoring the woman's special part in the reproductive process and motherhood?

Is it possible that eventually all women, regardless of their social and class position, will organize for the promotion of their demands for equal rights at work and measures supporting working mothers? Is it at all possible that women who align themselves with capitalism and big-time employers can truly accept our requests for equal pay, extended maternity leave, special arrangements and facilitations for the working mother? And finally, can we achieve gender parity when our societies and economies are based on inequality, exploitation, injustice and the commercialization of everything? All these questions are useful and relevant not only in order to shape, confirm and deepen the radical progressive orientation of WIDF but also in order to rouse the women and societies of our countries.

Class at the root of female inequity

In our view, orientation can be given if we identify the root cause, the starting point of female inequity. There is no serious scientific doubt to the notion that genders were equal at the beginning of mankind. Marxism contributed significantly in analyzing the social and historical conditions in which, the "momentous defeat" was incurred by the female sex thousands of years ago. The founders of scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, revealed the true nature and essence of the Women's Issue, which is the dual - class oriented and sex oriented- exploitation of women. The emergence of private ownership of the means of production, the class division of human societies and -as a consequence- the emergence of exploitation of man by man coincided with the great reverse in gender relations. The natural division of labor that existed between the two sexes due to the new conditions that were brought upon by private ownership and class exploitation, was transformed into a social and competitive division that lead to the alienation of women from the means of production. The fatal result was the overthrow of matriarchy (which did not give any social benefits to the woman) from the patriarchal law (which instead ensured the supremacy of man over woman) and eventually the entire subjugation of the female sex. Upon these class- oriented relations of exploitation, were moulded for thousands of years, all economic, political, cultural and sexual forms of inequality, discrimination and oppression of women, which were often justified and certified by religions, state laws and institutions, dominant cultures and values.

Mankind had to go a long way to develop the necessary physical and social conditions that would give back the possibility to women to enter en masse into employment and to assert a different position in society. And indeed it was under capitalism that an objectively progressive evolution in the women's issue occurred, as they returned to productive activity. This of course was neither accidental, nor because fair conditions for women at work had finally become reality. Women were part of the productive activity due to the conditions that form capitalism as a system. The development of industry and the perfection of machinery enabled the use of female and child labor, which of course capitalism used to undermine the achievements and rights of men workers.

Simultaneously, women are subjected to further exploitation by capitalism due to their inferior social position. Women enter economic life but continue to carry all their primordial weights and certainly continue to bear the responsibilities of motherhood, childcare and the household. As workers they are doubly oppressed: through their class position and through their sex. However, this trend is not unequivocal. The massive participation of women at work shaped the conditions for them to join the class-related organized struggle with male workers, which, as life itself has so many times demonstrated, is the only way to improve the position for the overwhelming majority of women. Through the ranks of the trade union movement, the progressive women's movement keeping pace with the labor movement and through the impetus given to social progress by the communist movement, woman has advanced many steps forward in the 20th century.

By identifying and highlighting the root cause of female inequality, we find the way to fight it: which is the way of the class struggle!

With Whom? For Whom?

Undoubtedly, history has produced several female personalities and movements of the bourgeoisie which also demanded the elimination of certain forms of inequality and discrimination against women. The recognition of the right to vote, the modernization of family law, the right to education are some of the gains women achieved with the contribution of women of the bourgeoisie.

However, women of higher social status are not experiencing the double exploitation that women belonging to the working class and working class people in general suffer, because they can afford the means and the time to cope with both their tasks at work and at home.

Instead, the woman of the working class has twice the need for her employment rights to be secured, her maternity and parental leave to be enshrined by law. She needs policies supporting working mothers and policies setting age limits for retirement in order to enjoy, after having retired from work, a quality of life. For this woman it is necessary to have public and free social services, state and high standard day-care centres for infants, children and the elderly, comprehensive and high quality medical care. Conversely, we can understand that when workers' rights are mutilated, when state welfare is compromised, when social services are privatized, things are twice as difficult, especially for women of the working class. We mention this because women's inequality has not the same impact on the lives of all women.

This is the reason why in postmodern capitalist society women of the bourgeoisie cannot effectively support the radical demands for parity of women (e.g. in relation to industrial relations, maternity, education and health for all women, social care for the elderly and the family). Their efforts are limited and relate to demands which concern their class in particular (e.g. introduction of quota for women in the state and party organs) or problems that are related to women in general regardless of their social class. Such are problems regarding anachronistic attitudes and mentality on gender relations, preconceptions about the social role of the sexes, male violence towards women, sexual harassment etc.

What is more, in today's era where the bourgeoisie has exhausted their potential for progress, which they had demonstrated during the period they emerged in the limelight of history, women who belong to the upper social class and embrace the ideology of capitalism are being utilized to obscure the true nature of the Women's Issue or to promote deeply anti-people policies, which target the vast majority of women, the women of the working class. Thus we witness women politicians voting against increasing maternity leave, supporting privatization of social services, agreeing to the extension of the retirement age, etc. Thus we witness female politicians supporting or ordering imperialist military attacks and conflicts that lead to carnage of women and children. These are the women whom the present system promotes as standards of feminine prestige and symbols of gender equality! In our struggle for gender equality and emancipation of women, all these women are against us.

Therefore, those who have objective interest to struggle and raise the female sex to its rightful position are those who experience the true nature of female inequality: the class related inequality. Women of the working class, women

farmers, pensioners that face the risk of poverty, the women immigrants oppressed in multiple ways, women of minorities, etc. These are the women the World Federation of Democratic Women addresses and it is for these women that we fight. We do not reject cooperation in specific issues and goals with organizations and movements that do not identify with us. But we point out that only when these women who are the vast majority of our sex mobilize, will our struggle be victorious. Only then will our struggle reach its ultimate goal, which is the eradication of the root of female inequality: the abolition of class exploitation.

Objectives of the Struggle

Today, women's organizations that constitute the World Federation of Democratic Women wage their daily struggles in their countries. In some countries co-fighters struggle to abolish medieval laws which forbid women to be educated and to work. In other countries, our organizations struggle against neo-liberal policies of privatization and flexible employment affecting first and foremost women. Elsewhere, they struggle to stop the hideous "traditions" of mutilating women's genitals and of stoning women for "crimes of honor". In other countries, women fight for freedom and democracy in their homeland. The particular aims of each national organization may differ but we are all united by the ideals of gender equality and women's rights. These ideals are not abstract wishful thinking. They are rich in content and the 15th congress of WIDF specifies these goals that meet the demands of the 21st century, whereas each national organization further refines and promotes them at its country depending on their particular circumstances.

Full equality in all aspects of public and private life

- Full constitutional guarantee of gender equality by all states which have not yet established it.
- Full implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and development of mechanisms at international and local level for the control and evaluation of its implementation.
- Withdrawal of any unjustified reservations expressed by states regarding parts of the provisions of the Convention (30 states have expressed reservations as to the provision on equality of rights to marriage and family, 22 states as to the compatibility with religious rules and tradition codes, 20 states as to equality in citizenship etc.).³

³ Progress of the World's Women 2011–2012: In Pursuit of Justice, UN Women

- Abolition of all laws, administrative rules or practices and custom rules which affect women's human rights in all states, dignity, work, education, participation in social, economic and political life, in family and marriage, in property, in citizenship acquisition etc.
- Prohibition of child marriages and abolition – where it exists – of the difference in the lowest age limit for marriage based on gender
- Creation of special legal services (e.g. special courts for gender issues, “one-stop shops” service, which combine psychological and financial support, legal aid, medical and coronary support, access to police authorities and so on in order to ensure access of all women to justice.

Work and Social Security

The position of women in labor relations is at the centre of our perception of the woman issue and this is interrelated – in one way or another – with most fields of action regarding equality of the sexes. Unemployment, poverty, unequal pay, insecure and illegal labor, underemployment and part-time employment is the permanent nightmare of women who struggle to live, since each statistic shows that the female population is diachronically at a worse position than the male regarding the above issues. If we note that phenomena such as labor terrorism (prohibition or attack against trade-unionism and action) occur more frequently in occupation with high female proportion, or that sexual harassment in the workplace, – as a rule - targets women, we then may realize the setting that composes the labor environment for the female population of the planet. We also note that, in many countries of the world work and participation in the productive process is forbidden for women. In Arab countries, only 28% of women participate in the work force.⁴

At the same time, we need to bear in mind that the fact that women find jobs with more difficulty, get more insecure jobs, are more easily fired, get paid less and have fewer rights is inevitably reflected in the pensions they get. This explains the increasing risk that they may find themselves lower in the poverty limit when they retire.

The world capitalist crisis came to make things worse. Women comprise 60-80% of the work force in the field of imported products, a field which according to the World Bank

⁴ UNIFEM, 'Progress of Arab Women; Jordanian News Digest', 26 Feb 2007

will shrink considerably. Millions of women became unemployed because of the crisis, because they are usually the first to get fired.

The response of the world progressive women's movement can only be given in alliance with the international working class movement. Beyond the specific demands of women workers, we unite our voice and our actions with the class unions in each country and the PAG requiring:

- Full – stable employment for everybody. NO lay-offs
- Substantial protection of the unemployed with dignified unemployment allowance and introduction of regulations such as loan “freezing” etc.
- We struggle for the reduction of work time, introducing a 35 hour weekly work time – 7 hours/5 days with full salary and security rights.
- Institutionalization of minimum salary (legal, collective agreements at national, regional, or departmental level) so as to provide a salary that will be at least 60% of the average salary).
- Institutionalization of minimum income programs and compensating programs to supplement income (e.g. unemployment allowance, minimum pension and so on) so as to provide income support that will be at least 60% of the relevant national income average.
- We object to any effort to raise the retirement age limits of workers. Retirement is at 55 years for women and 60 years for men. The retirement of women five years earlier in the public and private sector is the minimum acknowledgement of the inequality of women in the exploitative society, the acknowledgement of the social role of motherhood.
- Public and free social security systems which will cover fully the needs of the workers and their families and will guarantee a dignified standard of living to the third generation. A network of pharmaceutical coverage, of rest-houses, cultural and educational activities, entertainment and socialization of the elderly.

Motherhood and childcare

Nature has given women the privilege of this unique role in the reproductive process so they have to care about matters regarding motherhood and the upbringing of children, which is not an exclusively individual or family responsibility. We demand

- The formation or continuous expansion of the state's infrastructure, services, measures and benefits which support the working pregnant woman, the working mother and family in general:

- Legislation prohibiting the dismissal of pregnant women with severe penalties for employers
- Consolidation and extension of maternity and parental leave (pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding) with full pay and pension rights
- Prohibition of night work shifts during pregnancy and confinement.
- Introduction of paternity leave
- Public and free health centres with gynecological and obstetric clinics with mobile units as well as centres of assisted reproduction, sperm banks and stem cells.
- Introduction of institutions like the family doctor and pediatrician for the entire population.
- Introduction of institutions for care rooms and childcare centres at the workplace and introduction of institutions such as baby sitting house calls.
- State funded nursery schools and public creative activity centres for children and toddlers and also children's camps.
- Special arrangements for the members of single parent families and families that have a member with disability (reduced work hours, increased absence time, etc.)

Specific prevention and protection of health of the female population

The recent UN report on the implementation progress of the Millennium Development Goals gives some very dramatic evidence regarding increased risks facing women's health (pregnancy mortality, HIV) and even admits that these risks depend not only on age and education level of women, or whether they live in urban or rural areas but also depend on their social class. Therefore WIDF demands:

- Public and free health systems with sufficient and quality gynecological medical centres, Family Planning Centres
- National state and free prevention programs, vaccines, PAP tests, mammography, and osteoporosis tests for all women
- Special attention to the prevention of occupational diseases based on the particularities of the physiology of the female body
- Employment of an adequate number of female medical staff (besides the unbearable cost, the reason why a large part of women do not seek medical care – which exceeds the majority in some countries – is the fact that there is no female medical or nurse staff).
- Formulation of a special policy on AIDS and women so as to include an upgrade of the prevention services, healthcare services and support of patients as well as targeted

information campaigns around the issue. An important factor for the infection and spread of the virus is the unequal power relations between the sexes, because of which sexual violence is reproduced while millions of women are unable to ask their partner to use a condom.⁵

Violence against women

Some forms of violence occur in all corners of the earth (e.g. domestic violence and rape), while others appear only in certain countries or cultures, such as female genital mutilation, the verification of virginity, the burning of widows. Violence can be detected in the family (beatings, violence related to dowry, incest) or in relation to the punishment of the group that owns the woman (rape in wartime). Violence against women is any kind of sexual harassment, trafficking, prostitution and pornography although new forms of violence are detected in areas of modern technological means such as the internet.

However, in our perception violence against women (psychological, physical, sexual, and economic) is not an isolated unlawful act, regarding an individual or the family. It is an act of social malfunction that is produced and reproduced by the existence of specific social structures and relations that are dominated by exploitation and violence. The root of violence against women is found in the predetermined power relationship between the sexes which is class related, and in the unequal position of women.

As the World Federation of Democratic Women we demand

- That all states ban explicitly domestic violence and domestic rape. Today, 603 million women live in countries where violence within the family is not a crime and in 127 countries rape within a marriage is not explicitly banned by law.
- That all states acknowledge legally that violence against women is a special form of violence so as to formulate the suitable legal and institutional framework for the treatment to the problem.
- That suitable infrastructure and services become state responsibility and that state sources are used for the psychological, medical and legal support of abused women and also in order to create qualitatively and quantitatively sufficient hosting shelters of abused women.
- That measures are taken which increase the presence of women in the police force and the legal system (worldwide the number is lower than 10%); an element which proves to be connected with the number of reports of violent offenses by women victims

⁵ *Progress of the World's Women 2011–2012: In Pursuit of Justice, UN Women*, p. 114.

as well as with the conviction of offenders (in Europe less than 14% of reported rapes go to court.).

- That prostitution as a profession is banned, because it lowers human dignity and is the worst insult on human rights. Persecution of prostitution advertising and high penalties for those soliciting customers for prostitution and others involved in trafficking circuits.
- That effective infrastructures are created, to which women – victims of prostitution - can resort to and which give special care to foreign women.

Sexual and Reproductive rights

Every year, hundreds of thousands of women die during pregnancy, labor and post labor, most of whom are in developed countries. 80 million of women each year have unwanted pregnancies, 45 million of which are terminated.⁶ Out of these 45 million abortions, 19 million occur in unsafe conditions while 40% involve women under 25 years of age, and around 68 thousand women die each year due to complications arising from unsafe abortions.⁷ Nevertheless, dozens of states around the world prohibit abortions even in cases where the life of the mother is in danger or even when the pregnancy is the result of rape.

Apart from the aspect of reproductive health of women, their right to have control and decide freely and responsibly about issues concerning their sexuality, including their sexual and reproductive health, without force, discrimination and violence is part of human rights (article 96 of the Beijing Action Platform). Equality in relations between men and women on issues of sexual relations and reproduction, including the absolute respect of the integrity of the person, presupposes absolute respect, consent and joint responsibilities with regard to sexual behavior and its consequences.

International organizations, such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation - IPPF defined sexual and reproductive rights, which derive from the international law of human rights. The UN Fund for demographics UNFPA and WHO acknowledged the Charter of IPPF on sexual and reproductive rights (1995).

The World Federation of Democratic Women demands the immediate abolition of any restrictive clause regarding reproductive rights derived from the UN Conventions, especially in relation to the right of women for legal and safe abortion and also

⁶ Alan Guttmacher Institute 1999.

⁷ WHO 2004

demands the safeguarding of reproductive rights of women as they are derived from the relevant codification of IPPF.⁸ At the same time, the World Federation of Democratic Women calls upon the governments of the world

- To introduce programs of comprehensive sexual education within and outside the educational system.
- To make every effort to provide birth control and services for sexual and reproductive health, free or at low cost, to groups of people who are not sufficiently served, such as young people, ethnic minorities and socially excluded groups.
- To safeguard better access to health care services for persons who live in poverty in the field of reproductive and sexual health, offering them the option of birth control and prevention/diagnosis of sexually transmitted diseases.
- To implement health care and social policy that will lead to the decrease of abortions, through the provision of family planning services and the financial/material support to pregnant women who experience difficulties.

8

1. The right to life, which means, among others, that the life of any woman should not be put at risk due to pregnancy.
2. The right to freedom and safety of the person, which acknowledges that no person should undergo amputation of female reproductive organs, forced pregnancy, sterilization or abortion.
3. The right to equality and liberation from any form of discrimination, which includes discrimination in relation to the sexual and reproductive life of the person.
4. The right to privacy, which means that all medical services of sexual and reproductive health ought to be confidential and that all women have the right to decide autonomously on their reproductive options.
5. The right to freedom of thought, which includes freedom from the restrictive interpretation of religious texts, beliefs, philosophies, and customs, which are used to undermine the freedom of thought in relation to sexual and reproductive medical care and other issues.
6. The right to be informed and educated in relation to sexual and reproductive health for all persons, including access to complete information on the benefits, the risks and effectiveness of all methods of regulating fertility, so that every decision is based on a comprehensive, free and informed consent of the person.
7. The right to choose marriage or not, and to create a planned family.
8. The right to decide whether and when to have a child.
9. The right to health care and protection of health which includes the right to the best possible quality in medical care of clients and the right to be free of traditional habits that are detrimental to health.
10. The right to the benefits of scientific progress, which includes the right of users of sexual and reproductive health services to access to new technologies that concern reproductive health, which are safe, effective and acceptable.
11. The right to freedom of gathering and political participation, which includes the right of all persons to ask to influence communities governments so as to set as priority the promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights.
12. The right freedom from torture and abuse, which includes the right of all women, men, and young people to be protected from violence, sexual exploitation and abuse.

- To eliminate the practice of “pre-natal sex selection” which by rule gives preference to boys over girls and the social/family pressure exercised against women in certain parts of the world to give birth to boys. Related to this practice, are phenomena of neglect of new born baby girls as well as infanticide.

Representation in decision-making centers

Despite great steps that occurred in the last few decades regarding the political representation of women, right now, only 10 out of 151 elected state leaders, 11 out of 192 heads of governments, 16% of Ministers and 19% of parliament members around the world are women. Almost in all countries of the world, the presence of women in state institutions, in public administration, in justice and so on is disproportionately small. This issue is projected by bourgeois political forces as the main aspect of the whole issue of inequality of the two sexes and it is similarly asserted that the solution is to institutionalize quotas in favor of women in all state bodies. Certain bourgeois women who are found in positions of political and economic power are projected as symbols of female success and equality.

In our view, the under-representation of women is not – as claimed – the major motive for the equity between the sexes. Nor is it “just a matter of time until the distance separating the two sexes is covered” regarding their presence in political life. Nor is it exclusively due to sexist stereotypes, even though these have a secondary role to play. The under-representation of women is only one aspect – and perhaps not the most important one – of the woman’s issue, with the various forms of discrimination, inequality and oppression at the expense of women. This is the tip of the iceberg. We approach the issue starting off at its root. We start off with the fact that diachronically the participation of women in political life, in parties, in trade-unionism is reduced. It is therefore only natural that very few women are at the ‘top’ of the political life when there is no corresponding percentage at the basis of the socio political activity. The question that is avoided by bourgeois political forces and neo-feminists of every country is: why is this the case?

The truth is that today a woman finds a job with more difficulty than a man, is paid less, has fewer prospects to climb in her work career, has motherhood obligations and increased duties at home while she may experience domestic violence, religious and social prejudice, even legal obstacles which render it very difficult to make the decision to stand up with all the personal and family difficulties and get involved in political life. This is where it all begins. To be exact, these do not concern all women, but mostly the

women who come from labor-popular strata of society. So, if we wish to see more women in politics, we will have to improve the conditions of life and work of women, especially working women who are the vast majority. Then we may see more women in political life, in mass organizations or better in organized struggle. Then life itself will overturn sexist stereotypes. Then we will see more women in parliamentary chairs and ministry councils. Then the election of a woman in the leadership of a state will be an everyday event and not headline news.

Based on this line of thought, we are against the practice of quota since it does not give solutions to the problem at its root, in society, but it only fixes the facade.

At the same time, we have to underline that the participation of bourgeois women in state or political offices does not change the policies followed by a state or bourgeois party. Or even, the participation of women in management positions of economic nature does not overturn the double oppression to which the women of the labor class are doomed. For this reason, the woman who originates from the classes of the working people cannot struggle in the abstract for the increase of woman's participation in the institutions and decision-making centres. She cannot cheer for the election of women in offices, regardless of the class and ideological/political stance. The WFDW, struggles for the increase of the participation of women in the labor movement, in trade-union bodies, in workers' parties bodies as well as in electoral procedures and state offices that these parties obtain.

Media and women

The reactionary role of the bourgeois media originates in the capitalist system itself and in particular in their dominant position in the field of information, i.e. the contradiction between the social role and nature of information and production - dissemination of cultural objects on the one hand and its control by a group of big monopolies of the other. The media, like any other instrument, are inevitably aligned with the class and value positioning of their owners. No matter how objective or progressive they may try to be or pretend to be, the bourgeois media cannot escape the system of values and ideas of capitalism and cannot escape from being manipulated by ideological forces of the system.

The mutual respect of the sexes cannot fit into the culture of the bourgeois media, especially when the low values and rotten standards they promote and reproduce yield profit. The commercialization of the female body, the reproduction of stereotypes about the role of women in the family, society, politics, career, interpersonal relationships,

love, etc., underestimating the potential of women, the promotion of standards of the sexually pseudo-feminist "liberated" woman, and of the authoritarian employer as acknowledged female symbols are just some of the issues that express the philosophy of the bourgeois media throughout their broadcasts. At this point, we need to put forth the concept that the outer beauty is the highest goal for women, which can be achieved, according to the media stereotypes with exhausting diets that end up in anorexia, with expensive cosmetics and even more expensive surgeries. Meanwhile, the sexist stereotypes constantly promoted through the wording used as well as by the limited (quantitatively and thematically speaking) presence of women in the media, while female under-representation is well-established in managerial and supervisory bodies of the media. Furthermore, the news broadcasting and socio-political journalism of the urban media are in constant conflict with the class approach to female inequality. Therefore the organized progressive women's movement has to go perform an active and fighting role.

The transformation of the media into means and agencies for the consolidation of universal values and ideals, levers for highlighting the problems and needs of our peoples, promoters of knowledge and science, requires radical changes in the ownership and management status of the media. However, the issue of the social control and institutional accountability of the media can and must be placed immediately on the table, on the basis of a three faceted demand for: democracy in information, protection of human values and prevention of phenomena of decadence. Based on these needs, the women's movement in each country has to become a means for the exercise of pressure on the media, adding of course the specialized context of demands for women:

- Strict legal framework regarding advertising which will prohibit the exploitation of the female body and the promotion of sexist messages which reduce the dignity of women.
- Exercise of systematic control programs by institutions, which participate in the women's movement, to ensure respect for the dignity of women and prevent the commercialization of the female body and the representation of women as sexual objects. Particular emphasis should be placed on the elimination of offensive stereotypes dominating the media against specific groups of women e.g. women immigrants and generally those targeting women in accordance with their ethnic origin.

- Constant pressure for greater participation of women in TV debates and interviews concerning the whole range of issues of public life, not only on women and gender equality (which should also involve men).
- The ensuring of full implementation of equality between men and women at the workplace through regulations adopted for the employment, training, pay, promotion and generally all working conditions of people employed in the media. Adopting positive measures to support working women in the media in relation to pregnancy and motherhood (timetable, permits, etc.). The development of educational channels and facilities for training women in new media technology.
- The development of professional guidelines and internal codes of conduct and other forms of self-regulation to promote the projection of non-stereotypical images of women in a manner consistent with freedom of expression. The education of workers in the media on issues of women and gender equality, which will help them to grasp social reality through their work.
- The increase in women's participation in the supervisory and managerial bodies of the media and generally in decision-making at all levels of media.
- The development of programs dealing with real problems and issues facing the modern woman (employment, health, motherhood, domestic violence etc. and promotion of the activities of the women's movement.

Women and Education

The recent UN report on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals could not be clearer: "Being poor, a girl or living in a war zone increases the probability of a child dropping out of school" and that "The girls are gaining ground in education, but unequal access remains a fact in many regions of the world." It should be noted that all studies conclude that approximately 2/3 of the world's illiterates are women.

Moreover, in developed countries of the world, girls may have the opportunity to go to school but the educational system reproduces discrimination and stereotypes against women.

Language and references used in manuals and textbooks, the teaching practices, teacher expectations, the expectations of teachers from boys and girls, the lack of courses that promote communication and fellowship between the sexes, vocational guidance, the gendered division of teachers in the hierarchy, in union bodies and in decision-making bodies are just some of the areas where elements of discrimination

against women are identified. For instance, deeply embedded is the hidden "urge" of women toward specific fields of study and professional groups and not to the fields of natural sciences, computing and technology.

Our response must include the following demands:

- Establishment of twelve-year public and free compulsory education for all children in the world.
- Elimination of any reference to or content in education and in the operational structures of institutions that discriminate against women or reproduce negative stereotypes about women.
- Reform of the curricula to include the gender perspective (with elements that encourage boys to participate more actively in family life and girls in public life, cultivating mutual respect between the sexes in the history of the female sex, the time course of the woman question and update on the status of women in society today.)
- Introduction of educational and information programs for teachers on gender equality as well as training programs for teachers and parents so as to eliminate stereotypes in the choice of field of study and profession.
- Introduction of programs that encourage girls to participate in professional orientation that is technical in nature and use of new technologies.
- Design of a strategy in order to promote women in decision-making positions in all sectors and levels of education.
- Introduction of health education programs in schools, with elements of sexual education and gender communication, starting from the primary or pre-primary education.
- Introduction of Gender Studies in Higher Education at undergraduate and postgraduate level.
- Development at each educational foundation of a modern educational material bank (book writing, press, audiovisual material, library) that is gender related.

What kind of development? What kind of peace? How do we fight for these?

First: The truth is that all of these demands, although they appear ambitious, are totally feasible. It is estimated, for example, that if the salaries of working women were to increase to the same level as men's salaries then the GDP of America would be 9% higher, that of the Euro zone 13% higher and of Japan 16% higher. However, this is not the case and it is futile for one to expect that the capitalists would put the general interest over and above profit. It is confirmed every day more emphatically that

capitalism has offered all it could have offered to human civilization. **The capitalist relations of production now present an obstacle to progress and development. The productive forces of the world, humanity's possibilities and prospects are suffocating within the framework of the exploitative relations and structures of the current socio-economic system.**

Second: In general, if we take into account the enormous increase in the world's wealth and the gigantic possibilities technology and science offered during the past few decades of the development of capitalism, we will come to the conclusion that indeed humanity does have at its disposal the objective and material possibilities to safeguard a dignified living standard, housing, health and education for all the world's people, also alleviating the inequality affecting women and girls. One could ask the question why this is not the case. This is due to the fact that the motive underlying the capitalist economy is profit and not the popular interest or the interest of the planet. **The "development" promoted by the forces of capital, internationally and locally, is one thing, and our own perception about our countries, but also the world's socio-economic development is another.**

We are fighting for a sort of development which will serve the people and social prosperity; for a development which will fully and in a planned manner utilize the rich productive resources of each country; for a development which will place natural wealth and the means of production in the ownership and management of society, for a development which will be strengthened through a transnational, regional and international cooperation between the peoples, based on just, mutually beneficial and equal relations; for a development which can realistically ensure the access of all people throughout the world to food, water, energy, housing, education and health; for a development which will be able to guarantee the construction of a new society which will eradicate the moral degradation of injustice, exploitation, decay and commercialization; for a development which would not need, nor have need of competitiveness and war in order to move forward.

Third: This issue of peace is also perceived in the same way. **For us, peace is not merely the absence of war, but mainly the absence of the causes of war.** This is why we are combating imperialism and all it provokes: militarization, foreign intervention in the internal affairs of states and nationalist hatred.

For us, peace and justice are inseparable. The only peace we recognize is the peace the peoples impose through their struggle. The only peace we recognize is the peace

which safeguards the freedom and self-determination of peoples, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of states. This is why we do not compromise with any "peace" the imperialists impose at the expense of the peoples and we do not consent to their plans that aim to defend their economic and geo-strategic interests. This is why we do not compromise with the attempt of the imperialists - headed by the USA - to put the UN under control and with the tearing up of international law or with its selective utilization.

Fourth: It is also true that none of these secondary issues constituting women's inequality can be solved in isolation, given that they are interconnected and interdependent. Also, it is now clear that it is not enough to fight for some measures that will improve the position of women. Neither can we combat only certain aspects of women's inequality. All of the major economic issues are interlinked. They cannot be promoted or indeed solved in a fragmented manner. **An all-round socio-political struggle is demanded by the people in each country, which will break with the monopolies and imperialism,** with the forces of the establishment and conservatism, with the ideological positions camouflaging the real nature of contemporary social issues.

Fifth: The necessity for the upgrading of the international coordination, joint action and solidarity between the progressive forces of the world is highlighted. At the same time, the international organizations of the world progressive movement (World Federation of Democratic Youth, World Federation of Trade Unions, World Peace Council and the World Democratic Federation of Women) must intensify their activity and joint initiatives. More specifically, the World Democratic Federation of Women, which represents a historic achievement for women, should raise their level of activity and base it on a more steady ideological and political unity, with radical positions and activity - that is to say, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist - which will correspond to the demands of our times.

At the same time, certain axes of activity and unity of movements and forces that do not identify completely with our own perception of things may be formed. Every progressive and thinking person in the world today can comprehend the necessity of a struggle for: The development of just and equal international economic relations and the rejection of the disastrous choices dictated by the international financial organizations (IMF, World Bank),

The safeguarding of access to food, water and energy for all the peoples of the world,

Radical changes in world production toward economic and sustainable development and the radical reduction of military expenditure.

Sixth: The current crisis has highlighted the historical limits of the capitalist system itself and has reconfirmed that the future of humanity cannot be the decaying socio-economic system that has grown old but refuses to die. **The necessity and timeliness of the new qualitatively advanced society is now clear; this society will include social equality, dignity, solidarity and gender equality, that is to say, socialism!** In this future, unjust wars will be a thing of the past and world lasting peace will be a self-evident daily reality. In this future society, women and men will once again become equal, in essence and in every respect.

This future is neither a wish, nor a dream, but a law of history. There is no other perspective for humanity. The dilemma "socialism or barbarity" set by Engels and Rosa Luxemburg is as timely as never before, today when capitalism is turning humanity backwards to medieval living conditions and is even destroying life itself on the planet.

The Socialism constructed by the peoples will be better than the socialism we knew in the 20th century because the experience from the historical conquests of the socialist community of the 20th century cannot be erased from peoples' consciousness, despite all the anti-communist mud the imperialist centres throw at it. In particular, with regards the women's question, even the most rampant anti-communists admit that socialism in effect turned a new page and began to write the history of the equality between the two sexes. Twenty years after the overthrow of socialism in Eastern Europe, contemporary capitalist societies did not manage to even approach all that socialism gave women. At the same time, we do not hide the mistakes and weaknesses that appeared in the course of the construction of this system, but we illuminate them, not via nihilism and anti-communism, but with the will to render the world progressive movement wiser and more effective, so that the "next storming of the future" will be finally victorious.

The 21st century will be a century of development and peace because it will be the last century of human history where capitalism and class exploitation will exist. The 21st century will be the century of women because it will be the century of socialism!

THEME 5

Ethnic and Cultural Diversity of Women

A glance at ethnical and cultural diversity

When we analyze ethnical and cultural diversity we necessarily have to refer to indigenous and African descent, peoples who with their ancestral knowledge share with us their thoughts and actions in the contemporary world, showing us their problems and necessities of their everyday life, with their own logic.

We must remember that our in our continent live no less than 150 million afro descendants and more than 50 million indigenous peoples, conforming with their diversity a great pluricultural and multiethnic community, whom have played a fundamental role in the construction of the processes of independence of America and Caribbean.

The indigenous and African decent women are a fundamental part of our peoples and cultures. They are social actors that with their own thoughts interrelated with nature, the cosmos, agricultural and ethnics.

The native peoples are survivors of the conquest and extermination that took place in past and present history that took away their territories, rivers, forests, language, religion, culture and their riches.

More than 300 million peoples from 5000 indigenous peoples in 70 countries of the world have been submitted to oppression, exclusion from decision making, marginalization, exploitation, forced assimilation and repression when they fight for their rights.

In this scenario the indigenous and afro descendent women become the mayor victims of a serious environmental deterioration that affect their quality of life and foods sources.

For all the native peoples the earth is our roots, from the beginning to the end, where they create and recreate. With this philosophy Maria Luna, an indigenous woman from the Mexican community of Tzeltel, while she cuts the elotes from the milpa she would say “without the earth I don’t exist”.

The indigenous peoples are part of a Cosmvision in which the universe is present in all aspects of social, human, communitarian life and the natural environment. The 150 millions of African decent people live in the countries of this region. More than half are women and the majority are younger than 20 year old.

Our region, Latin America and the Caribbean, are pluricultural and multi ethnical societies, but, nevertheless, the economic differences between the indigenous and African decent with the rest of the population, are absolutely unacceptable. In this context indigenous and African decent women are the poorest among the poor.

The history of these communities is marked by a patriarchal and racists’ culture, reality turns into a triple discrimination: for being women, poor and indigenous or black, which marginalizes and excludes them.

It not necessary to make comparisons to conclude that their socioeconomic situation is only the result of a model that excludes them and of racism since 80% of the African descent people live in poverty.

Gender condition of afro descendent women places them in clear disadvantage in the labor market; they receive 50% less than a white male. Racism and sexism segment the labor market placing them in the base of the pyramid despite advances in diminishing breeches in the educational and labor system.

Material poverty and lack of access to services evidences the tendencies in violence and VIH in afro communities, which have become a calamity that attempts against the survival of entire populations.

The answer to this problem requires proposals that avoid the re-stigmatization, as a result of racism.

The reality of indigenous people is the much better. In many cases they live in the worst living conditions, as a result of a society that denies their rights to organize and closes the doors to the most elemental public services that permits their survival. In America there are hundreds of indigenous peoples that have their own tongue and political and social organization, but that have to fight for their rights and their precious land and for the resources they have protected for centuries and that today are in dispute because their value for a development model who’s logic is the great market for the enjoyment of few and the exclusion of the majority.

According to the National Women’s Council, CONAMU, in Ecuador, the indicators regarding language and ethnics reveals a unfavorable situation for young women, especially in secondary school: in 2003, for every 100 men, 88 native speaking women assisted school from rural areas and for superior education it was similar: for every 100 men, there were 92 women from these areas.

In this logic also humans are merchandise which explains the trafficking of persons, an offense which make black women a niche for this kind of exploitation.

The implementation of the Colombia Plan as a plan of destruction and death, brings with it a series of impacts in the lives of frontier women, including communities of African descent and indigenous peoples who see the deterioration of their crops, their rivers and ultimately their lives as a result of the intensification of the Colombian armed conflict that forces them to move because of violence and fumigations on the pretext of eradicating drug trafficking.

In America and in the world an environment of great ethnic and cultural diversity has been set forth. This fact however, although it seems obvious and unquestionable, has not been recognized. Throughout our history it has been concealed and/or underestimated without a serious effort in recognizing the indigenous peoples and Afro-Ecuadorians, appreciate its values by understanding their specificities. In fact, even the mestizos have not made efforts to understand their own identity.

Achieve an integrity that respects the ethnic and cultural diversity of Latin American and of the world means to settle the moral, political and social historical debt that humanity has in order to advance in the reconstruction with dignity in the perspective to re-conquer their sovereignty.

In recent years things have changed. There have been advances like the recognition in certain Constitutions of the cultural rights of native peoples. But still these developments need go beyond statements and discourse, to constitute central elements of development, democracy and social justice, to promote the integration of the balance between diversity and unity. We need to go beyond the acceptance of the reality of multi-ethnic and multicultural country, to build on a new foundation of respect and solidarity.

In this process one of the pillars is multiculturalism which implies recognizing ourselves as diverse and appreciating that this diversity is our wealth and our identity as peoples and as women.

Advances in the cultural context and rights

From its creation the United Nations, as a sensitive response to the voices of various ethnic groups, has endeavored to find measures to combat racial discrimination and ethnic violence. In article 1 of the Charter is mentioned as one of the purposes of the United Nations the development and encouragement to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction on grounds of ethnicity, race, sex, age, language or religion. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, in 1948, establishes that every person has the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, economic position, birth or other status (art. 2).

Consistent with these principles, the United Nations, through its legislative functions, monitoring of human rights and awareness-raising, plays an important role in the fight against racial discrimination. But each and every one of us must contribute. We need to reject acts of discrimination or intolerance in our private lives and categorically denounce them publicly. Given the relationship between racism and development this proceeding should be considered an integral part of local and national initiatives aimed at achieving of the Millennium Goals by 2015.

Racist practices are detrimental to their victims, but when they are tolerated they also limit the prospects of entire societies, inhibiting people to fulfill their potentials and contribute fully to national progress and they perpetuate deeply rooted social and economic inequalities. If it is not confronted it may cause social unrest and conflict, which undermines stability and economic growth. We understand racism "is the theory which holds the preeminence of one race over another" (1)).

Racism in itself is a social phenomenon, which has a double effect: it is offensive and defensive, at the same time. All racism has its rebound. If a race exalts itself offending another there will be a rematch; if a race exacerbates defending itself, it becomes an enemy. Races are social constructs that differentiate human groups from one another, constructions that made in a specific historical time in linkage with social relations and cultural accumulations of that society.

Racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance continue to plague society. They coined a new term "ethnic cleansing" to describe an old horror while the ideology of racial superiority was extended to the media, including globalization with its potential benefits, has been accompanied by risks that can lead to exclusion and an increase of inequality, often by racial, ethnic and cultural considerations. In the Declaration issued at the Millennium Summit held at United Nations Headquarters States were urged not to allow that the diversity of races and cultures become a limiting factor and to understand it as a possibility of mutual enrichment. The Durban Conference States should provide rules, structures and resources to ensure the full recognition of the equality of all persons and full respect for human rights.

The Durban Conference convened by the General Assembly in 1997, is the third International Conference against racism. While apartheid was the main focus of the previous conferences, the issues raised in Durban are reflections of the complex ways in which racial prejudice and intolerance manifests today. Since the aftermath of slavery up to ethnic conflicts, from the situation of indigenous peoples to discrimination because of beliefs, cultures, etc.

Continuing challenges in the fight against racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia were raised at the Regional and World Conference against racism, including situations women are facing due to her gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and identity in gender, disability or other conditions that manifest through various forms of sexual exploitation and abuse, trafficking of women, and domestic and institutional violence.

The Democratic International Federation of women, WIDF, calls on:

States to fulfill the commitments made at the Santiago and Durban conferences for the eradication of inequalities, racism and discrimination, incorporating in all its proposals the self-determination of indigenous peoples and the interjection of gender and ethnicity.

States to ensure indigenous peoples and peoples of African descent, land rights, territories and natural and genetic heritage as well as respect for their spirituality.

States and intergovernmental organizations so they can summon an evaluation of the Durban Plan of Action as soon as possible in order to identify progresses, obstacles and challenges and take steps to advance in its implementation.

States and intergovernmental institutions to accompany and support Haiti in their struggle for development and to adopt efficient and committed international actions of solidarity and collective work.

That the governments of the region in the fulfillment of the objectives of the MDGs pay special attention to the Afro descendent and indigenous peoples and incorporate inequality indicators to measure the gaps between rich and poor.

The High Commissioner of the United Nations so that in its efforts to follow-up on the Durban Conference agreements, structurally incorporate women's situation due to their condition of race, ethnic and gender.

Governments so that they are the warrants of the rights of women through the implementation of legislative, judicial, regulatory, administrative and other measures for the prevention and protection against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in all its forms and manifestations.

In this collective commitment the WIDF will incorporate in its agenda of work initiatives including:

Deepen the study and research on the reality of indigenous and black women and construct with them an Agenda on Rights, as a political and technical instrument of denunciation, negotiation, dialogue and enforceability of their rights.

Promote the integration of women's indigenous and Afro-descendants organizations to the WIDF so internally they can be supported in their political, social and economic participation.

The Organization of the United Nations should implement the Permanent Forum of the Peoples of African descent and the Decade of the Afro descendent peoples of the United Nations.

Investigate and disseminate the thoughts and actions of committed indigenous and black women in past and recent history in order to position their example and legitimize their leadership as a seed of our identity.

We welcome the initiative of evaluating this significant reality in the 15th World Congress of the WIDF, space of converge of organizations from all continents, ethnicities and cultures, which is important to mark a milestone in recognizing and discussing the diversity we must respect and convene to adopt agreements and resolutions so in our countries and organizations we can work to eliminate every vestige that discriminate against women.