



WIDE  
NETWORK

Globalising  
gender equality  
and  
social justice

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**Women's rights organisations call for structural, sustainable, gender-equitable and rights-based responses to the global financial and economic crisis**

**By Luisa Antolin and Natalie Giorgadze**

As a member of the Women's Working Group (WWG) on Financing for Development (FfD), WIDE participated in its second Women's Consultation in New York, on 24–26 April. The meeting took place ahead of the Special High Level Meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) held on 27 of April.

The objective of the Second Women's Consultation was to include perspectives of women's rights organisations in discussions around policy responses to the global financial crisis, and to draw up common recommendations to promote gender equality in the global financial architecture. During two days of dynamic work, WWG elaborated on threats and opportunities, lessons learned and best practices from the field of policy responses to the global financial crisis, as shared by women's networks.

As a result of the consultation, the WWG developed a lobbying paper and strategy with a view towards influencing the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development (1–3 June 2009) (<http://www.un-ngls.org/juneconference>). The declaration was

also annexed to the Doha NGO Group statement, which was circulated to delegates attending the ECOSOC-BWI-WTO Special High Level Meeting.

*"A call for structural, sustainable, gender-equitable and rights-based responses to the global financial and economic crisis" proposes actions needed to reform the global financial, economic and development architecture. It also identifies alternative policy approaches that harmonise with international standards and commitments to gender equality, women's rights and human rights and empowerment.*

The statement criticises decisions made by the G-20 and demands a more inclusive platform that is regulated by the United Nations. *"The recent G-20 decision to replenish International Monetary Fund (IMF) resources is deeply flawed as it perpetuates failed neoliberal economic policies, reinforces structural inequalities, and will increase developing country indebtedness. Moreover it is based on an overproduction and overconsumption model that ignores social reproduction, sustainability of the resources of the planet; and is based on a few acting to the exclusion of the many. We need an alternative more inclusive process not one lodged in the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) that have created the crisis but in the United Nations (UN), which today is the only platform for genuine global dialogue and governance on global public 'goods'; where women's rights and human rights are enshrined; and where each country large or small has a voice at the table"*, states the declaration. Read the declaration here: <http://62.149.193.10/wide/download/WWG%20>

[declaration%20on%20global%20crisis1.pdf?id=843](http://www.wide-network.org/declaration%20on%20global%20crisis1.pdf?id=843)

The lobbying paper produced by WWG on FfD is being used to influence heads of states and high representatives of the governments to attend the June conference and agree on how to reform the international financial architecture. Civil society organisations (CSOs) worldwide are promoting several calls for urgent action related to the UN Conference on the Financial Crisis. While many developing-country governments are proposing to send their heads of state, many other developing and developed countries (in particular G-20 countries) are not. CSOs are asking for higher-level participation to give this meeting the political weight it needs to challenge the status quo (Send a letter to your head of State [http://74.125.77.132/search?q=cache:rTjeS9ejYJMJ:www.eurodad.org/uploadedFiles/WhatsNew/News/ENG%2520-%2520UN%2520letter%2520on%2520high%2520level%2520participation%2520-%2520Final\(1\).doc+un+letter+on+high+participation&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk](http://74.125.77.132/search?q=cache:rTjeS9ejYJMJ:www.eurodad.org/uploadedFiles/WhatsNew/News/ENG%2520-%2520UN%2520letter%2520on%2520high%2520level%2520participation%2520-%2520Final(1).doc+un+letter+on+high+participation&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk))

The United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development was mandated at the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development, held in December 2008 in Doha, Qatar. The upcoming high-level conference will bring the voices of all 192 UN Member States to the discussion table.

The EU will prepare its position to the UN Conference at its General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) meeting next week. The draft conclusions for this meeting are still under discussion. The draft text has some language on gender equality, although it is vague and limited. The first mention of gender equality is related to the commitments in the outcome document from the last Doha Conference on Financing for Development: *“The EU will step up support for their effort to mobilize domestic resources for development, including through improving public financial management (including gender responsive budgeting)”*. The document also states: *“the EU will take targeted social-protection measures in a **gender sensitive** way and support developing countries’ actions to cope with the social impact of the crisis through the creation and strengthening of social safety nets (...)”*. In relation to food security it says: *“the Member States and the EC should ensure continued support for and increased investment in agriculture and food security, with particular attention to small scale farmers,*

*and take into account the crucial role of women”*.

Now the focus of debate is on the content that the upcoming UN conference should have and the level and extent of participation that it should involve. The European Commission (EC) and EU Member States intend for the conference to focus on “immediate issues” to deal with the crisis (*“what the EU can do to mitigate the impact on developing countries”*). However, the President of the General Assembly, together with a majority of developing countries and CSOs, want the Conference to tackle structural reforms on global economic governance – a kind of ‘Bretton Woods II’. (Read PGA First Draft of the Outcome Document <http://62.149.193.10/wide/download/outcomedoc.pdf?id=871> ). The EC position is that, while they would support the UN process of reforms for a more effective global architecture, they would not take any immediate actions as a result of the conference.

WIDE will attend the UN conference in June. In preparation, we will continue working with the WWG to prepare for the CSO parallel events that will take place in New York during the conference. WIDE is developing proposals for possible side-events, and interacting with representatives of EU Member States and EC officials to promote our recommendations. WIDE has also endorsed the statement of the cross-sectoral network of European CSOs addressing the UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development. (<http://62.149.193.10/wide/download/draft%20-%20EU%20related%20demands%20for%20UN%20-5-%2028%204%2009.pdf?id=877>).

WIDE appeals to organisations, networks and individuals to disseminate the WWG statement to your national government representatives and officials and to other civil society and women’s organisations. Request the participation and involvement of governments at the level of heads of state. This will help to assure that this UN conference produces concrete recommendations on new foundational and structural agreements for global development, and economic and financial governance, which fully integrate gender equality and women’s rights.

The WWG on FfD is an alliance of women’s organisations and networks that advocate for the advancement of gender equality, women’s empowerment and human rights in UN processes related to FfD and the global financial and economic crises.

The WWG on FfD is coordinated by Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) and includes the following networks/organisations: African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), Feminist Task Force–Global Call to Action against Poverty (FTF–GCAP), Global Policy Forum (GPF), International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN), International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT), Women in Development Europe (WIDE) and Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO).

For further information, one can contact Luisa Antolin, [luisa\[at\]wide-network.org](mailto:luisa[at]wide-network.org)

### **Join the Alternative Trade Mandate, which puts people and the environment first**

**By Laura Paulus**

The basis for the EU's free-trade negotiations is a set of mandates given to the EC by the European Council. This has resulted in a trade policy that serves the interests of big corporations, facilitates the exploitation of natural resources and labour, dismantles social and environmental regulations in the global North and South and undermines strategies for sustainable development. As a result, EU trade policy has contributed to the current financial, environmental and food crises. As an alternative to Europe's trade policy, a group of European CSOs/NGOs, including WIDE, have launched a new initiative called Alternative Trade Mandate which puts people and the environment first. The group is calling for other CSOs and NGOs to join them.

People around the world have criticised Europe's trade policy and have developed alternatives to the mainstream trading system. Similarly, various people from European CSOs and NGOs met in Brussels in March 2009 to write a document expressing their alternative vision for the EU economy, based on men's and women's rights and quality of life; the role trade could play in that vision; democratisation of European trade policies and concrete steps to realise this. This Alternative Trade Mandate could be used as a campaign tool to put pressure on policymakers, to raise awareness on trade issues within Europe and to get more groups involved. It would serve as a common platform, upon which individual groups or networks could develop more comprehensive papers upon specific alternatives.

A common version of the Alternative Trade Mandate is expected to be ready by autumn 2009 and promoted in autumn/winter 2009 and spring 2010. A broad sign-on-process is planned, possibly including wellknown politicians and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). There are also plans to include the Mandate in activities during the climate change summit in Copenhagen in December 2009. Furthermore, individual NGOs/CSOs could use it in their national campaigns.

The organisations and people involved in the process call on fair-trade activists, unions, migrant workers, environmentalists, women's, human rights and farmers' groups and transparency organisations in Europe – from the grassroots-level to more institutionalised NGOs – to help develop the Alternative Trade Mandate. Discussion about the Mandate will be valuable for bringing together different European groups and networks working on trade. It will also help to strengthen civil society work on alternatives, as a means for including a more positive, visionary dimension in civil society campaigns.

If you and/or your organisation are interested to hear more about the mandate or to get involved, please contact Barbara Specht ([Barbara\[at\]wide-network.org](mailto:Barbara[at]wide-network.org)) and Laura Paulus ([laura\[at\]wide-network.org](mailto:laura[at]wide-network.org)).

### **Advocating for a change – development and gender for Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia**

**By Irina Savin**

The International Gender Policy Network (IGPN) released an in-depth regional report on advocacy for development cooperation and gender for Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The study was released at the end of 2008 and reports on the current situation for gender equality in development policies in this region. It points to the difficulties women's rights advocates encounter in their efforts to advance gender equality within European Commission neighbourhood cooperation (ENP) and pre-accession assistance policies, and national governments' policies. The report resulted in national and regional advocacy recommendations for stakeholders and women's rights advocates.

The report is based on national reports on Official Development Aid (ODA) issued by

IGPN member organisations. It assesses the situation in each respective country and gives recommendations for stakeholders. The report looks at the specific situation for the four 'regions': Central Asia, Eastern and Southeastern Europe and the Caucasus, new EU Member States and pre-accession states. But it also stresses common problems, which, according to IGPN coordinator Kristina Kosatíková, are a result of "*... the existing gap between the formal political and legal commitments to gender equality and its implementation. There are scarcely any concrete examples in this region where gender equality is, in practice, well embedded in development cooperation. To advocate for a change – for gender equality and women's empowerment as crucial prerequisites to development – IGPN provides concrete recommendations to the national governments and to the European institutions.*"

### **Central Asia**

In Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) IGPN researched the Regional Strategy Paper (RSP), the EC's main cooperation tool in this area, and the way it is translated into concrete projects. Discussions with the EC Delegations in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan revealed that gender equality exists within the EU's assistance agenda, but no detailed information could be provided concerning the implementation or the review of the general policies in the RSP. The commitment to gender equality declared by EU officials and national governments seems to lack specific measures for implementation. CSOs do not have financial support or opportunities for active involvement. The situation is even more alarming when acknowledging the serious gender inequality problems these countries are facing: women's vulnerability to poverty, especially in the context of political and economical transition; discrimination in the labour market; revival of traditional stereotypes; domestic violence; and humiliating and dangerous practices as part of the re-Islamisation process (particularly in Uzbekistan, where polygamy, arranged marriages and virginity controls are still practised).

### **Eastern and Southeastern Europe and the Caucasus**

IGPN evaluated the specific Country Strategy Papers (CSP), the EC's main programming tools for development cooperation, for the Eastern and Southeastern European countries and the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine). The

evaluation revealed that, although gender equality is mentioned as a cross-cutting issue, the documents prove to be rather blind in terms of gender concerns. This is reflected in concrete measures for gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. NGOs working on gender equality in Armenia are rather dissociated from the EC's support and have no information on the EC Delegation's commitment to gender equality. In Azerbaijan, where women's rights are brusquely violated but lack a specific governmental institution to deal with gender concerns, NGOs are beginning to take advantage of the EC's call for proposals, though in a context that requires more transparency and fairness. Lack of political will is the main impediment to gender justice implementation in Georgia.

### **EC Pre-accession Assistance**

The EU candidate and potential candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Serbia) are currently undergoing political and socioeconomic transitions in their advancement towards EU standards and prerequisites. An analysis revealed that significant attention has recently been given to developing legal and institutional frameworks for gender equality. Yet EU pre-accession assistance is largely focused on promoting human rights in general, lacking specific instruments for advancing gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in particular. The situation in Montenegro, as described by Maja Kovacevic, is not unique: "*Although foreign support, including the EC's pre-accession assistance, has been flowing into the country to help with political and socioeconomic reconstruction, gender equality has been overshadowed by other priorities.*" This describes a reality experienced by a majority of the countries. Failure to prioritise gender equality can be added to all the other factors hindering gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment projects: lack of experience in employing EU assistance instruments, lack of expertise in gender equality projects, ineffective communication between EU representatives and women's organisations, and difficulties in assessing the real impact of the projects that are implemented.

### **'New' EU Member States**

The IGPN report also focused on the new EU Member States (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia) as newly emerging donors, by analysing the extent to which their ODA

strategies include gender equality. Until recently these countries were aid recipients themselves and at the moment they are still defining and continuously adjusting their development cooperation strategies. Consequently, they are facing many problems along the bumpy road: lack of capacity and expertise within governmental institutions, lack of gender concerns explicitly mentioned in the official documents, no gender equality strategy etc. In general, there are no specific measures focused on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment and no specific funding allocations. And since the ODA strategies of the new EU Member States do not have specific gender indicators, gender impact assessments are difficult and do not lead to improvements in the strategies.

## Conclusions

Following the findings of the report, IGPN put forward key recommendations:

- The **EU institutions** should explicitly integrate gender concerns in policies and in their implementation, in calls for proposals, and in other stages of the project cycle. They should also strengthen the capacity of EC administrations to help ensure the financial sustainability of women's NGOs.
- **National governments** should comply with the EU's cooperation agreements, improve their institutional and legal frameworks for gender equality, increase communication and transparency with CSOs and the EU, and undertake effective gender impact assessments.
- **CSOs** should lobby national governments and the EU institutions for the achievement of gender equality; monitor and provide shadow reports on the actual implementation of women's empowerment and gender equality projects; and strengthen networking among women's organisations.

Irina Savin is a WIDE associate, dedicated to gender studies in the media.

## New resources

### 'Rights is the Answer' The Social Watch Report 2008

The Social Watch report documents the relationship between human rights and the economic and financial architecture in 59 countries, through the testimonies of grassroots activists and civil society analysts in

these countries. The report shows how the pervasiveness of extreme poverty and gender inequity is intimately linked to the immediate effects of the current 'triple crisis' (financial, food and climate) and to longer-term, painful economic adjustments ingrained in the global financial architecture.

Social Watch calls on the UN to convene a comprehensive, inclusive process to review and reconstruct the international financial and monetary institutions – a demand that has become a bone of contention at the Doha talks. According to Social Watch, only an international conference convened by the UN, which includes developing countries and civil society, can yield benefits for the majority of the world's people.

### To download:

[www.socialwatch.org/en/informelmpreso/index.htm](http://www.socialwatch.org/en/informelmpreso/index.htm)

### The Gendered Impacts of Liberalization: Towards "Embedded Liberalism"?

This new book edited by Shahra Razavi examines how public policies have reflected a drive for accelerated global economic integration, associated with greater economic liberalisation. *The Gendered Impacts of Liberalization* reveals that the outcomes have been largely disappointing, even in the estimate of their designers. Rural livelihoods have become more insecure, and the expected growth has rarely materialised. Yet the economic policy agenda that has been so adverse to many people around the world has also provided new opportunities to some social groups, including some low-income women. In response to widespread discontent with the liberalisation agenda, more attention is now being given to social policies and governance issues, viewed as necessary if globalisation is to be "tamed" and "embedded".

### To download follow the link:

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/se-arch/1197DAC65C4D2216C12575370039DB30?OpenDocument&cntxt=1A8B8&cookielang=en#top>

### 'Towards Human Rights-Consistent Trade Policies'

"Towards Human Rights-Consistent Trade Policies" is 3D's new publication, which aims to encourage advocates for fairer trade and development policies to use the human rights

framework. This publication calls on public interest groups to submit information on human impacts of trade policies to the treaty monitoring bodies and other human rights mechanisms, so they can promote the human rights accountability of trade actors.

**Download here:**

[http://www.3dthree.org/pdf\\_3D/HR&tradeolicies.pdf](http://www.3dthree.org/pdf_3D/HR&tradeolicies.pdf)

### 'Gender Equality Now: Accelerating the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals'

In its new resource pack, UNIFEM stresses the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in enabling countries and the international community to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

This resource pack explores and makes recommendations on: the actions needed to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs; the progress made so far and the backlogs on gender equality; the costs of prioritising, planning and budgeting for gender equality, as well as the costs of failing to do so; the link between violence against women and the MDGs; and the fresh opportunities afforded by new development aid modalities for promoting gender equality in the achievement of the MDGs.

**View online complete resource pack:**

<http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/GenderEqualityNow.pdf>

### The Atlas of Women in the World

The fourth edition of this eye-opening book from internationally acclaimed feminist scholar and environmentalist Joni Seager reviews the status of women in the world. In this revised edition the author draws on the latest data to map the changes that have occurred since the first edition was published over 20 years ago – the strides women have made and the distance still to be travelled. Seager explores the current status of women in relation to issues of equality, motherhood, feminism, government, global economy, workplaces, lesbian rights, domestic violence etc. Filled with a wealth of information that is creatively displayed, this is an indispensable resource for understanding the world we live in.

**Find out more:**

<http://www.earthscan.co.uk/?tabid=49166>

### Women workers pay the price for the global economic crisis

New research by Oxfam International uncovers a hidden aspect of the global economic crisis – its impact on women. The research suggests that as supply chains are squeezed by falling global demand, women in export manufacturing, garments and services are often first to be laid off. Employers fail to pay wages and evade legal obligations to give notice and pay compensation, while many governments turn a blind eye. The International Labour Organization (ILO) predicts that the global economic crisis will plunge a further 22 million women into unemployment, make female unemployment higher than male unemployment, and make the ratio of women pushed into insecure jobs this year higher than for men.

**Download and read the paper:**

[http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/economic\\_crisis/downloads/impact\\_economic\\_crisis\\_women.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/economic_crisis/downloads/impact_economic_crisis_women.pdf)

### Getting the Balance Right: Gender Equality in Journalism

This handbook is a timely, illustrated and easy-to-read guide and resource for journalists. It evolved primarily out of a desire to equip all journalists with more information and understanding of gender issues in their work. It is addressed to media organisations, professional associations and journalists' unions seeking to contribute to gender equality.

**Download here:**

[http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=28397&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=28397&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

### Women raise their voices against tree plantations

The World Rainforest Movement has recently produced a 12-minute video based on three workshops conducted in New Guinea, Nigeria and Brazil, within the framework of a project on the role of the EU in disempowering women in the global South through the conversion of local ecosystems into tree plantations. The video is accompanied by a written report containing further information on the findings of the workshops.

**Watch the video:**

<http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php->

[URL\\_ID=28397&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://www.wrm.org.uy/subjects/women/fullreport.pdf)

**Download the report:**

<http://www.wrm.org.uy/subjects/women/fullreport.pdf>

## Call for contributions

### Women, business and international development goals – input from CSOs needed

Based on the interest from businesses and others, the UN Global Compact and UNIFEM are launching a consultative international process around opportunities and obstacles for business in working with a set of Women's Principles, especially in context of the current global economic crisis. The process includes dialogue around the potential value of the Women's Principles and how they might be operationalised.

UNIFEM will solicit your reflections about how applicable you think the Principles are to your business/organisation and/or more broadly. Please provide your responses by 15 June 2009 to Laraine Mills ([laraine.mills@unifem.org](mailto:laraine.mills@unifem.org)).

#### **Further information:**

- Women's Principles for Business--Input Requested:  
[http://www.awid.org/eng/content/download/50677/561958/file/Women's Principles for Business--Input Requested.doc](http://www.awid.org/eng/content/download/50677/561958/file/Women's_Principles_for_Business--Input_Requested.doc)
- Principles for Business to Advance Women:  
[http://www.awid.org/eng/content/download/50678/561962/file/05Mar2009 Guiding Principles for Business to Advance Women.pdf](http://www.awid.org/eng/content/download/50678/561962/file/05Mar2009_Guiding_Principles_for_Business_to_Advance_Women.pdf)
- UNGC\_UNIFEM\_Cases:  
[http://www.awid.org/eng/content/download/50679/561966/file/UNGC UNIFEM Cases](http://www.awid.org/eng/content/download/50679/561966/file/UNGC_UNIFEM_Cases)

## About the WIDE newsletter

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The opinions and analysis provided in this newsletter are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the positions of WIDE.