

## Land

In an era of unprecedented globalization, equity between women and men in terms of land and property is absolutely critical. Women are often disadvantaged through **patrilineal inheritance**, yet, in a globalizing money economy, they need **land as capital**. Women's lack of equal property rights with men is a major cause of the **impoverishment of women**. Land is being moved away from food production and into corporate control for large-scale industrial monocultures, tourism projects, shrimp cultivation and other industrial processes. This has further marginalized and impoverished women and men farmers and further intensified food insecurity.

Less than 1% of the world's landed property is owned by women, while women are often responsible for the majority of agricultural production. The lack of appropriate legal rights of women to land has meant an increased reliance on limited credit programmes. Even in countries where women have ownership rights, huge inequities in access exist.

In **paragraph 40(b) of the Habitat Agenda**, governments committed themselves to "Providing legal security of tenure and equal access to land to all people, including women and those living in poverty; and undertaking legislative and administrative reforms to give women full and equal access to economic resources, including the right to inheritance and to ownership of land and other property, credit, natural resources and appropriate technologies." (2) In 1998, the Kigali Plan of Action indicated that "women should have adequate and secure rights to property. These rights must be equal to those of men, and a woman should not be dependent upon a man in order to secure or enjoy those rights." (3)

To address this inequality, we recommend that the CSD:

1. Institute **measurable timetables and benchmarks** for governments to ensure that constitutions and laws guarantee women's equal rights to own and inherit property;
2. Call upon governments to ensure that such **legal rights are enforced**;
3. Utilize Earth Summit 2002 as a deadline for **reporting on progress** regarding the proportion of land owned by women;
4. **Urge governments to support:**
  - Grassroots and community-based organisations seeking to improve women's land and property rights
  - The dissemination of information and training of paralegal advisers on these rights
  - The organisation and finance of grassroots exchanges and of workshops on women's land rights, especially as part of the Beijing and Istanbul follow-up processes.
  - Collection and dissemination of information on relevant best practices.

## Food Security

The Women's Caucus calls on the CSD to urge government to implement as soon as possible the commitments under the **World Food Summit Programme of Action**, in particular Objective 1.3, to enhance and empower women's roles throughout the food chain in developing countries. We formally invite them to send a strong message in this sense to the forthcoming session of the **FAO Committee on World Food Security**, which will be meeting in September (12-16 September, Rome) to review implementation of Commitments 1, 2, 5, 7 of this Programme both by governments and international organisations.

The World Food Summit (WFS) recognises **the leading role of women as architects of household food security**, as well as the need to mainstream gender aspects throughout policies. We invite the CSD to adopt language in its forthcoming recommendations from this session to support and enhance all relevant WFS commitments relating to women and gender, and invite member states to ensure that these considerations are fully reflected not only in **national policies**, but in all **bilateral and multilateral development co-operation programmes**. We also invite CSD to call upon the IMF and the World Bank to redesign **Structural Adjustment Programmes** so that they facilitate the implementation of the WFS commitments.

Finally, the Women's caucus welcomes the initiative of the German government to appoint a **Global Food Security Co-ordinator** to promote world food security, and urges other governments to follow its example.

### **Globalisation and Trade**

We are concerned that the rule-based system created by the WTO has produced increasing levels of inequality in both the North and South. This system privileges corporate interests over community and national interests.

**Trade liberalization is not gender-neutral** and has a different impact on women and men; similar to the different impact it has on developed and developing countries. While some women may gain from opening up of trade, the majority of the world's women and girls are adversely affected by the unequal power relations created at the national, regional and international levels by the new trade regime. We firmly believe that the trade policies should ensure gender equality and equity and people centered sustainable development.

We believe that the **WTO undermines major international agreements** that women have worked hard to get their governments to commit to including the UN conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and Habitat II. We further believe that all WTO agreements and policies should be bound by international human rights standards including the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against women.

We recommend a **comprehensive gender, social, and environmental assessment** of the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements before undertaking a new round at the local, national and regional levels. Such a review should address the negative impacts and correct the deficiencies and imbalances in the agreements; and needs to involve consultations with women's and other non-governmental organizations. It needs to look at impacts of WTO agreements on small and medium-sized enterprises, which affect women in particular, eg in agriculture, textile production, etc. To develop measures alleviating the negative impacts, consultative processes involving all stakeholders, including women, should be undertaken. Appropriate measures will include capacity building schemes for women to understand impacts and how to deal with them.

A review of the **Agreement on Agriculture** (AoA) must include the experience of consumers, farmers, indigenous peoples, women, civil society groups, and research non-government organizations as well as multilateral organizations that have been critical of the existing rules governing agriculture.

We urge governments to

- Ensure food security based on self-sufficient, small-scale, diverse agriculture instead of corporate export-oriented, agro-industrial monocultures.
- Ensure that southern and small farmers, particularly women, are not undermined by competitive pressures resulting from the rapid removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers and subsidized agricultural products from northern countries.
- Adopt the Convention on Biodiversity. Ban the patenting of living organisms and protect the knowledge, practices and livelihoods of indigenous peoples.

### **2002: Global Summit on Sustainable Development**

Agenda 21 acknowledges the critical role of women in sustainable development and the urgent need to overcome gender inequity and inequality - in Chapter 24 and in over one hundred further references pertaining to women.

Gender equity is an essential building block of the three pillars of sustainable development. It is not necessary to justify women's full and equal participation. Women's rights are human rights. It is clearly inappropriate and inefficient to try and define problems; identify appropriate strategies; and implement solutions if the largest Major Group is not fully and equally involved.

A review of the implementation of commitments made in the area of women and sustainable development and a strong gender perspective within the forward-looking discussions need to be integral parts of the preparations towards 2002. Women's involvement is crucial to the success of the

process, as it was in 1992. We need to apply a **gender perspective to all issues** under consideration for 2002; and we need **full and equal participation of women's NGOs and grassroots women's groups**.

Women's NGOs, networks and grassroots groups will inform us about what is happening regarding the implementation of Agenda 21. Much of that is being achieved through women's initiatives and work. We need to learn from women's initiatives and good practices.

An issue of particular concern for women is the impact of **globalisation and trade liberalisation**. Trade liberalization is not gender-neutral and has a different impact on women and men, similar to the different impact it has on developed and developing countries. While some women may gain from opening up of trade, the majority of the world's women and girls are adversely affected by the unequal power relations created at the national, regional and international levels by the new trade regime. We firmly believe that the trade policies should ensure gender equality and equity and people centered sustainable development. Apart from developing appropriate policy measures – which imply the paradigm shift outlined at Rio - there is a great need for research to assess impacts and for capacity building supporting women to deal with impacts, most predominantly the increasing impoverishment of women. **Poverty** has a woman's face in the South and in the North; women make up the majority of the Global South.

Other issues of particular concern to women are **environmental health, environmental refugees, and women in Local Agenda 21** processes. However, we strongly argue to mainstream gender into consideration of all issues addressed by the review and the Summit.

The process towards must be as **inclusive and participatory** as possible, starting with identifying priority issues in a consultative manner. However, the links between stakeholder involvement and the UN governance structure - between the participatory and the decision-making processes need to be carefully designed and made transparent. Involvement of women will mobilize powerful networks of civil society, strengthen the process and increase its visibility.

The preparatory process needs to take into account the information and analysis being provided in the ongoing review processes of **Beijing+5, Copenhagen +5**, the follow-up to the **World Food Summit** and the process towards **Istanbul+5**, including work on gender-sensitive indicators. There should be serious considerations on how to pull the processes together again, under the overarching theme of sustainable development.

Finally, many talk about setting clear **targets and benchmarks** as a crucial tool to improve implementation. However, if these goals are not being monitored and reviewed then they are not work the energy and effort of putting them together. We witness a regrettable example this year: Agenda 21, Chapter 24, Paragraph 2.c urges governments "to consider developing and issuing by the year 2000 a strategy of changes necessary to eliminate constitutional, legal, administrative, cultural, behavioral, social and economic obstacles to women's full participation in sustainable development and in public life." No review of this commitment has been planned so far; the CSD work programme until 2002 does not include it. Benchmarking needs to include adequate monitoring.

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(1) Land includes buildings, houses, fields for agricultural use, pastures and other forms of productive resources that are immovable property.

(2) United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, UNCHS / Habitat, 1996. The Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda. Nairobi

(3) Peace for Homes, Homes for Peace. Inter-Regional Consultation on Women's Land and Property Rights in Situations of Conflict and Reconstruction, Kigali, Rwanda, 16-19 February 1998, UNIFEM, UNCHS, UNCHR, UNDP. This includes the "Kigali Plan of Action".