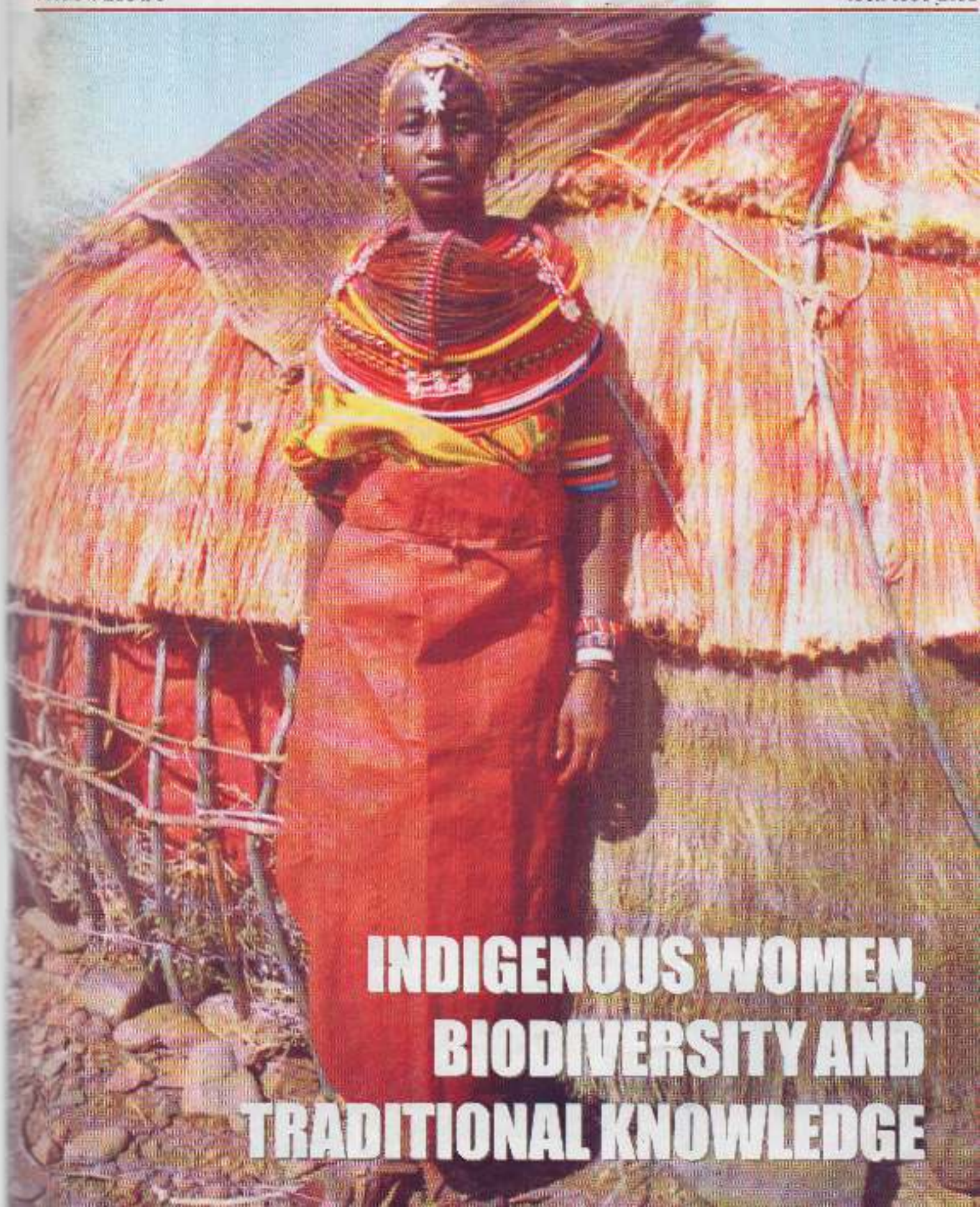




Nomadic News

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**INDIGENOUS WOMEN,
BIODIVERSITY AND
TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE**

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AIWO

2nd

CONFERENCE

FIG. 1-63

Participants out for a field day in the community.

FIG. 2-63-8

Participants pose for a photo with the Minister for State, Hon. Cdechi Kilimo.

FIG. 3-63-9

Participants share gifts of beads.

FIG. 4

Madame Nyerere, Executive Director, UNIFEM talking to the participants.

FIG. 7

Participants share pictures of the conference.

FIG. 10

Maryam & Sanaa, participants from Morocco.

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LAYOUT

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Emily Gussone - Forest Peoples
Programme

GRAPHICS DESIGN

Nyanga R. Mwangi

EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE

Hawa Maryam Mohammed
Mary Kubo
Dzairi Muna

PRINTING & PUBLISHING

Web Paper Solutions - 0722 891205
0721 341485

PHOTOS

UN Women
Save the Children - Uganda
Lorraine T. A.

DISTRIBUTION

David Muna
Hawa Maryam Mohammed
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Nomadic News
P.O. Box 4988 01000 G.P. Square
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 254 21 273958
Fax: 254 21 273960
Mobile: 254 722 51461
254 715 92275
E-mail: info@nomadicnews.org

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Promote, Protect, Empower and Build
Capacity of Indigenous Peoples



CHIEF EDITOR
Lucy Muleke

It is a great pleasure to welcome you again to this eighth edition of nomadic news. This edition focuses on Indigenous Women. This year has been a great year for Indigenous Women. As women, we have advanced in archiving many activities and have managed to have visibility. We in Africa have been successful in our respective countries despite the financial constraints. The third session of the Permanent forum on Indigenous Issues held this May had a theme; **"Indigenous Women"**. During the session, Indigenous Women from all over the world came with their hearts open and ready to speak and share with the world the different problems and successes that they have had. It was very enriching to attend the round tables and the different side events all focusing on Indigenous Women.

Before the Permanent Forum session began, there were preparatory meetings in different regions. Indigenous Women decided to hold their own conferences to bring issues on the table together. We thank the donors who supported the different gatherings for it is, with their help that the Indigenous Women came together to share their problems and attend the Permanent forum with one voice. In this edition you will have the opportunity to read the different declarations which were a summary of the outcomes of the regional conferences held between March and April this year. Asia held her second conference in Manila Philippines in March, Latin America in Lima Peru early April followed closely by Africa in Nairobi Kenya. We bring you profiles of our key Indigenous Women who have worked hard to give Indigenous Peoples and especially Women a voice.

It was wonderful for us in Africa to hold our second conference after the first one in 1998. We sincerely thank SWEDBIO of Sweden for sponsoring the conference and made sure it succeeded. Our

theme was **"Indigenous Women Biodiversity and traditional knowledge"**. The theme was important as many times people do not recognize the role Indigenous Women play in the conservation of Biodiversity, they do not even acknowledge that women are the key players in the protection of our traditional knowledge and culture. This same theme is the focus for this edition of our Nomadic News Magazine. These magazine takes you around the world with many stories on women's work and participation on different efforts to protect our Environment.

When I left my paid job both as a manager and a broadcast Journalist, my friends thought that I was crazy to leave a paid job and go to work as a volunteer without a salary for poor communities. At one point I thought that it was a big mistake, but as a positive thinker and one who believes in success despite any opposition, I convinced myself that all would be fine and that I will one day make a difference. Today I am proud of the work we have undertaken with all our communities and partners who have supported us. I feel proud every time when I look at the success of the groups we started with, the women groups who now speak, fundraise and speak for their rights. They have become part of us and we all learn and share from each other. Our networking at all levels in different continents with different partners has grown.

Indigenous Peoples here in Africa live in very harsh climatic conditions where frequent droughts are common. The hunter gathers who live in forest areas have in the past few years seen their land and habitat change due to encroachment by other local communities. These problems have brought challenges to us all on how to fight poverty and marginalization. Despite the fact that we had the United Nations decade of Indigenous Peoples for the past 10 years, 1994-2004 we still have along way to go. The decade has had its successes and the Permanent Forum is one of the achievement that we are proud of. Before the close of the decade many partners worked closely with Indigenous Peoples, creating their visibility and assisting them in different activities. In Kenya we are proud as Indigenous Peoples. We have the **Hurist Programme** which is a human rights strengthening project for Indigenous Peoples by United Nations Development programme and Office of the High Commissioner on Human rights. End of June saw the fruits of the

Harist project **UNIPACK- United Nations' Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee - Kenya** - *Nomadic News will bring you more information in our next edition.*

This edition brings you much more than a story. What you will see in our photo collection takes you through a journey which is both happy and sad especially the discovery of faces from Dafur that are shocking to all of us. We know what is going on there and the most vulnerable victims are the women and children. We thank our partners Trocaire for providing us with the photos. Our photos also tell of many other activities that have been undertaken in the year, activities that have made us closer with our communities. In March 2005 women from all over the world will be gathered to take stock of what has happened and what are the achievements since the world women conference in 1995 in Beijing China. The preparations have been going on for the conference- Beijing + 10. The most important thing for all of us as women is to take a check list in our

own countries and see what the governments have done after the commitments and especially on the implementation of CEDAW. In this edition we have a questionnaire developed by Women Environment and Development Organization. We shall all be very happy to see you look at the questionnaire and help us take stock.

Female genital mutilation has been a key subject for this region of Africa lately and the issue has taken center stage especially focusing on the health of women and especially that of a girl child who has no right to say no in a community governed by traditions. Read about the outcomes of different forums and take step in stopping FGM. The peak of it is a declaration of the FGM Conference held this September in Nairobi Kenya. The Conference brought one of the largest gatherings in the history of FGM. ■

Lucy Mullenkei

Condolence



Our Late Nanyima Ekundanziga, African Government representative to Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues who passed on. May the good Lord rest her soul in eternal peace.

Nairobi declaration of the 2nd African Indigenous Women's Conference

In the closing year of the UN Decade for Indigenous Peoples, we, the participants of the 2nd African Indigenous Women's Conference, affirm our vital role in advancing the struggles of our Indigenous and hunter-gatherer Peoples of Africa for social, political, self-determination and peace. We respect and value our diversity, traditional knowledge and our solidarity working to renew our historic identities.

At the turn of the 21st century, our continent of Africa has been subject to the worst conflicts in any written history, from poverty, to a pandemic of HIV/AIDS, to the devastating effects of climate change, and, due to the destruction of our natural resources, the desert is encroaching in almost each country in the continent. The powerful forces of globalization and development aggression have continued to violate the inherent rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples and are threatening our very survival as distinct peoples in our society. As women, with our children and our communities, we have suffered multiple burdens, marginalization, cultural, religious, development and gender discrimination.

One hundred and twenty five Indigenous Women from 15 African Countries have met here in Nairobi Kenya from 13th to 17th of April 2004 to take stock of our situation as Indigenous women, and commit ourselves to the fullest exercise of our rights towards self-determination, non-discrimination and equality for ourselves, our children, our communities and all the peoples of the world.

At this second conference of African Indigenous Women, we hear testimony to the following problems and issues:

Exploitation of our Biodiversity and traditional knowledge, denial of our basic human rights, poor health facilities and the spread of HIV/AIDS among our Indigenous Peoples, lack of information and of participation, Globalization that has open door to privatization and commercialization of land, water and the natural resources in Indigenous Peoples lands, and Conflict and Poverty among Indigenous Women, Hunter gathers and Indigenous Peoples of Africa.

Biodiversity and traditional Knowledge

- Our knowledge of biodiversity and natural resource management has been systematically exploited,

appropriated and eroded. Ownership rights for indigenous medical knowledge and resources harvested from indigenous forests must be recognized and communities must given the opportunity to be partners in price control (what does this mean?) on the medicine generated from the environment.

- Indigenous women have great knowledge of biodiversity, and often resources and knowledge are taken from their lands without their free prior informed consent. In order to control this, indigenous women should be fully involved at the planning and implementation levels in research activities.
- Piracy of indigenous arts, crafts and medicines is rampant and is facilitated by patents and other western intellectual property rights rules that are not compatible with the cultural and political norms of indigenous peoples in Africa. The African Indigenous Women's Organization should try to obtain financial assistance to help the community based organizations understand the issues of Intellectual property rights and free prior informed consent to enable them protect and conserve the traditional knowledge, medicine and resources in a sustainable manner.
- For many years misconceptions on the part of other communities and other religions have had a negative impact on traditional medicine practitioners, who are seen to be practicing witchcraft. On the contrary, traditional medicine is a vital part of our cultures and should be envisaged positively, and indigenous Women should be encouraged not to give up their practices.
- There is need for Indigenous Women's participation in all forums, at the local, national regional and international levels. This will help to ensure that policies at each of these levels, particularly those that risk jeopardizing Indigenous Peoples' way of life and natural resources, recognize Indigenous Peoples.
- The Conference of the African Indigenous Women's Organization plays a central role in helping local women groups and community based organizations to identify useful plants, market them and control illegal poaching of plants that are used. That AIWO supports the sensitization and encouragement of local Indigenous Peoples to identify and preserve herbal plants in their territories.
- Population increase, illegal logging, private concessions, monoculture plantations and agribusiness ventures are depriving Indigenous Peoples of lands and livelihoods

and are seriously eroding our rights. These factors have been at the root of many conflicts in many countries where Indigenous Peoples live. As a result, Indigenous Peoples have been misplaced and rendered homeless to make way for the harvest of their natural resources.

- As a result of climate change, droughts have increased in frequency and intensity, severely affecting many indigenous communities.



Hon. Chebi Kilimo, Minister of State - Office the Vice President (Middle) seated with AIWO members in a group photograph during the 2nd Conference, April 2004.

An increase in the felling of trees for fuel wood is entrenching poverty and furthering the encroachment of the desert. The loss of lands, waters and forests is deepening the poverty of indigenous women while increasing their domestic loads and subsistence responsibilities. Indigenous Women have to work harder and longer to feed and nurture our families. There is a need to encourage alternative sources of energy in order to protect the disappearing forest.

- Knowledge held by our elders should be carefully protected and efforts to encourage them to share their knowledge with their loved ones are important for the perpetuation of this knowledge. Methods for documenting Indigenous Peoples' knowledge must be improved, and must be decided upon by the indigenous knowledge holders themselves. Success stories related to IK documentation should be sought from other Indigenous Peoples Organizations for the sake of ensuring protection of community based collective intellectual property.
- Lack of awareness concerning Intellectual property rights and the guidelines in the Convention on Biological Diversity, especially the article 8j and related provisions, has meant that knowledge and resources are at great risk of pillage by people outside the community and this could lead to the disappearance of this knowledge and these resources. There is a need to establish a process of capacity building concerning the CBD in order that the owners of the knowledge and the resources have a better understanding of the methods for protection of our knowledge.

- National Parks and Protected Areas have displaced indigenous communities, expropriating our lands and denying our access to the natural resources critical for our livelihoods and survival. The fundamental role of Indigenous Women in the protection of the flora and fauna of these areas should be recognized. Indigenous Women could improve their livelihoods through the promotion of income generating activities in and around protected areas. This fundamental role of Indigenous Women should be recognized by their inclusion in policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- In Africa, current forms of tourism make Indigenous Peoples and women objects of curiosity, display and commercialization. Prostitution has increased, alongside the inducement to commercialise indigenous cultural heritages. Tourism is breeding cash dependence and thus eroding our Traditions and culture.

Human Rights

- Human rights are the natural fundamental rights that fulfill the basic needs of our lives. The denial of the rights of Indigenous Peoples to physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual survival, affects our health and wellbeing as Indigenous Women, our children and our communities.
- Indigenous women in Africa face many barriers to their access of education, healthcare and sanitation, and other basic services; they are excluded from decision-making in programmes which are meant to meet these needs and entitlements. Women are marginalized by cultures of patriarchy and violence,

which confine women to the domestic sphere.

- Conflict in Africa and the establishment of military detachments in our communities has curtailed our movement, economic activities, the entry of food supplies, health services, and other basic social services such as the education of our children, as well as the fundamental well being of our communities.
- Forced displacement of Indigenous Peoples from our ancestral lands is a major cause of impoverishment and threatens our very survival as Indigenous peoples. Indigenous women and children are the most seriously harmed by the denial of our the rights to our lands and to live peacefully.
- Lack of funds for Indigenous Women to participate effectively in all human rights forums will continue to deny a voice for them to claim their rights and a process should be put in place to have continuous training, information sharing and awareness raising for Indigenous Women concerning human rights.
- Every human being has a right to a religion and worship. Unfortunately in some countries in Africa, the human rights of Indigenous Peoples have been abused and denied because they do not belong to a certain religion and culture; often Indigenous women and children have been the more vulnerable section of society.
- Lack of maintenance and access to matrimonial property has rendered the indigenous woman the poorest of the poor, due to denial of rights to property and freedom to choose in matrimony. There is need to sensitize the community and indigenous peoples to refocus on the need to give the indigenous women and girls the right to inherit and own property.
- The convention on Biological Diversity is crucial to our traditional knowledge and our cultural survival as Indigenous Peoples and women, there is need to start activities raising awareness with regard to article 8j and related provisions of the CBD.
- We must preserve and enhance the protection of indigenous knowledge of medicinal plants within the indigenous lands and encourage women's groups to start small projects to plant and open small community museums to store the disappearing traditional and cultural knowledge and art.
- Enhance the role and participation of indigenous women with regard to the management of ecosystems, e.g. protected areas and forests.
- Governments and other key players should assist in strengthening the capacity of Indigenous Peoples, especially Indigenous women and youth in conserving the natural resources and involve them fully in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.
- There should be a system of documenting and publishing indigenous plants and trees and there is a

need to protect that knowledge from entering the public domain without our free prior informed consent

- Elders should be encouraged to share and transfer the knowledge they hold, by demonstrating the need to maintain and protect it for future generations.
- Indigenous Peoples, Women and youth should be trained and given information on intellectual property rights, prior informed consent and their rights in sharing benefits from resources and knowledge accruing from their lands and territories.
- Working and sharing among Indigenous peoples from other regions is very important in order to enhance skills in environmental conservation and in the protection of the rights and property collectively as Indigenous Peoples.

CONFLICT

- Governments should recognize the crucial role played by Indigenous women in conflict resolution and peace building processes, and include them in all related processes at all levels.
- Indigenous Women should be encouraged and supported in their role in establishing and creating a culture of peace from the family to higher levels especially in schools and colleges.
- Training Indigenous Women on conflict resolution should be enhanced to ensure a broad base forum for peace and development.
- Indigenous Women should be assisted and supported in creating initiatives for peace, in order to protect their interests in conflict prone areas.
- Governments and key players in Conflict resolution should recognize, safeguard, encourage, make use of and encourage Indigenous conflict management institutions and skills in the community.

Communication and Networking

- Transparency and exchange of information among indigenous Women should be enhanced and funds should be sought to put in place communication and networking centres at the communities level.
- Communication among Indigenous women leaders from different regions and different countries should be encouraged.
- There is a need for strong Networking among the regions to ensure continuity and information flow.
- There is a need to elaborate working strategies of communication like certain traditional methods of communication, community radio, and other channels of information dissemination.
- It is important to encourage indigenous led use of the media, such as radio, TV and newsletters, for example, by holding demonstration sessions for the indigenous and local communities. ■

Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network 7th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity

February 9-20, 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Preamble

We, the Indigenous Women, who have come together in Manukan, Sabah to prepare for the deliberations of the COP7, issue this declaration on behalf of our respective organizations, communities and Nations.

We note with alarm that since the beginning of the Convention on Biodiversity, there continues to be a decline in the world's biological diversity. We also note the increase in corporate control of biological resources, and a proliferation of policies that facilitate biotechnological development of resources taken from our territories.

Indigenous Women play a major role in environmental conservation and preservation and have done so throughout our histories. We are the holders of Indigenous knowledge and have primary responsibility to protect and perpetuate this knowledge. Our weaving art, music, songs, our dress, knowledge of agriculture, hunting and fishing, are examples of some contributions to the world. We are the children of Mother Earth, and to her we are indebted. Our ceremonies recognize her and we return our children's placentas to her. She also holds the remains of our ancestors.

Indigenous Women continue to affirm our cultures, histories, views of creation and ancestry, our views of life and the world, and ways of being. These life-ways are essential to the continued perpetuation, promotion, and development of the world's biodiversity.

Indigenous Women ensure the health of our Peoples and environments. We maintain a reciprocal relationship with Mother Earth, as she sustains our lives. Indigenous Peoples have developed our own health systems, and Indigenous women are the fundamental conservers of the diversity of medicinal plants, so frequently used from the moment of our conception.

Indigenous Women stand firmly upon our rights to self-determination. Our rights to self-determination are fundamental to the freedom to carry out our responsibilities in accordance with our cultural values and customary laws.

We also note the importance of work still to be done by States to honor treaty obligations made with Indigenous peoples. Many treaties contain specific obligations for States to guarantee Indigenous rights to protect the flora, fauna, lands, freshwater, fisheries, seas and lakes.

As Indigenous Women, our priority is to protect our rights over our traditional knowledge and biological

resources, which must be preserved and protected for future generations. Any decisions regarding the use and protection of our traditional knowledge and biological resources must respect the rights of Indigenous peoples.

We bring to your attention these key areas of concern:

Indigenous Women as Knowledge Holders

Indigenous Women are holders of environmental, spiritual and cultural knowledge, wisdom and experiences that play an integral role in the transfer of this knowledge, wisdom and experience to younger generations.

Our traditional Indigenous knowledge systems long predate Western systems of education or property rights regimes, and have a right to exist free from external interference and in their own integrity.

Non-Indigenous education systems are negatively impacting Indigenous knowledge and lifeways. Indigenous peoples have a right to protect, develop and perpetuate their own educational systems that are consistent with their cultural and spiritual values as an integral aspect of self-determination.

As Indigenous Women, we recognize that these languages are fast disappearing and this threatens the maintenance and continuance of our knowledge. We urge governments to support our efforts to maintain the use of our languages through culturally-based and appropriate educational systems.

Indigenous Women oppose the imposition of databases and registries of Indigenous knowledge as mechanisms required for the protection of Indigenous knowledge.

Indigenous Women and Biodiversity

Indigenous knowledge systems and the diversity of life within our territories are collective resources under our direct control and administration.

Indigenous Women play a key role in the protection and maintenance of the biodiversity in diverse ecosystems including forests, dry and sub-humid, inland waters, marine and coastal, mountains regions. Our lifeways, our artistic expressions, are dependant on and the bounty of the land. Any erosion of biodiversity can irreversibly impact our cultural heritage.

Medicinal knowledge of Indigenous women is widespread and in their vast expertise, they are our widwives, spiritual leaders, healers, herbalists, botanists and

pharmacists. Their knowledge, use and control of these medicinal plants must be protected from external research and commercialization efforts.

We oppose technologies and policies such as the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) regimes that violate Indigenous Peoples' rights to maintain our traditional knowledge, practices, seeds and other food related genetic resources.

We are opposed to the introduction of genetically engineered life-forms, and genetic use restriction technologies (GURTs) which pose serious negative impacts to Indigenous peoples food security, health, environment, and livelihoods.

Indigenous Women and Health

Indigenous Women acknowledge that the womb is every person's first environment and that the state of the health of this sacred environment is intrinsically related to and dependent on the health of the waterways, air, earth, plants and animals.



IPWPN participants pose for a photograph at Montok Island in Sabah Malaysia, February 2004.

The poor health status of Indigenous women is intimately linked to their access to traditional medicines, practices and the health of ecosystems. For example, in the Arctic region, Indigenous women's milk has the highest levels of PCBs and mercury in the world due to the trans-boundary travel of persistent organic pollutants and their bioaccumulation and magnification in the food chain.

Indigenous Women are also the primary food producers for their communities and environmental pollutants threaten food security, cultures and life-ways.

We recognize that Indigenous knowledge has greatly contributed to food security and many medicines used in the world. We oppose any efforts for external parties to commercialize and benefit from the enclosure of our knowledge and resources.

Indigenous Women and Industrialization

Industrial projects including, but not limited to, mining, logging, hydroelectric projects, nuclear power and waste, toxic dumping, agribusiness expansion, commercial fisheries, tourism development and war devastate our lands, destroy our economies, and threaten our survival within our territories.

Power in the government in many countries is largely concentrated in the hands of the industry lobby so they have an opportunity and advantage to make decisions about environmental problems. We need instruments to ensure the participation of Indigenous peoples in the decision making processes related to industrial developments and environmental policy.

Indigenous Women and Protected Areas

Indigenous communities have been and continue to be expelled from their lands and to be victimized by the despoilment of their lands and sacred sites, on the pretext of the establishment of protected areas and national parks. We demand that our rights be restored and that these acts, which violate our human rights and the rights of women, cease immediately. We also call for adequate compensation for all the past wrongs inflicted by the establishment of protected areas.

Indigenous Women and Trade and Globalization

Indigenous women strongly oppose the appropriation and commodification of their knowledge, ceremonies, songs, dances, rituals, designs, medicines and intellectual property. Any acquisition, use or commercial

application of Indigenous women's intellectual, cultural and spiritual property must be in accordance with their prior informed consent and customary laws.

Intellectual property regimes must be prevented from asserting patents, copyright, or trademark monopolies for products, data, or processes derived or originating from the biodiversity or knowledge of Indigenous peoples.

We affirm that natural life processes and prior art and knowledge are clearly outside the parameters of IPR protection and therefore eliminate IPR protections over any genes, isolated genes, or other natural properties or processes, for any life forms, or knowledge derived from Indigenous knowledge.

The advancement of free trade policies through international and regional free trade agreements, state laws,

and policies is allowing an increase in the exploitation of Indigenous peoples knowledge and resources.

We oppose the trade policies that impose the Western legal frameworks upon us and fail to recognize our rights to maintain and implement our systems of management based upon customary law.

Indigenous Women and Conflict and Militarization

Indigenous women have been severely affected by colonialism, armed conflict, displacement and enforced removal from their communities, discriminatory laws, lack of laws or lack of enforcement of laws.

In regions where conflict is rife, Indigenous women are the first victims of the destruction of biodiversity. Dependent on and linked to their lands, but displaced as a result of war, they are unable to provide for the needs of their families. We therefore call upon the international community to support our call for immediate peaceful resolution of conflicts.

We recall previous declarations, conventions, and decisions that affirm the rights of Indigenous peoples to the full and effective participation in international fora that impact our lives:

Recalling the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights affirm the fundamental importance of the right of self-determination of all peoples, by virtue of which they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development;

Recalling *decision VI/10, Article 8(j) and related provisions "emphasizing the need for dialogue with representatives of indigenous and local communities, particularly women for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity within the framework of the Convention."*

Noting "...the vital role of Indigenous Peoples in sustainable development" as affirmed by the political declaration of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 2002 in paragraph 25; and

Affirming other international instruments and mechanisms that ensure our participation and contribution within the discussions, such as:

The Rio de Janeiro Declaration on the Environment and Development (in particular Principle 22), the Agenda 21 (in particular Chapters 11 and 26); the Convention on Biological Diversity (in particular Article 8 (j) and related provisions); the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Statement on Forest Principles and IPP/IF/UNEP; Convention 169 of the ILO on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, among others;

Further recognizing, that at the close of the UN Decade on Indigenous Peoples, some progress and gains have been achieved, however, much still needs to be done.

We, therefore, call upon the Conference of the Parties to include the following recommendations in the final

decisions of the COP7, as follows:

We encourage the development of instruments that prevent the expropriation and commercialization of our knowledge and biological resources.

Affirm that natural processes and prior art and knowledge are clearly outside the parameters of IPR protection and therefore eliminate IPR protections over any genes, isolated genes, or other natural properties or processes, for any life forms, or knowledge derived from Indigenous knowledge.

Parties must declare an immediate moratorium on the development, cultivation, and use of genetically modified seeds, plants, fish and other organisms.

Request the Parties reaffirm paragraph 23 of its decision V/5, in light of the continued lack of data on the potential negative impacts on Indigenous Peoples and in line with the precautionary approach.

Parties ensure Indigenous women are free to implement their own practices and institutions to ensure food sovereignty.

Scientific research, and any bioprospecting activity, conducted without the full consultation and prior informed consent of the impacted Indigenous populations must be halted and be handled in a comprehensive and protective manner.

States take immediate action to urgently work to stop the introduction of alien or invasive species which threaten the health of our traditional territories and food sources.

With the knowledge that contaminated ecosystems threaten the very survival of our Peoples, Indigenous women strongly request that governments ratify and implement the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

States ensure decisions protect and promote the development of *sui generis* systems based upon customary law.

States ensure intellectual property rights regimes are not imposed upon Indigenous knowledge, biodiversity, and customary management systems.

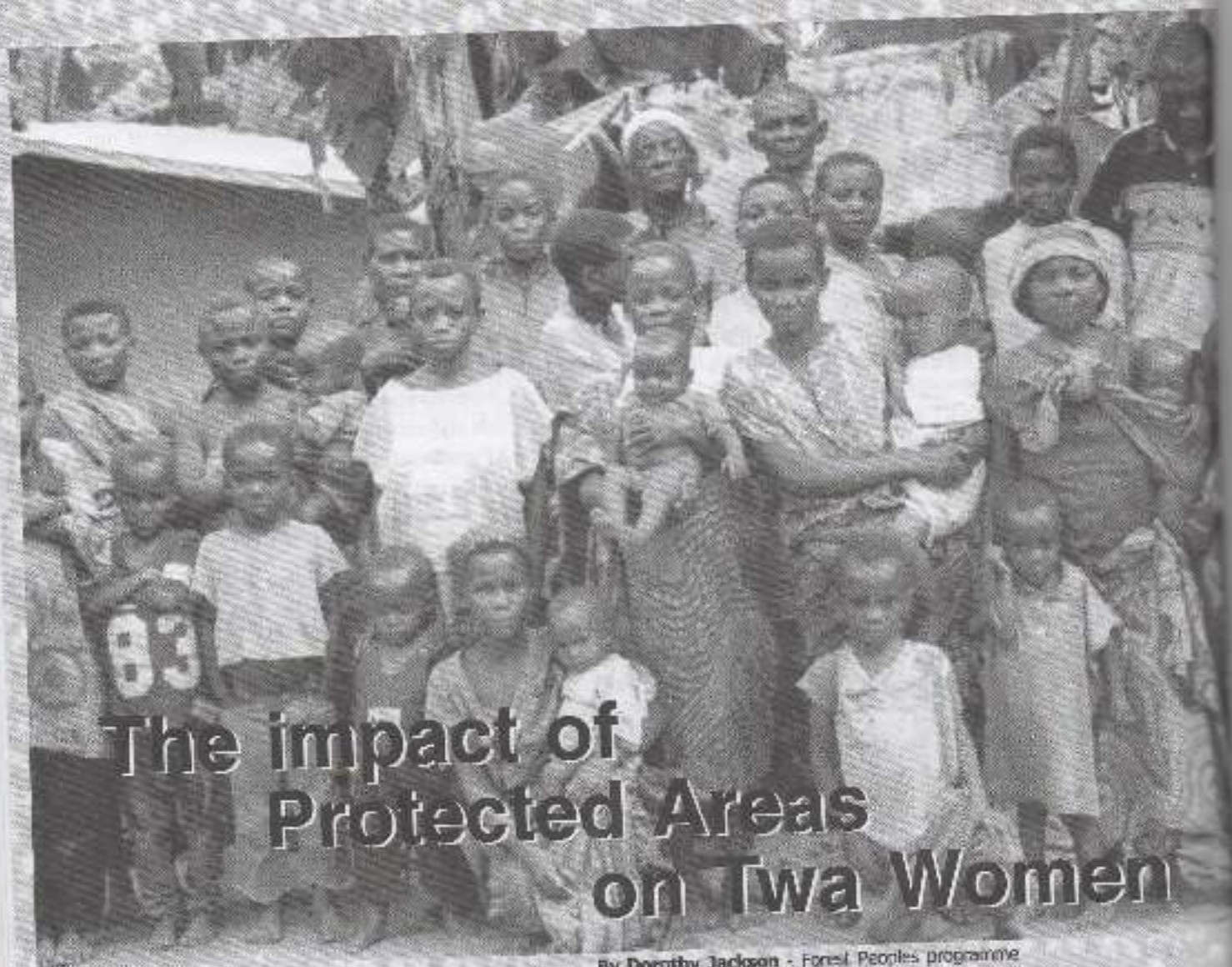
Ensure that any benefit sharing regime protects the rights of Indigenous peoples to prior informed consent as principle parties when their knowledge or resources are impacted, and further protect their rights to deny access and refuse participation.

Parties must insure national legislation reflect and be consistent with the standards established by the CBD.

Decisions must recognize and reflect the intrinsic link between Indigenous knowledge and biodiversity.

The Secretariat, in its outreach and capacity building activities, should specifically target the full and effective participation of Indigenous women.

All decisions must recognize and protect the fundamental premise that Indigenous peoples are rights holders with proprietary, inherent, and inalienable rights to our traditional knowledge and biological resources. ■



The impact of Protected Areas on Twa Women

By Dorothy Jackson - Forest Peoples programme

The Twa are the Indigenous Peoples of the Great Lakes region of Central Africa, inhabiting Burundi, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda. Their population is estimated at less than 100,000 in the region. Originally the Twa were forest-dwelling hunter-gatherers living in the mountainous areas around Lakes Tanganyika, Kivu and Albert, but over time the forests were encroached by incoming farming and herding peoples and taken over for commercial development projects and protected areas. Nowadays, few Twa are still able to lead a forest-based way of life. During the 20th century Twa communities were expelled from national parks and conservation areas throughout the region, including the Volcanos National Park and Nyungwe Forest in Rwanda, the Mgahinga and Bwindi Impenetrable Forest and the Echuya Forest in Uganda, the Kibira forest in Burundi and the Virunga National Park and Kahuzi-Biega National Park in DRC.

"The ancestors told us we were the first. The people who know how to write have invaded our lands [the Kahuzi-Biega National Park]. According to our ancestors, all those lands belonged to us, but we do not have any rights there now. The park was our area since the time of our ancestors. When a man left with his spear from his home to go into the forest, the family knew they would eat. If the man did not get out his spear, the woman

knew she had to get her basket and axe to collect wood. She took the wood to non-Pygmyies, and bartered it for bananas, so the family had food. Now, we, the women of the forest, don't have access to the forest. [...] We cry because we have a miserable life. Then, we could live, we had enough to eat, all our needs were satisfied. Now there is nothing." (Twa woman from Buyungula/Kabare, DRC at Women's Rights Conference organized by the Congolese Twa organization PITDP in 2000)

The removal of the Twa from these forests has caused enormous hardship. No lands were provided as compensation at the time of eviction, with the result that the former inhabitants of these forests are now largely landless and suffering extreme poverty. A few communities have since obtained small amounts of land through government distribution or NGO land purchase schemes. In these cases the distribution has either been to individual families or to Twa communities, who have then divided it up between the families. In these circumstances, like Twa have adopted the customary laws of neighbouring farming communities as concerns land rights – the family plot is considered to be owned by the husband, land is inherited by sons from their fathers and women only have use rights.

According to these customs, a wife can be denied access to the family land if her husband takes another wife, or if he dies, his family can remove the widow from the land. Although these customs seem to be applied more flexibly in Twa communities than in neighbouring ethnic groups and Twa women not infrequently can inherit and retain control of family land if their marriage ends, the rights of Twa women are weaker than those of men. They are also probably weaker than when Twa lived as hunter-gatherers, when it is likely that collective rights to large areas of forest enabled women to exercise autonomy in how they used the land, and their rights to gather or hunt were not dependent on their husbands.

The loss of access to forest resources has also had a severe impact on Twa women, who are mainly responsible for providing daily food for the family. Forest yards that are a favourite food of Twa are no longer accessible, along with many other forest products including leaves, fruit, mushrooms and small animals, as well as medicinal herbs. When they had access to the forest, women could also sell forest products such as charcoal and vines, and make handicrafts such as mats.

"We go to look for yams and milonda bitter leaves in the marshes on the edge of the lake and in the eucalyptus plantations of the Zairou (DRC Twa term for non-Twa people), as that's where the yams like to grow. We can't go to the park since they closed it off, and even if we bend the rules a bit, if we are caught we are threatened with death. Yet, it's in the forest that there's a large amount of food, but how to get access to it? Now we don't even know if we can go to the eucalyptus plantations, as the Zairous have started to threaten us and drive us away saying that we are damaging their trees by cutting their roots when we dig up the yams." (Twa woman, Chombo/Kabare, DRC)

Without land and without access to wild food resources, Twa women's main source of livelihood is now from labouring on other peoples' fields, carrying loads or opportunistic searching for food, including begging.

Some communities, particularly in Rwanda and



Burundi are specialists in pottery, but this is no longer profitable due to the advent of metal and plastic goods. A Twa woman's typical earnings from a day's agricultural labour is 15–50 US cents, or the equivalent in food i.e. 1–2 kilos of beans or cassava flour. With these earnings she is scarcely able to meet the daily food needs of her family, let alone have spare resources for essentials such as clothes, soap, medical care or paying for her children's schooling. The extra food that would have been supplied by her husband, in the form of game from the forest, is also no longer available, unless her husband hunts clandestinely.

As the Twa have lost their forests, so has their culture been undermined. "Before, when we had access to the forest, the boy had to present his future mother-in-law with a bride price of 5 bulo (small rodents) caught in the forest. In our grandparents' time, we gave an antelope and buffalo as bride price. Now we are all in the same situation, without means to pay a bride price, so we just live together without ceremony." (Twa woman, Chombo/Kabare, DRC)

Very few of the national parks employ Twa, and then only as game guides and park guards. No Twa women are employed even though they also have valuable forest knowledge like their men folk. The ongoing violent civil conflicts in the area have severely reduced the number of visitors to the national parks. However, women in one or two Twa communities on the edge of the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda have been able to benefit from tourism by selling handicrafts to them, and also being members of dance troupes that put on performances for tourists. For more information about the situation of Twa women see Jackson, D (2003) "Twa women, Twa Rights in the Great Lakes Region of Africa."

Minority Rights Group International visit the www.minorityrights.org

Indigenous Women of the Great Lakes struggle to fight the destruction of the Environment.

By Colette Mikila
Programme d'intégration
et de Développement du
Peuple Pygmée du Kivu

Concerning the profile of the Indigenous Women, we must master the necessary knowledge; the traditional and modern cultural values in order to better establish our identity amongst the other people. We must be the reference of these values when our society seems pulled between a number of divergent livelihood models. We must be the only ones who can integrate modernity, information and technology in our lives so that we are able to communicate at all levels concerning the topics involving our future. This demonstrates the importance of work, education and instruction as well as the means, which should be at our disposal to perfect our profile.

Indigenous Women must consolidate themselves through different organizations designed for the different important sectors of life where the fate of all people and women in particular is decided upon. This is the case of Indigenous Women's organizations for economic development, for human rights (struggle against discrimination, sexual violence, the right to property and protection, etc.). All the organizations must be represented at the different level of the organization of human society. Indigenous Women must participate because they have an ideal to convey, an experience to share and they aim to influence the decisions and resolutions in order to find their solutions in terms of their vital priorities. We must therefore fight if we want to come out of secrecy and of our backwardness in all fields.

Indigenous Women are often the most helpless in all social strata, the least educated for the great part, health programmes do not concern them, etc. All these issues represent for us strength in our claims at all levels.

Indigenous women are much closer to the environment than anyone else, and in that capacity, she is supposed to protect the environment better, without which her very life would be threatened. Since the protection of the environment is found at all levels of organizations, it would be incomprehensible for her not to participate in it. This is another example of strength of claim for our participation at all levels.

Indigenous women cultivate farms and herd livestock and are organized in farming cooperatives. This is another example showing how we should be present at all levels where the future of agriculture and farming is decided.

Indigenous women remain a reference concerning some traditional values of women's dignity. Whilst our society is pulled hither and thither by borrowed cultures with their consequences in deprivation of mores, and that voices are being heard to denounce this, indigenous women constitute another social and cultural force to be present everywhere where education and dignity of women is discussed.

These few examples amongst many others illustrate many reasons why indigenous women must participate at all levels. We could cite many other examples. As for our partners, we want to learn from their experiences, learn about their ways of working, and obtain the necessary technology, all in order to improve our own living conditions. Indigenous women should be a partner of all organizations whose aims and objectives meet our vital concerns in all sectors of life, from life in the village to the United Nations, through the governments.

Indigenous women evolve in a given environment and need a certain security to blossom, to develop and to ensure their development, that of her children and that of society at large. Her way of life is linked to the environment, which she has the duty to protect. To what extent can she undertake this activity if she is dominated by conflicts? Conflicts create instability for indigenous women on different levels:

Unstable, indigenous women cannot cultivate, produce or sell. They live a nomadic existence. With this permanent mobility, she has no direct contact with the natural world. For example, she will have to fetch wood in a haphazard manner for her needs, thus creating deforestation, which is at the origin of floods.

How will she manage society in a conflict? She represents the crucible of education, she is the keeper of some traditional values, and she has the duty to pass these on in a climate of peace. Without this neither can she educate nor be educated. Without peace she cannot remember nor pass on her traditional knowledge. On the intellectual level, she needs to develop her intellectual capacity in order to create organizations at the basic level, which can help her develop her future.

Conflicts disrupt the social stability of Indigenous Women and demoralize her: let us remember the rapes that throw rural women into trauma, loss of dignity followed by moral degeneration, the dissolution of some marriages, with no way of attending to initiation rites, to religious contemplation for some stories passing on ancestral wisdom.

Women are no longer in contact with the vital environment, they no longer have that interaction through destruction of ecosystems, both aquatic and terrestrial. It is important to raise awareness of the existing powers and authorities of our countries to ensure the security of Indigenous Women; fight ethnoism, colonialism, regionalism, which are the source of some conflicts and provoke rape and violence as well as discrimination and marginalisation of Indigenous Women; stop all wars, arms traffic, by resorting to mass media (TV, radio, newspapers) to highlight the importance and the role of indigenous women in the conservation of traditional values and the protection of biodiversity. ■

Indigenous Women Biodiversity and traditional Knowledge; *the case of the Boscuda*

By Hama Boubba - Secretary General African Indigenous Women's Organization.

In all the attempts by experts on Indigenous issues, such as the ILO and the United Nations, one of the very indispensable criteria in identifying Indigenous Peoples is their special attachment to their lands or territories. This simply means that Indigenous Peoples as a whole, and women in particular, are highly attached to the biological diversity of the environment in which they live. This environment is the provider of their livelihood, the food they eat, the food for their animals, their clothing, the medicine they use for the treatment of all diseases for themselves as well as for their animals.

If they are taken out of the environment, it is more or like genocide. Be it the forest people in their forest or the savannah of the nomadic people, the Indigenous Woman interacts naturally with the flora and fauna, the air, the animals and the water. She knows every plant, every animal and all the streams by name and they can localize them any time she or someone else is in need. Every plant, animal and stream has a name.

In the same way every aspect of the biological diversity plays a role in their day-to-day life.

They get their food and water and medicine from the environment, their animals also feed from it as well. The Indigenous Woman has from time immemorial been the guardian, protector and promoter of her environment and its biodiversity.

A big majority of Indigenous groups in Africa practice nomadism or transhumance. The reason behind these displacements was to allow for the regeneration of the biodiversity of the environment. Be it the forest people or the pastoralist, these seasonal movements enable the flora and fauna, and the water to regenerate.

The Pastoralists of Cameroon or those who roamed the Adamawa plateau had the tradition to live for longer periods up the mountains during the rainy seasons and move down the valleys during the dry season period. These movements are related to the biological diversity. During the rainy seasons, there is abundant water and fresh grass for their animals. Thus abundant dairy products for the families to live on. During the dry season, the fresh grass dries up and the stream dry up. The families move down the valleys where there is fresher grass and abundant water. This practice, therefore, is to enable the mountains to regenerate as it has been over grazed. The flora and fauna and the water will have enough time to reconstitute. This is the same for the forest people. When they have hunted, gathered for a period in a place, they abandon the place

for another area to enable reconstitution. All their activities are seasonal.

But where the biodiversity gets difficult is to regenerate when these pastoralists abandon the land for long periods before settling back.

The Judicious Use of their Biodiversity; Indigenous Women are great architects and very good builders of Pastoralists and forest people. Due to their nomadic way of life, they often construct temporal huts. All the materials are derived from their environment, the sticks for the walls, the roofing and the flooring and every equipment including, beds, tables. The selection of these materials is done taking into account biodiversity conservation. They cut young trees they consider fragile to use as supporting walls; uses dry grass to roof the huts or old leaves. They use the dung's of their animals, wood ash and little ground to plaster or floor their houses.

For her energy supply, she uses only firewood. When the Indigenous Woman goes to fetch for wood she is an expert. She masters her environment so well that, she knows before leaving her house where she is going to fetch for wood. Some months ago, she must have seen a fallen tree somewhere, which surely has a name. The whole environment has been marked out and named. She therefore sets out for that locality for that tree which is surely dry. They often move in groups. When they have exhausted that part of the bush, they change and go to another area they had surveyed earlier. They go only for dry wood and need a large space to fetch for wood. They do this through out the dry season to have enough reserves during the rainy season.

The Indigenous Peoples have used the biological diversity of their environment for all their health needs. Some of the medicinal plants, especially shrubs, can be grown just around the homestead for emergencies for both man and animals. Animals, especially the cow, occupy a very important place in the life of Indigenous Peoples especially the women. It is the provider of her daily bread.

All around them, the trees of all varieties, herbs, grass, water, animals and the air are all vital for their existence. The leaves, the barks of trees, the roots, the flowers, the fruits, the water and the fresh air are used for medicinal purposes for both man and animals till date. The efficiency of these plants is extraordinary and the fastness in which its relieves the ailments leave many a people perplexed. If nothing is done to safeguard this invaluable measure which is fast disappearing the Indigenous Peoples especially

women and children present and future will lose one of the most important knowledge they ever possesses and the very essence of their existence.

But then what are the Problems that Biodiversity and the Indigenous Knowledge are facing? What are the Perspectives?

Due to demographic explosion and the globalisation trends, vast expanses of territorial forests and the savannah are invaded daily by mainstream communities in search of farmlands.

The scramble for these very rich territories by multinational petroleum, logging and ranching companies who have no notion of, or knowledge of the biological

potentials of the lands is a cause for concern. The farmers, as well as the companies, use a lot of violence on the environment; destroying everything they come across which can disturb the attainment and fulfilment of their objectives. They do not have the culture and love for biodiversity. Something very urgent must be done here and now.

A very powerful resolution must be proposed on how we can safeguard our Indigenous knowledge in whatever form we could, for future generations in an environment, which is undergoing devastative changes in the name of globalisation. ■

It is not by chance that femininity is linked to nature, to the origins and to mystery. Women are those who make life, suckle the species, communicate oral tradition and are the jealous guardians of secrets.

When the conquest of El Dorado started, the great woman meandered from the memory of time through the Amazon forest. She was the cosmic serpent, the great river with her long and enormous arms of water, with her quiet havens and warm and fertile lagoons.

She told her stories to another great Lady, the Jaguar. To the mistress of lands and trees, of monkeys, tapirs and elks. The Powerful One, the one who gave birth to yopo, to ayahuasca and curare [native plants with special attributes], the mistress of the smell of cinnamon. Together they sent out the message to conceal the splendid cities imagined by Pizarro or Orellana, the golden thrones dreamt of by Vasco Da Gama, the precious stones sought by any other wealth thirsty Spaniard. They disguised the ispingo [precious wood tree] with mantles of moss and orchids, they hid their children and with the sound of the mangrove [irum], they called for the way to be closed to strangers.

Orellana and his men told about tall and strong women, armed with bows and arrows, with massive stone maces and thorny trunks that threatened them from the banks of the great river. These women commanded — so they say — many warrior men. One of them was taken prisoner by the Spaniards, and after being questioned they learnt of the power of these fearful women.

They came from over 60 villages, where men were their servants and slaves and they were only allowed to approach them to fecundate them. The man also told them that in their vagina inhabited the many sharp toothed piranha and if they possessed a woman without her consent, this meant the most effective and painful castration.

The hallucinations and weariness of the Conquistadors, after weeks of terror, mosquitoes and fevers, within the unknown world of the jungle, was linked to the stories and threats of the Indigenous man who, to keep them

The great Amazons

By Tania Roura, Revista Iniciativa Amazónica

away from his village and the Indian women, did not spare imagination in his stories, told in an unknown language and receiving the creative input of the translator.

Thus was born the myth of the Amazon Women, very similar to Greek mythology but with the "savageness" attributed to the Indigenous people.

The myth gave a name to the enormous river and to the surrounding forest. Beyond the myth and the legend, the Amazons, the women who live in the basin, have been warriors, defenders of the malixas [round houses], and those mainly responsible for conserving the descendents of a people condemned to genocide and systematic disregard. In lullabies and in parsimonious stories to calm fear, they whispered in the ears of their children the history of their people, their origins and values. They taught their descendents to love the great spirit of the forest, while making the thin clay vessels or crushing yucca to make cassava. They showed them the difference between the leaf with serrated edges that kills and the one that is almost exactly like it, that cures. They instructed their sons on how to guard the fire on their long walks and their daughters to hide the seeds in the folds of their bodies, to plant them in propitious ground when they had finished running away from the usurpers and were deep in the forest.

Thin, small and smiling, only armed with a malicious grin, they disarmed the friars and missionaries with their cross and dressed the cosmic serpent with Mary's mantle. And when it was time to fight cruelly or to poison the water, they did so. When it was time to leave their children in safer hands they did so, shedding no tears, in the hope

of saving what was left of their ethnic group.

They were easy prey to slave traffic, to the dogs trained to leave them with no faces, to the lascivious Conquistadors, priests and settlers, to flu and smallpox, but even so, they continued singing to their gods and to their avenging spirits. They lost their husbands, their grandfathers and grandchildren, but continued giving birth to remain in the memory.

They also bled the rubber tree so that the milk - turned into tokens to buy at the rubber-tapers shop - would feed their children. They washed gold and broke rocks looking

for onyx and diamonds to fill the chests of the great miners. They planted coca and chose the best leaves to swell the bank accounts of the Capos.

Today their skin is sore from the contact of the mist from crop spraying and the water contaminated by oil and gold exploitation poisons their body; they continue bearing children to resist assimilation.

Today they are the organisers, the teachers, and the Indigenous leaders. Today they continue to be the mothers of knowledge, life, continuity, the guardians of the past. The great Amazons. ■

Pachamama: The Impact of the Commodification of Nature on Women

By Simone Llovera
Friends of the Earth International

Pachamama is a Quechua term, which stands basically for Mother Earth. The Quechua, an Indigenous Peoples living in a large part of the Andes, believe that the Earth is a mother, which cares for people as if they were her children.

The concept of ecological services is a very strange one, in this perspective. According to the concept of ecological services, the different functions healthy ecosystems provide to local people, like the provision of food, medicines, fuelwood, water and construction materials, and local climate mitigation, can be translated into monetary economies, turning local people who use these "services" into clients. Clients that will, one way or another, have to pay for these functions. It is like one enters a family and suddenly forces the children to pay for the care their mother provides.

Women have always played a fundamental role in the non-monetary "economy" of people. Much of their day-to-day employment is targeted towards caring for their loved ones, their children, husbands, parents. Like the functions of Mother Earth, these activities are very hard to translate into monetary terms. Yet, they are indispensable for human well-being.

However, neo-liberal biodiversity policy makers are actively trying to impose the concept of ecological services upon people living within "Mother Earth's care". These local people suddenly see themselves in a position where they have become the "clients" of ecosystems.

Water that used to be available to them - and used to be fresh - has suddenly become a commodity that has to be paid for, and paid for dearly. Due to water privatization, some families in Mali are now paying up to

60% of their income for freshwater alone!

Fuelwood used to be freely accessible to them, but with the privatization of forests, and the rapidly progressing conversion of forests into monoculture tree plantations, every branch has to be paid for nowadays.

Medicinal plants used to be and still are a fundamental source of health care for many rural families, but with biodiversity destruction reaching epidemic speed worldwide, many families have lost their access to medicinal plants, which means they have to rely on expensive commercial health services.

Fish meat has become overexploited by commercial hunting, and coastal fish grounds are becoming rapidly degraded, with the only fish stocks left being sold to large commercial fishing fleets.

Even seeds, which are the result of generations of joint innovations of farmers, most of them women, are becoming rapidly privatized and monopolized. Large biotechnology companies are even introducing special terminator technologies, which ensure that farmers are unable to reproduce their own seeds. Meanwhile, it is the reproduction of seeds which has formed the engine behind the development of the world's amazing agrobiodiversity.

As women are, in average, beginning a large part of their daily work to non-monetary activities like family care and unpaid care for people in their direct neighbourhood in general, they have a very disadvantaged position in the monetary economy. In many countries, women are still unable to participate fully in the monetary economy: they are unable to own real estate, they cannot get a mortgage, and they often cannot take a loan without permission of

their husbands.

Worldwide, women are paid 30 to 40% less than men for comparable work. Meanwhile, women in developing countries work 60 to 90 hours a week, they provide 40 to 60 % of the household income, 75% of healthcare services, and over 75% of the food consumed throughout Africa. Even in the UK, the average full-time weekly earnings of women are 72% that of men.

Meanwhile, women are far more dependent on nature in their economic activities than men. In most countries, women are responsible for providing basic needs like freshwater, fuelwood and health care to the family. In most rural families they are also responsible for maintaining the family vegetable garden, and caring for small livestock like chicken, which form an important source of nutrition in the family. Men often work in paid labour or cash-crop production, and they are more likely to benefit economically from monocultures like export-oriented cash crops and even from logging.

The replacement of biodiverse systems by monocultures is a major cause of impoverishment of rural women. As most of their work is unpaid, it deprives them of their main source of income and makes them more dependent upon men. This diminishes their overall status in society and increases their vulnerability, including their sexual vulnerability.

The introduction of ecological services schemes adds even more to this problem. As women receive relatively little monetary income, they are unable to pay for basic needs like fuelwood and water. Due to their low status in many societies they are also less capable to negotiate on



A lady from the Amazon attending the IV, May 2004

an equal level about access to so-called ecological services, thus leading to an even more disadvantaged position in the so-called ecological services market. The concept of ecological services has thus become a major cause in the further impoverishment of rural women.

Instead of trying to sell life and associated knowledge, we should address the direct and underlying causes of deforestation and other forms of biodiversity destruction. Only by challenging market-oriented approaches to biodiversity, and supporting the efforts of millions of women and men around the world to nurture nature and share the benefits of it, we can make any progress towards eradicating poverty amongst women and preventing ecological disaster. ■

The IVth Continental meeting of Indigenous Women of the Americas

"Feeling, thinking and shaping the future, following the path of Mema Waku"

Lima – Peru, 4- 7 April, 2004

Under the framework of the International Decade of Indigenous Peoples of the World, proclaimed by the UN that ends this 2004, the indigenous women of the original peoples of Abya Yala, Pachamama, Welnapi, Ximbi and Kipatsi, gathered from April 4 to 7, 2004, in the city of Lima, Peru, the millenary territory of the Quechua, Asháninka, Aymara, Shipibo, Konibo, Kakataibo, Machiguenga, Nomatsiguenga, Kakintu, Yanesha, Yine, Aguaruna, Huambisa, Kokama, Kokomilla, Chayaluita, Bora, Huitoto, Iiamakbui, Huachipsire, Arawaire, Jelsaire, Kashinahua, and other indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation who inhabit their territory from time immemorial, hereby, we declare that:

1. We reaffirm that we are Indigenous Women bearers

"Sisters, you are all summoned to make progress and to decisively and firmly take a step forward, united through the diversity of our peoples; to stand up and to make our capacity known and, in demand that our Nation States respect our rights, but also to work strenuously for ourselves and our people, returning and recovering the lessons our mothers and grandmothers taught us, they are the guide and path to the future."

of a millenary heritage who continue to fight united with our peoples to achieve our freedom for self-determination. We understand that globalization is a threat to our original peoples. Today our people have stood up to fight for their historic rights which have been systematically deprived from them. This struggle has brought us closer to each other to take into consideration all our concerns and to establish a

common agenda as indigenous women through stronger, inclusive, respectful and tolerant bonds with the same diversity and differences of our own peoples.

2. **We recognize** the contribution of our elder sisters who suffered from the discrimination of our own indigenous brothers and sisters when they vindicated the recognition of a space for indigenous women. Similarly, we reviewed certain customs that harm and sadden our hearts, we discussed them maturely and exercised the right to change them. These women as well as ourselves have suffered from the institutionalized violence of Nation States on our continent that has brought about the structural exclusion of our indigenous peoples.
3. **We adopt** the resolutions of the "Summit of Indigenous Women of the Americas", the "Forum of Indigenous Women of Asia" and those emanating from the preparatory meetings held by all the countries prior to the III Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Equally, we establish the strategic alliances with social movements that fight for the care of natural resources, biodiversity and life itself, the democratization movement of the Nation States, and international organizations who sympathize with our aspirations.
4. **We ratify** our commitment to attain "unity in diversity", expanding and strengthening the spaces achieved for young women and girls, renewing leadership, bearing in mind that they are the future of our original peoples.
5. **We ratify** our commitment to resume the values and knowledge of our peoples, the teachings and the recovery of usage of our food, songs, religion, medicine, attitudes and manner of conceiving life, as values that distinguish us from other national societies, and we commit ourselves to establishing the appropriate institutions to strengthen our knowledge and values.
6. **We recognize** the progress made by international judicial entities such as ILO 169 Convention, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Special Rapporteur Report on Human Rights as well as the Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples. However, we cannot envisage nor feel the will of the Nation States yet, since these international spaces still lack adequate funding in addition to the material conditions required in order to fulfill these commitments.
7. **We are concerned** about the serious problems regarding the violation of human rights and fundamental rights of the individuals, due to the growing militarization of our territories; the displacement and internal harassment suffered by our communities due to the implementation of mega

projects; armed conflicts; religious and political intolerance; the plundering of our natural resources, knowledge and wisdom; the alienation of our seeds to give way to germoplasm banks and the proliferation of transgenic seeds that cause a wide variety of sickness and disease as well as genetic changes.

Therefore

1. **We reject** the lack of national policies on the generation of employment and social and economic development for indigenous peoples, that have spurred massive migrations from indigenous towns to places overseas, and have obliged illegal immigrants to become victims persecuted by the authorities of any Nation State.
2. **We repudiate** the laws governing privatizations and the indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources, such as water, since they have an impact on the survival of indigenous peoples, they violate human and collective rights and irreversibly affect the natural resources that sustain biodiversity.
3. **We disclaim** the signing of international treaties entered into by governments to implement trade agreements such as the Plan Puebla Panama, Plan Colombia, NAFTA, FTAA, the Cocacero Plan, the Andean and Amazon Pact and the Biological Meso-American Corridor, since these affect the interests and rights of indigenous peoples and the national economic development.
4. **We reject** forthright the execution of mega projects that plunder our territories, knowledge, wisdom and natural resources.
5. **We reject** the military occupation of indigenous territories in each Nation State since this involves the persecution of our indigenous authorities and leaders. We also reject the aggravated discrimination of indigenous women due to our threefold condition as women, indigenous and poor.
6. **We denounce** the impunity and corruption of the governments that does not seek, promote, or guarantee a respect for our rights or our fundamental freedoms by disregarding justice and national and international laws, pacts and agreements.
7. **We denounce** the racist and discriminatory attitudes of officials of the Nation States of our Americas because they systematically and repeatedly violate our fundamental rights and freedoms. This racism must be stamped out since it is one of the causes of the exclusion of thousands of women and it violates our fundamental rights, such as the right to health and education.
8. **We propose** to all women of the world that they adopt our natural and millenary laws once again and exercise them, and that they should also carry out campaigns to recover our sacred sites, our symbols and our sacred animals.

9. **We urge** the Nation States to adopt the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the OAS American Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples since they are the minimum laws that guarantee our permanence and validity.
10. **We demand** that the Nation States include the participation of indigenous peoples in political decisions concerning the execution of mega projects, so that they may be informed, consulted and that these consultations be respected. We issue a warning against the latent danger of a deepening of social conflict.
11. **We propose** that the Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) of our Nation States become a State policy covering pre-school, primary, secondary and advanced levels of education, including both indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, in order to learn how to respect our differences - gender, ethnic, racial and social class, etc. - and the autonomy of each original people.
12. **We propose** and reiterate to the governments of our countries, that they adopt social, environmental and cultural compensation programs due to the harm caused to the environment, the basis of our survival.
13. **We recommend** to the ILO:
 - a. To urgently implement surveillance measures with respect to ILO Convention 169, creating a space for direct dialogue between ILO and the indigenous peoples, to monitor and surveil its fulfillment;
 - b. A system for the direct participation of indigenous

peoples according to their legal status to present their demands directly to ILO and not through unions or guild associations. ■

14. **We propose** that jointly with the indigenous peoples, the United Nations carry out a serious and responsible evaluation of the International Decade of Indigenous People of the World and it be expanded for another decade and that a World Summit of Indigenous Peoples be held.
15. **We urge** the Nation States of our America to guarantee consultation mechanisms of our indigenous peoples, recognizing their authorities and representatives and promoting grassroots consultation processes on topics that have summoned us, such as the OAS Draft American Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; we also urge them to prompt other States to rapidly adopt these declarations.
16. **We demand** the Nation States to take into account indigenous peoples who live in rural areas and large cities, providing them with basic social services; we demand that these services be implemented from the perspective and vision of the culture and knowledge of indigenous peoples.
17. **We recommend** the United Nations Organization to pay more attention to its policies and actions to improve the conditions of health, education, economy and political participation of indigenous women and youth. ■

Baguio declaration of the 2nd Asian Indigenous Women's Conference

We, the participants of the 2nd Asian Indigenous Women's Conference affirm our vital role in advancing the struggles of indigenous and tribal peoples of Asia for social and ecological justice, self-determination and peace. We celebrate our diversity and our solidarity as vibrant movements working to renew our historic identities at this critical time.

At the turn of the 21st century, the unfettered forces of neo-liberal globalisation, statist militarism and development aggression are violating our inherent rights and fundamental freedoms and threatening our very survival as distinct peoples. As indigenous peoples and as

women, we suffer multiple burdens, underpinned by racial, cultural, religious and gender discrimination.

Today, as we celebrate International Women's Day, on the closing year of the UN Decade for Indigenous Peoples, we take stock of our situation as women, and as indigenous peoples, and commit ourselves to the fullest exercise of our rights towards self-determination, non-discrimination and equality for all peoples of the world.

At this conference, we bear testimony to the following problems and issues:

Globalisation and the Exploitation and Theft of Indigenous Peoples' Lands, Waters, Forests and Resources

- Globalisation is accelerating the alienation, privatisation, commercialisation and theft of community forests, lands, waters and traditional medicinal plants causing impoverishment and generating ill health for our peoples.
- The violation of indigenous peoples' prior rights to ancestral territories, lands, waters and resources, including the requirement to obtain our free, prior and informed consent to all programmes and projects affecting our lives and welfare is causing community strife and conflicts. Free and prior informed consent should include the full and effective participation of indigenous women in the decision-making process. Violations of customary use rights, particularly women's access to and control over natural resources has been especially undermined.
- Indigenous peoples are gradually being estranged from our lands, mountains, waters and forests which are sources of wisdom and means of survival. Our knowledge of biodiversity and natural resource management is systematically exploited, appropriated or eroded. Piracy of indigenous arts, crafts and medicines is rampant and is facilitated by patents and other western intellectual property rights.
- The cash economy has eroded indigenous women's independence as self-reliant food producers, healers, artisans and spiritualists, transforming us into vulnerable lowly-paid workers, urban poor and tourist attractions in the market economy.
- Indigenous Peoples, particularly women, are not given our just share of the benefits arising from the sustainable use of surface and sub-surface resources, including waters and forests on indigenous territories.
- Corporate mining has resulted in the displacement of indigenous communities as well as in soil erosion and contamination, water and air pollution, serious health problems, impoverishment and social conflict.
- Illegal logging, private concessions, monoculture plantations and agribusiness ventures are depriving indigenous peoples of lands and livelihoods and seriously eroding our rights.
- National Parks and Protected Areas have displaced indigenous communities, expropriating our lands and denying access to the natural resources critical for our livelihoods and survival. Indigenous women have been disproportionately affected.
- Current forms of tourism make indigenous peoples and women objects of curiosity, display and commercialisation. Prostitution has increased, alongside the inducement to commercialise indigenous cultural heritages. Tourism is breeding cash dependence, especially on children.
- Large dams have serious impacts on the lives, livelihoods, cultures and spiritual existence of indigenous and tribal peoples, who have suffered

disproportionately from their negative impacts, while often being excluded from sharing in any benefits. In the Philippines, almost all the larger dams built or proposed are on the lands of indigenous peoples. In India, 40-50% of those displaced by development projects were tribal peoples, who account for just 8% of the nation's 1 billion people.

- Forced displacement of indigenous peoples from our ancestral lands is a major cause of impoverishment and threatens our very survival as indigenous peoples. Indigenous women and children are the most seriously harmed.

Militarization and Violence

- Indigenous women and children in Asia likewise suffer the brunt of militarization perpetrated by state forces, including vigilante groups and private armies of companies. Indigenous communities targeted for development aggression are also targets of militarization.
- Rape continues to be used as a weapon of war by the military to humiliate and attack indigenous communities. Girls and even older women and children are not spared. Courtship and marriage with indigenous women is used to gain acceptance in indigenous communities, however, soldiers often abandon local women and children upon transfer to other destinations.
- Military rule and the establishment of military detachments in our communities has curtailed our movement and economic activities, the entry of food supplies and basic social services and even disrupted the education of our children.
- The military has facilitated the occupation of indigenous territories by non-indigenous settlers, a form of assimilation which breeds conflicts between indigenous and non-indigenous communities.
- Compounding militarization is the war on terror and the passage of national policies or laws restricting the exercise of democratic rights and freedoms of the indigenous women and communities. Our organizations are regarded by the state to be engaged in terrorist activities. Women leaders suffer persecution and our elders are criminalized for asserting customary practices in defence of our land and resources.
- The Burmese military regime has perpetrated extreme violence against ethnic communities including forced labour, forced relocations, torture and murder. Indigenous women suffer from rapes and sexual violence, including the trafficking of women and forced prostitution.
- The report on the Philippines by Prof. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples underlines the continuing militarization of indigenous territories in furtherance of development aggression, particularly the extractive



industries. Intensified militarization has resulted in family and community disintegration, human rights violations and hardships.

Violation of the Right to Citizenship of the Tribal Peoples of Thailand

- The right to citizenship of the tribal peoples of Thailand has not been guaranteed by the government; with applicants facing long delays in the processing of documents. Without citizenship, indigenous and tribal peoples are denied their most fundamental rights and entitlements, including access to education and other public services, land and property rights, and social mobility. Under these conditions, indigenous women are rendered extremely vulnerable and marginalised. Urgent government action is needed to redress this situation.

Political Misrepresentation

- Governments have engaged in political misrepresentation of indigenous peoples through the creation of government-controlled structures, the promotion of false and beholden indigenous leaders and deceitful manipulation. Indigenous Peoples' right to free, prior and informed consent has likewise been manipulated and abused.

Lack of access to Basic Social Services

- Indigenous women in many countries face many barriers to the access of education, healthcare and sanitation, and other basic services and are excluded from decision-making on programmes to meet these needs and entitlements.
- Women are marginalised by cultures of patriarchy and violence, which confine women to the domestic sphere.

Outmigration and Loss of Traditional Livelihoods

- Recent extreme climate events and changes in Mongolia have devastated nomadic livestock herding, thus deepening rural poverty and lack of access to basic

social services, and accelerating migration to urban centres. The continued survival of traditional livelihoods and cultures is under threat with the rapid transition to market and urban lifestyles.

Physical and Sexual Violence Against Women

- Poverty, which has been exacerbated by globalisation policies, is increasing the vulnerability of indigenous women to violence, both sexual and physical. In search of jobs, many indigenous women are trafficked to other parts of the country, or even across borders and are eventually pushed to prostitution.
- At the same time, indigenous women living in urban centres become victims of wife battering by their husbands, who finding themselves jobless are unable to support their families, become irritable or addicted to drugs and alcohol. Uprooted from the communities, indigenous women who migrate lose the protection afforded by customary laws.

Weakening of Women's Role

- The loss of lands, waters and forests is deepening the poverty of indigenous women while increasing their domestic loads and subsistence responsibilities. We now have to work harder and longer to feed and nurture our families. Many women have become increasingly dependent on their husbands as the primary wage earners, who have more employment opportunities and higher salaries in the market system. Thus indigenous women's status and power declined, weakening their influence and participation in decision-making.
- The incorporation of indigenous peoples in the cash economy has eroded. Self-reliant subsistence activities and women's role in production, economy and community life.
- Changes in the traditional social, cultural and political institutions and practices have led to a loss of practices, rules and codes of behaviour which have long been

instruments in ensuring gender-sensitive structures. The introduction of western education and religion, and the imposition of alien leadership structures has undermined the role of our indigenous women spiritual leaders and healers, who have provided moral and spiritual guidance through generations, and who were often part of decision-making structures in our communities.

- The declaration of Nepal as a Hindu State, has meant the promulgation of laws, rules and regulations (including the Constitution) based on Hindu values, including cultural norms which consider women as inferior and impure. The government policy of Hinduisation, undermines the egalitarianism of traditional indigenous societies of Nepal, and downgrades the status of indigenous women.

We also agree on the following actions and commitments:

Recognition of Indigenous Peoples Rights to Self-Determination

- To work in unity with indigenous women and peoples in Asia and the world for the recognition of our rights to self-determination.

Policy and Administrative Reform

- We will actively engage in policy advocacy and reform in all political arenas, and at all levels, to gain full respect and recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, including indigenous women to self-determination and for social and ecological justice and peace.
- We will work for an end to racial, cultural, religious and gender discrimination, and all its manifestations in public policy and practices.
- We will work for the amendment of constitutional provisions and conflicting laws to make these consistent with the internationally recognised rights of indigenous peoples. Customary laws should likewise be recognised in national and international legislation.

Citizenship Rights

- We uphold that all indigenous women and men are entitled to be free and equal to all others in terms of dignity and rights. Every indigenous person has the right to belong to a nationality, and to enjoy legal status and to be granted citizenship of the country where they live, if they so wish.

Renewal and Revitalization of Traditional Cultures, Customary Laws, Social Values and Practices.

- We accept the challenge and responsibility to address cultural renewal and revitalization to promote gender-sensitive values and structures within our communities. We note with concern that some modern changes in our traditional social, cultural and political institutions and practices have led to a loss of values and codes of behaviour which uphold gender-sensitive structures and roles, while accepting our responsibility to change other customary laws and practices which oppress

indigenous women. We will speak up against abusive treatment of indigenous women in the name of custom and tradition.

- To unify and educate women, children and youth in our communities about our cultures and identity as the basis of our struggles and rights to land, territory and resources.
- We will work with our traditional institutions to raise the respect, recognition and status of indigenous women who are knowledgeable about traditional resource management, biodiversity conservation, food security and the health system.
- We will strive towards working with our traditional leaders and institutions to ensure that women are not disinherited from family properties, nor used to propagate social status through bride-price or dowry.
- We will revitalise traditional support systems against domestic violence and work towards removing prejudice and negative perceptions of indigenous peoples and women which undermine our pride and self-confidence.

Campaigns against Development Aggression and Militarization

- We will conduct campaigns against development aggression and militarization and for the defence of our lands, resources and cultures from destruction and assimilation.
- We demand proper rehabilitation and compensation for lands and waters despoiled by destructive development projects;
- We demand the pull-out of military troops, checkpoints and detachments in our territories;
- We demand justice and accountability for criminal offences perpetrated by the Armed Forces and paramilitary groups and to indemnify victims of political repressions and sexual violence;
- Expose and oppose repressive and undemocratic anti-terrorism bills
- We demand protection from transmigration and resettlement of outside settlers on indigenous peoples territories
- We demand a share of all benefits taken from our lands, waters and territories.

Peace-building and Conflict Resolution

- We do not see ourselves as simply victims; we are survivors of our struggles against militarization and for peace building. We participate in peace-making efforts in support of our peoples.
- We recognise and respect indigenous women's contributions to peace building and conflict resolution. We will engender indigenous conflict resolution and peace-building processes and ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous women in peace processes and accords entered into by our people and communities.

- We call for increased international pressure on the Burmese military regime to stop its military offensives in territories of indigenous peoples and violent crimes against indigenous women.

Appropriate Social Services

- We will promote education in indigenous mother-tongue languages and the transmission of indigenous cultures.
- We call upon governments to implement their international commitments on education, with due regard for the special needs for education of indigenous children.
- Promote and develop indigenous healing practices, such as the use of herbal medicines, and work for the effective protection of indigenous knowledge from piracy and patenting.
- Awareness programmes must be carried out to change the mindset of communities and the government to address the special needs of indigenous peoples.

Recommendations to the Indigenous Peoples' Movement and Organisations

We will continue to strengthen our organisation solidarity linkages, build our awareness and sustain our campaigns against development aggression, militarization and ethnocide at national, regional and international levels.

Research and Documentation

- Conduct specific studies on the impact of conflicts on

women and children, and the role of indigenous women in conflict resolution, peace building and sustainable development.

- Intensify research activities by indigenous peoples on our priority issues and concerns.

Empowerment of Indigenous Women for Leadership

- Empower indigenous women to exercise our life skills, in health, education and decision-making and to play our important roles in our families, communities and the indigenous peoples' movement.
- Carry out gender-sensitivity programmes within indigenous organisations and communities.
- Strengthen indigenous women's participation in all aspects of leadership and governance. Special meetings, leadership training as well as other training courses and exposure programmes should be organised.
- In terms of participation, a quota for women should be allocated, and when projects or meetings are going on, nursery facilities should be provided.
- Women will be encouraged to take up decision-making positions, after gaining the necessary confidence.
- The role and perception of women should not follow stereotypes and women who are qualified and experienced should be selected as leaders. ■

Participation of Indigenous Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict Management, and Conflict Resolution and Post Conflict Peace Building

Panel discussion organised by the Secretariat of UN PFII and Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs by Stella Tamang.



Stella Tamang

Tamang is one of the largest indigenous peoples of Nepal. I would like to express my appreciation to the organiser for giving me this opportunity. My presentation is to raise the voice of those women who are brave and are ready to die to protect and defend the children, the weak and the elders, the animals and the nature, and their contribution and sacrifices are never recognised and are respected. They are shouting and screaming but they are not heard and seen. Their sacrifice and contribution in peace process are not documented and recorded and they are not getting attention.

We always hear sad stories of women and

children dying in evacuation centres, caught in the cross fire, rape, sexually abused and traumatised. Women are always depicted and described as mere casualties of war, weak, defenceless needing protection and crying for sympathy. Little is known and documented about how women survive in this conflict, how they are protecting and saving the lives of thousands of children, elders and the pupils and how do they cope and what do they contribute toward rebuilding peace? How can they help in the peace process?

Armed conflicts are occurring in many parts of the world and have escalated over the last decade. It is taking the life of many innocent civilians. As noted in paragraph 135 of the Beijing Platform for Action, "while entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict and terrorism, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex". These days, women and children are not spared as it used to be before. They are the worst victims of gender-based and sexual violence, rape, forced prostitutions, trafficking and forced recruiting in armed forces. It is also a fact that most of today's conflicts are taking place in the areas of indigenous peoples.

The present ongoing armed conflict is not the choice of the women and it is not their decisions too. It is undeniably a male-dominated, male perpetrated game of aggression claiming innocent lives and displacing thousands of families. It is the men's creation to gain more power and more wealth. The worst pain bearer of the conflict is ultimately the women and the children. It is also the conflict between masculine qualities and feminine qualities. Masculine qualities are physical strength, power, anger, greed and hatred and feminine qualities are love, affection, forgiveness and tolerance etc.

The present conflicts are not based on human needs but they are based on human greed; for power and money and based on the desire to conquer, control and exploit nature and environment. Conflicts are no more natural phenomenon. There are great efforts from some peoples not to let conflict resolved but manipulate it since they gain and benefit by it.

We are also making mistakes in resolving conflicts and in finding out the root causes. The causes are not the dangerous weapons created and produced in the factories. We are after the weapons of mass destruction forgetting the sources from where such dreadful weapons are designed and produced and that is the minds, the hearts, and the heads of human beings. The dreadful machines are useless unless human mind does not order and the finger does not press the button. We are said to be the supreme creatures on the earth because of our intelligence but we human beings are unfortunately failing to resume our responsibilities in using our intelligence in the right way.

Indigenous Women as Mediators and Negotiators

In all the conflict areas around the world, women are not passive observers and are just the victims. They are very active. Their participation could be voluntary, abduction, intimidation or forced recruitment. Their support and responsibility could be from simple thing like cooking, cleaning and acting as messengers to taking the lead in the front line. Women are the best mediators and negotiators but their way of working is very informal and these informal activities of the women actually laid the ground for the formal serious peace dialogues.

The present armed conflict between the Government's Armed Forces and the rebel Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) has demonstrated a very important but significant role of Nepali women. In

this conflict, women do not appear weak and feeble victims only, but they are very strong, good mediators, negotiators and fighters too. The armed conflict in Nepal is centred in the villages and districts inhabited by indigenous peoples. Now only women, elders and the children are seen in the villages since men and particularly the youths are leaving the villages to escape from both the parties of the conflict. The recent Government policy of legalising the Man Power Company to send men abroad is adding burden on already heavily loaded women.

The Nepalese indigenous women are now not only caretakers, food providers and protectors of the families, but they are negotiators with the Government security forces and the Maoists' People's Liberation Army for the protection and the survival of their families. Most of the families in the villages are now headed by women. They hold a responsible position in both the conflicting parties that is, the Government security forces as well as the Maoist PLA. They are also in the forefront of armed conflicts, given the choice this would not be what they would like to do.

They are showing their brevity and intelligence by breaking the popular Nepali saying that,

"Hens should not crow;

*If it crows, her neck should
be twisted*

*And thrown across the roof
of the house."*

*In a situation where the
protection and the security of
the children and the elders
becomes the most important
responsibilities, every mother
and woman will be compelled to
hold weapons and fight.*

The present conflict in Nepal has discovered the indigenous women as

1. Fighters,
2. Commanders,
3. Negotiators,
4. Mediators,

5. Peace makers, **Tamang cultural conflict resolution practices**

We believe that women are born peace makers and wonderful mediators. From the time of birth, Tamang women are taught and are encouraged to mediate and resolve conflict between the family members and between families. Whenever there are conflicts in the family members, they know how to mediate and resolve. They will do everything in resolving conflict from cooking special food to performing rituals to provoke positive energy to drive away the devil or evil spirits from the family. Tamang women are skilled in mediation. Family conflict resolution and peace depends on women. The conflict is not limited with human only. The conflict with nature too are taken care a lot by the women. That is the reason for having this popular Nepali saying:

**"Women are the homes and men
are the fences."**

If there is conflict between two families, the highest valued and respected process for conflict resolution would be women taking "Shyalgar" which would contain chicken or goat limb, local wine, fruits and breads covered with "Khata", an auspicious scarf. This gesture is taken as being done by the most respectful family member, the women, though there is different interpretation now.

Maranao women from the Bangsamoro peoples in Philippines view themselves as "tiglimpyo sa mga hugaw sa katilingban" (cleansers of the dirt of the community). They usually play the role of mediators in conflict situations. Whenever there is family conflict, it is always a woman who addresses critical issues and brings the parties to settlement. Within Maranao culture, women do not consider themselves oppressed or exploited because they know their specific roles

and place within the community. Women are well respected and influential in the community.

In the Arumanen Manobo tribe, women are sent to the enemy to settle conflicts. Arumanen Manobo women see this as a crucial role in their community life-mediating and resolving conflict even at the risk of sacrificing their own lives. More often than not, the women are successful in the negotiation process and are able to prevent the conflict from escalating.

"It is a fact that conflict or difference is a natural and unavoidable part of life but which, instead of taking otherwise, can be used as an opportunity for growth and learning. We do not always create the conflicts that come our way but we can always choose our response to those conflicts. Our focus in conflict situation should be to learn how to creatively deal with conflict rather than to avoid it or to allow it to destroy us." (Naga Women Magazine)

In the Samburu pastoral community in the Northern Kenya and Maasai community women and children and the aged are never attacked during armed conflicts. The gesture of cutting the grass and holding up mean request to stop violence and request for peace. (Sekuda, 1997-80). Grass is very important in the Maasai environment because their livelihood depends mainly on its availability for their livestock.

The Maasai women and particularly mothers of warriors who are called Nougotonhe ilmurun are so revered that no warrior would dare hurt them. Maasai women sometimes remove their Olokesena, (lower skirts, or belts), to show their weakness and sympathy for both parties. They are mothers of all and cannot afford loss of life. Apart from the women children especially girls, can help to restore peace in a conflict

situation. Their influence by even word of mouth can bring calm in a conflict. (Sekuda, 1997-95)

Women as mothers

Conflict resolutions skill has to be cultivated and nurtured. Mothers are the first teachers. They shape the minds and hearts of the young and are influential in the family. Mothers shape our values, beliefs, spirituality, habits, practices and even our biases and prejudices. I grew up hearing my mother saying that life and conflict is a synonym. One must not run away from conflict and one must not be afraid of conflict. Good conflict mediation, facilitation, conflict resolution and peace making are considered to be the quality of good women.

Invisibility of women in the peace process

While existing customs and practices within our communities recognise the role of women as peace negotiators and mediators, the reality is that we also have policies and systems that make these efforts and roles invisible. Our roles in the community as peace mediators seem to be but an extension of our role in the kitchen that is, to keep the peace within the family and contain conflict among the children and family members. There is no recognition of the women as peace negotiators in the more "formal, public, and official sense."

How many women are in the peace negotiations? In the case of Nepal, there has been two Peace Talks but there was one woman in the Government team but from the side of Maoist there was none. It is easy to predict what will happen at the negotiating table with only men around it. They will debate about weapons, territorial integrity, political power, self-determination, constitution, power sharing, elections, international laws, and politically

negotiated settlement the so-called hard issues.

Women show the human face of the conflict. They will tell about their lives, in the evacuation centres, food blockades, sick children, orphans, widows, destroyed homes, schooling, medicines, trauma, and broken relationships. If we put women at the negotiating table, they will change the equation of the negotiation. They will introduce practical workable solutions to the conflict. This does not mean that women are not parties in the right of self-determination struggles of the indigenous peoples.

If women have already been playing the role of mediators, and peacemakers in their communities, why is their expertise not recognised and tapped in the official peace process? We seem to have the distorted notion that men are for public concerns and women for private life-hard issues and soft issues for women. Thus, if official, it should be left to men while the women do their usual mediation within the family and at the community level the later perceived as an extension of the women's kitchen. If we continue to exclude women, we can never complete this peace process. There is a need to elevate the status of women as mediators and negotiators of conflict from the community level to the official peace negotiations.

It is not that women only can bring everlasting peace. What is important is that we start in the right direction by bringing our sisters into this negotiation process. Then perhaps we can rebuild peace in our country for ourselves, our children, and the generation to come.

Need honest and collaborative effort

It is important to have clear objectives in resolving conflict. It is

also important to be honest. To have change in one place, it demands changes in so many places of the world. In the globalized world, where the small and underdeveloped countries are under the remote control of big developed countries, resolving conflict is not simple. It cannot be resolved until and unless it is done in collaborative way and everyone takes responsibilities.

Shared responsibilities

It is important that the women in the north take more responsibilities since most of the root causes lie in the north. Until and unless we do not deal with the root causes, we will be wasting our energy like clearing the spilled milk and not patching or stopping the leakages.

Women in the north have comparatively more access to information and resources which the women in the south do not have.

The women in the north have more rights and freedom than the women in the south.

I am again not claiming and undermining the efforts of men but what is important to be reminded is that men alone and only men's interpretations and solutions will not resolve conflicts and bring peace. It needs to be the joint efforts.

Recommendations:

- Form International Indigenous Peoples' Commission on Armed Conflict
- Ensure the assessments of fact-finding missions with the special focus on the human right situation of indigenous women and children in the armed conflicts areas,
- Undertake an annual review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and report to the Security Council,
- Condemn all violation of the

human rights of indigenous women and girls in situation of armed conflicts; take necessary measures to bring to an end such violation,

- Ensure full involvement of indigenous women in negotiation of peace dialogue and agreements at national and international levels, including through provision of training for indigenous women and their organisations on formal peace processes,
 - Identify indigenous peoples customs and traditions and informal peace-building initiatives and provide relevant technical and financial support and establish mechanisms to channel the outcomes of these initiatives into more formal peace processes,
 - Increase access to information from indigenous women's groups and networks on indicator of impending conflict as a means to ensure effective gender-sensitive early warning mechanisms,
 - Take steps to prevent from recruitment of girls and boys into armed forces and rebel groups,
 - Incorporate the needs and priorities of women and girls as ex-combatants and families of ex-combatants in the design and implementation of Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, (DDR) programmes,
 - Recognise and utilize the contributions of women and girls in encouraging ex-combatants to lay down arms, in weapons collections programmes and ensure that they benefit from any incentives provided for such activities,
- Ensure full access of women and girls to all resources and benefits provided in reintegration programmes, including skills development programmes. ■

Putting Together a Picture of Asian Indigenous Women

By Jill K. Carino

The stories of Asian indigenous women about their lives and problems are as varied as they are numerous. Written accounts of indigenous women in Asia are found in a number of sources. These include news and feature articles, proceedings of conferences on women where indigenous women themselves are able to tell their own stories, special issues on women of indigenous peoples' publications, and other assorted books and articles. In most publications on indigenous peoples, indigenous women are hardly ever mentioned as a special sector. Even publications on the situation of women in general seldom tackle the added dimension of indigenous women. Available materials on indigenous women are nowhere as substantial or comprehensive as we would like. However, they are sufficient for us to be able to draw a picture in broad strokes, or to come up with an initial overview of certain patterns and trends that tie together the complex situation of the indigenous women in Asia.

It is clear from the start that Asian indigenous women occupy an extremely disadvantaged position in society. They are victims of multiple forms of oppression because of the fact that they are indigenous and they are women, added to the fact that majority of them are farmers or workers belonging to the most exploited classes in society. In Taiwan, for instance, indigenous women are called "third class citizens" because of their inferior status in relation to men and in relation to non-indigenous peoples, those belonging to the dominant Han culture in Taiwanese society.

Women who are at the same time indigenous peoples, experience discrimination and racism from the dominant culture and nation state. On one hand, their status as indigenous peoples is not recognized by the state within which they find themselves. On the other hand, it is their distinctness as indigenous peoples which is used as justification for government policies of assimilation, integration, resettlement, transmigration, or militarization. These policies are used not only as a means of erasing

their existence as indigenous peoples but also to dispossess them of their rich ancestral land which is the basis of their culture and survival. In the most extreme cases, these state policies amount to cultural genocide or ethnocide as in the case of the indigenous peoples of Nagaland, the



Asian Indigenous Women showing solidarity for their rights, Manila Philippines, March 2004

Chittagong Hill Tracts and Burma.

In addition, Indigenous Women find themselves living within traditional and largely patriarchal societies, which dictate that the woman is subordinate to the man. From birth, females are considered inferior to males. An indigenous woman is viewed as being there to bear children, to serve her father, her brother and later her husband and her family, including her in-laws in some cases. In most cases, women do not have any property rights, or if they do, they cannot inherit these rights. In the few matriarchal or matrilineal societies such as the Lahu and Karen in Thailand, the hill tribes of Cambodia or the Amis in Taiwan, the women generally have more control over property, resources and production, and there is a fairer division of labor between the sexes. However, these women eventually lose their relatively egalitarian status as a result of the erosion of traditional indigenous culture. Conversion to Islam or Christian religion has further weakened the position of women and reinforced their subordinate status in relation to men.

Indigenous women are often excluded from roles of political leadership both in indigenous socio-political structures and in structures imposed by the state. Seldom are they consulted on political matters concerning the

community, much less are they involved in actual decision-making which is usually done in structures or institutions dominated by men such as in the traditional village council. Women are not allowed to hold positions of leadership at the village level which is usually passed down from father to son.

Women play a primary role in production in indigenous communities in Asia which are largely subsistence agricultural communities. Indigenous women in Asia engage in swidden farming or plough cultivation in settled, irrigated or terraced fields. Women usually bear the brunt of the work in the fields such as hoeing, transplanting and weeding. Farming by indigenous women is usually augmented by other productive activities such as foraging, fishing and handicrafts like weaving, knitting, basketry and embroidery. In hunting and gathering societies, it is usually the women who forage for food and other forest products while the men do the hunting.

There are now an increasing number of indigenous women migrating to urban centers in search for work as laborers in the formal and informal sectors. As farmers or as laborers, indigenous women are exploited by the propertied classes. The mere fact that they are women aggravates the oppression and exploitation they experience as members of the working classes and as indigenous peoples. In addition, almost all household chores and child-rearing work are done by the woman.

It is against this backdrop of discrimination and oppression of indigenous women that the phenomenon of globalization has come in to further complicate the problem. Globalization has encroached in varying degrees into the local economies of the different countries in Asia. Nevertheless, pressures of the global market are felt even in the most remote communities of indigenous people, with profound and intense impact on the indigenous women.

Globalization seeks the removal of national barriers to allow multinational corporations (MNCs) maximize profits through free and open access to natural resources. In most cases, the land on which indigenous peoples live is where much of the world's remaining natural resources are still found. Sadly, it is this natural wealth in indigenous peoples territories which has now become the target for exploitation and commercialization by MNCs.

On the ground, globalization comes in the form of mining and logging operations, dam construction and other energy projects, agriculture for export, inflow of imported goods and crops, tourism development projects such as national parks and golf courses, agricultural plantations and industrial estates, among others. While MNCs are clearly the winners in the process of globalization, there are also clear losers - among them the indigenous peoples whose land and resources are ravaged in the globalization race.

The particular impacts of globalization on the

indigenous women of Asia are profound and far-reaching. Globalization impacts on women in the various roles they play in life: as productive forces in society, as child-bearers and rearers, and as vital members of indigenous communities.

The loss of land due to incursions by MNCs, government projects or settlers into indigenous territories is crucial in deciding the fate of the indigenous women. Displaced from their ancestral territories and their production base, the affected indigenous peoples are economically and culturally dislocated. With the loss of their land, women lose control over the natural resources which have been the source of their survival since birth. Indigenous women are marginalized from their integral role in agricultural production.

Agricultural production was traditionally very much in the hands of women who spent most of their time working in the fields to produce food for their family's consumption and other needs. Now, production of crops for export in plantations is tightly controlled by the managing MNCs and businessmen. Women are transformed into contractual workers on these plantations. For example in Malaysia, the mushrooming of big monocrop plantations using mechanized methods, chemical fertilizer and pesticides has displaced rural women from their farms. Aside from agriculture, other means of subsistence livelihood are likewise affected such as fishing, foraging, hunting, livestock raising and small handicrafts, still to the disadvantage of indigenous women. From being important productive forces, they are reduced to being dependents of their husbands or menfolk.

Production of food for export, monocrop production of high value crops for the market, and importation of food staples in line with the policies of globalization have had the overall effect of degrading the environment and threatening the food security of the people in the rural areas, most especially, indigenous peoples and women. The effects range from the loss of soil fertility, massive land erosion, the pollution of water aquifers, loss of natural enemies to pests and the loss of biodiversity due to the use of fewer certified seed varieties. As a result, indigenous women who are primarily involved in agriculture are unable to produce the food needed by their families and fall into the trap of commercialized agricultural production for export.

Poverty, dislocation from their ancestral land and marginalization from subsistence agriculture have pushed thousands upon thousands of indigenous women to migrate to urban centers, in search of other livelihood opportunities. Some try their luck as migrant workers or overseas workers, while others cross national borders as refugees retreating from the armed military repression in their homelands.

In the cities, indigenous women have difficulties finding employment because of the prevailing discrimination

against indigenous people and women, and the inherent lack of employment opportunities in underdeveloped countries in Asia. Some are able to find low-level jobs in the formal economy as workers in plantations, factories, hotels or other establishments. Others are not as fortunate as to get regular employment. They survive mainly through the informal economy, making do with odd jobs when they can find them, working as domestic servants, waitresses, sales girls, laundry women, pulling rickshaw, construction workers, etc. Most end up underemployed, or unemployed, living below-poverty lives in the city slums.

As workers, indigenous women are exploited by the capitalists in terms of wages, benefits and working conditions. In addition, they experience discrimination in the workplace based on the fact that they are women and indigenous. They easily fall victim to flexible labor practices of capitalists which increase their exploitation. In the plantations, indigenous women workers usually receive lower wages than the men.

Many indigenous women are forced into prostitution in the cities. Unscrupulous people out to make money by exploiting the poor women engage in sex-trafficking of women and children. A particularly serious case is that of the refugee indigenous women of Burma who have fled the excessively abusive military operations in their homeland and have gone to live in Thailand. These women have lost everything and have nothing with which to earn a living. They easily fall prey to traffickers who make them prostitutes in Thai brothels. Many prostitutes in Thailand come from Burma, an estimated 90% of whom have HIV/AIDS. The numbers of prostituted indigenous women in the different Asian countries are astounding, reaching hundreds of thousands in countries like Thailand, India, and Taiwan.

Rising prostitution is largely a result of the poverty and landlessness of indigenous people in areas which have been taken over by exploiting multinational corporations, settlers or hostile government forces. In the countryside, it comes as a result of the influx of male workers into indigenous peoples lands. Men who have come to work in the plantations, logging companies or mining operations usually leave behind their wives and families back home and look towards the local women for sexual services. In Kalimantan, Indonesia, it is clear that prostitution arose with the coming of the logging company into indigenous territory.

An additional impact of the loss of land, marginalization of women from subsistence agriculture and the destruction on environment is the heavier workload taken on by the indigenous women in the home. The loss of water and forests due to mining, logging, plantations, or the declaration of parks and forest reservations make it difficult for women to maintain the needed supply of water and fuel in the home. They are forced to walk long distances to fetch heavy pails of water

or to line up for many hours with other women in the few remaining natural water sources. Wood from forests is no longer available and they are forced to look for cash to buy commercial fuel. In addition, the lack of basic social services which are supposed to be provided by the government makes it more difficult for the indigenous women to maintain the welfare of the family.

There is a prevalent neglect by the government of the welfare of indigenous people as seen in the inadequate provision of social services. Health care, education, roads, communication networks, and utilities like water and electricity are usually the concern of the women in the community. Indigenous people generally have poorer health and less medical services available to them. For example in Burma, the indigenous peoples have the highest infant mortality, lowest levels of income, highest illiteracy rates, no access to basic health, education and social services in the country compared to other Burmese. In relation to men, women are also at a disadvantage healthwise. For instance in Nepal, life expectancy of females is 53 years which is 3 years lower than that of males.

In this era of globalization, the most common health problems encountered by indigenous women include inadequate health and medical services, miseducation and problems with western medicines, loss of indigenous medicines, promotion of expensive drugs leading to added expenses for the family, forced sterilization of women and other family planning operations, rise in the mortality of women and children due to hard physical labor even in times of pregnancy, and the health problems related to the use of toxic agro-chemicals in plantations and commercial gardens.

Cases of violence committed against indigenous women are also rising. Rape of women and children is a common and widespread occurrence, particularly in areas torn by war or armed conflict. The rape of women in war is as much a part of war as the killing of soldiers. The general perception is that rape is a natural, normal or inevitable outcome of war. Among indigenous women, rape has come to be used by soldiers or even settlers as a weapon for the systematic repression and dislocation of the indigenous people.

Another aspect of violence is that committed against women migrant workers. Thousands of cases of physical, sexual, verbal and emotional abuse committed by employers against women migrant workers have been reported while even more remain unreported. The worst cases are those of women who have sold their land and properties to be able to pay their fare and placement fee to the recruiting agency, and who come home a lifeless corpse, a victim of abuse. In the Cordillera, Philippines, there is hardly a community now which does not have an overseas contract worker or migrant worker coming from their area. Stories of abuse and violence experienced by the indigenous women migrant workers of the Cordillera

are common.

A particular concern at this point is the impact of globalization on the children of indigenous peoples. Among the most significant impacts are child malnutrition due to poverty, growing consumerism among the youth due to the creation of new needs, lack of education opportunities in the school and at home, loss of traditional and natural areas for children's recreation, neglect of children by parents who are forced to work in distant places, and child labor. In Thailand, for instance, many mothers are forced to find work in the city. They are taken out of the home and away from daily contact with their children. The mother's absence from the home leaves a large gap in the children's knowledge of traditional culture which is usually passed on by the mother through her practice. The break down of traditional cultural practices contribute to the breakdown of the family system with many marriages ending in separation or broken families. Children are growing up with many problems as a result of this difficult family situation.

The breakdown of traditional culture and beliefs of the indigenous people is a direct result of their integration into the dominant culture and the globalized market economy. Problems like immorality, drug addiction, alcoholism, opium trade, and suicides are on the rise in indigenous communities where traditional culture has been weakened. Traditional cultures of indigenous peoples are not only weakened but even commercialized to make money and to promote tourism. For the women, this has meant a loss of control over their culture. Traditional crafts made by women which used to provide them with a sense of pride and some income are taken over by businessmen who mass produce traditional designs and crafts for a profit.

Traditionally, indigenous women often act as healers or spiritual leaders in the community. They carry with them a wealth of indigenous knowledge about agriculture, herbal and traditional medicine. For instance, women have knowledge of indigenous seed varieties of rice and other plants. They know what kind of seeds and plants are necessary for ensuring a bountiful harvest, for providing the nutritional needs of the family, and for healing simple illnesses. The increasing control of biotechnology corporations over seeds used in agriculture is marginalizing the indigenous peasant women from this important role in the community.

The trends in the situation of Asian indigenous women outlined above clearly reveal a pattern of violation of the rights of indigenous women. Rights of women and indigenous people contained in several international human rights instruments are systematically violated in a myriad of ways. International instruments and conventions in relation to women include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the

Advancement of Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. When it comes to indigenous peoples' rights, the United Nations Charter and other instruments like the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights declare that "all peoples have the right to self-determination." In addition, Conventions 107 and 169 of the International Labour Organization recognize the right of indigenous and tribal peoples to the control and ownership of their territories and lands.

It is precisely the experience of being violated, oppressed and exploited that has been the condition for an indigenous peoples movement to take shape. In Asia, indigenous peoples, including indigenous women, have waged life-and-death struggles against ethnocide, land dispossession and national oppression. They have set up organizations at all levels, from local to international, and have launched various activities in the defense of their land, life and resources.

The indigenous women have done their part, through participation in general community struggles as well as through setting up their own women's organizations and networks, locally and internationally. Worth mentioning are the Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN) founded in 1993, the Innabuyog (Regional Federation of Cordillera Indigenous Women), the Indigenous Women's Network in Cambodia, the Naga Women's Union of Manipur, Naga Mothers' Association, the Indigenous Women's Forum in Jharkhand, the Karen Women's Organization, the Jhumma Peoples Network of the Asia-Pacific, the Ghumasar Mahila Sangathan, among others. Forms of action utilized by the indigenous women have ranged from political and confrontational protest actions to petitions, pickets, litigation and local self-help socio-economic projects.

The situation of the indigenous women of Asia today could not be further from the picture of equality and human dignity envisioned in existing declarations of human rights, women's rights and indigenous peoples' rights. Indigenous women remain among the poorest, most violated, most oppressed, most scorned and most exploited sectors in society. Their situation is a dark picture of human misery painted by the powers-that-be who covet indigenous peoples' land and who would do anything to control power and profits in the global economy. The redeeming feature in the picture are the struggles of indigenous peoples themselves who have persevered despite the odds against them. Their struggles as indigenous people and as women for self-determination and equality are a ray of light for the future of humankind.

Jill K. Carino is the Research, Documentation and Publications officer of the Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Center, Inc. (CWERC). She was commissioned by Teetebba to research on the situation of Asian Indigenous Women. ■

Echo of voices from the forest

By Bernice A. See, Tebtebba Foundation (Indigenous Peoples International Centre for Policy Research and Education)

Forests are home to many peoples, including a substantial population of Indigenous Peoples. A 1992 European Union-funded study on the situation of Indigenous Peoples in the tropical rainforests estimated about 12 million of them or 3.5 per cent of the total population of covered areas lived in the rainforest areas of the world. This was apart from those who lived in other types of forest areas.

Forests provide the source and means of survival. The director-general for the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) Mr David Kaimowitz says: "One hundred million people depend on forests to supply key elements needed for their survival, either goods and services or incomes. At least one third of the world's rural population depends on firewood, medicinal plants, food, and compost for agriculture that come from forests. Forests are also a major source of income for large populations of the rural poor especially in Africa and Asia, and to a more limited extent in Latin America."

Forests are vital for the healthy state of our global environment. And it is here that women play a major and critical role. They are intimately familiar with the forest like the nooks and crannies of their home. In many societies, women have for centuries been the firewood and minor forest product gatherers and water-fetchers. They are the herbalists and ritualists. These are tasks that take time to accomplish, and must be done on a regular, if not daily, basis. These activities keep the women in close touch with the forests and enable them to have a vibrant knowledge of its diversity.

In its work with women in the

forestry sector, the Food and Agriculture Organisation has come to the conclusion that "throughout the developing world, women make a significant contribution to forestry". It cites lessons learned in the process:

1. Forests are often a major source of paid employment for rural women.
2. Rural women are often the principal caretakers and guardians of the forests.
3. Women have an extensive knowledge of forest resources.
4. In many areas, women have demonstrated that they are not only the primary users but also the most effective protectors of the forests.

Forests are also considered the physical representation of women. The forest-dwelling Amungme of Irian Jaya regard women as central to their society, thus equally entitled to rights and access to land, forests and other natural resources. The mother is a very powerful figure in Amungme beliefs — the living habitat is Mother. The highest elevation of the physical environment represents Her head and is thus a sacred place.

Nobody desecrates a mother. Thus when the mining company Freeport McMoran destroyed their Mother, the Amungme filed a suit in a court in the United States.

The increasing integration of rural communities into the cash economy that has resulted in male migration has further entrenched women in agroforestry work. Like any other income they earn, the women use the cash they get from the gathering and cultivation of forest products to put food on the table and meet their family's other basic needs.

Unfortunately, in the development process, in programmes intended for

forest dwellers and users, in forest exploitation projects, the voices of women are not heard. Nor are their traditional rights to the forests respected.

Yet it is they who bear the costs of forest destruction and forest-use transformation.

The impacts of forest change or loss are not gender neutral. In Papua New Guinea, the money men generate from logging activities has become a source of problem for the women. The social cost of cash in the hands of the men is increased drunkenness, sexually transmitted diseases, law and order problems, and violence against women.

Women may have to take destiny into their own hands. As mothers who ensure the life of future generations, we have to take concrete affirmative action. We must assert our right to be heard in all processes and stages of development. We must struggle to be heard on our own definition of what development is and how it should be undertaken in our forests. The women of the Chipko Movement in India are famous for this. We need not be dramatic. We are experts in agroforestry, silviculture, and other forest-related works.

Let us harness our Indigenous Knowledge and our treasure trove of experience: the Javanese women with their centuries-old forest gardens, the Thai hill-tribes with their home gardens, the Sahelian women with their drought food, the women traditional healers of the world with their medicinal preparations, the world's women firewood gatherers with their knowledge of trees, the Cote d'Ivoire women's organisations with their forestry cooperatives, the Cameroonian women's organisations

environmental protection work, the Central African Republic women's associations' rehabilitation of urban forests and last but not least, the Amazonian Indigenous women with their rich knowledge of the forest ecosystem and biodiversity.

In this way we ensure not only

biological but also cultural diversity, and the respect for rights of all peoples. In this homogenising world, the forces of dominance can only be dented if the marginalized, most of whom are women, link arms, reach out and act. If forests give life, as women also give life, we should

ensure that the world is a better place to live in for our children — with equal access, use and ownership of the world's resources without discrimination as to gender. Just like any good homemaker. ■

Courtesy of WRM Bulletin

The changing climate and its impact on Women

*Linkages Between Climate Change and Women
by Fatma Denton ENDA*

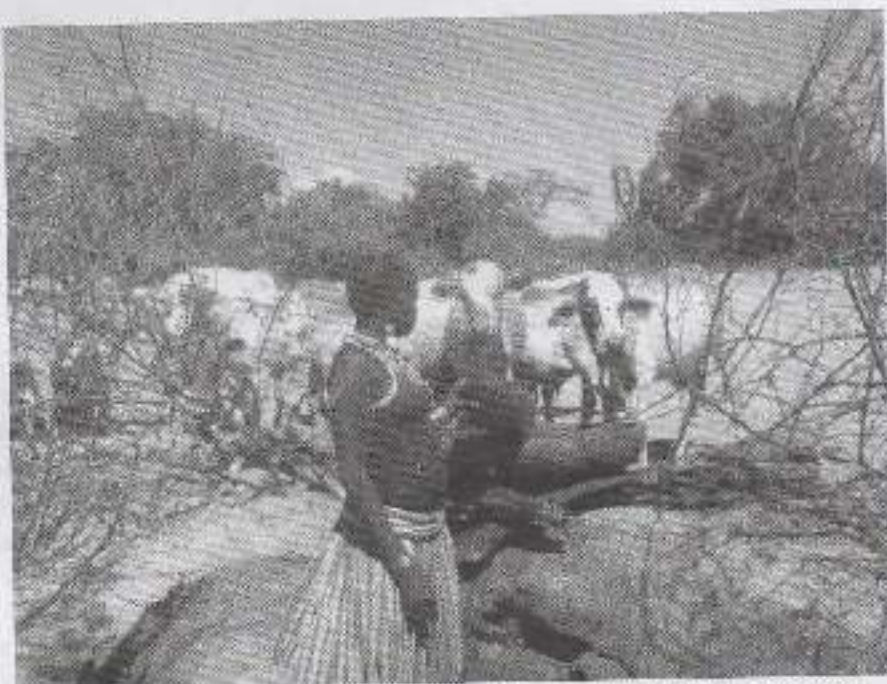
Climate change analysis has so far been science-driven, presentational in terms of greenhouse gases and emissions. While the scientific analyses remain crucial, social imperatives must be taken into account. Although there are no obvious direct linkages between climate change and women, its potential impacts in terms of socio-economic vulnerability and adaptation place women in a key position.

The notion of gendered impacts of climate change may be perceived by cynics as yet another attempt at academic babble; a systematic attempt at gender mainstreaming in key development policies. After all, climate change is a phenomenon of our times that may alter the lives of humankind in general. Just as hurricanes, storms and floods strike indiscriminately, so too will the consequences of climate change. So, what gender

differences could be expected?

The release of greenhouse gases through human activities is creating a thick blanket in the atmosphere, bringing about global warming and hence climate change. Carbon dioxide is one of the most important of these gases and its release is mainly caused by the use of fossil fuels and by deforestation.

As we consider along this bulletin, women who live in or depend on the forest are already being affected by processes, which destroy or degrade



Lack of water for both livestock and domestic is one of the worst impact for climate change on pastoralist women.

its: logging, mining, oil, dams, expansion of agriculture, plantations, shrimp farming. These processes in turn contribute to climate change (through the release of carbon dioxide and methane), while changes in the climate will further degrade forests, thereby accelerating the release of carbon dioxide. This means that women already impacted by deforestation would suffer the additional impacts of climate change.

Physical impacts such as rising sea levels, increasing salt water intrusion, and intruding into human settlements will dramatically alter the natural balance of local and global ecosystems. The problem of rising sea

levels is crucial, especially in terms of small islands and low-lying areas. These areas are inhabited by a significant percentage of the human population whose main sustenance comes from their natural habitat. Water

contamination of ground water by seawater would also occur in low-lying deltas. Women involved directly or indirectly (as fish traders) will see their income fall significantly. Climate change impacts could give rise to job losses and an increase in the price of fish leading to social upheaval.

In their quest for remunerative activities, women may be unable to adapt to the vagaries of the weather



Children from AIC Kafubu planting trees during the World Environment Day, 2004

and their remunerative activities could be severely disrupted. Also, many women are responsible for the cultivation and production of agricultural crops. Climate change may worsen agricultural production and, consequently, exacerbate food insecurity.

Women who are centre stage in the food chain, in production and in distribution already have to contend with environmental stress such as cultivating arid land and climate change as this will exacerbate the situation.

Climate change may also heighten the problem of human migration. Natural catastrophes such as floods and storms could result in severe infrastructural damage on the coast and lead to population displacement. Worldwide, 150 million people will become homeless due to coastal flooding, agricultural disruption and shoreline erosion. Because women are

key actors in maintaining the social cohesion of the family, this possible impact of environmental degradation could be very destabilizing. Migration and environmental change could also trigger economic and social instability.

Climate change is predicted to cause serious health problems related to cardiovascular, respiratory and other diseases. Also women and children may be exposed to greater water-related health risks since they are responsible for drawing water and have to contend with unhygienic and unsanitary conditions.

Women constitute the majority of low-income earners. Perpetually imprisoned in cycles of dependency and co-dependent roles, women have to strive to maintain the

household and its nutritional needs. Defining poverty is not easy, yet indicators such as per capita income, access to credit, ownership of assets, differential access to land rights, life

expectancy, education, all put women in an unfavourable position in comparison to their male counterparts. In addition, because poor people and poor women specifically tend to have isolated lives, they find themselves marginalized and do not figure in poverty indicator analyses.

Climate change is predicted to accentuate the gaps between the world's rich and poor, and women are among the poorest and most disadvantaged. They often develop adaptive strategies, yet the nature and scale of environmental stress is such that it may overwhelm women's ability to contribute effectively to socio-economic development. Climate change

related hazards could mean a loss of revenue for women in agriculture, industry, fisheries and also in the informal sector.

Climate change is simply a much graver example of the complexity of environmental stress and how it could affect women, who have a multi-dimensional role as mothers, providers, and often natural resource managers.

Excerpted and adapted from "Gendered Impacts of Climate Change", by Fatma Deaton at FNUA - Energy Programme, e-mail: energy2@funda.in you can read more on women issues by visiting World Rainforest Movement International Secretariat <http://www.wrwm.org.nz>

Greening our Country

She is a household name that every one remembers when we talk of our environment. This is no wonder for Prof. Wangari Muta Maathai who was born in Nyeri, one of the most green and beautiful districts in Kenya. The district has beautiful landscapes with assorted species of trees which bring cool fresh breathing air every morning when you wake up. It is one of the districts with more jacaranda trees that make you turn when you see them.

She is the first woman in East and Central Africa to earn a doctorate degree. Prof. Maathai obtained a degree in Biological Sciences from Mount St. Scholastica College in Atchison, Kansas (1964). She subsequently earned a Master of Science degree from the University of Pittsburgh (1966). She pursued doctoral studies in Germany and the University of Nairobi, obtaining a PhD (1971) from the University of Nairobi where she also taught veterinary anatomy and an associate professor in 1976 and 1977 respectively. In both cases, she was the first woman to attain those positions in the region.

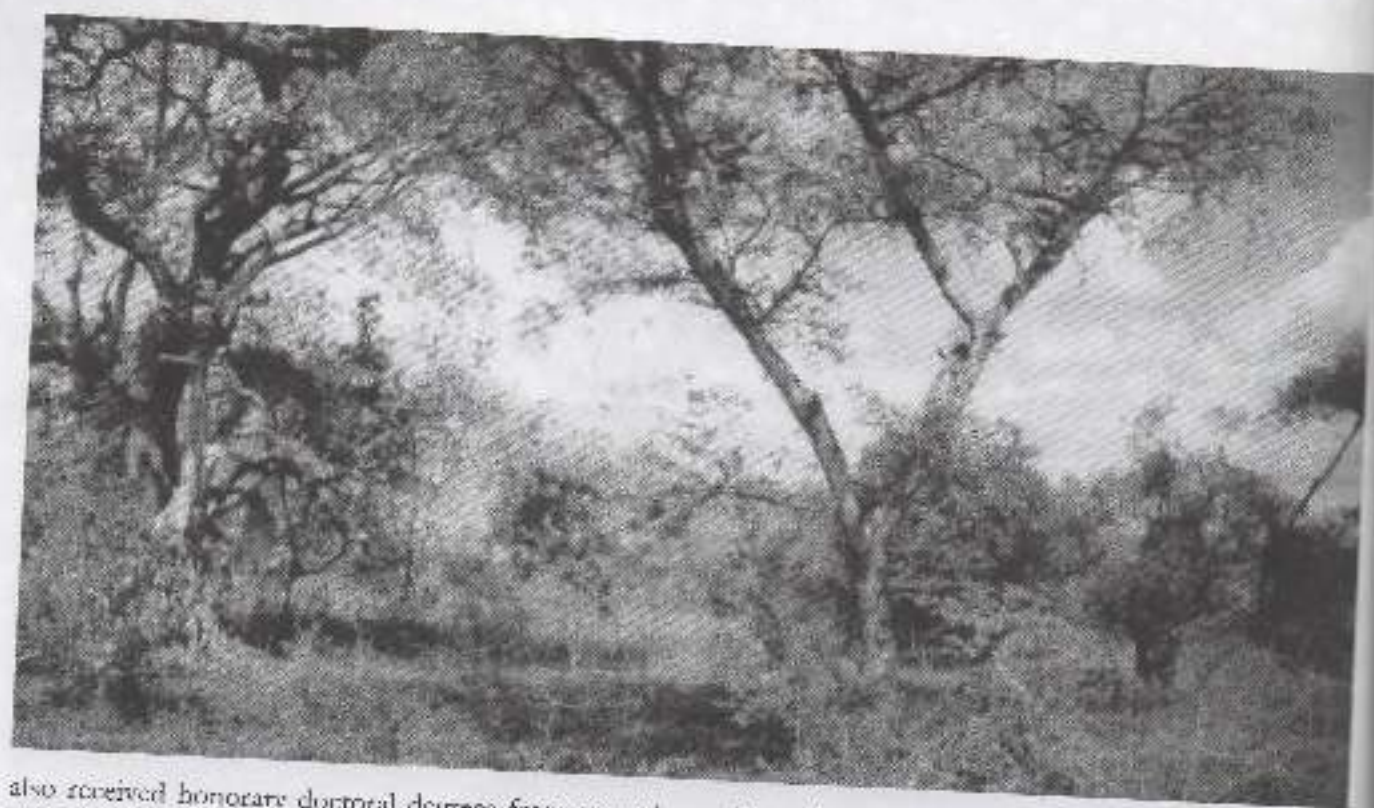
Wangari Maathai was active in the national council of women of Kenya in 1976-87 and was the chairman in 1981-87. It was while she served the national council of women that she introduced the idea of planting trees with the people in 1976 and continued to develop it into broad based, grassroots organization whose main focus is the planting of trees with women groups in order to conserve the environment and improve their quality of life. However, through the green belt movement she has assisted women in planting more than 20 million trees on their farms and on schools and church compounds.

In 1986 the Movement established a Pan African Green Belt Network and has exposed over 40 individuals from other African countries to the approach. Some of these individuals have established similar tree planting initiatives in their own countries or they use some of the Green Belt Movement methods to improve their efforts. So far some countries have successfully launched such initiatives in Africa (Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Lesotho, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe etc). In September 1998 she launched a campaign of the jubilee 2000 coalition. She has embarked on new challenges, playing a leading global role as a co chair, of the jubilee 2000 Africa Campaign, which seeks cancellation of the unpayable backlog debts of the poor countries in Africa by the year 2000. Her campaign against land grabbing and rapacious allocation of forests land that has caught the limelight in the recent past.

Wangari Maathai is internationally recognized for her persistent struggle for democracy, human rights and environmental conservation. She has addressed the UN



on several occasions and spoke on behalf of women at special sessions of the General Assembly for the five-year review of the earth summit. She served on the commission for Global Governance and commission on the future. She and the Green Belt Movement have received numerous awards, such as Woman of the year award (1983), the right livelihood award (1984), the Better World Society Award (1986), the Wind star Award for the Environment (1988), the Woman of the World (1989), the Goldman Environmental Prize (1991), UN's Africa Prize for Leadership (1991), The Edinburgh Medal (1993), the Jane Adams Leadership Award (1993), the Golden Ark Award (1994), the Julius Hollister Award (2001), Excellence Award from the Kenyan community abroad (2001), Outstanding Vision and Commitment Award (2002), the WANGO Environment Award (2003), the Petra Kelly for Environment (2004), Arbor Day Award (2004) and the Center for Environmental Research and Conversation's "Conversation Scientists Award" (2004). Prof. Maathai was also listed on UNEP's Global 500 Hall of Fame and named one of the 100 heroines of the world. In June 1997, Wangari was elected by *Earth Times* as one of 100 persons in the world who have made a difference in the environmental arena. Prof. Maathai has



also received honorary doctoral degrees from several institutions around the world: William's college, MA USA (1990), Hobart & William Smith Colleges (1994), University of Norway (1997).

The Green Belt Movement and prof. Wangari Maathai are featured in several publications including *The Green Belt Movement: sharing the approach* (by prof. Wangari Maathai, 2002), *Speak truth to power* (Kerry Kennedy Cuomo, 2001), *women pioneers for the Environment* (Mary Joy Breton, 1998), *Hopes Edge: The Next Diet for a small planet* (Frances Moore Lappe and Anna Lappe, 2002), *Una Sola Terra: Donna I Medi Ambiente Despres de Rio* (Brice Lalonde et al, 1998), *Land 1st Leben* (Bedrohte Volker, 1993).

Prof. Maathai serves on the boards of several organizations including the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Disarmament, the Jane Goodall Institute, Women and Environment Development Organization (WEDO), World Learning for International Development, Green Cross International, Environment Liaison Center International, the Worldwide Network of Women in Environmental Work and National Council of women of Kenya.

In December 2002, Prof. Maathai was elected to parliament with an overwhelming 98% of the vote. The President subsequently appointed her As Assistant Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Wildlife in Kenya's ninth parliament.

About the prize and the Sophie Foundation

The Sophie Prize is one of the world's most generous environment and development prizes (US \$ 100,000). It is international and it is awarded annually. The Sophie Prize is established to inspire people working towards a sustainable future.

The prize was established in 1997 by the Norwegian author Justein Gaarder (writer of the best selling novel *Sophie's WORLD*, a novel about philosophy) and his wife Siri Dannervig.

The Sophie Prize will for as long as the means allow, be awarded to one or several individuals, or to an organization, that in a pioneering or a particularly creative way has pointed to alternatives to the present development and/ or put such alternatives into practice.

- What kind of change of consciousness is needed?
- What is sustainable wisdom?
- What qualities of life are the most important?
- What important alternative measures must be implemented now?
- What kind of mobilization of people is needed in the "global village"?

The recipient of The Sophie Prize will have sought a challenging answer to one or several of the questions above and thus contributed to setting them on the international agenda.

The following individuals or organizations have formerly received the Sophie Prize:

- 1998 Environmental Rights Action (Nigeria)
- 1999 Herman Daly (USA) and Thomas Kocherry (India)
- 2000 Shou Liang (China)
- 2001 ATTAC (Association for the Taxation of financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens, France)
- 2002 His All Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and the Ecumenical Patriarch (Turkey)
- 2003 John Pilger (Australia)

For more information about the Sophie prize and former laureates, please visit: www.sophieprize.org

Indigenous Women of our times:



Vicky Tauli, Chairperson of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations.

If you meet her for the first time, you will not think she has the power and voice of a woman from an indigenous community, a community where women are not recognized as leaders and decision makers. **Victoria Lucia Tauli Corpuz** proved it. She is a mentor to many of us. She has taught us that as a woman you must move on and make the sky and the stars above us to be the only limitation. She is a Kankana-ey Igorot, one of the Indigenous Peoples from Mt. Province, Philippines. She is a role model for many of us and her recent election as member of the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues from Asia, makes us have more respect for her as a lady who has continued with her dynamic style and strength not only to represent Asia but all of us from the Indigenous World. In addition of many academic qualifications, she holds a masters degree in Humanities, a major in Women's Studies from St. Scholastic's College Philippines.

She is the founder and Executive Director, Tebtebba Foundation (Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education). She conceptualized the idea of a policy center for Indigenous Peoples because of her experience in grassroots by organizing Indigenous Peoples and in lobbying the UN for Indigenous Peoples' Rights. As early as 1993, immediately after the UN Conference on Environment and Development and after the declaration of the International Year of the World's

Indigenous Peoples, she saw the great need to build the capacity of Indigenous Peoples to become more effective in their lobbying and advocacy work. After consulting with key leaders of Indigenous Peoples and other NGO leaders, she was convinced of the need to set up this center and proceeded to plan and implement the concept. Vicky is joining the expert team of the permanent forum representing Asia as from 2005 for a term of three years.

As the Executive Director, she plays the lead role in defining the vision, mission, goals and programs of the NGO and ensuring that these are attained. She is the one in charge of raising funds and ensuring the sustainability of the programs and resources. She is the official spokesperson of the organization. The development of the capabilities and commitment of the personnel to promote the vision and mission of Tebtebba is her main responsibility. Presently, there are 13 staff members, four of whom are members of the Management Committee. She makes the reports and presents these to the International Advisory Committee and the donors.

In 1986 the women's movement in the Philippines was gaining ground, but it was not present among Indigenous Women. At that time she was already engaged in organizing campaign work among Indigenous Peoples in her region. She saw the importance of organizing indigenous women and raising their gender awareness. An NGO is needed to realize these goals and thus she founded the Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Center. As the founder she had to negotiate with funding agencies and convince them that this is an endeavor worthwhile supporting. She succeeded in getting funds and this was set up with her as the Executive Director. She worked in this capacity for more than 8 years until she saw that the staff she trained were already very capable of running the NGO themselves. When she left the CWEREC, it already had 46 staff members, majority of whom were women organizers in the villages.

Victoria is also the founder of many networks and organizations in her own regions to ensure full participation of Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines in different development activities. Some of these organizations and networks helped the Indigenous Communities build anti-dictatorship movements. It was important during the time of the struggle to lobby and work with key players like the church in order to succeed in strengthening the freedom and justice.

Since 1983, she has formed many programmes and organizations to help in the advocacy of her community.



Vicky (holding a bag) with women participants from Asia and Africa during the 3rd PF, New York May 2004

Vicky as she is known to many, is a busy lady- she has a schedule hard to catch up with. She sits in many advisory boards that concern Indigenous Women and Indigenous Peoples in general.

She is a board member of many professional agencies and has sat in many commissions.

She is a Commissioner of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) representing indigenous peoples. She was appointed by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo of the Philippines to be a member of this Government Commission which ensures that government agencies and local government bodies address women's issues and concerns. It has an oversight function to ensure that the various government bodies integrate gender concerns as part of their programs. It also monitors whether the Gender Budget which is 5% of the total budget is part of the whole budget and look into how this is used. The NCRFW monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform of Action.

She is also the Vice President - International Training Center of Indigenous Peoples (ITCIP). This is a training center which is based in Nuuk, Greenland. It provides training for indigenous peoples to hone their knowledge, skills and capacities for promoting and protecting their rights as distinct peoples. She was a trainer for the first batch of trainees which was held in the 2000 June in Nuuk.

Vicky has shown her wisdom and love of IPS in their advancement. She is a member of the Advisory Committee of the UN Voluntary Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. This Fund was created to support projects of indigenous peoples' organizations, governments and institutions doing work for indigenous peoples. She sits in this body as an

individual UN Expert and her role is to ensure that those projects from indigenous peoples' organizations and communities in Asia were given funds. She also ensured that indigenous women's projects be given heavier consideration, especially those which are developing leadership qualities of women.

Founding member of Indigenous Initiative for Peace, an organization set up by Nobel Peace Laureate, Rigoberta Menchu Tum which is

composed of indigenous leaders.

Vicky has taken a lot of consultancy in evaluating many projects and programmes and with her leadership her organization has published several reports and books.

She is the author of over thirty publications and has written various articles on Indigenous Peoples, women, environment and development and other related issues which have been published in books, journals and magazines. Visit www.tebtebba.org for the list of publications.

Vicky has received many awards of recognition for her tireless struggle for the advancement of Indigenous Peoples among the awards are;

Jane Bagley Lehman Award for Excellence in Public Advocacy: Honoring Effective Resistance to Corporate Globalization, December 4, 2001, Presented by Tides Foundation, San Francisco, USA.

Advancing the Status of Women Award, Presented by Soroptomist International of Baguio City, 25 August 2001, Baguio City, Philippines.

Gawad Lagahlab Award (November 1994) This is an award given to the 10 outstanding alumni of the Philippine Science High School. The Philippine Science High School is the most prestigious high school in the Philippines. The award was given to in recognition of the work she has done among her own people, the indigenous peoples in the Cordillera.

Most Outstanding Alumni - Outstanding Community Service Award (1995 December) - University of the Philippines- Philippine General Hospital School of Nursing. This is in recognition of the social work and activism she has done with and among her people.

Most Outstanding Igorot (1994 December) - for promoting and protecting Igorot women's rights and welfare. Presented by the Krigoroun Foundation an NGO, which is based in the Cordillera region. ■

Sowing the seeds of the future- Women and the Environment

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) women's consultative seminar on gender and environment was convened by the Division of Policy Development and Law of UNEP, with a view to tackling some of the outstanding and anticipated substantive and strategic challenges in the area of gender and environment. The seminar was held at UNEP headquarters, Nairobi, on 25 and 26 February 2004.

The discussions and recommendations from each of the six working groups set up under the seminar would feed into the planning of the UNEP Women's Global Environmental Assembly in 2004 and into the continuous work conducted by UNEP on environment and gender mainstreaming.

UNEP had adopted its gender mainstreaming policy in 2000 to improve the governing and managerial processes of UNEP, promoting gender equality in sustainable development, refocusing institutional arrangements to create a working environment sensitive to gender differences. In 2001, the Executive Director had emphasized the importance of civil society, including women's organizations, playing a role in effective international environmental governance. The UNEP Division of Policy Development and Law had decided to revitalize gender activities through workshops in Africa on the relationship between biodiversity, women and poverty reduction. The policy series publication on women and the environment, in cooperation with WILDO, includes guidelines on mainstreaming gender perspectives in water management, combating desertification and preserving biodiversity. Gaps remained between policy and practice and the 2004 report of the Commission on the Status of Women had made important recommendations in that regard.

Recommendations

Women, poverty and the environment

Following the deliberations of the working group on women, poverty and the environment, chaired by Mr. Davindler Iamiba, the seminar agreed to recommend to the UNEP Women's Global Environmental Assembly:

- a) That the Assembly should take up the issue of the weak performance of governments and United Nations agencies in implementing past commitments;
- b) That the agenda for the Assembly should itemize the targets referred to in various environmental action plan documents in order to measure to what extent they had been reached;
- c) That recently started prototype projects in some five African countries in relation to poverty and the

environment should be reviewed to check whether they were taking adequate account of gender issues.

Beijing+10 and the Millennium Development Goals

Following the deliberations of the working group on Beijing+10 and the Millennium Development Goals, chaired by Ms. Jane Zeilins, the seminar agreed to recommend to the UNEP Women's Global Environmental Assembly:

- a) That a review of the implementation of gender and environment commitments made in the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and in relation to the Millennium Development Goals should be carried out, including best and worst practices;
- b) That a budget should be established for the implementation of outcomes, recommendations and actions from the Assembly;
- c) That a decision should be drafted for consideration by the Governing Council of UNEP requesting UNEP to evaluate progress and gaps in gender mainstreaming and set new benchmarks for achieving gender policies.

Establishment of a mentoring programme on women and youth

Following the deliberations of the working group on the establishment of a mentoring programme on women and youth, chaired by Mr. Troy Govender, the seminar agreed to recommend to the UNEP Women's Global Environmental Assembly:

- a) That clear internal guidelines should be established to enhance women's opportunities in UNEP as well as external guidelines for non-governmental organizations for women and youth working on environmental issues;
- b) That a mentorship workshop should be held at the Assembly;
- c) That a pilot mentorship study should be conducted with participants from the present meeting, the results of which would be presented at the Assembly.

How can UNEP better incorporate gender in its work?

Following the deliberations of the working group on how UNEP could better incorporate gender in its work, chaired by Ms. Marie Claire Cordonnier Segger, the seminar agreed to recommend to the UNEP Women's Global Environmental Assembly:

- a) That there should be an audit of the UNEP gender mainstreaming strategy;



Zulabatu, June-WEDO, Mulenkei, Irene - WEDO and Bokary Kante - Unep.
Break through Women and Environment, New York May 2004

- c) That a gender task force should be established, with a membership that included civil society and women, with specific terms of reference, mandate, timeframe and expected outputs, to be launched at the Assembly;
- d) That a mechanism should be established in UNEP for monitoring gender mainstreaming, with targets such as increasing the women professional cadre to 50 per cent by 2007 and the women director's cadre up to 30 per cent by 2007.

Biodiversity, water and indigenous knowledge at the core of sustainable and equitable development

Following the deliberations of the working group on biodiversity, water and indigenous knowledge at the core of sustainable and equitable development, chaired by Ms. Lucy Mulenkei, the seminar agreed to recommend to the UNEP Women's Global Environmental Assembly:

- a) That UNEP should carry out a global review on indigenous knowledge, biodiversity and water as they relate to women;
- b) That a review should be carried out on the impact of water privatization policies on communities and on women;
- c) That indigenous knowledge should be included in formal school curricula as well as informal learning from women.

Planning the UNEP Women's Global Environmental Assembly

A presentation was made by Ms. Minu Hemmati, rapporteur of the working group on planning the UNEP Women's Global Environmental Assembly, summarizing the discussions of the group.

- a) The context of the Assembly was UNEP's revitalization of its gender programme with gender as a cross-cutting priority in its 2004-2005 programme of work, together with its aim to work in partnership with civil society groups and other organizations;
- b) Objectives would include the following:

- i. Firming up partnerships with women's organizations and interaction with them;

- ii. The formulation of recommendations and inputs to the following session of the UNEP Governing Council;

- iii. To identify gaps in the gender programme of UNEP;

- iv. To review the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

- v. To strengthen young women's leadership in environmental protection and sustainable development.

Outcomes should include:

- vi. Clear action plans for follow up;

- vii. A report for launch at the Assembly to reflect women's experiences, and best and worst practices, in relation to both the Strategic Objective of the Beijing Platform and the Millennium

Development Goals:

- viii. A declaration to be issued at the end of the Assembly;

- ix. Funds for implementing the recommendations of the Assembly.

Themes for consideration by the Assembly could be obtained by consulting the relevant documents presented at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and could include the following:

- i. Women and environmental decision-making;
- ii. Termination of poverty;
- iii. Sustainable development education;
- iv. Peace and security;
- v. Indigenous knowledge;
- vi. Water and sanitation;
- vii. Biodiversity;
- viii. Cultural diversity;
- ix. Mentoring and strengthening youth;
- x. Sustainable production and consumption;
- xi. Reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS.

Under the heading of the preparatory process for the Assembly, the following points were made:

- i. The criteria for participation should include regional balance, different age and ethnic groups, minority groups including people with disabilities and people with grassroots experience;
- ii. The procedure for drafting the declaration by the Assembly should be planned;
- iii. It was thought that the duration should be of four days;
- iv. Further thought should be given to the preparatory processes and material, as well as financial resources;
- v. A small planning committee was required and the secretariat would circulate the terms of reference for committee members, which would include the need to have representatives of the six working groups of the present seminar, a balanced regional representation, and at least two representatives from the Nairobi area.

When tree planting becomes a health hazard

The invisibility of women is perhaps nowhere greater than in timber plantations. Few women are ever seen working within the endless rows of eucalyptus or pine trees. But plantations are very visible to women, who are in fact greatly impacted by them in different ways.

No wonder then that one of the first documented demonstrations against monoculture tree plantations was led by women. This happened in August 1983 in Karnataka, India, when a large group of women and small peasants of the Bacha and Doddballi villages marched on the local eucalyptus nursery. The women protested the commercial eucalyptus trees as being destructive to the water, soil and food systems. They pulled out millions of eucalyptus seedlings and planted mirinda and mango seeds in place. They were all arrested, but their action became a symbol of a struggle that continues today.

In forest dependent communities, women have no doubt that plantations are not forests, because the former do not provide them with any of the non timber forest products provided by the latter, particularly food, fuel, material for handicrafts, resources used for housing, household items and medicines. Additionally, they deplete the water resources they depend on. Large scale tree plantations result in:

- **Food scarcity.** Women are traditional collectors of different types of food found in forests, such as vegetables, fruit, mushrooms and many other edible products. As forests are cleared to give way to plantations, food is no longer available and women find it much harder to collect the necessary food resources.
- **Firewood scarcity.** Although there is plenty of wood in plantations, collection of firewood by local people is severely restricted in most cases, thereby increasing the hours spent by women in distant forests to collect less wood than before.
- **Water scarcity.** Fast growing tree plantations (eucalyptus, pines, acacia) require large amounts of water and can cause the depletion of water resources for consumption and agriculture. As a result, women spend many more hours a day carrying water, thus resulting in added work burdens for women.
- **Medicine scarcity.** Forests provide a broad array of medicinal plants, which are usually collected by women.

These plants disappear after the plantations are put in place, thus increasing the time spent by women in collecting such plants at longer distances.

Even in the few cases where plantations provide women with some employment opportunities, not only do they not compensate for losses such as those mentioned above, but they add new problems to women's livelihoods.

In Brazil, for instance, in the state of Minas Gerais, women are hired to carry out a number of activities at par with men — except logging which is a masculine activity par excellence.

Hiring of women workers is based on their greater aptitude to carry out certain tasks, such as growing plants in nurseries, which requires greater dexterity. In some cases too, women are entrusted with the application of anti-killers to the land planted with eucalyptus. It must be said, however, that in some cases female labour simply becomes a form of direct incorporation of cheap labour, contributing to lower the salaries of men workers. Because, as usual, women's salaries are lower than men's for equal types of work.

The labour conditions of women workers have much in common with those of men — low salaries, bad working and living conditions, seasonal work, outsourcing — but some degree of differentiation may be established with relation to their work in tree nurseries.

In the nurseries of two large forestry companies in Minas Gerais, a large quantity of reiterated injuries caused by making great efforts have been observed, in spite of which women continue to work, many of them with swollen or handaged hands.

They also suffer from rheumatic diseases, probably caused by their constant exposure to cold water in the nurseries and to a generally mild environment during winter.

As the vast majority of plantation companies, those of Minas Gerais have no specific gender policies, which is detrimental to women and their children. There are no day-care centres near the place of work and it is almost impossible for women to breastfeed their babies after their maternity leave, thus increasing malnutrition. They usually leave their homes at 5:30 in the morning and return late in the afternoon, having to return home in the company transport, which takes an hour or more as it goes around, picking up all the workers at the many women workers do not receive medical care and they are even made to feel guilty for work-related accidents or diseases. Furthermore, they are afraid to complain because they fear losing their jobs or not receiving the basic food basket that the Collective Agreement ensures them and that they count on for their family's basic food.

In sum, the substitution of local ecosystems by monoculture tree plantations result in impacts on local people by eliminating most of the goods and services previously available and impacting more on women through an increase in their work burden and a reduction

in the amount of resources collected. At the same time, the scarce jobs provided to women by plantation companies do not compensate for those losses, while adding new problems to their health and livelihoods. ■

Article based on information from: Shiva, Vandana: "Narrowing Away: Women, Ecology and Survival in India", Zed Books, 1989; "Saving the Forest for the People, a Handbook on Gender, Forestry and Rural Livelihoods", Vanessa Griffin, APOC (Asian and Pacific Development Centre), 2001; "Verifying the Unverifiable: FVC Certification of Tree Plantations in Thailand and Brazil", WTRM, August 2003; and information provided by Kato Roldán.

vanessag@alternet.com.br

Women and adaptive collaborative management

By: Carol J. Pierce Colfer

Centre for International Forestry Research, Bogor, Indonesia

The Centre for International Forestry Research has implemented a programme called Adaptive Collaborative Management of Forests (ACM) for more than five years.

At its most extensive, we worked in 11 countries (Nepal, Indonesia, Philippines, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Madagascar, Bolivia and Brazil); and activities continue in eight.

One of the striking elements of this work has been our success at involving women (and other marginalized groups) in our work with communities.

Our central method is participatory action research; and we have made an effort to attend to equity issues from the start. On each site there was at least one ACM facilitator whose role involved both action with communities and other stakeholders, and research on that action. It was a challenging task, to which most facilitators rose. Indeed, the more demanding the context and the problems, the more motivated and successful the facilitators appeared to be.

Although there is not space to describe the entire effort, I would like to provide some sense of the kinds of involvement and change that occurred.

In the area of Matigaura forest reserve, in Zimbabwe, women had been uninvolved in formal forest management. Activities pertaining to forests were deemed men's sphere. After representatives from the communities were invited to participate in "training for transformation" (building on the empowerment work of Paulo Freire), women's attendance and participation in formal meetings went up dramatically. The women also became involved in user groups, focused on particular natural resources. One of the most successful was a bromeliad user group, which examined their experience with two harvesting methods (using participatory systems modelling techniques), looked at the implications for sustainability, and developed a new bromeliad design that would favour the more sustainable method. These women have been able to improve sustainability, income generation, and their own empowerment in community affairs.

In several villages in Nepal, forest user groups that manage community forests met to consider their visions for their forests. In this process they identified a number of problems, including elite domination of decision making and benefit sharing, lack of transparency in management, and gender inequities; and they made plans to address these problems. They also developed indicators that would help them determine how well they were meeting their goals. Since many people, particularly women, were illiterate, it was important to use visual symbols to record progress. The phases of the moon were used, with a new moon meaning little progress and a full moon, full accomplishment of the goal. The

structure of meetings was also changed, so that more decision-making took place in smaller, neighbourhood meetings composed of people of similar caste and ethnic group, where women felt free to speak their minds. During the course of this process, women became more willing to speak out and more regular attendees at community meetings. In short, they became more involved in decision making and actions pertaining to community forests.

In Guarani, Bolivia, a large forest management project was underway in the Indigenous territory where ACM was operating. This project had paid little attention to gender in its efforts to train villagers to manage their forests for timber, considering women somewhat irrelevant for timber management. However, with careful analysis, three interesting issues emerged. First, "timber" timber management was as alien to men as it was to women. Neither sex was familiar with doing inventories, keeping records, or administration. Only wielding a chainsaw was beyond women's capabilities. Second, the withdrawing of men's labour from household work for logging and other timber management tasks had the potential to seriously and adversely affect women's lives. All the tasks that men normally did would fall to the women. And finally, women's views of the value of the forest differed from men's. Women were interested less in the forest as a source of timber; more in it as a habitat for the animals that formed a significant part of family nutrition - making an intriguing link with the concerns of environmentalists.

Other intriguing results came from Zimbabwe, where women's preference for behind the scenes influence rather than explicit power made researchers reconsider their assumptions; or where the involvement of NGOs in community action resulted in women's gaining access to land, something that had not been theirs traditionally. From Brazil, where the diversity of women's roles - and the inappropriateness of one-size-fits-all "development" - was vividly portrayed through contrasting Acre and Maranhão; From Campo Ma'an National Park, in Cameroon, where enforcement of rules against hunting, a male activity, had serious adverse effects on the women who had sold the game.

This body of research has produced a rich treasure trove of material on women's roles and on ways that women and other marginalized groups have been seriously involved in externally facilitated collective action. Our forthcoming book elaborates on the examples presented above (see Colfer, Carol J. Pierce, Ed. "The Equitable Forest: Diversity, Community and Resource Management", scheduled for publication in April 2004). This approach is an effective way to involve women meaningfully in formal management efforts; and to recognise the traditional roles they have always had in informal management of forests. ■



*African Indigenous Women - Kenya,
Uganda Sudan & DRC.*



Ndinini, Tanzania.



Henrik Ole Maga - Norway.



Canada & U.S.A.

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*Pacific Indigenous women with a spiritual
opening*



Mury Simari & M. Koileken, Kenya.



*The participants with the late Mama
Najuma Nekundunayo, Seated.*



Latin America.

Various Indigenous Peoples activities.



*Visiting Artists singing African & Latin American Indigenous
Woods, NY 2004*



Longjuat Indigenous Women visiting Artists, March 2004.



Barbados Indigenous Women in a meeting in Arusha.



*Peter-INDIE Hon. Kilimo, Indella OUCHI in a UNDP/IL
meeting, Nakuru Kenya 2004.*



*Mary Lehtala Harmonist, Tanzania in AIWFO conference April
2004.*



*Hon. Chibii Kilimo being welcomed in the AIWFO conference,
2004.*



*Hassan Umarina Terebin AIWFO Chad and Terebin AIWFO
Kenya*



*Amaly AIWFO Cameroon &
Bianca AIWFO Kenya.*



*Maribe Mahavvumana AIWFO
Rwanda.*

Indigenous Information Networks activities in the community.



With Eibach at Morabit



With Karungony at Morabit, Uganda



NOWILK members planting trees in Logoleya



Hon. John Kariuki addressing HIV workshop in Nanyaga, Kenya



Glady Natchua Turaiza launching the Cultural Diversity report in Nanyaga, Kenya



Women participating in a workshop in Logoleya, Morabit

Young Karungony children attending to young cattle in Karama, Uganda



Donating books and magazines at AIC Kapkaka, World Environment Day 2004



Representative of the Maasai women's group presenting at Nanyaga



James Tapes Oulgi presenting at local level, Nanyaga, Kenya



Christie Natchua and a colleague - AIC/DRC

Hurists in Kenya - United Nations Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee - Kenya (UNIPAK) is born. June 2004 Nakuru, Kenya.

1.



2.



3.



4.



Pgs. 1 & 8

Participants heavily listening to contributions and for a field day in the community.

Pgs. 2

Committee members Kailchen, Mulenhai & Kohri taking stock of the meeting.

Pgs. 3

Hon. Kato, Sarunga & Kibulekanya taking time to discuss politics of the day.

5.



6.



7.



8.



Pgs. 9 & 10

Hon. Chebii Kilimo addressing participants during the workshop.

Pgs. 5

Petra De Iona of UNDP, Kenya discusses a point to Kailchen and Sophie while Alejandra Pero of UNDP HQ prepares her presentation

Women's Voices on Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth

A Call to Transformative Reflection and Action

We are called to confront any form of injustice in the economy and the destruction of the environment, so that "justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5: 24).

We are churchwomen, feminist economists and women activists from Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, Middle East and Eastern Europe. As caring women and daring women from the global South, we have gathered in Antipolo City in the Philippines from 27-29 August 2004 to make our voices heard on our vision of an Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth.

The Signs of the Times

We are not afraid to say that we live in a time of empire. In using the term "empire" we mean the coherence of economic, cultural, political and military powers that constitute a global system of domination directed by powerful nations and organizations. These are the Group of Eight (G8) led by the U.S. and organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), World Trade Organization (WTO), and multinational corporations (MNCs). As an instrument of domination, the neo-liberal economic model which has made the market into an absolute such that it has become the means, the method and the end of all intelligent and rational human behavior – is leading the world towards systemic crises, increased vulnerability and the emergence of new classes of poor, the globalization of inequality and continuous ecological degradation. It has been accompanied by heightened repression, militarization and massive human rights violations – for where there are profits to be made, there are quickly secured by military might.

In this disturbing picture, it is the poor women in the South who suffer

inordinately because of unjust structures, institutions and policies that perpetuate class-, gender- and race-based subordination. The neo-liberal model has intensified the feminization of underpaid market work and undervalued care work, the feminization of forced migration, labor export and trafficking, the feminization of poverty and even the feminization of survival. The insecurity and frustration provoked by the neo-liberal model are inflicting on women's lives from womb to tomb – patriarchal disciplining, including social and institutional control of reproductive rights, and violence against women are escalating in many parts of the world.

Yet, at the same time, the seeds of hope are being sown by women around the world who are organizing themselves globally, regionally and locally. They are courageously resisting neo-liberal forces and defending their rights and those of their families/communities, and national sovereignty in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

An Alternative Vision

We believe that the present neo-liberal globalization is completely against God's vision of "Oikoumene," the Household of God that is founded on a theology of caring for all life – a theology that promotes justice, compassion and solidarity with the impoverished, the vulnerable and the excluded – many of whom are women.

Rooted in this theological perspective, we say "NO!" to a neo-liberal economy. In its stead, we seek for a just, sustainable and caring economy that supports and upholds the sacred nature of all life and creation. This alternative vision:

- has, at its core, the values of justice, compassion and solidarity;
- ensures the provision of basic needs for all, women and men;

- recognizes, (re)affirms and (re)values the essential contribution of social reproduction or care work, which must be (re)produced by and (re)distributed equitably among both women and men;
- nurtures relationships based on community, mutuality and reciprocity;
- ensures the participation of all, women and men, in decision making, planning and implementation;
- upholds and protects human rights including women's economic, social and cultural rights (FSCR);
- moves away from goals of accumulation and profit to goals of redistribution and reparation;
- celebrates cultural plurality and contextuality; and
- cares for the earth's biodiversity for future generations.

In the area of global trade, we must move from "free" to just, sustainable and caring global trade that:

- recognizes the sovereign right of states to use a combination of trade policies, including protective measures, to ensure their people's socio-economic welfare and mutual benefits gained from trade;
- ensures that the formulation and implementation of global trade rules are democratic, transparent, participatory and made accountable to human and collective rights;
- does not displace women from their sources of livelihood nor destroy the capacity of both women and men to nurture and provide for their families and communities;
- places agriculture, fisheries and livestock as key to food sovereignty, and protects their multi functionality – thus, these should not be subsumed under the dictates of "free" trade;
- ensures women's access to and control of land and other

resources;

- protects land, natural resources, goods and services that sustain life (e.g. water, health and education services) from commodification and corporate control;
- nurtures real producers through the expansion of dignified livelihood for women and men, improvement of their health, and raising of education levels, among others;
- respects and protects biodiversity, local and collective wisdoms, and cultural identities, especially of indigenous peoples; and
- honors universally applicable labor and environmental safety standards evolved by the International Labor Organization and the World Health Organization.

In the area of global finance, we believe that capital flows must be subordinated to the goals of justice, sustainability and care. This implies, among others:

- the cancellation of illegitimate debts and halting of structural adjustment policies under the IMF and WB's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiatives, which have placed tremendous burdens on women's time and energy;
- the creation of transparent mechanisms that hold international financial institutions (IFIs) accountable for the failure of their debt policies;
- the imposition of gender-sensitive financial transaction tax or similar mechanisms to curb volatile short-term capital flows causing financial crises;
- the implementation of socially-responsible, progressive and gender-aware fiscal policies that do not tax the already impoverished, majority of whom are women;
- the functioning of responsible and transparent public finances utilized for social welfare and protection and the stimulation of internal markets through participatory and gender-responsive budgets; and
- the moving away from over-reliance on foreign direct investment that only leads to wasteful public financial practices such as concessions and

subsidies to MNCs and the erosion of labor standards.

Just, sustainable and caring global trade and finance ensure that the movement and utilization of goods, services and funds best serve the interests of all peoples. Therefore, decision-making structures and processes on trade and financial agreements and policies must be genuinely democratized to involve and represent women and the diversity of society.

Transformative Action and Reflection

Nothing less than radical change is required if we are to address the root causes of the multi-faced tragedies brought about by neo-liberal globalization—for all of us, as churches, are implicated in this project of domination. Transformation must occur at the levels of structures, institutions, and laws as well as collective and personal consciousness and values. Churches must not forget that their authentic roles are to listen and respond to the cries and needs of the poor, vulnerable and excluded as well as to accompany people towards the fullness of life by raising prophetic voices against injustices at all levels. We firmly urge our churches to:

- read the Bible with new eyes, with justice and gender sensitivities that talk to and respond to the socio-economic realities of women in the South;
- be self-critical; some churches preach a theology of prosperity that advances values of accumulation and consumerism, and a theology of patriarchy that justifies the subordination of women;
- put an end to fundamentalisms and the backlash against women that erode the relevance of churches as well as legitimate and perpetuate the existing unjust and discriminatory economic, political and social order, and patriarchal power;
- build and strengthen alliances with social movements, people's organizations and neighboring faiths on the basis of respecting plural sources of knowledge construction;
- strengthen "ministry of hospitality" to address the problems of forced

migration and labor export based on justice, compassion and human rights, not just charity;

- address all forms of discrimination and violence against women in the private and public spheres, in church and society;
- promote South-South and South-North exchange and sharing of alternative paradigms;
- enable church media to be source of alternative information and ideas;
- engender theological education as well as provide education, training and capacity-building on feminist economic literacy and feminist theological literacy;
- challenge IFIs, the WTO and governments to be accountable for the observance of human rights including women's ESCR as well as reproductive and sexual rights;
- confront governments to divert military budgets to social services;
- challenge gendered roles that relegate women to the domestic sphere and promote and practice ethics of shared parenthood—caring and care work are not the exclusive domain of women—to enable women's total citizenship in nations and churches; and
- recapture and revive the spirit of Jubilee in the campaign against debt.

Working hand-in-hand, we women from the churches, academic and civil and people's organizations will continue to vigilantly monitor trade agreements and financial policies, conduct careful research on their impacts especially at the grassroots level, build networks, mobilise and advocate for just, sustainable and caring trade and financial systems. Among others, we will prepare and work with global, regional and local movements to critically engage the WTO at its 6th Ministerial Meeting, which will be held in Hong Kong in December 2005.

In a time of empire, we will continue to reflect, act and hope to keep the faith: for "happy are those whose help is God...who keeps the faith forever, who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry" (Psalm 146: 6c-7). ■

Human rights and its impact on indigenous women and children

By Hawe Bouda - AIWO Cameroon

Indigenous Peoples in the world over are victims of constant Human Rights violation. In Latin America, many Indians tribes have been exterminated or wipe out from existences through the most inhuman ways (see **survival International**, bulletins and publications).

The Indigenous Peoples of Africa are not exception. And as Dr Naomi Kipuri put it in her essays, the Governments that emanated from the Colonial Government simply stepped in to the shoes of their former masters by relegating the Indigenous Peoples to the most inhuman conditions.

Wherever genocidal wars, violence and human rights abuses have occurred, the Indigenous Peoples are victims even if it is not directed at them.

The Central African region, which is the most volatile in Africa regrouping a very important population of Indigenous groups, is a glaring example. The effects of the genocide in Rwanda, Burundi and Congo Democratic are nothing new to recount. The indigenous women and children were killed, raped and even eaten by their predators.

In year 2000 to 2001 the pastoralist from Nigeria went through a horrible nightmare when violent ethnic clashes erupted that opposed the farmer communities to the pastoralist who they consider as strangers.

The death toll was too high and the men were the biggest victims. The massacres were well planned that they targeted the men and adult boys followed by the stealing of their property. A good number of women too lost their lives but the majority were left with their children as



Conflict and abuse of human rights has a great impact on children.

widows with no property or a house. Most of them today are refugees over the Nigerian/ Cameroon borders while a good number were integrated into Cameroonian families, as it was just a matter of artificial frontiers that separated families. They are about 50,000 refugees. It took a long time before the Government and the UN took conscience of their plight. And today the UNHCR has opened its office in Cameroon to manage the crisis.

In CAMEROON the picture is not as bright as that, though there are no ethnic crisis or wars. The Mbororo pastoralist of Cameroon are victims of constant harassment from the forces of Law and Order and mainstream communities. The Mbororo man knows nothing about his/her right and is scared of people in uniform and particular passing a night in a cell. The forces of law and order know their psychology and in some region have made it a habit of harassing them during cattle market days as they know, they have sold and got money. The gendarmes simply arrest them and take them to the brigades where they are detained. The

Mbororo man will quickly pay for his liberation.

MBOSCUDA in the northwest region where this practice is rampant has embarked on paralegal trainings of key person in those areas to assist the population from such abuses.

Case Study: Cameroon

For the past 18 years the Mbororo's of the North West province of Cameroon experienced a new form of Human Right abuses which include expropriation from their pastures, seizure of cattle arrests, torture and long term detention in cells or prisons.

One man perpetrated all these acts: a cattle rancher and International business man Albaji Bala Ahamaku Dangulko. In this, he was helped by the local Administration at the highest level including the forces of law and order.

MBOSCUDA opposed his actions out rightly and became in the red line as an organisation he will have to destroy at all cost. Four of its leaders were arrested in 1996 and locked up in cell for 10 days.

The conflict came to its apex in April 2001 when he once again

extended his range in to the grazing land of the MBOROROS of Sabgu, a locality out of his territorial jurisdiction. The men of that locality said enough is enough, went up the hill and destroyed the precarious fences and huts he had put up and drove the 200 cattle he had deployed back in to his ranch. From that fateful day it was as if hell has broken lose as a long list was circulated for arrest. The forces of law and order decreed the village of Sabgu as *persona non grata*.

Men fled from their homes and ran into the bush to escape arrest while those who had regular jobs lost them, as they had to run into hiding all the time. Four were arrested and in violation of all legal rules taken out of their jurisdiction to a military court. Three others were later arrested bringing the number to seven (?) in Biassay prison. After investigation, four were freed and the famous four who were the first remained.

MBOSCUDA cried foul and our cries were heard all over the world, giving the hundreds of protest letters that came in from Europe, Asia and Africa obliged them to react. Investigation teams were sent to the field and came back with palpable proofs as gross human right abuses.

Some of the reports were simply put in to drawers and ignored. The pressure from the Mbororo elites and the International world resulted in judgement reached in 10 months time while as usual cases of the military court can take years to be called up.

The four men were jailed for 10 years in imprisonment for having in co-action disturbed public order, destroyed and burnt property. There were no arms charges and as we all know the military tribunal try matters related to possession of arms or munitions if it concern civilians. The appeal was made on the same day. A few months later the prison where they became too full to contend prisoners and there were further attacks.

The four were transferred to their

natural jurisdiction in Amanda where the acts took place.

from February to November 2002 and no one knows where the appeal file was. The court that issued the judgement gives us different version. Today the file is in Baffoussam; tomorrow it is in Yaounde and another day it is in Boua. But never in Bamenda which host the court of appeal.

This scenarios went on and on until November 2002 when we got our greatest shock, that the prisoners who are awaiting trial were on their way to the high security prison (political prison) as very dangerous prisoners. It was real that they were coming to Yaounde on their way to two high security prisons. They could not continue the very day, so they had to pass (spend) the night at the central prison in the capital city. The incident was the biggest blow to all who have contributed far and wide to justice, yet we gathered all the courage we had left and informed all the partners of what have happened. For two days and two nights, we wrote and took hostage the residence of two Government Ministers. As usual, they were out or they refused to see us and their staff offered no help. We used all the means at our disposal and as God is merciful the closest collaborator to the Head of State opened his gate wide for us. It was a miracle. The reception was warm and exceptional. All the tension we had carried for the two days went down, and there were smiles on our faces. We told him in a short speech our problems and what we expect of him.

He answered our request in simple terms that no man and no matter the wealth he got has the rights to influence Government Ministers to take wrong decisions. He told us that his main objective as a Minister is to fight injustice, at least to reduce it as much as he could. It was comforting to hear that as we have lost hope in the Government he incarnates.

From that moment on things took another turn in our favour. Firm orders were given for the prisoners to be taken back urgently and their appeal were forwarded to the court of appeal in Bamenda. This very Minister, closest collaborator to the Head of State ordered for a commission of inquiry that went to the field twice to investigate on the conflict that opposed the Mbororo to the famous rancher.

He succeeded to corrupt some members of the commission who rendered the work of the Commission difficult as they provided him with vital information to counteract the commission. But after a lot of disputes, the commission finally submitted its final report to the presidency of the republic.

After seven postponements of the appeal hearing, the verdict was given on the 23rd of March, acquitting the prisoners, amidst very strong emotions of joy and sorrow. But the effects are there. The three men who were based in Douala as small business men, with stores have everything collapsed. Their women and children had gone back home. Most of the children have dropped out of school for financial reasons. The elites who struggled to free them are feeling the effects financially, physically and morally.

The aftermath of prison life will be the most difficult for them. Where will they start from? In all, the battle has been won but not the war.

Special thanks to you all the partners and Indigenous Peoples Organizations world wide for the support to make the reality of freedom to our brothers and relatives come true. Working in solidarity is success to development for Indigenous Peoples.

My special thanks to two Government Ministers: Minister of Justice and Minister of State, as well as the Secretary General at the Presidency who proved that even in corrupt systems there can be exceptions. ■

Pastoral women as peacemakers

In addition to supporting the traditional authority of elders over the communities, other traditional social institutions have been identified that can better target youths. The Women's Peace Crusade, for example, is based on the traditional *alokita*, in which women join together to express their grievances to the wider community.

One of the most important things that outside organisations can do is to provide a space for dialogue between the traditional structures that are effective across lines of conflict and link them to those of the government. This will improve communication between all parties and lead to a reduction in conflict.

The significant role that pastoral women play both in conflict and peace making is often overlooked, to the detriment of field based conflict management operations. Women can incite their sons and husbands to go for raids, or privately persuade them to work towards peace. The challenge for outside organisations working with pastoral women lies in emphasising these powerful informal roles in appropriate and effective ways.

Working through elders has produced positive results in terms of increased recognition of their role in peace making and a reduction in conflict in many areas.

It was also found necessary that the youth need to be involved in the peace process. By taking the meetings to where the youths were, African Union/Inter-Africa Bureau for Animal Resource (IBAR) was consciously seeking to engage youths more directly in the process of reflecting on the causes of conflict. Although this strategy is still in place, it has been supplanted by the suggestion of the youths themselves that women be more directly involved in the process. This is based on the view articulated by the youths, that women play an important role as mothers and wives in both inciting conflict and making peace.

During the Women's Border Harmonisation Workshop in Lokichoggio in April 2001, women participants proposed another approach for promoting peace and



Karamojong women listening carefully to their colleague's peace talk gathering.

resolving conflict: the *alokita*, or Women's Peace Crusade. The *alokita* a ng'aberu is a traditional social institution of the Karamoja Cluster which roughly translates as 'a group of women united for a purpose.' This purpose can include appeasing evil spirits, praising elders in exchange for animals or raising demands or grievances in public. In the case of the Women's Peace Crusade, the *alokita* functions as a means for women to act as ambassadors of peace, bearing messages through songs, poems, dances and speeches performed for neighbouring communities. The women travel along the length of a border area between two communities in conflict.

The Turkana-Pokot Women's Peace Crusade travelled through the Pokot grazing areas with nearly 45 participants over two weeks while the primary participants were Turkana women, elders and youths. Key Pokot peace builders were identified through the meetings held at each location, and they were invited to join the group of 'peace ambassadors' and travel ahead to further communities. This strengthened both the relationship between the Pokot and the Turkana individuals and enhanced the message of peace in each community, as the Pokot in the area being visited were able to identify with those Pokot who came with the crusade.

They discussed different means of strengthening trust between their communities. Suggestions including intermarriage, exchange of cattle through trade and marriage, the return of animals stolen in the past as an act of goodwill, commitment of raiders to bring an end to theft, and grazing animals together. In addition to suggestions on how to create the trust necessary for a peaceful relationship, they also identified the following possible actions for enforcing any agreements devised:

- With government enforcement, they should apply sanctions against thieves, including a fine system for stolen animals.
- Create Village Level Peace Committees.
- Prevent raiders from other areas from passing through the border between the Pokot and Turkana through the creation of joint Inter-community Security Patrol comprising Pokot and Turkana youth working together.
- Women should curse their sons and husbands who go for raids.
- Resource sharing agreements should be created based on negotiations over access to grazing areas.
- The Turkana and Pokot should bury their hatchet as the ultimate sign of commitment to live in peace.

In all pastoral communities of the Karamajong Cluster, there are key elders who are decision makers, key youths considered 'ringleaders' or 'sharpshooter' and known for inciting their fellow youths to raid, and key women given more respect for their opinions. Additionally, there are local agreements and hence must be included in any conflict

transformation activities.

The main role of pastoral women in peacemaking is that the women have the ability to open a dialogue between two communities in conflict. As they are not directly involved in carrying out raids, women are able to communicate with other women across lines of conflict. They are able to sing songs with women whose husbands have fought their own, and are able to forge bonds because of their common suffering due to conflict.

The informal power of pastoral women is often unrecognised, but plays an important part in conflict and peace building. This informal power is exerted through persuasion of their male relatives in the home, and varies depending on the age, or status, of the woman and form of relations.

The women's peace crusade brings women's informal roles of persuasion and influence on decision-making men into the public sphere. It is rare for women to be given the opportunity, but, because of the traditional roots of the *alokim*, it is accepted. This method has proven successful both in targeting the youth and engaging them in the peace process as well as leading to significant agreements between communities in conflict, including the formation of village-level peace committees and joint inter-community security patrols. Additionally, through focusing attention on the role of pastoral women in both conflict and peace building, it will provide future opportunities to further involving women in the peace process. ■

Matching for peace



The role of Women in Environment and Biodiversity conservation among the Lotuho of Sudan

By Susan Oduho Wongo - CWAPS

The Lotuho Indigenous Peoples live in Torit County of Eastern Equatorial Region, South Sudan. Their population is estimated to be around 760,000, though it is believed that in the 18th Century their number was higher. The Lotuho are Pastoralists and farmers, living on mountain slopes and the plains. The highest mountain in the area is the Imatong mountain peak found within Imatong mountain ranges that run from east to west along the Sudan Uganda border.

For centuries, the Imatong mountain ranges have been the source of livelihood for the Lotuho Indigenous Peoples. It is here that most of the rivers in the area originate, such as the Hoss, Ilinsya and Atepi rivers that provide most of the people and livestock with fresh drinking water. The slopes of the mountains have some of the best soils in South Sudan and crops like tea, coffee and Irish potatoes are grown. Trees such as the teak, mahogany and cypress, are grown in government plantations to provide timber for local consumption and export.

The Lotuho woman is always concerned about the environment. It is her responsibility, as the custodian of the land, to mother the environment by ensuring that its biodiversity in terms of the various species of plants and animals are preserved. This is necessitated by the fact that the different species of plants and animals provide families and the entire community with food, firewood, building materials and medicinal plants to treat the sick. The Lotuho woman has a tremendous amount of knowledge on the environment and uses of plants, which has been passed to her from older generations. It is of utmost importance that, for the community to survive, it should retain such Indigenous knowledge, since the knowledge utilizes the natural resources in a sustainable way.

In conservation of the environment and biodiversity the Lotuho woman utilizes plant species very selectively; she knows which particular plants are for fencing or structure erection for instance, the Lotuho woman will not cut a growing tree for firewood; instead she collects firewood from dead trees. Growing plants are cut only when land is being cleared for cultivation. The Lotuho homestead is always surrounded by a fence, mainly for protection against enemies and wild animals, and to provide firewood during the rainy season. Wood removed from the fence for firewood during the rainy season is replaced with new ones during the dry season. The Lotuho woman is also responsible for the selection and storage of seed for planting in the cropping season. In so doing she helps to preserve the various crop species and biodiversity of food crops. She knows the importance of collecting wild

vegetables from particular plants and trees, such as the "Fibongoi" and "Fulai" trees from which she picks the soft, young leaves for food, without destruction. In this way, she allows the plants and trees to regenerate and continue to give new growth for future use.

The Lotuho woman also does fishing only once a year, using a basketlike trap. The fish caught are preserved by smoking and used for food when required throughout the year. Women do not participate in hunting except when welcoming the hunting party back to the village. The hunting area is divided into several portions and the hunting groups are allowed to hunt in turns until all the hunting areas are covered. This is only done during the dry season for a period of 3-4 months, and as soon as the rains begin all hunting stops. The pattern of fishing and hunting are conducive to the replenishment of both fish stocks in the rivers and the animals.

Unfortunately, because of the civil war, the Sudanese army, for security reasons, has cleared the once beautiful forests. This has left the Imatong mountains bare and the climate of the area changed. The presence of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the area has also contributed to the displacement and movement of the Lotuho indigenous peoples away from their fertile ancestral lands to semi arid regions. This has had detrimental effects on their way of life. Certain medicinal plants or trees such as the "Pepper tree" used for the treatment of many ailments, is no longer available in the new areas of settlement. The community feels that the knowledge about such plants may be lost permanently.

The civil war in South Sudan between the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army/ Movement (SPLA/M) and the Government of Sudan has made implementation of the conventions concerning the environment and biodiversity, such as Article 8(j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) very difficult. It would be necessary to build the capacity of the community, especially that of the women, who are the custodians of the land and natural resources of the community. Women must also become actively involved in planning and implementing policies to protect and preserve the environment and biodiversity. Training programs, awareness campaigns and information dissemination are all important to empower women to take care of the environment, since most men are in the front line at war or those left in the community are mostly the young, elderly or disabled. This leaves women as the heads of families taking care of the welfare of the community. This can only be possible when the human rights of Indigenous Peoples are recognized and protected.

Global context for WEDO's 2005 Global Monitoring Report

By Women Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

WEDO has embarked on a new global monitoring report where women will assess and critique the progress governments and international institutions have made in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, which was agreed upon by 189 countries during the fourth world conference on women in 1995 and the Millennium Development Goals, which resulted from the Millennium summit in 2000. The report will be released early in 2005 to have maximum impact and visibility for the ten-year review of Beijing and the five-year review of the MDGs.

Project Description

The global monitoring report (GMR) will enable NGOs around the world to keep the pressure on governments to fulfill the commitments made to women at the fourth world conference and the millennium summit. The GMR will achieve this goal by (a) documenting women's experiences, perspectives and assessments of government progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); (b) highlighting advocacy strategies and tools for advancing these global commitments.

This 2005 global report will highlight a series of reports based on women's experiences, submitted by individual researchers or regional networks. It will include monitoring tools for women at the national level, including ways to connect their activities to global processes, such as the MDGs, for greater national impact. As an overall frame, we will include a global analysis. This chapter will summarize the findings of the

reports from the regions. Within each of these issue areas described above and on an overall basis, this section will: review overall gains and losses; discuss the contribution of each region to the global movement; describe barriers/obstacles to the attainment of global goals; highlight successes and successful strategies and discuss lessons learnt for the future.

The target audience is policy oriented organizations, specifically governments, multilateral, institutional women's organizations and other NGOs.

The research will include regional/international meetings; WEDO regional meeting series; key UN/IFI/Trade Negotiations and NGO alternative forums; national/regional women's activities; Beijing + 10 regional meetings; as well as existing documentation, women's statements, presentations, publications, and shadow reports.

WEDO's past seven reports helped to build a broad-based regionally balanced monitoring and advocacy network that grew to over 140 partners around the world. These reports have shown that in every country, women are active agents for progressive change. The reports have been very effective mechanisms for bringing the local to the global and challenging the state bureaucracies, which tend to assign low priority to women's concerns, as well as highlighting these concerns in the media and in the general public.

Global context for WEDO's 2005 Global monitoring Report

Background

America and the Caribbean to Asia and the Pacific had built an

international movement and defined a far-reaching global agenda. In the preparatory stages of the 1992 United Nations conference on environment and development (UNCED), the first of a series of intergovernmental United Nations conferences on development, women activists seized the opportunity to make women's equity and equality, along with social justice, more to the global policy agenda.

The women's action agenda was a direct challenge from the world's women to shape the official platform of UNCED (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1992). Organizing together, women won significant change devoted to gender equality and, for the first time, a formal recognition of women's central role in achieving sustainable development.

The success at UNCED positioned women's organizations to play a leadership role in putting women's equity and equality on the global policy agenda throughout the decade of the 1990s at key United Nations conferences. These included the international conference on population and development (Cairo, Egypt, 1994), where formal recognition of women's reproductive rights prevailed despite bitter opposition by religious fundamentalists, and the social summit (Copenhagen, Denmark, 1995), where the link between gender equality and poverty eradication was explicitly recognized.

At the UN fourth world conference on women (Beijing, China, 1995), a broad range of advocacy concerns of the international women's movement: poverty, militarization, war and civil conflict; violations of women's human rights; under-

representation of women in dominate the global economy were brought into the global arena.

In the resulting Beijing Platform for Action, women won a broad-based agenda for promoting and protecting their human rights worldwide, while establishing the principle of shared power and responsibility between women and men in all arenas. Since then, issues of violence against women and women's human rights have gained greater visibility and government attention and legislative action worldwide. In many parts of the world, women's role in decision-making has become more prominent, access to education has improved, and discriminatory laws have been repealed. At the grassroots level, women have developed innovative approaches to meeting the basic needs of families and communities in the face of fundamentalisms of different kinds.

Yet despite policy gains at the United Nations in the form of government commitments and ambitious documents, and despite efforts to use these documents to achieve legal and policy changes to advance women's rights at the national level, many women—especially poor women—are worse off today than they were a decade ago. Women around the world continue to face many of the same critical issues and even more complex and the need for action is more urgent.

Negative impacts, global challenges over the past decade, major global forces have emerged that are undermining the gains made by women. The neo-liberal economic model and market driven policies—particularly changes in trade and finance rules, and the deregulation and privatization of public goods and services—have exacerbated the poverty, food insecurity, and economic exclusion of the majority, while increasing the wealth and economic opportunities, and thus over-

consumption, of the privileged few. At the same time, the world is becoming increasingly dangerous due to unilateral military intervention and communal and ethnic violence. Escalating militarism and new and revived fundamentalisms, both secular and religious have created a stifling climate for progressive change.

Throughout the world, women and children—who comprise the majority of the world's poor—are experiencing the disproportionate effects of these global forces. The negative impact is intensified among racial and ethnic minorities and indigenous women.

While it is well documented that women's empowerment is central to poverty eradication and national development, women still face significant barriers when it comes to access to resources, wage employment, and decision making positions. As macroeconomic and national policies are too often gender blind, they are ineffective in addressing the needs of poor and minority women. In many parts of the world, the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic has further increased women's income-earning, domestic, and care taking responsibilities.

Women play a critical role in managing natural resources and have extensive knowledge and experience of the water, land, and energy supplies that sustain households and communities. Yet, women's lack of land tenure or inheritance rights, and current trends such as water privatization, undermine their ability to own, manage, use, and conserve these resources and to provide for themselves and their families.

Women are still concentrated in the informal sector, where there are no job or safety protections, and those entering the formal wage economy tend to be employed in the lowest-paying jobs with the greatest environmental and safety hazards. Women still earn less than men for

the same work, outnumber men among those who are illiterate, and are drastically under-represented in decision-making positions at all levels. For instance, only 15 percent of parliamentarians worldwide are women.

The UN world conferences resulted in greater recognition of gender inequalities and propelled governments to make global commitments to advance women's rights. At the same time these external forces and trends, promoted by the international financial institutions and the world trade organization, perpetuate and reinforce the structural inequalities between women and men in the economy and in society. Thus, the world faces a democracy deficit in global governance—the power of the World Bank, international monetary fund and world trade organization remains unchecked and these institutions lack accountability, transparency, and democracy. Transnational corporations also disregard global norms as they operate without adequate systems of regulation, oversight, or accountability.

The external stronghold on national development policy and frameworks has weakened the ability of some governments to meet basic social needs, while increases in military and 'anti-terrorism' spending further drain limited public resources for education, health, and social services. This emphasis on national security and policing also is being used to undermine hard-won civil rights and civil liberties.

In the United States, the world's only superpower, the current administration employs its unsurpassed military and economic power for narrow economic, political and ideological interests with dire consequences for people in the US and around the world. The preemptive war in Iraq, the most extreme case so far of U.S.

unilateralism, was preceded by the administration's earlier repudiation of the Kyoto protocol, its refusal from the international criminal court treaty, and its invalidation of the Antihallistic missile treaty. The Bush Administration's war on women started on its first day in office when the president reappplied the global gag rule to international family planning programs. Further, the U.S. has failed to ratify the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW), and promotes abstinence-only in the undeclared global HIV/AIDS program.

Women advocated working to implement the global policy commitment of the 1990s have often been stymied by these global challenges. While the UN is the most universal a legitimate global governance institution, it finds itself at a crossroads, weakened by a membership. The voices of developing countries a civil society—particularly those speaking for women, the poor and other marginalized group—are demanding reforms. Instead of advancing the status quo by accommodating the international countries, the UN must emerge as a counterweight and an effective promoter of peace, human rights, gender equality, sustainable development, and economic justice.

A call to action

Although this global scenario presents unprecedented challenges for women's movements, it is also a call to action. The same pernicious force that are causing so much insecurity in the world have given rise to global and local movements seeking alternatives to war, neo liberalism, environmental devastation, gender and racial oppression, and social and economic inequalities.

Women are agents of change and have made enormous contributions to social movements worldwide. Organizations pushing for peace and

justice cannot succeed without women's active participation and leadership. However, these organizations and movements have not been equally active in struggles for gender justice or integrating gender in their own perspectives and positions. WEDO will work to increase global collaboration and solidarity among grassroots social movements, labor unions, and peace, human rights economic justice, and environmental organizations that share our vision.

The challenge is to identify effective strategies, alliances, and institutions to promote this comprehensive social justice agenda. Women want to move forward rather than merely UN remains the international institution in which we have the most hope, where every nation in the world has a voice and a vote, and where developing countries play a leadership role in setting and carrying out its agenda. The UN also provides most systematically and broadly for civil society participation and has unquestionably advanced the global women's agenda.

Going forward, WEDO will place greater emphasis on structure and institutional changes in global governance to reassert the primacy of the UN charter—which envisioned the Bretton Woods institutions being accountable to the UN—and to bring the world trade organization into the UN structure. And we will continue to support the challenges of women worldwide to religious and economic fundamentalisms that undermine democratization, sustainable development, and the implementation of international human rights—including economic and social rights, as well as gender equality.

WEDO will continue to challenge the UN, international financial and trade institutions, governments, civil society and the private sector to recognize and address the negative impacts of globalization, particularly on women. We will join with others

to oppose the gross misdistribution of the world's resources and the growing gaps between rich and poor people and nations, and to promote alternative policies that are equitable and sustainable.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—endorsed in 2000 by 191 governments—do not represent the full vision of either gender equity, equality or women empowerment or poverty eradication and structural transformation envisaged in UN conference and human rights documents. Nonetheless, with their time-bound targets, they are one important mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the international policy documents of the 1990s. They can also be useful tools for advocacy and accountability—for example, to hold international financial and trade institutions and donor countries accountable for creating the necessary enabling conditions and conditions and resources for the goals to be achieved. WEDO will promote a gender perspective on the MDGs, advocating for gender equality to be central to each of the goals and for the goals to be more explicitly linked.

To achieve progressive change globally it is essential to confront U.S. unilateralism. As an international organization based in the U.S. and working on global issues, WEDO is committed to partnering with local women's, peace, and other social justice groups to advocate for a U.S. foreign policy that seeks to advance international law and human rights and vital treaty commitments; supports a strong and effective United Nations to promote multilateral action to address threats to peace and security and to advance human development around the world; and transforms the global governance system, including the international trade and financial institutions. ■

Questionnaire for WEDO's 2005 Global Monitoring Report

Human Rights

This section explores several components of human rights issues as they pertain to women including the effectiveness and implementation of international treaties, legislation and legal literacy, and violence against women.

A. Implementation of the convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

1. If your government has ratified CEDAW:

- Have reservations been eliminated?
- Has there been a review of laws and policies to ensure that they meet the standards of CEDAW and the Children's Convention?
- Has the Optional Protocol been ratified? If not, what measures have been taken to ratify the OP?
- How frequent is the CEDAW committee reported to?

2. If your government has not ratified CEDAW:

- What, if any, steps are being taken towards ratification?

3. Please describe the success and/or obstacles concerning CEDAW implementation, as well as what changes have taken place since ratification.

B. Nondiscrimination

1. Legislation concerning sex discrimination and disproportionate impacts on women:

- Does any legislation address concerns affecting the girl child – i.e. harmful child labor, child prostitution, child pornography, sexual abuse of minors.
- What laws and policies are in place to protect the rights of indigenous, minority and immigrant women?
- Is trafficking in women prevalent? What legislation is in place to eliminate this practice?
- To what extent are the above laws being implemented?

2. National action Plans to improve the women's rights:

- Have any such National Action Plans been drafted?
- To what extent have they been implemented?
- What steps have been taken to create or strengthen independent national institutions for the protection and promotion of women's human rights?

C. Achieve Legal Literacy

1. Human rights education

- Is there a comprehensive human rights education program in place that raises human rights awareness among women?

2. Publicizing and disseminating laws and information relating to women's rights

- Are any guidelines in place on how to use legislation to exercise individual rights?
- Are laws/guidelines translated into indigenous and local languages?
- Are women's rights included in school curriculum?
- Are there any education programs in place?
- Are there any women's human rights education programs in place for members of the national security and armed forces?

D. Violence against women

1. Government attitudes and actions against violence against women

- To what extent does the government condemn violence against women and endorse prevention and punishment of these acts?
- Has government enacted or reinforced penal, civil, labor and administrative sanctions to compensate women and girls who have been subjected to violence?
- Is there legislation in place to prevent and punish domestic violence? If so, is the legislation enforced? If not, why?
- Has government taken steps to ensure legislation is effective?
- If there are refugee women or internally displaced women in your country, how does government address particular issues of violence against group addressal?

2. Culture – based violence against women

- Are any negative cultural practices such as female circumcision/female genital mutilation, dowry deaths "honor killing s" prevalent in your country? If so, are there laws prohibiting the above practices? What other government actions address these practices?

3. Proactive government programs

- Are there programs to train judicial, legal, medical, social, educational, police and immigrant personnel about dealing with violence against women?
- Is there a policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programs related to violence against women? How has this affected the issue?
- What efforts are underway to promote research and data compilation concerning violence against women?

4. Support System

- Are women who are subjected to violence provided

with direct service support systems? (I.e., shelters, relief, accesses to the mechanisms of justice, physical and mental health services) what particular support services are available for the migrant, immigrant and minority/ indigenous women who have been subjected to violence?

Peace and Security

This section explores the effects of increasing unilateral/military interventions and communal and ethnic violence on the lives and security of women, and how international agreements have been implemented to protect them.

A. Implementation of Security Council 1325

- What is the level of public awareness about Security Council Resolution 1325?
- To what extent does the government subscribe to it?
- How have women's groups used it to ensure their representation in peace processes? What were the most successful experiences? The challenges? Please explain any lessons learned in terms of prevention, protection and participation of women in peace processes?
- To what extent is a gender perspective/ integrated in all peace operations including conflict prevention, management, resolution and post - conflict peace building?
- To what extent do women participate in all peace processes, agreements, transitional governance structures and other nation - building or decision - making processes?

B. Refugee and Internally Displaced (ID) Women

- What provisions are in place to protect refugee and ID women and girls' human rights?
- What are the living conditions of refugee and ID women and girls?
- What kind of discrimination do they face in terms of access to food, health care, shelter, education, and employment?
- Does the government have programs that facilitate their integration into society?
- How did the September 11, 2001 events affect procedures determining the refugee status and the granting of asylum of women in comparison with men?

C. The International Criminal Court (ICC)

- Is your country a party to the ICC?
- How has the ICC been used?

Power and Decision - Making

Gender - balanced participation at all levels of decision

making, with the aim of including women's concerns and perspectives. The formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policy, is an essential component of democratic governance. This section deals with the measures taken to ensure this equal and full participation of women.

A. Increasing of women's representation in all governmental, public and private administration decision - making positions

- In what areas (judicial, public administration, local and national governments' etc.) have women's representation substantially increased or decreased? Please explain.
- What measures (including quotas, training programs, women, gender - sensitization of political parties) has the government taken to achieve equal representation? Did the adoption of positive measures require legislative or constitutional reform? Who is in charge of their implementation? Describe successes and shortcomings of the implementation.
- What measures have political parties taken to integrate women in elective and non - elective public positions in the same proportion and levels as men? How are these measures being implemented within the parties, and what is their impact on government elective bodies?
- To what extent do electoral and campaign finance systems represent an obstacle?

B. The Impact of women's representation and participation and gender mainstreaming

- What policies or legislation have been introduced that have a direct bearing on the status of women? To what extent has the women's representation and participation in power and decision making been responsible for these changes? Give specific examples.
- Which policies do women politicians prioritize (i.e. social, economic, security, infrastructures, constitutional / legal and finance)?
- What impact - if - any have women made to cabinet, national and local governments in terms of policy content (as reflected for instance in white papers, laws and programs)?
- How has women's representation and participation led to institutional transformation with regard to: Rule; Mode of operation (dress code, meeting times); Institutional culture (code of conduct, sexual harassment); attitudes; Infrastructure; Behaviour; Power relations; Resources allocation/ gender budgets.
- Is there an office or Ministry of Women's Affairs in your country?
- To what extent do women politicians work across

their political parties in gender-related issues (i.e. do they have inter-party women's lobbies or caucuses? If so do they make a difference?)

Macroeconomic Policy and Poverty Eradication

Women's empowerment is central to poverty eradication and national development, yet women still face barriers accessing resources, wage employment, and decision-making positions. As macroeconomic and national policies are often gender-blind, they are ineffective in addressing the needs of women.

A. Women's paid and unpaid labour

- In what sectors has women's participation in the labour force increased?
- In what sectors has it decreased?
- Have women's working conditions improved or worsened in these sectors?
- Have family welfare demands placed on the women increased, remained the same, or decreased?
- To what extent has women's work in the unpaid sector remained invisible in national income accounts?
- Have social sector expenditures increased or decreased?

B. Gender analysis in research

- What resources have been allocated towards sex-disaggregated data collection and gender analysis of economic life?
- How has this improved or hindered assessing the impact of macroeconomic policies on women?
- How and to what extent have gender perspective and women's concerns been taken into account in preparation of budgets at national, regional, and local levels?
- Describe efforts to monitor budgetary allocations related to achieving gender equality.

C. Role of Trade Globalization

- How have globalization, trade and finance policy foreign investment, and /or debt burdens impacted gender equality and women's empowerment? Please consider:
 - i) Rural women's livelihoods
 - ii) Women's role in paid and unpaid sectors
 - iii) Women's access to education, training, information, technology, and health care
 - iv) Women's access to and control of natural resources
 - v) The role of the World Bank and the IMF

D. Decision-Making

- What laws and policies exist to eradicate legal, institutional and cultural barriers that prevent or disadvantage women's participation in economic activity and decision making?
- What policies have been implemented to promote

equality in sharing reproductive responsibilities and decision-making within the household?

Education

This section examines the extent to which governments have undertaken policies and programs that ensure women and girls access to equitable and quality education. It examines the extent to which governments have engendered the curriculum, dealt with sexual harassment and actively included marginalized women and girls.

A. International Agreements

- Has your country ratified the international recommendations in the education for all agreements and MDG #2?
- How does the government support women's groups and other NGO's that publish and disseminate national and international norms related to women's equal rights and education?

B. Public Policy

- Do policies on education have a gender perspective? Please explain.
- Has there been a review of national policy documents - particularly, the constitution, the education Act, etc - to ensure the incorporation of CEDAW's agreements and norms in education?
- Please discuss any national action plans that address equality in education? (What are the objectives? What have been the results?)
- Have guidelines for training policies in vocational education been established to achieve a quality education with equal opportunities for women?
- Are there specific mechanisms or measures in place to deal with discrimination in education?
- Are there policies to protect women and girls from sexual harassment in educational centres?
- Are there measures to deal with the education of girls and women that are refugees or displaced persons? Are there special laws to protect their rights?
- Is there a national literacy program aimed at adult women?

C. Access and changes in educational practices and curricula content

- What steps have been taken to promote access to education for all women/girls (particularly rural, minority, poor and indigenous women/girls)?
- What changes have been made in educational practices to promote equality? Have there been proposals to change curricula contents? If so, where they implemented?
- Is there an effort to change education equality at all

educational levels and sectors? Which sectors or levels are responding?

- Is there a unit within the Education Ministry that focuses solely on girls's education?
- What efforts are being made to promote research and data collection regarding women's education?
- Is information on the labor market and training easily accessible to women?
- Compulsory Education?

Access to and control of Natural Resources and Environmental Security

Women play a role in managing natural resources, and have extensive knowledge of the water, land, and energy supplies that sustain households and communities. Yet women's lack of land tenure or inheritance rights, as well as current trends such as water privatisation, undermine their ability to own, manage, use and conserve these resources and to provide for themselves and their families.

A. Women's participation in decision - making on natural resources and environment

- How has the participation of women in this sector at the national and local level increased or decreased during the past decade?
- What kind of positions do women have in decision-making bodies on environment and natural resources at governmental and non-governmental levels?
- How are local women's interests represented at national and global levels?
- Is there any success stories on women's participation in decision - making on natural resources and environment available?
- What are the main obstacles for women's full participation?

B. Gender impacts of degradation of the environment and natural resources

- Please describe the most important impacts of degradation of the environment and natural resources with specific reference to:

- i) Women's work
- ii) Women's (and family's) health
- iii) Girls education
- iv) Women's income

C. Women's right to natural resources, in particular land, water and biodiversity

- What have been main developments regarding women's land and water rights and intellectual property rights over biodiversity in the past decade?
- Describe the main impact of water privatisation (and privatization of other natural resources).

- How have women organized in respect to this issue?

Health

This question examines the extent to which governments have undertaken policies and programs that ensure women and girls access to adequate and comprehensive healthcare service and information, particular that related to maternal health and HIV/AIDS and what obstacles exist in that effort.

A. Ensure women's access to quality and affordable healthcare services and information

- Do women have access to quality primary healthcare? Does access differ for minority/indigenous/poor women?
- Is it gender sensitive and fully informative and are human rights and ethical standards focused on ensuring consent?
- Are the special needs of girls and adolescents being met?
- Do programs, laws and policies address environmental and occupational health hazards?
- What are the obstacles to full and comprehensive access?

B. Improve maternal health

- Do women and girls have full access to information regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights and to quality family planning, pre-pregnancy, pregnancy and post-partum services?
- Has the government monitored, collected data or enacted laws and policies that specify address maternal health, particularly maternal mortality, morbidity, and abortion?
- Are attempts made to discourage early marriage amongst young women?
- What are the obstacles to full and comprehensive access?

C. Ensure appropriate HIV/AIDS service and provide protection to HIV + women

- Are HIV/AIDS - related health services and information available to all women, including pregnant women and girls? If so, they are gender - sensitive and are women involved in the design of services?
- What laws and policies protect person with HIV/AIDS against non-discrimination and provide HIV + people with government benefits?
- What are the obstacles to full and comprehensive access.

Send your response to WEDO :-

Tel. 212-973-0325

fax 212-973-0335

www.wedo.org

Married Adolescents Ignored In Global Agenda, Says UNFPA

Leaders from UNFPA, the Population Council, the Government of Senegal and the International Center for Research on Women met today to address the neglected issue of child marriage. Child marriage violates the human rights of millions of girls by threatening their health, restricting their education and limiting their social, economic and political growth.

Most nations have declared 18 as the legal minimum age for marriage. Yet, in the next decade, more than 100 million girls worldwide will marry before their 18th birthday. Some will be as young as 8 or 9 and many will marry against their will.

"Married adolescents have been largely ignored in the development and health agenda because of the perception that their married status ensures them a safe passage to adulthood," said Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. "Nothing could be further from the truth."

Ms. Obaid spoke at a special session of the Global Health Council's annual conference in Washington, D.C. The theme of the conference was "Youth and Health: Generation on the Edge." Other panelists included Aminata Diallo, Minister of Health, Senegal; Geeta Rao Gupta, President, International Center for Research on Women; Judith Bruce, Director, Gender, Family and Development, Population Council; and, Kakenya Ntaiya, a Kenyan woman who fought hard to delay marriage and continue her education.

"UNFPA seeks to reposition the concern about adolescent girls from a relatively narrow one, focused on their fertility and health, to one that emphasizes the capacities and life skills

they need to negotiate their lives," said Ms. Obaid. "Income generating work can transform the lives of married adolescents by providing them with a degree of autonomy, mobility and freedom from traditional gender roles."

The Executive Director called for greater action to discourage child marriage, such as:

- Highlighting the increased risk of HIV infection for young girls who marry much older men, especially in communities with high prevalence of HIV/AIDS;
- Fostering national and community dialogue over the human dignity and human rights of all persons, and the security and health threats entailed in forced or early marriage of girls;
- Helping girls to complete their secondary education and working to address the root causes of early marriage, such as poverty and discrimination against girls;
- Designing safe, appropriate and effective educational skill building and livelihood opportunities for unmarried girls that may assist them in deferring marriage by raising their literacy, increasing their income generation and overall economic and social well-being.

Child marriage remains a deeply entrenched custom in many countries. Parents want to secure their daughters' future both socially and financially, and ties between families and villages are often strengthened with arranged marriages.

At the meeting, UNFPA premiered a new video with testimonies of married girls, entitled "Too Brief a Child: Voices of Married Adolescents" (media copies available). As one girl from Burkina Faso explains: "I was promised to a man before I was 10. It was a traditional

wedding. When the time came, I was just handed over to my husband's family and when I saw him I realized he was older than my daddy."

Ms. Obaid called for greater action to protect the rights of married girls and stressed that child marriage brought great health risks for young girls. Pregnancy is a leading cause of death and disability for young women aged 15 to 19. Married adolescent girls are at particular risk of HIV infection since they are often married to much older men with more sexual experience and are generally unable to negotiate condom use.

Studies from Kenya and Zambia show that teenage brides are contracting HIV at a faster rate than their sexually active unmarried counterparts. An estimated 7.3 million young women are living with HIV/AIDS, compared to 4.5 million young men and nearly two thirds of newly infected youth aged 15 to 19 in sub-Saharan Africa are female.

The stakes are high. The largest generation of adolescents in world history is now making the transition from childhood to adulthood: 1.2 billion people are between the ages of 10 and 19. The health and well-being of young girls today will have a major impact on the overall social and economic health of our world tomorrow.

UNFPA is the world's largest multilateral source of population assistance. Since it became operational in 1969, it has provided help to developing countries, at their request, to meet reproductive health needs and support development efforts. ■

Contact information:

Micol Zarb

Tel.: +1 212 297 5042

Email: zarb@unfpa.org

Negative Cultural Practices that affect our Indigenous Women

In June 2004 nine ex-circumciseses from six African countries (Djibouti, Gambia, Guinea-conary, Kenya, Mali, and Tanzania) concluded the first international meeting of former circumciseses, convened by Equality Now in Nairobi, Kenya from 5-6 June 2004. Overcoming challenging language barriers, the women shared with each other their experiences of transformation from circumciseses who performed female genital mutilation (FGM) into activists working to end FGM. Almost all of the ex-circumciseses were motivated to lay down their knives once they learned of the adverse health consequences caused by the practice, particularly for women in childbirth. In some cases, the realization that FGM is not a religious requirement of Islam also played a role in convincing them to stop. Although the ex-circumciseses discussed the need for and importance of finding alternative means of livelihood, they affirmed that they would never revert to FGM for income. One ex-circumciseses characterized the practice as "torture." Another recalled with deep sorrow girls she had cut hemorrhaging to death. Several ex-circumciseses expressed their view that that FGM could be eliminated.

This historic gathering of ex-circumciseses formed part of the third annual international meeting of Equality Now's fund for grassroots activism to end FGM. Activists' from ten African countries participated in the meeting, which focused this year on the role of ex-circumciseses in ending FGM. Last year's FGM fund meeting focused on the need for involvement of men in the campaign against. This year, the need for laws against FGM and effective law enforcement was emphasized and articulated by the activists as a common goal. The meeting noted



Samburu Indigenous Women from Archers Post, Samburu in a meeting listening to discussions on FGM, Nairobi 2004.

that as awareness of the dangers of FGM grow, more girls are running away from the practice and seeking legal protection, which they are often denied. Some countries, such as Mali and Ethiopia, still do not have laws against FGM. Other countries such as Tanzania and Guinea have such laws but fail to implement them. The meeting discussed the relative merits of penalties varying in severity and recognized the need for sentences and fines severe enough to deter practitioners.

The need for greater funding of the movement to end FGM was highlighted by the meeting. The importance of reaching out to religious leaders and dispelling the many myths linked to the practice of FGM was also highlighted as an emerging priority, not only with regard to Islam but also with regard to animist beliefs in Africa. In reviewing the progress of the campaign to date, it was noted that over the years the work of NGOs had steadily increased public awareness of the dangers of FGM, and that many more people, women and men, are speaking out against the practice. In Somalia, for example, on international women's day (march 8) 20,000 women and young people

took to the streets in eight cities across the country, in the first nationally coordinated public action against FGM.

Equality Now is an international human rights organization that works to protect and promote the civil, political, economic and social rights of girls and women. Equality NOW's Women's Action Network is comprised of more than 25,000 organizations and individuals in more than 160 countries.

Galkayo, Somalia

I am Hawa Aden Mohamed from Puntland state of Somalia. I am the Executive Director of Galkayo Education Center for Peace and Development, which is a woman's organization focused on education of girls, women and youth. GECPD provides integrated literacy and non-formal education for women and girls in eight districts and fourteen villages in Puntland. GECPD plans to implement female teacher training and capacity building for women's organizations, leaders and managers. We raise awareness about HIV/AIDS, civic and peace education, human rights, women's rights, leadership and decision-making. GECPD collaborates and networks with civil society organizations in Somalia,

Somali Diaspora, regional and international organizations, donors and UN agencies. The GECPD mandate includes training and advocacy to stop all forms of FGM.

FGM is deeply entrenched in Somali culture. Many interventions to raise awareness were initiated by Somali women. In March 2004, on international women's days 180 women's NGOs, CBOs and women's support groups organized the "NO FGM" demonstration, the first of its kind in the history of the campaign against FGM in Somali. 3 women's umbrella networks organized parallel anti FGM marches, WAWA in Puntland, NAGARID in Somaliland and COGWO from south and central Somalia. Over 20,000 women, youth and children were out in the street of 8 towns: Garawa, Bosaso, Galkaya, Hargeisa, Mogadishu, Marka, Las Anod and Baram. The above 3 umbrella NGOs networks planned, shared resources and information.

It was in this March that for the first time high-level decision-makers fully participated in the anti-FGM campaign. Women's groups were apprehensive about the risks involved in organizing such large-scale demonstration. But it was a miracle that all the Marches went about smoothly without any risk involved.

Bringing change to stop FGM requires resources and commitment from the government, civil society and at the level of families, something that does not exist today. But we activists are working hard to transform the same and we hope that one day FGM will be eliminated in Somalia.

We as an organization are part of the anti-FGM movement in Africa and internationally. The FGM Fund has brought groups from 11 African Countries together from the past 3 years to review anti-FGM programs and to share responses from governments, communities, and other civil society members. We have also assessed elimination strategies for successes and challenges and

opportunities as well as constraints for implementing FGM program. Equality Now makes crucial networking and exchange of ideas within this group possible.

Tanzania

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), also known as female circumcision, is prohibited by law in Tanzania. The law is not effectively enforced, however, and the practice of FGM continues openly. In some parts of Tanzania, mass circumcisions are carried out in which thousands of girls are genitally cut at the same time, generally in December. In December 1996, according to reports, of the 5,000 girls who were cut in one such ceremony, twenty girls died from medical complications. Referring to a similar ceremony to be held in December 1998, circumciser Maria Magwaiga, was quoted in the *Tanzanian Daily Mail* as saying, "It is too late for the Government to stop us circumcising women this season. They should have done that earlier." Despite the appeals from Equality Now and other government of Tanzania has allowed these circumcision ceremonies to proceed, and despite the public defiance of circumcisers such as Maria Magwaiga, no action has been taken to hold them accountable under the law.

FGM is practiced in various parts of the country, including among the gogo people in central Tanzania. Recently, a 78-year-old gogo circumciser from the Doukoma Rural District, Nyangulule Kodi, defended FGM publicly. In an interview posted on the internet in May 2001 by the African Church Information Service, she explained that the procedure took fifteen or twenty minutes, depending on the sharpness of the knife, and justified FGM as "a rite of passage for girls into womanhood, grooming and training of cultural values that maintain domestic stability within the community." Older women like Nyangulule Kodi reportedly maintain that they would not allow their male relatives to marry uncircumcised women and "not polite and are over-

sexed."

FGM is also practiced by the Maasai people in the Morogoro Region. According to the Tanzanian legal and Human Rights Centre, local government officials have issued statements against FGM but there is no government follow-up. The local church intervenes in some cases, but according to the local bishop, even in cases where children have bled to death no one is charged. The legal and Human Rights Centre investigated one case in Morogoro, in which three girls ran away from their father in the summer of 1999, in a desperate effort to save themselves from the practice of FGM. They fled to a local church for protection, and several pastors took them to the nearest police station, in Matombo. Rather than protect the girls, the police arrested one of the pastors, as well as his wife, for having taken custody of minor children. The pastor was beaten severely in the presence of his wife and asked to confess that he had raped the girls. The three girls were taken to hospital for an examination, where it was confirmed that they had not been raped. They were then turned over by the police to their father, who had them circumcised the next day and married within a month, one as a third wife. The three girls were aged 13 and 14 at the time. One of them is already a mother now. When the legal and Human Rights centre interviewed one of the girls, she told them how painful it was to her that even the police and the courts could not help them in their efforts to save themselves from the genital mutilation. Subsequently, however, after the legal and Human Rights Center submitted its report on the incident to the authorities, the young girls changed their versions of events and said they did not want to pursue the prosecution of their father.

In 1998, the parliament of Tanzania amended the Penal Code to specify prohibit FGM. Section 169A(1) of the Sexual Offences Special Provisions Act provides that anyone having custody, charge or use

of a girl under eighteen years of age who causes her to undergo FGM commits the offence of cruelty to children. The penalty for this offence is a term of imprisonment and the fine. The law also provides for the payment of compensation by the perpetrator to the person against whom the offence was committed. In addition to having passed its own law against FGM, Tanzania is a party to various international human rights treaties that mandate the protection of girls from the practices of FGM including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women, The Convention on the rights of the Child, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

FGM takes different forms in different countries: the partial or total removal of clitoris (Clitoridectomy), the removal of the entire clitoris and the cutting of the labia minora (excision), or in its most extreme form of removal of all external genitalia and the stitching together of the two sides of the vulva, leaving only a very small vaginal opening (infibulations). It is estimated that more than 130 million girls and women around the world have undergone genital mutilation. At least 2 million girls every year, 6,000 every day, are at risk of suffering FGM. The cutting, which is generally done without anaesthetic, may have lifelong health consequences including chronic infection, severe pain during urination, menstruation, sexual intercourse, and childbirth and psychological trauma. Some girls die from the cutting, usually a result of bleeding or infection. An extreme form of the many traditional practices used around the world to deny women independence the equality, FGM is defended by both men and women in the cultures where it is practiced as a rite of passage and a social prerequisite of marriage. It is used to control sexuality by safeguarding

virginity and suppressing sexual desire.

Laws against Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as a different forms in different forms known as female circumcision, takes different forms in different countries: the partial or total removal of the clitoris (Clitoridectomy), the removal of the entire clitoris and the cutting of the labia minora (excision), or in its most extreme form the removal of all the external genitalia and the stitching together of the two sides of the vulva (infibulation). It is estimated that more than 130 million girls and women around the world have undergone genital mutilation. At least 2 million girls every year are at risk of suffering FGM. The cutting, which is generally done without anaesthetic, may have lifelong health consequences including chronic infection, severe pain during urination, menstruation, sexual intercourse, and childbirth, and psychological trauma. Some die from the cutting, usually as result of bleeding or infection. FGM is a fundamental human rights violation.

FGM is practiced in at least 28 countries in Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Cote D' Ivory, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda), as well as in Indonesia, Yemen, in a few communities in other parts of the world, mostly in Asia, and in countries with African immigrant communities. Many other countries, including those that receive immigrants from countries where FGM is practiced, have outlawed or are working towards outlawing the practice.

The information contained in this summary is current as of April 2004. FGM – Summary of status / country laws.

African Countries with laws against FGM

- *Benin* – FGM specific law passed in 2003
- *Burkina Faso* – FGM – specific

law passed in 1996

- *Central African Republic* – FGM – specific presidential Decree issued in 1996
- *Cote D' Ivory* – FGM – specific law passed in 1998
- *Djibouti* – FGM – specific law contained in the Penal Code since 1995
- *Ghana* – FGM – specified law passed in 1994
- *Gambia* – FGM – specific law contained in the Penal Code since 1965
- *Kenya* – FGM – specific law contained in the Children Act passed in 2001
- *Niger* – FGM – specific law passed in 2003
- *Nigeria* – Federal law passed in 2003* and state laws in Fako, Ogun, Cross River, Osum, Rivers, Bayelsa and under discussion in Benue state**.
- *Senegal* – FGM – specific law passed in 1999
- *Tanzania* – FGM – specific law passed in 1998
- *Togo* – FGM – Specific law passed in 1998

African countries where FGM is practiced but no specific anti-FGM law

- *Cameroon*
- *Democratic Republic of Congo*
- *Egypt* – Decree by the minister of Health passed in 1996 banning performance of FGM in hospitals and clinics
- *Eritrea*
- *Ethiopia* – Draft Penal code contains anti-FGM provision
- *Gambia*
- *Guinea-Bissau*
- *Liberia*
- *Mali*
- *Mauritania* – Hospitals barred from performing FGM**
- *Sierra Leone*
- *Somalia*
- *Sudan* – Minister of Health / Medical Council Decree in 2003 banning medical practitioners from performing FGM
- *Uganda* – No FGM – specific law, but the 1996 Children Statute

includes provision regarding harmful customary practices.

Countries outside Africa with laws against FGM

- *Australia* – no federal law, FGM – specific laws in 6 states / territories: Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria
- *Belgium* – FGM – specific law passed in 2000
- *Canada* – FGM – specific law passed in 1997
- *Denmark* – FGM – specific law passed in 2003 in relation to taking a child abroad to undergo FGM and existing penal code provision applicable to domestic cases
- *France* – Penal code sections on mutilation have been used to prosecute FGM cases
- *Germany* – No FGM – specific law, but existing legislation has been considered adequate
- *Netherlands* – No FGM – specific law, but existing legislation has been considered adequate
- *New Zealand* – FGM – specific law passed in 1995
- *Norway* – FGM – specific law passed 1995
- *Sweden* – FGM – specific federal law passed in 1996 and FGM specific laws passed in the following 16 states: California, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, Wisconsin
- *United Kingdom* – FGM – specific law passed in 1985 and replaced with new law in 2003 to increase penalties and to cover children taken abroad to undergo FGM.
- *Yemen* – Decree making it illegal from health service workers to perform FGM passed in 2001

Ethiopia

Walmara community discusses ideas to enforce declaration to end FGM.

At Walmara, 40 km outside Addis Ababa, where HUNDER, a local

organization that works in the Oromia region, recently ended a year long campaign on ending FGM, 28 members of the community met for a one-day meeting on 23 September organized by HUNDER to strategise on ways to ensure that community's public declaration on FGM is sustained. Several ideas were floated but the first principle proposed was that group member's act as role models for the community in that they would publicly reaffirm that the no longer circumcised girls.

The group suggested as a first step registering families with girls at risk of FGM. Then each group member would be assigned to monitor a cluster of families, keeping regular contact with them, advising them against carrying out FGM and reminding them of the declaration. The group would also empower young people (girls and boys) and give support to girls faced with FGM. Other ideas proposed included turning circumcisers into activists, encouraging activist youth to influenced other young people to oppose the practice and organizing public forums for priests, sheik's and doctors to inform the community about the harmfulness of the practice and the fact that no religion condones it.

Eleven Kebeles make public demonstration denouncing FGM.

A public declaration to end FGM by the communities of eleven Kebeles (areas) of the Kedida Gamela District of Kembatta & Timboto zone of the Southern Ethiopia Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region was held on 25 September 2003. The Event, said to be the first of its kind, was organized by community advocacy groups who were trained



Agnes Pureyo Nasuru, Narok, an advocate against FGM.

and empowered by the Kembatta Women's Self-Help Center (KMG) and was attended by close to 700 members of the eleven Kebeles – mostly girls of different ages but also men, boys and women. A couple of elders spoke against FGM, followed by a woman's representative. Abayenesh Adore, an uncircumcised girl, then spoke, repeating how proud she was to be uncircumcised and asked the crowd if they were not happy for her. To all speakers the crowd joined in shouting back "no more FGM". Abayenesh Adore and her sister, Dinkeshi, also sang a song asking the community not to slaughter girls like cows but to save them from FGM. The initiative has inspired other community advocacy groups who are preparing their communities, in this case in the Kachabira Woreda (district), to join in a public declaration ending FGM. Kachabira is where the young Ethiopian couple, Gent Cirma and Addis Abosie (highlighted in previous issues of *Awaken*) had a public wedding declaring how happy they were for the bride to be marrying uncircumcised.

Source: Equality Now, 25 September 2003.

Final declaration from the international conference on FGM developing a political, legal and social environment to implement the Maputo protocol

Nairobi, Kenya, 16 – 18th September 2004

At the conclusion of the international conference on FGM, "developing a political, legal and social environment to implement the Maputo protocol", at the invitation of no peace without justice, the government of Kenya and the association of media women in Kenya (AMWTK), with the technical support of AIDOS organized within the framework of the STOP FGM campaign" and support by CIDA GFSP and UNICEF jointly with the Swedish government, the Sigrid Rausing trust, the French embassy and GIZ, in Nairobi from 16-18 September 2004:

1. **Emphasizing** that most African and Arab countries affected by the practice of FGM have been present at the Nairobi international conference on fgm in the form of government and civil society representatives, together with participants from other countries, making it a unique opportunity for dialogue and exchange of information concerning how best to develop a political, legal and social framework for the abandonment of fgm, with a particular focus on the ratification and implementation of the Maputo protocol on women's rights to the African charter on peoples' and human rights together with all other international instruments concerning harmful practices;

2. **Recognizing** that invaluable participation of Kenya actors both in the Nairobi international conference and in efforts to bring an end to FGM, as evidenced by the participation of more than 600 representatives of civil society and Government from all over Kenya.

3. **Recognizing** that African and Arab countries are at different stages in the struggle against FGM and recognizing in this context, the role played by the government of Kenya in spearheading the process, and in particular welcoming the declaration of

H.E. Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya, read by Hon Arthur Moody Awori, vice president of the Republic, of Kenya's intention to work towards ratification of the Maputo Protocol;

4. **Recognizing** that the struggle against FGM is not the special agenda of a few people, but is an important regional and global concern;

5. **Taking note** of the results obtained by the thematic sessions, the quality of the contributions by the speakers and all the participants, as well as the most valuable technical contribution by experts on issues related to FGM, all of which have made the successful outcome of the conference possible;

6. **Reiterates** the importance of the international "Stop FGM" Appeal, launched on 10 December 2002 and

signed by African First Ladies and a number of other international personalities, as well as the Program on "Zero Tolerance to FGM" launched by the Inter-African Committee (IAC) on 6 February 2003 and later endorsed by the United Nations;

7. **Appreciating** and thanking the organizers for taking the initiatives to convene this International Conference in Nairobi and expressing appreciation in particular to the Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWTK) in collaboration with civil society organizations and the Government of Kenya for the warm welcome received in Nairobi and for ensuring the best working conditions for the meeting;

8. **Thanking** the sponsors and other contributors for providing the resources for this International Conference and its follow-up, which enabled these critical discussions and the sharing of experiences and information to take place in a setting that facilitated open dialogue;
We, the participants, hereby declare that:

A. The Nairobi International Conference on FGM is one of the key steps in an ongoing commitment to recognize FGM as a political, economic, social, cultural and human rights issue, implementing the operating parts of the Cairo Declaration for the elimination of FGM, adopted at the Cairo Conference on Legal Tools for the prevention of Female Genital Mutilation of 21-23 June 2003.

B. The practice of FGM is a violation of the rights of women and girls and an assault on their human dignity. It has no basis in any religion but instead degrades the status of women and deprives women and girls of their basic human rights. Efforts for the abandonment of FGM should be undertaken so as to reinforce the fact that FGM is a human rights issue and a political issue; in particular, public information and education on the practice of FGM should stress human rights and political solutions, as medicalisation of the practice obscures the problem and prevents the development of effective, long-term solutions. Medical professionals in particular should reject FGM and recognize the problem as a violation of the human rights of girls and women.

C. The Maputo Protocol, adopted by consensus by the Heads of State of the African Union in July 2003, is the most important initiatives for the abandonment of harmful traditional practices, especially article 5 on FGM. Ratification and effective implementation of the Protocol by all African countries and its rapid entry

into force would be a considerable step forward not only for the abandonment of FGM and the protection of women and girls at risk of undergoing the practice, but also for women's rights and gender issues in general.

- D. Bearing in mind the law-making role of parliaments, Governments and the specific role of Pan-African Parliament and all other Pan-African bodies, civil society, including non-governmental organizations, community based organizations, religious leaders and all members of the community, should stress the implications and benefits of ratification and implementation of the Maputo Protocol, through lobbying, the provision of information and other appropriate activities.

We, the participants, hereby recommend that:

1. All Afro-Arab States, as well as other States concerned with the practice of Female Genital Mutilation, should implement the Cairo Declaration in an integrated manner.
2. Legislation prohibiting FGM has a moral force and an educational impact that could provide an effective deterrent. To this end:
 - a. Member States of the African Union should implement the provisions of the Maputo Protocol on FGM in their domestic legislation;
 - b. States not members of the African Union should also enact legislation prohibiting FGM based on the principles of Article 5 of the Maputo Protocol to enhance their own domestic legislation and to support the efforts of the African Union;
 - c. Arab countries who are not members of the African Union should call upon the Arab League to include harmful practices in the Arab Charter for Human Rights as a regional mechanism to protect the human rights of women and girls.
3. Comprehensive legislation prohibiting FGM must be enacted and, where it is already adopted, appropriate strategies must be implemented to ensure its effective enforcement, including capacity building of all relevant actors. Such strategies should developed in consultation with the relevant actors, including law enforcement officials and civil society, in order to ensure effective and consistent public information and education, particularly in terms of informing whoever performs FGM, including health professionals and traditional circumcisers, that performing FGM gives rise to legal and professional sanctions.
4. In implementing the relevant provisions of the Maputo Protocol, member States of the African union and other should adopt a broad-based consultative process, including non-government organization, community-based organization, religious leaders, members of the community and other. Where appropriate, governments should seek technical assistance from organizations and bodies with

particular expertise in incorporating international obligations in national legislation related to women's rights, in particular the condemnation and prohibition of FGM. The prohibition on FGM should be integrated into broader legislation addressing other issues, such as gender equality;

Protection from of violence against women and children;

Women's reproductive health and rights;

Children's rights.

5. The use of law should be one component of a multi-disciplinary approach to stopping the practice of FGM. For the successful abandonment of FGM, there needs to a common and integral approach to addressing FGM and to finding solutions for combating the practice and to effect long-lasting behavioral changes in society. Public information and education campaigns should be undertaken so as to involve as many people as possible and to enhance ownership of strategies and activities aimed at the abandonment of FGM by all Africans. In addition to the provision of information to the general public, those groups and individuals who require particular information about FGM should be targeted at, including those at risk, parents and those who would practice FGM, including traditional circumcisers, clan elders and men, as well as health care providers.
6. Academic institutions, as they are requested by the International Conference on population and Development (ICPD-Cairo), should be recognized for the knowledge and expertise they can provide in the implementation of a social and political environment for the eradication of FGM.
7. Girls and women who are willing to refuse to undergo FGM, for themselves or for their children, and regions and community leaders who are willing to take a firm stand against the practice of FGM, such as those who have pledged to mobilize against FGM during this Conference, need to be supported and encouraged. In addition, support and encouragement should be provided to do so, in order to change the perception in many countries that men in countries affected by FGM are in favour of the practice.
8. Programs of rehabilitation and counseling for victims of FGM should be implemented, in particular in terms of health services, legal and judicial support, emotional and psychological counseling as well as vocational training. Government, civil society, faith based organizations and members of the community should work together in the development of strategies and in the provision of such services.
9. Governments and international actors should provide political support and, where possible, financial resource to empower NGOs in their struggle to stop FGM. Governments in particular should consider allocating

allocating resources in the national budget and working with civil society in the implementation of strategies for the abandonment of FGM, including through collaboration in public information and education activities.' In addition, governments must ensure that national NGOs are able to pursue their activities freely.

10. States affected by FGM should formulate a national plan of action for the eradication of FGM with time-

bound objectives. Plans should be formulated and implemented through a participatory approach involving for the implementation of the plan of action. The African union should assign to the African commission on the rights of the child and other relevant bodies the responsibility to monitor implementation of the commitment by states parties of the abandonment and eradication of FGM. ■

Empowering Indigenous Women of Africa: The case of Nawoden – Kenya

By Nancy S. Kireu

Nabwisha-e-maa Development Network (NAWODEN) is a Community Based organization situated in the South West of Kenya in Loitokitok Division of Kajiado District. It is a membership organization founded by 28 women from Kimanu, Imbirikani, Eselenkei, Rombo, Kuku, Luolopon and Lintonet locations. NAWODEN was set up to empower Indigenous Maasai women through education, culture and resource mobilization. The Maasai women are among the most marginalized groups in Kenya through cultural taboos that alienate women from mainstream formal leadership and limits women rights in possession of property. While women have limited access to some communal owned resources, they are not consulted in decision making on social, cultural, and economic development of their community.

The Maasai women like other pastoralist women in Kenya face serious challenges in the development field. They are not allowed to own property and their consultation on resource use and management is limited as it is controlled by men. They have been confined to a life of silent participants in development as their opinion is hardly sought by the male dominated society. Women contribute significantly in social development and other societal roles and their efforts need to be harnessed for the benefit of strengthening the Maasai community human resource development base.

This alienation detaches women from communal resources exposing them to marginalization, exposure to poverty and deprivation of their basic human rights including education and health care. NAWODEN was established in order to mobilize Maasai women and bring them closer to the decision-making process. NAWODEN engages to do this through culture, education and economic empowerment.

NAWODEN was established to advocate for Maasai women roles in social, political and economic dispensation. NAWODEN founder members realize that by sidelining women, the Maasai community has

continuously backtracked in development compared to the other communities.

NAWODEN owes its establishment to its relationship with Indigenous Information Network (IIN) and the Indigenous Peoples Programs (IPP) of the World Council of Churches (WCC). NAWODEN first activities achieved in 2000 and 2001 was through a grant from WCC-IPP. This grant was the first to help the organization start to plan and brain storm on what the vision should be for the network. Indigenous Information Network played a crucial role in allocation of time in facilitating the process and resources to NAWODEN to ensure a success.

In 2003 NAWODEN got support from the UN Voluntary Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples to implement a project known as the Maasai Cultural and Resource Center. The grant proved the United Nation's commitment to support the Indigenous Peoples world wide. As a Women's group, it enabled us have a visibility, a step towards the empowerment of the Maasai women who had not even known what the United Nation was.

The Project was to:

- Build the capacity of women to enable them participate fully in developmental processes.
- Increase the level of awareness of the women in understanding their fundamental human rights.
- Promote the Maasai culture through documentation of songs, sayings and historical background of the Maasai people and,
- Promote income generating activities for the women.

The following was achieved:

- A strategic planning workshop was conducted and all the 28 women participated in the planning process. 5 strategic areas were identified namely; Girl child education, Health, Environment & Culture, Family livelihoods and Institutional strengthening.
- Bursary support to rescued girls. NAWODEN is an advocate for girls education and it has been able to rescue a number of girls in the division from early



Lucy Nasiru, a member of NAWODEN with Josephine Kiptumui from Trusmi attending a women's conference

marriages. Some of this girls are taken to boarding schools and the burden of paying school fees is left to the woman. 25 girls (10 girls in secondary school and 15 in primary school) benefited from this fund.

- NAWODEN was able to purchase a 5 acres piece of land. This land is meant for the construction of cultural museum for promotion and education of the youth on Maasai culture and heritage. It will also serve as an income generating activity for the women. The women have also started to collect artifacts to be displayed at the museum.
- NAWODEN has also participated in a number of meetings to monitor the project and also discuss future plans.

The project help the members define and discuss critically their vision and mission.

The vision is better livelihoods for the indigenous Maasai women in Amboseli region through education, economic empowerment, and cultural development.

The Mission is empower the indigenous Maasai women to improve their livelihoods and enhance their educational standards

Our main objectives for NAWODEN is:

- advocate for the importance of girl child education
- promotion of Maasai culture through preserving the positive aspects of culture and language for the benefit of future generations
- promote socio-economic activities to increase the income levels of the women and
- strengthening the capacity of women to enable them participate in development activities

(Other activities undertaken by the project were:

- workshops and meetings to educate the community on the importance of girl child education,
- guiding and counseling of girls in schools and at homes,

- rescue girls who are forced into early marriages,

- lobby and network with other Indigenous women organizations, NGOs and other institutions,

- income generating activities and
- exchange visits and study tours.

- NAWODEN hopes to engage itself in Early Childhood development a program. This is after attending a conference organized by Christian Children Fund,

Bernard Van leer foundation and Indigenous Information Network. The participation was encouraged and sponsored by Indigenous Information Network in order to open door for her network to participate and set up Early Childhood Education among the members to encourage both interest and promotion of traditional knowledge learning and the preservation of our cultural languages. NAWODEN will use part of its new home it is setting to make a structure where the young children will be taught and fed. The ECD is a unique form of education that takes into consideration the people's culture and traditions and incorporates them into the learning system. NAWODEN will use this opportunity to teach the young children songs, tell stories to enable them understand the richness of the Maasai culture.

- Income generation is another area NAWODEN will focus on. They hope to do this through conducting market surveys and already they have been able to identify some potential markets for their products. They will also start a savings scheme for the members.
- Girl child education: This is ongoing and more funding is needed in this activity as more girls are now aware of the existence of the organization and therefore more are coming to request for support.
- Institutional Building: NAWODEN identified the need of a volunteer working with them to assist in sharing information and following up of issues. An office space was given by the Amboseli Tsavo Group Ranches Conservation Association. This will help in improving communication among the group members. The members will also participate in workshops and conferences by other women organizations to be able to learn from them. They also expressed the need to visit women in other parts of Kenya to learn from their experiences. ■

Mariamamu Lekisemon

From child bride to human rights fighter

By Jane Godla

When 12 year old Mariamamu Ntusan Lekisemon, ran away from an early forced marriage, she must have set sights on what she wanted to do with her life. And she didn't care that running away at such a tender age posed so many dangers to her life, particularly because she made the decision at night and could not wait for morning.

"I told my husband that I didn't want to get married and was therefore leaving," recalls Mariamamu. "He called elders to intercept and convince me to stay but I refused because I wanted to go to school."

The sad thing about the whole business is that she had not been informed about the intended marriage. "I was only informed after the ceremony started."

Mariamamu now, 25, is very busy advocating for Kenyans' human rights. She was also a delegate at the Kenya Constitution Review Conference that has just completed writing the Draft Constitution.

And it was not an easy road for her. Mariamamu, coming from Marigat Division, in Baringo District faced a lot of hostility when she started advocating for the need for Kenyans to change the Constitution.

She came from an area that fully supported the government of former President Daniel arap Moi, who was previously very much opposed to the Constitution being changed.

Although Mariamamu was previously a businesswoman before she started advocating for human rights, she went through a rough path before reaching the stage where now the Constitution has been rewritten and is just waiting to be adapted.

How did she get hooked into this business of fighting for human rights?

"I was invited to a human rights



Mariamamu Lekisemon making a presentation at a women's conference in Nairobi

seminar and constitution Review," Mariamamu says. "This is when I knew that there were some rights that I was entitled to, yet I was not getting them."

She elaborates: "I was also made to understand about the Constitution and why it needed to be changed."

It was after this that Mariamamu was hooked because she knew she could help work towards changing the Constitution for the people of Kenya.

All this began in 1996 when the question of the need to review the Constitution came up. She then worked as an observer in 1997 elections.

"Immediately thereafter I was appointed to co-ordinate several non government organisations on civic education for the Constitution Review process," says Mariamamu.

And with that she started preaching the gospel of the need for a new regime and Constitution change.

Although she was still doing her small business of selling clothes, she was constantly interrupted because she had to attend many civic education

meetings and trainings — both at local and national level — as the Constitution Review went into top gear.

Listening to Mariamamu speak one gets mesmerised at how far she has moved. After running away from her forced marriage, she insisted that her father take her back to school and return back the dowry that her husband had paid.

The old man threatened and cursed Mariamamu but she was not one to be cowed. He even rejected her and said she should not count herself as his daughter. However he eventually returned what he had received from his in-laws and took his daughter back to school.

She went through Elume Primary School before joining Marigat Secondary School. It was not easy learning because she would occasionally spend time at home due to lack of school fees despite receiving a little assistance from the Catholic Church in her area. She eventually had to drop out when she was in Third Form.

The saying charity begins at home worked very well with Mariamu. She started by first making her family aware about their rights and the need to change the constitution. But it was not easy once she moved out of her family's sitting room. "People at first rejected the idea because they were worried about how the Kaniu government would respond," Mariamu says.

"I started by holding talks in my church and talking to church members," Mariamu says. "But I could not go on for long because my priest was being threatened and he then stopped me from using the church."

She then went to speak to people during chief's barazas but they also rejected her because they were afraid of what the government was going to do to them.

"The administration said that I was bringing opposition politics to the area."

There were many times when she was chased away by police for advocating for change. "I was told that in Moi's government I cannot talk about constitution change and human rights," recalls Mariamu of her woes. "I was told to take my 'Ufungamano business' to Nakuru and Nairobi."

She then had to be tactical. "I resorted to using books and calendars to enable people read for themselves what all this was about."

Mariamu went into great lengths to achieve her dreams. "I would meet people in a hotel pretending to have tea or lunch while I was actually telling them about the need for change."

It reached a time when if she was seen with anybody the police would come and chase her away. Being a catechist also gave her the opportunity to talk to people. She also took advantage of women's merry-go-round meetings.

After being harassed for a long time, Mariamu opted to be ferrying people to Nakuru town, about 100 kilometers away to teach them about Constitution Review.

"It was only after Moi retired as President that people realised they were missing a lot and that they had actually been denied their rights."

Right now she finds the administration in Marigat seeking her out to bring seminars on civic education and human rights to the town. "I actually get surprised because even the police want to know about human rights."

Mariamu is happy that people are now giving their views freely about the problems they face.

During her stint as a delegate at the Constitution Review talks, Mariamu was a member of the Finance Committee. "I believe when given a chance one can do a lot," she says, adding, "The only problem is that there were too many people."

The whole process was successful despite the many interruptions they went through. Mariamu is happy that they were able to write the Zero Draft, which has been adopted to be Draft Constitution of Kenya 2004.

After this, the marginalized groups are now recognised. "I was happy to see all names of Kenyan tribes documented," she says.

About women in general she would like to see more of them take up leadership positions starting from district, to national upon regional levels. "There is a place reserved for women in all hierarchies, she says.

However she is sad that, Indigenous woman might face difficulties due to lack of support from the grassroots and that there are very few of them who can vie for such positions.

"Indigenous women need to be empowered to stand out as leaders and compete with other women for

leadership positions."

She blames all these on the fact that the indigenous woman is not cultured to volunteer in leadership. "They hardly stand up to speak where there are minorities."

She believes that there is hope for a better life if they volunteer to speak in public forums, attend meetings and seminars as well as practise leadership right from the grassroots.

She would also like to see more Indigenous women brought together to enable them be informed about



Joining the community in a local workshop.

human rights, the constitution and leadership skills.

"This will enable them get ideas about improving themselves," Mariamu advises. "The Indigenous woman must come out and struggle to compete with other women and not just view themselves as weak women."

She would also like to see the Indigenous woman encouraging their daughters to be brave and not be subjugated to living in fear and suffering from inferiority complex.

Now that she is through with rewriting the Constitution, Mariamu says she is going to be very busy with civic education teaching the people about the difference between the new Constitution and the old one. ■

Mililani Trask

Mililani Trask is a Native Hawaiian attorney with an extensive background on Native Hawaiian land trusts, resources and legal entitlements. Her work has been cited by the Hawaii Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and published by *Cultural Survival* and *IWGLA* Magazines on issues relating to native people and human and civil rights.

In October 1993, Ms. Trask was invited to become a member of the prestigious Indigenous Initiative for Peace (IIP), a global body of indigenous leaders convened by Nobel Laureate Rigoberta Menchu-Turn, the United Nations Goodwill Ambassador to the UN Decade on Indigenous Peoples. Since that time, Ms. Trask has worked in the global arena for passage of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In this respect, Ms. Trask attended and participated in the United Nations Global Consultations in Cairo, Beijing, Copenhagen and Vienna as a Pacific Delegate to the indigenous caucus.

In 1995, Ms. Trask was elected the second Vice Chair of the General Assembly of Nations of the



In a ceremonial mood at the IIP, May 2002

the Indigenous Women's Network, a coalition of Native American Women whose work includes community based economic development, social justice, human rights, housing and health.

Ms. Trask is an acknowledged Peace advocate and has studied and worked for seven years with Mother Theresa of Calcutta.

Ms. Trask is the Convener for a Native Hawaiian NGO entitled Na Koa Ikaika o Ka Lahui Hawai'i that has worked in the international arena on the Draft Declaration for Indigenous Peoples and the World Conference on Racism for 15 years.

From 1987-1998, Ms. Trask served as the Interim and elected Kia'aina (Governor/Prime Minister) of Ka Lahui Hawai'i, the Native Hawaiian Nation, with a citizenry of over 20,000 Hawaiians.

From 1998 - 2000, Ms. Trask was elected to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs as Trustee at Large.

Ms. Trask has served as the Executive Director of the Gibson Foundation from 1987 to present, a private, non-profit dedicated to assisting Native Hawaiians with housing issues, and housing programs.

In 2001, Ms. Trask was nominated and appointed as the Pacific representative to Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to serve a three-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2002. Ms. Trask was appointed to the position by the President of the Economic Social Council of the United Nations and is currently considered an indigenous expert in the United Nations in international and human rights law.



Mililani, on the right, with her friends who have supported her through her work.

Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organizations (UNPO), an international body comprising of the unrecognized nations of the world. His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, as an alternative forum to the United Nations, founded UNPO in 1991. Ms. Trask assumed the position vacated by Ken Saro-Wira, the Ogoni human rights advocate, who was killed by the Nigerian Government.

Ms. Trask is a founding member and current Chair of

Partnership that brought two friends together

In 1985 and 1986 two women's groups started in Kirauka, Oloshobor and Iluguvij areas of Oloshobor situated in Ngong division of Kajiado District. The women who began these groups were for the most part illiterate but wanted to get groups going to help the community. One, called Enguraj (child), was begun to help young people who had a chance for further education. The other group, Nkanyak (people who try) was begun as a Church group to assist in the Church and in the community. These two groups came together to work as one unit after an NGO, Mennonite Central Committee, offered to assist and the women chose what they knew so well, bead work.

CC donated some beads and the two groups began to work together in 1990. Each group continues with its own executive and bank account and each was registered as self-help Group with Social Services. Each person in each group paid something to enter the group and they also contribute something small to help others and to keep their own work going. The total group chose a new name for their business enterprises and thus **NAMAYIANA** was born. Namayiana means, "blessed" in the Maasai language. After several attempts, the new group was also able to convince Social Services, that, in fact, two groups could work together as one and had been doing so for some years. They were given registration for **NAMAYIANA** in 2001 as a self-help group. Each of the two groups does its own things to assist its members and the entire community but Namayiana together, headed by the chairladies from the two groups, the chairlady from each group, does the bead business.



Minister for Planning, Prof. Anyang Nyong'o visiting an exhibition stand for Namayiana Women's Group.

The bead business has grown and each member has improved in beading and getting things done on time so as to keep customers. There are still problems, as working with 112 women is no easy task. However, the positive effects of this project on the community can easily be seen. More children are in school, the children are better fed and clothed, the women have been able to get themselves cupboards and things they wanted to have and even fix up their houses and in some cases, build one.

This group works with 112 women in this semi-arid area in the District of Kajiado North, Ngong Division. The group has received help from Mennonite Central Committee for a number of years and also received a grant from the American Embassy to build a stone house for classes, meetings, sales room and classroom. The women were able to match the grant from the Embassy with their profits from sales. The group pays salaries to the local people each month. These salaries come from the groups own funds and pays workers in the shop and for the shop's security at night. The money is also used when the group travels to do business in Nairobi.

The group wants to be independent in terms of finances. It wants to start depending on its own and has done so especially at the time when their business with Japan was at its best. It was assisted by the Kenya Export Promotion Council and the Japanese External Trade Organization to go to Japan and from those craft fairs, it received very large orders which it completed well and on time and did a lot of business. Most of the income from these sales



Catherine Mutafua, Co-ordinator of the group, Kahali - one of the chairperson's and a member of the women's group.

goes to the women while any profit is used for the business, either to run the vehicle or to pay the salaries and do repairs. The vehicle is a vital necessity, as the customer does not want to be waiting while you stay on the road hoping for a possible vehicle to come or walk to Ngong town.

Situated in the semi-arid area there is always scarce of resources. Water is one of those scarce resources in the area. Water supply is limited and where it is available, like the other pastoralist areas water for their livestock is priority. The few sources are over taxed and when drought sets in, people have to walk for long distances far for water even for drinking. When drought is extreme, the animals often have to be moved to another location causing disruption in the family and expense. Animals become weak and ill and there are many losses.

Namayians has tried to do the best to see if it would solve the problem but it is still a pain in the tooth for the women. They have a water tank next to the shop, which they got through their own savings from beadwork and from the Mennonite Central Committee. The group decided also to start a garden to assist in food securing especially during drought spells. Unfortunately, it has not

succeeded yet due to lack of water and funds to fence and protect it from domestic animals. There is need to upgrade the water supply by changing the taps which will help is easy access to the women and the garden and will ease the workload of the pastoralist women. The real answer would be a borehole on site that would serve not only the group members, but also a good portion of the local community.

Despite all the water supply problems and the effects of drought, Namayiana Women's group has stayed and worked together as a team and the members believe that, in order for the women to concentrate on marketing and doing the orders, they still need some assistance to improve their business so that they can, in fact, provide for themselves. It is estimated that about 1,000 of the approximately 3,000 people in the area are directly affected by the work of this group. They are keen to venture in other income-generating activities if they are trained for the diversification and resource mobilization. The sky is the limit for them and their hope is one that one day, they will eradicate poverty if only all their children could go to school. ■

Empowering Girls through Education

by Genet Abebaw
Pastoralist Concern Association Ethiopia (PACAE)

Education is the core and principal engine for development. A sound socio-economic development of a given nation cannot be secured without commensurate human resource development. Thus, education is means for a nation building and poverty reduction. Likewise, basic (primary) education is the starting point for the survival, growth and development of humanity.

Giving girls the chance to basic primary education is empowering them to make wise decision on the lives they wish to lead in the future. Investing² on our future generation on whom the survival, stability and advancement moral and ethical responsibility of every citizen. This was the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26), and the subsequent plans, conventions and commitments in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s education as a birth right to every one.³

In Ethiopia nine decades elapsed before the realization of Education for all was reached. However, the hopes and aspiration to Universalize Primary Education failed to materialize even at the dawn of the 21st century. Eight million children (nearly 60%) out of 12.5 million have no access to basic primary education (The minimum essential learning needs). Less than half the average for sub-Saharan

Africa (MOH, 1998) AND 67% adults are illiterate; unable to read and write. The UNICEF report has ranked Ethiopia as the third last country in the provision of primary education in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The situation is more disturbing when one looks at the disparity of education opportunities with regard to regional, spatial and gender differences. Among others, the most common problems which hinders the attainment of Universal Primary Education (UPE) are huge decreases in enrollment, drop outs, repeaters, absence of adequate instructional materials, poor learning environment, shortage of qualified staff, absence of appropriate technology, acute financial constraints, etc. These and other factors hinder health and socio-economic development of the nation at large (Hussein and Postlethwaite, 1994). Apart from this, many who completed their studies are said to be functionally illiterate.

It is unlikely that, the formal schooling the government alone can respond to the dire basic education needs in the near future in a country like Ethiopia. Universalizing primary education is now targeted by the year 2015 and as our line in the education sector development program, in the coming thirteen years, special attention will be given to equitable expansions of quality basic education.

Nonetheless, the current situation clearly calls upon greater involvement of NGOs in developing alternative approaches to supplement the effort of the government and the formal schooling system in order to achieve the goal of UPE by the year 2015. Apart from these general problems of education, the pastoralist communities residing in arid and lowland areas of the country who depend, for their livelihood, on livestock husbandry in this harsh environment have rarely had the opportunity of appropriate or even modest access to development interventions. Health, education, agriculture, water and other essential services are at basic levels when compared to the settled highland areas of the country in terms of both quantity and quality. More alarming in this respect is that even the meager services that do exist are, in most cases, irrelevant to the agro-ecological conditions of the area and to the socio-cultural realities of pastoralist communities. For instance, agricultural extension service which is the government's favorite development intervention and popular in some highland areas has done little to support nomadic cattle development as expressed by representatives of relevant development organizations in the area. This is because the extension package focuses on crops and techniques suitable to highland areas with plenty of rainfall and population with much background in farming crops, which has little relevance to arid lowland agro-ecological zone and nomadic population with little farming tradition and mobile life style depending on cattle rearing. The few formal schools in the area have never utilized curricula particularly geared to nomadic community. As a result of this neglect, pastoralists remain one of the most vulnerable population groups in Ethiopia. It is only very recently that discussion and awareness building on pastoralist-oriented development in Ethiopia has begun emerging.

Education in pastoralist areas follows the same pattern as other development sectors. Overall education in Ethiopia is inadequate. In 1999, Ethiopia was determined to have the lowest primary education enrollment in the world within a system of education characterized by high levels of inequity and disparity of all types (age, sex, marginal population groups like the disabled, pastoralists, etc.). In the pastoralist communities of Filtu Woreda enrollment rates for formal basic education are less than the national average. The overall Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) for grades 1-8 in 1998/99 for boys was 55.9% and 35.3% for girls for a total of 45.8%.¹ The overall GER of for Somali Region was 8%.² This suggests that enrollment rates among pastoralists are even lower as they do not traditionally have access to formal education structures. Not only is pastoralist children marginalized due to the lack of formal school infrastructures, they are further marginalized due to the inherent inflexible and top-down approach of formal education policies in Ethiopia.

Dollo Districts is one of the three Districts that

constitute Liban Zone in the Somali National Regional State of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The District has three settlement areas among which Dollo Ado town is the major one. The weather in the Zone is considered as semi arid with annual temperature ranging between 35°C-40°C and annual rainfall is less than 400 mm. The populations are ethnic Somali who are predominantly pastoralist and depending on a livestock production for their livelihood with exception of limited farming along riverbanks. Women who are residing in small towns usually depend on petty trading for their livelihoods.

The traditional status and division of labor regarding the roles and responsibilities of women in the Somali ethnic group differs in that domestic activities predominantly belong to the women while men are given the privilege and power of making decisions on the utilization of economic resources.

Due to the frequent conflict and drought in the area for the last decade women in Dollo Districts have experienced major changes in their roles and responsibilities as the result of which they abandoned the pastoral way of life and adopt new way of life. This new way of life forced most of the women to bear new responsibilities such as financing household expenses through exercising some petty trading. Thus women in the District were forced by situations to focus on petty trading in order to feed their families.

In this process of generating income to help the family, the girl's labor has been desperately needed at home to replace mothers who are always out of home for petty trading. This in a way has created extensive labor demand on girls, which has prevented them from going to school. Girls' education is further hampered by cultural factors such as: Household responsibilities, Early marriage, Fear of abduction, Absenteeism, Religious factor, Cultural factor, Economic problem and Lack of separate school for girls.

Moreover, the existing few formal schools in the area has never utilized curricula particularly geared to nomadic community but also were not flexible to adjust to the girls' needs in particular and that of pastoralists as a whole. In this regard of the very few pastoralists children who are enrolled in formal education, significant numbers of children and/or adults migrate during dry months (December-February) to move with their herds in search of pasture and water. The conventional school system, however, has no provision for re-entering students who were not able to maintain consistent attendance during the school year. Besides, it doesn't also consider economic, religious and cultural factor that hinders them from school.

As a result of this neglect, pastoralists remain one of the most vulnerable population groups in Ethiopia. In addition to this, the numbers of functional school are limited and characterized by untrained teachers and poor facilities. Enrollment rates are extremely low depicting lack

of the communities' confidence in the existing system.

The combination of these and other factors have made it almost impossible to improve access and quality of basic education, have created inequities within the system, and has alienated community from management and ownership of education.

Very recently discussions and awareness building on pastoralist-oriented development in Ethiopia has begun emerging. PCAE having seen the situation design a project entitled Girls Group Home Education and implemented since 1998 having goal and objectives.

The goal is to provide alternative viable basic educational opportunities to pastoral children and adult basic education.

The objective is to Provide alternative viable basic education for girls of age group of 7-14 by establishing separate school in near by village, develop and community awareness and involvement on girls education, develop a

schooling system appropriate for pastoralist girls in particular, develop an affordable teacher support system of pastoralists basic education centers and to strengthen child center education.

The implementation of this project has brought some impacts like the change in attitudes of the community towards girls education, good opportunity for pastoral girls to contribute to the household economy by engaging in different business activities, has improved the security of girls in attending their education and running their business and it has given good opportunity for pastoral community to learn from their own geographic, social and economic context.

There has been some challenges such as absenteeism, weak economic status of the community to expand and support the program and low capacity of the government line department to hand over the program. ■

Facilitating restocking in ILkishaki Samburu District

By Joseph Lepanyo - CODES

Ilkishaki is a community based organization in Lodokejek location, Samburu District. The area lies within a climatic transitional zone between the drier lowlands and the moderate zone known as the Lorraki plateau. The community is predominantly pastoralist but a small proportion practices some crop farming. The population of Ilkishaki in 1998 was approximately 2400 people. The consecutive droughts of 1993 and 1997 had decimated livestock populations in the area leaving many household poor. In 1998, a bilateral organization funded by the Dutch government DPRIP (Drought Preparedness Intervention and Recovery Programme) undertook a survey and selected Ilkishaki as a pilot community. The organization facilitated a two week participatory appraisal in which the community came up with priority needs, ways and strategies to address these needs.

The community planned a restocking activity that targeted 45 most vulnerable households. The main objective was to raise the economic status of these households in order to reduce poverty levels in the community. A viable restocking package was discussed in which the DPRIP contributed 25 shoats and the community contributed 15 shoats for each beneficiary. The process of selection of beneficiaries started from a wealth ranking exercise which was done earlier in the process during data collection. All households that were in the lower bracket were considered against an agreed

criteria just to know those who were worse off than others. The criteria included such considerations.

- Marital Status
- No. of dependants
- Age of dependants
- Ability of close relatives and their support
- Number of stock owned by the household
- Physical ability

The outcome was a further categorization of the lower bracket group into three more groups, just as the wealth ranking did to the whole community. Those in the lower bracket in this exercise were again ranked against factors that were more focused to the household level which are more personal, such as:

- Personal factors that may have led to poverty (habits)
- Ability of persons to look after stock
- Gender
- Physical ability

Each of the households being considered was scored against the criteria. The forty five were selected based on the outcome of this exercise.

The community selected a committee, which included both men and women to oversee implementation. A plan of action was drawn. The community first made their contribution of 15 shoats per beneficiary. This was quite a difficult task, which took two months. Each beneficiary was also assigned a personal responsibility to obtain from

friends and relatives even from far localities, a substantial number of the 15 shoats before the community topped up. These goats were branded and distributed to beneficiaries. The project (DPIRP) gave funds to the committee to buy, brand and distributed the shoats, after which project staff held meetings with beneficiaries to verify. Funds were given in phases that are manageable to the community. Goats were bought at an agreed price. Women formed part of the committee and a substantial portion of beneficiaries. As committee members, they were involved in decision-making. Women also actively participated in the PRA process both in their own groups and in joint groups.

The participatory approach was key to success of the restocking activity. It enabled a focused view and utilization of available resources in a beneficial manner. Commitment to this process by both organization staff and the community was very important. Key among resources actually utilized is a institutional framework in place in terms of committee, social structures and the administrative units at community level which played an important role. It was also important that the restocking was carried out at a time when plenty of pasture existed. The area was also free of the time of livestock diseases that would have made efforts to restock the poor very difficult.

The main challenges experienced were:

- The community being not used to the participatory approach. This included the chiefs, councilors and other leaders who usually get opportunity to make decisions.
- The inadequacy of the community to fulfill own pledges in time as agreed.
- Conceptual aspects of the need to involve women at all stages.
- The selection of beneficiaries was strenuous and clouded with a lot of anxiety.

At first the chiefs, councilors and other prominent leaders tried to shadow organization staff from other community members. While the community members would always suggested that the leaders know better and more, thus giving them the opportunity to make decisions on their behalf. This was overcome by assignment of mobilization roles to this category and putting them in a group of their own to look at the wider context of things. For example to provide information concerning their division e.g. Map of entire division while the community drew the map of their area. Though it was prudent to plan with community and have a timeframe of all activities, it was also understood that they were not keen on timelines and tight scheduling.

Besides the expected date of attaining the activities, an allowable limit was introduced by which the responsible party prepared a report and informed the others concerned about the cause of the delay.

Presence of women in meetings and committees did not translate to their participation in project activities. It was therefore realized that during the PRA sessions women work in their own groups and also made presentation. Their participation in meetings was not instant despite their presence, but they were gradually able to talk and put up discussions.

Selection of beneficiaries was a real challenge especially because of the magnitude of the need. To hear with the process of selection entailed a build up of activities and at times caused some uproars, but the people were objective and because a commonly agreed criteria, complaints of being left out were minimal.

Contact with beneficiaries was constant as the project field staff visited them on a regular basis while committee members representative of villages visited their neighbours on monthly basis. The committee met monthly and discussed the restocking program at least for months after completion. This provided a feedback to both DPIRP and the community as it was even be discussed in other unrelated community forums. It enabled quick necessary changes as seen necessary from time to time.

The programme can be said to have met its objectives to a greater extent. Within 2 years of implementation, positive changes were observed.

Milk availability at the level of vulnerable households restocked had improved as most of them had increased their stocks and during the drought of 2000 were able to sell some animals and buy food stuff. Of importance is also the improved social status of these members of the community as gauged by improved participation in community forums. Some of them by the year 2002 have in fact acquired cows through the sale of some goats. Widows and single mothers particularly show a lot of improvement in terms social and economic social and economic well being.

Community knowledge of their own situation is paramount. It was this that enabled through analysis of the state of affairs. They understood every member of their community, their abilities and predicaments.

Given the opportunity to participate, women would, but reluctantly at first, take up chances to prove their conceptual and decision making abilities. This helped to demystify the negative attitude and fears held by society about women's ability and enhanced their social status. Women are not yet able to take up these opportunities automatically, they must be sort and aided to come up. This more so in the Samburu society where their role is being so much downplayed. An activity that is in line with the social and economic system of the people easily gets their support because they have their confidence and experience in doing it. ■

Keepers of Traditional Knowledge

By Monica Litovsky - CEUTA

In the framework of the South American Medicinal Plants Network, the Uruguayan Centre for the Study of Appropriate Technologies (CEUTA) is coordinating a collective activity for the recovery of traditional knowledge on the use of plants as medicine and as food.

We want to tell you about the experience of a group of women, gathered together since November 2002, when we held the first meeting on Women's Cycles and Natural Medicine. At this first meeting, we shared visions and knowledge of plants that help us to keep healthy, considering the various stages of our feminine cycles.

We carried out an awareness-raising activity centred on our relationship with food and with our power to heal. We personally experienced the diversity and respectful dialogue of knowledge because women from the various corners of the country were gathered, having different occupations and situations (rural women, midwives, sexologists, herbalists, members of community groups).

Nelly Carbelo, one of the participants recalls: "We started in November 2002. Previously each one of us in our locations had worked with plants collected in our areas, remembering knowledge that has existed for a very

long time: which were used for health and the important food input. At the first meeting the theme was feminine health in all its phases, folk knowledge, very deeply rooted traditions - some perhaps erroneous, but no doubt containing much wisdom - transmitted to us by our grandmothers and those before them, old women, herb doctors, and women who know how to live better and more healthily, using plants."

We reflected on the cycles of the moon and all the physical and spiritual harmony that we have in us and that surrounds us, that can make our existence a sacred temple to be cared for.

"Closer in time, all this wealth has been set aside in the name of conventional medicine. It is for this reason that we want to restore that wise knowledge that is sometimes hard to reach because the people who have it are wary of "opening up" until they are sure of our good intentions and also because they have been devalued or, what is also sad, people have taken the knowledge of humble and ordinary people and made a profit out of it."

At the second meeting in May 2003, we worked on the relationship we have with folk, traditional and university knowledge, the way in which each type of knowledge is received, the privileged opportunities for each knowledge, their own rationale and the relationship among them all. We had in-depth conversations on the relationship between the official health system in the region and the use of medicinal plants, community and folk experience, research and experience of folk knowledge in Uruguay and Argentina, their implications and results.

In December 2003, our third meeting was held in the forest along a river. The forest was our shelter and our inspiration to share both personal and group research on our native plants, to work on folk botanical descriptions, on traditional recipes and to exchange experiences on restoration and recovery of the opportunity to use Indigenous flora.

Nelly continues with the story: "We met around the fire. The canopy of coronilla (*Scaevola buxifolia*), tana negra (*Senna corymbosa*), guayabo colorado (*Myrcianthes discolor*)

and ulu (*Celtis spinosa*) did what it could to protect us from the fine rain that from time to time was accompanied by the wind. There was a feeling, indiscipherable to me, a mixture of spiritual grandeur and earthly safety. We enjoyed the silence full of messages, the nearby crystalline and unringing river, the silenced night elms, also the frogs and crickets leaving time and space to us.

At each of the meetings we learnt more, not only because of the subject that we were addressing, but also because intuitively and instinctively we captured feelings, knowledge, conclusions, that enrich, strengthening values, opening doors and leaving it clear that we are all at the same time teachers and students.

We started the first activity of the second day: before breakfast, inhaling that special forest aroma in the quiet morning, each one of us in silence, walking alone, choosing a route, observing suspended in time, going back too, until you feel chosen or you choose a grass, a shrub or a tree, and using your senses with all the love Mother Nature gives us.

Once I found "my plant" I sat next to it, feeling its texture, its smell, its taste if it lets me, the form of its stems, its leaves, if it has flowers, fruit, what its surroundings are like, which way it is oriented, if it is alone or has offspring, what other species accompany it and if they are complementary, the type of soil, seeing whether it prefers the sun, half shade or very shady spots or the caress of water. Perhaps I try to feel a bit like the plant, to share its knowledge and how much I can take of its life for my existence and health. I know I can only offer it care, respect and admiration, and if its contribution or message to me is silence: respect it with all the tenderness that led me to choose it.

This was a beautiful task. Once

concluded we met to share our experience.

When we talked and shared this personal experience, such rich and valuable contributions were made by the other companions that they greatly enriched our previous knowledge.

When we are in synch with our surroundings, living these meetings so

intensely, we always feel moved and the time goes by and there is no time to be measured."

This meeting was yet another input to the reactivation of the memory of the forest, which many of our ordinary country people hold, sharing their profound love for the places that they endeavour to shelter from

depreciating attacks. Thus, we gather the different contributions of women and men regarding knowledge and practices related with the good use and conservation of our ecosystems and environments. Thus, we are building up a folk pharmacopoeia on the forest. ■

jayon@chasque.net

The Rendile way of life and its marginalisation of Women

By Elizabeth Leitoro

The Rendile are Cushitic Nomadic Pastoralists who keep goats and camels in arid and semi arid land in the south west of Marsabit District in Eastern Province of Kenya. The Rendile Tribe is made up of 9 Clans, namely: Salch, Muiarhab, Fulchal, Gaborreb, Nebel, Odhola, Ongeli, Rongurux and Dubasahai. The Clan is large with between 1000 to 5000 married male adults and normally split into two groups: Nuhagan and Orowen. The large camel-keeping group is in the lowland and the small goat-keeping group is in the highland. The Clan is strictly exogamous as each settlement is made up of agnate relatives with "We Feelings". The Settlement is called "Grob" or "Our Home". Elders call the children "Walsayaa" or "My Child" and children refer to each other as "Wala".

The social and economic life is determined by pastoral existence. Living exclusively of their herds for milk, meat, blood, skin for clothing and trade in exchange of agricultural products. Their daily and seasonal activity is aimed at herding their livestock. In general, their social organization is characterized by fission of nomadic settlement and their livestock keeping revolving around the fundamental task of achieving sufficient productivity from livestock within existing environment. They migrate seasonally to the highland during the dry season for pasture for their livestock and to the lowlands during the wet season when the pasture is available.

The internal structure provides a high degree of patterning and predictability, the settlements are organized within a circular segmentary descent system. Where each group consists of a local descent group of patrilineal clan agnates to several linkages. Every settlement is autonomous in its political and economic decisions such as herding patterns or relocation of settlements by council of elders. The settlement may periodically break apart along the lineage boundaries and again rejoin or merge with lineage of the same clan in the period of plenty and at ritual occasions such as circumcision and/or other rites of



passage ceremonies. The settlement construction are based on affinal relationships thus have descent ties, families are relative to local descent by marriage or friendship ties. The settlement is composed of different lineage groups. Close males agnate and the family who track from one ancestor is a grandfather. These lineage groupings are an important economic unit. Lineage members share their labour in enclosing and herding livestock together. This group determines the central point of the Clan settlement. Each clan owns equal number of cattle and camels, although individual families concentrate on a type over the other, depending on their residence.

The second organizing principle is the Age Set system. In Rendiles, just like Samburux and the other pastoral groups, they circumcise males into age-sets after every fifteen years. Youths pass through successive age-set grades

as boys to circumcised morans or warriors and married elders. Although girls are not incorporated into named age-sets, they are also distinguished as unmarried, and married women. Both genders use rituals that make the transition from one age-grade to another possible. The rituals are associated within local descent group and considered important rituals in society. They mark the beginning of each age-set with a five ritual ox slaughter performed after circumcision of each age-set, and each age-set is given a name which becomes historical markers as these societies refer to the events as "when Ikimani (certain age-set) are morans there was a sun eclipse or that was when so and so was born. The aspect of age-set organization explains the political and social structure of the wider tribe, in particular, the relation of the morans and elders. Elders have rights to marry unlike morans who wait until the end of the age-set period and are then allowed to marry. The morans focus on their economic role in division of labour as well as armed protection of the herds and settlement from enemy attacks.

This work revolves around the tasks of livestock management as the major feature of their food production system. Specific tasks such as herding, settlement construction, childcare, entertainment, defense, prayers and household chores. The age and sex are the two major criteria for distribution.

Sex roles indicate that elders are responsible for the most political decision of the settlement and economic management of herds and ritual ceremonies. They participate in physical labour such as digging wells, searching for lost herds and arbitrators in settlement and inter clan conflict management. The political system is decentralized where each descent group is politically autonomous with the segmentary system. They hold that all married men have equal rights and voice to political affairs, discussion and collective decision-making. The influential leaders are determined on wealth, prestige and reputation. They act as major decision makers in the society.

Women are socialized to perform the household chores, such as house construction, herd milking, food preparation, child rearing and care, fetching firewood and water, beadwork making and sometimes herding. They play insignificant roles in decision-making, defense and meetings rather in case of trouble they scream for men to respond. This marginalizes them because it takes a lot time off their household chores. They have little access and no control to means of production. The girls too join their few mothers and herd where necessary in role performance. The young boys join the herding force and play no role in household chores.

In marginalization of Rendile women, the culture has played a central role in the following ways:

Socially, the Rendile women have been socialized to mainly preoccupy themselves in domestic domains such as cleaning, childcare and rearing and preparation of food and they have no say in political or economic roles. Men

dominate the economic production and political positions that empower them more than women.

The Rendile woman does not own any property; instead she is an asset to her husband. Men marry many women for prestige. In the society, those with many women and children are regarded as influential and key decision-makers.

Since men own property in Rendile, they are bestowed with decision-making power as the breadwinner. Women have access to products of the herds or livestock but cannot decide on how the stock can be managed or distributed in the family. She is only given a present for herding well or when she is married off. In the case of her husband's death, the mother or the elder son (if mature enough) takes over the family.

Politically, they cannot participate in any meetings, if when they do so, they play a passive role for fear of punishment by their husbands who might think that the women are more superior to them. If a woman challenges a man in society, since she is less experienced or fears the mob beating by all the married men to silence her.

Circumcision of a girl child makes her the subordinate possession. This is so because it limits her self satisfaction and reduces her interest in sex. This gives the man a chance to marry as many young women as possible.

The child socialization process in the society where the girls are taught to perform less valued jobs, such as childcare whereas the boys are taught tough jobs such as herding. Wrestling in a way played a role in marginalization of women. This discipline was instilled to perform only the assigned roles.

Discrimination against the girl child from birth to womanhood is common. In terms of child preference, the boy child is regarded highly and any woman without a son is looked down upon by society and fears that the man will marry another woman to bear him a son. The boy child is the heir of the family's property. Any woman without a boy child will live at the mercy of her husband or the one wife with sons. In education and health service, the boy child is preferred by the breadwinner. He will be given preference to go to school while the girl child is married off in the pretext that there isn't enough money to fund both. This limits her choices hence live in poverty and remains submissive under all conditions to survive with her children. In selection of the spouse, the Rendile woman/girl is brooked at a tender age without her consent. The father or brothers can decide to marry her off to a wealthy relative or a friend. In the job market today, there are few Rendile women due to a lack of an educational background and freedom to work in a more paying occupational job.

In marriage, men can marry many women as possible, whereas the woman remains in the same home until death. Marriage ceremonies/rituals limit her marriage again. This implies that there is no divorce. No man can marry her again.

Rich and Poor

By Rosemary Okello, AWC.

Who is rich and who is poor in Kenya? And what are the results of the inequalities?

In economic terms urban people are richer than those who live in the rural areas. Educated people earn more

and the parents fought a lot about economic matters. Sometimes the mother fled from the home and Kakanya was in fact head of the family. The father would tell her that she should not waste any more of her time going to school.

"I can say now with clarity that the reason I had so many struggles with my mother was because she herself dropped out of school and had to work so hard to feed us.

My mother, who is my hero, thought the kind of life she was leading would not take me anywhere. She wanted me to be a teacher like some women teachers from other communities in our area. Mind you at that time no woman in our area had had any college education. But my father used to tell me that if I went to school I would not get married."

But Kakanya negotiated with her father. She assured him that if he let her finish primary school she would voluntarily get circumcised. At last he agreed and Kakanya and her mother worked hard as casual labourers on other people's farms in order to get money for school fees. She was one of only two girls among 25 boys in the classroom. Both girls were topic of bad talk in the village because they were uncircumcised.

"I was fourteen when I completed my primary education. I knew that if I got circumcised, I would have to be married right away. I didn't want to be married; I wanted to go to secondary school. But in Maasai culture, a girl who isn't circumcised is a shame to her family. At the age of fifteen, and in form two, he insisted and I was forced



This village tells you what poverty is.

money than those who did not go to school and landowners are richer than the landless. Farmers are richer than pastoralists.

This means that the pastoralist communities in Kenya are economically worse off than other communities.

But one group is even more disadvantaged, namely the women among the pastoralists. They most often have limited economic independence; they seldom own land and cattle. Inequality is not only a matter of economy. It is very much a matter of human rights: the right to education, to decide over your own body, the right to health care, to have access to legal service. In most respects of the socio-economic ladder of Kenya, you find the many pastoralist women on the lowest step. They are victims of multiple inequalities.

But there are brilliant exceptions to these rules. There are women who are able to create a better future for themselves and also for their communities. Such is the story of Kakanya Ntuiya, the Maasai girl from Transmara Kenya who negotiated her way to fulfil a dream. Kakanya is the first of eight children.

"I was expected from birth to forgo school, undergo circumcision and marry the man my parents had chosen for me. I was engaged to him when I was five years old. My village is 20 miles from the nearest road. When I was a child, I herded cattle and wrote with chalk on the classroom floor because we had no pens, books or paper."

But Kakanya's mother struggled to help her go to school. The family only had one cow. The father worked in the city



Kakanya Ntuiya.

to undergo the circumcision. He said that he did not mind me continuing with my education, as long as I got circumcised. But he knew very well that, after circumcision, I was going to take long time healing and that I would drop out of school."

Kakunya's mother arranged for a doctor to treat her so she could go back to school after only two weeks. Kakunya finished school and wanted to go to University. A boy in my village was studying in America. No woman she knew of had ever done that. She asked him to send college forms and her application was accepted.

"I was so excited and I told myself, nothing was going to stop me from fulfilling my dreams. So again I had to negotiate with the community. I went to the women groups in my community and told them why I wanted to go to college. I assured them that in educating me, they were investing their money in a good thing and I would come back and build them a girls' school and a maternity hospital because there were none in the community.

They were too frightened by my proposal and they told me to go and speak to the elders since no girl had ever done what I wanted to do. For days, I went to the house of our village elder very early in the morning but he would not talk to me. I told him, I was his daughter and if he helped me now I would return all my knowledge back to the community. After almost three months he agreed to discuss my appeal with the other village elder. In the end the whole village worked to raise the money to send me to America."

Kakunya's father who had been ailing after a stroke could

not walk, but was carried to the venue to witness the *barotza*. People came and brought whatever they had. There were chickens, goats, sheep and even maize just to make sure that Kakunya went to school.

"I really cried with joy just seeing how committed the community was to send me to America. And they raised Ksh 500,000."

But the money was barely enough to take Kakunya to America. The college fee was US\$ 6000. She managed to receive a partial scholarship and worked to raise the rest of the money.

Today, Kakunya has a college degree, she will soon be working for a UN organisation in Washington. But she has not forgotten her promises to her community.

"My mother and a friend of hers came for my graduation. And now all the women in Eaoorwen want their daughters to go to school. I am planning to go to law school and then return to my village to deliver on my promises. I also want to help stop Female Genital Mutilation – this is something that I only came to understand fully during my college education."

This page is published as part of a project on inequalities in Kenya, started in cooperation between the Ministry of Planning and National Development, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, STU 1 and Society for International Development. The aim of the project is to put issues of inequality on the political and public agenda in Kenya through research, publications, regional conferences, media workshops etc.



Women in pastoralist areas spend hours looking for water which is stressful thus poverty is very visible.

Women and biodiversity: The long journey from users to policy-makers

By Paola Deda and Renata Rubian - CBD Secretariate, Montreal, Canada.

Abstract

Although there has been a broad acknowledgment that women's local and traditional knowledge is fundamental to guarantee food security and conserve biological diversity, few women are represented at the managerial and decision-making level of environmental movements and organizations. The United Nations, its agencies and agreements have long promoted the full and effective participation of women in decision-making processes. So how can commitments contained in international agreements be translated into concrete actions? By using the case of the Convention on Biological Diversity, one of the key agreements adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, this article analyses how gender-equitable initiatives tend to assume an ad hoc character with few governments effectively involving women in their sustainable development strategies.

The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the United Nations or its subsidiary bodies.

Keywords: Gender; Biodiversity; United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity; Women's participation; Resources management.

Introduction

Life, nature and the planet Earth have been generally portrayed with female features throughout different civilizations and times. Coatlicue was the earth goddess of life and death in the Aztec mythology. Papa was mother Earth with the Maori people of New Zealand, while Pachama personified the Earth with the Incas. Nantosuelta was the goddess of nature for the Celts. Bharat Mata is the modern Hindu Mother India. Gaia, Mother Earth for the early Greeks, was worshipped as the universal mother for centuries. Also in Greece, Demeter was the goddess of agriculture, recognized as Ceres within Roman mythology.

The notions of fertility, nativity, beginning, birth and renewal have always been associated with females, because of their natural function of conceiving, thus ensuring the continuity of species. Their role as caretakers in the growth of children and in the daily provision for the family's subsistence has also made women the primary users of natural resources for non-commercial purposes in the preparation of food, clothes, shelter, utensils and medicines. Nature and its wonders have also inspired art



Asian Indigenous Women in a group discussion on the role of Indigenous Women and biodiversity conservation.

and creativity, making women the talented, but unknown, authors of thousands of craftworks.

The strong link between women and nature is therefore not only a romantic or mythological notion. Women, through their uses of natural resources for building, cultivating, breeding, nourishing and healing, have preserved biological diversity and developed knowledge of possible uses of biodiversity, which have been transmitted from generation to generation, helping to enhance livelihood security.

Despite widespread recognition at the international level that women have an essential role to play as users and managers of biological resources, women's participation in biodiversity-related decision-making processes still remains limited. Given the relevance of the issue to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, this article discusses factors constraining women's effective involvement in resource management and decision-making.

A difficult role as managers. There is little evidence to suggest that women are inherently more conservationist than men (Agarwal, 2000).

Nevertheless, as a result of a gendered division of labour Paula Deda is a Programme Officer of Sustainable Use and Tourism at the UN Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) based in Montreal, Canada.

Renata Rubian is a Programme Assistant of Legal Affairs, Sustainable Use and Tourism at the SCBD. 202 *Paula Deda and Renata Rubian / Natural Resources Forum 28 (2004) 201–204* across many societies, women and men hold distinct forms of traditional knowledge related to biodiversity. Thus, the marginalization of women leads to the marginalization of the knowledge that they preserve, which is indispensable for maintaining livelihood security.

There are several examples of women's involvement as users and custodians of biological diversity. Women are responsible for the selection, improvement and storage of seeds, and management of small livestock in countries like Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Viet Nam, Indonesia and India.

In sub-Saharan Africa, women have grown over 120 different plant varieties in small areas alongside cash crops handled by men. In general, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) reports a trend towards the 'feminization of agriculture' prompted mainly by the occurrence of war, pandemics (i.e., the increasing death toll from HIV/AIDS) and migration of men to urban areas seeking paid work. As women's population has remained stable in rural areas, their responsibilities in the household for food production have increased (FAO, 2004). Nevertheless, women's role as managers is constrained by a series of inter-related socio-economic, cultural and political factors, varying from 'roles of entry' to aspects affecting women's responsibilities after they are included in policy or decision-making forums.

One of the factors reducing the efficacy of their intervention is the lack of secure access to land. It should be noted that women hold title to less than 2% of the world's private land. Women have little incentive to devote efforts to conservation of resources, as tenure laws in many countries limit their ownership and use of land, thus reducing their opportunity to invest resources and obtain support services. In many cases, the existence of legal rights still does not guarantee women access to land and to natural resources, where customs prevent them from *de facto* control. This is the case, for instance, in Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso and Cameroon (Sass, 2002). Women's role is also limited by their often adverse financial condition, as they comprise 70% of the world population living in absolute poverty. Their situation is exacerbated by a limited access to credit. Women encounter difficulties in obtaining loans and other means of financial assistance from banks that could assist them in the management of their activities.

Lack of access to education further limits their competitiveness and technical knowledge on biodiversity conservation and sustainable practices.

In addition, public policies based on assessments performed by government conservation agents have traditionally focused on the male population as heads of household. Consequently, new technologies and tools are targeted to men's needs and priorities, which may differ significantly from those of women. For instance, development workers did not consult with the women in developing countries before the introduction of new varieties of rice, but only with 'village leaders' who were mainly men, to explain how the new crop should be managed. Consequently, much of the rice was wasted, as the actual planters were women, and men did not transfer the new knowledge to them (McNeely, 2003).

Similarly, in Thailand, forest officials consulted with village men to implement a community forestry project. Men advised that they needed more hardwood tree species for commercial purposes. Three thousand hardwood seedlings were provided, but were left to die. The reason was that women in that region care for the seedlings, and, as the providers for family subsistence, they preferred softwood species for fuelwood. Women were included in a second round of consultations, as forestry officials realized the need to take into account all stakeholders. Finally seedlings of both varieties were provided, fulfilling the needs of women and men in the village (Sass, 2002).

The 'green revolution' also had an impact on gender structures through the mechanization of agriculture. Mechanized agriculture substituted for traditional methods, which were labour intensive and commonly employed by women, increasing their labour burden, reducing available opportunities and forcing them to undertake underpaid farming tasks (Huyin, 1998). Furthermore, gender roles based on socio-cultural norms of behaviour and perceptions embedded in class divisions, race and ethnicity are often biased against women. Also, men's entrenched interests within bureaucratic institutions often obstruct the expression of women's voices. Women's forms of collective environmental action are therefore frequently characterized by more spontaneous and informal movements than the formal structures engaged by men (Agarwal, 2000). Classic cases of women's engagement are the Chipko and the anti-large-dam construction mass movements (i.e., Narmada) in India, and Kenya's Green Belt Movement, which gathered 50,000 women members who were responsible for planting 20 million trees to reverse the desertification process. Yet, despite evidence that women have been actively engaged in the management of biodiversity resources and have taken various forms of collective action to reduce the pressure on the environment, 'women rarely find entry into the regular decision-making forums of the organizations spearheading these movements' (Agarwal,

Inadequate participation in decision and policy-making processes. Commitments made at UN conferences throughout the 1990s reiterated the gender-sustainable development nexus (Dankelman, 2003) and promoted a series of initiatives and actions to consolidate women's role in the international and national environmental agendas. For instance, principle 20 of the Rio Declaration (1992) affirms that 'women have a vital role in environmental management and development' and that 'their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development' (UNCED, 1992). In the Rome Declaration on World Food Security (1996), governments acknowledged the essential contribution of women to food security, particularly in rural areas of developing countries (Havio, 1998).

Although significant progress was achieved at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the

report of the *Ad-Hoc Committee of the Whole* on the 23rd special session of the General Assembly (A/S-23/10/Rev.1), focusing on women, stresses the lack of effective participation in decision-making on environmental issues, including at the international level. Also the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), a key international instrument promoting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, recognizes 'the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity' and affirms 'the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation for biodiversity conservation' (UNEP, 1993: Preamble). Nevertheless, the decisions of the Conference of the Parties have hitherto not included any specific guidance to foster their effective involvement

(UNEP, 2001: 238). It should be noted that there is indeed a lack of information on gender empowering measures concerning biodiversity implemented at the national level. For example, according to information contained in the CBD Second National Report, only 25% of the Parties indicated that they have fully incorporated women and women's organizations in the activities undertaken under the Convention, 20% of the Parties replied negatively and more than half of the Parties did not provide any information on the subject. At the Conference of the Parties of the Climate Change Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity, men regularly head the vast majority of delegations and male delegates are also preponderant. For instance, at the sixth Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which was held in The Hague, The Netherlands, from 7



Collection of wild fruits for food security indicates clearly why indigenous women are the key in

to 19 April 2002, more than 70% of delegates were men. Amongst different groups represented at the meeting, such as governments, UN agencies, international governmental organizations, NGOs, indigenous and local communities, industry and media, the representation of women averaged 30%. Only the education and university sector had a majority (68%) of women delegates. A similar scenario applies to organizations and meetings on sustainable development based in New York. Within UN agencies, women still remain in positions of lower status, with 60% confined to administrative and clerical fields (i.e., women hold only 20% of the geographical posts at senior management level). As the International Civil Service Commission reports, 'at this rate, reaching gender parity will take 44 years' (UNIFEM 2000: 92).

A research study conducted among staff personnel at specific integrated conservation and development projects (ICDPs), based in Africa and Asia, confirms that biodiversity conservation is still a male-dominated environment, while women continue to perform administrative tasks (Flintan, 2003: 21). With few women at managerial level, it is not an easy task to address the continued inequality between men and women, as it is deep-rooted in most governance structures. Moreover, the attention to the gender issues expressed in documents is rarely translated into action. As Bretherton (2003: 115) observed, women's advocates and existing lobbying networks have been 'excessively preoccupied with the insertion of words and phrases in international agreements, which has become their principal measure of success, and have failed to demonstrate similar zeal in relation to monitoring and compliance.' In addition, few governments have effectively integrated gender policies into their sustainable development strategies, and their gender equity initiatives tend to have an *ad hoc* character.

From agreements to action While the above evidence indicates that most environmental policies are not targeted to women's roles and needs, research and development strategies also rarely consider gender needs and priorities. Women's local knowledge is recognized as fundamental to guarantee food security, and it is argued that, if women controlled more of the usage of natural resources, they would do more to conserve them. Thus, women's involvement and empowerment are needed to secure sound management of biological resources. Empowerment in this case entails the improvement of the conditions of rural women, in their role as users and preservers of local biological knowledge. Moreover, it must be recognized that gender-differentiated local knowledge systems play a decisive role in the conservation of *in situ* biological diversity. Practical solutions and alternatives are needed to meet women's short-term needs, as well as to address longer-term environmental conservation needs. To increase the involvement of women and enhance their role as managers of biodiversity and decision-makers, it is necessary to encourage governments and development organizations to treat gender as a cross-cutting issue, relevant in different areas of development, and to incorporate gender concerns into the national biodiversity strategies and action plans. It is time to build on existing mandates and processes such as the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) that recognizes the need to 'promote women's equal access to and full participation, on the basis of equality with men, in decision-making at all levels, through full and equal access to economic opportunity, land, credit, education and health-care services.'

Paragraph 6(d) of the Plan of Implementation of the

World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg 2002, 204 *Paola Deda and Renata Rabian / Natural Resources Forum 28 (2004) 201–204* The international community has reiterated several times the gender message *vis-à-vis* environment and natural resources. It is imperative now that commitments contained in international agreements are translated into tangible action.

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Darfurthe experience!



'I was taken by the Janjaweed.' 15 year old girl in Kac camp July 2004



Children in Darfur



Minna children in Darfur



Dejo families and one surviving horse find shelter in Combiou Mission S. Darfur



Displaced Woman from Abyei in South Sudan



Kalimna camp July 2004 beside the Wadi area with water and source of disease



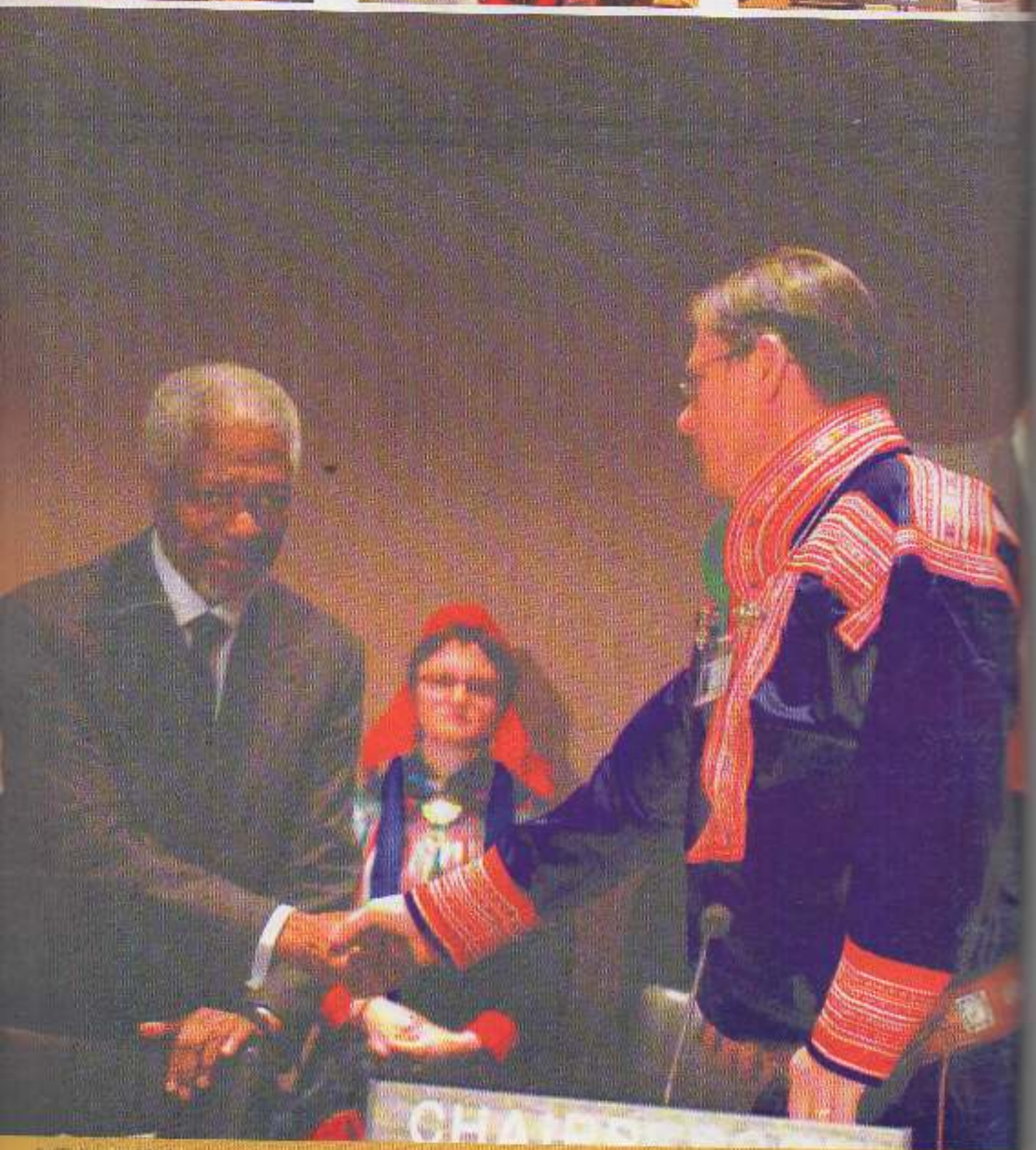
Mother and son arrive in Kalimna camp July 2004 after travelling for 5 days



Informal camps for Dejo displaced - no shelter or other facilities, Nyala town



Daaki and first on young face. Darfur, July 2004



Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General and Henrik Ronsbo, Chairman Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, May 2004.

*Hope for the best and
never forget that anything is possible
as long as you remain dedicated to the task!*