

# Newsletter “World March of Women”, Vol. 9, Number 2

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## Contents

- [CONTENTS](#)
- [Editorial: Reinforce our \(...\)](#)
- [No to the Attacks on Lebanon](#)
- [6<sup>th</sup> International Meeting of](#)
- [STRATEGIC PLANNING](#)
- [International Secretariat in](#)

## CONTENTS

1. Editorial: Reinforce our Common Identity and Actions
  2. No to the Attacks on Lebanon
  3. 6<sup>th</sup> International Meeting of the World March of Women, July 29, 2006, Lima, Peru
    - The Women's Movement of Peru
    - Women of the March In the Streets
    - Amendment to the Constitution and By-laws
    - Decision on Active Participating Groups
    - Discussion on Action Focuses
    - The March's Unequalled Contribution to Québec Women
  4. Changes at the International Committee
  5. International Secretariat in Transition
  6. Upcoming Events: Brussels, WSF, Nyeleni
  7. Inside the March
  8. Put News of Your Country Online
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## **Editorial: Reinforce our Common Identity and Actions**

Dear Friends:

The World March of Women is a recent movement. Our first international meeting dates back to 1998 when we gathered in Montréal, Québec. At that time we didn't know each other very well, or even at all, and many of us had never participated in an international meeting before. In 2006, we held our 6<sup>th</sup> International Meeting in Lima, Peru. During these years we have mobilized at the international level—in 2000 and 2005—and we have acted at the local level and within other social movements struggling to achieve another form of globalization. In short, together we have managed to build an irreversible movement, a movement with its own unique identity.

From the first meeting as the World March of Women, we have concerned ourselves with women's everyday lives and focussed on the roots of the poverty and violence women experience. This year in Lima, we revisited the themes of poverty and violence against women based on today's context and we defined our vision for the next four years.

Together, we noted how the commodification of life, nature and human relationships is being exacerbated and denounced the growing incidence of armed conflict and war. Based on these observations we identified four areas of action that will allow us to deepen our initial commitment to fighting poverty and violence; we also discussed alternative solutions. The four action focuses are: peace and demilitarization; violence as a tool to control women's bodies and lives; work/employment and pay equity; and the common good and food sovereignty.

Our collective discussions and thinking allowed us to make progress in terms of strengthening our common political identity. We decided that it is no longer enough to juxtapose a series of demands issuing from women of various experiences; we must be in dialogue, confronting our ideas with each other, in order to arrive at a synthesis with which all women can identify. We have always generated analysis, held discussions, organized demonstrations and drafted proposals based on women's lived experience, thinking and action. We must continue the work we have already begun with the goal of defining the next international actions of the World March of Women.

In Lima, we began the process of transferring the International Secretariat to the South. Brazil was chosen to assume this responsibility and I was named coordinator of the March, succeeding Diane Matte in this position. We are organizing the new Secretariat in Brazil with the help of the members of the former Secretariat. We will continue time-tested practices such as using professional feminist translators; updating our Web site; e-mail communications; reinforcing national coordinating bodies and regional processes; and horizontal coordination mechanisms.

The strategic plan will guide us in organizing our action and enable us to raise funds in the medium term.

With respect to our international operations, the most urgent challenges are to reinforce the International Committee as the political leadership of the WMW and to implement coordinating processes at the regional level. We must also be creative in mobilizing national coordinating bodies to assume tasks at the international level, whether in connection with particular issues (through the working groups and collectives) or via regional processes.

For the four action focuses we expect to work in alliance with other movements. Many of our allies were present in Lima and they shared their analysis and agenda with us. We are already involved in three aspects of the alternative globalization movement: the World Social Forum, the Social Movements International Network and the organization of a Forum on Food Sovereignty, in

partnership with Via Campesina, Friends of the Earth and others.

We have gained much from this work, and indeed our involvement in the alternative globalization movement is also part of our political identity. We work to ensure that a feminist approach is integrated into the analysis and practice of these groupings. But it is a challenge to achieve a balance between the energy we spend on building our own movement and organizing our actions and the work we do in alliance with other movements.

In Lima, we didn't talk much about the enormous challenge of funding our international operation and actions. It's important to underline, however, that most of the financial resources for the meeting were raised through the activist contributions of participants and their coordinating bodies. During breaks, different coordinating bodies sold promotional materials, illustrating their marvellous creativity and making the point that independent fundraising is a path we must continue to develop.

Confronted with all these responsibilities and challenges, I am reminded of our Women's Global Charter for Humanity: We want to change the established order in order to change women's lives. We have the power to create this world.

Miriam Nobre, Coordinator, International Secretariat, São Paulo, Brazil, August 20006.

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## **No to the Attacks on Lebanon**

The summer was tragically marked by the attacks on Lebanon and its people. The World March of Women issued the following call to action.

"We, the International Committee of the World March of Women, wish to express our outrage at the escalation of violence in the Middle East.

We believe that no form of military violence will put an end to the conflicts in this region and pave the way for peace and justice for all. The Israeli government's massive military operations inside Lebanese territory have been targeting the civilian population in addition to destroying vital infrastructures. We mourn the hundreds of women, men and children who have lost their lives and the thousands who no longer have homes or even access to shelter, clean water and basic services.

We express our solidarity with the Lebanese, Palestinian, Arab and Jewish women who fight for peace, dialogue and negotiated conflict resolution throughout the region. We call for the respect of people's rights, including those of the Palestinians who have been oppressed for so many years by the State of Israel.

We know that peace is only possible when rights are fully acknowledged and respected. We reaffirm the contents of our Declaration, approved by 100 women from 31 national coordinating bodies in attendance at our 6<sup>th</sup> International Meeting, held July 2-9, 2006, in Lima, Peru.

War decimates civilian populations, forces the displacement of massive numbers of people, and deprives people and peasants of access to land and water, thus preventing them from growing the food they need to survive. Territories are occupied and foreign forces invade countries whose governments are deprived of their sovereignty.

We denounce, in particular, the U.S. military interventions and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Israeli government's aggression and occupation of Palestine and other Arab countries; and agreements that impose any kind of military presence.

We demand the withdrawal of all occupation forces in the region, the dismantling of all military bases, the destruction of weapons, and the end of political and economic blockades constituting aggression against peoples and countries.

We demand that the Israeli government institute an immediate ceasefire, end military operations in Lebanon and return to the negotiating table. We demand that the international community, in particular the United Nations, protect civilian populations and their right to live in freedom and in peace; the implementation of international law without reservation; and fair and negotiated conflict resolution."

World March of Women, International Committee, July 2006

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## **6<sup>th</sup> International Meeting of the World March of Women, July 2-9, 2006, Lima, Peru**

The 6<sup>th</sup> International Meeting of the March included 51 delegates from 29 countries and the Native Women's Network of the Americas. There were nearly 50 observers, including 40 women from Peru and numerous volunteers.

The goal of the meeting was to adopt the March's Strategic Plan for the next four years and at the same time, redefine the March's missions and goals. Four `arejavascript:barre_raccourci(",","document.formulaire.texte)`as of action were proposed and discussed, as Miriam has mentioned in her editorial. The relocation of the International Secretariat to the Global South, a decision made by the International Meeting in 2003, was finalized with the decision to move it to Brazil. Miriam Nobre has replaced Diane Matte as March coordinator.

The meeting took place at the Hotel Bolivar in downtown Lima. Meeting organizers chose this hotel because, following the owner's declaration of bankruptcy and subsequent labour dispute, hotel employees joined forces to run the hotel. The case has yet to be settled in the court. Our presence in the hotel was a gesture of support to the hotel staff.

### **THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT OF PERU**

Rosa Guillén, of the March in Peru, opened the meeting with a presentation on the Peruvian women's movement. Peruvian women have been part of the struggles against slavery and dictatorship. They have always fought for social and labour rights, universal access to education, democracy, and the rights of peasants to own land. In the 1970s and 1980s, they mobilized to oppose beauty contests and bring women out of the kitchen. They are active in the anti-poverty struggle, working in organizations like Vaso de leche (Glass of Milk), and soup kitchens,

During the armed struggle in the countryside between rebels (Shining Path) and the army, women played a central role in their homes and the communities. In 1995, during the World Conference on Women in Beijing, women's groups began forming in resistance to neoliberalism and to defend

sexual and reproductive rights.

Today, the struggle is focussed on the rejection of neoliberalism and its economic free trade zone projects (FTTA, free trade treaties, etc.). The World March of Women has joined Peruvian social movements to abolish poverty, cancel the debt and promote sexual equality. It is denouncing the return to religious conservatism that seeks to control women's bodies and lives. As a participant in the World Social Forums, it works to establish peace, freedom and justice. It is fighting for citizenship based on the recognition of universal collective economic rights, community development, harmonious relations with the environment and the respect of biodiversity.

*Listen to the complete presentation on our Web site (Multimedia/Peru 2006).*

## **WOMEN OF THE MARCH IN THE STREETS**

The meeting took place in the political context of Peru. In June, a new president was elected. In July, the Congress (parliament) was holding its last sessions. Several social organizations organized demonstrations to make sure their voices would be heard on the issues of concern to them. Since the meeting was being held in a downtown hotel, the demonstrators marched passed our meeting room. We demonstrated our solidarity with many of them.

On July 6, some 10,000 women from the Vaso de Leche movement marched to the Congress to demand that the law governing their movement be maintained. Vaso de leche is an initiative born in Lima in 1984 that then spread to the rest of the country.

Under this program, poor children under 6, pregnant women and breastfeeding women receive food assistance. Still, every year they must take to the streets to obtain a budget for their program. The organization counts 600,000 members and 156,000 beneficiaries.

Their presence in the street was particularly important this year, after the national media broadcasted reports of financial misconduct in the program. For thousands of Peruvian women and their children, the maintenance of this program is vital.

On July 3, we demonstrated in front of the U.S. embassy to denounce the free trade treaty the United States wants to sign with Peru. Our demonstration preceded a nation-wide mobilization that took place the next day.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

The strategic planning process, adopted at the March's 5<sup>th</sup> International Meeting in Kigali, started in October 2005 during a meeting of the International Committee (IC) in Dakar, Senegal. March national coordinating bodies were consulted twice. The IC held several meetings, both virtual and face-to-face, and worked with an advisory committee composed of a consultant, Lyne Bouchard, and Sandra Trottier, of the coalition of women centres in Québec.

In Lima, there was a proposal to expand the mission of the March and work on the four areas of action mentioned previously: violence against women as a tool to control women's bodies and lives; peace and demilitarization; access to resources, biodiversity and food sovereignty; and women and work. The four areas of action are interdependent.

Discussion also centred on an action of international scope for 2010, the actions to be held leading up to that date, the March's mission and membership.

## **EXPANSION OF THE MARCH'S MISSION**

After some discussion, the goals of the March were amended as follows:

**PURPOSE** - The World March of Women is an international feminist action movement connecting grass-roots groups and organizations working to eliminate the causes at the root of poverty and violence against women.

We struggle against all forms of inequality and discrimination directed at women. Our values and actions are directed at making political, economic and social change. They centre on the globalization of solidarity; equality between women and men, among women themselves and between peoples; the respect and recognition of diversity among women; the multiplicity of our strategies; the appreciation of women's leadership; and the strength of alliances among women and with other progressive social movements.

**OBJECTIVE # 1** - Strengthen and maintain a vast solidarity movement of all women and grass-roots groups so that the March constitutes a gesture of affirmation by women of the world.

**OBJECTIVE # 2** - Promote equality and justice between women and men, among women themselves and between all peoples.

**OBJECTIVE # 3** - Continue building and reinforcing a vast process of popular education so that all women can analyze for themselves the causes of their oppression and discrimination, and the possible alternatives.

**OBJECTIVE # 4** - Highlight the common demands and alternatives issuing from women's movements worldwide, on the local, national, regional and international levels, relating to the issues of poverty and violence against women.

**OBJECTIVE # 5 A** - Exert political pressure on governments and multilateral political institutions (e.g., the UN) so that they institute the changes necessary for improving the status of women and women's quality of life worldwide, including a disarmament and peaceful conflict resolution policy, and an end to all forms of impunity and corruption, the use of rape as a weapon of war, occupations, foreign military presence and the imposition of political/economic blockades.

**OBJECTIVE # 5 B** - Challenge and denounce the international financial, economic and military institutions (IMF, NATO, WTO, WB, transnational corporations, cooperation agencies that impose conditions on women's struggles, etc.) that are responsible for impoverishing and marginalizing women and intensifying the violence committed against us; and formulate proposals for alternative institutions.

**OBJECTIVE # 6** - Convince the general public, other social sectors and social movements to support and institute the changes necessary for improving the status and conditions of women and women's quality of life the world over.

**OBJECTIVE # 7** - Develop and implement feminist actions and proposals that denounce the economic and financial institutions that promote the exploitation and degradation of our resources, climate change and the loss of our biodiversity. Struggle for the self-management of our environmental resources based on a development model that respects the basic needs of present and future generations.

**VALUE # 1**- The leadership of the organization is in the hands of women.

**VALUE # 2** - All regions in the world are responsible for organizing the actions.

**VALUE # 3** - Active participating groups must subscribe to the purpose and values, objectives and overall plan of action of the March, but are independent in organizing actions in their respective countries.

**VALUE # 4** - We recognize, respect and value the diversity (of women's realities, countries, political approaches and action strategies) of women's movements.

**VALUE # 5** - The World March of Women organizes mass actions; popular education activities; resistance; and national, regional and worldwide mobilizations. We advocate non-violence while recognizing the right to self-defence.

## **ACTIVE PARTICIPATING GROUPS**

From now on, groups that meet the following criteria will be considered to be active participating groups:

- Be an autonomous women's group, a women's committee within a mixed group or a mixed organization that doesn't have a committee on the status of women but within which a group of women hold leadership for the March;
- Subscribe to the objectives, values and world platform of the World March of Women;
- Incorporate the March's actions in its activity programs or to promote the World March of Women.

It will not possible for a group to be considered an "active" participating group if it doesn't have ties with the national coordinating body of its country or territory, if such a body exists.

The complete list of groups is published on our website.

Sympathizers are organisations or individual persons that are included in our distribution list to receive information such as the international newsletter, calls to mobilization, etc

## **DISCUSSIONS ON THE FOUR ACTION FOCUSES**

### **1. ACTION FOCUS: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AS A TOOL OF CONTROL**

**The theme was introduced** by Awa Ouédraogo, of the March in Burkina Faso, and Jean Enriquez, director of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW).

Awa spoke of the multiple forms of violence against women that result from the "failure to recognize women's rights. There is a political discourse underlying the control of women's bodies." She described the constraints imposed by the fashion and cosmetics industries. "In poor countries, especially Africa, the norm is procreation, even at the risk of women's health." She denounced religious fanaticism that calls for women's total obedience to their husband or head of family. "In rural zones, many women possess no identity papers and live below the poverty level."

Jean followed by speaking about sex trafficking and prostitution as a "system of violence against women, because the act of buying and the trade in women's bodies to reap profit, is a flagrant violation of women's integrity, dignity and autonomy." Buyer "takes advantage of situations or vulnerability created by social contexts that engender economic and sexual inequality."

Evoking her experience working with survivors of prostitution, Jean explained that "women's entry into prostitution is linked to experiences of incest and/or rape; the cynicism of their family and community with respect to this situation; and to cultural pressure says that they be sexually

available to men." Patriarchy imposes an image of women that they are "objects for men's use." Patriarchy and capitalism intersect, with one system reinforcing the other. All women experience economic, political, social inequality, and discrimination, with impoverishment being most extensive in the South. But, "even when money is not at stake via prostitution, there is rape."

Jean then described the consequences of violence, sexual abuse and prostitution on women's health. She affirmed that prostitution is a "system of violence where women are attacked, raped, and beaten; they are subjected to sadistic acts, sexual harassment, verbal insults and used for sex by numerous men." In this climate of fear many women resort to drugs and alcohol to forget the trauma of their daily lives.

We must refuse to consider prostitution as work and "question the demand for prostitution, the definitions of masculinity and globalization—the ideology that promotes the institution and exacerbates the buying and selling of women."

Neoliberal globalization is another aggravating factor: the WTO agreements on the liberalization of services pave the way for sex tourism. Neoliberal globalization also increases women's poverty. On the other hand, the traffic in human beings, the sex industry, pornography and cybersex generate enormous, constantly rising profits. Militarization also encourages prostitution (the rise in prostitution around military bases, in particular).

Jean finished her talk with an appeal to fight the legalization of prostitution, the discourse about 'forced' prostitution, the ideology "that consists in refusing to place prostitution in the context of patriarchy and structural, economic and political inequalities" and to pressure States to address the roots of prostitution and sex trafficking.

Before opening the discussion, Diane Matte explained that the purpose of this action focus was to "extend our analysis beyond the human right to live free of violence, and to define violence against women as the"ultimate tool used by patriarchy to control women,"exercised in a context where women are subjected to the institutions of marriage, heterosexuality and maternity."We must have a more radical discourse to expose the roots of our oppression and how patriarchy has maintained itself for centuries; we must struggle against violence and patriarchy."

During the discussion women stressed the need to trace a comprehensive picture of all forms of violence against women: sexual violence, wife assault, rape, incest, prostitution, harassment, sexist advertising, beauty standards, arranged marriages, etc. There was a consensus regarding the necessity to address the issue in terms of the control of women's bodies. The discussion revealed a general condemnation of the trade in women. Most of the participants also condemned the institution of prostitution, and delegates from national coordinating bodies where differing opinions exist expressed their uneasiness. We agreed that we must continue to discuss this subject along with the related proposal for international actions.

Violence against women is systemic; women as a social group are its victims. We must redefine the current global context in which the sex industry is increasingly lucrative and violent and is contributing to the commodification of women's bodies. Poverty, and neoliberal economic systems cause and exacerbate violence and reinforce patriarchy. We must therefore maintain the struggle against women's poverty and link it to the political context and militarism. The struggle for women's sexual and reproductive rights and the right to abortion should also be integrated in this analysis.

Several women referred to fights they have led on the issue of violence against women, and against femicide and the possibility of using existing international conventions and protocols. Courts should condemn violence in all its forms. We must tighten and consolidate our alliances to carry out this struggle, for example, with Japanese women in the "Comfort Women" movement. There are already



several international days on the issue of violence (September 28 and November 25). We must link violence against women to the lack or loss of rights, for example, sexual and reproductive rights.

### *POLITICAL OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS CONCERNING THIS TOPIC*

**Objective 1.** Further our thinking and organize actions to denounce violence against women as a tool for controlling women's bodies, lives and sexuality; and update our demands.

Actions :

Develop a more political analysis of violence against women as a tool for controlling women's bodies, lives and sexuality and think about appropriate global strategies.

The violence against women working group and the IC should propose a plan for reflection and actions.

§ Further develop our thinking and actions with women at the grassroots.

§ Organize an awareness-raising campaign with the media, schools and institutions, as well as other social movements.

§ Constitute a bank of good practices for preventing and denouncing violence against women, distribute it within the movement, and use it in our actions.

§ Document and denounce femicide and "honour crimes" at the international level.

§ Discuss the Peruvian Manifesto on sexual insurrection.

**Objective 2.** Further our thinking and propose actions to oppose the commodification of women's bodies.

Actions :

Both in the NCBs and at the international level, further our thinking about prostitution and sex trafficking and the impact of legalization of the sex industry. The working group and the IC have the mandate to ensure that these discussions take place, gather up the results of these discussions and determine the feasibility of establishing a WMW position and action in 2010.

Trace the links between violence against women, militarism, globalization and the commodification of women's bodies.

**Objective 3.** Develop an ongoing plan for actions and discussion on violence against women for the WMW.

Actions :

Invite WMW participating groups to participate in the existing actions concerning violence against women and the control of our bodies: September 28, International Day for Abortion and Reproductive Rights, November 25, Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women, etc.

Develop international actions specific to the March concerning violence against women (control of the bodies, sexuality and lives of women).

## **2. ACTION FOCUS: WOMEN AND WORK**

This theme was introduced by Wilhelmina Trout, of the March in South Africa, and Nalu Faria,

representing the Latin-American network REMTE (Network of Women Transforming the Economy).

Wilhelmina Trout emphasized the degree to which the economic system has changed the concept of work. The economy has become neoliberal; privatization and deregulation have created atypical jobs, unstable employment, and contracted labour. This system is harmful to the most marginalized segment of the population, especially women (domestic and agricultural workers, homecare workers, etc.). It is patriarchal. It divides the working class into those who have a job and want to hold on to it, no matter how unpleasant or unstable, and those who don't have job.

In our demands concerning feminist economic alternatives, she said, we must give a voice to those who have no voice, to those who don't belong to unions, to domestic workers, for example. This is why we must build alliances with groups that are defending the rights of these workers. In our popular education work we must supply these women with the tools they need to defend themselves.

Nalu Faria presented another critique of the capitalist/patriarchal system, emphasizing that it is based on a sexual division of labour where women too often are relegated to subordinate poorly paid jobs that are often unstable or part time. In addition to this type of production labour, women also are responsible for reproductive labour. They assume the lion's share of housework, childcare, and caring work, all without pay. Household labour is never counted as part of a country's wealth.

The capitalist system is based on the concentration of wealth among the few and the overexploitation of natural resources and workers. Women are overexploited. In Latin America, women are the majority of workers in the maquilas, the companies located in the free export zones, where working conditions are atrocious and violence is omnipresent. They also work in the export crop sector (flowers in Chili and Colombia and asparagus in Peru). This sector is dominated by a few large owners, and workers are forced to endure low wages and difficult working conditions.

This system is supported by international financial organizations, especially the World Trade Organization, whose practices the World March of Women denounces. Nalu also presented feminist economic alternatives: women's micro-enterprises, cooperatives, self-managed businesses, etc. Finally, she stressed that men must share responsibility for household labour with women.

*Listen to these presentations in MP3 format on our Web site (Multimedia section).*

The discussion mainly focussed on the demand for a minimum wage. What does this concept mean? What would be an acceptable amount? How do we calculate it? Some women said that it should be linked to the companies' profits. In agro-export businesses, for example, women work long hours and maintain high production levels, but are paid less than men. This is seasonal work but the wages are spread throughout the year. A wage that is too low will not provide enough to live on. The idea then is to talk about the minimum needed to ensure a decent quality of life. But before that we must highlight women's right to have a job and women's economic contribution to a country's wealth, no matter what her job is. We must conduct campaigns to ensure women know their rights; struggle for gender equality in all forms (pay, taxation, social rights like retirement); struggle against unstable employment that mainly affects women; for women's right to inherit and own land; and for women's access to credit. We must recognize the work of migrant women and heighten the visibility of domestic work. Unions and public authorities must be made aware of these campaigns.

### *POLITICAL OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS CONCERNING THIS TOPIC*

**Objective 1.** Continue our work on feminist economic alternatives and review our demands in this respect.

Actions :

Update our demands on women's work and economic alternatives. Discuss alternatives such as solidarity economy and agroecology from a feminist perspective. Analyze the impact and significance of the feminization of migration.

**Objectives 2.** Denounce the impact of neoliberal and patriarchal globalization on the lives of women, on the working conditions of all women and on their economic autonomy.

Consolidate the solidarity of women and struggles between the South and North, and South-South.

Actions :

Document and disseminate our resistance with regard to labour rights.

Disseminate our analysis on women and work, the importance of economic autonomy, free trade agreements and the international institutions by means of mass and alternative media and popular education tools.

Conduct a campaign to publicize practices of the transnationals that exploit the work of rural, urban, indigenous and migrant women.

Conduct a campaign to denounce all forms and manifestations of the increasing instability of women's work such as subcontracting, domestic work, immigrant labour, legislation changes, the prohibition of unionization, etc.

**Objective 3.** Call for the creation of a universal social security system, the consolidation of jobs with social rights, pay equity, adequate conditions for production and commercialization for peasant women, women handicraft producers and small business women, jobs for women, especially disabled women, access to land and resources, etc.

Actions:

Conduct an international campaign for the creation or increase of a minimum wage (allowing for adequate remuneration and the possibility to live in dignity) as a means to achieving equality. Identify the struggles led by NCBs regarding this goal and, based on joint struggles, develop proposals for international actions.

**Objective 4.** Call for the recognition of reproductive labour, equitable sharing of this work between women and men, and social responsibility for this labour.

Actions:

§ Conduct campaigns to heighten the visibility of reproductive labour performed by women and women's unfair work burden.

§ Raise society's awareness about State responsibility for daycare, programs to care for the sick and elderly and other services to support social reproduction.

§ Raise social awareness of men's responsibility for reproductive labour.

### *3. ACTION FOCUS: PEACE AND DEMILITARIZATION*

The theme was introduced by Emily Naffa, from the March in Jordan, and by Josée Kusinza, Executive Secretary of the Concertation des collectifs des associations oeuvrant pour la promotion de la femme dans la région des Grands lacs africains (COCAFEM-GL).

Emily denounced the globalization of militarization and the United States' imperialist designs. "They

are trying to build their empire everywhere in the world by launching wars of aggression and occupying countries rich in oil, like Afghanistan and Iraq,” she said. To carry out its designs, that country is using its military and financial might, and has the support of institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, WTO and NATO.

“Hundreds of thousands of innocent people are killed. Women living under U.S. supported Israeli occupation suffer collective punishment, murder, destruction of their homes, imprisonment and displacement. A wall separates members of the same family,” she continued. “This is why we must fight for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Palestinian territories and U.S. troops from Iraq, so that the Iraqi people can gain their freedom and a democratic system, and can use their collective wealth for themselves.” She recalled the demonstration held in Ramallah on the occasion of the World Relay of the Women’s Global Charter for Humanity in 2005.

To complement the theme, a play was staged on the peace and reconciliation process in Peru. Peruvian women lived through the civil war waged from 1980 to 2000 between government forces and the Maoist rebel forces, led by Shining Path. They are still waiting for justice to be done in the case of many women who were victims of violence, especially Indigenous women. They are demanding the implementation of Truth and Reconciliation Commission decisions, particularly those denouncing the forced sterilization of thousands of Indigenous women under the Fujimori regime.

In her intervention, Josée insisted on the need to deepen the analysis of the causes of war, to link the theme of peace with demilitarization and to act forcefully against impunity. “Everything happening in Central Africa, in Ivory Coast, in the Middle East happens elsewhere too. And every time, violence against women<sup>3/4</sup>including rape<sup>3/4</sup>is used as a weapon of war.

This raises many questions and we need a feminist analysis to define our strategies,” she stated. She spoke of the involvement of transnational companies that facilitate the circulation of arms to take over natural resources. Women must be more present in the political sphere and fill high positions in the military hierarchy if we want to change things. War has taken a heavy toll on women.

During the discussion, women expressed the need to be better informed about current militarization for a feminist analysis to emerge around peace as a core value. We must explain the causes and consequences of wars and militarization. Securing justice and fighting impunity, whether at a domestic or international level, in the International Criminal Court are major challenges. This might take the form of moral tribunals in all countries where the United States has led attacks. We must show that wars and militarization have economic objectives; we must also show how they destroy societies, as do occupations, which displace populations. Rape is a weapon of war and women’s bodies are part of the spoils. The UN and its member States should allocate their war budgets to social or environmental projects. There must be peace education, and in places where there is peace, it must be preserved. We must take vigorous action against aggression and military bases, and for demilitarization. We must join with all women and men who are against war, act in concert with the social movements and call on our governments as well. We must show our solidarity with all women who are victims of violence and militarization.

### *POLITICAL OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS CONCERNING THIS TOPIC*

**Objective 1.** Continue thinking and organizing actions on planetary demilitarization and the related demands (an end to the arms race, nuclear arms, the militarization of space, closure of military bases and agreements, demilitarization of state budgets, reparations, and an end to terrorism as a form of war, etc.).

Actions :

Formulate a feminist position paper on peace and demilitarization and make strategic choices and specific demands. This position paper should contain the WMW's positions on the causes of war, an analysis of the militarization of capitalism, and above all, a feminist analysis of war and militarism.

**Objective 2.** Act to denounce impunity in all its forms rape as a war weapon, the use of women's bodies as war booty, and more generally, the links between militarism and violence against women.

Actions :

Organize an annual day of reflection and actions on May 24 on the themes of peace; demilitarization; and an end to impunity and the use of women's bodies as war booty, and rape as a war weapon. This would be carried out through popular education campaigns with women at the grassroots and creative awareness-raising tools.

§ Do the same action at the regional level in 2009.

Gather up the thinking of groups and NCBs and disseminate it at the international level

Draft and disseminate a WMW statement denouncing impunity with respect to crimes against women.

Resume our global campaign to protest the use of rape as a war weapon.

**Objective 3.** Raise public awareness of the feminist analysis of the roots of war, our definition of peace and demands.

Action :

Present our allies with a feminist analysis of the roots and consequences of war and its effects on women.

#### *4. ACTION FOCUS: ACCESS TO RESOURCES, BIODIVERSITY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY*

The theme was introduced by Miriam Nobre, from the March in Brazil; Mafalda Galdames Castro, from the National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women (ANAMURI), from Chile, and a representative of Via Campesina; and Caridad Ynares (Jing), from the March in the Philippines.

Miriam Nobre pointed out the progress made on this question at the March. In 1998, in the set of world demands, we wanted the means to "ensure food security for the population." In the Women's Global Charter for Humanity (2004), however, we talk about "food sovereignty." Following the example of its ally Via Campesina, the March defends the idea that every people should be able to produce the food they need to feed themselves, in sufficient amounts and with sufficient quality. All peoples need to control the processes of food transformation and marketing. The control of natural resources should belong to those who work them (land, water, seeds). As Miriam Nobre said, "Food is not just a commodity, it is associated with our culture and our way of seeing the world."

The capitalist model of agricultural production goes against this philosophy. It is based on extreme exploitation of land and water, and develops export crops to the detriment of meeting domestic needs. "The effects on biodiversity have never been so strong," Jing pointed out. "Food, medicine, clothing and wood supplies depend on biodiversity. For poor people living in rural areas, it is vital." Its loss affects food sovereignty as well as environmental and genetic integrity. It has long-term effects on the reproduction of species, land restoration and the handing down of values. Women's role in food sovereignty is essential, the three speakers underscored. It is women who

select seeds and ensure their preservation; it is they who raise small flocks, who tend vegetable gardens, who ensure the survival of their communities by feeding and taking care of them. They must be given training and the means to maintain and strengthen their role, to intervene in discussions on international treaties and how these are written into national legislation; they must play an economic role in their communities. Finally, city and country must be reconciled.

Mafalda took up the theme by insisting on the need to train rural women but also to raise awareness in the "urban world." She described the campaigns that Via Campesina has been leading for six years to defend the model of family farming and to maintain the production of crops that have disappeared from commercial networks. Potato growing in the Andean region is an excellent example: of the approximately 2000 varieties grown, only a handful is marketed!

All these subjects will be brought up at the Nyeleni Forum on Food Sovereignty, to be held in February 2007, in Bamako, Mali, of which the World March of Women is a partner along with Via Campesina, among others.

The discussion showed the need for a feminist analysis of the environment and natural resources, and the kind of development we want to see. What does sustainable development mean? How should we consume? The over-consumption of the so-called developed countries produces waste, causes damage and leads to predatory behaviour on the part of transnational companies, who mine the planet and appropriate biodiversity. We must denounce the role of neoliberal globalization in no uncertain terms and make the connection with the resulting poverty (therefore, the WTO and the G-8 must be among our targets). The effects of climate change arising from this over-exploitation (earthquakes, hurricanes) are more devastating for poor people. We must work with peasant and Indigenous populations, defend their right to intellectual property over the knowledge of seeds handed down from generation to generation. We must fight against the privatization of natural resources such as water, because they are part of the common good of humankind and must not become commodities. We must support land reform initiatives that give rights to small farmers and help them fight against subsidized products from abroad. We must deepen our thinking and knowledge about fair trade.

We must do training sessions, develop ecologically-based popular education tools. We must take advantage of Nyeleni to learn, to educate ourselves.

### *POLITICAL OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS CONCERNING THIS TOPIC*

**Objective 1.** Further our analysis on the links between poverty, violence, the destruction of the environment, militarization, the neoliberal system and its impact on women's lives, and on globalization from a feminist perspective. Update our demands and carry out actions.

Actions :

Create a new WMW working group.

Ask NCBs to share their thinking and actions on this topic. Circulate these texts inside the WMW.

Hold more discussions on this topic between rural and urban women, North and South, and South-South.

Develop counter-arguments to the dominant discourse on growth, development and progress.

Develop popular education tools with women at the grassroots.

**Objective 2.** Act to defend food sovereignty, considering water, the air, land and seeds as the common good of peoples and based on feminist analysis and practice.

Actions :

Conduct actions to protect resources, knowledge and peoples' sovereignty.

Distribute and use the Women's Global Charter for Humanity to generate discussions.

Collectively develop the WMW's position on food sovereignty. Distribute this position.

Participate in organizing the Nyleni Forum on Food Sovereignty and its follow-up.

Increase our protest actions regarding the Davos, IMF and WB meetings as part of a broader coordinated action with social movements during international meetings (e.g. WSF) and in countries.

**Objective 3.** Take action against the privatization of the common good, particularly water, and for fair and conscientious utilization.

Actions :

Develop the WMW's position against the commodification of the common good based on specific situations.

Identify and denounce the role of the transnationals, national governments and parliaments, and institutions like the World Bank and IMF in the commodification and privatization of the common good, resulting in inequitable utilization.

Draft a joint action proposal for 2009.

**Objective 4.** Reinforce struggles and mobilization against the WTO, G8 and free trade treaties.

Actions :

Mobilize NCBs and participating groups for meetings of the WTO, G8 and free trade negotiations. Ensure the WMW's presence with a diverse delegation, including peasant women.

Hold a discussion on integration and trade alternatives and clarify our position on the solidarity economy and fair trade.

## **PUBLIC FORUM**

Most of these topics were also addressed at the public forum held on the evening of July 6, called "Women and Neoliberal and Sexist Globalization." The event attracted a very large number of Peruvian women, who showed their rejection of the Free Trade Agreement between Peru and the United States, and their solidarity with the women of the world.

## **2010 ACTION**

A number of ideas on one or more actions for 2010 emerged: national or relay marches, or transmission of a symbolic object, the purpose being to highlight women's struggles. The Women's Global Charter for Humanity should be used in concrete ways. The final decision about an action will fall to the next meeting of the IC in 2008. In the meantime, discussions will lead to deciding on actions to stage in the next few years.

## **Working Groups and Collectives**

With the goal of deepening our thinking about the action focuses, it was decided to continue the work started by the working groups and collectives. A new working group was created to examine the issue of the common good and access to resources. The composition of each of these groups will be confirmed later on, but members should represent all regions of the planet. Readers are reminded that the collectives have an additional mandate outside the March, whereas the working groups should concentrate more on analysis and writing documents and position papers.

## **THE MARCH'S UNEQUALLED CONTRIBUTION TO QUÉBEC WOMEN**

Michèle Asselin, President of the Fédération des femmes du Québec, explained how the themes developed at the international level came to be adopted as daily concerns by the women of Québec.

Regarding women's living and working conditions, clearly the March was instrumental in making gains in legislation, programs and policies (e.g., minimum wage increase in 2000). At times, it was a question of preventing a slide backwards. The most decisive impact, however, came from "having marched together as a feminist movement. Struggles gained visibility because they were no longer fought by a single group but by the whole Québec women's movement in 2000 and 2005."

New alliances came into being. "We emerged with a stronger image of solidarity and greater ease in mobilizing women. We became an irreversible movement. This strength helps us move women's rights forward, despite the difficult current situation. We were able to work on forms of prejudice against women, as well as prejudice we harboured ourselves, particularly towards women experiencing more than one form of discrimination; for example, the rights of immigrant workers, lesbians, domestic workers, etc."

Thus the women of Québec learned at the same time about internal situations and the situation of women internationally. "What happens to women the world over is part of our day-to-day action, because we understand that this has an impact on women's living conditions at home. In Gaspésie, an area quite far from the centre of Québec, many jobs were lost recently, and thanks to the tools we developed, the women who live there understood better why this happened."

You can hear Michèle Asselin's entire speech in MP3 format on our web site (Multimedia section).

## **4. CHANGES AT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE**

During the meeting in Peru, some members of the International Committee were replaced since they were at the end of their term.

Outgoing:

- Diane Matte (coordinator of the WMW)
- Emily Naffa (Middle East and Arab World), WMW Jordan
- Awa Ouedraogo (French speaking part of Africa), WMW Burkina Faso
- Charlot Pierik (Europe), WMW Netherlands
- Shashi Sail (South Asia), WMW India

Remaining:

- Nadia De Mond (Europe), WMW Italia
- Rosa Guillén (Americas), WMW Peru
- Miriam Nobre (now coordinator WMW)
- Wilhelmina Trout (English speaking part of Africa), WMW South Africa
- Caridad Ynarès (South East Asia, Oceania), WMW Philippines



Incoming:

- Saleha Athar (Southern Asia), WMW Pakistan
- Farida El Nakash (Middle East and Arab World), WMW Egypt
- Maria Quispe Nepo (Americas), WMW Mexico
- Teresa Cunha (Europe, temporary), WMW Portugal
- Nana Aïcha Cissé (French speaking part of Africa), WMW Mali

## **International Secretariat in Transition**

The current International Secretariat team, composed of Nancy Burrows, liaison officer; Diane Matte, WMW coordinator from 1997 to 2006; and Brigitte Verdière, communications officer, are handing over the Secretariat to a new team in November 2006.

The team would like to thank all the women who took part in the March's in-house work for all these years. "The three of us were so delighted to work for this wonderful movement of the World March of Women<sup>3/4</sup>wonderful because its goals are noble and generous, and also because it gave us the opportunity to consolidate international solidarity ties.

"We learned so much from you, and we will continue our efforts so that all women everywhere may live their lives free of poverty and violence. Thank you for all the support you gave us throughout the years and for making our movement strong and vibrant."

Now, let us remind you that support for the Secretariat's work is also financial. National coordinating bodies' dues are from US \$100 to US \$200, depending on each one's financial circumstances. You may also make donations.

Between now and when the new team is set up, to contact the WMW, please send you e-mails to [info.marchemondiale.org](mailto:info.marchemondiale.org)

You will find all the contact information at the end of this newsletter.

### **Upcoming Events: Brussels, WSF, Nyeleni**

September 30 to October 1, 2006: The Seminar on Strategies of the Social Movements against Imperialism, War, Neoliberalism and Patriarchy will be held in Brussels. There, information on ongoing political processes and mobilizations in different countries will be pooled. Members will discuss the current world situation and their links to regional and domestic realities, along with the world process we are building together.

We will define new methods of concerted action for 2007. The World March of Women is a partner in organizing the Seminar. Diane Matte, Miriam Nobre, Saleha Athar and Wilhelmina Trout will represent us there.

After that, Diane Matte and Nadia de Mond will represent the WMW at the World Social Forum's International Council meeting, from October 9 to 12, in Parma, Italy. The meeting will prepare the 7<sup>th</sup> WSF, to be held January 20 to 25, 2007, in Nairobi, Kenya. We will attend the Forum to follow discussion on the four areas of action that the March has chosen to focus on. We will pay particular attention to the questions of interest to African women. And we will strengthen our alliances.

November 11 to 17, 2006: The March plans to organize seminars on the themes of women-peace-violence and communications at the 9<sup>th</sup> World Conference and General Assembly of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), to be held in Amman, Jordan.

March members planning to go to the Conference may contact Brigitte Verdière at [bverdiere@marchemondiale.org](mailto:bverdiere@marchemondiale.org)

More information on AMARC's web site: <http://amarc9.amarc.org/>

February 23 to 27, 2007: The WMW is co-organizer of the Forum on Food Sovereignty - Nyeleni, in Bamako, Mali. Via Campesina; the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF); the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP); Friends of the Earth International; the Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA); the Coordination Nationale des Organisations paysannes (CNOP), in Mali; and the IPC Rome are partners of this Forum.

A place for dialogue and cooperation among organizations belonging to the social movement fighting for food sovereignty, Nyeleni is aimed at the collective re-appropriation of food sovereignty to avoid its being co-opted and its content diverted for the benefit of liberal policies. We will reflect on concrete alternatives and ways to make this concept more accessible for peasants and fisher folk, and also for citizens at large. The Forum will develop strategies and a concrete action plan to change the balance of power and implement policies based on food sovereignty, to curtail the power of multinationals and the elite, and to heighten pressure on governments and international institutions.

A group of women from Brazil, Chile, Peru, Mali, Cameroon, Senegal, India and the Philippines is working within the WMW to prepare the Forum. The women from these national coordinating bodies will suggest workshops and information on women's contributions to building food sovereignty (paid and non-paid work, knowledge, vision, attitudes and decision-making within the family and the community, political struggles and building social movements). What are the solutions proposed by women to confront these obstacles and problems? What are women's gains and victories in the building of food sovereignty?

### **Inside the March**

The European coordinating body will meet October 21 to 23, 2006, in Irun-Hondarribia, in the province of Gipuzkoa, Basque Country Euskal Herria. Participants will implement the decisions made in Lima with respect to the priority themes of violence against women, poverty and insecurity. They will also discuss the organization and running of the coordinating body, in particular the election of representatives to the International Committee and the next international meeting, to be held in Portugal or another European country in 2008.

Information: Coordinación nacional del País vasco- Euskal Herria

Izaskun Guarrotxena and Itziar Gabikagogeaskoa:  
[emakumemartxa2006@hotmail.com](mailto:emakumemartxa2006@hotmail.com)

### **Young Women's Place**

The young women who attended the 6<sup>th</sup> International Meeting agreed on an informal process for discussing strategic planning and for staying in touch with one another throughout the year. Those who would like to join them are invited to contact Manuela Nicodemos Bailosa, a Brazilian delegate to the Meeting ([manumulher\\_me@yahoo.com.br](mailto:manumulher_me@yahoo.com.br)).

### **Put News of Your Country Online**

There's a new section on our web site. In National News Flashes, you can publish news items on

what you are doing in your country on behalf of the March. Calls to action, formal and informal meetings, musings, gains, difficulties¾this page is yours. All types of news are possible: texts, PDF documents, photos, audio, video.

To publish, you must have access to the site. To obtain it, please send an e-mail to [info.marchemondiale.org](mailto:info.marchemondiale.org) and write "Request for Web access" in the subject line. We will send you a user name and password, and some tips on how to update your section.

Thank you!

Special thanks to the workers of the Grupo Género y Economía in Lima, to all the women of the WMW in Peru, to the photographer and to the many volunteers who helped out at the Meeting.

Our thanks also to the writers and translators of this newsletter.

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Ce bulletin est également disponible en français. Este boletín está disponible en español.

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#### **P.S.**

\* For pictures in our Multimedia Section/Photos and audio connection, see:  
[http://www.marchemondialesdesfemmes.org/bulletin\\_liaison/2006/octobre/formathtml/en](http://www.marchemondialesdesfemmes.org/bulletin_liaison/2006/octobre/formathtml/en)