



# Why Women are Essential for Sustainable Development

Results  
of the European Women's Conference  
for a Sustainable Future Célakovice (Prague)  
14th – 17th March 2002



Women in Europe  
for a Common Future **WECF**

# Why Women are Essential for Sustainable Development

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a blueprint for a better world for all. At the heart of these goals is the recognition that women and girls are essential to achieving sustainable development. Their full and equal participation in all spheres of life is not only a matter of justice, but also a practical necessity for progress.

Women are the backbone of their communities, often serving as the primary caregivers and breadwinners. Their economic empowerment leads to improved living standards for their families and contributes to national growth.

Investing in women's education and skills training yields high returns for society. Educated women are more likely to have smaller families, invest in their children's health and education, and participate in community decision-making.

Women's leadership is crucial for addressing global challenges such as climate change, poverty, and inequality. They bring unique perspectives and solutions to the table, ensuring that development is inclusive and sustainable.

Empowering women is a win-win strategy. It promotes economic growth, social stability, and environmental sustainability. By supporting women's rights and opportunities, we can build a more resilient and prosperous world for all.

Let us commit to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This is not just a goal, it is a path to a sustainable future.

---

Published by WECF  
Munich/Bunnik, July 2002

WECF is an international network, founded in 1992 during the UNCED Earth Summit, which brings together NGOs from different parts of Europe and the NIS countries in joint projects on sustainable development, social rights, environment, health and participatory democracy. WECF aims to stimulate participation of women in the implementation of Agenda 21 and to support cooperation between NGOs from Eastern and Western Europe and the NIS, on the issues of environment, health and sustainable development. WECF's approach is to jointly implement practical projects and policy influencing activities, always from a gender perspective. WECF provides services - including networking services - to its partners and partner groups, information, expertise, funding and coordination support.

4

Editor: Sascha Gabizon

Proofreader: Lisa Magel

Design: Véronique Grassinger

**This publication was made possible thanks to:**

**European Union**, Directorate General Education and Culture

**BMU**, The Federal Ministry for Environment and Nuclear Safety,  
Germany

**VROM**, Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Housing,  
The Netherlands

**WEDO**, Women's Environment Organisation New York - Redeh Brazil

This publication is available from WECF's two offices:

WECF

email: [wecf@wecf.org](mailto:wecf@wecf.org)

website: [www.wecf.org](http://www.wecf.org)

Germany

Ickstattstrasse 22

D-80469 Munich,

Tel: +49-89-20232390

Fax: +49-89-20232391

The Netherlands

regulierenring 9,

NL-3981 LA Bunnik,

Tel: +31-30-2310300

Fax: +31-30-40878

Printed and bound in Germany

Printed on 100% recycled paper

© **WECF** and the authors, 2002

# Why Women are Essential for Sustainable Development

Results of the  
European Women's Conference  
for a Sustainable Future  
Célakovice (Prague)  
14th – 17th March 2002

Published by  
Women in Europe for a Common Future  
Munich/Bunnik,  
July 2002

---

## Acknowledgement and Thanks

6

WECF hereby wants to thank all the people who helped make the European Women's Conference for a Sustainable Future a success.

We thank in particular the working group leaders – **Ewa Lachkovicz, Alex Caterbow, Anabel Short, Anna Tsvetkova, Michaela Vasilescu, Helen Lynn, Liza Danielyan, Isabel Ripa, Melania Cavelli and Irene Dankelman** – for motivating the participants to take part in the preparatory discussions on the website, to moderate the workshops, to present the results and still spend time after the conference correcting and recorrecting the statements.

We thank all the WECF volunteers, staff and board members who worked very hard to get everything so well organised: **Kitty Bengtvelsen** and **Sandra Gusing** for helping with the preparation, travel and the finances, **Swenja Wegner** for helping with the invitations and travel, **Anne Barre** who did an incredible job on organising the logistics, decoration, translation and making us feel at home and who helped write the financial report, **Véronique Grassinger** and **Annemarie Mohr** for helping with the multimedia equipment, designing the badges, bags and pens and lots of other things, and **Ellen Peek** for indispensable administrative support.

We thank our Czech friends and assistants, particularly **Radka Chmelarova** for getting us everything we needed, **Marie Haisova** for her warm welcome and **Michaela Tominova** for organising the excellent press conference.

We thank our **sponsors** who have made it financially possible for us all to meet and work together: the European Union Directorate General Education and Culture the German Federal Environment Ministry, the Dutch Environment Ministry, and WEDO/Redeh in particular Thais Coral from Brazil!

Of course we want to thank all the **speakers and participants** for having so actively and enthusiastically taken part in all the events.

Finally, we want to thank **all of our partners/husbands** – both of the organizers as well as the participants – who have patiently been looking after our children, animals and plants and putting up with our long evenings /nights of preparation!

Sascha Gabizon  
International Director  
WECF

Marie Kranendonk  
President  
WECF

# Contents

- 9 MARIE KRANENDONK, WECF  
Introduction: Why Women are Essential  
for Sustainable Development
- I. Policy, Gender and Environment:  
Recommendations**
- 13 MARIE HAIKOVA, AGENTURA GAIA  
Welcome: Views from the Czech Women  
Environment Movement
- 15 CORNELIA QUENNET-THIELEN, BMU  
Key-note: Gender mainstreaming-  
Progress for Sustainability
- 19 ANS ZWERVER, COUNCIL OF EUROPE/DUTCH SENATE  
Key-note: Dilemmas and Contradictions in the  
European Political Strategy for a Sustainable Future
- 24 SASCHA GABIZON, WECF  
Perspective: From Rio to Johannesburg via Doha  
and Brussels
- 34 IRENE DANKELMAN, WECF/WEDO  
Women's Lobbying Efforts and Priorities for WSSD
- 37 ISABEL RIPA, FUTURA  
Report back from the WSSD Prepcom Feb. 2002
- 39 ULRIKE ROEHR, LIFE e.V.  
Why a Gender Approach is important-  
the Energy Example
- 45 CHRISTA WICHTERICH,  
GERMAN NGO FORUM, WOMEN'S WG  
Social, economic and environmental sustainability  
from a gender perspective
- 52 MAUREEN BUTTER, ANPED  
Environmental Rights are Human Rights,  
getting it on the WSSD agenda
- 54 ANNEMARIJE SLABE,  
INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
Threats and Opportunities of Enlargement:  
Agriculture, Safe Food and Biodiversity
- 58 CHRISTA MÜLLER, ANSTIFTUNG  
The Impact of Globalization on Women
- 68 IRENE DANKELMAN, WECF/WEDO  
Poverty Eradication as a Challenge for Sustainable  
Development
- 72 MELANIA CAVELLI, WECF  
From Habitat to WSSD: Gender issues and  
Globalization
- 77 OKSANA KISSELOVA,  
LIBERAL SOCIETY INSTITUTE  
Financing for Development; a Gender View

## II. Learning from Best Practices and Success Stories

- 83 ZHANNAT MAKHAMBETOVA, ARAL SEA  
Building up a sustainable community  
on the edge of the dying Aral sea
- 90 HELEN LYNN, WEN  
From Breast cancer to cosmetics: Women taking  
action for a healthier planet
- 94 SVETLANA SLESARENOK, MAMA-86 ODESSA  
Sustainable Development in Odessa
- 97 MILYA KABIROVA, AJGUL  
Grassroots fight for right and survival  
in nuclear contaminated areas
- 101 MUBORAK SHARIPOVA, OPEN ASIA  
War and subsequent Poverty  
and its effects on Women and Children  
in Tajikistan
- 103 ALEXANDRA BAIER, PAN-GERMANY  
Cotton: Sustainable Production in Agriculture
- 106 YELENA PANINA, ECOLAW  
Women, poverty and globalisation in the NIS
- 112 ISABEL RIPA, FUTURA  
Sustainable Development and Women's  
Empowerment in the Agricultural Region  
of Rioja, Spain
- 113 FRIEDA DE KONINCK, CCC  
International Women's Co-operation -  
the Clean Clothes Campaign
- 115 MEREL BIERKENS, DUTCH YOUTH COUNCIL  
Experiences of a youth representative  
on the Dutch delegation
- 116 CÉLINE OSTYN, FEMMES ET CHANGEMENT  
French women's action plan

## III. Results and follow-up

- 125 Peace Appeal
- 127 Statement of the European Women's Conference  
for a Sustainable Future
- 133 Working group statements:
- 133 Health
- 136 Agriculture and Rural Development
- 139 Habitat and Local Agenda 21
- 141 Globalization and Trade – Enlargement of the EU
- 142 Sustainable Consumption and Production
- 146 Biodiversity and Gene Technologie
- 148 Poverty
- 151 Water
- 153 ANITA NAYAR, SAGE  
Women's Gains and Unfinished Agenda  
in the Past Decade of UN Conferences

# Why Women are Essential for Sustainable Development

## Marie Kranendonk

President Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF),  
Netherlands

I am very glad that we can welcome so many participants to the European Women's Conference for a Sustainable Future. Many of you we know from cooperation in projects or lobby work of our network. But it is good to also see many new women that want to join our common efforts.

We are here to formulate our recommendations and exchange our experiences of how to implement sustainable development, at a local, regional, EU and international level. Our views and experiences are important. Women are main catalysts in making their local communities healthier, safe and more sustainable. Our governments need to know this, but often overlook women's role.

In 1991, women from all over the world met in Miami to prepare for the Rio Earth Summit. Then, we were only 15 Women from the whole European region, 2 from Russia, 13 from Western Europe. I am very happy to see that we are now 120 and many more would have liked to join us had there been more funding.

I would like to use this occasion to thank our sponsors, who have made it possible that so many women

*The right to a healthy environment*

can be here today, the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, the Netherlands

Ministry for the Environment, the European Union Directorate General for Education and Culture and Thais Corral of WEDO.

At the Rio Earth Summit – UNCED – we have seen that women can be extremely powerful in setting the right priorities. Often, women will put priorities less at a purely economic level, and more at a social and community level. Women often prioritize the livelihood of people, the health of people, people's access to safe food, water and clean air. Women argue that we should all have a guaranteed right, to human rights, to a healthy environment, and that no economic development can have precedence.

In this conference we have 120 women from all over the European Region, from Ireland, Finland and Spain to as far as Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. This is a great improvement from 10 years ago. 10 years ago the Berlin wall had only just come down and we had only just started to cooperate with partners from the NIS countries.

*Feminization of poverty in the NIS is a new phenomenon*

We have been preparing this conference in online working groups since January. Many of you have been participating actively in these preparations. Lots of information has been gathered. Often incredible figures, especially on issues like poverty. Poverty is a new phenomenon in the NIS (Newly Independent States). Especially feminization of poverty is a clear Women are most effected by poverty. And women are most effected by environmental degradation.

A strong link exists between environment, health and poverty. Poor families often have no access to clean water, can't buy bottled water and are therefore more vulnerable to disease, for which they can not buy medicine, which brings them into a viscous circle.



We will hear about this from women here at this conference. We will hear what women are doing and what women are lobbying for to change this situation. We have decided on purpose to combine these two things at this conference; the experiences and actions of women at grassroots level and the knowledge of women in science and politics. We will integrate these two aspects into strong recommendations for the Johannesburg conference and the EU enlargement process.

Looking at the priorities which you have set for this conference in your preparatory discussion, we see that many of the priorities are similar to those on the women's action agenda of the Rio conference. The Women's Action Agenda is still very alive. And we still need to work very hard to get it implemented. There is one main new issue, which is overriding at the Johannesburg conference, the negative effect of globalization. We see it in all the discussions with the women in preparation of Johannesburg (at the Preparatory Commission Meetings): the effects of current economic development and globalization are very negative for sustainable development. Economic activities have become a goal in themselves, whereas, they should be a mere tool for the benefit of the people and secure the planet on which we depend. The question which is posed is how to make the economy work for sustainable development. And here it is women who come with strong initiatives. This is the real challenge. We have to be very concrete on this. We should propose real measures and actions to be taken. Privatizing the water utility of

*Why privatisation  
of water utilities is not  
sustainable*

governments would like us to think. We will hear in the case-study presentation of Svetlana Slesarenok why privatization of water hampers sustainable development.

In your comments in the on-line preparation we see other priorities coming out. The protection of vulnerable groups: children, elderly and the poor. These groups are much too neglected. We need to protect the health of future generations. We need to guarantee access to safe water and safe food. We need to demand the right

to live in a clean and safe environment. And we need to defend the right for children to be born and live in a clean and safe environment (in the presentations we will see important links between the reproductive health of parents, especially mothers, and the health of children). In your priorities, you also plead strongly for sustainable food production and respect for animal welfare.

*Supportive letter from  
the EU Commissioner Margot  
Wallström*

All of these subjects will be discussed in our working groups, and I am sure from what I have seen in the preparations, that we will have significant results from the workgroups. These results can make a change. We will need to do good lobbying with our own governments. And I hope that we will be able to send a few representatives to Johannesburg. Let's make a very strong action plan and demands to our governments for what they will decide in Johannesburg. I am convinced that we will make a difference.

It is important to identify specific problems and solutions for your own regions where you live. Regional strategizing is important to become as concrete as possible. However, we will also need to emphasize the common issues and proposals from all the women from the pan-European region. We hope that our joint work at this conference will not stop here, but that we will continue to cooperate after the WSSD. We will do our best as WECF to strengthen the network of women in this field. Let's join forces at this conference, to work for a world where conflicts will be solved in a peaceful way (this is a first condition for sustainable development), where we respect human environmental rights for all, where economic justice is rendered and where we provide a sound and healthy environment.

Before I end, I want to tell you that we received a very supportive letter from Margot Wallström, the European Commissioner for the Environment. We had invited the commissioner, as you will have seen in her program. In our invitation letter we explained why we could only invite her so late – as we only got the funding for the conference together at the last moment – and we explained the purpose of this conference. She writes us, that she thanks us very much, that she highly values our initiative, and that she finds it inspiring that

women from all over Europe, the CEE and the NIS are cooperating. She was very pleased with our invitation to be a keynote speaker at our conference, but unfortunately can not accept, but sends us her best wishes for a successful conference.

We also got a verbal message from the Dutch minister of the Environment, Mr. Pronk. Mr. Pronk says that he is very interested in our program and discussions. Pronk is an important actor in the preparations for the WSSD as he is in charge of trying to get as many heads of state to the Johannesburg conference as possible. He asks us, if you have the possibility, to please write a letter to your government and ask that they be represented at the highest level, and explain why this is so important. So, that is a request from Minister Pronk to you. I wish you a very successful conference.



**Marie Kranendonk**  
Women in Europe  
for a Common Future (WECF),  
Netherlandswecf@wecf.org  
www.wecf.org

# I. Policy, Gender and Environment: Recommendations

# Welcome: Views from the Czech Women's Environment Movement

## Marie Haisova

Agentura GAIA, Czech Republic

### Welcome to the Czech Republic.

Let me introduce myself. I am the leader of the GAIA agency. Before GAIA I was the director of Green Circle, an alliance of Czech NGOs. That is how I met Marie Kranendonk of WECF at a meeting in the Netherlands. GAIA's main activity is to develop interpersonal communication for the environment. GAIA has three programs: "Women and Environment", "Green means Life" and "Alternatives to a Consumption Lifestyle".

Our Women Environment program deals - among others - with promoting involvement of women in policy making on environment. If we would have more women in strategic places in society, our life would look different. Better. As you are in the Czech republic you will find it interesting to know that we unfortunately do not have one single women minister in our government. And only 10% of parliamentarians are women. There is still a lot to do.

I would like to tell you about another international women's conference which took place in Prague two

*Life is not for sale* | years ago. You might remember that there was a large meeting of international financial institutions (World Bank, IMF) here in Prague. This meeting got a lot of press coverage because the anti-globalization movement - or we should better call the 'different'-globalization movement - was very vocal.

Our agency GAIA, together with the international women's network "Diverse Women for Diversity" organized a parallel women's conference, where we tried to show how these large financial institutions negatively influence the daily life of women.

We had invited speakers like Vandana Shiva from India. Vandana Shiva gave examples of how large transnational corporations influence agriculture and food production and poverty. Ursula Oswald Spring, ex-minister of the environment from Mexico, spoke about the unbalance in the world between large corporations and civil society. Carlos Crespo from Bolivia spoke about the problems of privatization of water. Maria Mies from Germany spoke about Militarization and how the arms industry makes huge profits paid by our taxes, and what terrible influence they have on our lives.

The title of the conference was "Life is not for Sale". GAIA published a little brochure with the results of the conference. It is half in English and half in Czech. GAIA also made a Czech version of a French video which shows the green movement in Tanzania, the work of Vandana Shiva and which shows alternatives to consumption lifestyle in different parts of the world. "Future is already there" is the name of video and it is made by Marina Galinberti from Rapsode Production Paris.

When we ask what has changed since the first Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, then this is a big change. There were two Eastern-European women at the preparatory meeting for Rio in 1991, now there are 120 women, of which half from Eastern Europe and the NIS. We had about 200 European women at the "Life is not

for sale” women’s conference.  
We don’t see much of this in the newspapers, but it is  
great progress at the same time.  
I wish you an excellent conference and hope that  
we will make ourselves heard in Johannesburg.



**Marie Haisova**  
Agentura GAIA,  
Czech Republic  
gaia@ecn.cz

# Key-note: Gender mainstreaming – Progress for Sustainability

German initiatives for implementing the Gender perspective into CSD, EU and national environmental politics by Environment

## Cornelia Quennet-Thielen

Deputy Director General, German Federal Ministry for the Environment

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Marie Kranendonk, dear Sascha Gabizon,

Thank you for the invitation to the German Ministry for the Environment to speak at this conference. Our Parliamentary Secretary of State, Gila Altmann, sincerely wanted to come to speak to you, but she just could not make it. This is why I am speaking to you right now – because we considered it worthwhile to be present in person instead of only sending a letter of encouragement to this conference. Personally, I am very familiar with the Rio-process, because I was the focal point in the German government for the Rio preparation and follow up process until 1997.

Today I am in charge of strategic and economic aspects of environmental policy and cross media environmental legislation. I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak to you today about German initiatives for implementing the gender perspective into UN, EU and national environmental policy.

Yesterday's speakers outlined the international process of integrating gender aspects into the work of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and the preparation process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development that will take place in Johannesburg in a few months' time.

Today, I would like to give you some insight into how these processes work on the EU and the national level – seen from the perspective of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment.

There is no doubt that both gender and environmental policies are important for and thus must be integrated into, all political fields of action. The special role of women in the field of sustainable development was already acknowledged at the Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. All over the world, women from various cultural and social backgrounds have a long tradition of responsibility for the use of resources and for living together in a community.

After the German federal election in 1998 the Federal Government started addressing the topic "gender and environment" much more intensely than before – both on the national and the international level. In January 2001 we organized the international workshop "Gender Perspectives on Earth Summit 2002" in Berlin, which some of you also attended. During the workshop we discussed the gender aspects of energy and transportation policies as well as of information for decision-making, all three of which were debated in New York during CSD-9 in spring 2001.

During the workshop one fact became even more obvious than before: There is, as in many other areas of AGENDA 21, a considerable gap between the goals and their implementation in practice.

The fact that the relations between environmental objectives and gender are rather complex makes the situation even more difficult. We still lack the necessary thorough understanding of the linkages in many fields, and this is certainly one reason why implementation is lagging behind. Studies in Belarus, for instance, show that 16 years after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, women appear to be suffering far

greater psychological and physical stress than men, arising from only recently occurring diseases. But at present there can be no question at all of any systematic investigation or any

*Specific negotiations on gender and environment resulted in unspecific decisions*

thorough understanding of the connections.

Ulrike Roehr will give more information on gender aspects of energy policy later.

What steps is the international community taking?

While the topic "Gender and Environment" has been, at least officially, on the international agenda since Rio, specific negotiations have nevertheless often resulted in relatively unsubstantial decisions.

Consideration of the problem is mostly limited to general calls on the Parties to relevant international agreements to increase women's participation in the political process and to give greater consideration to women's interests. Normally no specific projects or action plans are decided upon, and the decisions also largely ignore the real experience which has been gained throughout the world due to the commitment of women.

Hence it is no surprise that the results of the follow-up process to Beijing have also fallen far short of expectations. Significantly, the final document makes no mention whatsoever of such pressing and current issues as – for example – refugees due to military conflicts over the distribution of natural resources, the majority of which are women.

Other important issues are also neglected in the Beijing final document, such as the effects that long distances to the nearest market, to water sources or to social services have on employment opportunities for women, and education opportunities for girls.

*The majority of refugees of military conflicts are women*

There is, however, a direct link to environmental ques-

tions, because the distance covered to reach water sources increases due to water shortage and pollution. This makes it even more difficult for women to be incorporated into the employment market.

This is why the topic has also been addressed during the UN-conference on freshwater in Bonn last December – and I understand that the discussions on gender and water have been very fruitful.

Ladies and gentlemen, what has been and what can be done to better integrate the gender perspective into UN, EU and national policies? Starting off with CSD, some of the key recommendations concerning energy and transport made by our workshop's participants were integrated into the CSD-9 decisions. In addition, Germany alongside with the EU has been paying close attention to integrating concrete gender language into the WSSD preparations. I hope that our conference will build on that – not only continuing the dialogue on gender and sustainability between North and South, but also explicitly

*The EU organised a workshop on "European environmental policy and women"*

considering the East-West-perspective. And the number of draft statements I found in the folder last night fuels my expectation that good contributions for Johannesburg will emerge from this conference. Gender mainstreaming should be an essential issue in Johannesburg. In my opinion, the recent proposal made by the WSSD women's caucus to organize a women's tent at Johannesburg, where there will be space for meetings, workshops, exhibitions as well as music and art and also room for organizations to present their work to the public, supports that goal.

In the EU, proceedings on gender and environment seem to get on the right track, too. In February the Spanish EU presidency organized a workshop on "European environmental policy and women". The Environment Council of the European Union took note of the workshop's conclusions on March, 4. Among these was the recommendation to incorporate the gender perspective into environmental policy as well as into programs supported by the European Commission and to implement it in all phases: launch, design, development, equipment and evaluation. Furthermore, the European Commission was called upon to facilitate cooperation among the Member States, i.e. the exchange of experiences and good practices, the development of shared methodologies and instruments, and the adoption of measures that go further and deeper towards the common goal of gender equality. This, the workshop's participants concluded, should also be achieved by supporting the creation of an "ad hoc" Working Group on gender and environment. Last but not least the workshop stated

the need for effective data and indicators systems that are broken down by gender in order to improve our common ability to evaluate the correlation between gender and environmental policies and programs.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Many EU Member States are very pro-active on integrating the gender perspective into all fields of policies, among them the Netherlands, Sweden, Austria, and Germany.

On the national level, the German government considers the dialogue with and the support of the major groups to be very important. This of course also includes groups working on gender and environment, such as the German NGO Women's –Forum who in their recent preparatory conference agreed on 14 fields of action to tackle in and after Johannesburg.

In the process of elaborating our national sustainability strategy – which will be adopted by the Cabinet in April – we had two dialogue phases. In the first dialogue phase, the major groups named the issues they wanted to see covered in the strategy. In the second phase that has just finished, the groups were asked to comment on the draft strategy published in December 2001.

In addition, a national Council for Sustainable Development consisting of 17 eminent persons across society advises the German government and promotes the dialogue within society on the goals and measures of sustainable development.

Germany will present this strategy in Johannesburg. It contains inter alia 21 indicators and targets for a sustainable future from all areas of life, among the targets we have already agreed upon earlier, e.g.

*Germany sets as target to reduce space consumption from 130 to 30 hectares a day*

our target to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions by 25% between 1990 and 2005 and green house gas

emissions by 21% between 1990 and 2012. However, we also defined new targets, such as a target for reducing space consumption from 130 hectares a day to 30 hectares a day by 2020. Moreover, the strategy contains pilot projects in which the Federal Government cooperates with local authorities and major groups to show ways to achieve sustainable housing, mobility and agriculture. Of course gender aspects are also included in the strategy.

On the national level we have begun to focus on gender mainstreaming – not only, but also in environmental policy. By taking a

Cabinet decision on 23 June 1999 the Federal Government has

*All German Federal Ministries should use gender mainstreaming*

acknowledged the instrument of gender mainstreaming as an underlying principle for all its activities.

All Federal Ministries are called upon to promote gender mainstreaming as the underlying principle for all political, legislative and administrative measures in their respective fields of work.

Within an inter-ministerial working group at Director Generals' level the Ministries, among them the Federal Ministry for the Environment, agreed to lay down pilot projects for testing the strategy of gender mainstreaming and to organize further training measures in all Ministries at all levels of hierarchy.

As its pilot project the Federal Environment Ministry decided to develop a gender impact assessment (GIA) for legislative measures in the field of radiation protection.

The work on the application of the GIA to the Radiation Protection Ordinance has just been completed.

An interim report documenting the results achieved so far has been available since late February. The GIA draft was developed using selected rules for the protection of women of childbearing age and of the unborn child when exposed to radiation. The main result is that there is a way to protect fetuses from radiation without strictly prohibiting pregnant women from working in restricted access areas which was laid down in the former ordinance. Hence the new ordinance ensures the necessary protection of the unborn child and at the same time gives more freedom of choice to mothers as to where they want to work. Without a gender approach the latter aim might have been given too little weight during the revision process, even though it is a basic right in Germany for both men and women to freely choose their place of work.

Since this legal field cannot be representative for the entire Environment Ministry due to its wide variety of tasks, the findings and experience thus made are to be



evaluated and further developed in at least one more area of work. This will be environmental labelling – some of you may know the German ecolabel “Blue Angel” – for computer devices. The final aim is to obtain a GIA procedure – if necessary with alternatives - which can be implemented in all areas of work of the Environment Ministry and all its subordinate authorities.

The second step, the testing phase for the gender impact assessment has just started and is to be completed by October 2002.

In the past the topic of gender mainstreaming had to cope with a lack of understanding among Ministry staff and continues to do so – although this is slowly but constantly declining. Considerable reservations have been voiced in particular against the term gender mainstreaming (the English word also being used in German because of the lack of an adequate translation), as well as against contents and aims.

As a first step general information on gender mainstreaming and gender impact assessment was provided

*Ministry staff had reservations against the term gender mainstreaming*

ed in an in-house information leaflet. In addition, a communication strategy is being elaborated which

is to support the presentation of the work to outside parties and to increase its acceptance within the Federal Environment Ministry. Workshops providing both basic information on gender mainstreaming and on the GIA for the Radiation Protection Ordinance were organized and many colleagues showed interest in the topic. An important point to mention here is the support of the Minister and his representatives, without which we would not have progressed so far.

We also closely cooperate with our Federal Environmental Agency in Berlin and its project on “Gender and Sustainability”. Its aims coincide as it wants to help lay the groundwork and develop tools for an environmental policy which takes gender equity to be both an opportunity and a responsibility. The project targets a qualitative improvement through a broadened and more adequate perspective as well as an avoidance of policies that discriminate against women.

Last but not least, some of these initiatives and activities will be reported in a brochure on German –

governmental and non-governmental - gender-related activities which will be presented during the WSSD in Johannesburg.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The current political conflicts all over the world show the importance of a gender approach, not only to environmental policy. For example, women in Afghanistan are key players in rebuilding their communities and their country. Hence, their contributions need to be recognized, valued and supported. UNIFEM recently outlined the four key areas of concern to be dealt with, namely women's security, promotion of gender justice, i.e. regarding education, governance, and women's economic security. Especially governance is also a field of action for environmental politics. While a strong Women's Ministry is vital to making sure that commitments to women are honored, women's perspectives and leadership must also be included within other ministries and outside of government, not only, but also in the environmental sector.

To conclude: Much has been done, and yet there is much more to do to globally mainstream gender in environmental policy. We are very much aware that this conference must be followed by specific projects which show that linking the question of gender with that of environment – both of which are cross-cutting issues - considerably advances both policy areas – women's as well as environmental issues.

We are very interested in hearing your ideas and concepts and look forward to the discussions over the next few days. We hope to be able to implement them as concrete decisions, but in particular also actions and projects with our partners in the United Nations in the context of the World Summit.

---

**Cornelia Quennet-Thielen**  
Deputy Director General,  
German Federal Ministry  
for the Environment

# Key-note: Dilemmas and contradictions in Political Strategies for a Sustainable Future

## Ans Zwerver

Senator, Dutch Senate

Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

### Dilemmas and contradictions in political strategies towards a sustainable future.

Thank you very much for inviting me today. As a representative of GroenLinks, the Green Left Party in the Netherlands, I am very honoured by the invitation to participate in this conference. Let me first introduce myself a bit further. I am in the Netherlands member of the First Chamber, that is to say, I am a senator. I am also a member of the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe. In all the fora I participate I always find it, as a feminist, very stimulating to work with women.

I quote your web-site: "Women are essential in the implementation of agenda 21. Over the last 10 years women have carried out many excellent initiatives for sustainable development. In many regions women were the main catalyst for sustainable development. But successful local initiatives often stand little change against the forces of globalisation and weak international agreements at government level."

Coherence in international sustainable development, human rights and poverty eradication policies has to

*Women are essential for implementing Agenda 21*

be taken very seriously. Work on a national level for national environment can simply not be successful if it fails to take into account the issues and dimensions of global sustainable development. The air that we breathe in Prague is the same

air we breathe in The Hague or elsewhere. Whatever is destroyed in the habitat in and around the capital of Moldova will have an impact, sooner or later, on the habitat in Prague or The Hague and vice-versa.

Today I will talk about dilemmas and contradictions in political strategies towards a sustainable future on 4 dimensions:

1. Green Left policies.
2. National political strategies: the example of the sustainable development agreements.
3. European political strategies: the case of the flower industry in Kenya.
4. International political strategies: the interrelationship between population growth, sustainable development and ecological sustainability.

I will conclude with some ideas and suggestions of how to get more women in the decision-making process.

### Dilemma's of a Green Left party

My party links left politics with ecological or green politics. In fact the very name of the party is a reflection of this linking process. An effective cooperation between the left and the environmental movement requires not only a profound transformation of left politics but also of ecological thinking. Ecological politics can't bypass the core issues addressed by left politics. This is especially true for the central theme of left discourse: social equity, justice and human rights. For example, the ecological question how to deal with our natural resources is unavoidably linked to the question who should benefit from the use of these resources.

Or in other words, Green politics may have intended or unintended consequences for diminishing or enhanc-

ing the structural inequalities of society. Awareness of these consequences is necessary in order to develop a sustainable collaboration between Green and Left. The same objectives concerning sustainable development, i.e. ecological sustainability, may be incompatible with objectives concerning social justice and equity and it may be very difficult to develop satisfying solutions. What we need is a constant awareness.

### **Dilemma's and contradictions in national political strategies**

The Rio conference in 1992 shaped Agenda 21, a very ambitious programme of action that fully recognised the necessity of working for the goals of sustainable development in cooperation with civil society and local governments. In fact the main part of the Agenda 21 addresses issues to be taken up at the local level. Our former minister of development cooperation, Jan Pronk, initiated three sustainable development treaties at the national level between Benin, Costa Rica, Bhutan and the Netherlands. The governments agreed to establish long-term cooperation between their countries based on equality, reciprocity and participation. Sustainable development was more than the fight against poverty, more than development cooperation. It asks for international cooperation and for cohesion through an integrated consideration of economic, social and ecological aspects between different actors in society.

To live up to the goals in these treaties has not been easy. The idea of reciprocal development partnerships in the form of a treaty instrument was an important breakthrough in the thinking about development cooperation. No longer was development co-operation only foreign aid. This was a shock for some Dutch political parties.

The idea that people in Benin, Bhutan or Costa Rica could formulate critical questions about the way in which the Netherlands deals with issues of airport pollution, noise, agricultural issues or issues of governance and democratic participation, was almost appalling for them.

Last year the sustainable development agreements were evaluated. The evaluation was not bad. The problems encountered arose from trying to implement new ideas with old rules. The evaluators advised the Dutch

Parliament to continue the experiment and proposed some changes concerning financial arrangements and institutional rules. Sustainable development was an integrated approach and in need of expanding its activities to other ministries. Our new minister of Development never believed in the agreements. What she finally proposed to parliament was not a broadening up of the agreements, but narrowed it down to development issues. In other words poverty reduction. In a way this is a betrayal of a new approach towards sustainable development. That is a pity but a political reality too. Green Left will keep on fighting for real sustainable development agreements.

### **Dilemmas and contradictions on a European level.**

I will give you the example of the flower industry in Kenya. I could also have given you the example of the oil pipeline in Chad and Cameroon. It is all about ecological sustainability, poverty reduction and social justice.

The flower industry in Kenya supplies about 40% of the flowers imported to Europe and employs about 50,000 people. The industry is comparatively high tech: flowers are grown in plastic greenhouses under drip irrigation with heavy use of chemicals. Because of the huge set up costs and technology involved there is no use of small family growers. The flowers are flown daily either directly to supermarket chains in Britain and Germany or to the vast flower auction in Amsterdam. Most of the firms are either British or Dutch owned and have foreign managers. This industry has grown up in the last ten years and is expanding. It currently generates some \$110 million a year in revenue. The main competitors outside Europe are Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Israel.

*40% of European Flowers come from Kenya. Almost 90% of workers in the Kenian flower industry are women*

Most of the workers (up to 90%) are women. There is widespread use of casual labour employment terms, which means people are taken on for three months, then fired and hired again on the same terms. Some workers have worked for ten years like this. This means not only that they are paid low wages but also they have no rights whatever, especially for organising. About 60% of the 50,000 workers in the industry are employed like this.

There is massive use of pesticides and other agro-chemicals with little or no protective clothing. Women report barrenness and blindness as a result. Pesticides accumulate more in women's bodies than men's because of more fatty tissue. This has negative implications for breast feeding and foetus development.

There is systematic sexual harassment. The proportion of men to women on the flower farms may be twenty women to one man. Men occupy the powerful positions and demand sexual favours from women in

*There is systematic sexual harassment; aids is rampant*

return for 'protection' and job security.

**AIDS is rampant.** Child

labour does not appear to be a direct problem, but workers testified that some children under sixteen do work and falsify their ages. However, the most serious child issue is that the very low wages (less than a dollar a day for casual workers) means that they cannot afford to send their children to school, and the children therefore may well be engaged in child labour outside the farms. What to do with these facts. Here we see the tension between ecology and economy, between men and women, between environment conservation and survival, between ecological sustainability and social equity and justice. What to do?

The flower industry in Kenya appears to represent the good and bad sides of globalisation. On the one hand it does provide work for 50,000 Kenyans. On the other hand their conditions would not be acceptable to workers in Europe and it seems like another example of multinational business going where the labour is cheap and easily manipulated. It is not clear how much of the total profits end up in Kenya.

*Their salary is not sufficient to send children to school, they have to work too*

The EU should demand certain labour standards of the countries it imports from.

The present labour stan-

dards and environmental standards are not acceptable at all. The EU should, in close cooperation with the ILO, local unions, employers and NGO's in Kenya make agreements about ethical trading and demand proper ethical corporate responsibility in the firms it imports from. Together they could provide training to the workers and set up development programs in order to send the children to schools and build health clinics.

The environmental effects should be taken into the price of the flowers. Green Left made an initiative law (together with NGO's) about corporate responsibility and ethical trading.

Before ending the first part of my presentation, I would like to say a few words about the **interrelationship between population growth, sustainable development and ecological sustainability.**

It is a very important issue and needs to be properly addressed.

Population stabilization, a term used by many environmental organizations, implies declining population rates over time, in other words population reduction. Traditionally, environmental groups have stressed population control to reduce environmental degradation. Not much attention is given for the health and well being of the women they want to influence to have fewer children. But we know that population growth is now agreed to be only one of the multiple and complex factors that

have led to global/environmental degradation. In

*Ethical Trading: we should demand labour standards from the countries we import from*

fact, it is the consumption of the North, the industrialized countries –US, Europe, Japan- that consumes most resources and degrade the environment most. Anti-immigrant and population control forces use words like ecological sustainability, economic security, human rights and environmentally sustainable consumption, not for the well-being of the people but to get arguments to halt immigration, on a national level. On a global level draconian one-child family policies are proposed.

Hardly a women's health and human rights agenda. We should be very sceptical and very alert when there is talk about population reduction. It is not women who are the problem, they have a problem. Many of them still struggle to get better access to sexual and reproductive health services. Quite often men are the problem for women. They also have a problem. Population is not about numbers. Population is about people. It is particularly troubling to note that in many developing countries maternal mortality rates remain extremely high, with an estimation of 500,000 deaths per year, many of them due to unsafe abortions.

This increase can be attributed to lack of access to reproductive health information and services, which

***It is not the women who are the problem; they have a problem***

leads to unwanted pregnancies and increased prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. The increase has occurred mainly among the young age and prime-age groups.

Other crucial challenges exist, among them, gender related issues such as multiple forms of violence, rape, trafficking of young girls and adolescents, and domestic violence, all of which are widespread. Also in the countries in Europe.

Facts we all know, facts we all say we want to change. It is also a fact that the support which we said we would be giving to change this - as agreed on at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo to address these issues - is not forthcoming.

**I call on all the women present here to press your governments to fulfill their financial commitments made in Cairo to the implementation of the Program of Action.**

I come to the **second part** of my speech.

It is very important from the principles of equity and justice that women play a role in the decision-making process.

This means that we should work within our political parties, that we should have equal representation of women. Not only at local levels, but also at national and international levels. A gender balanced representation is not something that falls out of the air. One has to fight for it, put the issue on the table constantly. Even in my party - a party which is very much aware of this issue - a gender-balanced representation, is not always a given.

In the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe we have a women's group within the socialist group and a committee on Equal opportunities between women and men. We are working hard together. I will give you some examples.

The examination of representation in the political insti-

tutions of the Council of Europe member countries has shown that women are very under-represented and this under-representation is reflected in the composition of national delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly. That is why I made a motion for a resolution proposing to change the Assembly Rules of Procedure with a view to ensure the gender balance principle in the work of the Assembly.

More concrete to change some rules to ensure a fair gender representation in national delegations, insisting on a minimum 30% representation of women in each delegation. If this rule is not respected the Assembly shall not ratify the credentials of this delegation. Until now there are 5 national delegations composed exclusively of male parliamentarians.

To respect the principal of gender equality in the composition of the Bureau and to ensure that all reports prepared by the committees should take gender dimension into consideration and this should be reflected in all resolutions, recommendations and orders. This resolution will be discussed in June. It is not sure at all that it will be accepted, but it is a way of trying to pursue our goals.

The committee of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men made many reports. One of them is the report Demographic change and sustainable development. Currently we are working on a report on the State of the world population. Out of this comes a visit to the US, where female parliamentarians from Europe will discuss with

US senators the impact of President Bush's decision to cut funds to non

***of the 380 women who became pregnant every minute, 190 of them did not wish to become pregnant, 110 will suffer from pregnancy-related complications and 40 will have an unsafe abortion***

governmental organizations which are engaged on abortion related activities. This has a worldwide impact on women. Considering that of the 380 women who became pregnant every minute, 190 of them did not wish to become pregnant, 110 will suffer from pregnancy-related complications and 40 will have an unsafe abortion.

These, in short, are issues I wanted to address to you today. Issues, which don't have simple solutions. Issues where dilemma's like ecological sustainability,

human rights, social equity and social justice play a role. Issues where it is important to hear women's voices. Issues where women worldwide need each other in order to find solutions.

Networking is what we are doing here in Prague. It is good to have these networks, on a local level, a national level and an international level. If women want to make a change we have to combine our efforts, we have to work together.

Networking - for me - means to give and to take.

I gave you some of my views. In return I would love to take a motion for recommendations made by you which I can take along to the Council of Europe.

A motion for a recommendation to ask the committee of ministers in the Council of Europe for a coherent, integrated strategy by the member states of the Council of Europe towards a sustainable future.



**Ans Zwerwer**

Senator, Dutch Senate  
Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe  
zwerwer@xs4all.nl

# Perspective: From Rio to Johannesburg via Doha and Brussels

Sascha Gabizon, WECF, Germany/Netherlands

In this presentation, I want to tell briefly what we hope to achieve at this conference, what the output will be, what the results will be.

But before I get to our results, I want to look at some strategic issues from Rio - the first Earth Summit in 1992. I then want to look at how we are moving from Rio, via Doha, to Johannesburg, to the second Earth Summit, the "World Summit on Sustainable Development". In short the WSSD. I think this will be helpful for those of us who have not been following the preparations for the WSSD intensively. However, I will only glance at issues, and leave our invited speakers to tell us the essentials. So, for some of you I might be going a bit fast, but you'll hear much more about these issues in the coming days!

## **Earth Summit, Rio 1992, an historic event**

The first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 was an historic event. It was the First time that NGOs had an important role. In particular the women's NGOs took an important lead. It was also the First time that our Heads of State committed to an "Agenda 21", a very ambitious document, which specifies concrete actions, promises public participation and sets a timetable. It was also the First time that a number of "international conventions" were put in process, the convention on Climate Change, on Biodiversity and on Desertification.

Rio was a historic event. Never had civil society taken part so actively in shaping our global future. Never before had women's organisations from around the world worked together as much as in preparation and

during the first Earth Summit (which was officially called United Nations Conference on Environment and Development – UNCED). We will probably hear some more about this from other speakers. Rio for the first time also saw a whole lot of presidents and prime ministers turn-up to discuss 'environment', and 'health', and 'gender perspectives'. Very different from their usual discussion topics of trade liberalisation and economic embargoes. And the outcomes of Rio are a landmark. We have the Rio principles with their incredible vision - we have Agenda 21, a clear roadmap with goals and timetables, and with an entire chapter on Women as well as reference to gender in many other chapters - and we have the global environment conventions started, on climate, biodiversity, desertification.

## **Key issues in Rio**

Sustainable Development, as developed by Gro Harlem Brundland and her team, is a fantastic idea.

Sustainable Development includes the idea of both material AND immaterial wellbeing - so it's not just about having more cars, televisions and gameboys,

Sustainable Development includes the idea of a *FAIR* distribution - why would a Dutch person be allowed to use 20 times more fossil fuels and leave nothing for it's neighbour in Africa. And why would we deplete all our natural resources now and leave a polluted and toxic earth for our *CHILDREN!*

And Sustainable Development integrates economic development - green enterprises -, social development, - more and healthier jobs - environmental protection - less pollution and depletion, and institutional - progressive policies and institutions "Better Governance".

**Sustainable Development is:**

- Material and immaterial wellbeing,
- Distributed in a FAIR way between countries, peoples, generations
- Integrating: economy, social, environmental, institutional

**Changing Consumption and Production Patterns**

One of the issues that were put straight in Rio was that environmental degradation was NOT the fault of women in developing countries having to many children; the demographic explosion theory which had had many followers until then.

Figures were put on the table that showed that the environmental crisis is due to our unsustainable consumption patterns.

This graph (1) of the Wuppertal institute where I used to work, toured the globe. It shows how much environmental depletion and pollution are caused by the con-

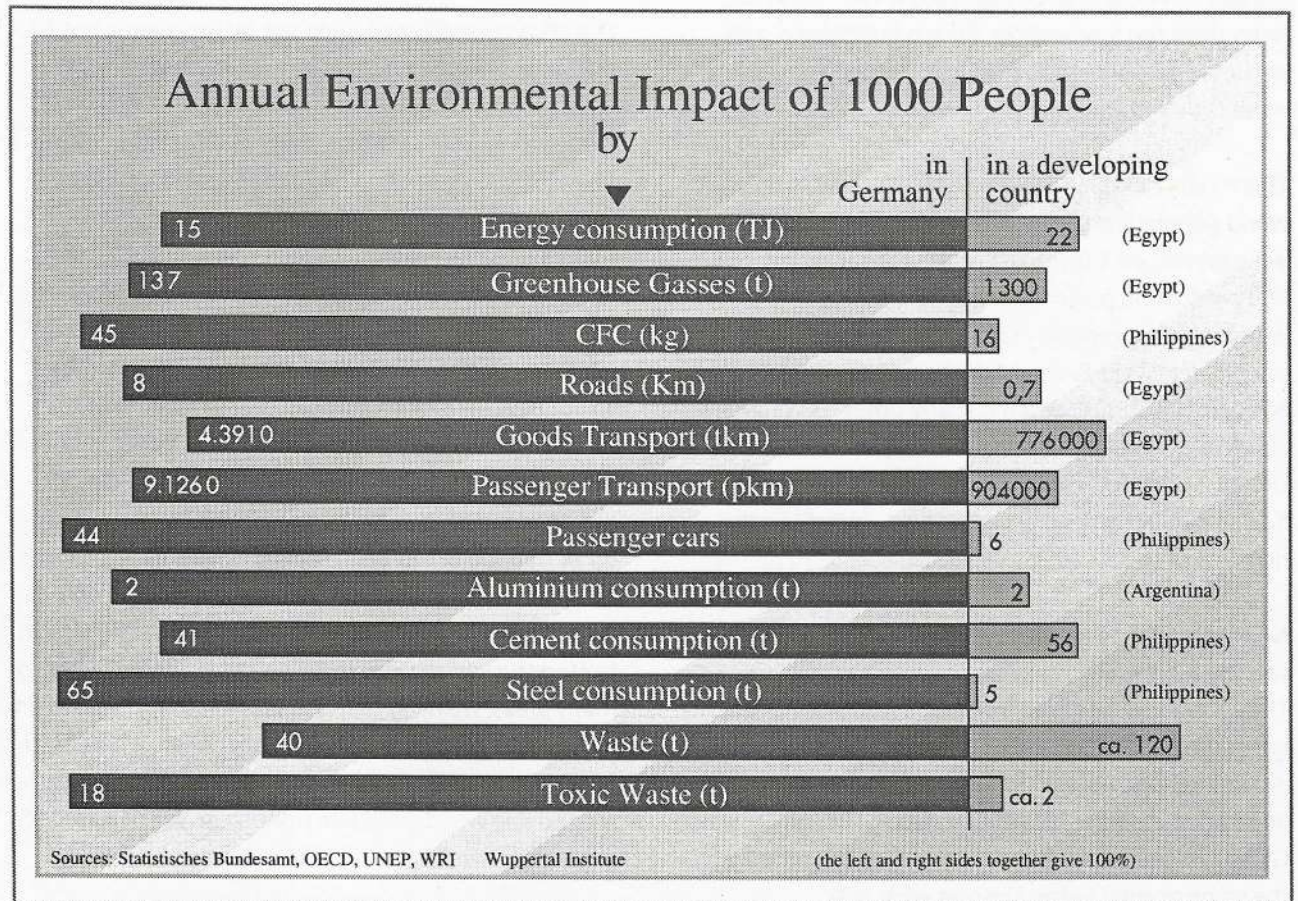
sumption patters of an average European - in this case a German - compared to an average person in Egypt or the Philippines. As the graph shows, a European uses 655.000 tons of steel which is 131 times more then an Egyptian, and a European causes 450.000 kg of ozon-destructing emissions, which is 28 times more then an average Pilippino. So, 1 European depletes and pollutes as much as 1 Egyptian or Philippino. In other words, if 10 philippinos are born the impact is still less then of 1 European. Women should not be made the black sheep of development and be forced to be sterilized or other rigid family-planning measures.

Women should have the right to decide themselves and should be given more education and access to reproductive health care.

**Inefficient over-consumption and production**

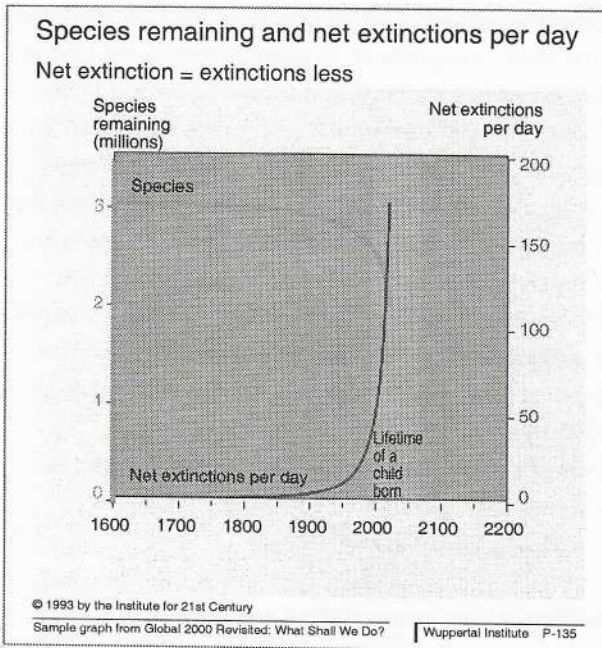
One thing which also became clear is that the industrialized countries are NOT an example to follow.

We have had 50 years of unsustainable development in



Graph 1: in average, 1000 Germans use about 10 times as much as 1000 Argentinos, Philippinos or Egyptians (by Bleischwitz and Schütz, Wuppertal Institute, 1992)





*Graph 2: we are losing species every day, damage that can never be restored.*

the North. We have been using too many resources, to produce too few services, for too few people. 20% of the world-population ALREADY pollute and deplete more than the earth can cope with.

This model can not be extended to the rest of the world population. Lots of interesting studies have been done on this, on the impact of the consumption and production patterns of the northern industrialized world. It's now generally called the "Ecological footprint" calculation. Every product we consume has an ecological footprint which is many times its weight and size. For tiny-super conductors in our computers, kilometers of virgin jungle have been felled. We would need 4 planet Earths if everybody would live like the rich 20% of this world.

#### **Need to be fair, we reduce so that others can use a bit more**

The conclusion was that the Earth's resources and ability to absorb pollution needs to be shared more equally, between countries and between generations. Many good practices have been developed in the last 10 years. Green companies have shown that you can produce the same or even better services with 25% of the resources, even 90% of the former resources. Grey-water recycling, wind-energy, organic farming...

the examples are manifold. Women are often seen as a key player in 'changing consumption patterns', but are not given much power to do so. We will hear much more about this in the coming days.

#### **The North to take the first steps**

Rio was a milestone in that many people, Government representatives and NGOs started to accept this idea of the North having to make a big step first towards less wasteful production and consumption, towards a fairer sharing of the worlds resources.

But not everybody excepted this idea of having to change consumption patterns. George Bush senior made a historic remark at the Earth Summit in Rio, he said: "The American Way of Life is not up for Discussion". As the US have been blocking any progress in the preparations towards Johanneburg in the last few months, I am afraid that we can expect even less vision from his son.

The US is currently governed not by the people but by the large industries. Those industries which are also among the most wasteful and old-fashioned, the oil-industry, the steel-industry, and industrial agriculture. They are blindly holding on to their status-quo.

#### **Loss of Bio-diversity**

Another key issue in Rio was the terrible figures on the loss of species. Every day we are losing species. Species which could have brought us incredibly useful materials for new medicines, for sustainable raw materials, who are part of an ecosystem which is now thrown out of balance. This graph shows how the loss of species has accelerated in the last years. In Rio an entire chapter of Agenda 21 has been dedicated to this issue, chapter 15, and from Rio has come the Biodiversity Convention. We see however that the issues are all linked, that to stop the loss of species we need to make changes in many areas, we need to move to organic agriculture on a large scale, we need to halt further destruction of virgin forest, as much in Canada as in Indonesia, by stopping to buy wood-products from these areas, by reducing metal use etc.

Christine von Weizsaecker of the organisation "Diverse Women for Diversity" unfortunately had to cancel

her presentation here at this conference at the last moment. She had to go to the biodiversity negotiations to replace the only NGO representative which fell ill. She was going to tell us how only a small group of very effective NGO women have been able to turn the biodiversity convention negotiations into a success. Women in developing countries are again the most affected by loss of biodiversity. We have an Excellent working group on this issue under the guidance of Eva Lankovicz, where we will hear more about gender and biodiversity.

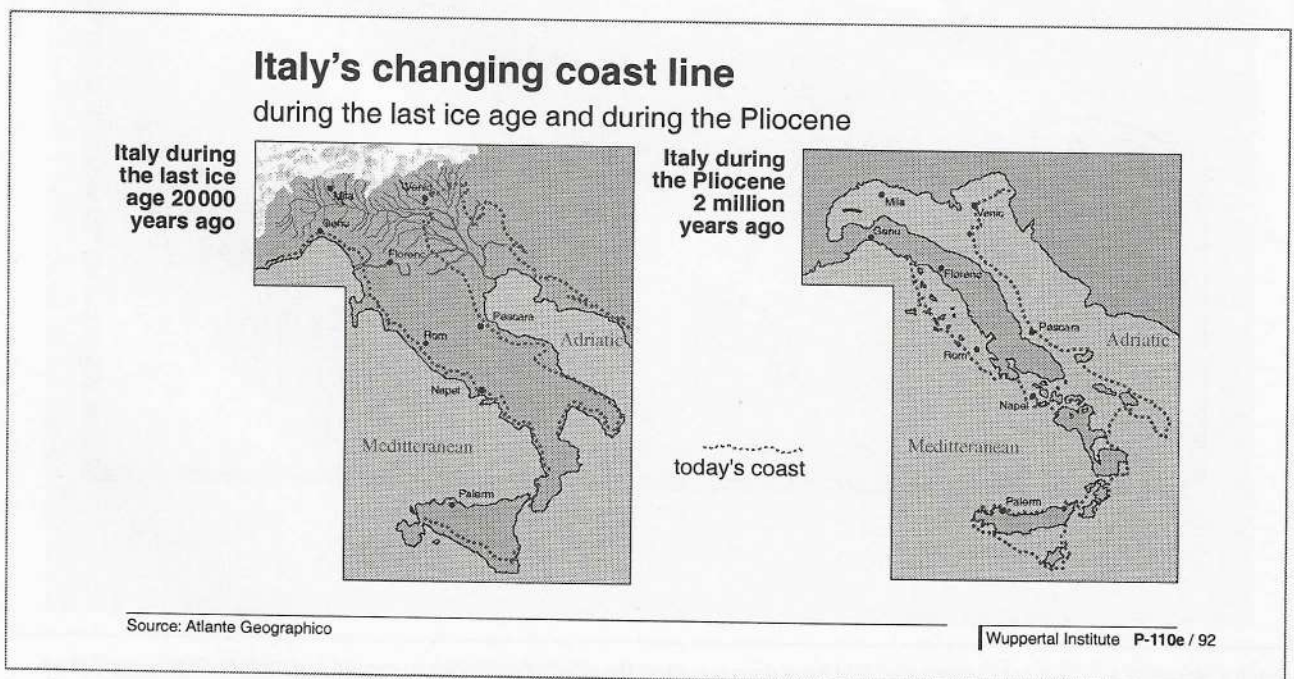
### Climate change & Sea level rise

Climate change also became a global concern at Rio, and led to the climate convention and the Kyoto protocol. Climate change can only be dealt with at a global level. And because of climate change, Italy might in a few decennea take back the shape it had during the pliocese, 2 million years ago, see the graph. The latest news about the melting of the ice on the poles is even more worrying then it is was 10 years ago in Rio. The climate change will lead to increasing floods and draughts. Some small-island states are already starting to disappear below the sea. In 10 years they will no longer exist. And the poorest countries are hardest hit. The floods and hurricanes kill many more people in Niguaragua or Bangladesh then they do in Florida. It is terrible that the US has stepped out of the Kyoto

protocol, after first having watered it down to 1,3%. Nevertheless, Kyoto is avoided a business-as-usual scenario in the countries who are ratifying it. In Rio chapter 9 of Agenda 21 is dedicated to needed climate change measures and one if not the major result of Rio has been the Climate Convention.

### Health effects from pollution

Several chapters in Agenda 21 are dedicated to health effects from environmental pollution and reducing toxic chemicals. This is a theme in which recent research has shown that the effects are much more dramatic then previously thought. This illustration (graph 4) shows drawings made by two 4 year old children from a group of children which were studies by Elisabeth Guillette in an agricultural region in Mexico. The 4 year old children who's mothers have been exposed to pesticides, and who have been exposed themselves to pesticides are clearly motorically and intellectually retarded. An increasing number of show that many commonly used pesticides damage and deform the hormone system and can lead to infertility, reduced intellect and cancer. We will hear much more about this issues, particularly specific health effects on women and children and what women's organisations like WEN are doing about this. In Rio, chapter 67 of Agenda 21 has been dedicated to health.



Graph 3: will Italy soon look again as it did 2 million years ago?

### Social dimension

The social dimension of sustainable development has been dealt with in many places in Agenda 21 and in the discussions in Rio. We now know that Poverty often develops after environmental depletion of resources. The large industrial fishing fleets of industrial countries leave no fish for the small fishers, who lose their livelihoods. We have increasing numbers of official "environmental refugees", entire populations who have to leave their country because of environmental disasters, such as the indigenous Karakalpakhs and Kazakhs who used to live around the Aral Sea which is drying up because of irrigation of cotton plantations in a desert area. We have learned about the existence of "Environmental Racism". In many countries ethnic minorities not only encounter racism when looking for a job, but also when looking for a place to live, and they will end up living next or on top of the toxic waste dump, or near a dioxin-fuming waste incinerator. We will hear from Maureen Butter that ANPED and other NGOs are trying to get a convention on "Environmental Human Rights". Everybody should have the right to a safe and clean environment, to safe drink-

ing water, to safe food without dioxins and pesticides which will not damage the foetus in our bellies.

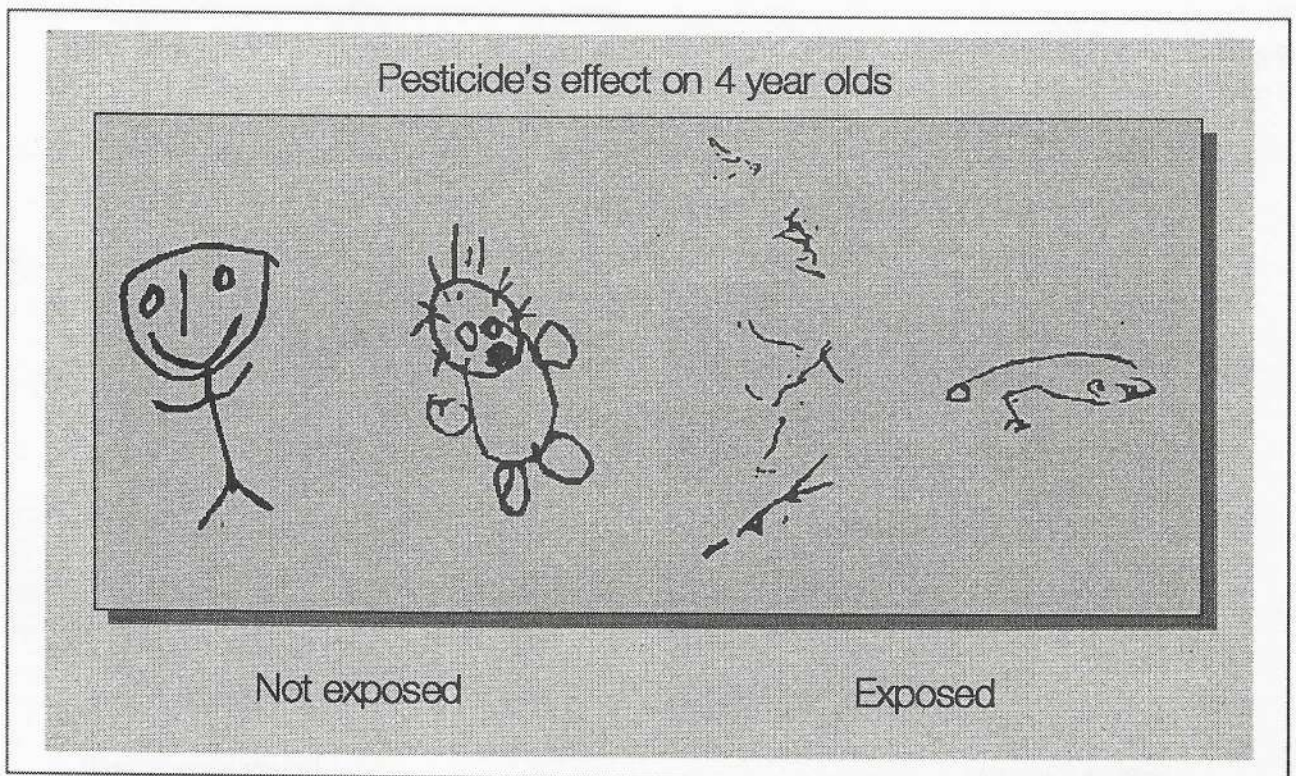
Rio's Agenda 21 is like a bible, you can spend your life reading. To mention just a few other issues in there: fresh Water, the need to preserve fresh water and give everybody access to safe drinking water. Chapter 18 of Agenda 21 is dedicated to water. Water will again be crucial in Johannesburg. We have an excellent working group on this issue at our conference. The chapter on Women as a major group is crucial, and we should make sure that this remains the case in Johannesburg.

### Rio documents will and should not be renegotiated

The documents negotiated at the Rio Earth Summit are in most part excellent, should not be renegotiated and should continue to be implemented.

For example:

- Principle 25 says "all states cooperate essential task of poverty eradication"
- Chapter 21 says "till 2000 everybody should have



Graph 4: drawings by 4 year old Children, the right hand drawings show the effect of pesticides on mental and motoric development in an agricultural region in Mexico. Research: Elisabeth Guillette.

access to 40 liter clean drinking water.”

- Chapter 17 says that we should end over-fishing
- It was decided in Rio that 0,7% of the GDP of industrialized countries will be used to aid projects for sustainable development in developing countries
- Agenda 21 has 143 references to the importance of a gender approach

The governments meeting in Johannesburg will try not to *RENEGOTIATE* Agenda 21, even though the US would like to skip lots of points, such as the promised 0,7% of GDP for developing aid and helping implementation of Sustainable development in developing countries. But there the US does not stand alone. A couple of European countries have just decided the same, among others Germany.

#### **Dangers of Genetic Engineering and Nuclear industry were omitted**

But there are also omissions and contradictions in the Rio documents. The two flagrant omissions is that it is not mentioned anywhere that nuclear energy is unsustainable. The NGOs even had to fight very hard not to have the nuclear lobby put in that nuclear energy should be promoted because it does not produce CO<sub>2</sub>. Another obvious omission is that the dangers of genetic engineering are nowhere mentioned.

Omissions:

- Unsustainability of Nuclear energy
- Dangers of genetic engineering

We also find contradictions in Agenda 21 due to the fact that it is a consensus documents written by many people. There are clearly two fronts which oppose each other.

You will find parts of Agenda 21 reflecting the Neo-Liberal movement which thinks that free trade should not be hampered by sustainable development. And you will find the more ‘social market economy’ views that economy should serve mankind, and that free-trade itself is not a goal, but a means which needs to be guided and follow certain criteria.

Two fronts:

- Social-Democratic - "Economy should serve mankind"
- Neo-liberal - "People as consumers" - SD as long as does not obstruct free trade...

#### **10 years after**

Where do we stand 10 years after Rio's Earth Summit? On the one hand we have lot's of excellent projects by women, local communities, green businesses and international agencies. For example, in this conference we will hear about MAMA-86's projects to provide clean drinking water in 11 towns across the Ukraine. And we will hear about the work done by NGOs in Chelyabinsk Russia to promote an alternative development path to the current nuclear industry development. We will hear from Armenian Women for Health and a Healthy Environment's nutrition project for pregnant women and malnourished children.

Not just NGOs have been doing excellent work. But also some of the UN agencies, and many people in our governments. The problem is that often our environment ministries have smaller budgets and less power than the economics and trade ministries. Therefore again, we need more women in decision making positions, also in the difficult ministries, the economics and trade departments! We might hear more about this in the coming days.

#### **Lots of solutions being implemented**

Some Strategies for Sustainable Development which are being implemented are:

- Reduction
- Efficiency
- Risk reduction
- Fair distribution
- Sufficiency (always ask "How much is enough?")

Many scientists have developed strategies for sustainable development, many courageous consumers and entrepreneurs have started to implement them. Lets look at Resource Efficiency. The UN is aiming at 400% improvement of resource use until 2012. How can this be achieved? We have different types of solutions, technical, legislative and behavioural solutions. I'll quote my former colleague Joachim Spangenberg on the example of a car. Cars are a typical male technology and currently highly inefficient. To make a car, you need one ton of material. The car is then used to move 100 kg of human from one point to the next. The car has an accumulated lifetime of only 6 months -

if you calculate that the average car is used only 1-2 hours per day, during 12 years - after which it is thrown away with a recycling-rate of close to zero! So really, it is not very difficult to improve the efficiency of a car. There are already many proto-types for low-weight cars which use 1 liter of petrol for a 100 kilometres, they can do Moscow – Lisbon on 1 full tank.

### **Super efficient: O car!**

Of course better than any low-weight car is to use no car at all, by reducing our need for a car. The car is not an end in itself, we need them to get comfortable from one place to another and preferable with kids, dogs and suitcases. Now reducing the need for a car means moving back to building compact cities, to stop urban-sprawl. And where necessary to have comfortable, individualist, public transportation, this can also be car-sharing. And for transporting heavy goods, we shift from trucks to zeppelins. When we think sustainable we always have to ask the question: "do I really need this product". So in the case of the car: "how can we organise ourselves differently, how can we reduce our need for mobility by organising our living environments differently, with much better public transportation, and what other modes there are of using a car if finally we cannot do without it, for example by car-sharing". We should also ask, WHO needs a car. Women mostly have very complex transport routes – from and to work, kindergarten, children's sports-club, shops - and would be the ones who would need cars most. Men often have very simple transport routes - from and to work - and hardly need a car. We should stop expecting that only women should change their habits to help society become more sustainable.

### **Policy Solutions, Governance.**

Many solutions can only be reached if we create the right incentives for them. We can tell consumers that they should change their consumption patterns and buy organic agriculture products, but if we continue to pay billions of Euros in subsidies to industrial farming, then there is very little incentive both for consumers and for producers to change.

That's why we need what is called a reform of the tax system in all countries, we need an 'ecological tax reform'. We should no longer subsidise polluting and inefficient products and services, and instead,

we should have "prices tell the ecological truth". The same is true for the need to have more women involved in decision making and implementing sustainable alternatives. Marie Haisova said that our lives would be different if there were more women at decision making positions in our countries. Women have different needs and priorities. So do children. So do ethnic minorities. These different views need to be taken into account. We need to have a differentiated perspective, and we need aggregated statistics which take these into account.

Doris Hayn, a German scientist, has developed gender impact assessment and gender budgets as new tools to create gender differentiated data. We will hear more about this in other presentations.

Other policy tools and treaties which are helping move to more sustainable development are:

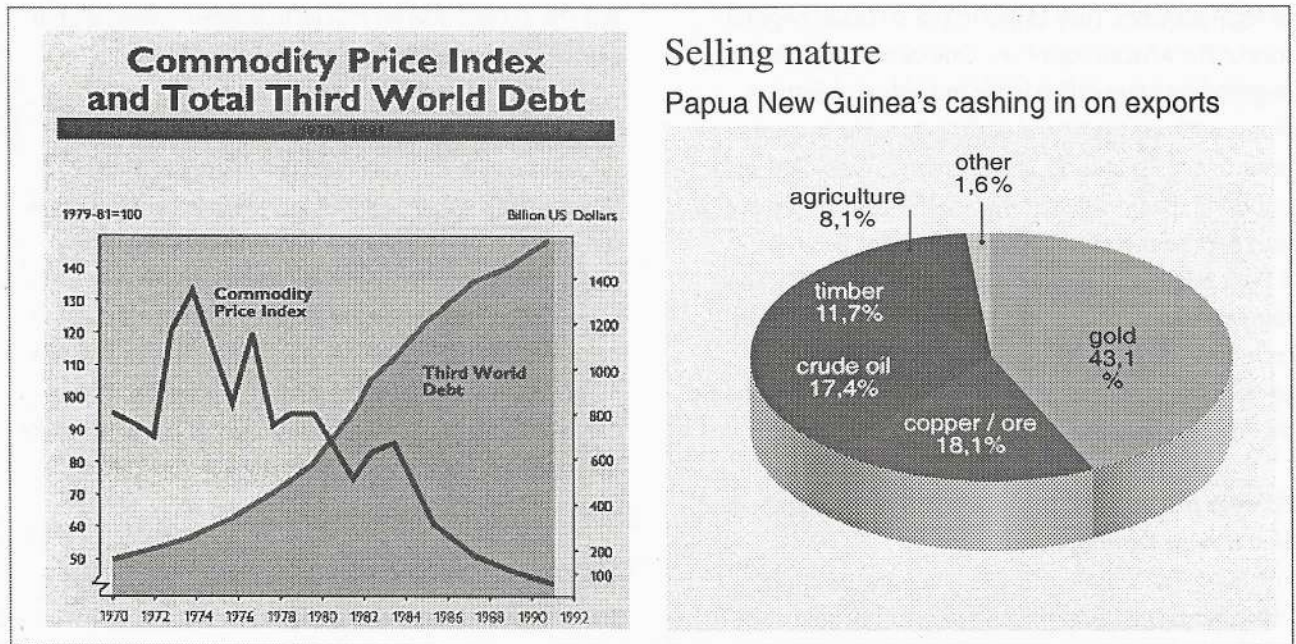
- Aarhus Convention on right to environmental information and public participation in decision making
- Stockholm convention on eliminating persistent toxic chemicals (POPs)
- Green Public Procurement

### **WTO is the stronger force**

Despite all these excellent initiatives at a different levels, the main global indicators have been getting worse: CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have gone up in all countries despite the Climate Convention's aim at reducing them, species extinction has accelerated in the last 10 years, poverty has expanded, toxic chemicals emissions are way up, water pollution has gotten worse.

It has been very frustrating for many of us who have reached good results with our practical projects, to see that we are insignificant compared to the main driving force in the world; globalization. We are not against globalization, but we know it has to be a different globalization.

Daniel Mittler of Friends of the Earth was leading a local climate project in Edingbourg. They had introduced lots of positive changes, more bikeways, energy saving. They had been calculating how much CO<sub>2</sub> emissions their projects had saved. And then, a new airport was built for the city. An the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of the city increased enormously, and they felt like their efforts had been in vain.



Graph 5 + 6: selling more and more natural capital, at lower and lower world market prices, makes countries increasingly incapable of paying back the loans taken to pay for this 'development'. Source: Wuppertal Institute

Of course we are part of this negative trend, most of us have come here by plane, we have computers, we produce lots of paper. Nevertheless, we need to continue our efforts. As you will have noticed we have made a great effort at this conference to be as sustainable as possible. Pens and paper are from recycled or renewable materials, your badges are from cardboard, not plastic. We have told the caterers that we do not want to see a single throw-away cup (and they were surprised, they hadn't heard that yet).

#### Free trade is a sacred cow!

The main anti-sustainable development force of the last 10 years has been the further liberalization of trade, which we often call simply 'globalization'. This tendency has been strengthened in November 2001, with the latest World Trade Organizations trade round in Doha. The Doha agreements give WTO ultimate power. It gives the WTO enforcement measures which UN agreements lack. The WTO protects rights of global corporations over people's sovereignty (village councils, national parliaments...). The WTO promotes unsustainable practices: i.e. export-based chemical intensive farming, industrial fishing, hormone-meat, genetically engineered crops. At the same time the WTO fights sustainable community development as 'unfair trade barriers', for example local eco-label schemes are seen

as protectionist. This situation is totally absurd and scandalous. But unfortunately you will find that none of our governments will officially agree to this. Free trade is a sacred cow!

#### A vicious circle

Trade liberalisation and the focus on export industries has pushed many development countries into a destructive vicious circle. It is leading to more and more environmental destruction which is earning these countries less and less money.

This graph shows the example of Papua New Guinea, a developing country which earns foreign valuta exclusively with the exports of a few of its raw materials. At the same time, because the world's 'economic advisors' such as the IMF have been recommending ALL developing countries to do the same, there is an increasing offer of raw materials on the world market, which has made the prices of these raw materials fall sharply.

We need to break this vicious circle.

At DOHA a few African countries tried to go another way. It has been humiliating to see how their negotiators have been 'broken' by the representatives of the industrialized nations. It was the old colonizer putting his bad pupils in the corner. The EU, US, Canada were sitting in the conference center with a legion

of legal advisors. They called in the 'difficult' negotiators of the African countries. One by one the African negotiators were called in for individual meetings, alone, without their legal staff, to face the large delegations of the EU and US. The EU and US would go as far as phone the presidents of these African countries and tell them the promised loans would not be given if their negotiator did not agree with the next trade rounds. It was humiliating, especially as the African countries were totally right to insist on wanting to clear the unsolved issue of the last round. We should be listening to them.

### **EU does not want to see incompatibility of Doha and Sustainable Development**

The European Union countries are unfortunately in favour of the Doha Trade Round and do not want to see that these are incompatible with sustainable development.

The European NGOs at this conference will need to make a great effort on this issue. We need to come with a program in which the WTO is restricted. Human rights, health and environment should have priority over free trade. If human health is endangered by a product, then each country should be allowed to forbid the import or production of this product. The same is true for subsidies. It is incredible unfair that only the 'strong' countries can decide to wave away the WTO agreements without punishment, as now is the case with Bush's subsidies to industrial agriculture and heavy industry.

We as women need to have our own concept of what 'making globalization work' means and present this to our government, and in particular to the EU. I hope the working group on globalization will develop a good document on this.

### **EU's progressive positions**

The EU is luckily also promoting a few good issues, eliminating poverty, providing access to safe drinking water, and improving governance. The EU sees that improving governance means improving public participation and transparent decision making.

Also on the Energy issue the EU is taking a progressive position. The EU will have a crucial role in Johannesburg, thus looking at what the EU can do better is important.

But the EU will also be crucial in implementing global sustainable development

The only country which seems to be sabotaging the negotiations is the USA. The US does not want to discuss the 0,7% of GDP for development aid (now it is 0,1% in the US). The US took out the reference in the preparatory document that all countries will aim at 10% energy from renewable sources. The US took out the precautionary principle, and the US does not want to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. And other countries like Canada and Japan are following the US. The problem is that a global convention without these countries makes no sense.

### **Making the CAP sustainable**

The European NGOs want to continue from EU Göteborg Summit and want the EU to reform the EU Agriculture Policy (CAP) so that it will be sustainable at a global level. Here there is still a big difference between the NGOs and the EU commission. The commission seems to think that genetic engineering is good for Sustainable Development.

### **Results of this conference**

What we aim to have as results from this conference will be to have specific input for the WSSD and for the European Union.

We will produce two types of outcomes at this conference. The working groups have been working very hard to prepare statements for the WSSD. These statements will be discussed here during the working groups sessions and then put into two types of formats. We will have a 'Short' Statement from our working groups for the WSSD Precom III and IV. In the short statement we will have some praise, some background, and some recommendations on existing texts. We will also have 'Longer' statements from the working groups, including all the issues we find relevant, even if they are not issues in the existing WSSD documents. The short statement will be distributed to the WSSD bureau, the EU, the EC and our own delegations and of course the press. Finally we want to discuss joint activities which we will want to carry out at the WSSD. There will be a Women's Tent at the Global Forum where we will want to organise a number of workshops.

**Beyond the WSSD, networking in Europe**

Many good initiatives will not make it at the WSSD. But preparing for the WSSD is a unique occasion to work together. We are 120 Women from 30 different countries, NGOs scientists, farmers, journalists. We should start a lasting cooperation and develop joint projects. WECF proposes to help coordinate a strong network of women in Europe, professionals, working together on common projects.



**Sascha Gabizon,**

WECF, Germany/Netherlands  
Women in Europe  
for a Common Future  
wecf@wecf.org  
www.wecf.org



## Women's Lobbying Efforts and Priorities for WSSD

34

**Irene Dankelman**

WECF / WEDO

We need to bring women's voices into the official WSSD process. We have many communalities. It is good to share our experiences, analyse what is happening and come up with alternatives.

Sascha has given an overview of the outcome and process of the UNCED in Rio 1992, but for the women the most important date was probably the 1991 preparatory conference in Miami. 1200 women from around the world took part. Of which only 20 from Europe. These 1200 women prepared for Rio. So it was a similar gathering as here, but at a global level. The Miami conference was called the 'Women's Conference for a Healthy planet'. In Miami we drafted the "Women's Action Agenda for a Healthy Planet". The Women's Action Agenda has been instrumental in bringing forward our voices, our views and our ideas on issues such as 'governance' – then called 'governments' and about 'economy – now called 'globalization'. And women prepared special chapters on health and environmental security. So the Women's Action Agenda was an important document prepared by women from all over the world.

The most important outcome of the Rio process is probably Agenda 21. The women's big achievement was that first of all, there is a whole chapter on women's roles in sustainable development. This is chapter 24 of Agenda 21. This chapter is still very useful if you want to look at participation and equality aspects. But even more important still, is that in almost all other chapters of Agenda 21, references are made to women's

roles in development, for example on 'water and gender' and 'energy and gender'. In Johannesburg we will not need to re-negotiate Agenda 21. We should continue to use it as a reference document, for monitoring.

At the Prepcom II in New York last month many NGOs and governments representatives met for the 2nd official preparatory meeting for Johannesburg. The Prepcom I was held in April 2001. This had been a very short a 1-2 day meeting, where it was decided that the WSSD would take place in Johannesburg. Prepcom II was crucial for building the agenda for Johannesburg: what will be at stake, how are we going to organize as governments and as NGOs. In New York, last month, all the mayor groups were asked to present their views. That is interesting, because in Agenda 21 for the first time specific groups of society have been recognized, such as women, farmers, indigenous people, local authorities, business, science and technology. These major groups got their own Chapter in Agenda 21. All these major groups were asked to take the word in New York and say what was at stake in Johannesburg, what there views were.

We as the Women Major Group also tried to review the implementation of the promises as they stand in Agenda 21. There is a document, the review document "major group document of women". In this document we described how far we have come in the implementation of Agenda 21 - How far did we get with the gender aspects. It would be nice if you could look at your country and analyze if the role of women has been recognized in Sustainable Development in your

*What about women's health?  
What about women's poverty?  
Have they improved?*

country, do women participate at an equal level, do women have access and control over natural resources. And what about women's education, work, women's poverty, what about women's health? Has it changed? Improved? Become worse? We have to continue monitoring at all levels in all our countries.

To monitor we need figures, we need to define the level as it was, and check how it has been changing. We need to work with gender analyses. We have to ask our governments to gather gender-aggregated data. And as long as we do not have this data, we as NGOs have to create the figures by carrying out surveys.

The women's organizations at Prepcom II and at all the upcoming meetings to the WSSD meet for a daily 'women's caucus'. Every day the women meet for one hour. The purpose of meeting is to divide tasks, who will contact which delegations, what strategy to use, how to communicate our concerns.

Another aspect of Prepcom II was to look forward.

As NGOs we indicate which issues we feel have to be stressed. Which issues are really at stake.

For the women this does not mean that they ONLY stress women's participation and equality! Of course we always have to push for that.

We always have to ask, "where are the women in your delegation"? When can women speak in your official meeting?

But the women are also looking at issues which they feel are a great concern to them. Often the women will stress social aspects. The social aspects came out very strongly from the women's caucus: the rights based approach is stressed as very important, the right to security, the right to sustainable livelihoods, property rights for women – in many countries women are not allowed to inherit a house or land and will be evicted if their husbands or parents die – , intellectual property rights for women.

In the women's caucus there has also been lots of discussion and analysis on alternative thinking regarding globalization.

There is a nucleus of women's groups who are working on globalization from a gender perspective.

Another major concern put forward by women is privatization of shared resources like water and energy. Who is going to have access, who has control, especially from those who are already marginalized. We will have to repeat and repeat this issue. We should not be afraid to always say the same things. These issues still are mostly missing in the official documents. So keep saying what you have to say.

*Women want more attention for conflict solving*

Last but not least, an issue which is very crucial is conflict and peace. This issue is not at all mentioned in the chairman's paper. The chairman of the Prepcom's and the WSSD has prepared a document for Prepcom II. This is a kind of an agenda for Johannesburg. The only thing he says is that "many regions are in conflict". That we know. But we want and need to address this issue. Women want more attention for conflict solving, and conflict prevention and the relationship of conflict and sustainable development and human rights.

To summarize, the women have been focussing on the issues of:

- Conflict solving
- Rights based approach
- Distribution (more equal)
- Sustainable livelihoods
- Health.

We need to say that these are the issues which are at stake. We have to give concrete ideas how to address them. We can come up with our own partnership initiatives to be presented at Johannesburg. Many women groups, together with other NGOs, trade unions, even businesses should try to bring these issues forward together. Partnerships will be one of the outcomes of the WSSD. There will be the type-1 outcomes – the political statements, the declaration of the governments – and the type-2 outcomes. The type-2 partnership initiatives can be any type of partnership: between different organisations and stakeholders, between women's groups among themselves, between women's groups and government, between women's groups and trade unions. There is a challenge in that, as long as does not take away responsibility of the governments.

It is very important that from our conference here in the Czech Republic, clear messages go out to the next Prepcom and to the European Union.

I am quite concerned about the fact that the EU is formed by governments, and that we have had several countries in which new conservative governments have recently been elected. We see that the EU is not going in the right direction. The EU is not taking a leading role for Sustainable Development. In Johannesburg we will have Denmark chairing the European Union. They have a conservative government at the moment from which not much progressive thinking is expected. So we have to be pushing our own governments even more to take action. We have to be far more provocative. We need to have our own countries put our issues on the agenda. Those countries which are not part of the EU have a strong role in guiding this position, and shaping it. It is not the EU that will define where we go, it is the combination of forces. We need a clear statement from the NGOs and from our delegations. You should try to challenge your delegations to take a progressive lead in this.

In Helsinki last week the “women ministers of environment of the world” met. It was a very encouraging meeting, to see that these top women have decided that they have another voice to make, that they don’t always want to be together with the male ministers of environment, that they want to make a difference. These female ministers are now organized in a network. We are also trying to form into a network. These female environment ministers can be an important partner for us. Before, and hopefully after Johannesburg. We should all work together.



**Irene Dankelman**

WECF / WEDO

irened@sci.kun.nl