



## Countering False Solutions & Population Stabilization Arguments *by Anita Nayar*

We are witnessing a historic moment of converging global crises with an alarming loss of ecosystems, a crisis in climate, food and fuel, and an economic and financial meltdown. At the core of these lies the unsustainability of the capitalist model of production and consumption. We need to question the very model of development based on the accumulation of capital and material goods, with its gross economic and social iniquities and destruction of nature.

Solutions to these crises must be holistic and people centred. Governments cannot separate action on biodiversity loss from the climate and food crisis. Responses need to prioritise those most affected across the economic South, especially close to one billion people - one in six people globally - who live on sea fishing and about half that number who depend on forests for their livelihoods.

Did governments at the 10th Conference of Parties (COP 10) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) take any of this seriously? No! In 1993, when they initially signed the CBD, most of them developed national plans but only 16 of them have bothered to revise their plans since then.

The good news is that social movements and political mobilizations worldwide are rejecting their governments' fragmented responses and envisioning development alternatives, which not only protect people's human rights but also the health of the planet. Demands for justice are growing louder as evident in earlier movements calling for environmental justice to more recent solidarities for climate justice and now biodiversity justice. These complimentary frameworks for justice have clearly captured the imagination of a broad spectrum of social movements globally.

'**Environmental justice**' has been used as a political framework over the last 30 odd years to respond to the disproportionate negative environmental impacts on marginalized communities, from adverse impacts on women's health including rising levels of cancer to political struggles over the inequitable allocation of resources including the extractive sector.

The more recent framework of '**climate justice**' approaches climate change beyond a scientific or environmental issue, recognizing that it, in fact, emerged through economic and political systems both historically and today. Over the past 200 years, roughly three-quarters of emissions globally have been created by less than a quarter of the world's population. Climate justice calls for the richest countries that contributed most to the problem to take the greatest responsibility. Addressing the enormous disparities in power over resources and in greenhouse gas emissions between the North and South, as well as, between rich and impoverished people within those nations, climate justice seeks to promote equitable development and human rights.

'**Biodiversity justice**', a framework employed by civil society groups engaged in the CBD process, upholds the rights of all peoples and respects the rights of living things simultaneously. This approach places the custodians of biodiversity - women farmers, indigenous people, fisher folk, etc. - at the centre of policymaking, as they should be the most critical beneficiaries of biodiversity policies.

Using feminist principles, how can we elaborate on the demand for environmental / climate / biodiversity justice toward alternative development policies? I would like to... *[continued on p.5]*

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### *DAWN GEEJ Process to Rio+20*

This issue is dedicated to DAWN's ongoing work on Gender, Economic and Climate Justice (GEEJ), which focuses firmly on inter-linkages between the three issues - not merely the addition of gender to each as discrete themes. DAWN would like to see an end to all fragmented, siloed and purely market-based approaches to development and justice.

An emergent, regionalized south-south process led by global south women is essential to such feminist inter-linkage work. The GEEJ process has been painstakingly developed with trusted regional partners and working groups including the Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG), Third World Network- Africa, and the International Council for Adult Education/REPEM. It is also reflected in the detailed regionalized concept papers, continual adaptation of processes to suit local conditions and priorities, and participative workshop facilitation and training methods that evolve with the GEEJ process.

A key aspect of GEEJ/Rio+20 is that young women advocates from the South are at the centre of this process. Young women from the Pacific, Africa (and soon Latin America and Asia) are encouraged to participatively develop the GEEJ process over 2010-2012. One of the ways this is happening is through several small active regional alumnae ... *[continued on p.5]*

## DAWN at the CBD-COP 10 People's Forum



*In cooperation with the Gender Minority Working Group of the Japan Civil Network for Convention on Biological Diversity (JCN-CBD), DAWN women spoke in two plenary sessions at the Global People's Forum that took place in October 2010 alongside the 10th CBD-Conference of Parties in Nagoya, Japan. The plenary sessions were co-chaired by Seiko Hanochi of the JCN-CBD and Gigi Francisco of DAWN.*

### **Development spending on environment, climate change & gender**

**Marina Durano**, speaking on the impact of the global economic crisis on official development assistance worldwide, showed 2009 figures of the International Monetary Fund, wherein major donor countries, namely, Japan, United States, and the UK, registered budget deficits of around 7% which is way above the 3% figure that the IMF would recommend for a fairly stable economy. The overall decrease in aid disbursements of 75% from the previous year does not come as a surprise in this setting. On average, only 3% of total disbursements went to gender equality while only 5% went to environmental sustainability. If one were looking at both gender and environment, there is even less amount that is being spent.

By looking much more closely at the figures, Durano was able to trace whether spending aimed at both gender equality and environmental sustainability was targeted at biodiversity, climate change or desertification. Between 2006 and 2008, these projects focused on biodiversity and for desertification. But a clear shift has been made in 2009, when this subset of aid went to climate change. This is consistent with policy pronouncements by major donor governments. Durano opined, "This is the kind of spending that some of the countries are thinking about in terms of how to use the stimulus packages to change the structure of the economy towards more green production processes, more green consumption products and the like."

What is a green economy? It is a strategy for changing production methods from high carbon or petroleum use towards low carbon use and more renewable energy processes. Both

government and business financing are concentrated on the energy sector, on promoting renewable resource use but also on environmental services, recycling, as well as, pollution control methods. Most technologies for development around these sectors and areas are receiving subsidy from the stimulus packages, as well as, from the other revenue sources in order to begin the shift as it were to restructure the economy. Financialization is part of the "re-structuring" through proposals for market-based mechanisms, for example, the creation of carbon markets backed up also by financial mechanisms in international financial institutions such as the World Bank.

The main criticism that we would have is that women's work and social reproduction will continue to be undervalued within this very narrow concept of economic restructuring that is being promoted in a deliberate way through development financing. As the governments restructure towards green economies, we are finding out that women's work and responsibilities, including their relationships with their environment and access to environmental resources, remain in the margins. These are not a part of the solution because the solution is still driven by industry, technology and services.

### **Linking conflict & militarization with biodiversity & gender**

Warfare in many parts of the world happens where biodiversity is diverse yet critically threatened and has to be conserved. **Kumudini Samuel** proceeded to say that more than 80 percent of the major conflicts that took place from 1950 to 2000 were identified in such regions where the majority of the world's 1.2 billion poorest people who rely on the

sources and services provided by natural ecosystems for daily survival also live. Conflicts destroy the natural environment and post-conflict recovery has actually not paid attention to recovering biodiversity.

Violence and destruction spawned by warfare and militarization in the economic south have led to loss of lives, livelihoods, natural environment and cultures. Some examples come from the Asian region such as the use of Agent Orange in Vietnam, which maimed people and destroyed vast tracks of forests, mangroves and water sources. In Liberia, we know that timber was harvested in large quantities to fund the war. In Colombia, we have cocaine bonds and in the Congo, the mining of diamonds. There are also examples of displacements due to vast tracts of land being appropriated as military zones resulting in restrictions on movement, farming, fishery and access to forest resources in the Vanni in Sri Lanka; Maluku in Indonesia, and Mindanao in the Philippines.

One of the critical consequences of conflict is that people do not have access to their places of origin. Their livelihoods, which are based on traditional practices of survival that treats nature in a holistic and creative way get disrupted, sometimes completely destroyed. Traditional knowledge that had protected biodiversity through generations also disappears. The loss of the means of traditional production reduces food production, lead to hunger and increase poverty. This, in turn, results in continuing or new types of dependency particularly on aid assistance that can be quite inappropriate for the communities and regions to which it flows. Often in such situations, women are increasingly relegated to the informal sector, losing secure means of employment. There are other direct impacts on gender roles and relationships. During

conflict, many women emerge as both *de facto* and *de jure* heads of household. Yet these changed gender roles are often overlooked and policy interventions fail to perceive women as primary income earners exacerbating the discrimination and marginalization of women.

Post-conflict reconstruction is oftentimes based on neoliberal economic models, on market-based responses and these then, do not really support communities that are trying to recover from conflict. These do not take into consideration the changed needs of particularly the large number of women who need to support their families and their communities. Development moves on a macro level with no concern for the safeguard of the environment and traditional practices that protect biodiversity and environment sustainability.

Post-conflict agreements and accords also privilege the military and militant groups, who invariably play a direct role in civil administration after the fighting stops. Often, it is men that had been involved in the conflict who negotiate the transfer of power and who administer transitional governments. When men bargain with one another, transitional justice concerning issues that relate to women are rarely addressed. Women continue to be perceived as victims with no agency and most policy interventions are framed in protectionist terms rather than in ways that promote or redress rights.

We know that in many countries affected by conflicts around the world, women play a critical role in peace building, mediating across communities that are trying to survive conflict. However, when it comes to the process of conflict resolution and decision making at the formal level women are rarely consulted nor gender concerns included and women's voices are critically absent. The writing of history through the narration of women's memories and experience in the post-conflict period may be an important element that could contribute to the preservation of indigenous knowledge and local histories. Moreover, the promotion of just and sustainable peace may become more achievable if we refocus our attention to concerns for survival, the protection of biodiversity, and the security of communities. Linking environmental justice with peace through the experiences of women is necessary, if we are to attain sustainable development.

#### ***Production-consumption systems and environmental justice***

**Gita Sen** spoke to the question of whether markets were compatible with sustainability. Noting that the Japanese discussants had advocated for promoting local village markets that were compatible with sustainability, Sen argued that the problem is not markets *per se* but of systems of production and consumption.

In the Indian environmental justice scene, there is a lot of talk about consumption and about how people need to change and cut back on their consumption, or to consume more sustainably. As true and valid as that is, it puts the onus and burden on individual consumers. Consumption is something that we do within our households, within our private spheres by and large. But that's not primarily where the problem starts; the problem is unsustainable production. The two are linked to each other. But at which place do you need to break the chain?

If we keep trying to break the chain at consumption, Sen believes that we will not get anywhere. Why? Because sustainable consumption will remain continuously on the margins as it will involve only people deeply concerned about the environment. The majority of consuming will remain unsustainable and this will be carried on the back of unsustainable production.

What we need to start seriously asking are questions about "What do systems of production do to biodiversity?" How do the GDP, income, wealth-created, kinds of commodities we produce, the nature of the technology that we use, the number and kind of jobs that are being created, the work being created, the kind of growth we are talking about here, all relate to biodiversity? Is 9% of any kind of growth good, or is 9% of some kind of growth much worse than 4% of some



other kind of growth and should we not be asking those questions much more seriously? The environmental economists have asked these questions but somehow that sort of sit by themselves. Biodiversity questions sit by themselves. Consumption issues sit by themselves. They are not brought together in a manner that one can actually see the whole picture of what kind of changes need to happen.

Each one of these questions is deeply about gender relations and about gender power. If we ask each of these questions and look at them through a gender lens, we realize that they are in fact in the ways that our DAWN speakers spoke about. Who bears the cost and who gets the benefits? But it is also about the nature of production in terms of the questions that I've raised. We do not have a blue print for this – no nice model that says this is the route to go. But a sense of what may be possible and in which direction to look for answers is absolutely essential so that we will not completely be left with gloom and doom scenarios.

To talk only about village or traditional subsistence economies is both limited and limiting. One limitation is that much of the world has changed or is changing very rapidly. An interlinked issue is that this change is in the direction of rapid urbanization. This means more and more people are in fact going to be quite removed from food production and agricultural farming. It will be a major challenge to think how they will subsist and exchange through local subsistence economies that are viable in the long run. The third issue which feminists, working on gender issues have pointed out for a long time, is the deeply prevalent inequalities especially on the bases of gender and class in those traditional societies and economies. These inequalities may transform faster when those communities undergo change. When we think of the traditional village economy of India, the fact is, this has changed alongside the changes in the larger Indian economy.

Instead, we need to think about the change in the paradigm of human development. Human development reports have been put out since 1990s; its twenty years now that they are still there. When they first came out, they shifted the attention away from World Bank development prescriptions of the 1980s. But one of its major problems is that the human development paradigm, up to this point, has usually been seen as complementary, almost parallel to what happens on the other side, which is the economic growth of commodities. So here on one side, governments invest on people, take care of education and

health and here on the other side is the economy of commodities. The connection made between these two is that as people get more educated and healthier they also become good human capital for the economy. In short the convergence between the two is, in fact, in the creation of good human resources for the economy based on commodities.

Can't we think of producing for consumption that does not put unsustainable costs on resources but creates jobs and growth? Can't we encourage and create incentives and support people to consume more services and less of goods that are materially-based? Can't we in fact encourage collective consumption, including consumption of services rather than of materially based commodities? Maybe it is time to take more seriously Bhutan's gross national happiness. Such approaches would recognize the care economy which is what women do in taking care of people. Most of this is services and, in particular, is gendered in nature and its fundamental importance is in providing the services that help people to live fulfilling lives. Is this Utopian? Not really. Is it essential? Absolutely, if our children and the planet have to survive!

### *Coexistence of market and subsistence economies in Africa*

In the context of Africa, **Zo Randriamaro** asserted that the question of whether or not the coexistence between the market and subsistence economy is possible must be analyzed against the history and political economy of market-based policies in the region. It is also very important to understand that as far as the African continent is concerned, market-based reforms and globalization builds on the history of slavery, colonialism, and exploitation with gender dimensions which are very visible. During the colonial period, the use of land and natural resources was imposed by colonial powers and priority was given to the production of cash and export crops and natural source extraction for the commercial and industrial sectors. Until today, African countries are still contained in the production and export of few primary commodities in which colonial powers were interested.

After two decades of neoliberal market-based policies, 200 million people or 28% of Africa's population were chronically hungry between 1997 and 1999, up from 173 million between 1990 and 1992. According to a FAO assessment of 2008, 1 out of 3 people in sub-Saharan Africa is chronically hungry.

In sub-Saharan Africa, about 470

million people live in rural areas, where chronic poverty has the highest incidence. The majority of the population holds farms that are less than 2 hectares. Agriculture employs 65% of the labor force and women account for 70% of food production and dominate the subsistence economy. In most African countries, gender inequalities are perpetuated by the continued marginalization of women in access to productive assets like land, agricultural inputs, labor, technology, credit, and markets. Women are marginalized in information and decision-making processes on political, economic, cultural and social matters, including natural source management.

Until today, the disastrous effects of the global food crisis that occurred in 2008 are still felt in Africa. Against this backdrop, rich countries prompted the scramble for African land, not in order to address Africa's food crisis, but to address their own food security concerns. For example, South Korea, which needed to import corn for its 50 million population, went to Madagascar and made a deal with the former government for the lease of 1.3 million hectares of arable land, which was about half of the total arable land in Madagascar. Most of the land was earmarked for the production of corn for South Korea's food reserves, while 300,000 hectares were set aside for the production of 'green energy' (bio-fuel) from palm oil. Such a land deal in Madagascar had left local people with less vital resources, which they depend on for their livelihood and food security. Furthermore, the investment by the South Korean company was likely to be associated with a short-term mining of soils and water (through cultivation of crops with high water or nutrient demands), which would undermine sustainable soil and water management in the process. Moreover, there would have been a major loss of biodiversity, together with the spread of pest and disease problems which were associated with mono-culture production. Protest against this land deal has contributed to political unrest that resulted in the fall of the former President in Madagascar.

Hence, from the perspective of the resource-poor small farmers in Africa, especially women, who have been excluded by market-based policies and borne the costs of their negative impacts on communities and the environment, the co-existence of market and subsistence economies is not sustainable, nor desirable.

[continued from p.1] *DAWN GEEJ Process to Rio+20*

... listserv for information-sharing, dialogue and debate. For the Pacific group, this has led to increased internal networking and interaction with broader social justice and human rights networks, and increased focus on inter-linkage analysis in their own work.

The Pacific consultation and training institute was held in September 2010 in Suva, Fiji, with the Africa GEEJ consultation

following in November in Accra, Ghana. The Latin American consultation and training institute is scheduled to take place in March 2011, to be followed by a cross-regional planning meeting in Asia in mid 2011.

*Noelene Nabulivou, DAWN GEEJ To Rio+20 Info-Com and Networking Associate.*

## *Countering False Solutions & Population Stabilization Arguments*

[continued from p.1]

... offer six points of entry from which to begin this conversation around what women's movements need to be mindful of and advocate for. **First, resist false market-based and technological 'solutions' to climate change**, which has two varieties: one is market-based mechanisms such as carbon trading when there is no evidence that markets will actually protect ecosystems. Such schemes are about redistributing carbon emissions through trading, wherein companies or countries are allowed to pollute but can offset this by paying developing countries to store carbon. There is no clear understanding of how this will work; we don't know how much carbon trees are able to absorb; and what we're seeing are practices like clearing land for plantations of genetically modified trees that may grow fast but actually destroy biodiversity. This model essentially privatizes the atmosphere and promotes the right to pollute.

Another false solution that governments seem to be leaning toward is a bag of technological fixes including agro-fuels and geo-engineering. Geo-engineering is the large-scale manipulation of the earth's climate such as managing solar radiation, extracting carbon from the atmosphere, and modifying the weather. Currently, there are no laws overseeing geo-engineering experiments; however, at CBD COP10, 193 states took an important step forward to **adopt a moratorium on geo-engineering and apply the precautionary principle** to do no harm until a number of conditions are met. This decision comes on the heels of the 2008 moratorium on geo-engineering in the form of ocean fertilization (stimulating the growth of algae to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>) adopted by COP 9. While we celebrate these moratoria we need to continue to hold corporate science accountable and demand public discourse in the process of developing such new technologies.

**Second, recover sustainable deve-**

**lopment** and centrally lodge it back in the policy discourse. Sustainable development demands that people should be the centre of development concerns and that environment protection is integral to any development process. This entails eradication of poverty in the South and the elimination of un-sustainable production and consumption patterns in the North as agreed to in the outcome of the 1992 Earth Summit.

**Third, public investment in green energy.** The proposed financing schemes are peanuts compared to the massive public investment required to shift from fossil fuel to renewable energy, especially in the South. We will need public investment schemes, not through loans, but through large and new monies. Focus on the so-called 'green economy' in the upcoming 20 year review of the 1992 Earth Summit is not about transferring technology and resources necessary for Southern economies to make this shift. A number of South governments are, furthermore, concerned that the 'green economy' framework can be used as a conditionality in trade whereby Northern countries can place trade restrictions on goods imported from Southern countries that do not meet 'green economy' standards.

**Fourth, confront the contradictions between the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).** Another enormous challenge to sustainable development, is that, instead of fulfilling its commitments to the MEAs, the North has turned to the WTO to promote and obtain international rules that run counter to MEA principles. For instance, WTO rules around 'sound science' puts the burden of proof on governments to present conclusive scientific evidence before enacting any measures that might restrict trade, which completely contradicts the precautionary principle, which places the burden of proof on the commercial firms. We need to defend the UN multilateral space and

agreements to ensure that these are not trumped by WTO and bilateral trade agreements.

**Fifth, challenge neo-Malthusian notions linking population stabilization and climate change.** Both the 1992 Earth Summit (Rio) and 1994 Population Conference (Cairo) rejected the notion that overpopulation was a primary cause of environmental degradation and instead named unsustainable patterns of consumption and production in industrialised countries as a major factor. In Cairo, feminists succeeded in shifting the policy discourse from population control toward women's reproductive health and rights but, are once again having to remind governments not to roll back these hard-won gains.

**Sixth, challenge gender-neutral agreements.** There are massive impacts on livelihoods and survival of poor households across the economic South and thus, on women's work burdens. Agreements need to address women's and men's different relationships to ecological systems as producers, workers, consumers, conservers, not merely as subjects 'vulnerable' to 'disasters'.

The framing of women as a 'vulnerable' group is widespread in the discourse. We need to challenge this and reclaim women's pivotal role in the productive economy. We need to recognize women as change agents engaged in struggles over fossil fuel exploitation, pollution and environmental health, for food sovereignty, against privatization of water, access to renewable energy, etc.

It is very important that we make the link between women's rights and economic, environmental justice. Ecological issues cannot be disassociated or delinked from women's rights and we need to continue to develop policies from women's experiences, challenge the unsustainable neoliberal economic system, and resist the false market and technological solutions to biodiversity loss and climate change.

# GEEJ Pacific Discussion

DAWN in collaboration with the Pacific Action Network on Globalization (PANG) held the GEEJ Pacific Regional Consultation and Training Institute on 6-10 September 2010 in Suva, Fiji

**NAEEMAH KHAN** (Fiji Women’s Rights Movement): The actual area itself – trade and economics – is a male-dominated area. Whether it is due to the socialization of women or the way our patriarchal societies are set up, women may not view themselves as participants in economic discussions. As a profession, girls do not generally become economists. Women in the government are not Ministers of Finance but rather Ministers of either Women or Community Development. Those making the economic decisions are mostly men. Trade policy objectives and negotiations generally remain an exclusive exercise of the Ministry of Commerce and Trade. Such is the case of Fiji and the rest of the Pacific. Speaking of the business community, whose interests are pushed here? Even within the state machinery, Ministries for Women, Welfare, Health, Education and those who provide social services are not included in the formulation of policy.

All these factors affect our capacity to advocate for women’s rights within the arena of economic development. We don’t have the technical knowledge and are thus often not comfortable dealing with what is being discussed. This exclusion from trade policy discussions of different sectors, including women’s organization and civil society, generally leads to women’s development needs being made invisible. Women’s concerns are not factored into the wider negotiations. The costs of broader economic policy implications for women are not properly understood. To compound these issues further, we live in militarized societies such as the current political climate in my country. Here voices of women’s rights organizations are being shut off. It is difficult to advocate for women’s rights in an environment of restrictive decrees, when consultations are not meaningful. Looking at the interconnectedness of trade and human rights, how does one engage the regime that is a perpetrator of human rights violations? How do social change organizations work in such a volatile environment?

What are some of the implications of free trade on women? It means a reduction in government revenue when governments remove tariffs, which are

a major source of income for Pacific island governments. When governments retreat from services provision and turn this over to the private sector, there is increased burden on households, families and communities that rely on subsistence living. How will this extra monetary burden affect households and women in particular? Many services in the Pacific are provided by the public sector and they are linked to the protection of our fundamental human rights. What will privatization mean for women? For instance, what will be the effect of privatized health services on maternal mortality? We have more than 300 islands in this country. There is not a health center on every island.

We need to continue to engage with trade issues. We have to keep pushing ourselves. We have to upscale ourselves in terms of finding opportunities where we can make interventions but also building the capacities of organizations that are already working in the area. When we develop our young women’s training programs, we include these emerging issues. We constantly keep making the connections and analyses and we keep finding spaces for engagement.

**NIC MACLELLAN** (Swinburne University): On the dilemma that was raised: ‘Do you start with trade or do you start with the issues?’ We had the same impasse in Australia in terms of our advocacy on the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations or PACER Plus. We decided to talk to health workers and asked them what their issues were. Then we went back to the text of the PACER Plus trade agreement. This had been quite successful. There are a couple of health groups that are actively involved now. It has become their issue, not ours. I guess one way to go around the technical jargon is to focus on the topic you are working on - then move backwards. We found that it is a practical way. Ask what issues affect them – nutrition, drugs, HIV, food security. Put those on the table. We found this to be quite successful in terms of starting a conversation with people. Start with what you are working on and then show them how the issue is linked to trade. Sure, you need people with expertise in trade negotiations but in



the process of unearthing and clarifying issues, they have to take a back seat and listen to the people.

**JANE KELSEY** (University of Auckland): We have to start asserting that trade is not just men’s stuff. It is treated conceptually as something that men do because women perceive the world differently. Are there ways that we can think about trade from a feminist perspective that bridge the economic and the social and also hope to bridge the local to the regional to the global? How do we take an analysis of something like trade in services and use it in an effective way every day?

What services are important to Pacific women and why? We know that when we are dealing with trade and goods, there are issues that intimately impact on women. It is the ... *[continued on p.10]*

# GEEJ Africa Discussion

DAWN in collaboration with the Third World Network-Africa held the GEEJ Africa Regional Consultation and Training Institute on 20-23 November 2010 in Accra, Ghana



**DZODZI TSIKATA (CEGENSA, University of Ghana):** The effects of the global financial and economic crisis on countries vary but all are affected. In the African context, economic growth was reduced to 5.1% in 2008, down from 6% in 2007, and reduced further to 4.1% in 2009. African banks were also losing investments, especially those from foreign owners, and losing more from loan defaults, all of which impact negatively on credit availability. All over Africa, countries experienced shrinking stock exchanges, currency devaluations, double-digit inflation, as well as remittances losses estimated at 5-10% of Africa's GDP. Similar impacts are felt by most countries in the developing world.

Prior to the financial crisis, economies around the globe had also suffered from food and energy crises. The United Nations estimates that 125 million people in developing countries are experiencing extreme poverty because of the surge in global food prices since 2006. In the latter part of 2008, there had been food riots across Africa – Senegal, Guinea, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire and Cameroon. This food crisis was caused by the long-term neglect of food security issues and many developing countries are now importing food because of policy failures in agriculture and land reforms.

How were African women affected by the crisis? There are pre-existing factors that make women more vulnerable to the negative impacts of the crisis. First, for three decades the rate of unemployment has been on the rise, resulting in the growing informalization of work. Second, in order to meet the households' daily needs of, informal and unpaid work arrangements became important. Third, remittances also became increasingly important, especially for poor households. Fourth, there were gender inequalities in the division of productive and reproductive labor. Fifth, labor markets have been segmented. And sixth, there has been unequal access to and control of productive resources, particularly land, capital and labor.

African women, in particular, have suffered from the price volatility of commodity exports. For instance, women farmers involved in cocoa, oil palm, cotton and horticultural products such as fruits and spices operate on a smaller scale and are, therefore, more vulnerable. Women's work as laborers in the horticulture industry was also affected by the decline in international demand. Women involved in mining, tourism, production of timber, collection of shea-nuts and/or as members of commodity producers' households of remain negatively affected by the impacts of the crisis.

Small women food producers, processors and laborers were not spared by the crisis. In fact, women food producers are likely to face some of the most severe impacts of the crisis. Sixty-five percent of women's work in agriculture is small-scale. Theoretically, the hikes in food prices should benefit women but farm gate prices have traditionally been below production costs. Due to land tenure issues, production costs and post-harvest losses, there has also been a systematic decline in food production. Overall, women's work in food processing and distribution was affected by rising food prices and decline in commodity—such as oil palm and copra prices—in international markets. This was particularly experienced by Nigeria, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

While the survivalist sections of the informal economy dominated by women have expanded (e.g. trading and artisanal services such as sewing, hair-dressing, cloth dyeing, etc.), women have had a much narrower range of economic activities in this urban informal economy than men. The loss of urban incomes is likely to affect demand for their goods and services, including food. Their situation will be made even more difficult by the deteriorating credit situation.

With the unresolved food crisis, women in low-income households suffer the most. Women's involvement in food production, distribution, processing and cooking puts them in the frontline. Food price increases, in particular, not only reduce incomes but also add extra burden on women who are subject to consumption challenges as well as to difficulties in finding coping strategies.

In responding to the crisis, the starting point should be to protect and strengthen the livelihoods of the people of Africa in ways that are sustainable, gender equitable and promote development. This implies the need to identify which policies help particular groups – food producers, small-scale traders, small artisans and service providers and their employees - to maximize their productive

Top Photo: Ruth Mumbi Meshack speaking

Middle Photo: GEEJ Africa Regional Consultation and Training Institute Participants

Bottom Photo: Tetteh Hormeku, TWN-Africa

activities and increase the scale on which they operate so as to promote accumulation, growth and job creation. The EU's pressure on West Africa to sign the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) represents a looming threat to African initiatives. This threat should be countered by calling for a moratorium on debt servicing and the removal of aid conditionalities, as well as, by safeguarding the rapidly disappearing policy space and expanding its horizons.

The way forward can also be found by broadening the vision of economic restructuring as a process, which aims at achieving an agrarian transition, resulting in diversified economies to replace the mono-cultures of West Africa. Productive sectors should also be strengthened in order to create decent work, which is equitably distributed between rural and urban centers, across regions, among different social groups, particularly between men and women. Labor market segregation must be overcome by recognizing the significance of reproductive activities. This should be pursued together with financial sector reforms that must ensure access of small producers to formal credit institutions. In fact, 10% of national budgets on agriculture and rural development must privilege food production and women's production and market niches. Furthermore, domestic resources have to be mobilized to increase government revenue and policy space for development, as well as, to provide resources for the informal sector and local development. Investing in the care economy to support caregivers and achieving universal social security and protection are also crucial to effectively overcome the negative gendered impacts of the crisis.

**NAOME CHIMBETETE (SADC):** SADC stands for Southern African Development Community (SADC). It currently has 15 member states, namely Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The SADC's key milestones in terms of economic integration are the following: establishment of free trade areas in 2008 and customs union in 2010. By 2016, we hope to form a common market to be followed by a monetary union in 2018.

A number of initiatives have been pursued in order to mainstream gender in SADC. For one, appropriate institutional structures were established and sub-regional policy instruments were developed and adopted. The SADC

Declaration on Gender and Development framed in 1997, led to the adoption of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development in 2008. The Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), adopted in 2001, also aims to include women in the whole regional integration system. The SADC also developed clear guidelines for mainstreaming gender issues in trade, industry, finance and investment, including the development of the SADC Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit in 2009.

The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development encompasses commitments made in all regional, continental and global instruments for achieving gender equality. It seeks to address gaps and sets specific measurable targets where they do exist. Gender equality is advanced by ensuring accountability of all SADC member states, as well as, providing a platform for sharing best practices. Unfortunately, at present, women in SADC constitute only 23% of the total number of economic decision-makers. Economic policies are likewise gender blind such that only a few procurement policies make reference to gender. Moreover, the informal sector continues to be dominated by women and there remains a huge difference between men and women in terms of per capita income.

There is a wide range of strategies and approaches that can be applied to promote women's rights and empowerment in SADC. First, gender analyses, planning and resource allocation should all be informed by the needs of women. Empowering women also means supporting meaningful interventions, legislations and policies. On the economic side, the central bank should consider lowering interest rates for women who are struggling with issues of collateral. Laws that determine access, control and benefit from productive resources and activities such as mining, land and credit should also be reviewed. A women's fund that is accountable and autonomous must likewise be set up. It is important to understand that development issues are women's issues. Food security is linked to economic empowerment inasmuch as women's status is linked to poverty and health challenges. The time to advance gender equality in Africa is now. Yes, we can.

**ABDULAI DARIMANI (Third World Network-Africa):** When looking at the mining sector alone, we see every African country having suffered from the impacts of the global and financial crisis. In Congo, copper production declined from 34,215 tons in June 2008 to 23,562 tons in October 2008. A similar trend was observed for cobalt and diamonds. Small-scale miners

relapsed due to non-existent demand for their ores. As a result, 40 companies closed down at the end of 2008 and over 300,000 jobs were lost. In Zambia, two major mines closed operations and others scaled down significantly due to declining demand for copper. Over 3,000 jobs were lost. In South Africa, the platinum sector went down, resulting in some job losses. In Botswana, as a result of the decline in sales, production in all the Debswana operations was suspended up to mid-April 2009. Over one thousand three hundred of Debswana's 5,809 workers lost their jobs. The beneficiary factories also suffered a reduction in jobs from 3,226 to 2,391. Total revenue declined from US\$1.54 billion in 2008/9 fiscal year to about US\$0.98 billion in 2009/10 fiscal year.

The crisis also resulted in the retreat of the state. Terms for corporations have not only been liberal, but these have also paid much less attention to equity, human rights and the environment. In Zambia and Tanzania, for instance, the confidence in the State was weakened in terms of proceeding on reforms, let alone on alternatives. In effect, the State returned to more drastic orthodox economic policies that tax the poor to subsidize the rich and the business corporations. For example, Botswana increased its Value Added Tax from 10% to 12%; the same was true for Sierra Leone. This has deepened the pre-existing gender, social and economic inequalities in Africa.

To insulate primary commodity exports, dependent African countries require (1) price stabilization policy to control volatility (e.g. a policy that decouples domestic price from global market price); (2) reversal of financial deregulation and financial regulation in order to control speculation; (3) diversification (of both commodities and markets); (4) domestic strategy for Africa's minerals (the African Union-Economic Commission for Africa reform agenda is useful, but needs a gender assessment). The policy space must also be kept open and in the immediate term, we need a critical mass of citizens and effective linkages to pressure governments and policymakers.

**PATITA TINGOI (FAHAMU Change Programme):** In the East Africa sub-region, there is widespread thinking that pastoralism is not contributing to GDP despite the fact that pastoralism supplies 75-80% of the meat consumed in all of its countries. Of course, since pastoralism is not exporting and not bringing in foreign exchange, officially we are not contributing to GDP. We might not be contributing to GDP but we are employing and feeding huge populations. Yet, this is not recognized nor visible in our government's agenda. Time and again, pastoralism has



been dismissed as an outdated way of life by so-called development experts. Hence we do not figure centrally in discussions around the impact of the financial and economic crisis on Africa; especially on African women.

But let me use this opportunity to talk about our communities. Pastoralism probably occupies 80% of Sub-Saharan Africa, where over 20 ethnic communities live. Pastoralism occupies very dry arid and semi-arid land areas. About 4 million African pastoralists move from one place to another in search for pasture, water, livestock, etc. Pastoralism is togetherness with nature; it is about finding a very delicate balance between people, animals and the environment. Pastoralism depends entirely on the ability of the community to predict the weather and the environment in which they live.

What is the role of women in a scenario where pastoralist communities are in a vulnerable situation? Women are the custodians of seeds. They are also very much involved in livestock. When it comes to the household, women take care of the home and the children. As for the men, many of them have been forced to migrate to urban areas. And because there are no sufficient jobs in the cities, most of the men work as watchmen or assume minor jobs. As much as they want to send something back home, it is difficult. So this is the context for women in pastoralist communities: men are absent and women are left to take care of all day-to-day activities.

The impact of climate change on these remote communities is devastating. It had led to what I call a crisis of civilization. These are communities that rely 100% on their ability to predict the weather. Climate change means changing weather patterns. Communities are now unable to tell what next year will look like. As a result of climate change, we experience erratic rainfall, long periods of drought, and the spread of human and animal diseases. There has been reduced output. Women and people in communities struggle to

make up for this loss. They are stepping out for minor jobs that are still within their environment. When you go to national parks, you will see women selling bracelets and other traditional handicrafts to make up for the loss.

Another impact is political and economic marginalization. Pastoralists, by nature, do not obey boundaries. We are not very sensitive to that because of our way of life. We have pastoralist communities in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Somalia. When we move around for pasture, we don't even know where Kenya starts and ends. We are not Kenyans and we are not Tanzanians. There is very little discussion at the national and regional policy levels on how to support the development of pastoralists. There are inadequate numbers of schools and hospitals for pastoralist communities despite the fact that we occupy vast tracts of land. Governmental politics often overlook our primary identity and divide us into ethnic groups. This leads to our further marginalization.

What has been the advocacy of grassroots organizations of pastoralists? We try, as much as possible, to focus on how we can affect policies at the regional level. At the moment, there is a push to lobby individual governments to sign on to a policy that recognizes the need of pastoralists to nurture their migratory routes. This is the only way to deal with the current environmental crisis as well as with the economic and political marginalization of pastoralists. Kenya is at the forefront of a policy change that acknowledges communal land.

As African women working on development alternatives, we need to get ourselves out of the box in which we were enclosed by mainstream development. When you think of an African woman, the first thing that comes to your mind is female genital mutilation, violence, poverty. Nobody has taken time to think about the knowledge that African women have. We need to document more seriously the knowledge

of African women and act to transform this knowledge into global initiatives. As local activists, our major challenge is how to convince local communities that the knowledge they have is worth harnessing. We need to link this local process with global perspectives.

**YAO GRAHAM (Third World Network-Africa):** The policies that we discussed all intersect from the local to the international. One of the major challenges that we all face around these three themes – environmental, economic and gender justice – is that we often find single-issue groups. We need groups who have a combination of two or all of the issues and that follow through their inter-linkages and relationships from the local to the global. For me, this is central to addressing the silos and fragmentation that we face today.

In our experience, it has been difficult. Our work led to the emergence of NETRIGHT, which is an organization working on gender and economic issues. We host NETRIGHT physically, but this is more an example of how one could inter-link inadequately because our domestic engagement with questions of gender equity and equality has become a bit imbalanced. Since NETRIGHT is there, we've almost gone into a comfort zone. It also shows the challenge. If there's an organization that works on gender equality, how then does one work in parallel with it? How do larger organizations host a women's organization and not break its neck? For instance, some donors say that NETRIGHT is TWN-Africa. It is not. I am just narrating to show the challenge. The issues that TWN-Africa works on are mainly on economic policy issues, an area where women's movements in Africa are weak. We work with trade unions. If you go to trade unions, they have a women's desk but it doesn't permeate the work of the trade unions' movement. Inter-linking is a complex and challenging process, however, we must continue to achieve even modest successes.

GEEJ Pacific



[continued from p.6] ... services arena that is the most pervasive in the lives of women and communities – from health and education, to shops and retail markets, to credit, media, communications, IT, electricity, water, culture, tourism, and environment. If we look at the fisheries and mining sectors, all of these activities are services activities.

Why are they important? These are about the well-being of individuals, families, communities. How many women work in the services sector? How dependent are women on services? It is about the role of women as the cultural mediators, as the educators, as the conduit of knowledge from past to future generations. It is about women in relation to land as the care takers, guardians of the well-being of generations. It is about ensuring the potential for your children and your children's children. Services are about the survival of communities into the future for the next millennium.

Feminist perspectives in economics have always said that the non-market economy is important. We have to understand the social and cultural dimensions if we are to achieve ecological sustainability in terms of economies. When we talk about trade and services, the question then has to be, what do the trade agreements do in terms of recognizing and not recognizing our relationship to services in that form?

The other important question is: who currently provides services? Services are generally seen, including international human rights instruments, as the responsibility of the state. We know too that the state often doesn't do it very well. Do we say to the state that we will just let the market do it, or do we tell the state that it's your responsibility and you have to do it better? If we look at services, we see the national level, local government, village level – all of those

are integral to how services are related to our lives and how they are provided. We know also that there is big business that provides services just as there are small businesses that do the same. They do it differently and have different objectives. We, too, have different powers in relation to those services.

If we look at the trade agreements, they are very much about empowering the largest international corporations to be able to offer a whole range of services across our countries. There are many layers of trade negotiations currently taking place globally and regionally – WTO, Pacific ACP, EU, Pacer Plus, and various bilateral investment treaties. Potentially, all these require commitments along the lines of trade, services and investment. The good news is that the ground is shifting. Because there has been much publicity internationally around these issues, the trade services negotiations have had very little progress. The bad news for Samoa, Vanuatu and Tonga is that accession to the WTO involves very intensive sets of commitments.

**MERE FALEMAKA** (Melanesian Spearhead Group): There are no comprehensive studies in our region to assess the trade impact on gender and environment. Previous studies tended to focus on fiscal positions of governments – On how much revenue governments lose by reducing customs duties. On that point, there is not even analysis on the implications of tariff reduction on the health budget, or education budget, which are concerns of women.

However, our members requested a social impact analysis that PANG carried out in 2006. This was the first attempt to assess the social issues. But because these agreements have not been implemented as yet, we could only forecast what the impacts might be. This attempt was followed by a second step which was

to develop a monitoring framework on social impacts. It is important to have this monitoring framework in place with proper indicators, including those that would capture the gender and environment dimensions of trade agreements.

It is important to recognize that negotiating and signing on to trade agreements are functions of governments. But they also must be held accountable for what they sign up to because the impacts are going to be felt at all levels. Your various Women Departments and CSOs can contribute to ensuring that your governments negotiate agreements that deliver genuine development benefits. You can do this by seeking to understand what the national policies are on gender, trade and environment so that you can make the link at the national level. For instance, what sectors are particularly important for you to support calls for gender disaggregated statistics? At some point, we need to analyze some of these impacts and we cannot do that unless we have the data to support it.

As someone who comes from the side of government, I want to reiterate the importance for you to press your governments for participation if possible, or wider consultation that includes your organizations. You need to try to influence decisions at different levels. What we have learned in the handling of trade issues at the frontline is the value of strategic alliances. Identify strategic issues and form strategic alliances with countries that share common interests.

Some of our governments look at civil society with suspicion. The issue is to approach government in a spirit of trust building, not with a confrontational spirit. You can do this by providing reason and analysis. Focus on issues that are common. All of us want a trade agreement that will genuinely develop our people. Also, present an alternative. Present yourself as a civil society group and as an alternative mechanism for governments to think through more seriously and perhaps work with.

**MARITA MANLEY** (GTZ/ Secretariat of the Pacific Community): Sustainable development has taken a long time to be defined then ignored. The overarching definition is that it is development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their development needs. What this means in the context of the environment, is that we should not overuse our planetary resources now to meet all of our development and material wealth, at the expense of our children and grandchildren who will suffer the consequences and not meet their development needs as a result.

I wanted to give examples of how we have been plundering our environment, and overusing the resources our planet provides. One of the reasons this over-utilization is so pervasive is that the current economic system we have suggests that all of these resources are for free. They are not necessarily valued in the economic system that we have in place. Things like species extinction which we have contributed to, increasing the overfishing of oceans, degradation of our environment and ecosystems – these are just to give you an example in the Pacific context of how our environment provides real tangible benefits but not necessarily the ones that are valued in our economic system.

On biodiversity, our planet provides us with multitude varieties of crops, trees, fish, and other natural resources. To have an idea of the potential loss of biodiversity as a consequence of trade, we may recall that in the 1990s Samoa suffered from a devastating outbreak of taro leaf infestation. This was mainly a result of a push to plant one particular variety of taro driven by the desire to increase export of taro to Pacific island communities in New Zealand. That plant was later found to be highly susceptible to a leaf pest.

I am happy to read that Environmental Economics is now to be offered at the University of South Pacific. We really need the teaching system to be bringing through people that can contribute to this area of discussion and debate. We need to value environmental services and place them in real terms. Often, it is very difficult for non-negotiators and CSOs to get engaged in trade and environmental discussions because people involved in

the negotiations tend to use technical language, including jargon. However, we can learn from what the Cook Islands government has done. The country has a very good negotiations delegation that makes very effective use of civil society organizations, in making sure that a wider range of issues is covered. It is important that governments have the ability to cover a range of different issues, such as reducing emissions, climate finance and others. There are partnerships and opportunities between policy makers and CSOs on this front.

**YVONNE UNDERHILL-SEM** (University of Auckland): How many of us thought about how much it costs to get here? This is a real challenge in the Pacific. This is an issue that we take for granted. We take for granted, our water. We take for granted the fact that the only way we can get from one place to another is to fly. We are challenging ourselves personally and we should challenge ourselves intimately on what we do about such issues - if we need to make those kinds of shifts. DAWN needs to think about how it is to network across regions. I want to make that interconnection between environment and climate. How many of us know that somewhere in our bodies there is a trade issue that connects with environmental issues that is also related to climate change? What is being cut down to get that which we are consuming or wearing?

When we start to look at the local level, there are a number of things that come to mind in terms of initiatives and alternatives. Some of you might know about the Women and Mining project in Papua New Guinea. The advocacy on mining has had a very troubled history

in the region. It is a complex process but the project was about getting funding, expertise, local people, and connecting to local and global networks. The other thing I want to mention is Shefa Province in Vanuatu, which has adopted CEDAW at the provincial level. I think this is the only provincial level initiative that has ratified CEDAW and taken it seriously. As a result, there were some initiatives that sprung up around the marketplace where women go to not just to sell or buy but also to interact, engage and now, commit. There was a start of two women's associations. The Shefa initiative is an interesting one that combines governance, citizenship, participation, livelihoods.

Lastly, there is this market in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, which was regained by women. They were able to do this because there is a new government in PNG which is headed by a human rights lawyer. It makes all the difference in terms of what is possible regarding management of that market. In some ways, that also speaks true about getting women in parliament. We have been trying this for a long time, but we have to keep pushing this. We need to get women in those positions because they do make things work.

We need to watch out for initiatives such as these. By doing so, we can do the analytical work ourselves around the connection between what we do to have a livelihood, how we look after our environment, and how that bigger shifts in climate are compounding or making possible different things on the ground.

*Photo credit: UNIFEM Pacific-Part of UN Women)*



GEEJ Regional Consultation and Training Institute Participants

<i>Pacific</i>		<i>Africa</i>	
<i>Training Institute Participants</i>	<i>Regional Consultation Participants</i>	<i>Training Institute Participants</i>	<i>Regional Consultation Participants</i>
Lice Cokanasiga	Priya Chattier	Hameda Deedat	Bernice Asantewaa Appiah-Pinkrah
Ann Hubert	Elizabeth Cox	Korede Denton	Akua Britwum
Josephine Kalsuak	Mere Falemaka	Wambui Blessol Juddy Gathoni	Naome Chimbetete
Rosa Koian	Jane Kelsey	Hibist Kassa	Abdulai Darimani
Eweata Maata	Naeemah Khan	Ruth Mumbi Meshack	Yao Graham
Arieta Moceica	Nic Maclellan	Anne Mitaru	Nidra Hammond
Reeti Onorio	Marita Manley	Shaudzirai Muriel Mudekunye	Tetteh Hormeku
Ender Rence	Raijeli Mawa	Christine Njeru	Patita Tingoi
Lu'isa Samani	Vijay Naidu	Joyce Nyame	Dzodzi Tsikata
Kairangi Samuela	Maureen Penjueli	Anushka Dev Virahsawmy-Coy	Pauline Vande Pallen
Filomena Tuivanualevu	Patricia Petueli		
Sainimere Veitata	Viriseta Rabuatoka		
	Kavita Ram		
	Seruwaia Saumatua		
	Anasuya Sengupta		
	Claire Slatter		
	Yvonne Underhill-Sem		
	Adam Wolfenden		



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DAWN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DAWN GLOBAL SECRETARIAT

Issue Editors:  
GEEJ Team  
Copy-Editing:  
Sarah Domingo & Stella Marquez-Fong  
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Ryan Crisostomo  
Printing:  
Lithwerke

Marina Durano | Zo Randriamaro  
Anita Nayar | Kumudini Samuel | Gita Sen |  
Josefa Francisco (General Coordinator)

Information and Communications Officer: Sarah Domingo  
Program and Admin Officer: Stella Marquez Fong  
Finance Officer: Remedios Gamboa  
Office Associate: Victor Buenaventura  
Office Assistant: Leslie Cruz  
Telephone/Fax: +632 434 6440  
Email: [info@dawnnet.org](mailto:info@dawnnet.org)  
Website: [www.dawnnet.org](http://www.dawnnet.org)

Development Alternatives with Women  
for a New Era (DAWN) Global Secretariat  
c/o Women and Gender Institute (WAGI),  
Miriam College, Katipunan Road, Loyola Heights,  
Quezon City 1108 Philippines

