

## **GLOBAL WEEK OF ACTION FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

*Background Information*  
*March 1-8, 2005*

### **CONTEXT AND RATIONALE**

In 1995 in Beijing, China, women gathered at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women to review and appraise the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000 and to adopt a Platform for Action, which identified goals for obstacles to the advancement of women in the world. In the resulting Beijing Platform for Action, women won a broad-based agenda for promoting and protecting their human rights worldwide, while establishing the principle of shared power and responsibility between women and men in all arenas. In Beijing, the world acknowledged that women's rights were central to development and peace, and that women's issues and global issues are one and the same.

Yet, despite some policy gains, women – especially poor women-- around the world continue to face many of the same critical issues that were addressed in Beijing. The neo-liberal economic model and market driven policies that promote unfair trade and privatization of public goods and services, the increasing power and lack of accountability of multinational corporations, the resurgence of many forms of fundamentalisms, the escalation of military conflict, the persistence of violence against women around the globe, and the escalating backlash against women's sexual and reproductive rights have created a stifling climate for progressive changes in women's lives. As global forces threaten all human rights and as global inequities grow, the challenges facing women, their families and communities are ever more complex, and we as feminists cannot afford to have our perspectives on these critical questions marginalized.

From February 28 to March 11, 2005, the UN Commission on the Status of Women will conduct the ten-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing + 10) and, commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the First UN World Conference on Women held in Mexico in 1975. During 2004, regional meetings are taking place to prepare for this review but there is no World Conference scheduled as part of it.

Beijing +10 provides the global women's movement the opportunity to assess governments' implementation of the Beijing Platform; to give voice to issues important to women; to unite for our common agenda for peace, human rights and social justice both in country and across the globe; to advance feminist perspectives and not just defend gains won in the recent past; to look ahead and build upon the victories achieved at the global level and as a global movement; to not only strengthen our common fight for these gains, but also boldly move ahead to set new feminist agendas for ourselves, for our governments and for the multilateral system; to push for women's full equality at the UN and in local, national, regional, and global processes. We must use this occasion to advance a feminist agenda for the 21st century. The Beijing + 10 process is a political moment of world attention on women that can be used to focus on our concerns and to build momentum for re-politicization of gender equality work.

In this regard, women's rights activists around the world will take part in the Global Week of Action for Women's Rights during the official Beijing +10 review from March 1 to 8, 2005.

### **WHAT IS THE GLOBAL WEEK OF ACTION FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS?**

The Beijing +10 process marks a political moment and global opportunity to bring attention to women's lives. From March 1-8, 2005 women across the globe will organize local, national, regional, and international actions to address a broad range of concerns, demand action on commitments to women's rights and gender equality, and celebrate our gains of recent decades. While most of the focus will be on activities taking place around the globe, there will also be a week of local activities in New York parallel to the Commission on the Status of Women's formal review of the Beijing Platform in order to link the local actions to the global process.

Each group will conduct activities based on its own priorities in their local area. While women will be engaged in diverse actions, the coordinated, publicly visible discussion of these issues within a feminist framework will infuse creative energy into the process. It will also help us to move forward in our common endeavor to strengthen the global women's movement.

We invite you to join in this Global Week of Action and to share with us your plans as well as related materials. We will develop a web page to highlight the varied activities, from local to global. This week will culminate on International Women's Day on March 8 with actions of global women's solidarity and the launch of activities linking Beijing +10 to the UN's five-year review of the Millennium Summit in September 2005.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE WEEK OF ACTION FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS – BEIJING AND BEYOND:**

### **• Demand Accountability for Women's Rights**

- o Assess the state of implementation of the Beijing Platform For Action and examine new challenges not adequately covered in the Platform
- o Demand accountability from governments and multilateral institutions accountable for actions or inaction to implement their commitments to women over the past 30 years - in the Beijing Platform, ICPD, CEDAW, Vienna Conference, Security Council Resolution 1325 and other Human Rights instruments.
- o Examine global challenges and barriers to implementation such as fundamentalism, militarization, globalization and growing economic inequity
- o Highlight best and worst practices in implementing the Beijing Platform
- o Push for women's full equality at the UN and in local, national regional and global processes

### **• Demonstrate the Solidarity of the Global Women's Movement**

- o Mobilize activities in your community, simultaneously and in solidarity with women's rights advocates around the world
- o Bring renewed energy, strength and solidarity to the global women's movement
- o Celebrate women's achievements, struggles and resistance
- o Give voice to issues important to women's lives and unite for our common agenda for peace, human rights, and social, economic, environmental and gender justice both in country and across the globe
- o Link advocacy between Beijing+10 and Millennium Summit +5 (September 2005)

## **HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?**

- **Organize and mobilize in your community!** Organize teach-ins, marches, campaigns, tribunals, workshops, cultural events and other activities.
- **Meet with and lobby your government delegations** to take strong pro-women positions during the Beijing +10 review.
- **Link with women's groups at the national**, regional, and global levels! Share information on events and strategies; develop collective actions.
- **Join women from around the world at the UN!** Participate in events and actions at the official Beijing+10 review in New York. We will help create a virtual space linking the review of the CSW in New York to women's groups in the rest of the world and vice versa.
- **Celebrate global women's solidarity on International Women's Day!** The Week of Action will culminate on IWD on March 8 with joint actions taking place around the world.

## **WHO ARE WE?**

### **Project Initiators:**

Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)  
Development Alternatives With Women For A New Era (DAWN)  
Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO)

Project initiators will:

- Mobilize global and regional networks for the week of action
- Disseminate Call to Action as well other related information to local, national and regional women's networks and groups
- Post campaign information on web page
- Undertake activities during the week of action
- Translate the Call to Action into French and Spanish

### **Become a co-sponsor of the Global Week of Action:**

- Disseminate Call to Action as well as other related information to local, national and regional women's networks and groups
- Undertake local activities during the week of action
- Give feed back on local activities
- Translate Beijing and Beyond materials into other languages as needed