

INTRODUCTION: "IT IS TIME FOR WOMEN TO
MOTHER EARTH"^{9*}

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REPORT ON THE WORLD WOMEN'S CONGRESS
FOR A HEALTHY PLANET, MIAMI, FLORIDA,
NOVEMBER 8-12, 1991

This groundbreaking Congress, organized by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) in Miami in November 1991, was attended by 1,500 women from 83 countries who came together to share their knowledge and experiences and to develop recommendations and actions for a healthy planet. In spite of the large number of participants and the enormous range of differences in language, culture, and backgrounds, the Congress succeeded in articulating the "Women's Action Agenda 21," a blueprint for incorporating the women's dimension into environment and development decision-making. As Michele Landsberg, columnist for *The Toronto Star* and a participant at the conference, put it: "I've never seen an international conference as vigorous in articulating differences and as generous in transcending them, all in the cause of our common global destiny" (World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet, 1992, p. 7).

Reproductive and genetic engineering, as part of the reductionist scientific framework that guides much of the discussion around development, was addressed both in some of the main presentations and in the workshops. The fragmentation and uniformity that results from Western technologies geared to commodity production was seen as a powerful element in the destruction of human and natural resources.

The Congress was the brainchild of Bella Abzug (well-known U.S. politician, activist,

and feminist leader) as she realized that the upcoming United Nations' 1992 Earth Summit to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, did not encourage the participation and contribution of women to the concept of sustain-able development. At the Congress, a tribunal of five eminent women judges (Justice Desiree Bernard from Guyana, Justice Elizabeth Evatt from Australia, Justice Sujata V. Manohar from India, Justice Effie Owuor from Kenya, and Judge Margareta Wadstein from Sweden) heard testimony each morning from five witnesses and posed them questions before the general assembly. In the afternoons, workshops were held on a variety of topics, and each workshop prepared a set of resolutions that were incorporated into the Agenda 21 document. As the *Official Report* of the Congress states: "The World Women's Congress Action Agenda is a compilation of the work, ideas, and values of 1500 women from around the world, North and South, East and West. It represents the essence of four days of expert testimony, jury panels, and workshop discussions that are distilled in this document. It does not necessarily represent the views of each and every individual who participated in the process. It is meant as a challenge to women and men to work together to create a safe and sustainable future" (World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet, 1992).

The third day of the Congress focused on "Science, Technology, and Population," and the witnesses on that morning addressed issues that more directly relate to our journal concerns. However, I found that the presentations from the previous days organized around the themes "Towards Earth Charter '92: Developing a Code of Earth

Ethics with a Women's Dimension" and "Saving Natural Systems: Environment and Positive Development" contributed greatly to an understanding of biotechnology as a fundamental component in the ongoing destruction of the environment and of the views that emphasize the market as the sole measure of human progress. A profound critique of the patriarchal view of Nature as a dangerous force that needs to be dominated and controlled was a common thread in all the presentations.

The testimony given on the third day by Vandana Shiva (physicist, director of the Research Foundation for Natural Resource Policy in India), on "Biotechnology and Biogenetics" connected the patriarchal denial of the creative role of women in childbirth to the displacement of the natural process of recycling and robbery of the soil's fertility. The commercialization and control of life resulting from a view that equates development with the economic categories of needs, productivity, and growth that benefits national and international elites was identified as one of the sources of the oppression of women and the destruction of Nature.

The workshop on "Biodiversity and Biotechnology," led by Patricia Hynes (director of the Institute of Women and Technology and author of *The Recurrent Silent Spring*) and Jean Grossholtz (a professor of Political Science and Women's Studies at Mt. Holyoke), was attended by over 150 women and produced the resolution incorporated in the Agenda 21.

Caucuses grouping women from various parts of the world prepared statements expressing their concerns and needs. The caucuses were: Women for a Healthy Planet; The African Position; European Women's Caucus: An Agenda Towards Sustainable gain control of reproduction share a one-sided pro-technology-at-all-costs viewpoint with the technocrats, whose "development" projects have wrecked havoc in the lives of non-

Livelihood; International Indigenous Women's Caucus; Declaracion de las mujeres de America Latina y del Caribe; Middle East Caucus; North American Region; Pacific Region; Women From the South; and Women of Color of North America.

On the final day of the Congress, Maurice Strong, secretary-general of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) to be held in Brazil in 1992, addressed the participants, after listening to the reports of the workshops. In his remarks he noted that "one important objective of the UNCED Secretariat is to incorporate gender concerns into all areas of its work and generate global awareness about the important role of women in promoting sustainable development . . . ," and acknowledged the need to have "both the vision and wise counsel of the likes of Rachel Carson and Barbara Ward, and the leadership and inspiration of many modern-day environmental leaders such as Gro Harlem Brundtland, Bella Abzug, Lois Gibbs, Janet Gibson, Wangari Maathai, Sithembiso Nyoni, Vandana Shiva, and Maria Luisa Robledo, as well as the collective force of women in general, to rectify some of the damage that continues to cause havoc to our planet and endanger our civilizations and our common future." He expressed his pleasure with the resolutions of the Congress and said: "I'd have no trouble endorsing this agenda," while he acknowledged that "some governments" (i.e., the rich nations of the North) are trying hard to avoid dealing with issues like poverty, militarism, international debts, and free trade at the Brazil meeting.

It was important to see reproductive and genetic engineering topics as part of the discussions about sustainable development and ecology. The scientists and health "experts" who manipulate women's bodies and try to Western peoples. As Vandana Shiva stated in her book *Staying Alive – Women, Ecology and Development*: "Reductionistic science is a source of violence against nature and women

because it subjugates and dispossesses them of their full productivity, power and potential” (Shiva, 1989, p. 22).

REFERENCES

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WOMEN'S ACTION AGENDA 21

WORLD WOMEN'S CONGRESS FOR A HEALTHY PLANET
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PREAMBLE: TOWARD A HEALTHY PLANET

People everywhere are frightened by mounting evidence of the deterioration of Earth's life-giving systems. Human beings are part of the web of life, not above its laws. We have a special responsibility to respect all of the Earth community, including our air, water, soil, and natural resources, our fauna and flora, and the atmosphere that shelters us.

We, women of many nations, cultures, and creeds, of different colors and classes, have come together to voice our concern for the health of our living planet and all its interdependent life forms.

We have listened to each other speak of the ills of our societies, our families and children, our sacred Nature. We have been inspired by the courage and commitment of our sisters throughout the world who protect and repair our natural heritage.

The World Women's Congress Action Agenda is a compilation of the work, ideas, and values of 1,500 women from around the world, North and South, East and West, who met in Miami in November 1991. It represents the essence of four days of expert testimony, jury panels, and workshop discussions that are distilled in this document. It does not necessarily represent the views of each and every individual who participated in the process. It is meant as a challenge to women and men to work together to create a safe and sustainable future.

The Agenda 21 document is reproduced here in its entirety. A copy of the *Official Report of the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet*, containing the reports from the caucuses, the Agenda 21, and the findings of the tribunal, can be obtained by writing to Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO). Send US \$5, payable to WEDO/USA Fund, Inc. Bulk rates available on request.

As caring women, we speak on behalf of those who could not be with us, the millions of women who experience daily the violence of environmental degradation, poverty, and exploitation of their work and bodies. As long as Nature and women are abused by a so-called "free market" ideology and wrong concepts of "economic growth," there can be no environmental security. Rainforest dwellers, island peoples, and inhabitants of fragile arid zones are threatened with displacement and dispossession due to human disruption and pollution of vulnerable ecosystems. In a world that condones such practices, there lies little hope for long-term survival or peace among peoples.

We are deeply troubled by the increasing quality of life disparities between inhabitants of industrialized nations and those in so-called "developing" nations and by the growing numbers of poor within the rich countries. In all instances, women, children, minorities, and indigenous people are the chief victims.

We are outraged by the inequities among children the world over, with millions denied food, shelter, health care, education, and opportunities for a full and productive life. We condemn the racism and disrespect of diversity on which this inequity feeds.

We equate lack of political and individual will among world leaders with a lack of basic morality and spiritual values and an absence of responsibility towards future generations.

We will no longer tolerate the enormous role played by military establishments and industries in making the 20th century the bloodiest and most violent in all of human history. Militarism is impoverishing and maiming both the Earth and humanity. It is urgent that resources currently consumed by

the military be redirected to meet the needs of people and our planet.

We believe that a healthy and sustainable environment is contingent upon world peace, respect for human rights, participatory democracy, the self-determination of peoples, respect for indigenous people and their lands, cultures, and traditions, and the protection of all species.

We believe that basic human rights include access to clean air and water, food, shelter, health, education, personal liberty, and freedom of information.

We come together to pledge our commitment to the empowerment of women, the central and powerful force in the search for equity between and among the peoples of the Earth and for a balance between them and the life-support systems that sustain us all.

Women are a powerful force for change. In the past two decades, thousands of new women's groups have been organized in every region of the world, ranging from community-based groups to international networks. Everywhere, women are catalysts and initiators of environmental activism. Yet policy-makers continue to ignore the centrality of women's roles and needs as they make Fate of the Earth decisions.

We demand our right, as half the world's population, to bring our perspectives, values, skills, and experiences into policy-making, on an equal basis with men, not only at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in June 1992 but on into the 21st century.

We pledge to undertake our Action Agenda 21 on behalf of ourselves, our families, and future generations. We appeal to all women and men to join in this call for profound and immediate transformation in human values and activities.

ACTIONS

Democratic rights, diversity, and solidarity

Recognizing that Nature is not limited by national sovereignty or boundaries and that environmental degradation is global;

Observing the worldwide social and environmental consequences of development based solely on economic growth measurements;

Recognizing the creative diversity of our culture, class, race, and the ecosystems and political structures within which we live;

Believing that the world's indigenous peoples have long been denied basic human rights or acknowledgment of their contributions to world culture;

Recognizing the interconnectedness of women, the environment, economic policies, development strategies, social justice, and the survival of the all species;

We will promote the principles of this Action Agenda and encourage people everywhere to use political and economic means to make its recommendations a reality.

We will seek to protect all those who uphold these principles from forces that would silence their voices or stand in the way of environmental and social justice.

We will demand full and equal participation for women and men in public policy analyses, at senior levels in government and non-government organizations, in decision-making, implementation, administration, and funding at international, national, and community levels.

We recommend that the democracy-strengthening principle observed in some nations – that no more than 60% or no less than 40% of either sex be included in government bodies – should be applied universally to all public policy-making groups. The guide to women's empowerment is achieving a critical mass of representation in decision-making, not mere tokenism. Gender balance must be observed in the national delegations to the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED); in the permanent missions of UN member states; in the UN Secretariat's professional staff; in

the World Court, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and UN specialized agencies and programs.

We demand that all governments comply with requirements of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and that they ratify and implement the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the UN Convention on Human Rights, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We will organize groups to publicize, coordinate, and assist women's action in issuing report cards on progress toward a healthy community, village, region, or nation.

Code of environmental ethics and accountability

Recognizing the current moral and ethical double standards that are applied to environment and development activities, women's participation and social justice throughout the world,

Recognizing that, in contrast, the women's global environmental model is cooperative rather than competitive, values women's roles, work, and participation, and acknowledges the responsibility that accompanies power and is owed to future generations,

Believing that a universal code of ethics and international law should be based on equity, respect for humans and other species, and biological and cultural diversity,

Distressed that policy planners and political representatives use barren instruments (systems of national accounts) on which to make all major economic and environment decisions,

Insisting that national boundaries should not impede the development of global concepts of the environment and responsibility on a global level,

We will work for adoption of an International Code of Environmental Conduct by business and industry, governments, UN agencies, and non-governmental organizations

that includes precautionary and preventive approaches, considering the true value of the environment and the effect on women when planning activities that may affect the Earth,

We support new principles of international environmental law, including: strict liability for environmental harms (the polluter pays), the intrinsic value of biodiversity, and non-adversarial dispute resolution mechanisms to include the public in decision-making about compensation for victims.

We call for non-governmental monitoring systems that will hold institutions, corporations, states, organizations, and individuals accountable for their actions, products, and policies.

We demand time-use studies of women's work (household, cottage industries, subsistence agriculture, child care, elder care, volunteer community service).

We demand that qualitative indicators be used for environmental and natural resource measurements.

We urge governments to agree to a timetable for implementation of full cost accounting that includes environmental and social costs – and assigns full value to women's labor – in national accounting systems and in calculation of subsidies and incentives in international trade.

We require governments, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and lending agencies to establish environmental audits with which every funding proposal must comply before implementation of loans.

Women, militarism, and the environment

Knowing that military expenditures, the international arms trade, and armed conflict deprive billions of human beings of basic security and well-being,

Realizing the disastrous environmental impact of all military activity, including research, development, production of weaponry, testing, maneuvers, presence of military bases, disposal of toxic materials,

transport, and resource use,

Aware that research on and use of military weaponry, including nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, contribute significantly to environmental degradation, genetic mutation, illness, and death,

Recognizing that militarism often leads to the occupation of lands and the denial of human and environmental rights,

We call on UNCED to include in its Agenda 21 and final documents statements on the impact of militarism on the environment, development, and humanity and to support measures that will transfer the world's vast military resources to positive, life-enforcing programs.

We urge an immediate 50% reduction in military spending, with the money saved reallocated to socially useful and environmentally friendly purposes.

We demand creation of gender-balanced national civilian commissions that would open to public scrutiny all military activities, expenditures, and research and development.

We demand that nuclear weapons be dismantled, that nuclear testing cease immediately, and a global nuclear test ban treaty be negotiated, signed, and enforced.

We demand the cessation of space activities and supersonic flights that release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and threaten the ozone layer.

We demand that more decisive actions be taken to ban international traffic in nuclear, chemical, biological, and poison gas weapons or constituents of such weapons. Mechanisms should be developed for enforcement of this ban, whether against governments, businesses, or individuals.

We support a UN commission report that recommended re-assigning military-related satellites and other information-gathering systems to monitor and share global environmental data.

We demand that armies be used as environmental protection corps to monitor and

repair damage to natural systems, including clean-up of war zones, military bases and surrounding areas, and to be available to assist citizens in times of natural and man-made disasters.

We condemn governments that turn their armies against their citizens, causing millions of individuals to become refugees and displaced persons.

We will educate our daughters and sons to shun military service if it is in the service of governments that use military power to exploit the resources and people of other nations.

Foreign debt and trade

In full knowledge that the industrialized nations have been the net beneficiaries of exploitation of the abundant natural resources of poor nations,

Observing the disastrous social, environmental, and economic consequences of international lending practices and current terms of trade between industrialized and nonindustrialized nations,

Concerned about the negative impact on the poor, especially women and children, of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank structural adjustment policies,

Appalled by the flow of capital from poor nations to the banking systems of rich nations, depriving them of funds for needed domestic, social, economic, health, and education programs,

Recognizing the grievous consequences of this practice for poor families in the developing- countries and for the natural resources upon which we all depend,

We demand immediate official foreign debt cancellation.

We will work for reduction of commercial debt via mechanisms equivalent to corporate bankruptcy law.

We will cease to do business with banks that refuse to reduce the total owned and/or the interest rate on the whole debt owed by each of the poor nations.

We will oppose those debts for nature exchanges (swaps) that are not subject to wide public debate and that threaten sovereignty and indigenous people's rights to land and self-determination.

We will hold personally accountable corrupt officials, who borrow in the name of their people, for the social and environmental consequences of those loans and for personal misuse of such funds.

We call for the rejection of structural adjustments policies (SAPs) that shift the responsibilities of basic social services from governments to women without compensation or assistance.

We call for renegotiation of trade agreements to ensure an equitable relationship between the prices of raw materials and prices of manufactured goods.

We call for the dismantling of all unfair protective trade measures used by the industrialized nations.

We demand a total ban on the export of goods rejected for local consumption in or by the country of origin.

We suggest that historic audits of nation states (from 1945 onward) be conducted to determine the net beneficiaries of natural resource exploitation, an assessment that would serve as the basis to cancel current foreign debt.

Women, poverty, land rights, food security, and credit

Recognizing that while their living conditions deteriorate, women in many regions bear major responsibility for domestic food production (Africa, 80%; Asia, 60%; Latin America, over 40%) as well as for the protection of soils and other natural resources,

Noting that no one knows the realities of the over-exploitation of the land more intimately than the women who till it, draw and carry its water, use its trees for fuel, harvest forests for healing herbs and medicinal plants, and use their traditional knowledge for

the benefit of the community, preserving species and ecosystems,

Recognizing that in many communities the nutrition of the family depends upon women's ability to produce family and market food products,

Aware that growing inequities in land tenure and ownership are the primary causes of women's poverty, emigration to urban slums, homelessness, environmental degradation, and dispossession of indigenous people,

Recognizing that current agricultural policies in the industrialized and developing nations are uprooting and displacing land-based communities and diverting land from food production to cash crops for export,

We declare that because women and children are a majority of the one billion people in the world who go hungry every day, women's access to food, land inheritance, tenure, and ownership must be regarded as a basic human right.

We call on the UN, governments and non-governmental organizations to cease discriminatory practices that limit access to land and other resources, to increase allocation of resources that enhance food security, and to provide appropriate technologies to reduce women's work.

We will strive to create awareness of the environmental impact of land-use technologies guided by immediate profit at the cost of long-term sustainability and productivity. Policies should encourage use of indigenous foods and invest more resources to develop local expertise in traditional production, storage, and seed protection for future crops.

We urge women everywhere to join an international campaign to support the women, men, and children dependent on tropical forests for their livelihood and to help them protect and restore the forests, maintaining their communal rights to land and forest products. We recommend the World Rainforest Movement's statement on forests

and forest peoples as a guide to action by UNCED at its meeting in Rio de Janeiro.

We call on multilateral and bilateral development funds and programs and NGOs to promote women's access to credit. They should increase their support for microenterprise lending through women-run financial institutions as well as central banks in developing countries.

We demand that women be given greater access to water and fuel supplies and to food processing technologies (e.g., grinding mills; processing and packaging; oil extraction) and be assisted in setting up food cooperatives, community kitchens, women-owned seed companies, and farmers' markets. To protect trees from being used as fuel, alternative energy sources should be developed, such as inexpensive, durable, heat-storing solar or photovoltaic household cooking stoves, or at minimum, fuel-saving biomass (woodfuel, charcoal, or waste) stoves.

We reject as unacceptable the use of hormones, contaminants, additives, and irradiation in food production.

We call for special attention to the needs of women and children in urban centers experiencing phenomenal population growth. In refugee camps and hostile urban environments, the majority are denied land titles, low-cost decent permanent housing, use of basic amenities, such as water, sanitation, energy, and transportation, and access to building materials and credit.

We will campaign for the rights of urban populations not to be forcibly evicted from their homes and for their rights to use urban land for subsistence production of crops and livestock as well as small-scale trade and production, without harassment and with support from governments and international agencies.

We urge UN member states to adopt and implement the UN Conference on Settlements (Habitat) Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, by strengthening women's

involvement in the human settlements delivery process. Central government planning and implementation must involve local government and communities in these decisions, with non-governmental organizations functioning as a bridge between the official male-dominated policy-making mechanism and the practical approach of local communities and women's groups.

We call for the transformation of development strategies and development cooperation agencies. In every new or already established aid-giving mechanism or program, policy that specifies the involvement of women on an equal basis with men in determining the allocation of funds should be enforced.

We seek immediate enforcement of directives specifying that every funding proposal be examined for participation of women, including grass-roots women, in design and management, and for its impact on the economic, social, health and educational status of women as well as community-level and indigenous people.

We demand that, to compensate for 46 years of under-funding the needs of women and their families, half of international development resources should be reaching women through broad-scale projects such as access to drinking water, upgrading technologies, and researching ways to reduce women's workloads.

Women's rights, population policies, and health

Knowing that the major causes of environmental degradation are industrial and military pollutants, toxic wastes, and economic systems that exploit and misuse nature and people, we are outraged by suggestions that women's fertility rates (euphemistically called population pressures) are to blame,

Recognizing that this analysis, if unchallenged, lays the groundwork for the re-emergence of top-down, demographically-

driven population policies and programs that are deeply disrespectful of the basic human rights of women as guaranteed in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),

Knowing that it is the number of people plus their consumption of resources plus their wastes that determine their environmental impact, we note that a person in the industrialized world has a far greater negative impact on the environment than a person living in a poor country,

Aware that the right to reproductive health and choice is a basic human right of all individuals, we point out that the World Fertility Survey estimates that there are 500 million couples who wish to plan their family size but have no access to the means to do so,

Fearful of the threat to women's lives by the HIV pandemic and recognizing that women's ability to protect themselves from AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and to determine when-and-if to have children is a prerequisite for women's health, self-determination, and empowerment,

We condemn any attempt to deprive women of reproductive freedom or the knowledge to exercise that freedom.

We demand women-centered, women-managed comprehensive reproductive health care and family planning, including the right to prenatal care, safe and legal voluntary contraceptives and abortion, sex education, and information.

We urge governments, multilateral, and donor agencies to increase investments in comprehensive reproductive health services and to include men as beneficiaries of family planning education and services. Family support services should include child care and parental leave.

We call on policy-makers to recognize that raising the economic, health, education, and social status of women are essential to ending environmental degradation.

We call for recognition of the existence of a

global, environmentally induced cancer epidemic and demand removal from the environment of carcinogenic substances, which have particularly adverse effects on women and children. Particular attention in medical research and treatment should be paid to women's cancers: breast, ovarian, cervical, uterine, and vaginal. Research and remedial action should also focus on the effects on health of toxic chemicals, nuclear wastes, radiation, pesticides and fertilizers.

We demand that all governments systematically alert their citizens to the danger of AIDS and provide them with the information on how to avoid contamination.

We ask the World Health Organization, International Labour Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organization, national governments, public health groups, corporations and unions to increase efforts to eliminate environmental occupational hazards in factories, offices, and on the land.

Biodiversity and biotechnology

Concerned by the deterioration of habitats and ecosystems that are home to the millions of species with which we share the Earth,

Realizing the tragic loss of species upon which our interdependent ecosystems depend,

Recognizing the treasure of plant and animal knowledge-that is tended and passed on by the indigenous people of the world,

Knowing the attempt of commercial interests of the industrialized nations and multinationals to control the natural heritage of species in the nations of the South through patenting life forms and attempting to control gene banks,

Aware that genetically engineered organisms released into the environment pose a threat to natural biologic diversity,

We insist that the UNCED Convention on Biological Diversity address the risks of biotechnology as well as the conservation of species.

We are concerned about genetic

engineering in agriculture and oppose the release of genetically manipulated organisms into the environment. Since research and development of genetic engineering in plants, bacteria and viruses, and animals is proceeding and in some cases products have been commercialized,

We call for immediate and direct regulation of research and development in biotechnology, and ask that a citizens' board with independent science advisers be included in the review and approval process of all biotechnologies by governments.

We recommend that new biotechnologies be evaluated for whether or not they are appropriate and sustainable for humans and the environment. This means the approval process must include not only the examination of their efficacy, safety, and quality, but also an evaluation of their social and economic impacts on those who use and are affected by the technologies.

We demand that the testing and release of organisms be done only in the country of origin and that biotechnology products that are not yet approved or are restricted in the country of origin be prohibited from use or sale elsewhere.

We recommend that there be no patenting of life forms or life form technology, including non-regenerating seeds, to protect against the commercial exploitation of local farmers and the genetic resources of developing nations.

We will work for a ban on bovine growth hormone, for a boycott of dairy products with BGH, and for labeling requirements in the interim.

We insist that information on the risks of biotechnology be made widely available in clear layperson's language.

We recommend that every country and international development agency seek to reroute agriculture onto a sustainable path by supporting and educating farmers in organic and integrated pest management methods and by changing national and aid policies that

subsidize chemical and genetic engineering-based agriculture.

We will support indigenous people in their efforts to protect their natural environments. Aboriginal and indigenous peoples, and specifically women, must be recognized as providing vital wisdom and leadership in resisting the destruction of the Earth and its creatures, and in creating a new, life-affirming global reality.

We call for a redefinition of biology, one that gives priority to conservation biology and ecology and stops the trend in reductionist methods at the gene and molecular level, a trend that negates the primacy of the organism and ecosystem.

Nuclear power and alternative energy

Noting alarming increases in levels of radiation from man-made sources in our air, water, soil, and space,

Concerned at the rising death toll from nuclear power accidents, exposure to nuclear wastes and other radiation emissions,

Aware that women's breast and uterine tissue, fetuses, and children are particularly vulnerable to radiation-induced cancers and disease,

We urge that new nuclear research, development, production, and use be stopped, that uranium mining be halted, and that nuclear power production and use be phased out and replaced by environment-friendly energy sources.

We deplore the environmental racism responsible for the dumping, siting, or placement of environmentally hazardous facilities in the communities of color around the world, including those in North America.

We demand that export of radioactive and other toxic wastes to countries of the South and communities of color be stopped and that the nations responsible for such wastes be responsible for cleaning them up.

We call for a ban on food irradiation and urge support for research into alternative

medical diagnostic and healing methods that do not involve the use of radiation.

We propose that energy efficiency, conservation, and self-renewing sources such as sun, wind, and water be implemented globally as an alternative to nuclear power and fossil fuels. Available technology for these alternatives should be refined and implemented and retraining programs provided for workers displaced by this transition.

We call for promotion of mass transportation systems, including accommodations for bicycles, reducing reliance on fossil-fuel cars, and development of more energy-efficient motor vehicles.

We propose that a curriculum be developed and taught in every language in all schools throughout the world to educate and protect present and future generations from the risks of radiation exposure and contamination.

Science and technology transfer

Believing that science and technology should be at the service of the many rather than for the benefit of the few,

Observing that, on the contrary, they are used to “harness” Nature, contributing to the degradation of ecosystems for short-term profit,

Aware that a very small proportion of the world’s research and development resources are devoted to meeting basic needs of the rural poor,

Witnessing the disempowerment of women through lack of access to appropriate and sustainable technology and the disregard for women’s wealth of experiential knowledge,

Observing that all too often women have been the victims of the misuse of scientific discoveries and inappropriate technologies,

We urge the marriage of ethical values with scientific investigation and use, and the development of people-friendly, non-violent criteria for all technologies, including their appropriateness for both women and the environment.

We demand that all technology transfer be appropriate and sustainable, with special attention paid to longterm costs and benefits for people and the environment. Resources must be made available for research and development of technologies appropriate for women.

We urge that developing nations, and particularly women, be provided with immediate access to appropriate technologies that lead to provision of safe water for drinking and farming; transport; renewable energy sources; sustainable agriculture practices; and basic health care, such as sanitation and vaccinations for children. Benign technology transfer should include public transportation and computer technology and training, with guarantees that computer data and other information technologies not be used to violate rights to privacy and security.

We will support and promote communications strategies for disseminating information on appropriate and inappropriate technologies to women worldwide. The flow of information should be South-South, as well as North-South and South-North.

We call for more education and training of women and girls in the sciences and technology worldwide and emphasize the need for training women in developing countries at college and university levels.

We urge the UN, governments and nongovernmental organizations to create rural and urban training centers of excellence, North and South, that will serve to disseminate environment-friendly technologies to women.

Women’s consumer power

Recognizing that women are powerful catalysts, as individuals and in groups, in creating a healthier planet for our ourselves, our families, our communities, and nations,

Believing that our spending choices should express concern for environmental protection,

Aware that the power of the consumer is decisive in industrial planning and production,

Believing that women can use their consumer power to enforce environmentally and socially friendly industrial development,

Noting that many products bought by women in industrialized nations are based on low wages and hazardous working conditions of women in poor countries and communities,

We pledge to act in solidarity with women around the world to change policies responsible for economic, social, and political inequities and restore our planet to health.

We will form and strengthen existing networks among women globally to facilitate the analysis of consumer goods, from the extraction of raw materials through production processes to use and disposal – to measure holistically the environmental, socio-economic, and health impacts of a product.

We will engage in campaigns supporting investment in environmentally sound productive activities and encourage initiatives to reduce fossil fuel energy use, overconsumption, and wastes.

We pledge to use women's enormous consumer power to boycott businesses and institutions that are not eco-conscious and to support and commend those that are.

We pledge to reduce paper consumption and to promote precycling – not just recycling used products but developing reusable products.

We will organize campaigns against siting sewage treatment plants and incinerators in poor urban communities and seek non-polluting solid waste management planning and restrictions on mercury emission restrictions.

We will seek to reduce the use of cars and encourage the use of public transport systems, redesigning them to reduce energy consumption, and focus on safety and accessibility to those who experience difficulty in using mass transport.

We will choose natural products, avoiding those based on animal testing or toxic chemicals, and seek safer food products.

We advocate development of retraining programs and creation of new socially useful job opportunities for those displaced by the transition to more eco-friendly societies.

Information and education

Believing it is a basic human right to have access to unbiased information about the quality of the environment in which we live,

Recognizing the risk that the media may become dominated by forces which perpetuate a world view that ignores cultural diversity and integrity,

Believing that only through wide dissemination of information on environmental and developmental issues will we be able to confront the challenges of environmental decline,

Aware that information concerning the environmental and health impact of military and industrial by-products is often classified as secret for national security or proprietary reasons,

We invite the media to join with us in promoting the principles of this Action Agenda.

We demand that the UN monitor all activities of governments that threaten the environment, including space and ocean probing, and make information about such activities known to the world community.

We will work to create and strengthen formal and informal information systems and exchanges that adhere to the principles of openness and inclusiveness, giving voice to the majority of citizens, of reporting on violations of human and environmental rights.

We recommend that all countries offer environmental education at the primary and secondary levels, including ecology and consumer education.

We will promote environmental ethics education in our schools and in informal learning settings with the purpose of promoting harmony between all living systems and solidarity among peoples.

We strongly support the establishment of a non-governmental organization whose mandate and cooperation on environmental emergencies and environmental rights would be similar to those of Amnesty International.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Realizing that there may be an attempt to create new institutions to manage the world's ecosystem based on the current "economic growth" model,

Believing that such institutions might not have as their primary objective the long-term sustainability of the Earth's species and ecosystems,

We call instead for the creation of a permanent gender-balanced UN Commission on Environment and Development (analogous to the UN Commission on Human Rights) to promote environmental awareness and to station ombudspersons in every region of the world, to receive and investigate NGO, group, and individual complaints about environmental hazards, maldevelopment, government, and private misuse of UN and international aid funds and violations of UN conventions, treaties, and international law. Its duties should include monitoring compliance and enforcing principles of an International Code of Environmental Conduct.

We call for improvement of prevailing staff gender ratios in the UN system, noting that only some 4% of policy-making positions are currently held by women. Equitable gender representation must be of equal importance with equitable geographic representation until gender parity is achieved.

We urge governments to increase their contributions to and support of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), which assists governments in environmental assessment, undertakes studies, training, and major environmental management tasks, and negotiates and facilitates international environmental law.

Its budget should be increased, to triple its current \$40 million a year.

We recommend that UNEP expand its efforts to benefit from the knowledge and experience of female staff members, consultants and its Senior Women's Advisory Group by actively pursuing a policy of gender balance in policy-making. It should require a women's focal point in every regional and outposted office of UNEP to provide information and funding and help empower women in environmental management.

We appeal to donor countries to increase their contributions to UNIFEM, the only multilateral fund established specifically to increase the flow of development resources to women in low income countries, so as to reach a level of \$150 million annually by the year 2000. These funds are essential if UNIFEM is to enhance its catalytic role in providing resources and empowerment to poor women.

We urge all UN agencies to increase their commitment to integrating women's perspectives at all levels and in all programs and policies.

We support the recommendations of a "swords into ploughshares" report by a UN study group on "Charting Potential Uses of Military Resources for Civilian Endeavors to Protect the Environment." It proposes developing mechanisms for transferring to environmental protection and development programs some of the world's vast military resources.

THE UN CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCED)

We pledge to lobby our national governments to include equal numbers of women, as well as representatives of indigenous peoples and grassroots organizations, in their delegations to UNCED Preparatory Committee meetings and to the June 1992 UN conference in Rio de Janeiro.

We will conduct briefings for UNCED participants and press them to incorporate our Women's Action Agenda 21 into UNCED's Earth Charter, Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and other UNCED documents.

We will distribute our Action Agenda widely to our governments, to non-governmental organizations, to multilateral agencies, business and industrial leaders, and to the formal and informal networks we maintain.

We will make subsequent recommendations regarding governmental and non-governmental contributions to the UNCED process, including implementation and monitoring of its decisions.

We call on world leaders attending the 1992 Earth Summit to sign a Global Climate

Change Convention (with industrialized countries making a minimum commitment to a 20% reduction of carbon dioxide by the year 2000 and a Convention on Biological Diversity). New agreements are also needed on the safeguarding of forests and the conservation of Antarctica.

We pledge to be present in large numbers at the Earth Summit and Global Forum in Rio de Janeiro. We remind the policy-makers that the women of the world intend to participate in decisions made at UNCED and after-ward about the fate of our Earth.

We submit these recommendations as a basic guide to our efforts to promote environmental and economic security now and on into the 21st century.