



The World March of Women 2010 Third International Action

Feminist International Solidarity in Action



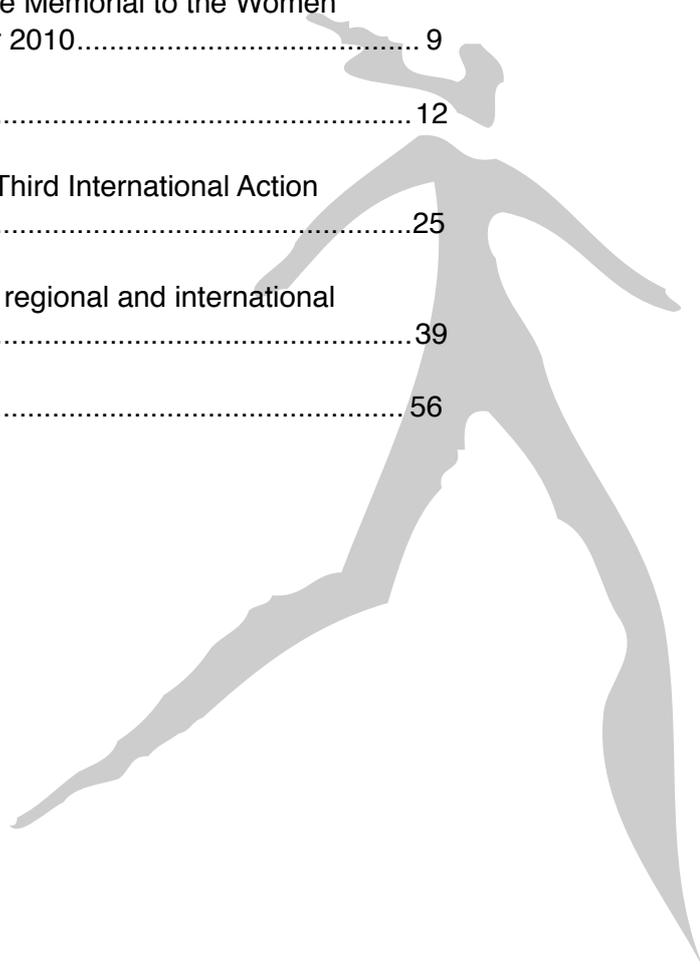


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Introduction

The World March of Women (WMW) is an international feminist movement rooted in grassroots organisation. We believe in challenging the root of our poverty and our oppression by building solidarity amongst women and men through action. The year 2010 marked our 3rd International Action. Thousands of women across the globe marched under the slogan... ***“Women on the March Until we All are Free!”***

The six texts represented here documents our 2010 Action.

Starting with the *Women’s Manifesto for Peace*, read out at the Closing Event in front of 20 000 people in the central square of Bukavu, South Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The declaration captured the values of the Global Women’s Charter for Humanity developed in 2005 linking the 2010 Action by denouncing the growing militarization of the world and its causes.

It follows with the very emotive *Message read at the Inauguration of the Memorial to the Women Martyrs of the War in Mwenga (DRC) 16th of October 2010*.

The third text *Why South Kivu, DRC?* – outlines the reasons for choosing to end the 2010 Action in a country that is still under siege and the reality facing the women in the DRC.

The fourth document - *Evaluation of the Closing Event of the 3rd International Action in Bukavu, South Kivu, DRC* - shares the learning’s and challenges faced organising such an enormous event, feminist solidarity in action!

The fifth document outlines the activities organised by the WMW National Coordinating Bodies and Participating Groups in over 76 countries around the world, on a local, national, regional and international level, over 220 days with an estimated participation of over 80 000 women and men.

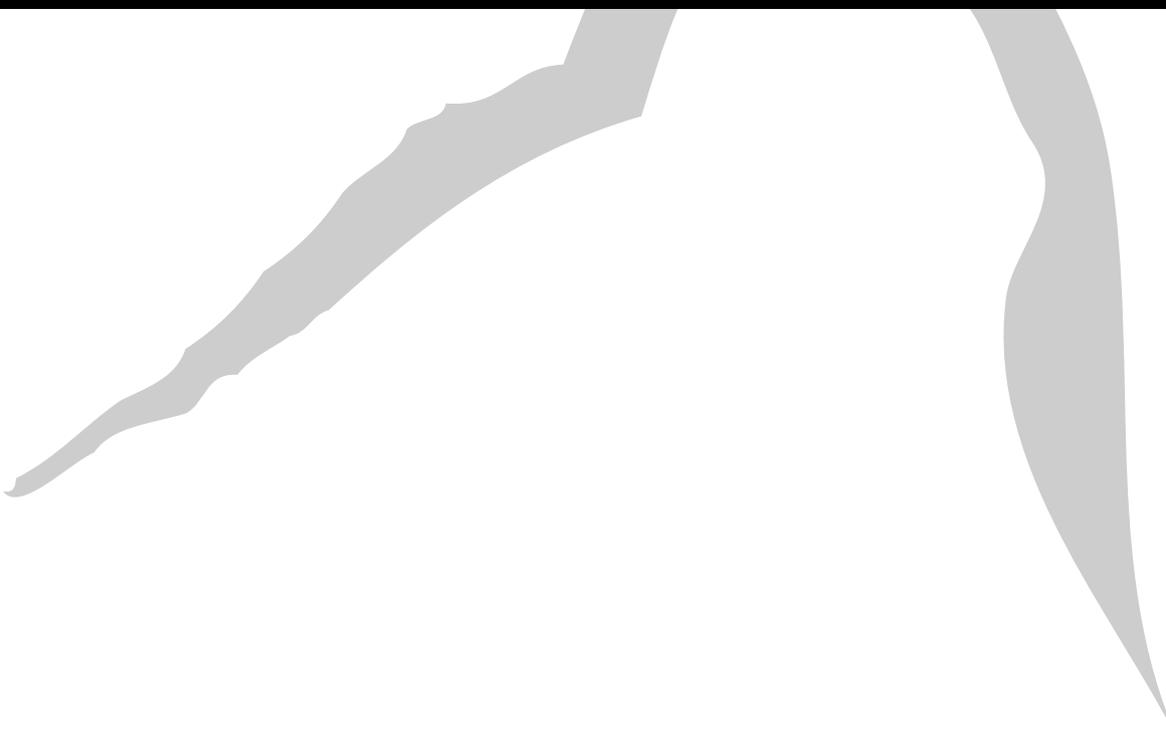
We end by looking at the current *Socio-politico-economic Context* and the challenges for our construction as a permanent feminist and anti-capitalist movement in preparation of our 8th International Meeting to be held in November 2011, in Quezon City, Philippines.

In feminist solidarity and struggle,

Nana Aicha-Cissé and Wilhelmina Trout
WMW International Committee members-Africa



Document 1



Women's Manifesto for Peace*

We, women who all over the world suffer the most from the cruel reality of war and who have seen militarization take over civilian life, our territories and our bodies, we have overcome fear and silence and are marching in the same places that have become battle fields, in order to unite our voices in the name of justice and peace.

The history of armed conflicts, genocides and repression is long. The language of violence, at the root of capitalism and patriarchy, and supported by transnational companies, mercenaries and paramilitary forces, brings about war. Some of these wars are present in our daily media, while others have long been forgotten. But the impact and consequences of them all are the same.

In different regions of the world our experiences and testimonies are similar. Women and girls are sexually harassed at military control posts, raped by groups of armed men, to be then rejected by their own communities. Women flee their homes, under a sky of bullets, carrying their belongings and their children on their shoulders, moving towards shelter or an unknown destination, far from their culture and their history, with the hopes of a new dawn. Women and girls are turned into weapons of war, the military target of armed groups. Women and girls are trapped into traffic or prostitution or never return, ending up on the list of victims of femicide.

We have more than enough reasons to organize ourselves and challenge the violence we face. We have had enough of the pretexts used to justify military conflicts such as ethnic or racial discrimination and criminalization of poverty or resistance to injustice.

We have the responsibility to silence weapons by speaking out against the cunning arguments of those in power trying to paralyze us by using false speeches about safety, humanitarian missions and the war against terrorism, while meanwhile, the arms industry, the installation of military bases and the privatization and destruction of natural resources keep growing.

In the *Women's Global Charter for Humanity* we declare that peace means much more than a lack of wars, it means ensuring the respect of our rights as inhabitants of this planet. With these goals and visions we keep marching, hands linked together with women and men, social movements and peoples of the world who are working to eliminate poverty and violence and to build a lasting peace.

*Declaration read out at the Closing Event of the 2010 Third International Action in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)



The World March of Women is a feminist international movement born through and based on action born in the year 2000. Our movement is unstoppable and is composed of women's and grass-root organizations in various countries throughout the world who are speaking out against and working to end the oppression, exploitation and discrimination that we experience.

Since March 8th, 2010, our steps have resonated and our voices have been heard in 52 countries. Tens of thousands women have taken part in national mobilizations based on four fields of action : women's economic autonomy, common good and public services, violence against women, peace and demilitarization.

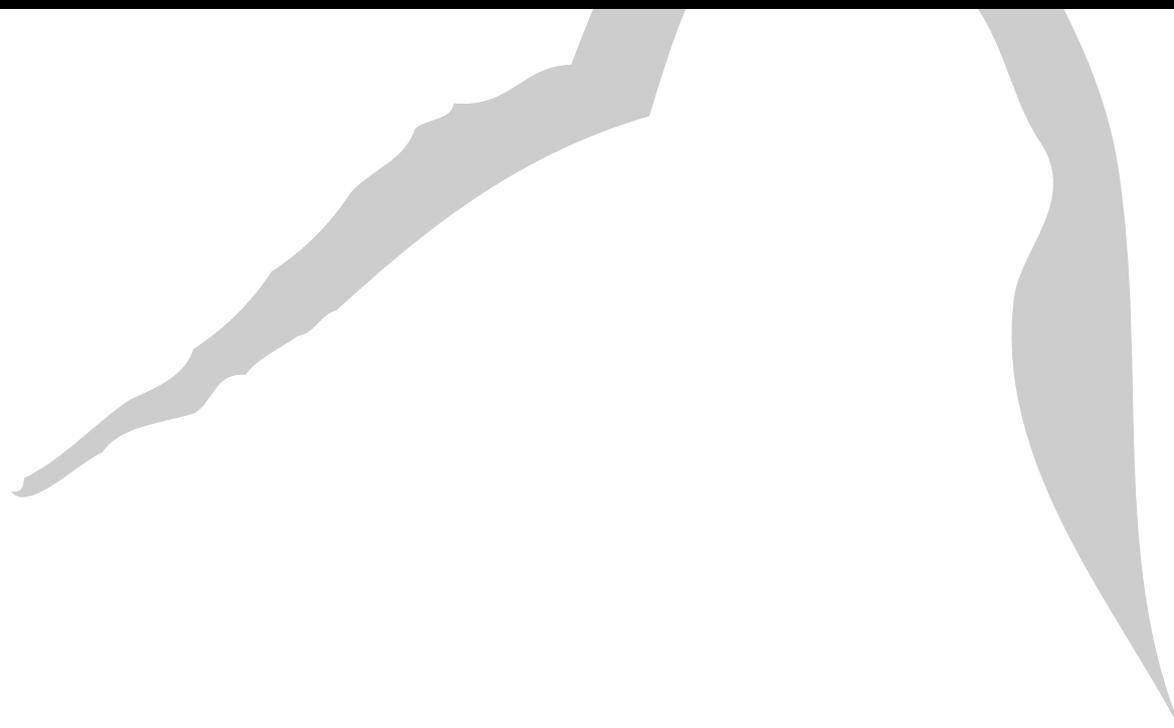
Today, October 17th 2010, we have arrived in Bukavu, in the province of Sud Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of Congo where horific acts of sexual violence within the context of war are commonplace. It is in solidarity with the women who resist daily the effects of armed conflicts that we have chosen to close our 3rd International Action in this country.

In 2000, our 1st International Action as the World March of Women, was one of the initiatives that led the Security Council of the United Nations, in its resolution 1325, to admit the impact that war has on women and to include women in conflict resolution processes. However, many governments and institutions sit idly by and let impunity reign.

We have continued and will continue to be in action. Our solidarity spreads to all women the world over who are struck by the violence of war and poverty. We will keep on moving, we won't remain silent, we are strengthening our commitment to continue marching, united by 5 values of the *Women's Global Charter for Humanity*: equality, freedom, justice, solidarity and peace.



Document 2





Message read at the Inauguration of the Memorial to the Women Martyrs of the War in Mwenga (DRC) 16 Oct. 2010

**Her Excellency The First Lady
Minister of Gender, Family and Children
Invited and Honored guests
Dear comrades here and from afar**

First of all, allow me to accomplish a task so painful: we are here to honor the memory of our Congolese partners and all innocent victims of armed conflicts around the world. In their memory and with your permission I beg a moment of silence. Thank you.

Today, this territory of martyrdom, Mwenga, I have the honor and the tough task of expressing, in front of this distinguished assembly, the happy and painful message of women throughout the world during this time.

Happy, because today is a big day for us, The World March of Women. For the third time, women from all continents are together in one place, to celebrate their solidarity, exchange their experiences and reflect in order to carry out common actions that can change women's lives and that thanks to this global movement of solidarity that is The World March of Women.

Today is a big day for us women, for sharing with all sectors of socio-political and cultural world, we revere the memory of 14 women, who along with a man, innocent hope of a family, a community, of a whole nation, were buried here in October 1999, still breathing the fresh air of this nature resplendent in Kivu, the design of people without dignity, without law, without faith or morals.

Honorable guests,

Goal #5A of the World March of Women justifies our presence here. I quote:
"Exert political pressure to bear on Governments and multilateral political institutions (e.g., the UN) so that they institute the changes necessary for improving the status of women and women's quality of life worldwide, including a disarmament and peaceful conflict resolution policy, and an end to all forms of impunity and corruption, the use of rape as a weapon of war, occupations, foreign military presence and the imposition of political / economic blockades."
And our "Women's Global Charter for Humanity," adopted on 10 December 2004 in Kigali, announced in its preamble the following:

“We Women have been marching a long time to denounce and demand an end to the oppression of women and end the domination, exploitation, egotism and unbridled quest for profit breeding injustice, war, conquest and violence. Our feminist struggles and those of our foremothers on every continent have forged new freedoms for us, our daughters and sons, and all the young girls and boys who will walk the earth after us. We are building a world where diversity is considered an asset and individuality a source of richness; where dialogue flourishes and where writing, song and dreams can flower. In this world, human beings are considered one of the most precious sources of wealth. Equality, freedom, solidarity, justice, and peace are its driving force. We have the power to create this world.”

In this Women’s Global Charter for Humanity we reaffirm that another world is possible, a world full of hope, of life, where life is good. The World March of Women confirmed, during the last years, its commitment to peace and their rejection of war and the militarization of society. We work to contribute to the promotion of a culture of peace, tolerance, nonviolence and respect for human rights, particularly those of women and children. Destroy the systems that perpetuate the fear of difference, which fuels the hatred of difference, and justify violence, and denounce the systems that produce exclusion and increase the domination, this is what inspires us.

Honorable guests Ladies and gentlemen

Peace goes beyond the absence of war or weapons in a society. Peace exists not only when women’s rights are recognized in society and when violence is eradicated, but also when all people have access to employment, sufficient income to feed, have a house, be clothed, have access to care, educate themselves and be protected in old age.

Peace exists when there is an independent system of justice and righteous sees that impunity is not perpetuated. Peace is based on an education that neglects the violence and macho behavior. It requires tolerance, dialogue, respect for diversity and solidarity. It is this form of peace that we want not only for the Democratic Republic of Congo, but for all people around the world. This is why:

- We condemn with all our energy these barbarous acts, which are a cruel violation of International Human Rights.
- We demand that those responsible are sought and that justice is done for these innocent souls, may they rest in peace, and their families to end their mourning that has lasted too long.
- We demand reparations for the victims’ families

Finally, we call to the conscience, reason and the hearts of everyone so that together we shout our slogan “Never Again!”

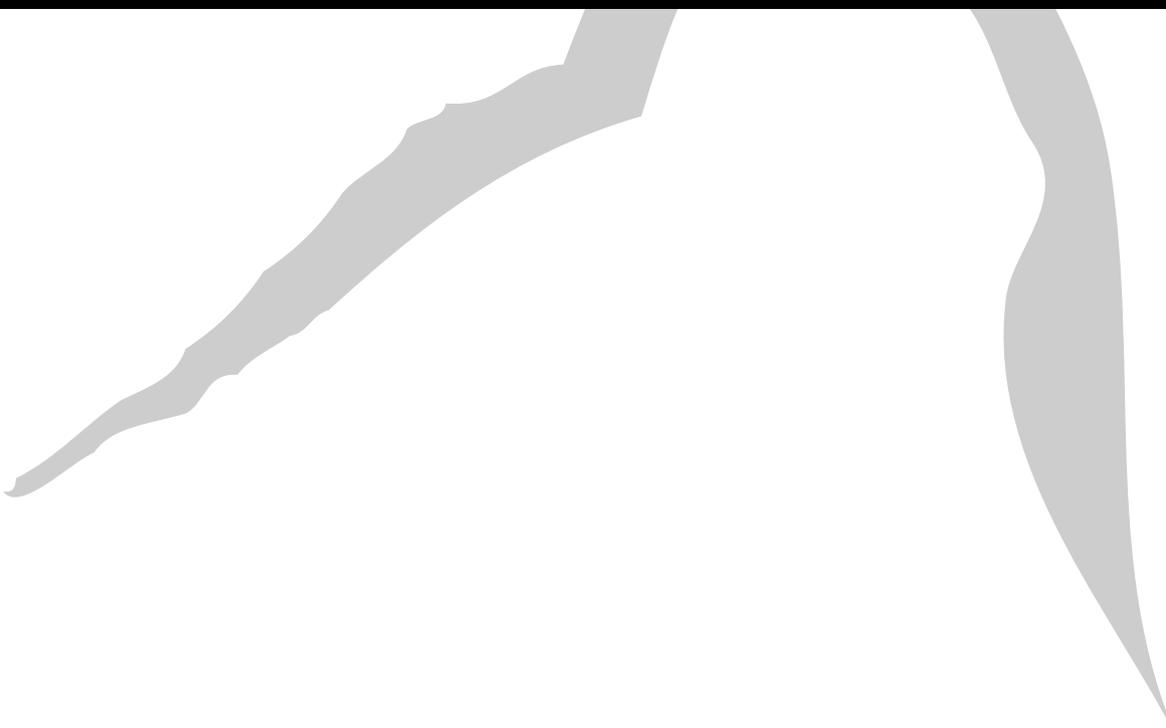
“Women of the world, women of the DRC, together, anything is possible!”

I thank you for your kind attention

Nana Aicha Cissé



Document **3**



Why South Kivu, DRC?*

October 2010

The third international action of the World March of Women (WMW) began on March 8, 2010. Since that date, national actions have been held in 52 countries, directly involving more than 38,000 women who have built national platforms around four action areas: women's economic autonomy, common good and public services, violence against women, and peace and demilitarization. In Pakistan, women came out on the streets, even after fundamentalists had exploded bombs to terrify the population. In Mali, women debated on peace-building and demonstrated in Gao, an area of armed conflict. In Greece, they held demonstrations against the persistence of high military expenditures during the financial crisis - at a time when other public spending is being cut, denouncing the lack of public policy in response to increasing unemployment levels (already high among women). In Brazil, more than 2,000 women marched for 10 days under the banner: "Women on the march until we are all free."

Over the course of 2010, three regional actions were organized, leading to debates and public demonstrations. In Asia, women from 10 countries met in Manila, Philippines, and demonstrated against the intervention, control and military presence of the United States in Southeast Asia. In Europe, women from 23 countries came together in Istanbul, Turkey, and proclaimed their demands under the slogan, "Women, Peace, Freedom." In the Americas, the WMW joined together with the Women's Social Movement against War and for Peace and other people's movements to raise awareness and to denounce the reality of the Colombian conflict and to protest in front of the Palenquero Military Base in Colombia, one of seven bases where the United States wants to set up operations in the interest of gaining geopolitical control of the region.

This different inspiring processes will come to a close in Bukavu, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). It was our decision to take action there, first as an expression of our solidarity with the women who resist day to day in a context of armed conflict, particularly women in Eastern DRC. But we are also traveling to Bukavu to continue our discussions and to reassert our ongoing denunciation of the growing militarization of the world: increasing militarization is a tool that bolsters the patriarchy in its ties to capitalism and racism.¹ During our action, we have come across numerous examples of the ways in which these ties are bound. In Korea, US military bases are surrounded by houses of prostitution, particularly involving migrant women from the Philippines and Russia. The bodies of women are used for the pleasure of the "visitors," who maintain a position of authority and control over the local populations. In Colombia, the paramilitaries and the army fuel teenage girls' illusion of being protected by a lover in uniform, to extract information or simply to have someone to prepare their meals. In Turkey, nationalists treat those who refuse military service as

* The preparatory text leading up to the Closing Event of the 2010 Third International Action, October 2010

1. Further information is available on the World March of Women website: <http://www.marchemondiale.org/themes/paix/en>.



enemies by threatening to rape their mothers. Recognizing the links between economic exploitation, racist and sexist violence, which affect the lives of millions of women around the world, as illustrated by these examples, is the fundamental basis for identifying direct alternatives.

The DRC is home to a number of local women's organizations. However, dialogue between them is complicated: the country is vast, face-to-face meetings are very costly, and the problems are many. These problems are consequence of armed conflicts, which have multiple repercussions on society, creating tensions and serious violation of human rights. The women's movement is not exempt from these issues.

The women of the DRC have proposals for their country, rooted in their daily struggles. Our aim is to strengthen them so that their work may come to fruition, ensuring a life of justice, liberty and equality for women and for the entire population. One of the expected results of our closing action in Bukavu is the gathering of women from the different provinces of the DRC, to dialogue on the subject of a platform of their national demands. The women of the DRC will meet to find ways of working together and to build a National Coordinating Body of the WMW as permanent movement.

The conflicts in the DRC cannot be resolved without taking account of its neighboring countries. We are confident that the joint work of women's organizations in the countries of the Great Lakes Region of Africa will create a solid basis for dialogue and for unity among the peoples of the region. Following the WMW's International Action in 2000, five coalitions of women's groups in Burundi, the DRC (North and South Kivu) and Rwanda decided to work together for peace in the Great Lakes Region, via the involvement of women. Thus was born COCAFEM-GL (Collective of Associations working for the Promotion of Women in the Great Lakes Region of Africa). In 2000, they adopted a shared platform to demand:

- "The recognition of women as partners in the pursuit of peace in the sub-region of the Great Lakes of Africa;
- "The establishment of mechanisms to identify arms marketing networks, and to prevent and put an end to the conflicts ravaging the sub-region of the Great Lakes of Africa;
- "That countries which hide behind economic interests in order to lay waste to the sub-region of the Great Lakes of Africa be told '**Enough!**';
- "The establishment of appropriate mechanisms to condemn and punish all crimes committed in the sub-region of the Great Lakes of Africa;
- "The adoption of debt cancellation measures for socioeconomic rehabilitation programs in the countries of the sub-region of the Great Lakes of Africa, without the imposition of additional conditions;

- “A revision of national and international legislation and the development of enforcing mechanisms, with the aim of eliminating all gender-based inequality;
- “Consideration of AIDS prevention as the top priority in the sub-region of the Great Lakes of Africa.”

This platform can be used as a starting point and a reference for women from other countries. We hope that our action will also be an occasion for meetings between women from the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi, as well as from the Central African Republic, Uganda and Kenya, where a new National Coordinating Body of the WMW is already very active and engaged on the side of the poorest women.

In Bukavu, we will also be exchanging experiences among women living in other countries and struggling against different forms of militarization. This will be an opportune time to engage in more in-depth analyses, taking as a starting point the demands and commitments that we defined for our four action areas, particularly on the topic of peace and demilitarization, during the 7th International Meeting of the WMW (see appendix).

The following analysis is both a view from outside and the expression of the lessons that we, the activists of the WMW, are learning in sharing struggles and debates with our Congolese sisters. This text was developed to nourish our debates in Bukavu and elsewhere, particularly in countries where simultaneous actions of solidarity will be taking place on October 17, 2010.

The text explains the WMW’s vision at the international level and is no substitute for the development of a national platform in the DRC, nor for updates of the platform of the women of the Great Lakes Region. It focuses on three key issues: preventing and fighting violence against women, the gradual withdrawal of Monusco troops and the role of the Congolese army, and the self-determination of the Congolese people with respect to the use of the natural resources of their territory. It is supplemented by the appended text prepared by the Committee for the Abolition of Third World Debt (CADTM), one of the WMW’s allied organizations, on the issue of ending debt in the DRC.

Violence against women

Sexual violence has become so widespread during the conflict in the DRC that violence against women has even labeled one of the characteristic features of this war. Massive gang rapes of women and young girls have been reported in Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Liberia, the Balkans, Uganda and Sudan. But in the DRC, gang rape is used systematically and by all of the armed players, as a weapon of war.

As is always the case with sexual violence, it is very difficult to report on testimonies given, and the data are invariably underestimated. The United Nations reported 27,000 cases of rape in the DRC in 2006. The International Rescue Committee recorded 40,000 rapes in the province of South Kivu between 2003 and 2008. More recently, reports on a single attack



in the territory of Walikale, North Kivu, on the night of July 30, estimate that more than 300 women were raped, some of them more than once.

A study of women treated at Panzi Hospital in Bukavu paints a picture of the sexual violence taking place in South Kivu². These are women of all ages and all ethnic groups, mostly from rural areas. The majority of the rapes were perpetrated by men in uniform, in gang rape situations, near or even inside the homes of the victims, at night.

The attackers come to pillage, and rape the women to subjugate the communities so they do not react or report them. Another purpose of rape is to disorganize community life, to force communities to displace or to agree to work under slave-labor conditions.

The reported attacks are frightening: insertion of foreign objects in the woman's vagina is a common practice, such as firearms shot off inside the woman's body. Fathers are forced to rape their daughters; brothers are forced to rape their sisters. Young women are kidnapped and used as sex slaves until the community pays for their release.

Women arrive at Panzi Hospital after having contacted NGOs or women's organizations. Among the women admitted to the hospital, 37.4% requested support three years after having been victims of violence. A number of them are there because they require genital or pelvic reconstruction. Stigmatization of raped women is very strong, either by their communities or by their own husbands, who then abandon them for fear of retaliation.

The study also shows a sharp rise in rape by civilians; this demonstrates how sexual violence against women has become commonplace.

A number of women's groups and NGOs are working to prevent violence against women. The South Kivu Provincial Commission to Prevent Sexual Violence (CPLVS) brings together 155 local NGOs and more than 10 international NGOs that support this work. According to one of the women receiving their support, "the benefactors provide aid in multiple forms: to boost our morale, to facilitate economic activity once we have returned to our communities, to pay for medical treatment for sick women who have been raped, and to support the legal case of victims who lodge a complaint."³ But their efforts are insufficient in the face of the scale of the problem. Panzi Hospital, for example, has 334 beds, including 200 for cases of sexual violence – and is prepared to admit 10-12 new cases each day. However, the actual demand is much higher. Other general hospitals receive no support, despite their closer proximity to victims and their ability to provide these women with treatment within 72 hours of an attack.

Resources must be substantially increased at all levels – from contact with the women in their communities to first conversations with specialized professionals in maisons d'écoute et

2. Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and Oxfam International: "Now, the World is without Me": An Investigation of Sexual Violence in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Mimeo, April 2010.

3. Thaddée Hyawe-Hinyi: Sud-Kivu: les femmes violées rapportent gros aux Ong. Grands Lacs Agence de Presse (www.syfia-grands-lacs.info, French only).

d'alerte (specialized support and alert centers) and at medical centers. The services performed by women's organizations in the region of South Kivu and in the DRC should be reinforced, and the work of INGOs has to be strongly rooted on the needs of local organizations. In addition, services provided by the Congolese State must be created and strengthened, taking into account the experience and the work of women's groups on the ground.

Aid for women suffering from violence must be provided in such a way that they are not seen simply as the passive recipients, but as active protagonists of their own lives. As largely as possible, women should not be limited to the role of the victim in situations of armed conflict. On the contrary, they should become collective actresses for social change, so that they can all live free from all forms of violence.

Organizations from regions in conflict – including the Great Lakes Region – are actively working to promote Resolution 1325, adopted by the United Nations Security Council in 2000, on the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building⁴. Clause 10 “calls on all parties in armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict.” A WMW collective in Gaspésie, Quebec, proposed a campaign to make enforcement of Clause 10 of Resolution 1325 legally binding, with associated deadlines⁵.

All of this work is both necessary and important. However, we must bear in mind that, although the Security Council has adopted six resolutions (between 2000 and 2009) on the participation of women in conflict resolution and the prevention of the violence that they endure (Resolutions 1325, 1612, 1674, 1820, 1882 and 1888), armed conflicts persist, with great losses of human life and tremendous suffering among the civilian populations, including sexual violence against women, reducing them to impoverishment and exile.

An interpretation that limits women's participation in conflict resolution to a simple increase in the number of women in United Nations military missions must be avoided. Today, women account for 8% of participants in UN peacekeeping operations, with the goal of attaining 20% by 2014. Images of women in blue berets are now part of the latest information campaigns concerning the participation of women in conflict resolution, published on the websites of multilateral organizations.

Unfortunately, there is no direct link between the United Nations resolutions and the reduction of the number of conflicts or of the loss of human life that they cause. Despite this fact, it is not uncommon to hear statements that armed combatants kidnap and rape because they are unaware of the United Nations treaties and resolutions that hold such actions to be serious crimes.

4. Online access: http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf.

5. “Bâtir un monde de paix,” available on www.femmesgim.qc.ca (French only).



At the intergovernmental level, documents, agreements and projects, recognize the need for human and financial resources (as direct support to the population), particularly when offensive actions are being launched. These resources are, however, residual, secondary to bolstering military action to disarm rebel groups. Our objective is to prevent violence. What warning and intelligence systems should be established to monitor the movements of rebel groups and to prevent their unexpected arrival in the different communities? The population has its own systems, such as sleeping in the bush at the times of worst conflict. The experience of the NGOs and the women's groups working on the ground, in direct contact with women in their communities, is essential to the creation of such a warning system. The experiences of other countries can also be looked at, to suggest what may or may not be successful in preventing massive rapes. In Colombia, for example, an Early Warning System was created to provide organized, local information and to better initiate rapid preventive responses and protect communities in situations of armed conflict. On the one hand, this type of mechanism shows the importance of the participation of grassroots networks and local organizations in the prevention of violence. On the other, this type of initiative may also be in vain, if the information thus obtained is used for strictly military purposes.

Disarmament, sovereignty and lasting peace: the role of Monusco and of the national army (FADRC).

Based on the testimonials of women and their assessments of conflicts and peace efforts affecting their own lives, we have defined a critical reexamination of the presence of UN peacekeeping forces in conflict situations as one of the aims of our action. This critique takes account of the ineffectiveness of this military presence at achieving peace and underscores the impunity enjoyed by the United Nations forces when they themselves perpetrate violence against women.

The WMW is present in 9 countries where United Nations Stabilization Missions are currently taking place (there are WMW National Coordinating Bodies in Haiti, Western Sahara, the Ivory Coast, the DRC, Sudan, Cyprus, India/Pakistan and, most recently, a contact group in Afghanistan). Our sisters in Haiti, in particular, have launched ongoing critical discussions of the presence of UN troops (MINUSTAH), which they identify as a force of occupation.

In the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, during a workshop in October 2009, in preparation for our action in Bukavu, we formulated the goal of the actions of the WMW regarding the conflict: for the Democratic Republic of the Congo to experience lasting peace, beginning with the demilitarization of Eastern DRC and the gradual and concerted disengagement of the Monusco (former Monuc).

The Monuc (United Nations Mission in the Congo) established its presence in the country in 2000. Conflict in the region persists, as does the use of violence against women as a weapon of war. The Mission's budget for the period from July 1st, 2009, to June 30, 2010, was US\$1.35 billion, nearly as much as the budget of the government of the DRC

(approximately US\$1.8 billion in 2009). Its presence has also affected the local economy, with the specific effects of distorting salaries in US\$ and degrading public roads by the intensive circulation of large vehicles. Not to mention the fact that most expenditure, such as those for fuel, are made in Uganda, Monuc's logistical center, and that the Monuc funding is managed by external financial institutions.

The government of the DRC requested that withdrawal of Monuc be completed in the year commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the country's independence. The result of the negotiations was an agreement on the reduction in the troops by 2000 soldiers and the creation of a new mission, Monusco – an acronym which now incorporates the word “stabilization” – which formally recognizes the role of the national government and the country's sovereignty. The annual budget has not decreased. The approved budget for July 1st, 2010, to June 30, 2011, is US\$1.369 billion. This new mission is to include a maximum of 17,745 military personnel, 760 military observers, 391 police staff and 1,050 members of police units including judicial and penitentiary staff, in addition to civilian personnel⁶.

Our sisters in the Congo consider that the withdrawal of the United Nations forces cannot take place without the reinforcement of the Congolese national army. This is a complex issue: there are varying opinions held by the different groups participating in the World March of Women regarding the role of national armies. Our shared text on peace and demilitarization asserts that “the military institution contributes in various ways to the training of young men to occupy the dominant position in society (in the hierarchy of social relationships between the sexes).” We consider the army to be one of the most patriarchal organizations in all societies, and one of those in which the inequalities that characterize relations between men and women are most flagrant: hierarchy, domination, and the cult of the power of the “leader,” obedience, physical violence, lack of critical thought, exclusive male circles, etc.

Nevertheless, the analyses performed by women's groups in the DRC have concluded that the Republic of Congo needs to complete the integration of the different existing military factions into a national army of professionals, provided with the necessary resources to protect the country and to preserve national sovereignty. The problem raised by our Congolese sisters is not only specific to the political context in the DRC. Questions about the creation and reinforcement of national armies, or even the problems entailed in the hypothesis of its dissolution, are all tied to issues of territoriality and sovereignty. In Haiti, for example, there are women's groups that assert that President Aristide's dissolution of the army was a problematic decision. In the matter of international and geopolitical interests occupying their land, the presence of foreign military troops continues, partially justified in the eyes of international public opinion by the absence of a Haitian national army.

Amongst us, activists of the WMW, our commitment is to support the work of Congolese women to obtain a better organization of the national army – with remuneration of the troops, transparency, accountability and punishment in the case of commission of acts of violence, to struggle to prevent the use of violence against women as a weapon of war

6. Information available on: www.un.org/french/documents/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/C.5/64/19&TYPE=&referer=/french/&Lang=E.



and as a commonplace practice in society – as well as against the militarization of civilian life. Under their proposal, the army would not be involved in education, health, social and humanitarian aid, or mining, which should be provided by civilians.

The money spent by the Monusco should remain within the country, not just to equip the army, but also to provide public services such as education and healthcare, and the creation of infrastructures, communications and transportation.

Channels for negotiations, integration and reconciliation must remain open at all times, particularly with neighboring countries. At the borders, the different peoples are constantly involved in cultural and economic exchanges, and even emotional bonds. Dialogue, justice, and the existence of material conditions necessary for a decent life, are the basis for stable security.

Nature: the common good of the people

The Congo is a very rich country. For example, it has reserves of gold, diamonds, copper, cobalt and coltan (combination of colombite and tantalite). Refined coltan is a high-performance electrical conductor used in cellular telephones, laptop computers and other electronic equipment. The Congo possesses 64% of the global reserves in coltan, with mines concentrated in the Kivu Region.

58.9% of the DRC's territory is covered by the second largest tropical forest in the world, the Congo Basin Forest. The State owns 80% of the forest, which is the main source of subsistence (food, energy, shelter and medicine) for more than 60% of the population. The Congo is also rich in drinking water.

Oil revenue accounted for 8% of the total revenue in the 2009 budget. During the first half of 2010, oil revenue has already exceeded the total for 2009, thanks to the increase in the price per barrel. In the fields of mining and hydrocarbons, the revenue collected, including bonuses and holdings, totaled 10% of total revenue. Project funding provided another 18%.

The international and local press cites the greed of all other countries for the Congo's riches, which has been a source of conflict and suffering for the Congolese people living in conditions of destitution. This greed was the key feature in the history of the country's colonization by Belgium and in its relations with the United States during the Cold War. At the time of the fiftieth anniversary of its independence, debt has become the new form of colonialism.

The agreement concluded between the DRC and China in 2008 provides for copper and cobalt mining concessions and the investment of the necessary resources in mines and infrastructures, in exchange for a total of US\$9 billion. The IMF pressured the Congolese government to revise this agreement, asserting that its stipulations would serve to increase the country's level of debt. Apparently, the operation was to reduce risks for Northern creditors; nothing was said about the people's rights to public services, sacrificed in the

name of debt repayment. In 2009, when the economic crisis was ravaging the world, the DRC paid \$170 million in interest on the illegitimate debt contracted by its former dictator, Mobutu. The 2009 revision of the agreement decreased the amount China's investments, but retained the concession for the extraction of 10 million tons of copper and 600,000 tons of cobalt, as initially stipulated.

It was precisely at the time of these negotiations that European (particularly German and British) and US governments and companies, along with multilateral bodies such as the OECD, intensified debates and initiatives on the subject of transparency in the exploitation and trade of natural resources.

These initiatives took the form of mechanisms designed to trace the origins of minerals, to certify them as not involving any armed groups and as being produced under minimum working conditions and with minimal environmental impact. Control of the mining production chain is one of the main sources of funding for armed players, via their direct exploitation of mines, recovery of a percentage from workers and small-scale miners through transportation, and informal tolls charged on arms-controlled roads. Estimates show that armed groups gathered revenue of more than US\$180 million in 2009, thanks to the mining trade. In the DRC in 2008, for every 5,000 kg of gold produced, only 122.5 kg were exported legally.

The initiatives of Northern countries and companies have been developed with varying degrees of interaction with the Congolese government and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)⁷, a permanent body focusing on integration and the promotion of peace, working in partnership with the United Nations, the African Union and other States.

In the United States, liberal NGOs like the *Center for American Progress*, the *Enough Project* and the feminist group *V-Day* have exerted substantial pressure for the development of a regulation guaranteeing "conflict-free" mineral products.

The *Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act*, signed by President Barack Obama on July 21, 2010, includes an amendment on minerals and the conflict in Congo. Beginning in 2011, companies will need to state whether or not they use conflict minerals and, if so, in the case of minerals from the DRC, they will need to set out the measures that they have taken to ensure that the minerals are produced legally, without the interference of armed groups. To this end, USAID has assumed responsibility for developing a strategy for addressing the relationship between armed groups, conflict minerals and human rights.

The Congolese State's capacity to respond to these initiatives and pressures, and its need to assert its territorial integrity, are at the heart of the issue. On September 13th, 2010, following the announcement by President Joseph Kabila during his visit to Goma, the Minister of Mines announced the suspension of concessions for all mining activities in North

7. The Member States of the ICGLR are: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.



Kivu, South Kivu and Maniema.

In turn, the NGOs asked companies to comply with a new system: the *trace-audit-certify process*, which requires that companies be capable of tracing the source and routing of the minerals that they use and of certifying that a credible, independent verification has taken place, so as to provide consumers with access to electronic items that are not the products of armed conflict.

But the fact of a verification system being external in no way ensures that it will be accurate and reliable. Around the world, USAID is known as a tool of US imperialism. Nor the mining transnationals that perform these verifications on the ground are models of transparency or respect for human rights. The Congolese people – particularly women, who suffer the harshest consequences of war and violence, aggravated by the exploitation of natural riches – would be far more capable of assessing the mineral production process in the DRC. Congolese women are the ones who should be talking about the issues surrounding the presence of armed groups and foreign companies in these activities and who should measure the environmental and social impact of this phenomenon. But or women’s experiences and proposals cannot fit in the accounting forms of major companies.

Certification has become also a problem in terms of ensuring the DRC people’s access to the forest, since the launch of REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) ongoing projects. REDD mechanisms are based on the absurd idea that trading “pollution rights” could offset the model of consumption and waste practiced by the countries of the North. Even if, at the outset, it is supposed that these projects will be financed by public resources and the World Bank, a financial structure is being created for future carbon markets, based on the transformation of forests into commodities. The objective of this policy is not to resolve the problem of climate change, but rather to manage environmental disaster such as to optimize the profits of international investors.

Furthermore, private forest reserve projects are likely to aggravate forced displacements, violations of the rights of native peoples, and the barring of the people’s access to the forests. For example, the Pygmies of the Ituri Forest, in Northeastern Congo, are now struggling against their displacement by the savage exploitation of the woods and by the planting of cacao in areas where they have been the first inhabitants. The forests in which the native peoples have developed their way of life and their knowledge are under threat of becoming environmental commodities on an international market fed by REDD policies.

Land grabbing by foreign investors is growing, as a result of major projects to establish African palm plantations for the production of biofuel. Chinese and Italian companies have already announced plans for enormous plantations covering 70,000 to 1 million hectares.

For further discussion

The reality in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is far more complex than can possibly be indicated in a text written by women living in other parts of the world. However, we

believe that an outside perspective can be useful, as this viewpoint is impregnated with our own life experiences and struggles, which have many similarities with those of our sisters in the Congo – because patriarchy, capitalism and racism remain hegemonic systems around the world today.

We must act on the root causes of violence against women. We believe this will first require the resolution of armed conflict and a transition to the use of natural riches by the people.

Women's groups in the DRC, non-profit associations, NGOs and grassroots groups are working hard to support women who are the victims of violence and to fight against perpetrators' impunity. As many of various social movements active in the Congo, they have proposals for their country to advance in this direction. We hope that our time in Bukavu will be marked by solidarity with women and with all those, women and men alike, fighting to free all territories and all people from oppression and violence, for the establishment of justice and peace.

Appendix: Demands and commitments of the WMW concerning peace and demilitarization

In struggling against militarization, we demand:

- The reduction of military expenses, i.e. the reduction of public budgets used for the purchase of arms and installation of military bases, maintenance of armies and their infrastructures; The end of incentives for the fabrication and commerce of arms;
- The immediate scrapping of foreign military base agreements;
- The withdrawal of troops in countries where conflict has ceased or where military agreements have come to an end;
- The end to the criminalization of protest, social movements, poverty and immigration, justified through the ideological manipulation of the fight against terrorism and in favor of national security, in order to legitimize the use of war and of terror itself to control women, peoples and natural resources;
- The punishment of the perpetrators of violence against women in situations of conflict (armies, paramilitary forces, guerrilla groups, the UN's blue berets, as well as husbands or relatives);
- The participation of women (with an equal importance to that of men) in conflict prevention and management, peacekeeping and post-conflict construction processes.

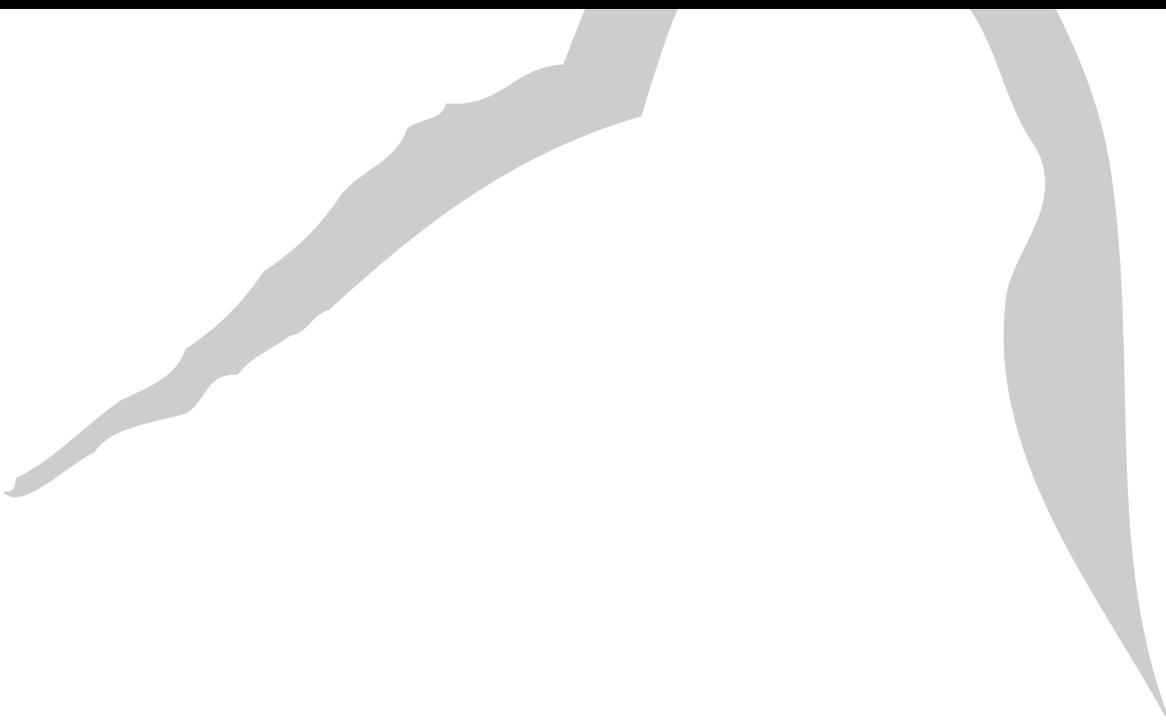


And we commit ourselves to:

- Denounce the role of the arms industry in the continuation of conflicts and militarization and in the manipulation of government policies to this end, as well as governments and transnational companies who profit economically from conflict (control of natural resources – oil, water, minerals, among others) on their own territory or on others' territories;
- Carry out a wide process of popular education to educate women around themes such as military base agreements, the natural resources of territories / countries, economic and political reasons for conflict, the participation of countries that support or produce wars, and the arms industry, etc. Also to prepare women to contribute to breaking the code of silence around sexual and other forms of violence in conflict zones;
- Disseminate the reality of countries and regions in conflict, including 'hidden' conflicts around the world, and the extreme double violence (rape and rejection) suffered by women in these situations by disseminating textual and audiovisual information (as films, photos and audios) and organizing events and other activities, with the objective of the WMW acting as an Alert / Solidarity Network that is able to deepen reflection and motivate urgent actions alongside and in support of those caught up in the conflict;
- To critically re-examine the presence of UN 'peacekeeping' forces in situations of conflict – based on the testimonies of women victims and peace protagonists – in the light of their passivity, inefficiency in bringing about peace and the impunity they enjoy as perpetrators of violence against women.



Document 4





Evaluation of the Closing Event of the Third International Action in Bukavu, South Kivu, DRC*

This document is the result of an evaluation carried out by the WMW International Committee and the International Secretariat between November and December 2010. The evaluation is supplemented by documents sent prior to the Closing Event: the debate text “Why South Kivu, DRC?” and the “Women’s Manifesto for Peace”; as well as the relevant parts of reports from the International Committee meetings in Bukavu (prior to, from 9th -12th October, and after the Event, on the 18th October), which related to mobilization, program, communication, and evaluation; and the Newsletter “The March In Action” No.7. This evaluation is organized in six parts:

- A first look at our achievements;
- Challenges in organizing a large-scale event in a country in conflict;
- The relationship between local, national, and international dynamics;
- The relationship between movements, political parties, governments, the United Nations, and large international NGOs;
- Logistical lessons and challenges;
- Follow-up.

A first look at our achievements

The Closing Event of the Third International Action took place in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, from the 13th to 17th October, and consisted of a series of activities: panels on the WMW’s four Action Areas; a solidarity visit to Mwenga with the inauguration of a memorial; a day of exchanging experiences between the WMW from different regions of the world and Congolese women; a food sovereignty and artistic fair; tree planting; and a Women’s March for Peace.

The WMW international delegation was made up of 144 women from 40 countries from the 5 regions of the world. Along with delegations organized by allied movements, we were more than 220 women from 41 countries, the majority from African countries. The largest delegations were from Burundi and Kenya, followed by the European delegation, made up of 10 countries. The Congolese Diaspora was present in the Belgian, French, and English

* Prepared by the International Committee and the International Secretariat, December 2010

delegations. The delegation from the Americas was the smallest, made up of 5 countries, while Asia was represented by an IC member from Pakistan, and the Arab World by a Palestinian sister.

The mobilizing of such a large number of international delegates for an action in a country that is considered to 'post-conflict' is the first achievement of the Closing Event. The trip to Bukavu was very expensive for the WMW's National Coordinating Bodies / Participating Groups, and it was due to a lack of financial resources that we 'lost' a number of delegates who were registered to participate, such as from Bangladesh and India. The stories of violence and risks in the DRC with which we are bombarded all the time by the commercial media and even by people from the humanitarian agencies contributed to creating a sense of insecurity. Some sisters and interpreters preferred not to go, but many others overcame their fear and travelled to Bukavu to show their solidarity with the DRC women, to listen to their stories, and to share their experiences.

The fact that the international delegations were well organized is another achievement. This facilitated the work of the IS. We think particularly of the Kenyan and Burundian caravans, whose mobilization and participation are other important achievements, especially the sisters from Kenya who traveled by bus for more than two days each way. As part of their preparation, they organized a large process of information-sharing, fundraising and lobbying that supported grassroots women, many of them indigenous women, in the achievement of personal goals – seemingly simple, but of huge importance to them – such as receiving identity documents necessary for requesting a passport.

Solidarity with women who live in conflict areas was also felt / demonstrated in the simultaneous actions organized by 10 WMW National Coordinating Bodies (NCBs), in dates close to the dates of the Bukavu Event. In some countries, actions took place in more than one city.

The Closing Event of the WMW 3rd International Action was also a huge mobilization success in the DRC. There, our sisters spoke of "engoument" – the World March of Women 'fever' – which all women wanted to feel a part of. The numbers say it all: on the 9th September, the last day for national registration, there were already 995 women registered, representing all 11 DRC provinces. Remembering that at the beginning of Event preparations we imagined an event for 500 people.

Finally, all 3.000 registration cards that were printed were used, and so we estimate that 3.000 people, the majority of whom were women, participated in the panels and other activities that took place in the Ateneo Ibanda (13th – 16th October). This includes 250 registered journalists, a combination of national press and international correspondents. We also estimate that 1.000 people participated in the visit to Mwenga, as well as around 2.000 local people who joined the visitors. Furthermore, an estimated 20.000 women (and men), from diverse political currents and social sectors, participated in the Women's March for Peace on the 17th October, which concluded the Closing Event of the 3rd International Action.



Another visible achievement is the large participation of Congolese women in the various debates that took place. During the panels, many women denounced their horrendous experiences, as well as naming the perpetrators of violence against women and the interests behind this violence. During the day reserved for the exchanging of experiences (16th October), women from different ethnicities spoke in their local languages. This shows us that the women felt that they were in a safe space which gave them the confidence to express themselves or even to disagree with us.

The panels were also opportunities to present the vision of WMW with regard to our Action Areas, combining our analyses and experiences. Furthermore, they were moments to repeat over and over that the March is a permanent movement and that our strength comes from the self-organization of grassroots women. The fact that, during both the panels and the sharing of experiences on the 16th, many Congolese women repeated our analyses and connected them to their own concrete experiences, permits us to confirm another of the Closing Event's achievements: the WMW became a much better known as a movement. A strong affirmation of the understanding of WMW as a movement is the fact that DRC women no longer accept being considered victims, but rather seek to affirm themselves ever more as protagonists in the struggle against the causes of violence.

Another achievement of the Event was the support we received from allied movements and organizations, such as CADTM (Committee for the Abolition of Third World Debt), the Belgian Peace and Solidarity Caravan, CECI (Center for International Studies and Cooperation in Canada), ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation) and WILPF (*Women's International League for Peace and Freedom*), all of which had their own delegations who joined our activities. Their presence was important to us, not only because of their participation and political contributions, but also for the trust that they demonstrated in our organizational capacity.

In relation to the DRC government, the women from the country believe that they are now in a better position to present their demands and to negotiate. For example, in preparation of our visit to Mwenga, the organization "Regroupement des femmes Rega de Mwenga" held a meeting on the 13th September 2010 to present the DRC Prime Minister with a series of demands related to the massacre of women who were buried alive there. Our Event permitted the dissemination of the demand for a special international tribunal to address these crimes (which were committed prior to 2002 by perpetrators who, because of signed peace agreements, it is not possible to bring to trial). The visit to Mwenga with a stop in Kasika on the way, in addition to being very well attended, received good coverage from national and international press, which helped to bring these events back to public attention and to support the demand for justice, in addition to denouncing current insecurity in the area.

Finally, the Event resulted in permanent benefits for the cities of Bukavu and Mwenga. Some examples: several streets in Bukavu and the access road to the Ateneo Ibanda were leveled and paved; the Ateneo Ibanda, a primary and secondary school with 7.325 students, was painted, the bathrooms were renovated and new ones were built; the access road to

Mwenga and the streets in the community were leveled; construction began on two multi-functional centers for women, one in Bukavu and another in Mwenga.

All of these achievements give us the courage to reflect on our weaknesses and the challenges that we faced in the DRC. This Event demanded a large dose of audacity but at the same time, it expressed our level of maturity as an international feminist movement and the accumulation of our 12 years of collective history.

Challenges in organizing a large-scale event in a country in conflict

The current global context is marked by growing militarization and repression of social and political activism. In April 2010, paramilitaries attacked an international caravan that was taking humanitarian aid to the Autonomous Community of Triqui in Mexico, murdering a widely respected activist for indigenous women's rights, Bety Cariño, and the Finnish activist Tyri Jaakola. At the end of May 2010, the Israeli government attacked the Freedom Flotilla, in which more than 700 activists participated, resulting in the deaths of 10 of them. These events heightened the atmosphere of fear around our Event.

The WMW's experience in organizing activities in countries in conflict is restricted to some NCBs, some activists, or in the participation in counter-summits organized by the anti-globalization movement, when the territory surrounding official conferences is militarized. However, these experiences are fragmented and are not consolidated within our movement. For us at the IS, it was important to have been part of the organization of the Gathering of Women and Peoples of the Americas against Militarization in Colombia in August 2010. Safety is also a huge and complicated issue in Colombia and the narratives about risk provoke more fear. During this Gathering we learnt from the experiences of our sisters from the Women Against War and for Peace social movement in relation to how we should act in context of open conflict.

Security was the first and permanent challenge that we faced. DRC is presented as a post-conflict country, but we all know about the continued presence of armed groups in the country's rural areas and about the brutal violence suffered by local people. Therefore we had to be careful about where we could go, or not go, and how to get there. In this context, it is difficult to define the limit between caution and paranoia. Some European governments sent letters to national delegates stating that they would not be responsible for their safety in the country and in the South Kivu region. Furthermore, Congolese airlines are blacklisted in security rankings, and an accident in which several people died took place in the country at the end of August.

In a similar to Colombia, there are real risks and there are fears that are hyped up by stories, like those that affirm that traveling to Congo is only for the courageous who love adventure,



or for those who are irresponsible. Additionally, it is normal when someone who is afraid and nervous demands more attention and care. In stressful situations, we are inclined to have greater difficulty in understanding and processing information. Trusting the information shared by our DRC sisters and transmitting that trust to the international delegates was a daily political task. For the IS, it was important to be able to constantly fall back on the unanimous decision taken at the VII International Meeting as well as very our very close contact with the DRC sisters and with the International Committee, especially in Africa.

The safety of international delegates was one of the items on the agenda at the meeting that was held between WMW members in the DRC, the IS, and the IC with the DRC Minister for Gender, Family and Children in April 2010. At that time, the Minister confirmed the government's commitment, guaranteed by a decision taken at an inter-ministerial meeting. MONUSCO also sought out the DRC women to address this issue, especially in relation to the visit to Mwenga on the 16th October. We decided that our dialogue would be with the DRC government, and that the decision of whether or not to request MONUSCO's support would be up to them. Security during the visit to Mwenga was carried out by the Congolese army and police and by MONUSCO. However, from our point of view, the women who walked for several days from their homes in order to line the road from Bukavu to Mwenga were also there for our safety.

Security is a permanent issue in the DRC. A few weeks before the Bukavu activities started, a key WMW activist in Kinshasa was unfortunately and coincidentally standing near a man who threw a rock at the presidential party passing by in the streets. Many people who were in the surrounding area were arrested and remained in jail for almost a week. The man who threw the rock died in jail. During the time she spent in prison, the safety of our sister was our biggest worry and we decided to urge several governments and the recently created agency UN Women to demand that the DRC government release her. This situation placed us in a position of negotiating with government representatives over and above the negotiations in relation to the Bukavu Event, and explains the reading of Michele Bachelet's message at the opening ceremony.

We perceived many other ways in which the conflict manifests itself in daily life and its impacts on the organization of our activity. One visible aspect was the precariousness of the communication and transport infrastructures. However, there are more subtle forms of social relations that made us more dependent on our DRC sisters, or even on the government "protocol" for getting around the country.

The relationship between local, national, and international dynamics

One of the WMW's characteristics is to allow and encourage a large of autonomy for National Coordinating Bodies, always in reference to the general parameters agreed to at the International Meetings. During international activities, our first goal is to strengthen organizational processes nationally and in the region. This means that the different international

activities that the WMW organizes, or participates in, reflect different themes, methodologies, expressions, and political cultures. In each activity, there is necessarily a lengthy process of building agreements between the proposals and expectations of the international delegates and the proposals and expectations of the national and regional delegates.

In the past, the existence of a National Coordinating Body and its capacity for network and national engagement has been an important criteria for defining where to hold an international activity. This criteria ceased to be a priority when we decided to hold regional and international activities in countries in conflict. Even so, at the meeting of African delegates at the VII International Meeting when the proposal to hold the Closing Event of the 3rd International Action in Bukavu was approved, it was done so on the basis of a commitment from the three DRC delegates present at the Meeting to take action to create an NCB. At that time, and as it remained throughout the entire preparation of the Closing Event, there was no NCB in the DRC, but rather four key organizations: CAFED (Goma), COFAS (Bukavu), CONAFED (Kinshasa) and COCAFEM-GL (Coalition of organizations from DRC, Rwanda and Burundi). In 2009, we attempted to start the process of constructing an NCB, but the costs of organizing a national gathering were very high and the DRC sisters were not able to raise the necessary funds, nor were we able to help them from the IS.

As an intermediary solution, it was decided that the work for preparation of the Closing would be divided among the 3 DRC organizations (CAFED, COFAS y CONAFED); they shared the responsibility for contacting the other national provinces and work towards a national gathering of different DRC groups to be held at the same time as the Closing Event. The sisters from the 3 organizations carried out intensive national mobilization, which was reflected in the representation of all national provinces at the Closing Event. A national meeting to formally convene the DRC NCB finally took place in Bukavu, after the Closing Event, on the 18th October, with the participation of 7 of the 11 provinces. However, the lack of a DRC NCB during the preparatory process weakened our position in relation to the national government (see details in the next section).

We could have compensated for the inexistence of an NCB through extensive international accompaniment. But we also faced financial limitations to this end. We established intense electronic communication and bi-monthly conference calls with our DRC sisters, but we were only able to be physically present in the country on two occasions.

We held a first preparatory workshop in Bukavu, in October 2009, with representatives of the four organizations (CAFED, COFAS, CONAFED, COCAFEM-GL) and three international participants (Miriam Nobre, Nana Aicha Cissé, Awa Ouedraogo). At this workshop, we made progress in defining the political objectives and proposals for activities. For example, at the time that the workshop took place, the withdrawal of MONUC was not being publicly debated, and one of the proposed objectives for the Event at the workshop was the MONUC's progressive and concerted withdrawal. It was some months later that the DRC government would present a demand for the MONUC's withdrawal, which was converted into MONUSCO in June 2010. It was also at this workshop that we agreed on the visit to Mwenga and the demand for a memorial, which would mean the re-remembering the tragic episode of the women who were buried alive, while the perpetrator of the crime continues



to be a part of the Congolese army and benefits from the peace agreements that prevent any trials taking place regarding crimes prior to 2002. This workshop was also important for the creation of a way of working together collectively. In her evaluation, a sister from COFAS said that she thought we would come to tell them what they should do, and she was surprised that they would have to think through so much and work so much.

In October 2009, we also met with our sisters from CAFOB in Bujumbura, Burundi, thereby establishing direct contact with them, which favored the presence of a delegation of 36 women from that country (the largest international WMW delegation). We did not go to Rwanda and we always had difficulties in achieving a direct and regular communication with the women from Pro-femme, the WMW's reference organization in the country, which may have complicated the Rwandan presence in Bukavu.

In April 2010, we visited the DRC a second time, this time staying in Kinshasa, where Miriam Nobre and Nana Aicha Cissé met with the Gender Minister and local groups of women. The government's logistical support and issues of security were the focus of this second visit.

Throughout the preparation of the Event, we perceived a huge interest from, and potential for the involvement of, groups from all over the country in the WMW. However, it was easier to incorporate DRC groups that already had some experience building relationships with international networks, as was the case of the women's groups that participate in CADTM.

The Bukavu – Kinshasa dynamic was also a source of difficulties in organizing the Event. It is common in most countries that organizations based in the capital speak in the name of the country. Our decision to hold the Closing Event in Bukavu and not in Kinshasa created many challenges in relation to political relationships, infrastructure and logistics, but it also encouraged us to search for creative, more long-term solutions for the building of provincial \diamond capital relationships.

The multiple difficulties faced at the national level with regard to logistical preparations for the Event also had an impact on its political contents. While the panels were important moments to share the contents of our Action Areas, we didn't manage to explore, along with our Congolese sisters, all of the potential for debating and sharing local/national experiences in different countries. One of the strongest points of the panels was the talk given by our Haitian sister Carole Jacob, with whose content DRC women strongly identified, particularly due to her critical analysis of the presence of the UNSMH (United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti).

Through a close look at women's situations in South Kivu and Mwenga, our proposal was to establish connections with the experiences of women in other parts of the world and identify common points in the systems of oppression. However we did not manage to highlight this as the overall 'idea' of the Event, rather it ended up being more restricted to our expression of solidarity. One expression of this was the fact that some women from other countries, instead of speaking of their own similar experiences or relating them to those of the DRC women, used the moments for debate to offer to host the next WMW international action.

On the other hand, each one of the WMW delegates worked very hard in support of the 3rd International action in their own countries and probably arrived at the Closing Event with her own expectations, such as, for example, that this would be a moment to deepen debate around the Action's political contents, our ways of demonstrating, etc. But the organizational reality of the WMW in the DRC, as well as of the current context of the women's movement in the country, meant that the Event felt much more like the beginning (it was the first time that many women were in contact with our Action Areas and with the meaning of WMW as a permanent movement). This difference between expectations and reality generated frustrations that were processed in different ways by the WMW delegates. Our evaluation is that we should have better prepared the international delegation with regards to the national dynamics and political culture in DRC, to what they should expect, etc.

The relationship between movements, political parties, governments, the United Nations, and large international NGOs

One of the points of tension present from the beginning of the organization of the Event was the relationship between women's groups and organizations taking the initiative in organizing the WMW in the DRC, and the women from the political parties, especially the public figures in these parties. The women from the parties were saying that if the March belongs to all women, then they want to be a part of it.

Within the March, we had already debated the issue of political parties at more than one International Meeting (the 3rd in Montreal in 2001, the 6th in Lima in 2006), and we came to the conclusion that it is not possible to have one common rule for all countries that excludes organizations of women from political parties. Everyone who wants to build the WMW as a permanent (feminist and anti-capitalist) movement is welcome, however it is important to be careful when women from political parties attempt to instrumentalize the March's actions or to promote their party's interests without a willingness to work through consensus-building. But it is not always the case that women affiliated to political parties act in this way, and each country – based on its experience and political culture – defines the participation of political parties (as participating groups, guests, without direct participation from the party, among other options).

In the DRC, this issue masked a harsher reality: the relationship between national and regional governments. When the national government decided to contribute to the Event, and especially from the moment when the First Lady decided – in September 2010 – to come to the opening ceremony, the “women of Kinshasa” began interfering in all issues (from the panel contents to the composition of the commissions). This took place without the WMW reference organizations having the necessary unity between them with regards to how to handle the problem.



The official inauguration ceremony (on the 13th) was emblematic of the situation. After the ceremony, everyone, including those who are part of government, was in agreement: the WMW was a guest at the opening of its own event. The authorities' presence at our opening ceremony had already been discussed at the IC Cape Town meeting, with the presence of a representative from Bukavu. At that time, the IC members came to understand the concern of the DRC sisters that it would not be possible to inaugurate an activity of such relevance in the local political and cultural context without the presence of the authorities. But in the final stages of preparation, we were not strategic enough and we (virtually) turned over the coordination / organization of the opening ceremony to the government protocol, and therefore the Opening Ceremony was carried out according to governmental praxis and tradition. The question is: what ability did we have to do it differently?

At the Mwenga ceremony, some progress was made with regard to this issue: three women from the March spoke – from Mwenga, Bukavu, and an international representative – while three authorities also spoke, from the local, regional, and national levels. This improvement was negotiated at the last moment and the March's position had the support of the Gender Minister.

In summary, the balance of forces between us as a movement and the DRC government was very precarious. Some factors made us more fragile: the lack of unity among our DRC organizations in relation to the government, the absence of prior experiences in which movements held a position of autonomy in relation to the government in the country, and the difficult political calculation of how far we could go without compromising the conditions for action of our sisters who would stay behind.

Regarding the DRC women, all of them assessed that there was progress regarding the relationship with the government and that this had been positive because it opens more possibilities to put forth their demands. We will have to check at a later time, what position they find themselves in during negotiations.

Our dependence on the government's support to resolve the simplest things, like welcoming people at the airport or ensuring that each delegate arrived on time for their return flight was another of our weaknesses. Also the fact that we, as a movement, did not contribute financial resources for local infrastructure. With the exception of 4.000 Euros used for the local secretariat in Bukavu, all of the funds we raised from the IS were used to ensure the presence of a small international delegation and of interpreters.

This brings us to another issue: the relationship with international NGOs and even the fact that many don't understand the difference between an international movement and a large international NGO. Our name, World March of Women, evokes a supposed access to large amounts of financial resources, and so government officials asked whether it made sense to provide funds for this Event when NGOs manage budgets that are often as large as those of local governments.

We are still working on a financial report that will bring together information about the funds raised in a decentralized way (IS, COFAS, CONAFED, CAFED, NCBs). However, overall, we can already conclude that we had difficulties in mobilizing resources from international NGOs for the Event. The majority of NGOs have an office in the DRC, many of them in Bukavu. If they contributed something to the Event, it was to guarantee the participation of their counterparts, rather than for the functioning and organization of the Event itself.

The relationship with the UN institutions (UNDP, MONUSCO) was completely managed by the Bukavu local committee, or by the national government. They supported us with part of the logistical structure, in air transport for national participants and in the transport and security to and from Mwenga. We did not allow the reading of MONUSCO's public statement during our activities. But it is difficult to say that they weren't visible, because they are very visible on a daily basis for the people of South Kivu. The reality is that it is very common for our DRC sisters to use MONUSCO planes to get around the country, which means a loss of autonomy for the movement, more dependence and the possibility to having to stay much longer in a place than was expected (because the flights do not have fixed dates / times), but that doesn't prevent the women from criticizing MONUSCO's actions. Respecting a decision made by the IC, the international delegation did not use the United Nations' planes or the helicopters.

It is important that we continue to reflect on governments' attempts to hijack our Event, because other countries' governments show strong interest in the DRC, and the issue of violence against women is part of their permanent agendas.

Here are some examples: Just after our Closing Event, in the 1st week of November, the new US ambassador's wife accompanied Eve Ensler – from the American NGO V-Day – in her visit to the Bukavu women's organizations that are supported by this NGO. At the end of October the Brazilian government gave US\$1 million - via the UNDP High Commissioner's Office - in support of activities to strengthen justice and compensation mechanisms for sexual violence victims in the DRC. Bilateral commerce between Brazil and the DRC increased 20 fold between 2002 and 2009, rising from US\$ 2.84 million to US\$ 58.56 million.

Logistical lessons and challenges

During the preparation of the Closing Event, the IS permanent team consisted of 3 women working full time and one woman working part-time. In September, we hired two women for 45 days as temporary workers, one to create and update the international registration database and the other to research and produce materials, and to update the web site of the 3rd International Action.

During this preparation period, our life as a permanent movement continued. In May and June we were finalizing the evaluation of our strategic plan and the negotiations with partners for financial support for the next three years. In June, July and August, International Secretariat staff were involved in the preparation of the Colombian regional action, and also participated in regional editions of the World Social Forum.



In summary, we worked as a small and over-worked team. Our assessment is that we should have had more team meetings and shared more information. Alessandra from the IS was able to arrive in DRC on 19th September 2010, but it would have been better to have arrived sooner and have traveled more often to Bukavu to work with the local team on practical matters such as the registration database, visas, the organization of the work to be done and the office, among other issues.

In Bukavu, with the minimal resources that we sent from the IS, it was possible to pay part of the COFAS team's salary, but it was not possible to hire additional staff. They worked with a large number of volunteers organized in several work committees. At first, there was a misunderstanding with regard to the fact that all work would be voluntary, which created an expectation for payment from those who got involved in the organization of the event. It would have been better to combine this voluntary work with some sort of paid work, especially for the coordinators of the registration and logistics commissions, who worked intensively over a long period, but it wasn't easy to debate this issue and establish criteria for those who should get paid and those who would only receive financial help with transport and meals for the days of the Event.

Precarious communication infrastructure affected all of the work conducted in Bukavu by our sisters there and by the IS team. The electricity cuts, the overloaded telephone lines, the calls that couldn't be completed, the slow and intermittent internet connection and the computer viruses: all of these are daily issues for our DRC sisters which we were able to experience first-hand when we arrived in Bukavu, as well as understanding that in order to maintain a constant flow of information, we had to be patient and persistent.

The division of responsibilities between the local, national and international was also not ideal. Our agreement was that all local logistics (the place, interpreting equipment, the reception of delegates) was the responsibility of the DRC WMW reference groups. On one hand, this produced good results, for example the decision to carry out the panels and the fair at the Ateneo Ibanda. The space was very suitable, the provincial government was able to install wireless internet and the structural improvements remain for the use of the Institute's students. All the improvements were completed in a very short time, but this demanded a large political effort on the part of the Bukavu sisters. The provincial government changed hands in June 2010, which delayed the preparations further due to having to re-start the negotiations for support of our Event.

The lack of equipment for simultaneous interpretation was also a big problem. We recognize that giving the responsibility of finding equipment with cabins to the Bukavu sisters was a mistake. The lack of cabins prevented us from organizing the panels in five languages as had been planned (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Swahili), and it forced the volunteer interpreters to work intensively in far from ideal conditions. Added to this, we 'lost' three interpreters at a last minute (one who, for security reasons, was not able to come; the other two lost their connecting flights because of the strike in France).

At first, we were worried about guaranteeing housing and food for the international delegates as our responsibility as the IS and for the national delegates as the responsibility of the DRC WMW reference organizations. As we believed that the number of accommodations available in the city was insufficient, we suggested limiting the number of delegates coming from outside Bukavu. But the local committee organized a list of hotels and hostels in Bukavu, which helped us to understand that lodging wouldn't be a huge problem. The international and national participants, mostly, were responsible for raising funds to cover their costs of accommodation or organizing it in a solidarity way (in house of family or friends).

For logistical and security reasons, we tried to lodge the WMW delegation in the same center, but in the end – because of availability of space and the number of delegates – we had to divide the delegation between two centers: AMANI and CAP. We tried to mix the delegates from different continents in the two centers, but the separation made it difficult for everyone to integrate and especially those who were lodged at the CAP felt isolated because they weren't with the IS and the IC.

Attending to the demands of many more women than expected was a big challenge for the DRC sisters. To respond in part to this demand, the national government organized a free lunch at the Ateneo Ibanda at the last minute. The problem is that we had organized for the delegates to buy their food from local women's groups so that they could benefit directly from these financial contributions. Although they did sell food and snacks, they ended up selling much smaller quantities than expected.

The food sovereignty fair and exhibition of products and crafts functioned better, the vendors were happy with the sales and the delegates took advantage of the fair as a space for exchange and relaxation.

Follow-Up

We identified the organization of information related to the event as an immediate follow-up task. We put together a first 'clipping', listing all the press coverage – printed material, radio, and television – and we are selecting and archiving photos and images (many of which are beautiful). We have to decide how to manage all of this information. We need to critically analyze the press coverage. It is curious how some WMW militants that were not in Bukavu and have followed the action only through the commercial/mainstream media believed that our action had been recovered by the government, but do not question the quality of the information or the media coverage. We believe that a critical analysis of the coverage of the Bukavu Closing Event could stimulate a strategic debate about communication as a policy rather than a tool and how to put this into practice in the coming months. We still need to write our own history and our own evaluation. Finally, there is a large amount of work to be done in organizing all of this information and making it available on the www.wmw2010.info web site, which now becomes a virtual space for our International Action's archives.



We know that many NCBs are organizing evaluation and reporting activities. We need to gather the contents of these debates and to consolidate analyses and evaluations of the International Action as a whole. Please therefore send us your NCB assessments.

We are also responsible for supporting the newly created DRC NCB. We plan to maintain close contact through conference calls, as well as to strengthen the connections between the DRC sisters and sisters from the region. More specifically, we need to follow up on contacts with the sisters from Burundi and Kenya, in addition to re-establishing connections with Rwanda (which might entail thinking about how the WMW is organized in the country).

Through permanent contact with our DRC sisters we can follow up on the infrastructure improvements that we achieved through the Closing Event: the improvements in the structural conditions at the Ibanda Ateneo, the promise of building a memorial and a multifunctional house for women in Mwenga and the continuity of the construction and operation of the multifunctional house in Bukavu. We also need to closely follow up on the impacts of the UNDP policy of building multifunctional houses for women in agreement with DRC government.

Along with the DRC sisters, we need to continue to improve the way we function as an alert network. During the panels, women denounced serious violence perpetrated with the participation, or omission of protection, of the Congolese army and MONUSCO. We hope that nothing more serious will come of this, but it is important for us to organize ourselves in advance in order to ensure the security of our sisters. It's possible that we would need to support them with activities in our countries, as well as showing our support through the strengthening of the WMW in the DRC. During the preparation of the event in Bukavu, resistance was manifested – sometimes very strongly – from certain politicians and even by a few sectors of civil society, in relation to the idea of the WMW as a movement, and to the self-organization of women.

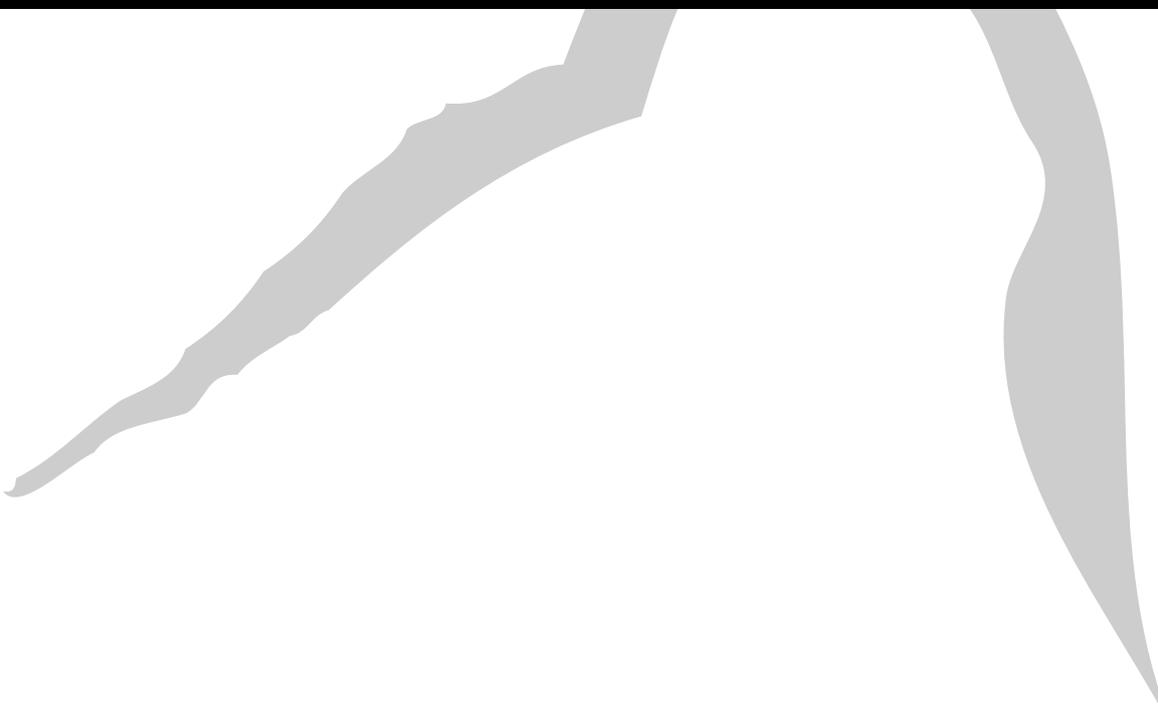
We have to think about more concrete actions to put a stop to the kidnapping of women in the region's rural areas. On the 30th October, 4 women and a young woman from Mwenga were kidnapped and held as sexual slaves during 7 days until the community paid a ransom fee in money and goods like food, a cell phone and matches. The DRC army took action but was not able to free the women.

Finally, during the preparation for the DRC Event, we suggested to NCBs that they could research information about the interests that their governments and national businesses have in activities in the DRC. We believe that this is another important follow up action: the monitoring and pressuring of our governments so that – either through their own initiatives or as part of multilateral institutions – they base their actions on the principles of respect for the DRC people's sovereignty, and denounce initiatives that go against this.

WMW International Committee and International Secretariat
São Paulo, December 2010



Document **5**





Activities and actions at local, national, regional and international levels

INTRODUCTION

The World March of Women (WMW) 3rd International Action, under the slogan “**Women on the March until we are All Free!**” was organised around two key moments:

- The launch: 8th – 18th March, with simultaneous national marches and mobilisations of different types, forms, colours, and rhythms that will also mark the 100-year anniversary of the Declaration of International Women’s Day by delegates of the 2nd International Conference of Socialist Women in Copenhagen in 1910;
- The closing events: Simultaneous marches and actions during the 7th – 17th October period, with an international event in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from the 13th – 17th.

Between these two key moments, mobilisations, actions and activities also took place at the local and national levels, as well as regionally in the Americas (16th – 23rd August, Colombia), Asia-Oceania (10th – 12th June, Philippines) and Europe (29th – 30th June, Turkey).

During the 3rd International Action, political demands were based on the four WMW Action Areas: Common good and access to public services, Peace and demilitarisation, Women’s work, and Violence against women.

In total, 76 countries from five continents participated in the International Action, 57 of which organised actions and activities in their own countries, and 19 of which sent national delegates to participate in regional and international actions. The Action lasted 220 days, with an estimated direct public of 80,000 women and men.

THE LAUNCH, 8TH – 18TH MARCH: NATIONAL ACTIONS

National actions and activities were carried out in 53 countries, across four continents:

Africa

From Algeria and Morocco in the very north, to South Africa and Zimbabwe in the very south, many hundreds of WMW sisters were mobilised on the African continent at the beginning of March to launch the International Action and celebrate the 100th anniversary of the declaration of International Women's Day. Actions organised in 14 countries – **Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya** (although the main 8th March demonstration in Nairobi was prohibited by police), **Mali** (training seminars in Bamako and Gao for women community leaders around the themes of the participation of women in the prevention and management of conflicts, the proliferation of small arms, and the security situation in the north of the country), **Morocco, Mozambique** (talks, sharing of experiences and cultural activities in an event in Maputo), **South Africa, Sudan, Western Sahara** (marches in the Saharawi refugee camps on the 8th March) and **Zimbabwe**.

It was in **Algeria**, that a campaign – the “Kif Kif equality in law” campaign – was launched at the same time as the 3rd International Action, on the 8th March. Lubna Hussein, the Sudanese journalist sister who was criminalised in her country for wearing trousers, took part in this important moment in the struggle for the implementation of civil and equal laws for women and men in Sudan, in the recognition that violence suffered by women starts with institutional violence, as permitted by the Algerian Family Code.

In caravan in the centre of Cotonou, capital of **Benin**, members of the WMW and women from other civil society and women's organisations marched with slogans, flags, dance and songs for “Equal rights, equal opportunities, progress for all”. The objective of this caravan was to raise awareness of the importance of mass mobilisation for the achievement of women's rights and demands. The caravan ended with the freeing of five doves, representing the five core values of the WMW: freedom, peace, equality, solidarity and justice.

Bringing together the women of Ouagadougou (the capital) and Kombissiri (a small town north of the capital), in **Burkina Faso**, the WMW commemorated International Women's Day with a very successful mobilisation. The goal was to motivate the participation of the Kombissiri population and to promote a better understanding of the event.

Marches for peace and equality between women and men, and against violence against women in Bukavu, Kinshasa, Lumbumbashi and Mbuji mayi marked the 8th March in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**. In Bukavu, a street mobilisation with the participation of diverse groups of women and different members of authority officially launched the 2010 International Action, while in Lumbumbashi, in the Katanga province, WMW sisters also launched the 3rd International Action in their city. In Mbuji mayi a conference with the title “After 100 years of feminist struggles, how can equality between women and men contribute to progress in the DRC?” was accompanied by radio and television programmes, a street march and expositions.



Approximately 100 women of difference ages, classes and social groups participated in a sit-in in **Morocco**, under torrential rain, to demand the end of all forms of violence against women. A platform of actions was planned collectively, including round table discussions and a caravan with the objective of reaching out to isolated women, helping them access services and demonstrating solidarity.

In **South Africa**, women activists from across Cape Town came together to reflect on the multiple crises facing South African women – high levels of unemployment, poverty, domestic violence, lack of housing and other public services – , to launch of the 3rd International Action and to commemorate the centenary of the declaration of International Women’s Day.

Women from diverse organisations and social groups participated in a very successful march in **Zimbabwe**, in which WMW information was presented, and the issues of violence against women and women’s economic empowerment were also discussed.

Americas

WMW activists from 18 American countries – in South, Central and North America and in the Caribbean – organised or participated in International Women’s Day demonstrations and other activities on or around the 8th March.

In several cities in **Bolivia**, WMW activists organised and took part in street demonstrations and other awareness-raising actions, namely Chuquisaca, Cochabamba, Oruro, Santa Cruz and Tarija. In Santa Cruz, for example, radio jingles to promote and disseminate the WMW were produced and transmitted by three radio stations and 20 women’s and mixed organisations participated in a march that ended at the 24th September Square.

In **Brazil**, over 2000 women walked for 11 days and 110km from the city of Campinas to the city of São Paulo (in the southeast of the country). In a march 100% organised by WMW activists, women participants representing all 27 Brazilian states walked for several hours every morning, set up camp, and then took part in debates, training workshops and cultural activities in the afternoons. Analyses and demands centred on the four WMW Action Areas and included the decriminalisation and legalisation of abortion; the reorganisation of care-work, equally shared between men and women; food and energy sovereignty; and the coordinated withdrawal of UN soldiers (including Brazilians) from Haiti. A documentary was filmed of the march has been produced.

The Feminist Network for the Coordination of 8th March in Santiago (of which the WMW is a member), **Chile**, decided to abandon their plans for a massive march and cultural-political act in the centre of the capital due to the earthquake that hit the country 10 days before International Women’s Day. Instead, they hastily organised a solidarity march with the objective of promoting the donation of personal hygiene products for women’s organisations in the Maule region, delivered on the 11th March by a solidarity caravan that travelled to the

region. A public declaration entitled “Women, organise yourselves! For all our rights, now and forever” was also published and disseminated.

Throughout the month of March, WMW activists participated in diverse actions in **El Salvador**: On the 8th March, accompanied by five giant ‘walkers’, they joined 10,000 women for a march in San Salvador to commemorate the launch of the 3rd International Action and to deliver an Equality Law ante-project to the Legislative Assembly. While other activities were organised in several other town and municipalities, including a debate forum in San Marcos and cultural artistic festivals in San Julián, Nahuizalco and San Vicente, to commemorate 100 years of women’s struggles and reflect on the strength of these struggles, among other themes.

Demonstrations in the capital of **Guatemala** – where indigenous and other activists ended their march in the Central Park with a symbolic territorial ‘hug’ and offering – and other cities such as Cobán where women marched against violence, discrimination and racism, and for fair salaries.

In **Mexico**, WMW activists mobilised in Mexico City and in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas. In the latter, hundreds of women walked through the streets holding candles and commemorating the 8th March as a day of resistance, struggle and feminist solidarity, ending at the Cathedral Square with the installation of a women’s altar and political speeches. The public declaration denounced the militarisation of Mexican society, high levels of feminicides, criminalisation of sexual and reproductive women’s rights and religious fundamentalism.

In **Peru**, decentralized demonstrations and actions took place in five cities: Arequipa (in La Oroya, a city very negatively impacted by mining), Chiclayo (street march with the participation of diverse women’s groups and accompanied by a ‘batucada’), Junín (Women’s Forum to discuss and mobilised around the struggle against the climate change crisis), Lima (where many women, accompanied by a ‘batucada’ and banners, marched to show that “Peruvians continue the struggle” and also took part in debates around the four Action Areas) and Puno (Peasant Women’s Assembly).

A demonstration in the capital of **Martinique**, Fort-de-France, on International Women’s Day, where women marched under the slogan “Women on the March until we are All Free” and in solidarity with women around the world.

In the streets of Montreal, **Quebec**, thousands of women and men marched towards the Prime Minister’s office and formed a human chain to denounce the government’s ignorance of feminists’ demands and the rolling back of women’s rights, in the framework of the 3rd International Action. WMW members presented their demands to the Quebec and Canadian governments, including legislation against sexist advertising, the protection of women’s rights to decide whether or not to have children, an end to military recruitment in schools, the valorisation of a minimum salary, etc.



Social, popular and cultural movements as well as diverse feminist collectives came together under the slogan of the 3rd International Action in Caracas, **Venezuela**, to denounce the inequality, discrimination and violence that women continue to suffer. With banners, pamphlets and chants, they raised their voices in the struggle to ensure their demands and alternatives were heard, and took to the streets in a march.

Other kinds of creative street interventions were organised in: Buenos Aires, **Argentina**, with women marching in the streets and opening a huge banner “Show violence against women the red card” in the middle of the Boca Juniors Stadium as part of their struggle against violence against women; Havana, **Cuba**; and Quito, **Ecuador**, where, on the 14th March, a bicycle ride – for “buen vivir” (good quality life conditions) – was promoted to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the declaration of International Women’s Day and 100 years of feminist struggle. Awareness-raising activities accompanied this bike ride, such as the sticking of posters along the way, the handing out of pamphlets and street theatre.

In **Canada**, **Paraguay** and the **United States**, feminist activists allied to the WMW made the most of the launch of our International Action to share our Action Area analyses and develop their own demands related to them, while mobilising interest in our movement. While in **Haiti** and **Honduras**, WMW activists were present in street demonstrations and activities together with other feminists, resisting the coup d’état in the former, and in remembrance of our sisters Magalie Marcelin, Myriam Merlet and Anne Marie Coriolan in the latter.

Asia-Oceania

Sisters were mobilised in mass – in both national and local demonstrations – in eight countries in the region for the launch of the 3rd International Action.

Two **Bangladeshi** cities, Dhaka and Rajbari, were chosen by organisations that are part of the WMW to carry out marches, in which talks and cultural activities also took place. In Rajbari, more than a 1000 participants marched in front of the around the town, finishing in front of district Shilpokola Academy (Cultural academy). Here they organised a discussion and cultural programs, with five local cultural organisations presenting songs and a recital.

In **Japan**, two marches were organised to launch the 3rd International Action. The “Mimosa Parade” on the 7th March in downtown Tokyo was organised to demand an end to all forms of discrimination against women. Many different groups – anti-globalisation, lesbian rights, abortion, anti-militarisation, ‘comfort women’, etc – participated and then took part in a debate for two hours afterwards. While around 800 women participated in the Central Rally in Tokyo on the 8th March, followed by a march through downtown Tokyo.

Many hundreds of women – including urban workers, rural farmers and gender violence survivors – marched under the slogan “Militarism, Sexism, WTO, Arroyo: Retreat!” in Manila and 11 other strategic centres of the **Philippines** archipelago. They marched for peace and against US military bases, for against rape as a weapon of war, for job generation and the

labour rights, for agricultural reform and for an immediate end to domestic violence, sexual abuse and trafficking of women and girls.

On the 6th March, 500 women participated in the 26th Korean Women's Festival and WMW action to commemorate International Women's Day in Seoul, **South Korea**, dressed in three colours – purple to represent the local election, yellow to represent women's rights, and red to represent the 'socialisation of care-work' campaign. The objectives of the action were to change society by ensuring the sharing of care-work responsibilities between women and men, to strengthen and defend women's rights and to increase voter turnout for the local election of June 2010.

In **New Caledonia** on the 27th March, a national mobilisation was organised in the central Mwa Kaa square of the capital Nouméa during which the 3rd International Action was launched, the 4 WMW Action Areas were debated, and the 100th anniversary of the declaration of International Women's Day was celebrated.

Representatives of 18 organisations came together in Chattisgarh, **India**, on the 8th March for the centenary celebrations of International Women's Day, while more than 1000 women farmers, domestic workers, unorganised workers, child workers, tribal women and rural youth participated in a demonstration in Raipur on the 19th and 20th March. In the latter, women marched displaying banners, placards and posters and shouting slogans that spoke of the kind of work women wish to build for all, in a celebration of the historic struggles of women in the world and to assert the rights of women in the family, communities and in society.

Over 1500 women marched in the centre of Lahore, **Pakistan** to celebrate the International Women Day on the 8th March. Despite a prevailing fear after an early morning suicide bomb attack in the city, thousands of women workers, including home-based workers, domestic workers, brick kiln and embellishment workers participated in the march, while chanting anti-capitalist slogans along the way, including "No to economic injustice", "No to violence against women" and "Down with US imperialism". From the 12th to the 18th, two women's caravan travelled from Lahore to Faisalabad and from Hyderabad to Karachi. Carrying out debates around the reality of Pakistani women's lives and cultural activities along the way, the former caravan stopped in five cities, while the latter stopped in five cities and four communes.

Activities in six towns along the northwest coast of **Sri Lanka**, where many live in fishing communities, were held on and around the 8th March, with a central theme of women's role in achieving democracy. These public events (with 250 – 300 participants in each town) included streets drama, video presentations, meetings, children's plays, etc, as part of Sri Lankan women's struggle for a just society, free from violence against women.

Europe

Of the 13 countries on the European continent who had shared plans with us for on or around the 8th March, only one of them – **Catalonia** – was not able to put those plans into



practice, due to very heavy snow. WMW activists in the other 12 countries were seen and heard – with their political demands and denouncements – in the streets of their capital and other cities participating in the following activities:

National demonstrations:

In the streets of the capital of **Belgium**, Brussels, 5000 women (and men) from diverse women's collectives, trade unions, political parties and social movements participated in a demonstration on the 6th March, with political demands based on the WMW's four Action Areas. To end the action, a platform of women's demands was delivered to political personalities.

Over 10,000 women travelled from all over the UK to march together in the centre of London, **England**, on the 6th March for the 3rd edition of Million Women Rise, a national demonstration against male violence and in celebration of International Women's Day. Many of them said it was an emotional, inspiring and empowering experience. United, they sang, chanted, hollered and shouted "Enough is Enough" and to demand justice and freedom from violence for women around the world. They were joined by speakers and artistic activists who shared their stories and experiences and inspired participants to continue their struggle for an end to male violence.

Paris, **France**, was the host city for a national women's demonstration on the 8th March with 5000 women participants from many different women's collectives and associations, as well as trade union organisations and politicians, reminding onlookers and the authorities that International Women's Day is a day of struggle for equality and for implementation of laws, rather than the day of celebrations, as described by the mass media. The march stopped along the way at a large hospital to denounce the closing of pregnancy interruption clinics, a public policy which disrespects women's right to free and safe abortion services.

Mobilised under the slogan "We don't celebrate, we denounce", on the 8th March approximately 300 women from 14 feminist collectives, associations, trade unions and NGOs took to the streets of Athens, **Greece**, as well as five Greek provinces. International Women's Day was very much characterised by strikes and huge workers' demonstrations, denouncing the draconian austerity measures imposed by the Greek government, whose first victims are women and immigrants.

Bringing together activists from across the country in Santiago de Compostela, **Galicia**, on the 13th March, the WMW launched the 3rd International Action with a march (with the presence of 14 'walkers', representing women's desires for a world without poverty and violence), dissemination of political demands, and a celebration in the central Cervantes Square. In this way, WMW activists made visible women's struggles for freedom, women's protagonism in diverse social and political areas, and the respect of women's rights around the world.

The national demonstration in Bern, **Switzerland**, was a huge success with the participation of 8000 women (and a few hundred male supporters) of different ages, with an important presence of migrant women. Lots of motivation, colour and enthusiasm permeated the street march, accompanied by the Swiss 'walkers', slogans and banners including "With women in movement, the world is in movement!" and "Change the lives of women to change the world".

Local marches, street gatherings and other activities:

Gatherings and marches took place on the 8th March simultaneously in several towns in **Albania**: Lezha (in the north), Alba Marini and Durres (in the middle of the country) and Bajana Cevoli and Fier (in the south). In Lezha, young women from the youth parliament and Roma sisters from the North Romas association mobilised community members and decision-makers for an end to violence, discrimination and women's poverty. Through speeches given on the day, they invited women and men to join them in the struggle to end violence at home and in the workplace.

From the 8th – 13th March, a feminist caravan – made up of several minibuses of women, under the slogan "2010 Reasons to Continue in March" – travelled 1000km and passed through twenty villages and towns in the **Basque Country**, starting and ending in Iruña (Pamplona). It was launched together with the 8th March demonstration in Pamplona and ended with a national political act. During the caravan, women's testimonies were gathered from Altsasu, Lizarra, Gasteiz, Laudio, Zornotza, Durango, Bilbao, Ermua, Zarautz, Donostia, Hazparne, Baiona, Leitza, etc. Women's murals and paintings were also collected with the objective of using the designs for the dresses of the national "Walkers". The diverse activities that were organised during the caravan were not only festive, but political, with the presentation of demands and protests and the participation of several thousand people.

In **France**, decentralised activities took place in several cities: a march in the streets of Havre to symbolise the many struggles of women; the launching of the 3rd International Action in Marseille with the central theme of peace and demilitarisation; the mobilisation of feminist activists in Strasbourg to commemorate 40 years of the Women's Liberation movement; the dissemination of women's political demands for the respect of their fundamental rights in a street action organised by 25 associations in Toulouse; and an action to denounce the closure of a maternity clinic in Valréas.

Five towns in **Galicia** – Coruña, Ferrolterra, Ourense, Pontevedra and Vigo – hosted women's activities to launch the 3rd International Action, under the slogan "100 years of struggle, 100 years of creativity". Activities included creative workshops (to construct the 'walkers', for example), mobilisations, demonstrations (for equal salaries for equal work, food sovereignty, women's rights to free and safe abortion, etc), and street actions (in solidarity with Congolese women, etc), an exposition about Palestine and several presentations about the WMW.



The 3rd International Action was presented in Milan, **Italy**, on the 8th March, with the showing of a short international WMW video and a discussion about concrete feminist solidarity around the world, linked – in the Italian context – to actions organised in the struggle for their rights by migrant women and men at the beginning of March. The young women present at the Milan activity were particularly inspired.

On the 7th March in the capital of **Macedonia**, Skopje, activists organised an ‘Open Women’s Day’, whose main objective was the new Equality Law in the country as part of the struggle against discrimination based on gender and sexuality. A plenary session was held, followed by working groups on the topics of gender, domestic violence, violence at work, the 1325 UN Resolution and cultural identity (with the construction of the ‘walkers’ bases).

Decentralised actions and activities in **Portugal** were organised in many different towns in cities. In Lisbon on the 8th March, for example, a street action with the ‘walkers’ took place, with the objective of raising awareness in relation to the four Action Areas. While on the 13th, a creative workshop to construct ‘walkers’ was organised in Coimbra, as well as a video, debate and commemorative dinner, and a march for peace and demilitarization was held in Açores accompanied by cultural activities. On the 14th, a conference was held in Lousão to celebrate the double centenary of the declaration of International Women’s Day and the implementation of the Republic, and in the historic centre of Porto on the 18th, a flash-mob march was held, followed by a dance and party.

Between the 1st – 17th March, in more than ten towns and cities in **Switzerland**, the WMW carried out actions and demonstrations of many imaginative and diverse forms, with the WMW’s Action Areas as the central themes. In Neuchâtel, for example, a flamenco dance presentation brought the large audience’s attention to the structural causes of domestic violence, while a park of sculptures in Basel permitted activists to raise awareness of the abusive working conditions and lack of rights suffered by women in care-work, many of whom are immigrants. The sexual violence suffered by women in wartime and the impacts of conflicts on women’s lives were highlighted through lectures given in Bienne, a theatrical representation of the war in Iraq in Zoug and a film about Bosnia in Lucerne.

Diyarbakir in **Turkey** was transformed into “Diyarbakir Women’s City” from the 5th – 8th March, beginning with an evening reception and concert on the 5th for women representatives of NGOs, unions, women’s organisations and women politicians. For the following two days, many activities were held, including seminars, forums, concerts, exhibition, theatre plays, etc, and on the 8th a huge demonstration took place with the participation of thousands of women, particularly Kurdish women, whose political demands include an urgent need for the Turkish state to start a dialogue for peace and democratic solutions to Kurdish issues. On the 7th, a large demonstration also took place in Istanbul. Meanwhile, on the 13th March, WMW activists in Ankara organised a forum about the WMW, and a human ‘peace-chain’ in the streets of Antalya.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR: REGIONAL ACTIONS

19th – 21st March, Balkans Regional Meeting

In Tirana, capital city of Albania, 65 sisters from 6 countries in the region – **Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro** and **Romania** – participated in this historic meeting in which the WMW Balkans Network was founded. Participants agreed to join together in solidarity and action organised across borders in the region, in the struggle against neoliberal policies and patriarchy. They also confirmed the organisation of a feminist Balkans caravan, passing through various countries in June, and ending in Istanbul for the European Regional Action (see below).

10th – 12th June, Asia-Oceania Regional Meeting

In mid-June, women from **Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, New Caledonia, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea**, and **Taiwan** gathered in Quezon City, Philippines, for the Asia-Oceania WMW regional meeting. On the 11th, a demonstration denouncing US imperialism in the region, foreign military bases, violence against women and the sexual exploitation of women and free trade, was organised under the slogans of, “Enough military violence against women! Enough of US wars and militarism! Stop US support to Israeli Terrorism!”

During the regional meeting, participants developed a working plan and a calendar of actions, based on our four Action Areas. These included simultaneous actions at the beginning of October in the struggle for the recognition of domestic work as labour, social security and for governments to promote policies that aim for sustainable local and full employment, as well as actions in solidarity with women in the DRC (in October), mobilisations from 11th – 20th November against the G-20 (in Korea) and activities around trafficking and prostitution in November.

The members of our International Committee for the region from the Philippines and Pakistan highlighted how positive was the meeting. Participants were very pleased to be able to share their national and regional struggles with each other, and decided collectively to remain united as a region, rather than to create a separate French-speaking, Oceania region.

29th – 30th June, European Regional Action

The WMW European Action started on June 29th with the reception of the Balkan feminist caravan – composed of women from **Albania, Macedonia, Poland** and **Greece** – at Gezi Square in Istanbul, Turkey. From here they walked up to the port where they took the boat to the Maiden Island, a meeting point between Asian and European continents. There, they denounced patriarchal practices and traditions which imprison women and exclude them from public life under the guise of protecting them.



More than 500 women from 25 countries (**Albania, Basque Country, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Catalonia, Cyprus, France, Galicia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Iraq, Kurdistan, Macedonia, Morocco, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spanish State, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Turkey, United Kingdom**) took part in the debates forum held on the following day, the 30th. Starting with women's cultural presentations and a presentation of the history of the Turkish and Kurdish women's movements and the situation of women in Europe, participants were then divided into 13 workshops and panels discussing our Action Areas and other issues, such as women's resistance during worker strikes in Turkey or the people's right to decide their future. At the end of the afternoon, plenary participants expressed their solidarity with Kurdish, Cypriot, Palestinian and Iraqi women. Debates ended with the approval of a declaration and a calendar of action for 2010, highlighting the closing event of our 3rd International Action in the DRC. At the end of the day, forum participants joined around 5,000 people, mostly women, for a demonstration in the streets of the city. Slogans such as "jîn, jijan, azadî" (women, peace, freedom), rhythms and tambourines animated the women in the streets struggling for peace.

During the European Social Forum, held straight after the Regional Action, from the 1st – 4th July, the European WMW held a workshop to share our experiences in the construction of a feminist movement in the continent and to talk about our 3rd International Action. Another activity was promoted by the Balkans WMW network to share information about the situation of women in their region.

16th – 23rd August, Americas Regional Action

Humanitarian missions in 14 regions of Colombia, an extensive forum in Barrancabermeja and a Vigil for Life in front of the Palanquero military base in Puerto Salgar formed the actions of the Women and People's Summit of the Americas against Militarization. The delegation organised by the WMW was composed of 30 women from 10 countries, including WMW delegates (**Brazil, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Quebec**) and allied movements (**Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay**). This event allowed participants to confirm the economic and geopolitical interests behind the military strategy carried out by the Colombian government for over 40 years, as well as showing their solidarity with their Colombian sisters and brothers.

Humanitarian missions took place on the 18th and 19th, with delegates visiting 14 Colombian regions to experience for themselves the climate of terror to which women and the Colombian people are subjected daily as part of the militarisation of their territories. Following these visits, around 2,500 people participated on the 21st and 22nd in a debates forum in the city of Barrancabermeja. In the mornings, the plenary sessions mixed cultural performances with political analysis and testimonials from the various resistance groups, while in the afternoons, working groups engaged in more in-depth debates and reached agreements for common actions. The debates emphasised patriarchy as the system which supports militarism and capitalism and is part of the daily lives of women, such as humiliation and sexual violence they often experience.

On the 23rd August, the Vigil for Life in front of the Palanquero military base, five hours travel from Barrancabermeja, marked the official closing of the meeting. There was music, dance and theatre, intermingled with a large number of speeches that denounced the direct consequences of wars and conflicts on women's lives, such as the appropriation of their bodies and sexual violence, the criminalizing members of social movements and restriction of their right to freedom of movement, and the role of the firearms industry that derives substantial profit from conflicts...

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR: NATIONAL ACTIONS

22nd May, Mali

A "March for Sustainable Peace", with the participation of 1000 women and men from nine Malian provinces took place in Gao (in the Sahel-Saharan zone, where armed conflicts are recurrent and from where Al Qaida, Maghreb, operates) on the 22nd May. Women travelled for days to come together to demonstrate, sing and dance with their slogans and demands: "Women on the march until we are all free!", "Together, everything is possible", "Women on the march for sustainable human development", "Change the lives of women to change to the world, change the world to change the lives of women", and "No to the proliferation of small arms". This march was the key activity of the 2010 International Action in Mali.

12th – 13th June, France

A national WMW 3rd International Action weekend was organised in Paris, with a 2-day Forum "Women in March, Women's Struggles" that included discussions and debates around the WMW Action Areas and preparation of the French participation in the 3rd International Action Closing Event in the DRC. On Saturday afternoon, most of the 800 forum participants also took part in the national WMW demonstration at the Republic Square, along with 5000 women from many groups and organisations, followed by a feminist concert and international banquet at the Stalingrad square. Participants' demands for an end to domestic violence were strengthened by the fact that a woman from the city had been murdered the previous weekend.

August 23rd, around the world

In a response to the call to action by some of the movements that organised the Women and People's Summit of the Americas against Militarisation, street demonstrations, pronouncements and vigils in different parts of the world expressed solidarity with the women and people of Colombia and the Americas and condemned militarisation.

In **Brazil**, actions were carried out in the cities of São Paulo (the distribution of leaflets denouncing the presence of foreign military troops in Latin America), in the southeast and Mossoró, in the northeast (a debate about the foreign military presence in the continent and



the launch of the video of the 3rd International Action march in Brazil), along with several other social movements.

In Barcelona, **Catalonia**, a number of women carried out a night vigil against war and militarisation in front of the Colombian consulate. In **Colombia**, a vigil against militarisation and for life was held in a park in Cali, organised by the “Colectivo de Noviolencia” (Non-Violence Collective). In Maracaibo, in the state of Zulia, **Venezuela**, a cultural activity with the presentation of several musical groups and a theatre play brought several groups, organisations and institutions together under the slogan, “For life and the integration of Latin America, no to militarisation in our America”.

One the other side of the world, in **Korea**, women took to the streets to demand the end of American military activities in the Korean peninsula, to denounce the threat to world peace represented by American military dominance and to oppose the installation of new military bases in Colombia. On 19th August, there were actions in front of Bupyeong military base in Incheon.

August – October, Preparation for the Kenyan Caravan

A peace caravan of 19 women was organised by the WMW-Kenya that left Nairobi very early on the 11th October and travelled for 3 days – passing through the Samburo community and Kericho in Kenya, Kampala in Uganda and Kigali in Rwanda – before arriving in Bukavu for the Closing Event.

The caravan’s preparatory process was integrated with the NCB activities as part of the 3rd International Action and as a permanent movement. The Kenyan sisters organised public awareness-raising activities – such as community forums and advocacy videos – around the reality lived by Congolese women, sexual violence suffered by them, and the causes and economic and geopolitical interests behind the conflict. They carried out cultural and fund-raising activities, and also lobbying work in order to facilitate access to identity documents for indigenous women so that they could participate in the caravan and leave Kenya.

30th September – 1st October, Haiti

A workshop on the 30th September, around 60 women from several different women’s organisations from around the country, came together to debate their demands related to the four WMW Action Areas. On the 1st October, these demands were presented, in the presence of around 100 people, to Haitian authorities such as the Agriculture Ministry’s director general, a representative of the prime minister, the general secretary of public security and the woman who holds the title of “protector of citizens”, she being the person who bridges the gap between civil society and the Haitian state. She committed herself to transmit these demands to the relevant authorities for follow-up.

12th – 17th October, Quebec

The WMW national action in Quebec was made up of a series of marches and actions in different towns, carried out between the 12th and the 16th October, culminating in a large demonstration on the 17th October in Rimouski. Each day was dedicated to demands related to one of our Action Areas, with priority given to indigenous women's rights on the 16th. Participation on the 17th October exceeded expectations, with 10,000 people gathered in solidarity with the women of the DRC and to denounce violence against women in countries at war.

28th October, Togo

On their return from Bukavu, DRC, WMW-Togo activists organised a workshop – with the participation of various women's associations – to share news of the Closing Event of the 3rd International Action.

27th November, Mozambique

Women from Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, and from the country's 10 provinces participated in a national action on the 27th November organised in the framework of the 3rd International Action. A large march celebrated the 10 year anniversary of the first International Action and of the WMW's struggles for women's rights, while simultaneous activities took place in all provinces.

INTERNATIONAL CLOSING EVENT, 13TH – 17TH OCTOBER

The Closing Event of the 3rd International Action took place in Bukavu, South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo and consisted of a series of activities: panels on the WMW's four Action Areas; a solidarity visit to Mwenga with the inauguration of a memorial; a day of exchanging experiences between the WMW from different regions of the world and Congolese women; a food sovereignty and artistic fair; tree planting; and a Women's March for Peace.

The WMW international delegation was made up of 144 women from 40 countries from the 5 regions of the world. Along with delegations organised by allied movements (CADTM – Committee for the Abolition of Third World Debt, the Belgian Peace and Solidarity Caravan, CECI – Centre for International Studies and Cooperation in Canada, ITUC – International Trade Union Confederation, and WILPF – Women's *International League for Peace and Freedom*), we were 220 women from 41 countries, the majority from African countries. The largest delegations were from Burundi and Kenya, followed by the European delegation, made up of 10 countries. The Congolese Diaspora was present in the Belgian, French, and English delegations.



This Closing Event was also a huge mobilisation success in the DRC. There, the WMW sisters spoke of “*engouement*” – the World March of Women ‘fever’ – whereby all women wanted to feel a part of the event. The numbers say it all: an estimated 3.000 people, the majority of whom were women from the 11 DRC provinces, participated in the panels and other activities that took place in the Ateneo Ibanda (13th – 16th October). Furthermore, 250 journalists – both national press and international correspondents – were registered to cover the event. And an estimated 1000 people participated in the visit to Mwenga, as well as around 2000 local people who joined the visitors, as well as 20.000 women (and men), from diverse political currents and social sectors, who participated in the Women’s March for Peace on the 17th October.

17th OCTOBER: NATIONAL SOLIDARITY ACTIONS

While an international delegation was in Bukavu, women from around the world took part in street actions and other activities simultaneous to the 3rd International Action Closing Event. Solidarity for women living in conflict zones was demonstrated by women from 10 NCBs (in some countries in more than one town or city):

10th October

WMW activities in Brussels, **Belgium**

13th October

Activity in Potosi, **Bolivia**, in solidarity with the women of the DRC

13th – 17th October

Series of local actions and marches in **Quebec**

14th October

WMW action in Neuchâtel, **Switzerland**

16th October

WMW conference on the human rights of women, Rabat, **Morocco**

WMW demonstration in Canaletes, Barcelona, **Catalonia**

WMW action in solidarity with the women of the DRC, Cologne, **Germany**

16th – 17th October

Mobilization of State WMW Committees in **Brazil** for the closure of the 3rd International Action

Demonstrations in **France**: Paris, Narbonne, Valence, Marseille, Rennes and Périgueux

17th October

Closure of the 3rd International Action in **Galicia**

WMW action in Rimouski, **Quebec**

Second WMW action in Bern, **Switzerland**

18th October

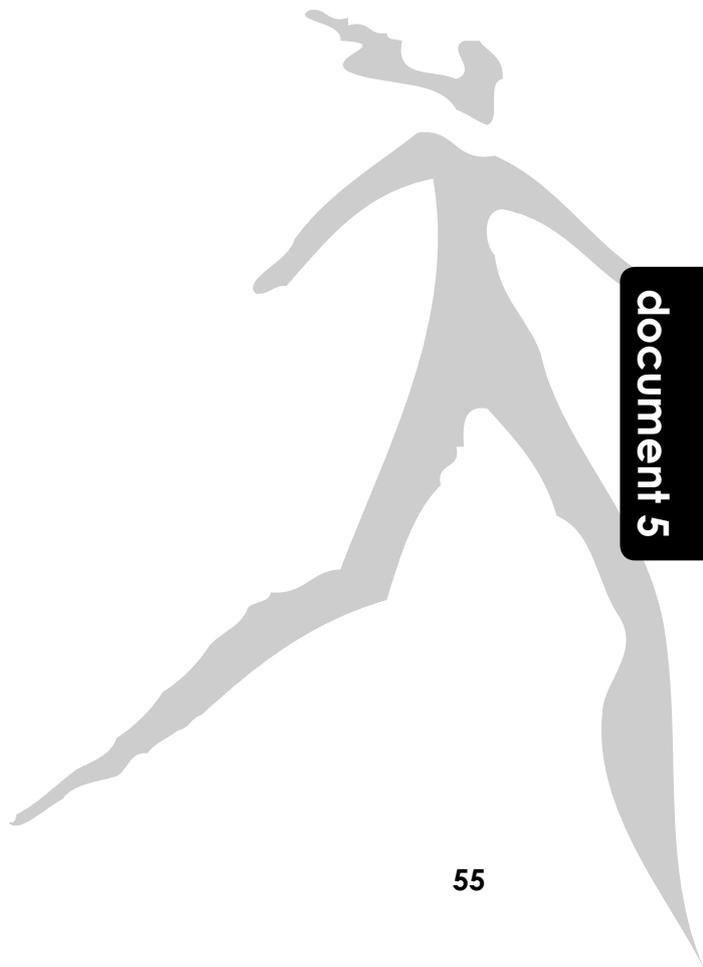
WMW activities in Chiapas, **Mexico**

21st October

WMW event “Women in conflicts”, Montpellier, **France**

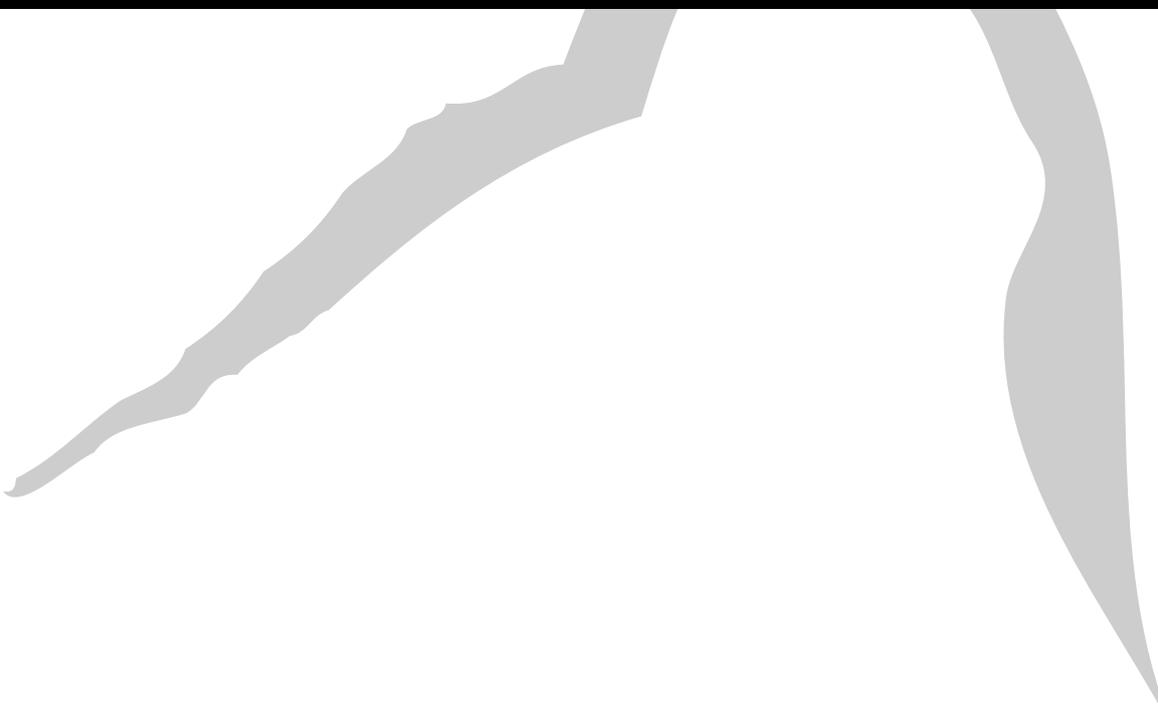
For more information about national solidarity actions on and around the 17th October: http://www.mmm2010.info/news-1/acciones-en-solidaridad-a-las-mujeres-congolesas?set_language=en

“Women on the March until we are All Free!”





Document 6



Socio-politico-economic context*

The 8th International Meeting of the World March of Women will be held in November 2011. This is an important moment for us, not only to evaluate our 3rd International Action, but also to improve our work as an anti-capitalist, feminist, and grassroots movement. We need to construct a common analysis of the consequences of the capitalist model crisis, felt most strongly in countries considered to central. We also need to analyse the growing conservatism and militarisation around the world.

This document, written by the International Committee, aims to contribute information to the debates being carried out as part of the National Coordinating Bodies' preparatory processes for the International Meeting. The basis of this document is an analysis of the capitalist, economic, financial, environmental and social reproduction crises, which have led to an increase of inequalities and contradictions in a society marked by violence against women, as a permanent tool to control women's bodies and lives. We suggest complementing this document with other analyses of the regional, national and local contexts. All contributions and comments, etc, are welcome. The International Secretariat will receive contributions to the text until the 11th September. We recognise that the political, socio-economic situation changes all the time and we stress that this is not and will not be a final document. We invite you to read it not only with WMW participant groups in your countries, but with other movements and organisations that share our vision and values.

The current situation can be analysed from different perspectives, which are not necessarily contradictory. The financial crisis, unemployment and debt levels in Northern countries opened up space for a questioning of the current model and neoliberal discourse, and for an increase in social mobilisations. Nevertheless, neoliberal policies are kept in place. The same neoliberal "solutions" to the crisis prevail, from cutting public spending and attacking the rights of women workers, to maintaining levels of corporate greed, including financial business and military expenditure. Pressure is growing on "real assets", such as land and real estate, resulting in landgrabbing of peasant, indigenous, and traditional lands, and the stalling of urban reform. Or is it the case that Southern countries benefit from increased commodities (raw materials) prices and the fact that their economies are more directed to internal markets?

Undisputable are the ultra-conservative sectors attacks on our rights – civil, sexual and reproductive – as women, through both public and political-electoral means. The mass media – controlled by large, often multi-national, companies or, in some countries, powerful families – supports and strengthens this offensive against women as well as the criminalisation of

* Text for Debate at the 8th International Meeting of the WMW, November 2011



poverty and social struggles. So far, left-wing sectors were not able to effectively respond to these attacks.

Despite the existence of several laws against gender violence, we have witnessed the intensification of violence against women, expressed through feminicides, despite the existence of diverse laws against gender-based violence. We have particularly noticed the increase of violence against women (and their families) who are active in social movements on every continent. This situation is also reflected in the rape and persecution of women, particularly in contexts of militarisation.

Crises, work, migration

The work done by women, in its multiple possible forms, is at the centre of the economic and market organisation of our societies in the capitalist, racist and patriarchal system. Women are to this day primarily responsible for care-work at home, in their communities or in the service sector, thus reproducing the model which has been historically designated to them by the capitalist and patriarchal society. Women are present in greater numbers than men in the kinds of work that sustain entire communities, such as agricultural and peasant production, artisan fishing or small-scale manufacture. They are also more active in economic production and sectors that depend on intensive labour-force within today's globalised market, such as the dressmaking and shoe industries and agro-exportation.

One of the features of this systemic crisis is the crisis of the social reproduction model, based on the sexual division of labour, which attributes productive work (production of merchandise) to men, and reproductive work (caring for people) to women. Moreover, a hierarchy is established, in which the former is more important than the latter. This model subjects care-work, human relationships and the organisation of work and consumption to the rules of the market, which aim to increase profit through efficiency and effectiveness within the current neoliberal phase of capitalism. This is particularly evident in the privatisation of common goods, such as public health services, education and water distribution. Given the pre-planned weakening and non-existence of public and community care services (for children, the ill or elderly, etc), women find themselves working long hours without remuneration, individually fulfilling tasks that are historically invisible and without salaries.

This exploitation situation stimulates the migration of women, between countries of the Southern hemisphere and, principally, to countries in the North. In some cases, certain women from the North end up exploiting women migrants, in order to fulfil both their social reproduction and production responsibilities. This situation is worsened by governmental policies, company practices and organised crime in the trafficking of women for forced labour.

In many communities¹, income from the Diaspora permits the daily survival of families and the improvement of local infrastructure, in situations where the State is totally absent. The

1. Such as Mali, Peru and Ecuador

governments of these countries of origin are interested in these incomes in order to lessen the internal pressure for jobs and services and to guarantee the financial resources needed to pay the debts and royalties of multinational companies. On the other hand, northern companies and governments are interested in receiving migrant workers because they accept precarious conditions and they are the first to be disposed of when the need decreases.

Despite the crisis, unemployment, reductions in income and even the return of migrants to their country of origin, the volume of remittances sent home by men and women workers is still higher than public spending for development.

Once again, women remain invisible within the debate around the crisis: male unemployment is highlighted, while the fact that women have only kept their jobs because their insertion in the labour market has always been based on less rights and lower wages is ignored. Full employment has rarely been an option for women. Official statistics do not take female unemployment into account. Furthermore, women's unemployment is hidden through childcare and house keeping, in the exchange of services and in underpaid activities.

In general, the crisis is being used to justify the undermining of workers' rights, the reduction of their salaries, and mass redundancies in the public sector, where there is a high concentration of women workers. Despite the protests and strikes in some countries and sectors, the trade unions aren't managing to react sufficiently. In many countries, in addition to the pay cuts, there has been a rise in the prices of food and basic services, thus increasing poverty.

In the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries work remuneration within the Gross National Product (GNP) continues to decrease in relation to the remuneration of capital. We have observed changes being made to pension and social security programs in those countries where they exist, as part of the structural changes that are taking place. These changes are having a larger impact on women, which were already discriminated by these very same systems that do not recognise social reproduction as work.

Crisis and conservatism

Within the framework of the crisis, we also see the progress of an ultra-conservative approach that relegates this whole debate to second place, while at the same time heaping praise on patriarchal families and blaming women for society's problems (including male unemployment). Xenophobia, racism, lesbophobia and homophobia are further elements of this way of thinking.

The religious conservative sectors – be they Catholic, Evangelist, Hindu or Muslim – continue their offensive against legitimate women's rights or against their struggle for these rights. These groups not only exert pressure from the outside, but are also present in a very organised way within State power (legislative, executive and judiciary) and institutions. This is visible, for example, in the Christian attacks against reproductive and sexual rights,



and in the Islamic offensive against the approval and implementation of family codes that recognise women as having equal rights to men.

We need a more in-depth analysis of the connections between this ultra-conservative offensive and the greater exploitation of women's work. For example, the ways in which patriarchal family ideals are used to encourage unemployed men to believe that they have the right to control the intensity and remuneration of their wife's work, or sexual harassment is used by men to control women's work in sweatshops. Additionally, sexual violence is used to punish women that demand their rights and to spread terror.

Increasing alliances with conservative sectors, including those linked to religious fundamentalists, is one of the strategies in place to strengthen this capitalist and patriarchal model and the "solutions" to the crises. In theory, "capitalist development" breaks family or clan ties so that each individual is free to sell their labour or to consume as they wish. The ideology of experimentation and of "the new" promotes the production of goods (many of which have no use and present health risks), the circulation of merchandise and profit rates. In reality, however, capitalism has always relied on the family to produce trained workers, whose basic needs are met thanks to women's work. Thus, in moments of crisis, the training of the working classes is strengthened by an appeal to family values and to women as their guardians.

It's evident that democracy and basic rights are under attack all over the world, ranging from the selective functioning of the juridical systems (very slow when dealing with attacks to collective rights and very fast when dealing with the criminalisation of the poor, migrants or social struggles) to extreme situations such as the support of *coups d'état* (as in Honduras).

This ultra-conservative offensive makes use of the ownership and control over the mass media to carry out an ideological war, with the sole goal of distracting and deviating people's attention from structural issues, as well as imposing their analyses and "solutions" to the crisis. In addition, women are used as public spokespersons for political conservatism: just as Margaret Thatcher was the expression of neoliberalism and the weakening of union organisation in 1980, and Sarah Palin² and Marine Le Pen stand out as public expressions of a "modern" fascism. We must struggle against them, to prevent them from strengthening their positions.

Climate change and environmental and energetic crisis

With regards to the climate debate, environmental, indigenous and peasant movements have successfully helped other movements and sectors of society to understand that the crisis promotes a conflicting relationship between humans and companies and the environment. Joint actions have consequently been organised against false solutions to climate change.

2. Sarah Palin was vice-presidential candidate for the United States in 2008 for the Republican Party and is the main public figure of the "Tea Party", a conservative, anti-state political movement. Marine Le Pen is president of the National Front, the extreme right party in France.

Solutions to the environmental crisis put forward by green capitalism include creating carbon credit markets and replacing vehicles of personal use, home appliances or inefficient products with models that use renewable energy. The promotion of this so called 'clean energy', such as agrofuels, results in the expansion of monoculture, landgrabbing, the contamination of nature through the use of genetically modified seeds and the intensive use of chemicals, without respecting communities' rights. Nuclear energy is also considered "clean" by green capitalism. In general terms, it is clear that poorer or "less developed" regions (from the point of view of the capitalist model) become energy-supply areas for richer industrialized regions. This is valid for both poor and rich countries, such as Japan, where the earthquake and tsunami of March 11th, 2011, revealed to the world the economic inequalities between the region of the Fukushima nuclear power plant and the rest of the country. In many other countries, power plants are being installed in native peoples' or peasants' territories, with the purpose of serving large industrial centres and not the communities around them.

Despite their discourses and propaganda about environmental responsibility, the large mining and petroleum transnational corporations maintain their projects that lead to the destruction of large areas of land and to the intensive use and contamination of water. Moreover, they are often involved in slave labour and armed conflicts.

The huge projects and social disasters that worsen natural events like earthquakes, torrential rains, and droughts, provoke the displacement of populations and the re-occupation of territories by large companies or foreign governments; a process known as landgrabbing. Similar processes are underway in urban areas for the same reasons or due to large international sporting events, as a result of tourism and the entertainment industry or purely for the sake of speculation purposes.

There are many similarities between companies' strategies and the discourse of appropriation / domination of nature, territories and women's bodies. Likewise, there are parallels between the use of the environment and of women's time; their exploitation is considered inexhaustible and both are used as a variable easily and continuously adjusted so as to maintain profits immune to the cyclic crises of capitalism.

We need to strengthen our political action in order to reclaim not only women's territory - their body and their land - but also water, biodiversity and the culture of those people living in these territories for generations.

The market's offensive on the environment is presented as a solution to many elements of the current crisis: for example the new forms of monetary circulation – such as the carbon credit market – that are not linked in any way to the real production of goods and services, or the "right" to pollute that is negotiated on the stock market. The re-granting of legitimacy to United Nations (UN) negotiation processes is another example, as seen in the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UN Convention on Climate Change and the upcoming Rio+20 Conference, both reminiscent of World Trade Organisation (WTO) conferences. They also allow for a renewed legitimisation of the World Bank, known for financing large projects that cause environmental devastation, and now responsible for managing the climate fund.



In this context, there are new attempts to instrumentalise women. REDD (Reducing Emissions from Degradation and Forest Degradation) is a mechanism that takes over forest control, dismissing the original peoples who have lived there for generations and transferring the power to governments, private companies and NGOs for their own use. In return, women are promised resources (possibly from the carbon market) just as they have been promised patents for traditional knowledge during past WTO negotiations. Indigenous and peasants' organisations strongly criticise this mechanism, but some NGOs that work with women spread ostensive propaganda claiming that REDD is an "opportunity for women", as if to say that women would benefit from the resources that would supposedly be transferred to their communities.

The illusion that the climate change market will provide many resources, with funding from companies, creates considerable confusion among social organisations, especially against the backdrop of cuts in public support for development and fundraising by social movements in the North.

Debt and free trade

The increase of poverty and national dependency as a consequence of structural adjustment programmes and, more recently, the financial crisis, reveal the weakness of neoliberal strategies. Even so, the basic pillars of this strategy – indebtedness and free trade – continue to operate and are even spreading further.

The increase of family indebtedness, even within the context of high unemployment levels and low wages, continues to be used as a way of stimulating the consumer market without distributing wealth.

Governments go into debt by relying on future growth as a guarantee. In addition to the repayment of this debt imposed upon future generations, much of this credit is used to build the necessary infrastructure for large transnational companies that are present in the country. In moments of debt crises, the dominant discourse demands the payment of these debts with cuts in public services.

Debt relief negotiations for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) continue to demand the privatisation of companies, or national laws that benefit the interests of transnational companies.

The World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) continue to impose negotiation conditions, even though their legitimacy does not carry the same weight as it did in the 1980's. Nowadays countries resort more easily to cash loans or product exchange, or even to direct investments from China.

As for the opening of markets and foreign investments, we observe two strategies in place: the ongoing bilateral treaty negotiations between countries or sub-regions directly with the

United States and/or the European Union, and the resumption of negotiations to conclude the WTO Doha round. Although halted in 2005, governments present at the ministerial meeting of November 2009 in Geneva (Switzerland) committed themselves to the Doha Round. Both in bilateral treaties and at the WTO, the predominance of market rules now extends beyond the “free circulation of goods” to the free circulation of services, such as access to health, education, and water, which were not considered tradable goods in the past.

Given the illegitimacy of multilateral financial institutions and the deadlock reached by neoliberal economical integration projects, social movements – especially in the Americas – have been analysing alternative proposals for regional integration based on solidarity, complementarity and the reduction of inequalities, and have been discussing these with the region’s governments. Other forms of financial integration, such as the Bank of the South, have been put forward.

On the other hand, and against a backdrop of widespread crisis, rich countries have been promoting the G-20 since the end of 2008 as a way to regain and / or speed up trade negotiations in a non-transparent and undemocratic form. The G-20 is the meeting of the 20 richest countries in the world (the G-8 and the “emerging” countries such as Brazil, China, India and South Africa), with the countries representing two thirds of the world’s population and of trade and over 90% of gross world product. Thanks to the resources made available, particularly by emerging countries in the G-20, the IMF and the World Bank have gained new momentum, thus imposing once again their austerity policies in countries of both the Northern and the Southern hemisphere. For instance, in emergency situations such as the one in Haiti, the WB (rather than the Bank of the South) coordinated resources destined to rebuild the country, with little autonomy granted to the national government and a complete absence of civil society. Furthermore, the G-20 is heading towards a new model of world economical and financial governance, for today it defines WB guidelines and important issues of the United Nations (UN) agenda.

Increase in militarization

As a way of activating the economy in a period of crisis, there has been a rise in government spending on security and the purchase of arms in many countries, together with increased militarisation to strengthen control over territories (including water, agricultural land, mineral resources and biodiversity).

In spite of the economic crisis and the cut in government spending, military expenditure keeps on increasing. Barack Obama, Nobel Peace Prize winner, proposed the highest military budget ever for 2011 – 708 billion dollars, a 7.1% increase in comparison to 2010. In the year 2008, the United States was responsible for 41.5% of worldwide military expenditure, followed by China, responsible for 5.8%.

As well as the increase in military expenditure, the current global context is characterised by the presence of Private Military Companies – an industry that is responsible for the



circulation of billions of dollars every year – and of the militarisation of people’s daily lives. Examples include the militarisation of humanitarian aid in Haiti, and so-called public security in poor urban areas.

The discourses of “pacifying”, democratizing or assuring women’s rights in specific countries is used by many countries in the North to justify military occupations, as was the case in Afghanistan or Iraq, and now in Libya. These discourses hide the North’s real interests in controlling territories and their natural and human resources. The hypocrisy of the Western rhetoric around the defence of democracy and women’s rights is revealed through the death of civilians – mostly women and children – and the destruction of basic infrastructure, such as access to water and housing.

To add insult to injury, foreign attacks and military occupations lead to a strengthening of authoritarian structures in local communities, which react to the threat by imposing radical values and even the deprivation of individual freedoms. On a daily basis, women are confronted with the need to compromise between respect for traditional rules that provide their communities with cohesion, on the one hand, and the exercise of – or desire to exercise – individual freedom, on the other. As a consequence of each racist, xenophobic offensive, or of foreign occupations, women experience less and less room for manoeuvre. In addition, in conflict situations, armed groups co-opt community members and disseminate mistrust. Young women are often used as informants, drawn in through strategies that include romantic relationships with soldiers, etc.

As already witnessed in global financial governance, there is also a restructuring in the military context. In November 2010, NATO – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, an alliance that brings together the United States and 27 other European countries (corresponding to 75% of the global military budget), adopted a new “strategic concept”: that of self-named guardian of peace and international order, not only in the northern hemisphere but also from a global perspective. In order to fulfil this role, its members often manipulate decision-making procedures in the UN Security Council. Through the rhetoric around the protection of civilian lives, NATO looks out for its own interests, as in Libya, and yet ignores civilians’ rights when of no interest to them as, for example, in the Palestinian slaughter executed by Israel.

On the other hand, there is growing resistance to the presence of United States military bases on foreign soil: for example, Rafael Correa, Ecuador’s president, fulfilled his campaign promise not to renovate the Manta Air Base agreement with the US, which forced the US to stop its use of the air base from September 2009 onwards. There are an estimated 800 to 900 military bases with the presence of U.S. troops around the world. However, when a country or community wins the struggle to close a base or expel foreign troops, these military personnel and installations move to another region or country.

In most of the diverse armed conflicts taking place worldwide today, women’s bodies are used as a weapon and spoils of war. Through a series of Security Council resolutions, the United Nations formally acknowledges this fact.

Resolution 1325 was adopted in 2000, and, since then, other resolutions have dealt with the issue of violence against women in war situations. These resolutions further acknowledge women's participation in conflict resolution, in defining priorities to rebuild the country, and in developing post-conflict social relations. The goal is to achieve a higher participation of women, which could possibly strengthen community reconciliation processes and prioritise women's recommendations for budgets and for the reorganisation of economic and social life. However, it has so far been reduced to the goal of a higher participation of women in the so-called peace and stabilisation operations: currently women represent 8% of this contingent; the goal for 2014 is to increase it to 20%.

We need to relate the increased participation of women in negotiation processes to the affirmation of a political agenda that confronts the causes of conflict and also of attacks on human rights and women's integrity. As regards the issue of militarization, the real challenge today lies in building a women's agenda, which expresses the voices and experiences of grassroots women as well as feminist, anti-capitalist views.

The United Nations currently carries out 27 operations around the world, 16 of which are missions. The WMW is present in the form of a National Coordinating Body or contact group in countries with a UN military presence such as Haiti, Western Sahara, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Cyprus, and India/Pakistan. Women in these countries express many concerns regarding the presence of these missions, especially because when become permanent. Local populations see them as occupation troops that provoke a distortion in the local economy due to the high dollar wages of their employees and military personnel, while creating a sexual exploitation network of girls and women around them. Some WMW activists have argued that by working to mainstream gender in the military policy, we end up militarising the gender policy. We have realised that this discussion cannot be reduced to how to guarantee gender mainstreaming in United Nations security policy without questioning the policy itself.

The WMW in this scenario: resisting and affirming our alternatives

In 2010, we carried out 3rd International Action, mobilising thousands of women from 76 countries around our four Action Areas: Women's work (women's economic autonomy); the Common good and public services; Peace and demilitarisation; Violence against women. Through these actions, we have denounced the false solutions to the crisis, that only aggravate the capitalist, patriarchal, and racist model, and we've sought to highlight bottom-up alternatives.

Throughout the last three years, we've moved forward in the consolidation of our identity through reflection and the organisation of our commitments and demands in each one of these Action Areas (see <http://www.marchemondiale.org/actions/2010action/text/en>). In the context of the systemic crisis, the Action Areas were especially useful in organising our



criticism of the model as the WMW, both for our grassroots activists and as part of our dialogue with allies and society in general. The Action Areas have concretely translated our struggle against poverty and violence against women, and they were references for National Coordinating Bodies in the construction of their national platforms.

Nonetheless, we have evaluated that we still need to work on interconnecting the four Action Areas and rescuing the Women's Global Charter for Humanity, in order to construct and strengthen the principles that connect our struggles. Our permanent challenge is how to develop analyses and actions that give shape to alternative ways of organising production and reproduction. This further reinforces the need to continuously put down roots and build the World March of Women as a permanent movement.

The 2011 – 2012 period must be one of resistance and intense struggle to avoid losing ground on the rights and living conditions of peoples. Revolutions in Arab countries and Africa show that the deterioration of people's living conditions can be followed by actions and demonstrations, leading in many cases to the collapse of governments historically aligned with the exclusionary policies of rich countries. In all these processes women participate actively, being equally imprisoned or killed in defence of real democracy. We must be vigilant so that our presence is also ensured during the transition moment, and that such victories are not reversed in actions that increase the control and violence against women.

Now more than ever, we must carry out political training and reflection activities to counter the dissemination of ultra-conservative ideologies, while innovating the way we organise and support our movement.

Challenges in building the WMW as a movement

Connecting reflection and common action at various levels (local, regional, international)

Over the last few years, we have realised that we cannot work with the Action Areas in a stagnant, fragmented way. If we are to achieve our goal of building a feminist movement that permanently mobilises large numbers of women worldwide, we have to continuously seek interconnections between them. In order to do this we have to observe and face the changes in the politico-socio-economic context, so that the demands that we've agreed upon at an international level continue to make an impact. Furthermore, we have to constantly establish connections between the global context and our struggles and issues at a national level, and we must work at different levels with a common strategy. In this way, our context analysis, demands and commitments are not separated from the construction of the WMW as a movement and its resulting challenges.

In 2010, women from many different countries incorporated the struggle for demilitarisation into their actions, and not only those from countries in situations of open armed conflict. Using these struggles as a framework, we began connecting the causes and consequences

of conflicts, which are in turn related to our other Action Areas, such as the control and exploitation of women's bodies and work, of their territories and of the environment.

Developing analyses and political training

Whilst preparing and carrying out the 2010 International Action, NCBs and Participating Groups worked actively with the Action Area documents, organising workshops and agreeing on demands at national levels. In doing so, they recognised the importance of highlighting the interconnections between the Action Areas in order to move forward with the recovery of feminist thinking, women's concrete experiences, and the current context. We have to continuously work on new syntheses that express the WMW's vision in a simpler and stronger way.

From now on, our priority is to turn our methodology into action, not only in terms of training, but also in expressing women's concrete experiences, thus investing in a common vision that is present in written documents, and more so in actions and activities of the National Coordinating Bodies.

We must keep up our strategic debates on the topics around which different perceptions coexist within the WMW, such as prostitution, lesbian rights, and abortion. We should additionally affirm our counter-hegemonic views – for example our conception of sexist violence as a tool of control over women's bodies, lives and sexuality – even though not all NCBs have taken these views on as their own.

Consolidating the WMW as a permanent movement at local, regional and international levels

Now that the 2010 International Action is over, National Coordinating Bodies need to establish a permanent functioning dynamic and understand the WMW as a permanent movement – capable of making an impact on local and national contexts – and not only as an event that takes place every five years (the period between International Actions).

For this goal to become a reality, we need to deepen the exchanges at organisational level and in relation to the contents of our struggles, between the WMW from different countries, on an inter-continental or an inter-regional scale. We should also need to strengthen thematic networking and exchanges, for example between the struggle for the rights of domestic and migrant workers being carried out in India, the US and South Africa, or the connection among countries in conflict.

Finally, we need to construct the March where we are not yet present, especially in countries and communities that live under Islamic laws, but also in countries economically rich, such as Russia and China.



Formalising functioning agreements

Within the WMW, very different political organisational cultures coexist, from informal groups to more institutionalised associations. The idea of having registered functioning agreements always raises concerns: are we becoming too bureaucratic, or are we creating traps for ourselves? The existent Rules and Bylaws are insufficient for the current moment of the WMW and we need to update our ideas of what is a National Coordinating Body, what responsibilities delegates have at the International Meetings and what the role of the International Committee is, among other issues. Another goal is to organise the process of transferring the International Secretariat from Brazil to another country without creating gaps and ensuring that the WMW keeps functioning as an international movement.

Strengthening youth, indigenous, and immigrant participation

We recognise that one of our strong points is the diversity of political cultures and experiences among WMW activists and our capacity to reach agreements. Yet we acknowledge important absences in some countries. We also recognise the ongoing challenge to share responsibilities at an international level with young, immigrant and indigenous women and we have consequently developed some mechanisms to tackle this challenge. For example, we invite at least one young woman per country delegation to the International Meetings and we take part in activities organised by indigenous women while inviting them to take part in ours. Nevertheless, we need to move forward, not just institutionally, but in how we include the discussion around racism / colonialism in our analyses or how we develop actions that respond to urgent issues in young women's lives, such as precarious employment, violence and commodification.

Developing our alliances policy at different levels

We build alliances because it is not possible to eliminate the causes of poverty and of violence against women without a deep political, economic, and social transformation. We need a large, encompassing movement of movements, one that changes the correlation of power that sustains the capitalist, colonialist, patriarchal, and racist order.

The systemic crisis has revealed to an even greater extent the need to create and / or maintain common spaces among different social movements: of strategic analysis, the development of alternatives and the organisation of common actions and solutions. Given the fragmentation of spaces such as campaigns, thematic networks and forums, we increasingly believe in the Social Movements Assembly as a priority space for reflection and common action for movements of the geopolitical South and North.

Another priority for the WMW is the ongoing follow-up of the World Social Forum process. We are part of the International Council and its commissions, as well as its Liaison Group. Furthermore, with the support of NCBs and regional work groups, we have organised

activities at national and regional Social Forums and at the World Social Forum in Senegal in January 2011.

Since the Forum for Food Sovereignty (Nyeleni), we have established a close alliance with Via Campesina and Friends of the Earth International with regard to this struggle. The principle of food sovereignty stimulates debate around women's autonomy in different countries and the common problems they face on a daily basis, and promotes the establishment or deepening of connections between rural and urban women. At all levels of our relationship with Via Campesina we are committed to supporting them as a movement, so that the Campaign to end violence against rural women becomes a reality.

In our 3rd International Action Closing Event in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the debates were enriched by the presence and contributions of women's delegations from the Committee for the Abolition of Third World Debt, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). It is our hope that these alliances will help deepen our work in those areas we have in common.

The fact that we operate as an alert network is another increasingly important aspect of our alliances policy, given the criminalisation of social movements throughout the world and the threats of *coup d'état*.

Nonetheless, we still face the challenge of rooting this policy of alliances locally and regionally, and of involving more WMW activists from different countries and regions to subsequently follow-up.

Thinking communication strategically

Within the WMW we have set ourselves the challenge to deepen our vision of strategic communication (rather than only instrumental). This includes establishing and improving internal and external communication channels as well as our relations with commercial media and, especially, with community media (newsletters, news websites and radio and TV programmes produced by our organisations and allies). Given the role of mass media in the definition of the public agenda for debate (what issues and how they should be discussed), we have to intensify our discussion around the democratisation of the media. We should strengthen our strategy to promote the discussion of ideas within different communication spaces. As part of this strategy, the WMW actively takes part in shared communication initiatives with other movements (such as *Minga Informativa de los Movimientos Sociales* in Latin America).



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The World March of Women is an international feminist action movement connecting grassroots groups and organizations working to eliminate the causes at the root of poverty and violence against women. We struggle against all forms of inequality and discrimination directed at women. Our values and actions are directed at making political, economic and social change. They centre on the globalization of solidarity; equality between women and men, among women themselves and between peoples; the respect and recognition of diversity among women; the multiplicity of our strategies; the appreciation of women's leadership; and the strengthening of alliances among women and with other progressive social movements.

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