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- 1) CSW55: Back to the pre-Beijing Ages? Not if We Can Help it!
- 2) Engendering European Development Policy: a Bag Full of Holes
- 3) International Women's Day and Migrant Women's Rights
- 4) Public Consultation on EC 'Trade and Development' Communication to Start at the End of April
- 5) Connect! East/South/West Women for Development
- 7) Needed: A True World Bank Development Report on Gender Equality
- 8) The Mapuche in Chile: Stop the Invisible Human Rights Violation
- 9) Free Our Seeds! International Days of Action, Brussels, 17–18 April 2011
- 10) Finland's Political Change – a Threat to Women's Rights?
- 11) New Publications and Resources

CSW55: Back to the pre-Beijing Ages? Not if We Can Help it!

By *Joni van de Sand, Rineke van Dam (WO=Men)*
and *Julia Günther (WIDE Austria)*



The 55th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) from 22 February to 4 March 2011 was not expected to cause a stir – especially considering the uncontroversial main theme of 'access and participation of

women and girls to education, training, science and technology'.

However, it became the stage for a heated confrontation between progressive and reactionary voices debating the meaning of 'gender equality'. Various representatives of national WIDE platforms were present in New York, amongst whom Joni van de Sand and Rineke van Dam from WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform (The Netherlands) and Julia Günther from WIDE Austria. They reflect on the formal negotiations during the CSW, its outcomes, and the implications of these outcomes for WIDE

members in terms of lobbying the European Union (EU).

We could hardly believe it as we heard how the negotiations on the Agreed Conclusions of CSW55 were unfolding behind closed doors: concepts such as 'gender equality', 'gender mainstreaming' and, indeed, the fundamental concept of 'gender' itself were subjects of discussion! Opposition to including these terms in the Agreed Conclusions is an indication of imminent setbacks for women's and men's equal choices and opportunities worldwide – particularly because these concepts have been agreed language by the international community since the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action.

Lobby for equal choice and opportunity

In spite of its observer status, the Holy See (the Vatican) 'aggressively defended' pro-family arguments. It was supported by Benin on behalf of the Africa Group and sometimes by representatives of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (Qatar, Iran, Yemen, Pakistan, Syria). These delegations repeatedly pushed for a narrow definition of gender as 'men and women', in an attempt to prevent inclusion of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals and intersex (LGBTIs). Such a narrow definition would set us back to a focus on 'sex': women and men as biologically

different, which would remove the aspect of power inequalities from the discussion and leave space for 'pro-family' arguments to relegate women to their roles solely as mothers and procreators.

Although we recognise the important roles of women and men in parenting and other caretaking roles within the family, we emphasise the rights of individuals to make their own, well-informed choices and to have equal opportunities to realise those choices. Allies for gender equality during the CSW55 included the EU, Switzerland, Turkey and Mexico. At the door of the conference room, we (Joni van de Sand and Rineke van Dam from WO=MEN, in cooperation with IPPF, CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, and many others) provided these delegates with previously agreed language to support their arguments. In that way, these delegations could counteract the blatant assaults on gender equality, human rights and freedom of choice.

The young women's caucus offered argumentations from a young women's perspective. The draft of the Agreed Conclusions had only little or no reference to girls and/or young women; therefore, the young women's caucus was keen on bringing in the issues of the younger generation and proposed rephrased paragraphs to the Committee. Furthermore, the Mentoring Project, planned and carried out by Julia Günther (WIDE Austria), Daniela Reiter (International Alliance of Women) and Catharina Grau (International Federation of University Women), was designed to encourage networking among women from all around the world – regardless of age, country of origin or social background and expertise – to join forces, motivate and support (new) NGO representatives to become more deeply involved and learn lobbying tools, especially in the light of the negatively developing negotiations on the Agreed Conclusions, promote an intergenerational dialogue and advocate for women's networks. The pilot project had a successful start and reached out to more than 120 multipliers in five caucuses and one side event and will continue at next year's CSW – aiming to play a bigger role in advocating for equal choice and opportunities.

Outcome document

The outcome document of this year's CSW shows several setbacks in already agreed language from the Beijing Platform for Action. 'Gender equality' is now only used twice in the entire text (!!!), whereas 'pro-family' language has gained more ground. Instead of moving forward to defend freedom of choice, sexual autonomy and the protection of human rights, we are losing language that we have already developed and agreed on. Moreover, the process of the negotiations itself is reason for concern and calls for alertness.

The statement by the EU on the Agreed Conclusions is a clear indication of shared concern about the developments at the CSW:

[...] "However, we note with disappointment the concerns expressed throughout the negotiations by some delegations with regard to concepts such as 'gender' and 'gender stereotypes'. [...] As such we were, and will remain, unwilling to go back to pre-Beijing concepts. Mr President, we hope that in the future, delegations can [...] continue to further the overriding objective of the Commission, which is to accelerate and develop the full enjoyment and unhindered exercise of equal rights for women and girls all over the world."

On a positive note, the negotiations show that there is a strong group of member states that do not wish to concede on past achievements and stand firm on gender equality and women's rights. Governments and organisations that recognise the importance of gender equality, including faith-based organisations all around the world, should not rest on their laurels. Cooperation is pivotal to providing a positive alternative to the feelings of fear and discomfort that conservatives are spreading. Because we stand for a world wherein diversity and choice are appreciated and celebrated!

For more extensive reflections on the CSW55 process, read the blog kept by WO=MEN (<http://womeninnewyork.blogspot.com>). In April this blog will be used by members of the network to report on the Commission on Population Development (CPD) in New York.

Engendering European Development Policy: a Bag Full of Holes

By Kasia Staszewska and Martina Nuti

This year's gender experts consultation on the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development (2010–2015), which took place in Brussels on 24 and 25 March, has finally got some political leverage and, unlike the previous one, given space for CSOs to present their comments and inputs to the plan.

The presence of Andris Piebalgs, EC Development Commissioner, and Michelle Bachelet, UN Women Executive Director (if only for the opening of the meeting), attracted decent Member States representation and fuelled the discussion on the importance of gender equality and women's rights to development debates. WIDE welcomed the progress in including civil society organisations (CSOs) and increasing the political profile of the Gender Action Plan (GAP), but pointed out that there will not be any real change unless the holes in the bag of European development policy – for example, trade, energy and agriculture – are fixed and work for women and men on the ground.

The consultation was a two-day event. The first day was for Member States' gender experts only, while the second day was open to civil society representatives. WIDE and CONCORD were both invited as speakers. We decided to join forces to present a review of the GAP and the role civil society should play in its monitoring and implementation. We focused on the GAP as only a small part of the EU's policies, which in most of the cases are not coherent with a gender equality and human rights-based approach.

Several policy processes are reshaping development policy right now; for WIDE, it is crucial that Europe and European development policy promote human rights, including women's rights. Many important documents that are being discussed at the moment can modify the European development framework – for example, the Green Paper on EU development policy, the EU Common Agricultural Policy and the new EU financial perspective (2014–2020).

This is then up to the EU leaders if they can put their objectives and funds where their mouth is – or at least in the GAP.

One of the biggest challenges when it comes to GAP implementation is that it is not working in isolation and needs to be linked with the policies that are defining the matters. Policy coherence has to be ensured by assessing external and internal EU policies and controlled by gender-sensitive budgets. The Green Paper, for example, is going to set up the basis for EU development policies in the coming years, but it is completely gender blind and suggests that development equals economic growth. The Green Paper should acknowledge that growth can have negative impacts on women and needs to reflect women's rights and gender equality as key objectives.

The GAP as it is now is an EC technical document only. To become real, it must be recognised beyond the Brussels circle, at the Member State level. Some, like Spain, have already done a good job to put it into practice. As for the others, much stronger political will is needed, followed by the concrete allocation of funds, and strengthened capacity and operational mechanisms to deliver and monitor it, in order to make it happen for real.

CSOs can and should play a strong role not only in GAP implementation, but at all stages of political cooperation, including policy dialogues, monitoring and evaluation. But, as with the GAP today, our role is not clear. It is crucial that CSOs, both in the donor and in the partner countries, will be recognised as partners. Women's organisations, in particular, have to be considered as fundamental interlocutors in the whole process.

The GAP needs a stronger and more ambitious monitoring and inclusive accountability mechanism to increase the quality of the implementation, with clearly defined time-frame targets, responsibilities, budget allocations and indicators. Currently, reliable information and an accounting mechanism on progress are missing; for example, there is no use of gender-segregated data, scarce transparency and ambiguous accountability.

Conclusion

WIDE and CONCORD recommendations were welcomed by the Member States' gender experts. It has been said that there is a political commitment from the European Commission, Member States and UN Women to drive the process for reform. For the future it is very important that a wide range of partners – CSOs and women's organisations, specifically – are involved in implementing the GAP, not only from a technical but also a political perspective. WIDE will strive to follow the EC and Member States' performance to make sure that the GAP is not lost in the complex architecture of other plans and commitments without a gender equality and women's rights perspective in place. As Ms Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, General Secretary of YWCA and Action Aid Partner, said: *"the EU has been good so far in providing 'windows' of opportunity as far as funding, political participation and policy dialogues are concerned. But to make a change real for the women in the South, not windows but big doors are needed."*

International Women's Day and Migrant Women's Rights

By Filomenita Mongaya Høgsholm (KULU)



History entwined

If it were not for immigrant women, we might not be celebrating 8 March as International Women's Day (IWD) today, when we honour and recognise women's contributions and also protect their rights. IWD has been observed since the early 1900s, when the world, cataclysmic owing to industrial expansion and booming population growth, witnessed impassioned women campaigning for change. It

made headlines when 15,000 women, probably immigrant women among them, marched in 1908 through New York City demanding shorter hours, better pay and voting rights.

The past...

At the 1910 International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen, Clara Zetkin, working for the Social Democratic Party in her native Germany, tabled the idea of an International Women's Day before more than 100 women from 17 countries, among them members of political parties and working women's clubs, including the first three women elected to the Finnish Parliament. Zetkin's suggestion was unanimously approved at the meeting. Thus was IWD celebrated for the first time in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland on 19 March 1911, with more than 1 million women and men attending. But less than a week later on 25 March, the tragic 'Triangle Fire' in New York City occurred, taking the lives of 146 garment workers, mostly Italian and Eastern European – Jewish – women immigrants. The tragedy underscored the dangerous working conditions of immigrant women workers in New York's sweatshops. It was a turning point for women workers and hence became instrumental in changing American labour laws.

From then on, the meaning of the tragic event would later be incorporated into the empowerment thrust commemorated on 8 March, now known as IWD, with special emphasis on women workers. That was exactly a century ago.

The present...

A whole century of struggle for rights has certainly brought significant changes to women workers' lives, but in many parts of the world, women's work continues to be undervalued, underpaid or unremunerated, and every single day on the calendar, women and girls in the global South, following their dreams of a better life, leave home to find jobs to secure their future by moving to the developed world of the North/West. They migrate to continents and cultures so far from their own.

The feminisation of migration

According to the International Office for Migration's bi-annual *World Migration Report* in 2010, 3% of the world's population – or 214 million people – were on the move, and 49% of these international migrants were women or girls, the proportion of females reaching 51% in more developed regions. Women now constitute 50% or more of the migrant workers in Asia, Africa and Latin America – among them heads of households who see it as their duty to go abroad and earn money to support their family's well-being – for example, the education of their children. Yet there is no indication that guarantees exist so that more women can migrate in safety. On the contrary, the area of protection has been marginalised, women migrants are still subjected to multiple discriminations, and the incidence of irregularity and of trafficking is rising.

But even without this criminal twist to female migration, women workers still pay the social costs of migration, since they suffer psychologically and emotionally from the separation from their children, which takes a toll on their health and quality of life.

Read the full article [here](#).

One World Action Celebrates 100 Years of International Women's Day!

ONE WORLD ACTION
FOR A JUST AND EQUAL WORLD

To mark the centenary of International Women's Day, One World Action (OWA) and Young Fabian Women hosted an event in Parliament to discuss the new United Nations agency for gender equality and women's empowerment – UN Women. A number of experts were invited to discuss the topic, and the event was attended by OWA's Women's Rights Champions, trustees, and lots of wonderful More Women More Power campaigners.

The speakers included MP Rushanara Ali, VSO's Kathy Peach, Baroness Glenys Kinnock, OWA's new Director Hannah Davies, and Helen Kijo-Bisimba, a lawyer from Tanzania who has been

working on women's rights for over 20 years. All of the speakers were amazing and brought to the table very different insights into the subject.

The speakers discussed UN Women's potential to improve the lives of women around the world, as well as the need to take positive and decisive action now. The subject of violence against women featured heavily in the discussion, as speakers drew upon their own experiences and the need to support women who experience violence, by having an international organisation with sufficient clout to defend and fight for their rights. The speakers also considered the role of the UK government in funding UN Women, and the need for the agency to have a seat at decision-making tables within the UN itself.

Public Consultation on EC 'Trade and Development' Communication to Start at the End of April

By Barbara Specht



On 30 March the European Commission's DG Trade organised a 'Civil Society Dialogue' meeting on the Trade and Development Communication that Trade Commissioner De Gucht has already been [announcing](#) for some time.

The Trade and Development Communication is expected to be adopted by the end of 2011. An online consultation will be launched at the end of April; a questionnaire will be made available on the DG Trade website which includes a number of questions on issues such as inclusive growth, sustainable development, trade and investment as tools for development, global and social standards, public procurement, intellectual property rights, private-sector

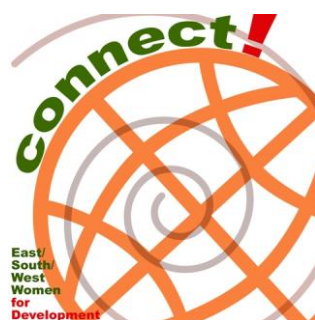
involvement etc. The public consultation will be open for two months.

The Communication will be authored jointly by Trade Commissioner De Gucht and Development Commissioner Piebalgs. It must be seen in the context of other recent policy initiatives reflecting on the future of development policies, including the Green Paper on development policy. The European Commission presents the Communication as another step in creating more 'policy coherence'; however, the question remains whether this translates into improved 'policy coherence for development' or rather bringing aid more in line with the EU's economic interests. So the leading question might not be how the EU's trade policy will serve development, but how development arguments can serve the EU's trade policy.

Read more about the Trade and Development Communication [here](#).

Connect! East/South/West Women for Development

By Marta Gontarska (KARAT)



A few years after EU enlargement, new Member States have already started shaping their development cooperation agendas. Previous experiences of Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania as partner countries receiving Official Development Assistance (ODA) have given them unique expertise in the development field.

Still, building their expertise as a donor country is a very important and challenging task, and sharing experiences and knowledge with women's movements from the global South and EU countries seems a good way to build the capacity of new Member States in planning and implementing development cooperation. One World Action (UK) and KARAT Coalition decided to answer this need and implement a project aimed at increasing the capacity of women's movements in new Member States through learning, sharing experiences and networking to generate stronger collaboration between

women from the East, South and West on EU gender equality and development policy and practice.

What is CONNECT?

CONNECT! East/South/West Women for Development is mostly focusing on building the capacity of women's organisations in the new Member States. The link between gender and development issues in the women's movement needs to be improved, which is why the main part of the project's activities are national dialogues – the meetings to share experiences in Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic and Slovakia. After a Regional Dialogue held in May 2010 in Warsaw, Poland, as a starting point for other meetings, the National Dialogues are mostly focused on the national context and problems and are strongly linked with the national agendas of women's and development organisations.

CONNECT in 2011

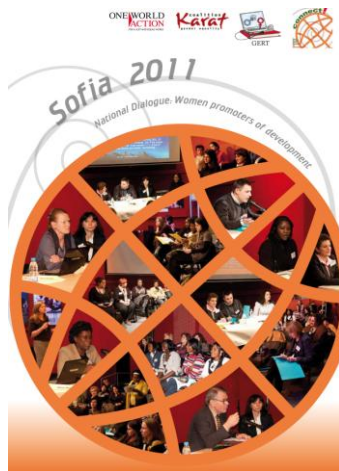
In February 2011 the first cycle of National Dialogues took place in Sofia, Bulgaria, organised by the Gender, Education, Research and Technologies Foundation, and in Bucharest, Romania, organised by AUR – the National Organisation of Human Resources Specialists. Both events focused on awareness-raising and tried to answer the questions: how to include gender equality in development cooperation, and how the women's movement can be active in the development field.

Experts from sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern developing countries – Atupele Babis Chirwa (Malawi National Women's Lobby), Edith Chipso Kanjo (Coalition of Women Living with HIV/AIDS, Malawi) and Valentina Bodrug-Lungu (Gender Center, Moldova) – played an active role as resource persons and also main speakers highlighting the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in developing countries as a means of development. The participants of both events were representatives of women's organisations and non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs) active at the national level, representatives of both national platforms of

CONCORD, officials from state institutions and guests from African minorities.

Presentations made by experts from diverse backgrounds provided a great opportunity to compare the statistics, data and analysis with practical examples from the everyday work of our guests, their experiences and field research. The participants also discovered linkages between the ideas and issues from sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern countries, but also the need for and advantages of transferring knowledge on how to use the international development agenda effectively to build the capacity of the women's movement.

On the one hand, this was a burning issue for Bulgarian and Romanian participants, because women in these countries still have to advocate for gender equality in national policies and practices. That is why it is going to be rather difficult to influence their governments to fully implement EU policy on gender equality and women's rights in development cooperation. But on the other hand, as the development policy is still under construction, it gives an opportunity to engage with the decision-makers, feed the agenda and pursue the implementation of gender equality as a cross-cutting issue from the very beginning.



The face-to-face meeting with representatives of partner countries was also an opportunity for advocacy. The Romanian National Dialogue was attended by decision-makers involved at national and European level in promoting gender equality and development cooperation, well-known Romanian parliamentarians and Romanian Members of the European Parliament, and representatives of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As a result of the meeting, the representative of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to take part in a European workshop in Brussels,

Belgium, which was a wider training on how to strengthen gender equality outcomes in development cooperation. A few representatives of state institutions including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ambassadors of Norway and the Netherlands participated in the Bulgarian meeting and engaged in the debate jointly with civil society organisations (CSOs) and representatives of partner countries.

The project partners for the National Dialogue meetings in each country have sought to attract various groups. The public events presenting the importance of women's rights in development cooperation in a nice and attractive way were a proposal for the general public and the media. A photography exhibition from Eastern partners' countries in Sofia and a performance staged by a local theatre in Bucharest were artistic summaries of the fruitful discussions and inspiring lessons learned.

Concluding words

The capacity-building and advocacy work has already been started by the events such as the National Dialogues in the Connect! East/South/West Women for Development project. That is why women's organisations in new EU Member States have to observe the trends in development agendas and constantly build their own capacities to influence effectively policy and practice with a focus on gender equality. Thanks to the Connect! project, women's organisations from new EU Member States can for the first time join forces, share experiences, establish alliances and create new standards of cooperation with other CSOs. As in the new EU Member States, the general problem is still the lack of understanding of the importance of gender equality issues outside the women's movement.

The next cycle of National Dialogues will take place in October 2011. Meetings will be held in Czech Republic and Slovakia. If you are interested in participating, please contact the KARAT Secretariat.

Needed: A True World Bank Development Report on Gender Equality

By Liane Schalatek

The World Bank's series of [World Development Reports \(WDR\)](#) is special: conceived as the 'flagship publication' of the international development bank, whose self-declared primary mission is poverty reduction, WDRs are meant to showcase the most advanced thinking from within the World Bank, detailing — and suggesting ways to overcome — major political, social and economic obstacles to global development, and targeted at development policymakers and practitioners. Given this premise, and the world's acknowledgment of gender equality as critical for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), one might wonder why it has taken the World Bank research staff so long to zoom in on gender equality (the Bank has published 32 WDRs so far since 1978) as the topic for a WDR, with '[Gender Equality and Development](#)' now being the [official focus of the upcoming WDR 2012](#) to be released in late 2011.

But if a first [65-page draft outline](#) of the possibly several-hundred-pages-long final report is any indication, the World Bank's staff, despite its stated intention to use the WDR to take a look at the 'various dimensions' of gender equality, will not be able to overcome its own parochial view of women and gender equality. Missing most prominently: an understanding of development in the context of sustainability, which — in the day and age of persistently high poverty rates, food insecurity, gender inequalities, environmental destruction and climate change globally — should be redefined as low-carbon, climate-resilient, livelihood-focused, gender-equitable development. After all, almost 20 years after the Earth Summit, next year a serious reconsideration and refocusing of the concept in the context of [Rio+20](#) seems unavoidable.

The draft outline of the WDR on Gender and Development does nothing in this respect; instead, it approaches the subject by solely attempting to make 'a business' case for giving men and women equal opportunities. Its narrow focus on women as entrepreneurs and economic actors and gender equality as 'smart economics' (the descriptive title of the [World Bank's Gender](#)

[Action Plan](#) as the Bank's primary effort in the recent past in integrating gender into its operations) allows for an analytical framework for gender equality based on economic costs and efficiency only. Its sole way to conceive of environmental concerns or the global systemic threat of climate change is as a 'risk' or 'shock' to economic and particularly income growth. The dominant growth paradigm with unsustainable production and consumption patterns, to which the World Bank continues to subscribe, is never questioned in this outline. No apparent readjustment is made in World Bank thinking to the kind of development that would be needed to allow for the equitable (across gender and generations) and sustainable use of the world's natural resources, which acknowledges both the human rights of individuals and collective, common rights.

Incidentally, the WDR outline very carefully avoids framing gender equality in terms of a basic human right, probably mostly since the World Bank itself has been reluctant to acknowledge a human rights framework as normative for its own operations. And it is thus not very surprising that even a clear violation of fundamental human rights — for example, the right to political participation denied many women — is seen primarily as 'political market failure', resulting from insufficient information (namely, that women do make pretty good, or at least not worse, political leaders than men). Remove the market barrier, seems to be the implied message, and you remedy women's inequality — irrespective of the fact that, for example, political participation, or the lack thereof, is a matter of existing societal and gender power relationships and resulting human rights violations, not of unrealised market opportunities.

While the WDRs are not meant to be an introspective exercise for the World Bank's own work, it would not hurt the topic of gender equality if it were. The resource-wasting growth paradigm the World Bank perpetuates with its investment decisions even today is itself a main contributor to persisting global gender inequality, thereby actively violating women's human rights. This, by the way, is contrary to international obligations of most World Bank member countries under the gender anti-discrimination convention, the Convention on

the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Of the hundreds of millions of people living in poverty, the majority ([some estimates claim 70%](#)) are women – proof that trickle-down does not work and the interests of those excluded from public participation and political power because of gender and social norms remain the last to be considered. Climate change, caused to a large extent by the externalisation of environmental costs by dominant economic approaches, likewise affects women in the poorest developing countries disproportionately worse than men. That [nearly 1 billion people globally](#) remain food-insecure – a crisis bound to be worsened by rising oil prices – is at least in part a lasting consequence of structural adjustment policies the World Bank pushed in the poorest developing countries since the 1980s. In the agricultural sector, this included a bias of World Bank investments for carbon-intensive agriculture focused on export production at the expense of national food security. Subsistence farmers, their livelihoods and interests, a majority of them women, were neglected (to be fair: the agricultural sector in developing countries was largely neglected by development banks up until just a few years ago, when plans for rapid industrialisation failed to materialise for most developing countries). It was the same development thinking that state agricultural extension services fell victim to as part of a general [private-sector investment strategy](#) propagated by the World Bank that considered most public service provision to be inefficient. Among those public services privatised under the World Bank's mandate over the past decades were many basic and social services, such as provision of water and energy, education or health care, making them often unaffordable for the poorest people. Traditionally, women have had to pick up the provision of these care services as part of their family duties and existing gender norms. Where states severely curtail them or do not provide them at all – for example, in times of an individual developing country's economic or debt crisis – it is on women's backs that families and communities cope. The last global economic crisis, which severely impacted the poorest countries and societal groups within countries, was no exception.

The unpaid care services women provide as part of their gender roles – and without which states poor and rich would collapse – are not captured in the economic statistics and income growth parameters on the basis of which the World Bank defines development. Essentially, the substantial contribution that women are already making to development – even before they become more active market participants – is not taken into account, mainly because the market has not attached a value to it. In this way, the World Bank continues to treat women's care provision as another 'externality' to the economic process, similar to ecological concerns, which likewise do not enter internal cost-benefit assessments of certain policies and actions. This fundamental shortcoming persists at the World Bank even a decade after the organisation instituted an [official gender mainstreaming strategy](#). It is accompanied by a systematic failure in the form of structural shortcomings and policy implementation weaknesses that a [recent report](#) of the World Bank's internal watchdog, the [Independent Evaluation Group](#), has highlighted with the World Bank's effort on gender mainstreaming. Among them (see also a [recent Böll analysis](#)):

- Gender is only selectively integrated, not mainstreamed, with unnecessarily narrow entry points through Country Assistance Strategies (CAS), which only consider gender implications of policy areas.
- Only a minority of World Bank loans are gender-aware. Development policy loans (for structural reforms) are not covered under the World Bank's existing operational policy on gender.
- Gender coverage in country loans remains uneven across sectors, going from a high in health and education, with more than three-quarters of loans being 'gender-informed' (although there is no definition of what this entails), to only 9% of loans in energy and mining.
- Gender funding at the bank is not tracked systematically and not funded as a 'core business'. The Gender Action Plan, the World Bank's main instrument in the past years to achieve gender equality, was funded by a

separate contribution of a few World Bank member countries.

- The staff, management and incentive structure at the bank remains largely gender-unaware: less than 1% of World Bank staff are gender experts; gender awareness is not made an indicator, and thus seen as a plus, for staff promotions, and there is no existing gender accountability and monitoring framework.

Given this list of shortcomings, the WDR will most likely be a missed opportunity for the World Bank. It is certainly laudable – some would argue overdue – that gender equality receives the serious consideration it deserves in the current international development discourse, and having a WDR exclusively focused on gender equality gives it yet another ‘stamp of approval’ of being an intrinsic development issue. Too bad that the World Bank is not using this occasion to accompany the academic exercise, whose recipients will mostly be found outside the World Bank, internally with a serious reflection and reconsideration of its own understanding of and approach to gender equality. This would then really be an action-oriented World Bank Development Report on gender equality.

This article was first published on the web blog [ClimatEquity](#).

The Mapuche in Chile: Stop the Invisible Human Rights Violation

By Martina Nuti



As a response to ongoing severe human rights violations in Chile, Oriol Junqueras Vies, a Greens/EFA group MEP, convened in the

European Parliament on 24 March the conference ‘The Mapuche in Chile’. This was the first European conference to examine the state of Mapuche in contemporary Latin American states, highlighting the inappropriate use of Chilean antiterrorism law to oppress Mapuche people and the renewed hunger strike of the Mapuche activists as an answer to the ongoing injustice.

The conference began with the description of the historical context of the **Mapuche**; indigenous people living in a region between Chile and Argentina. Land is an essential part of their culture, and they feel inextricably linked to it. This can easily be understood by analysing the name itself: *mapu* means ‘land’ and *che* ‘human being’, so there is no existence without land, and vice versa.

Historically, many indigenous groups have suffered **violence, land grabbing and disrespect of their community**. In the case of the Mapuche, land is not only an instrument for survival; it is the source of life.

Self-determination of Mapuche people is denied by national governments and restricted by European multinational industries established in the region.

In the late 19th century the Mapuche in the two countries lost their ancestral territory. In fact, due to the ultra-liberal economies of the Chilean and Argentinean governments, the ancestral territories have been sold or leased to forestry or energy companies and other multinationals.

In Argentina, the most representative example is **Benetton**, the Italian fashion brand well known for its socially critical campaigns, which has bought territory in Argentina to graze sheep for its wool. Immediately after the sale, the Mapuche living on the land claimed it as their own. The Argentinean government says the Mapuche should address their claim to Benetton, while Benetton refers them to the government of Argentina.

Read more about this case and watch the movie *The Mapuche vs. Benetton* [here](#).

In Chile, another example of the expropriation of Mapuche lands is **Endesa**, a Spanish electricity company that in 1997 began construction of the Ralco dam on the river Biobío that **swamped the land, forced the eviction of Mapuche families in the area, and flooded 14 ancient cemeteries** of Mapuche people. Another example is the drastic expansion of industrial tree plantations that infringes on agricultural land and native ecosystems such as forests; the forestry company **Forestal Mininco** not only damaged the environment by massively planting eucalyptus trees, but it even expropriated Mapuche lands. They all have to deal with Mapuche people reclaiming their ancestral territory.

Many Mapuche activists protest against the loss of land through peaceful protest but also by occupying land and reclaiming it as theirs. Mapuche do have entitlements to the land; it was taken away from them. Nevertheless, **Mapuche protest has been criminalised**, and a discriminatory policy is applied towards them. The reason is to be found in the very broad definition of ‘terrorist’ used by the Chilean government to counter the protest and in the **inappropriate application of the anti-terrorism law** in the case of Mapuche land occupation. This means that they can be treated in a discriminatory way and receive disproportionate penalties compared to ordinary criminal law.

An example of just how disproportionate the penalties are is that nowadays the Chilean justice system is condemning people responsible for torture during the dictatorship to four years’ imprisonment. Mapuche are condemned to 24 years for starting a fire.

To gain a clear picture of the context in which this discrimination is taking place, it is necessary to know that the media and press support the criminalisation of the Mapuche people and that they identify them as terrorists.

It is also relevant to add that an international treaty – the **ILO Convention 169 on the Land Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples**, where land rights are formally recognised – was ratified by Chile and Argentina. Moreover, the United Nations has recommended to Chile not to apply the anti-terrorism law against the Mapuche, but the Chilean government has ignored it.

The **European Parliament never pronounced a statement on the Mapuche issue**; good intentions alone are not enough. Furthermore, in the Chilean Parliament, there is no representative of the indigenous people, so how is the protection of their rights guaranteed? The Mapuche question is a very important issue not only for Chile, but even for the EU. The EU signed an **Association Agreement** with Chile in 2002, which included a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that came into force in February 2003. Instead of demanding an immediate stop to these severe human rights violations, the Chilean government’s promise to apply international rules protecting human rights seems enough for the EU to keep its economic relationships with Chile. At the same time, this situation raises again the question of how to hold multinational companies to account and prevent such harsh human rights violations.

In the second part of the conference, some representatives of the Mapuche community – all women – spoke about their personal experiences and initiatives taken to try to change the situation and step out from the daily life-threatening oppression they are suffering.

The conference then hosted **Ramona Quiroga**, an **indigenous women’s rights defender from the Mapuche Fundation FOLIL**. She explained the difficult role of Mapuche women, who are not only **subjects of multiple discriminations – as a woman, as a Mapuche, living in poverty** – but are also victims of continuous violence. The violation of their human rights is totally invisible and, consequently, the perpetrators are not persecuted or punished. That is the reason why Mapuche activists want to bring the violations to light and have a voice. Again, it is noticeable that international conventions are not applied, even if the government commits to them. UN or EU recommendations are only useful if there are mechanisms to force national governments to implement them.

The testimonies given illustrate the distressing realities of daily lives of Mapuche women: women’s health is a concern; they have minimum access to food and education; their houses are invaded daily by military forces; and women are sexually abused. **Poverty and economic, social and cultural inequalities do**

not allow them to enjoy their civil and political rights, perpetuating their exclusion from the community political life and from the decision-making process.

Violence against Mapuche women is increasing, and so is the traffic of young women and children. They live in a situation of unceasing panic due to the existential uncertainty they experience constantly.

Explicit violence against Mapuche women is not an isolated case but something that indigenous women experience every day; it is a historical phenomenon, unfortunately present in most cultures, but totally invisible to the world.

Mapuche people considered this conference a great opportunity to let Europe know the harsh violation of their human rights; they are just claiming rights that are taken for granted, for example, in European countries, struggling to step out of the invisibility. Currently, **economic interests seem to prevail over Mapuche lives**; solidarity at international and European level with the Mapuche people is important to stop this severe violation of human rights and help them to recuperate their dignity as indigenous people.

**Free Our Seeds! International Days of Action,
Brussels, 17–18 April 2011**



Tens of thousands of people throughout Europe are actively demanding that the right to produce seeds remains in the hands of small farmers and gardeners. A diversity of crops has nourished mankind for thousands of years. Seeds that we have inherited from past generations are the basis of life and are essential for food sovereignty.

The big seed trusts are determined to obtain worldwide control. This has been made clear by genetic engineering, patents on plants and animals, the introduction of seed reproduction fees etc. Add to that terminator technology that destroys the fertility of seeds and the prohibition of peasant varieties. We must prevent the very basis of our food supply from becoming a source of profit for multinational companies.

Two years ago we launched the petition ‘Sowing the future – harvesting diversity’ to protest against planned new EU seed laws that are dominated by the interests of the big seed companies.

We intend to present the tens of thousands of signatures collected throughout Europe to the European Parliament and call for an enquiry to clarify whether these laws violate the fundamental right to food and to access to seeds.

We invite you to participate in two days of action during which we will make clear our opposition to EU policies and our intention to resist them.

Come to Brussels! We are not prepared to accept that the basis of our livelihood is handed over to multinationals. In the future we intend to maintain and pass on the heritage of our plant varieties.

The main event will take place on 17 April, the day of international peasant resistance declared by Via Campesina, followed by a demonstration on 18 April.

Read more and get involved [here](#).

Finland's Political Change – a Threat to Women's Rights?

By Sanna Tirkkonen and Eija Ranta-Owusu
(FinnWID)



The general elections to be held in Finland on 17 April have been declared to be the elections of change. The latest polls indicate that the populist party 'True Finns' is to make an electoral breakthrough with around 16% of the vote. The *True Finns* criticise the politicians as being incompetent, corrupt and deaf to the problems of the people. They promote everything national and are hostile to the EU and globalisation, determined to restrict immigration from poor countries and cut development aid. The *True Finns* reject multi-ethnic society as the cause of social disjunction and suggest a reduction in social aid granted to foreigners. "A foreigner with a residence permit is not comparable to a Finn," declared the party leader and a Member of the European Parliament **Timo Soini**.¹

Soini maintains that his party can win at least 15 seats (out of 200). The numbers are striking: 2003 elections gave them three seats with 1.57% of the vote, and the party increased the number of the seats to five in 2007. On 31 March 2011, Soini appeared in a pre-election TV debate, organised by the national channel Yle, which was originally reserved for the three major parties. Now the *True Finns* are considered to be one of four major parties. Prime Minister **Mari Kiviniemi** and Finance Minister **Jyrki Katainen**, leader of the Conservative Assembly, have declared that *True Finns* may take part in the next government. More than a quarter of Finns (28%) want to see Katainen appointed as Prime Minister, 22% want

the present head of government Kiviniemi to stay in office – but 14% approve of Soini.²

Compared to other European populists, the *True Finns'* rhetoric is more conciliatory, which has blurred discourses on racism and sexism, creating new vocabulary to express views previously taken as politically incorrect. "I feel extremely offended when my party and myself are qualified as racist. It is an unfair opinion which goes against what I believe in", says Soini. The defence of "homogeneous, Finnish culture" means also that the *True Finns* are against marriage between people of the same sex or adoption by homosexual couples.³ The populist party defends traditional family values, and as a devoted Catholic, Soini has used the European Parliament as an arena to fight against women's sexual rights and the right to abortion. It remains to be seen whether and how these conservative views will be reflected in the post-election period in a predominantly Lutheran country, where sexual rights and the abortion law – that has enabled legal abortion for social, ethical and health reasons since 1970⁴ – is supported by the great majority of people. Lacking a clear stance on sexual rights, the True Finn Women's Association promotes conservative, Christian values and the rights of the excluded: the unemployed, poor families, farmers, senior citizens, and the self-employed⁵. Notions such as gender inequality or feminism are not part of the *True Finn* vocabulary: if not in a hostile and derogatory sense.

High orientation to consensus is a specific feature of Finnish political culture. Since the early 1990s, parties from Left to Right have promoted almost identical political and economic agendas, which have resulted in the deterioration of the welfare state system, deepening economic inequalities and social stratification. Coupled with the fatigue of the current economic crisis and the blurring of political agendas between the Left and the Right, the *True Finns* appear as a new channel for the masses to get their protest voices heard. The supporters of the *True Finns* say they are tired of rhetoric, which does not communicate clear views, whereas *True Finns* are seen as the

¹ Corinne Deloy 2011a. Fondation Robert Schuman. *Elections législatives en Finlande 17 avril 2011: Faut-il avoir peur des 'Vrais Finlandais'?*

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Finlex: Legislation. Law on Abortion.

⁵ Rules of the True Finn Women's Association.

only ones sincerely “speaking with the voice of the people”.

The vote in support of the *True Finns* appears a protest vote. Until recently, Finland has been ranked the least corrupt country in the world, and has been proud of it. The Finns have had remarkable reliance on their politicians and office-holders, which has been explained by the high trust of the welfare state system. The financial scandals revealed by the media in 2008 shocked the Finns deeply. It was revealed that builders of shopping centres or industrial estates had financed at least 53 political leaders in their electoral campaigns in 2007. Nearly all of them were elected, and seven became ministers.⁶ The Finns have now become more critical of decision-making processes: 78% think that politicians stand at a distance from people’s problems.⁷ Voting for a *True Finn* is to vote for a new alternative, as the traditional parties are accused of being corrupt and all the same.



Timo Soini, leader of *True Finns*

The *True Finns* have struggled in the media to explain their profile as the party of aggressive men. They have worked on their image and paid attention to recruiting women candidates, but still the percentage of women is the lowest of the parliamentary parties: 33.2%.⁸ Lately, several female parliamentary candidates of the *True Finns* have reported gender discrimination within the party. Instead of supporting women’s candidatures, women’s role in the party has been truncated into secretarial duties and making coffee. Finland has the history of being

⁶ Deloy 2011a.

⁷ Corinne Deloy 2011b. Fondation Robert Schuman..*General Elections in Finland, a round-up one week before the election.*

⁸ Statistics Finland: Nomination of candidates in Parliamentary elections 2011.

the first European country to have won voting rights for women – in 1906. It is specific to Finland that the country is governed by two women: in 2006 the President of the Republic, **Tarja Halonen**, was re-elected, and the Prime Minister Mari Kiviniemi (Centre) has held the post since June 2010. Finland is also the leading country of the 27 EU Member States with regard to women’s inclusion in government (57.9%),⁹ and 41% of the Members of the Parliament are women. However, compared to the 2007 elections, the number of the female candidates in 2011 has slightly decreased (from 39.9% in 2007 to 39% in 2011).¹⁰ According to the latest polls, it seems that the equality achieved in the Parliament is indeed under threat, since the views regarding the importance of gender equality have polarised. The *True Finns* have not pointed out female candidates to become ministers.

Many sectors of Finnish civil society such as women’s movements and development NGOs have followed the changing political scene closely. The future of women’s rights in national politics – and on global agendas – is definitely at the edge of either making it or breaking it. As part of the campaign of the NGO coalition Service Centre for Development Cooperation (KEPA) with the Finnish parliamentarians, the Finnish Women in Development (FinnWID) has emphasised our global responsibility to continue to have women’s rights high on the political agendas in the future.

New Publications and Resources

Silent No More



On 21 March 2011, Tearfund hosted an event to launch its report on the role of the Church in addressing sexual violence, called [*Silent no More*](#).

⁹ Deloy 2011a.

¹⁰ Statistics Finland: Nomination of candidates in Parliamentary elections 2011.

Tearfund is working in partnership with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Anglican Communion, Christian Aid and Restored.

The launch was followed by a discussion with key stakeholders to help shape a practical action plan that will move us forward in mobilising and supporting the Church in its response to sexual violence globally. [Read more](#).

Gender & Development Special issue: Migration

Gender & Development

Drawing on insights gained over the 13 years since the journal last published an issue on migration – a period which has seen a gradual ‘feminisation’ of migration, and an increased focus on the benefits that migration can bring to development in the ‘sending’ communities – the March 2011 issue of *Gender & Development* brings together research from across a range of countries and looks at migration not only as a livelihoods strategy, undertaken primarily for economic reasons, but also as a response to crisis, where people have relatively little or no option but to leave their homes.

Read this [Special Issue](#).

8 March Resources from The World March of Women



in Latin America, and also two interviews with

The special issue of the radio programme [Voz de los Movimientos](#) on 8 March 2011 (duration: 24'04s) includes reports from women in El Salvador, Guatemala and other countries

women activists from Tunisia and Morocco about the process in the Arabian region (audio in Spanish). Click to listen to the programme or to download it.

As additional material, [click](#) to listen to the interviews with Halima, from Tunisia, in French (duration: 5'40s) and Hilana, from Morocco, in English (duration: 4'47s).

This 8 March, women say ‘NO’ to REDD, another false mechanism to ‘solve’ global warming. We invite you to read and sign the document about REDD and women [here](#).

Also read the World March of Women’s [message](#) on this 8 March.

UK Feminista Online

UK Feminista

UK Feminista is a feminist campaigning organisation whose purpose is to end the continuing inequalities between women and men.

UK Feminista works as a bridge between ordinary people on the ground who want to do something about gender inequality – and the many fantastic feminist organisations both in the UK and abroad that are spearheading campaigns.

UK Feminista is also working hard to reclaim the term ‘feminist’ and to grow young activists around the UK.

Check out UK Feminista’s [website](#).

[Click here](#) to see the map of feminist groups around the UK.

The India–EU FTA and its Implications on India’s Food and Farm Sector

This factsheet by Shalini Bhutani is written in an easy-to-understand style. It succinctly brings together various concerns over the proposed India–EU Free Trade Agreement

(FTA) for India's food and farm sector. The author exposes the inherent dangers of the 'free trade' agenda pushed by corporate agribusiness under the aegis of the India-EU FTA. It closes with a call for action and relevant resources for further information.

Read it [here](#).

Gender Equality Exists not only at Home, but also in the Market

Gender inequality is a feature of the public domain and its institutions, most notably markets and macroeconomic flows. The critical issue is how to strengthen women's real options and entitlements both to decently paid work or income and to social rights for unpaid work.

[Read more](#).

About the WIDE newsletter

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