



# Women's Environment & Development Organization

**Bella Abzug** (1920 - 1998)  
Co-founder & Former President  
U.S.A.

November 10, 2008

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The Board of Directors of the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) is pleased to announce the appointment of Ms Thanh Xuan Nguyen as the new Executive Director of WEDO. Xuan comes to WEDO from the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, in Washington, DC, and the Refugee Women's Network, with a wealth of experience working with refugee, displaced, and conflict-affected women in both the United States and Asia. Xuan brings many vital skills to WEDO: managerial and financial skills, thanks to an MBA and years of experience in managing nonprofits; sensitivity to the issues of the world's poorest women, thanks to her work with refugee women from every corner of the globe; a command of Freirian popular education methodology, an invaluable tool in working with grassroots communities; and a track record of excellent relations with staff, partners and allies. Xuan will join WEDO officially on December 1, 2008. We are happy to provide a brief profile of Xuan for those who would like to know more about her.

The Board expresses special appreciation to our Interim Director and Board colleague, Monique Essed-Fernandes, who, apart from managing WEDO over the last many months, also steered and managed the selection process. The smoothness of the leadership transition at WEDO is mainly due to the capable and calm stewardship of Monique, and both staff and board owe her a debt of gratitude. We are also grateful to the Selection Committee (comprising three board members, the Interim Director, and two external selectors), who did a fine job of grading and interviewing finalists. Finally, thanks are due to WEDO's amazing staff, for their outstanding support and commitment during this transition.

We ask you all to join us in extending a very warm welcome to Xuan, and to extend to her your support and solidarity as she takes WEDO on the next phase of its journey.

With warm wishes,

Srilatha Batliwala,  
Chair,  
Board of Directors



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## **Thanh Xuan Nguyen**

Xuan Nguyen has 25 years of experience working with refugee and immigrant women in the U.S. and overseas. Prior to joining WEDO, Ms. Nguyen was Director of Health and Human Services at the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants where she developed innovative programs and training for national agencies and grassroots organizations serving refugees resettled in the U.S.

Previously, Ms. Nguyen was director of ADAPT, a human trafficking prevention program in Vietnam and executive director of the Refugee Women's Network. She also co-founded the International Women's House, a shelter for non-English speaking survivors of domestic violence.

Ms. Nguyen is a strong women's rights advocate and was a member of women's delegations to the Vienna Human Rights Conference (1993), Beijing Women's Conference (1995), New York United Nations Commission on Status of Women (1998, 1999, 2000, 2001), and Durban World Conference Against Racism (2001) where she helped get issues of refugee and displaced women on the agenda.

Her country experience includes long-term field work in Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia and short-term field work in South Africa, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Haiti. She is a fellow of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

A champion of refugee and immigrant women, Ms. Nguyen brings to WEDO extensive experience as a leader, policy advisor, community organizer and fundraiser. She hopes to continue WEDO's impressive advocacy work and strengthen women's voice by building a bridge between immigrant women in the US and women worldwide.