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Rio+20: Women “Disappointed and Outraged”

Women's Major Group Releases Final Statement on the Outcomes of Rio+20 (attached)

Rio de Janeiro: (24 June 2012) The Women's Major Group (WMG) at Rio+20, representing 200 civil society women's organizations from all around the world, is greatly disappointed and seriously outraged by the results of the “official” deliberations at the United Nations' Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio+20. We believe that the governments of the world have failed women, future generations and our beautiful but fragile planet earth.

Sascha Gabizon, Executive Director of Women in Europe for a Common Future, (WECF), a key coordinating group of Rio+20 Women, said “Two years of negotiations have culminated in a Rio+20 outcome that makes almost no progress for women's rights and rights of future generations in sustainable development. The Women's Major Group has worked around the clock to maintain women's rights and commitments to gender equality that have already been agreed to, but gaining affirmation of those rights left no time for real progress and commitments to moving toward the future we need.”

Gabizon continued: “For many delegates and women's organizations, the core of the matter was expressed by the welcome billboards at the Rio+20 conference center where just below the “bienvenidos” was the logo of Petrobras - one of the largest oil and big-hydro companies, a sector central to the root causes of **un-sustainable** development.”

Anita Nayar, Executive Committee Member of Development Alternatives with Women for A New Era (DAWN) – a second major coordinating organization of Rio+20 Women said,

“The lack of recognition of reproductive rights as essential to sustainable development was especially disappointing. Women worldwide are outraged that governments failed to recognize women's reproductive rights as a central aspect of gender equality and sustainable development in the Rio+20 Outcome Document. Reproductive rights are universally recognized as human rights.”

A Brazilian member of the women's caucus added: “This is the first time that we talk so much in Brazil about women's rights and our great but often invisible contribution to society, the economy and development. It has been very important that reproductive rights, in particular, have received so much press and media attention at Rio+20. As in most Latin American countries, in Brazil, we do not have reproductive rights!”

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Gabizon added:

"At Rio+20, governments had a historic chance to take bold steps to end poverty and environmental destruction, to protect the rights of the most vulnerable members of our societies, to take concrete measures to fully implement women's rights and women's leadership. We now risk increased poverty, inequities and irreversible environmental damage."

She continued:

"Rio+20 has not given us the concrete measures and institutions we need to allow for the rapid paradigm shift that is urgently necessary to assure survival of humanity on the planet. However, it has been very good for one thing, it has brought the term 'Buen Vivir', meaning "To Live Well", into common use in board rooms and ministries."

She concluded:

"Buen Vivir is truly the counterpoint to the failings of the so-called "Green Economy" - Buen Vivir means to take a major turn away from "throw-away" societies in which nature and culture are only considered for their inherent monetary value, to sustainable societies where women's rights, indigenous peoples rights and indeed, all human rights to live well in harmony with nature are seen as the Future we Really Want, which is also the Future We Need."

The Women's Major Group (WMG), comprised of over 200 organizations, is facilitated by three Organizing Partners – Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF), Voices of African Mothers (VAM), and Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN). It is supported by core members including, the International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy (ENERGIA), Global Forest Coalition, and Women's Environment Development Organization (WEDO).

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