



# News & Views

WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION • VOLUME 16, NUMBER 1 • DECEMBER 2003

## Ready, Renewed, Energized for 2004

### **WEDO completes a major review of its work and bids farewell to four founders**

**T**he WEDO Board and Staff have recently completed a year long process of reflection, assessment and strategic planning during which we set aside time to review and analyze the global economic and political changes of the past decade. In the process we benefited significantly from the formal and informal feedback on emerging trends and concerns of you, our partners, our allies and our friends around the world.

Based on these assessments, we have reframed WEDO's priorities and strategies in light of the major forces shaping the world today—neoliberalism, unilateralism, militarism and fundamentalism—and leaving women and children, the poorest of the poor, on the margins. Our analyses and goals going forward are contained in the new WEDO Manifesto (see page 4 for an abridged version).

At the same time as we were developing and refining the Manifesto, we also started to implement the proposed program changes (see Year in Review, page 6). Much more of our work is crosscutting, linking across issues of economic justice, sustainable development and governance. And, as so many of you have urged, we are devoting substantially more attention to challenging U.S. unilateralism by building and strengthening our

strategic alliances with national women's groups and other NGOs to promote a more progressive U.S. foreign policy.

Hand in hand with these program developments has come the retirement of the last four members of WEDO's Founding Board (see page 2). In a little more than 10 years, these passionately committed activists from around the world—in collaboration with so many of you—brought the energy and vision of the international women's movement to the

global policy agenda. WEDO will continue to count on their wisdom, their expertise and their dedication.

Moving forward into 2004, Women's Action Agenda for a Healthy and Peaceful Planet 2015 provides the guiding principles for our work. WEDO recognizes that the enormous challenges women face are greater than ever. But we also recognize that the world needs our collective strength and alternative vision, now more than ever. We stand ready to do our part in 2004 to make a better world possible. We trust you will stand with us and with women all across the globe.

On behalf of all of us at WEDO we wish that next year will bring the world nearer to peace and justice, equality and development. Happy New Year.

*June Zeitlin*  
**June Zeitlin**  
*Executive Director*

### **“Never Give Up, Never Give In...”**



**In the spirit of American rebel Bella Abzug, WEDO and its partners hit the streets of Washington, New York, Porto Alegre and Cancun to protest against war and militarism, and the neo-liberal rules of economic globalization that are hurting women worldwide.**

## WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

355 Lexington Avenue, 3rd floor  
New York, NY 10017-6603, U.S.A  
Tel: 212-973-0325; Fax: 212-973-0335  
E-mail: [wedo@wedo.org](mailto:wedo@wedo.org) / Website: [www.wedo.org](http://www.wedo.org)

WEDO is an international advocacy organization that seeks to increase the power of women worldwide as policymakers at all levels in governments, institutions and forums to achieve economic and social justice, a healthy and peaceful planet, and human rights for all.

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Bella S. Abzug 1920-1998

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# INSIDE

# WE DO

## Board Updates...

WEDO paid tribute to four founding board members. **Brownie Ledbetter** retired at the end of 2002, and in October 2003, the remaining founding Board members—**Chief Bisi Ogunleye** of Nigeria, **Thais Corral** of Brazil and **Jocelyn Dow** of Guyana—also retired.

New Board Officers were elected for two-year terms, and several new members joined the Board in 2003. **Srilatha Batliwala** became Board Chair, **Ros Petchesky** became a Vice-Chair and **Elizabeth Calvin** became Treasurer. The new members are **Lorena Aguilar** from the World Conservation Union/IUCN, Costa Rica; **Roberto Bissio** of the Third World Institute and Social Watch, Uruguay; **Monique Essed-Fernandes** of Suriname, and **Hellen Wangusa** from the African Women's Economic Policy Network (AWEPON), Uganda.

## Spotlight

WEDO co-founder, **Mim Kelber**, edited and published a limited edition of

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*The Bella Abzug Reader*, a collection of the former Congresswoman's speeches. A book launch hosted by New York City Council Member, **Ronnie Eldridge**, celebrated the work and life-long friendship of these two dynamic activists.

Congratulations to **Chief Bisi Ogunleye** on the founding of COWAN Rural Responsive Banking (CRRB). CRRB is women banking for women and is based on the African Traditional Responsive Banking method of cooperation, unity and savings. Chief Bisi founded and continues to lead COWAN, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2002.



Founding Board Stalwarts Bid WEDO "Au Revoir": Chief Bisi Ogunleye (seated), Jocelyn Dow (left, with *The Bella Abzug Reader*), and Thais Corral recognized for their "passion, dedication and commitment" by June Zeitlin (right) at a reception in their honor.

## Welcome...



To carry on the legacy of WEDO's leading founder, WEDO recently established a Bella Abzug Advocacy Fellowship. This annual Fellowship offers an opportunity

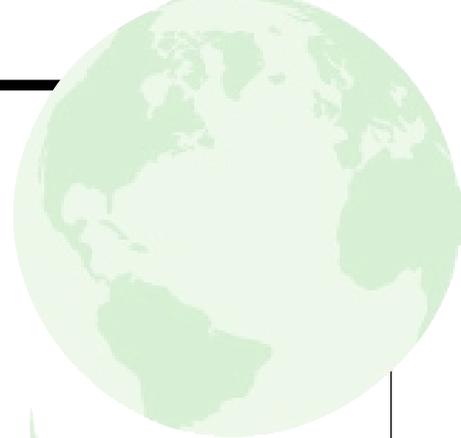
for young women who embody Bella's spirit and vision to develop their advocacy skills and enhance their local to global understanding. **Rebecca Brown**, who was a leading student activist at Hunter College of the City University of New York, and recently returned from serving two-years with the Peace Corps in the Gambia, was selected as the first Bella Fellow. Rebecca's main task is to network with national women's groups to build a U.S. constituency around global women's issues.

WEDO continues to offer an annual Global Advocacy Internship as an opportunity



for a young activist from the global South to learn advocacy skills and strengthen the work of her organization. The second Global Advocacy Intern, **Indira Vargas**,

is an associate of the Bolivian women's organization, IFFI (Instituto de Formación Femenina Integral). Indira was selected from a pool of 100 applicants. She helped to organize a Latin America regional meeting held in Costa Rica. The meeting was the first in a series organized by WEDO to strengthen local to global connections and share strategies for monitoring international commitments on women's rights. Indira will complete her internship in February 2004. ■



## Link Up & Stay Connected!

*You can keep up to date and take action on a range of women's global policy issues by joining one or all of WEDO's listservs.*

*To subscribe, send a blank email to the following addresses:*

- Gender and Global Governance and the 50/50 Campaign: [global5050ingovernment@yahoogroups.com](mailto:global5050ingovernment@yahoogroups.com)
- Financing for Development Women's Caucus listserv: [ffd\\_wc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:ffd_wc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).
- Sustainable Development listserv: [WEDOSustDev2002-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:WEDOSustDev2002-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

*To receive action alerts and updates on WEDO's U.S. work, email Rebecca Brown: [rbrown@wedo.org](mailto:rbrown@wedo.org)*

# Join Us!

**WEDO NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT...** Now more than ever!

*Please make a commitment to the Women's Environment & Development Organization*

Accept my donation of  \$25  \$50  \$75  \$100  \$150  \$250  other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*WEDO is a not for profit organization and donations are fully tax deductible.*

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Mail or fax form to WEDO, 355 Lexington Avenue, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10017, U.S.A. Tel: 212-973-0325; Fax: 212-973-0335.

# Women Challenging Power In a New Global Context

***WEDO reaffirms its call for economic, social, and gender justice, a healthy and peaceful planet and human rights for all***

**W**omen emerged as a strong force for social change in the 1990s. During the previous two decades, women from Africa to Europe and North America, from Latin America and the Caribbean to Asia and the Pacific built an international movement and defined a far-reaching global agenda. In the preparatory stages of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the first of a series of inter-governmental UN conferences on development, women activists seized the opportunity to make women's equity and equality, along with social justice, more central to the global policy agenda.

## **A BRIEF LOOK BACK**

**F**or more than ten years, WEDO has been a strong and unifying voice for women at the United Nations, pressing women's demands and monitoring government implementation of policy agreements. To prepare for UNCED, WEDO organized the groundbreaking World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet in Miami, Florida in 1991. Working in collaboration with women leaders in every region of the world, WEDO helped bring together more than 1,500 women from 83 countries to plan joint action.

Leading participants at the Miami Congress included, among others, members of WEDO's founding Board of prominent global activists. These women believed that by bringing the vision, demands, and energy of the global women's movement to the international policy arena, they could persuade governments to make new commitments to women's equity and equality, and to a more peaceful, just, and healthy planet. Together the Congress participants formulated and

adopted the Women's Action Agenda, a comprehensive global vision that articulated women's leadership and empowerment as catalysts for change.

The Women's Action Agenda was a direct challenge from the world's women to shape the official platform of UNCED (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1992). To advocate for this comprehensive agenda, WEDO established the Women's Caucus, bringing together women from North and South, and from all levels and across all issues. The Women's Caucus was historic and innovative, creating for the first time a participatory mechanism for bringing women's experiences and voices into UN processes. Organizing together, women won significant changes in Agenda 21, the official conference policy document, including an entire chapter devoted to gender equality and, for the first time, a formal recognition of women's central role in achieving sustainable development.

The success at UNCED positioned WEDO to play a leadership role in putting women's equity and equality on the global policy agenda throughout the decade of the 1990s at key United Nations conferences. These included the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, Egypt, 1994), where formal recognition of women's reproductive rights prevailed despite bitter opposition by religious fundamentalists, and the Social Summit (Copenhagen, Denmark, 1995), where the link between gender equality and poverty eradication was explicitly recognized.

At the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, China, 1995), WEDO pioneered the Linkage Caucus to bring together the broad range of advocacy concerns of the international women's movement: poverty;

militarization, war and civil conflict; violations of women's human rights; under-representation of women in politics; environmental degradation; and the growing power of the rich countries to dominate the global economy. The Linkage Caucus represented a new participatory methodology that became a model of engagement for civil society at the UN.

In the resulting Beijing Platform for Action, women won a broad-based agenda for promoting and protecting their human rights worldwide, while establishing the principle of shared power and responsibility between women and men in all arenas. Since then, issues of violence against women and women's human rights have gained greater visibility and more government action worldwide. In many parts of the world, women's role in decision-making has become more prominent, access to education has improved, and discriminatory laws have been repealed. At the grassroots level, women have developed innovative approaches to meeting the basic needs of families and communities in the face of challenges posed by the state, private corporations and fundamentalisms of different kinds.

Yet, despite policy gains at the UN, in the form of government commitments and ambitious documents, and despite efforts to use these documents to achieve legal and policy changes to protect and advance women's rights at the national level, many women—especially poor women—are worse off today than they were a decade ago. Women around the world continue to face many of the same critical issues that they did when WEDO was founded, but now these issues are even more complex and the need for action is more urgent.

## **NEGATIVE IMPACTS, GLOBAL CHALLENGES**

**O**ver the past decade, major global forces have emerged that are undermining the gains made by women. The neo-liberal economic model and market-driven policies—particularly changes in trade and finance rules, and the deregulation and privatization of public goods and

services—have exacerbated the poverty, food insecurity, and economic exclusion of the majority, while increasing the wealth and economic opportunities, and over-consumption, of the privileged few. At the same time, the world is becoming increasingly dangerous due to unilateral military intervention and communal and ethnic violence. Escalating militarism and new and revived fundamentalisms, both secular and religious, have created a stifling climate for progressive change.

Throughout the world, women and children—who comprise the majority of the world's poor—are experiencing the disproportionate effects of these global forces. The negative impact is intensified among racial and ethnic minorities and indigenous women.

While it is well documented that women's empowerment is central to poverty eradication and national development, women still face significant barriers in accessing resources, wage employment and decision-making. Since macroeconomic and national policies tend to be gender blind, they are ineffective in addressing the needs of poor and minority women. In many parts of the world, the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic has further increased women's income-earning, domestic and care-taking responsibilities.

Women play a critical role in managing natural resources and have extensive knowledge and experience of the water, land and energy supplies that sustain households and communities. Yet, women's lack of land tenure or inheritance rights, and current trends such as privatization of public goods, undermine their ability to own, manage, use, and conserve these resources and to provide for themselves and their families.

Women are still concentrated in the informal sector, where there are no job or safety protections, and those entering the formal wage economy tend to be employed in the lowest-paying jobs with the greatest environmental and safety hazards. Women still earn less than men for the same work, outnumber men among those who are illiterate, and are drastically under-represented in decision-making

positions at all levels—for instance, only 15 percent of parliamentarians worldwide are women.

The UN world conferences resulted in greater recognition of gender inequalities and propelled governments to make global commitments to advance women's rights. At the same time, these external forces and trends, promoted by the international financial institutions and the World Trade Organization, perpetuate and reinforce the structural inequalities between women and men in the economy and in society. Thus, the world faces a democracy deficit in global governance—the power of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and WTO remains unchecked and these institutions lack accountability, transparency, and democracy; transnational corporations flagrantly disregard global norms operating without adequate systems of regula-

and its invalidation of the Antiballistic Missile Treaty. The Bush Administration's war on women started on its first day in office when the President reapplied the global gag rule to international family planning programs. Further, the U.S. has failed to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and promotes abstinence-only in the under-funded global HIV/AIDS program.

While the UN is the most universal and legitimate global governance institution, it finds itself at a crossroads, weakened by a lack of resources and a broad agenda, as well as power imbalances among its diverse membership. Developing countries and civil society that speak for women, the poor, and other marginalized groups are demanding reform. Instead of advancing the status quo by accom-

*“I believe that women will change the nature of power, rather than power change the nature of women.”  
—Bella Abzug, 1995*

tion, oversight, or accountability.

The external stronghold on national development policy and frameworks has weakened the ability of some governments to meet basic social needs, while increases in military and 'anti-terrorism' spending further drain limited public resources for education, health, and social services. This emphasis on national security and policing is also being used to undermine hard-won civil rights and civil liberties.

In the United States, the world's only superpower, the current administration employs its unsurpassed military and economic power for narrow economic, political and ideological interests with dire consequences for people in the U.S. and around the world. The preemptive war in Iraq, the most extreme case so far of U.S. unilateralism, was preceded by the administration's earlier repudiation of the Kyoto Protocol, its retreat from the International Criminal Court treaty

modating the international financial and trade institutions, the transnational corporations, and powerful industrialized countries, the UN must emerge as a counterweight, and an effective promoter of peace, human rights, gender equality, sustainable development and economic justice.

#### **A CALL TO ACTION**

**A**lthough this global scenario presents unprecedented challenges for women's movements, it is also a call to action. The same pernicious forces causing such insecurity have given rise to global and local movements seeking alternatives to war, neo-liberalism, environmental devastation, gender and racial oppression and social and economic inequalities.

Women are agents of change and have made enormous contributions to social movements worldwide.

Organizations pushing for peace and

*Continued on page 10*

# An Action-Packed 2003

**Challenging global economics, promoting people-centered development and demanding gender-balanced governance.**

## WATER WOES, GENDER CONNECTIONS

**M**aking the links between gender, rights and access to water was WEDO's prime challenge at the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto, Japan last March. WEDO and partners joined hundreds of other groups from around the world to reject privatization. The so-called 'full cost recovery' privatization model, which was heavily touted by Michel Camdessus, a former director of the International Monetary Fund, increases consumer fees to cover the cost of operations, including profits.

The Women's Caucus convened by WEDO chalked up several lobbying successes, most notably the inclusion of a statement on gender in the official record of the "Dialogue between Ministers and Forum Participants," and the addition of gender mainstreaming and community-based approaches to water management in the final conference document. The Caucus produced amendments to the ministerial declaration and a list of recommendations that were presented officially to the forum and used for lobbying government delegations.

The WEDO publication *Untapped Connections* was launched at the forum, in collaboration with the

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). WEDO also contributed to activities of the Gender and Water Alliance, helping to draft an official background document and to organize a "Day on Gender and Water." WEDO was also rapporteur for a Gender in Court session where women addressed the challenges of integrating gender into water resources management at all levels.

WEDO was also one of only three NGO members of the UN Interagency Task Force on Gender and Water, which provides recommendations on gender and water to the UN Millennium Project and Commission on Sustainable Development.

## NO TO PRIVATE PLUNDER, YES TO PUBLIC GOODS

**W**EDO actively collaborated with other women's and economic justice organizations to promote fair trade, transparency and global accountability at the 5th Ministerial of the World Trade Organization in September in Cancun, Mexico.

Partnering with the Association for Women's Rights in Development, Women's Edge, and several local groups, WEDO convened strategy sessions to share information, organ-



**WHAT WORKS, WHAT DOESN'T:** At the 50/50 workshop in Guyana, Zeitlin used WEDO's "Think Equality to End Poverty" poster to underscore the need for women in decision-making at all levels of governance, including the global economy.

ize and build links between women's advocacy in both the street demonstrations and the negotiating arena.

As an accredited NGO, WEDO had extensive interaction with official delegations. After several developing countries rejected the draft text and talks broke down, WEDO issued a statement, "Explicit Non-Consensus Prevails in Cancun" ([www.wedo.org/cancun/collapse.htm](http://www.wedo.org/cancun/collapse.htm)).

A month later, WEDO watched closely as talks stalled in efforts to establish the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). In the case of the FTAA, the U.S. and some of the developing countries that clashed in Cancun, agreed to disagree and keep the process alive for the time being. The idea behind the FTAA, which is structured heavily in favor of commercial economic interests, is to expand the scope of the North American Free Trade Agreement to create a new trading system with authority over 34 countries.

## 50/50: GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT IN COURT AND COUNTRY

**N**ow in its third year, the global 50/50 Campaign continues to spread—there are currently initiatives in sixteen countries—and organizations that have already launched the campaign are expanding their efforts.

In Namibia the local 50/50 campaign launched by Sister Namibia and



**Making waves at the Water Forum—WEDO and partners from (l-r) national networks of NGOs, the international women's movement, and the UN Population Fund.**

Namibian Women's Manifesto Network in 2001 is thriving—a campaign-organized workshop in October brought together some 75 trainers of trainers to promote women's equal participation in local government elections, and to develop a gender agenda of women's needs for local and regional authorities to address. And, in the Caribbean, a regional meeting on 50/50 convened by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), drew 120 local office holders and activists from 10 countries to Guyana in May. National campaigns have been launched in Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

WEDO continued to advance the campaign at international meetings. In February, WEDO joined the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice campaign to promote gender balance in the election of 18 judges to the International Criminal Court. The outcome was a resounding success with seven women, over 30 percent, elected.

In terms of women in national parliaments, four more countries —Austria, Belgium, Cuba and Rwanda —reached the 30 percent critical mass mark in 2003, bringing to 15 the number of countries with this distinction.

### ENGAGING U.S. WOMEN: FOREIGN POLICY SCORECARDS, NETWORKING

**W**ith the first Bella Abzug Fellow on staff, WEDO pushed ahead with its commitment to confront U.S. unilateralism and promote a progressive approach to U.S. foreign policy based on international law and human rights.

In August, the first Global Women's Issues Scorecard on the Bush Administration's rhetoric versus the reality of its policies was launched at the National Press Club in Washington DC. Two scorecards have been published to date grading the wide gap between rhetoric and reality in several areas including Afghan women, women in post-conflict Iraq, international family planning, and the global HIV/AIDS initiative. WEDO authored those on the



**STRATEGY-BUILDING SESSION:** Women advocates from 13 Latin American countries planned ways to hold their governments accountable for implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and other global commitments in San Jose, Costa Rica. The WEDO-sponsored regional meeting was the first in a series—Asia and Africa meetings are planned for April and May.

Millennium Challenge Account, agricultural subsidies, FTAA and U.S. ratification of CEDAW.

The Scorecard, aimed mainly at policymakers and national media, is published by WEDO, Feminist Majority Foundation, Center for Health and Gender Equity and Communications Consortium Media Center with input from a wide range of women's and human rights organizations.

WEDO also increased its collaboration with National Council of Women's Organizations (NCWO) to build a stronger constituency on foreign policy issues among domestic women's groups. Beginning in September WEDO joined Feminist Majority Foundation as co-chair of NCWO's Global Women's Issues Taskforce. In this capacity, WEDO will organize meetings and policy briefings for women's groups and congressional staffers in Washington DC. WEDO plans to introduce new issues to the work of the Task Force, including peace, economic justice and political participation, while continuing to promote established areas of concern such as trafficking and women in Afghanistan.

Subject	Grade	Remarks	Update
U.S. Resolution on "Women and Political Participation"	A		D
Reconstruction, Rights and Security Afghan and Iraqi Women	B+		F
Economic and Social Rights: Free Trade Area of the Americas	F		F

### IMPLEMENTING BEIJING & THE MDGS

**I**n global and regional arenas and settings throughout 2003 WEDO kept up the pressure to hold governments accountable for taking action on the policy commitments made to women in the 1990s.

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals is one process of engagement being scrutinized by global advocates monitoring imple-

mentation of these promises. The MDGs, a set of time-bound targets agreed to by 191 governments, include some of the Critical Areas of Concern in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action—poverty, education, health and environmental sustainability.

WEDO advocates that gender equality must be central to each of the goals, and the goals more explicitly linked to each other for the initiative to succeed. At the March meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, WEDO organized events to introduce the MDGs to women from around the world and debate their merits for the Beijing implementation process.

With Center for Women's Global Leadership, Conference of NGOs, and the European Women's Lobby, WEDO facilitated discussion on the 10-year review of progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action scheduled for 2005 when the five-year review of the MDGs is also planned to take place.

To coincide with these reviews, WEDO began developing its seventh global monitoring report since the Beijing conference. The report will draw on a series of WEDO initiated regional meetings to strengthen the networking and collective capacity of women's organizations working on the implementation of global commitments. The first of these brought together Latin American women's organizations in San Jose, Costa Rica, in November.

The regional meetings examine barriers to national implementation, assess monitoring tools and develop strategies for joint advocacy at regional and global levels. Focus issues are economic justice, access to natural resources and political participation. ■

# WEDO at the United Nations

In 2003 WEDO stepped up its efforts to strengthen the United Nations as the primary global governance institution.

In March, WEDO organized a meeting between women NGO leaders and the co-chair of the **Working Group on Integrated and Coordinated Implementation of and Follow-up to the Outcomes of Major United Nations Conferences and Summits in the Economic and Social Fields**. Set up by the General Assembly, the Working Group began meeting in January but offered no official channel for civil society to influence the process. After further intense lobbying by WEDO and other groups, a larger meeting was held in April to brief NGOs about the Working Group and to listen to NGO concerns and recommendations. Prior to the meeting, WEDO and the World Federalist Movement brought together some 25 NGOs to strategize on issues to be addressed at the briefing.

WEDO monitors the work of the **UN Secretary-General's Panel of**

**Eminent Persons on UN-Civil Society Relations**. This has included several meetings with the Coordinator of the Panel Secretariat and the preparation of a brief for the Panel Chair recommending ways to improve civil society participation and gender mainstreaming in UN processes.

WEDO moderated a session on using the Millennium Development Goals as a tool for accountability at a conference titled **"The Crisis in Global Governance: Challenges for the United Nations and Global Civil Society,"** organized by the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service in Geneva, Switzerland. WEDO then joined more than 30 chief executives from transnational advocacy organizations and networks in Berlin, Germany, to identify challenges and explore ways of strengthening global civil society initiatives.

**W**EDO continued to play a pivotal role as a strong unifying voice for women and a leading advocate for gender and social justice

perspectives in UN processes.

At the **47th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** in March, WEDO led two Linkage Caucus meetings and facilitated discussions on pressing issues such as the war on Iraq, the MDGs, and plans for a 5th World Conference on Women (see box).

WEDO also played a crucial facilitating role at the **11th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development** in April, having been invited by the CSD Secretariat to lead the Women's Major Group. The lobbying efforts of WEDO and its NGO partners before and during the meeting succeeded in solidifying the gains made at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, and securing gender equality as a cross-cutting issue.

At the **28th (January) and 29th (June) Sessions of the CEDAW Committee**, WEDO compiled information on governments' progress in implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in the area of women in decision-making. WEDO also developed proposals on revising reporting guidelines to get more information on obstacles to women running for political office, and the policy impacts of critical numbers of women in decision-making structures. Later in the year, WEDO joined a campaign to have CEDAW incorporated into the U.S. draft resolution on women's political participation (see box).

As a founding member of the **International Facilitating Group on Financing for Development (IFG)**, WEDO played a significant role in follow up to the 2002 Monterey Conference on Financing for Development, organizing an event at the 3rd World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in January; coordinating "NGO Hearings and Dialogue with ECOSOC Representatives and UN Missions" in March; and securing funds for participants from regions to attend the UN, World Bank, IMF and WTO meetings in April. ■

## STRATEGIZING AROUND CEDAW

**Women take on the U.S.** In response to pressure from WEDO and a number of other women's and social justice organizations, the U.S. agreed to include CEDAW in their UN draft resolution, "Women and Political Participation," which highlights the need for more women in political office. In a letter to the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, the organizations also called on the U.S. to ratify CEDAW. WEDO Executive Director, June Zeitlin, noted that this would "put instant reality behind President Bush's rhetoric in support of women's rights and some credibility behind U.S. pressure on other countries to provide those rights." The U.S. is the only industrialized country that has not ratified the Convention, and ranks 60th in the global ranking of women participating in federal level decision-making.

**Promoting gender representation in political decision making as a human right** In collaboration with IWRAW Asia Pacific, WEDO is leading an effort to explore using CEDAW as a mechanism to increase women's political representation at the national and international levels. Initial research is focused on assessing the legal basis for using the Convention's Optional Protocol (OP)—which allows the CEDAW Committee to receive complaints from groups or individuals and make recommendations—to declare women's under representation in parliament a violation of Article 7. A long-term goal is to find ways of having women's equal participation in political decision-making recognized globally as a human right.

## BEIJING+10 REGIONAL REVIEWS [www.wedo.org/protect.htm](http://www.wedo.org/protect.htm)

### **Economic & Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA)**

**DEC. 1-7, 2003**

For the meeting report:  
[www.escwa.org.lb/information/press/escwa/2003/dec/4.html](http://www.escwa.org.lb/information/press/escwa/2003/dec/4.html)  
Contact: P.O. Box 11-8575, Riad el-Solh Square, Beirut, Lebanon  
Tel: (961-1) 981301; Fax: (961-1) 981510.  
E-mail: [webmaster-escwa@un.org](mailto:webmaster-escwa@un.org)  
[www.escwa.org.lb](http://www.escwa.org.lb)

### **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**

**Three sub-regional scheduled from**

**DEC. 2003 – APR. 2004**

Contact: Av. Dag Hammarskjöld 3477, Vitacura, Santiago, Chile  
Tel: +(56-2) 471-2000;  
Fax: +(56-2) 2080252.  
[www.eclac.org](http://www.eclac.org)

### **Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)**

**Decade Review, NOV. 2004**

Contact: P.O. Box 3001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Tel: +251-1-51 72 00;  
Fax: +251-1-51 03 65.  
E-mail: [ecainfo@uneca.org](mailto:ecainfo@uneca.org)  
[www.uneca.org](http://www.uneca.org)

### **Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**

**High Level Intergovernmental Meeting, SEPT. 6-9, 2004**

Contact: Chief, UN Information Services/Bangkok, UN Building, Rajadamnern Nok Avenue Bangkok 10200, Thailand  
Tel: +(662) 288-1234;  
Fax: +(662) 288-1052;  
E-mail: [unisbkk.unescap@un.org](mailto:unisbkk.unescap@un.org)  
[www.unescap.org](http://www.unescap.org)

### **Economic Commission for Europe/North America (ECE/NA)**

Contact: UN ECE Information Service, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland  
Tel: +41 (0) 22 917 12 34; Fax: +41 (0) 22 917 05 05. E-mail: [info.ece@unece.org](mailto:info.ece@unece.org)  
[www.unece.org](http://www.unece.org)

### **UN Division for the Advancement of Women**

**CSW, MAR. 2004**

**Beijing +10 Review, Spring 2005**

Contact: Division for the Advancement of Women, Dept. Economic and Social Affairs, 2 UN Plaza, DC2-12th Floor New York, NY 10017, USA  
Fax +1-212-963-3463.  
E-mail: [daw@un.org](mailto:daw@un.org)  
[www.un.org/womenwatch/daw](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw)

# Preview 2004

## JANUARY

### **World Social Forum**

**Mumbai, India | JAN. 16 – 21**

Contact: WSF India Office, Bhupesh Gupta Bhawan, 3rd Floor, Leningrad Chowk, 85 Sayani Road, Prabhadevi, Mumbai 400 025, India  
Fax: +91 22 24216382. Email: [wsfindia@vsnl.net](mailto:wsfindia@vsnl.net). Website: [www.wsfindia.org](http://www.wsfindia.org)

### **30th Session of CEDAW**

**UN-New York | JAN. 12 – 30**

Reports on the following countries are to be examined: Belarus, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Germany, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal and Nigeria. For details, please see [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/30sess.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/30sess.htm) or contact 2 UN Plaza, DC2-12th Floor New York, NY, 10017, USA. Fax: +1 212 963 3463. Email: [daw@un.org](mailto:daw@un.org)

## MARCH

### **48th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

**UN-New York | MAR. 1 – 12**

The Commission will focus on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality and on women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace building. For details on NGO accreditation and participation, please see [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/48sess.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/48sess.htm) or contact DESA NGO Section, One UN Plaza, Room DC1-1480, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel: +1 212 963 8652; Fax: +1 212 963 9248.

E-mail: [desangosection@un.org](mailto:desangosection@un.org).

### **International Women's Day**

**MAR. 8**

For details, go to [www.international-womensday.com/default.asp](http://www.international-womensday.com/default.asp)

### **UN Hearings with Civil Society & Business**

**UN-New York | TBA**

Part of the Financing for Development follow-up agenda. Contact Rosa G. Lizarde, Liaison, International Facilitating Group on Financing for Development (IFG)  
E-mail: [Rosaencasa@aol.com](mailto:Rosaencasa@aol.com)  
Tel/Fax: +1 718 789 9747;  
Mobile: +1 347 451 7794.

## APRIL

### **ECOSOC Spring Meeting with Bretton Woods Institutions and World Trade Organization**

**UN-New York | APR. 14**

[www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/index.html](http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/index.html)

### **12th Session of Commission on Sustainable Development**

**UN-New York | APR. 14–30**

Focus: Water, sanitation and human settlements. Kicks off with a three-day preparatory meeting for the ten-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). For details see [www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd12/csd12.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd12/csd12.htm) or contact: Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Two United Nations Plaza, Room DC2-2220, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel: +1 212 963 2803; Fax: +1 212 963 4260. E-mail: [dsd@un.org](mailto:dsd@un.org)

### **March for Freedom of Choice**

**Washington DC | APR. 25**

For information and to sign up to march with WEDO, go to [www.marchforchoice.org](http://www.marchforchoice.org) or contact March for Choice at 1725 Eye Street, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20006  
Tel: +1 202 349 3838;  
Fax: +1 202 349 3839.

**WOMEN CHALLENGING POWER***Continued from page 5*

justice cannot succeed without women's active participation and leadership. However, these organizations and movements have not been equally active in struggles for gender justice, or integrating gender in their own perspectives and positions. WEDO will work to increase global collaboration and solidarity among grassroots social movements, labor unions, and peace, human rights, economic justice and environmental organizations that share our vision.

The challenge is to identify effective strategies, alliances, and institutions to promote this comprehensive social justice agenda. Women want to move forward rather than merely struggle to hold the line on prior gains. Notwithstanding the weaknesses noted above, the UN remains the international institution in which we have the most hope: the only one where every nation has a voice and a vote, where developing countries play a leadership role in setting and carrying out its agenda, and where civil society participation is most broad and systematic.

Going forward, WEDO will place greater emphasis on structural and institutional changes in global governance to reassert the primacy of the UN Charter—which envisioned the Bretton Woods institutions being accountable to the UN—and to bring the World Trade Organization into the UN structure. And we will continue to support the challenges of women worldwide to religious and economic fundamentalisms that undermine democratization, sustainable development, and the implementation of international human rights—including economic and social rights, as well as gender equality.

WEDO will continue to challenge the UN, international financial and trade institutions, governments, civil society and the private sector to recognize and address the negative impacts of globalization, particularly on women. We will join with others to oppose the gross misallocation of the world's resources and the growing gaps between rich and poor people and nations, and to promote equitable

and sustainable alternative policies.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—endorsed by 191 governments—do not represent the full vision of either gender equity, equality, and women's empowerment or poverty eradication and structural transformation envisaged in UN conference and human rights documents. Nonetheless, with their time-bound targets, they are one important mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the international policy documents of the 1990s. They can also be useful tools for advocacy and accountability—for example, to hold international financial and trade institutions and donor countries accountable for creating the necessary enabling conditions and resources for the goals to be achieved. WEDO will promote a gender perspective on the MDGs, advocating for gender equality to be central to each of the goals, and for the goals to be more explicitly linked.

As an international organization based in the U.S. and working on global issues, WEDO is committed to partnering with local women's, peace, and other social justice groups to confront U.S. unilateralism and to work for a U.S. foreign policy that seeks to advance international law and human rights, including women's rights; support a strong and effective UN working for peace, security and human development; and transform the global governance system, including the international trade and financial institutions.

**GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

**I**n 2002 WEDO, in collaboration with Network for Human Development in Brazil and in consultation with women worldwide, updated the Women's Action Agenda. The new version, Women's Action Agenda for a Healthy and Peaceful Planet 2015, provides the guiding principles for WEDO's work during the next decade. Moving forward, with a focus on the Agenda's broad, interconnected goals, WEDO will seek to:

- Advance democratic, accountable and gender-balanced governance in decision-making processes and institutions at all levels.
- Challenge the current global eco-

nomical system and promote a sustainable development model to achieve human rights, economic and social justice, gender equality and equity and poverty eradication.

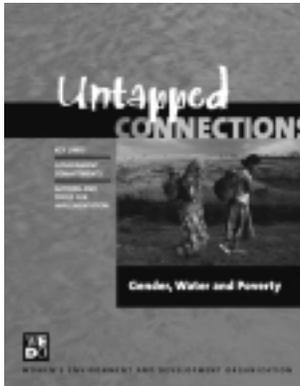
- Promote multilateralism and international cooperation to advance peace, human rights, human security and human solidarity.

To attain these goals WEDO will use the following interlinked strategies:

- Advocacy and monitoring in key global forums—strengthen the UN, oversee implementation of government commitments to women; convene Caucuses, undertake gender analyses of key policy documents and develop specialized advocacy tools in collaboration with women worldwide; promote a gender perspective; challenge global economic and social policies that negatively impact the poor; promote people-centered alternatives to corporate dominance; promote gender-balanced participation at all levels of decision-making.
- Support advocacy efforts of women's organizations and build broad strategic alliances to hold governments accountable—develop partnerships and alliances with organizations, networks and unions that support human rights, economic, ecological and social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication; collaborate in meetings and campaigns, and on publications; network via websites and listservs for joint awareness-raising.
- Engage U.S. women on foreign policy and global issues—promote foreign policy and global issues among U.S. women, focusing on the impact of these policies on women at home and abroad; disseminate information and galvanize public support; strengthen local/global links on issues of U.S. economic and environmental policy; promote an alternative model of sustainable development; support advocacy to ratify key UN conventions, such as CEDAW and the International Criminal Court Statute, and implementation of UN agreements crucial to women. ■

# WEDO Publications *Keeping you in touch with the issues*

2003



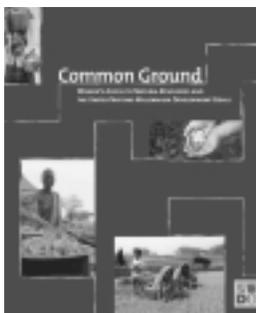
## **Untapped Connections: Gender, Water and Poverty**

This booklet presents an overview of the relationship between gender, poverty and water, and examines the gender impact of water management policies. (French, Spanish, English, Japanese summary).

## **Global Women's Issues Scorecard on the Bush Administration**

An advocacy tool that assesses the Administration's rhetoric versus its policies on women's rights, health and development. Published periodically by WEDO, the Feminist Majority Foundation, Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE), and the Communications Consortium Media Center.

Issue	Grade	Index
U.S. Resolution on "Women and Political Participation"	A	D
Democracy, Rights and Security: Afghanistan and Iraq	B+	F
Economic and Social Rights: Free Trade: Arms of the Americas	F	T



## **Common Ground: Women's Access to Natural Resources and the Millennium Development Goals**

This booklet demonstrates how MDG 1, 3 and 7 that focus on poverty reduction, gender equality and environmental sustainability can expand women's access to natural resources.



## **Diverting the Flow: A Resource Guide to Gender, Rights and Water Privatization**

This resource guide examines the impact of water privatization on the poor, particularly women, highlighting critical aspects of global policy and governance.

## Coming January 2004

### **Millennium Development Goals Issue Brief**

This short document introduces the Millennium Development Goals from a gender perspective and highlights critical issues related to implementation.

### **WEDO Concept Paper on the MDGs**

Provides key analysis, tools, and recommendations for engendering the MDG process. The paper addresses both the concerns of women's rights advocates and the potential this process has to advance women's rights.

### **Women in National Parliaments**

This issue brief presents strategies for overcoming the structural barriers that impede women's full and active representation and participation in parliaments.

[www.wedo.org/publicat/publicat.htm](http://www.wedo.org/publicat/publicat.htm)

# Bella Rocks



Judging by several recent articles bearing her name, there seems to be a growing nostalgia for women leaders such as WEDO's founder and past president, Bella Abzug. A recent article in *The New York Times* asked, "Where Have All the Women Gone?" (November 2, 2003), and in July, *The Nation* published an article by Patricia Bosworth remembering Bella's singular personality and her unending fight for women's rights.

Bella Abzug was not a woman who played by the men's rules. She was not afraid to speak her mind and to speak up for women's rights. "Bella was my heroine. She seemed part of every skirmish and every standoff in our struggle for equality," Patricia Bosworth wrote. Bella Abzug was a

woman who walked the walk and talked the talk, Bosworth noted. When her father died she was forbidden as a girl from saying Kaddish, but she did it anyway. In Congress she helped pen important legislation protecting individual rights. And she was not afraid to tell President Nixon in a receiving line at the White House that her constituents wanted him to stop bombing Vietnam.

Bella fought tirelessly for peace and justice throughout her life. As globalization took the world by storm, she devoted herself to strengthening the international women's movement. "Our call is to build real democracies, not hypocrisies...to build community, not only markets...to scale the great wall around women everywhere." In the spirit of these, her own words, Bella Abzug founded WEDO to fight for women's rights on a global scale.

In the face of the conservative Bush government, attempting to chip away at women's reproductive

rights and to strengthen the structures that keep women and other under represented peoples in the margins, women around the country seem to be longing for a strong woman leader like Bella. Despite great gains towards women's equality made in the 1970s and 80s the global fight for women's equality is far from over. It is crucial that we remember and respect Bella's legacy by supporting strong, just and honest leaders in the ongoing fight for equality, peace and social and economic justice. As WEDO's Executive Director June Zeitlin wrote in a letter to *The New York Times*, "Now more than ever we need political leaders like Bella Abzug."



**WE DO** News&Views

**WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION**

355 Lexington Avenue  
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