

An Equitable World is possible and necessary women at the FfD declare

STATEMENT BY THE WOMEN'S CAUCUS United Nations International Conference on Financing for Development

Monterrey, Mexico, March 19, 2002

The Women's Caucus, comprising representatives from organizations in more than 50 countries worldwide, is alarmed that this meeting on Financing for Development is being used as a venue for subverting development and advancing the militarist goals of the U.S. government's "war on terrorism".

As governments and multilateral financial and trade organizations collude here in Monterrey, women are being hemmed in by two forces of fundamentalism: the fundamentalism of the market and religious fundamentalism that have brought the world to a dangerous juncture. The Monterrey Consensus assumes that the global economic and financial system is functioning well and working for all.

The Monterrey Consensus promotes the market as a game in which players are rewarded when they create an environment favorable to the private sector in both North and South. And this final FfD meeting has become a playground for the most powerful nation on earth to use aid as a bargaining chip for economic, political and military compliance that will have devastating consequences for human rights, gender equality, and sustainability.

For women, who are 51 percent of the world's population and the majority of its poorest, there can be no such consensus. Women from civil society are excluded from decision making in our countries, in global economic governance, and as full participants at this Conference.

While the world's leaders gather to make token gestures towards poverty eradication, thousands of women, men and children in Africa are dying from AIDS, and millions of children in the poorest countries are dying from *preventable* diseases.

As heads of government revere market omnipotence, trade liberalization, and privatization in the Monterrey Consensus, civil wars, exacerbated by that very system of corporate globalization, are raging in Burundi, Liberia, the great lakes region of central Africa, and some 30 other countries, according to the UN itself. Furthermore, for millions of people in Argentina, who have lost jobs, savings and pensions, the future is bleak.

Male-dominated government budgets follow the U.S lead of *more* militarization and *less* social spending while

- the daily death toll rises in Palestine;
- millions are directed in new military aid to the Philippines and Colombia;

- the Afghani people are paying for the actions of others as bombs continue falling in their country; and
- new fronts are being sought by those who believe they have the right to decide who is evil and who is not.

The powers that be abandon former regions of conflict such as the Balkans, leaving them impoverished and environmentally damaged, then move on to hunt more ‘evil-doers’ on other fronts in Iraq, Iran and North Korea. Women and men are the “collateral damage” in these conflicts—and black, indigenous and ethnically marginalized women pay the highest price.

It is clear from the Monterrey Consensus that the original aim—to finance the commitments made by governments in UN development conferences on environment, human rights, population, social development, racism and women—has been abandoned.

Governments of the North must not use aid as a bargaining chip in pursuing their economic, political and military interests. Governments of the South must not cave in to pressures to accept aid, trade and investment in exchange for political and military compliance. As women we will not sacrifice our lives and the lives of our children, our families and our communities for this blood money.

We demand that our governments hold firm to the commitments they have made in UN conferences and their follow-up processes in Rio, Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen, Beijing, Istanbul and Durban, for the realization of an equitable, people-centered and gender-sensitive sustainability.

This requires nothing less than:

- democratic global governance;
- binding mechanisms for the full implementation of all human rights;
- equitable redistribution of resources, and;
- changes in power relations within and between countries—inclusive of women, the poor, and racially and other marginalized groups.

Women of the world declare:

The Monterrey Consensus is not our consensus!

Without human rights, there is NO consensus!

Women’s organizations and all of civil society must be fully included this week in the FFD conference, its follow-up, and decision-making at all levels.

Another world *is* possible and women are building it!

NO to financing war, YES to financing sustainable development free from conditionalities!

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