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NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION FOR FEMINIST RESEARCH AND ACTION
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CAFRA News is the quarterly newsletter and primary networking tool of the *Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)*.

Its main purposes are to:

- *Inform members and other interested persons about the activities and programmes of the association.*
- *Provide a forum for discussion and debate on key issues of concern to women in the region;*
- *Promote the sharing of experiences and foster links among individual feminists, activists and women's organisations;*
- *Assist in breaking down language barriers in the region;*
- *Stimulate women's creative expression; and*
- *Contribute to the development of the women's movement regionally and internationally.*

We welcome letters, articles, poems, reviews, opinions and artwork for editorial evaluation and selection. The newsletter committee has a final right to edit content and to reject material not appropriate for publication, e.g. that does not further the aims and objectives of CAFRA and promote a spirit of sisterhood; or that is racist, sexist or "maternalist." Individual authors and reviewers are solely responsible for views and opinions expressed in published articles.

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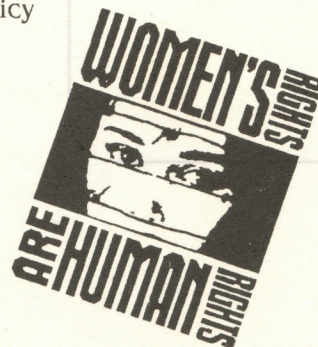
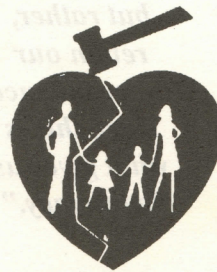
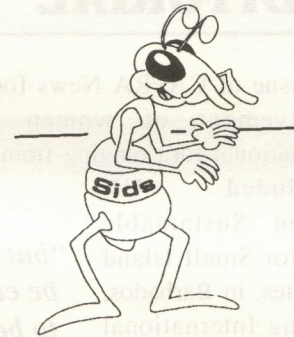
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EDITORIAL

This issue of CAFRA News focuses on the involvement of women at several international fora ranging from the recently concluded UN

conference on Sustainable Development for Small Island Developing States, in Barbados, to the upcoming International Conference on Population and Development in Egypt and the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women.

Since UNCED 1992, the global community has witnessed a swelling of the tide of women's direct participation at international fora with a focus on impacting policy.

As a case in point, women will comprise a significant number of the more than 7,000 representatives of NGOs from the six major regions of the world who will be in Cairo, Egypt. Several hundreds of them are part of national delegations and have successfully influenced the language of national reports.

According to Barbadian-born Billie Miller, Chairperson of the NGO Steering Committee for the Cairo population conference, this type of involvement augurs well for the future of the NGO Community "but we should be careful not to behave like governments but rather, retain our independence since this is what gives us legitimacy."

Women are no longer content to be viewed as beings to be "integrated into development" but have fought and earned the right to be seen as critical to development whether the issue be environment, population or global trade.

In sisterhood,
Newsletter Team

"but we should be careful not to behave like governments but rather, retain our independence since this is what gives us legitimacy."

LETTER

• TO EDITOR •

Dear CAFRA News,

I am writing to give you my new address and to make a suggestion for the Newsletter, especially after reading Rosanne Brunton's commentary on CAFRA's Third General Meeting (featured in the Oct/Dec 1993 newsletter).

Since 1995 is the 150th anniversary of the East Indian presence in the Caribbean, I would be very pleased if CAFRA has a special issue next year celebrating the achievements of Indian women in the Caribbean.

I think it was Rhoda Reddock who made the observation that many East Indian women came to the Caribbean as independent labourers, without husbands or fathers. What interests me about the women who came, is how many were actually living in those communal settlements called akhras. I came across this term in an essay by the Indian historian, Ranajit Guha (of the Subaltern Studies group), who examines a judicial document from 1849, describing the death of a widow, in the Subaltern Studies V (1987) collection. According to Guha, women in 19th century Bengal who had transgressed sexually were banished from society into akhras.

These women would have been victims of rape, deserted wives, women who resisted arranged marriages or had extra-marital affairs, widows, etc. Although these akhras may have allowed some social or moral freedom, many women had to resort to prostitution to survive. I am interested in whether entire akhras chose to migrate, and if so, have any of the female bonds of solidarity, specific to these women, manifested themselves in the cultural practices that have evolved in the Caribbean.

Looking forward to your next newsletter,

Sincerely
Joy Mahabir



CAFRA SPONSORS LANGUAGE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

CAFRA's first Intra-Regional Language Exchange Programme was launched earlier this year with four enthusiastic participants. Overall, participants found the experience rewarding and educational.

Colleen Moses of Guyana went to PRO MUJER in Puerto Rico; Yuniya Cox, also of Guyana, was in the Dominican Republic at the Centro de Investigacion por La Accion (CIPAF); Gaietry Pargass of Trinidad and Tobago was guest of the Federacion de Mujeres Cubanas, Cuba; and Adolfinia Pontier from The Dominican Republic, worked at CAFRA's office, Trinidad and Tobago.

The exchange programme aimed to facilitate second language learning, cultural sharing and cooperation among Caribbean women. As part of its long term goals, CAFRA hopes the programme will help participants develop a broader understanding of women's struggles and current issues within the Caribbean.

Funded by a German Agency, Frauen Anstiftung e.V., the one to two months programme provided exposure to the host country's cultural and political life and "hands on" job experience at a woman's organization.

Because of numerous requests from CAFRA members to learn Spanish, the exchange took place, initially, between English and Spanish-speaking territories. However, it is envisaged that exchanges among women belonging to countries whose popular language is different will also take place. These include French/Spanish, Spanish/English and Papiamentu/French.

CAFRA's language exchange programme is open to CAFRA members who reside in the Caribbean as well as members abroad.

CAFRA'S REGIONAL COMMITTEE MEETS IN CURACAO

The current English and Spanish CAFRA Newsletters will soon be replaced by a single bilingual newsletter. Implementation is expected to take effect from January 1995.

This was one of the major decisions taken at the recently concluded sixth meeting of the CAFRA Regional Committee, held in Curacao, in April.

The meeting, which was held at the Stichting Vormingscentrum Voor Jeugd welzijnswerk (Foundation Training Centre for Youth Welfare), received

reports from the National Representatives' Workshop and the Job Description/Job Classification Subcommittee.

Other decisions included:

- that the regional summer university in Feminist Theory be held every three years, with national and/or sub-regional ones in between;
- the establishment of new salary scales for the CAFRA staff, covering the period 1994 - 1996;
- the appointment of a Finance and Investment Committee;
- endorsement of the position to produce an independent CAFRA paper for Beijing;
- the appointment of the Continuation Committee with the following membership:-

Chairperson, Rhoda Reddock

Deputy Chairperson, Joan French

Andaiye, Guyana

D. Cummins, Barbados

R. Cutie, Cuba

J. Martis, Netherlands Antilles

N.Raveles, Suriname

The Acting Coordinator} as

The Projects Coordinator} non-voting

The Financial Officer} members

NURTURING OUR WOMEN WRITERS

So scenic. The ambience. The panoramic view. So idyllic."

Imagine writers at a loss for words as they contemplate the benefits of getting away from it all, taking time off to be creative.

That was just the feeling as I chatted with these women, some already published, others inspired to add the final lines or to put on paper the poetry in their heads. They had come from several countries in the region to share experiences, to discover the fine points, to hone their skills one more time. And what better place than the beautiful foothills of the Northern Range, at Mt St Benedict, Trinidad, with its breath-taking view of the Caroni Plains.

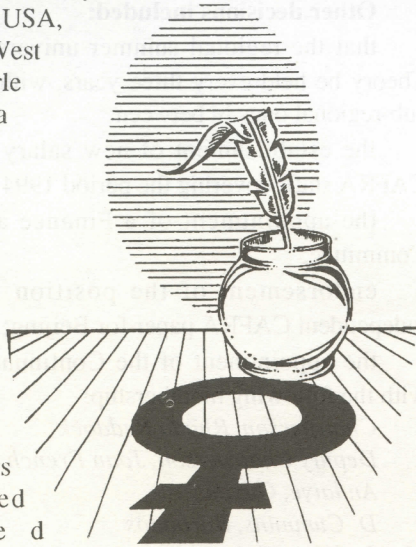
Approximately 30 participants from the Caribbean including Cuba and the US Virgin Islands participated in the second CAFRA-sponsored Women Writers Workshop, held in Trinidad and Tobago, from April 5 - 9, 1994.

This time the focus was on writing for children between the ages of 9 - 14, from a Caribbean and gender perspective. Facilitators included a number of well known

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Caribbean writers
Trinidadian-born Rosa Guy
who resides in the USA,
University of the West
Indies lecturers Merle
Hodge and Rhoda
Reddock,
Jamaican-born
writer Diane
Browne and
novelist Sybil
Seaforth,
workshop
coordinator.



Some of the
elements of writing
to which participants
were exposed
included
characterization,
language, conversion of
traditional Caribbean folk/fairy
tales from a feminist perspective and publishing. CAFRA's
first creative writing seminar was held in 1989.

Here's how some participants summed up their
impressions of the workshop:

*"At first, I was very intimidated. Everybody so good.
But after a while, I got out of my shell." Seventeen-year
old Michelle Matthew, Dominica. The youngest
participant.*

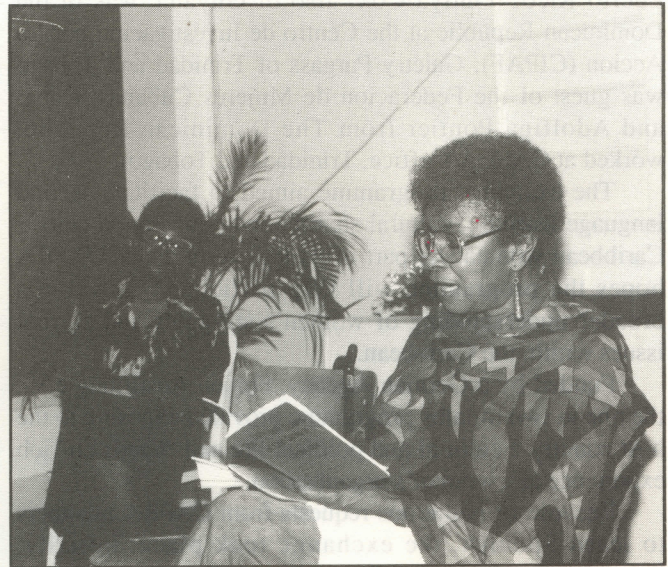


Participants in Cafra's Women Writers Workshop

*"The experience was good. Although some persons had
already published they were just "mirror" images of mine.
I no longer see the big gulf." Delia Cuffy, Dominica.*

*"To write poetry is really Lana. I write as frequently
as I breathe. I've published in *Sistren* and *CAFRA News*.
The 1989 seminar really pushed me further. I'm now
compiling an anthology with over 100 poems." Lana Mc
Farlane, Jamaica.*

*"Sometimes writers need to do research. You need to
be culturally correct." Sheila Stuart, Barbados.*



Rosa Guy - Resource Person

WHERE DOES GOD LIVE?

*I wonder!
Where does God live?
Or where does he stay?
This is what most people say
Many questions arise then
But they never try to answer them
they say He always lives up there
But yet they know not where is there
It is a serious question though
Yet we have left it way below
The mystery of this world was
Built by God yet some people say
They know not God but if the God
In them
Be hook
Then they'll know just where
To look.*

Lana Mc Farlane

An Excerpt from "Her Head A Village"

by Makeda Silvera

Her head was a noisy village, one filled with people, active and full of life, with many concerns and opinions. Children, including her own, ran about. Cousins twice remove bickered. A distant aunt, Maddie, decked out in two printed cotten dresses; a patched-up pair of pants and an old fuzzy sweater, marched up and down the right side of her forehead. Soon she would have a migraine. On the other side, a pack of idlers lounged around a heated domino game, slapping the pieces hard against her forehead. Close to her neck sat the gossiping crew, passing around bad news and smaples of malicious and scandalous tales. The top of her head was quiet. Come evening this would change, with the arrival of schoolchildren; when the workers left their factories and officers, the pots, banging dishes and television blaring would add to the noisy village.

The black women writer had been trying all month to write an essay for presentation at an international forum for Third World Women. She was to address the topic, "Writing as a Dangerous Profession." This was proving to be more difficult as the weeks passed. She pleaded for quiet, but could silence only the children.

The villagers did not like her style of writing, her focus and the new name she called herself - feminist. They did not like her choice of lovers, her spending to many hours behind her desk or propped up in her bed with paper and pen or book. The workers complained that she could be in the factories and offices with them; the idlers said she did not spend much time playing with them and the gossiping crew

told so many tales that the woman writer had trouble keeping her essay separate from their stories. Some of the villagers kept quiet, going about their business, but they were too far to shut out the noise. Maddie did not often side with the writer, but neither did she poke at her. She listened and sometimes smiled at the various expressions that surfaced on the woman writer's face. Maddie stood six feet tall with a long, stern face and eyes like well-used marbles. The villagers said Maddie was a woman of the spirits, a mystic woman who carried a sharpened pencil behind her ear. She walked about the village all day, sometimes marching loudly, and other times quietly. Some days she was seen talking to herself.

Plugging her ears against spirit-woman Maddie, the black woman writer sat in different places she thought would be good to her. She firstsat behind her desk, but no words came. It was so much that there were no words to write down - there were many - but the villagers were talking all at once and in so many tongues that it was hardfor her to hold on to their words. Each group wanted her to feature them in the essay.

Sometimes she holed up in the garden shed at the edge of the backyard. She had cleared out a space and brought in a kerosene heater. The shed faced south. Old drty windos ran the length of it and the ceiling's cracked

blue paint threatened to fall. There she worked on an oversize ill-kept antique desk, a gift from a former lover. She had furnished the space with two chairs, a wooden crate stacked with a dictionary and a few books, a big armchair dragged from the neighbour's garbage, postcards pasted on the walls to remind her of Africa. There were a few things from her village: coconut husks, ackee seeds, photographs of birds, flowers and her grandparents' house near the sea.

cont'd on pg 5



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"Her Head A Village"

One afternoon, however, the villagers discovered the shed and moved in. The idlers set up their gambling table. Gossip-mongers sat in a large area and Maddie walked around quietly and read everything written on every piece of paper. Soon they all wanted to read her essay. The idlers made fun of her words. The gossip-mongers said they had known all along she would write. Offices and factories closed early, as the others hurried into the shed to hear what all the shouting was about.

They were all at once, with varying opinions.

"Writing is not a dangerous profession, writing is a luxury!" shouted one of the workers.

"Many of us would like to write but can't. We have to work, find food to support our families. Put that in your essay."

"Look here, read here, something about woman as a lover and the danger of writing about that."

The black woman writer's head tore in half as the villagers snatched at the paper. She shouted as loud as she could that there was more to the paper than that.

"See for yourselves - here, read it, I am also writing about the economics of writing, problems of women writers, who have families." Almost out of breath, she continued, "See, I also wrote about cultural biases."

"Cultural biases," snarled a cold, grating voice. "Why not just plain old racism? What's wrong with that word?" Before she could answer, another villager who was jumping up and down silenced the rest of them. "This woman thing can't go into paper. It wouldn't look right to talk about that at a Third World Conference." They all shouted in agreement.

She felt dizzy. Her ears ached. Her mouth and tongue were heavy. But she would not give in. She tried to block them out by calling up faces of the villager and heard only the sound of their loud chatter.

"No one would write about women lovers. These are not national concerns in Third World countries. These issues are not relevant. These," they shouted, "are white bourgeois concerns!"

Exhausted, the black woman writer tried again. "All I want to do is to write something about being a black lesbian in a North American city. One where white racism is cloaked in liberalism and where black homophobia" They were not listening. They bombarded her with more questions.

"What about the danger of your writing being the definite word for black women? What about the danger of writing in liberal white bourgeois society and of selling out? Why don't you write about these things?"

She screamed at them to shut up and give her a voice, but they ignored her and talked even louder.

"Make it clear that you, as a black woman writer,

are privileged to be speaking on a panel like this."

"And what about the danger of singular achievement?" asked a worker.

"Woman lover," sniggered another. "What about the danger of writing about racism - police harassment - murders of our villagers?"

Many times during the month the black woman writer would scream at them to shut up. And when she succeeded in muting their voices she was tired because they refused to speak one at a time.

On days like these the black woman writer escaped from the garden shed to play songs by her favourite blues singer, drink bottles of warm beer and curl up in her queen-size pine bed. She held on to the faces of her lovers and tried to forget the great difficulty in writing the essay.

(Her head a village and other stories/ Makeda Silvera. Vancouver: Press Gang, 1993)

POEM

Listen

When I ask you to listen to me
and you start giving advice
you have not done what I asked
When I ask you to listen to me
and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way
you are trampling on my feelings.
When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to
do something to solve my problem
you have failed me, strange as that may seem
Listen! All I asked was that you listen,
not talk or do - just hear me.
Advice is cheap - ten cents will get you both Dear
Abby and
Billy Graham in the same newspaper.
All I can do for myself; I'm not helpless
Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.
When you do something for me that I can and need to
do for myself, you contribute to my fear and weakness.
But, when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel
what I feel,
no matter how irrational, then I can quit trying to
convince
you and can get about the business of understanding
what's behind this irrational feeling.
And when that's clear, the answer is obvious and I
don't need advice
Irrational feelings make sense when we
understand what's behind them.
Perhaps that's why prayer works for some people
because God is mute, and He doesn't give advice or try
to fix things.
So, please listen and just hear me. And if you want
to talk, wait a minute for your turn and I'll listen to
you.

Anonymous

GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

by Nelcia Robinson

Following on the UN Conference on the Environment held in Rio, Brazil in 1992, a Plan of Action, referred to as Agenda 21 was proposed. Part of that Plan called for a Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. This conference was set for April 25 - May 6, in Barbados. A parallel NGO Conference was organized for April 20 to May 6, in the same country. The conference was designed to address ten critical areas - climate change and sea level rise; natural disasters; waste management; coastal and marine resources; fresh water; land use; energy; tourism; bio-diversity; and transport and communication.

The NGO Forum addressed similar issues through a series of 23 workshops. There were also special sessions for the disabled and elderly and "tents" for women, youth and indigenous peoples. The Forum was therefore a hive of activity, statements, recommendations and resolutions.

The NGOs and Indigenous Peoples considered SIDS a unique opportunity to rise above all special interests and divisions in order to forge a partnership for improvement of the quality of life of our peoples while saving the environment. The NGOs outlined 81 recommendations for government and 36 for NGOs and Indigenous Peoples.

The recommendations were under the following headings:

- human and natural resource management
- governance and decision-making
- culture
- economics, finance and trade
- intersectoral partnership and cooperatives
- science and technology



In order to assist NGOs and Indigenous peoples in carrying out the recommendations, participants called for the creation of Earth Peoples Funds; a Technology Bank to serve as a registry of ideas and technologies; and a Talent Bank to identify existing human and technical resources in SIDS that could be used in implementing the UN Action Plan.

In other areas of SIDS conference activity, the NGO Village of Hope attempted to summarize the best wisdom currently available "to re-develop and maintain economics and lifestyles which are happy, environmentally friendly and sustainable." SUSTECH '94 was a showcase and market place for environmental and affordable technologies and services which could assist SIDS to achieve more sustainable patterns of development.

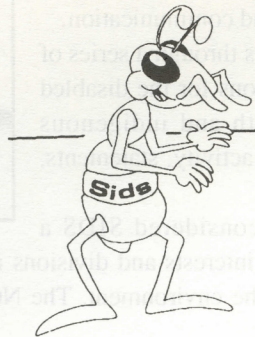
GROOTS CARIBBEAN LAUNCHED

One of the most important events that came out of the NGO Forum in Barbados on Sustainable Development for SIDS was the launching of a new Caribbean Network - GROOTS Caribbean.

Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Solidarity (GROOTS) is a network of grassroots women in the South and in the North who are in common struggle against the political and social system which represses/marginalises women. It includes groups, organizations and individual partners in Africa, the Caribbean, South and Central America, Europe, North America, South Pacific and South East Asia.

At the recent SIDS conference, GROOTS teamed up with the Women and Development Unit (WAND) to strengthen the voice of grassroots women so their issues could be included on the forum's agenda. A GROOTS Caribbean workshop was held and out of it came the common issue that Caribbean women were leading "human development" through:

- childbearing and childrearing;
- concentration on finding positive alternatives for youth;
- serving as a volunteer army for community building;
- training/animation to empower rural people who have been pacified and exploited.



WAND hopes that GROOTS will become a powerful vehicle for grassroots women to speak out to policy makers about conditions affecting Caribbean communities. (from: WAND Health Network, June 1994)

CARIBBEAN NGOS TO FORM SIDSNET

Caribbean NGO delegations will meet in Trinidad in August to officially form the NGO SIDSNet, a component of the International Network of SIDS NGOs and IPs.

This was one of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Caribbean Caucus on Sustainable Development for Small Island States, in Barbados, in May. It was also decided that the Programme Evaluation undertaken by the Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women be done on behalf of those Caribbean NGOs who attended the Forum.

The meeting also voted for the following representation on the Interim International Steering Committee until the August meeting in Trinidad: Valerie Griffith and Anthony Ferguson (T&T) and Jorge Ramon Cuevas (Cuba).

PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR SIDS

After intense and prolonged negotiations at the UN Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, a Programme of Action has been finally adopted.

The Programme of Action is expected to provide the blueprint for a holistic approach by small island developing states for their sustainable development over the coming years. In terms of monitoring and review, it has been recommended that the Commission on Sustainable Development review implementation of the Programme within the context of its multi-year thematic programme of work.

One of the visible successes of the conference was the growing maturity of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) as a cohesive negotiating block. Apart from the NGO Forum, NGOs were ever present, participating in and influencing the main conference. Issues that bear the mark of NGO input in the Programme of Action include chapter three on waste management; chapter 14 on human resource development and language on partnerships with women, youth, indigenous people and other major groups that appear throughout the text.

Despite wide media coverage among the islands, the Northern media was nowhere to be seen, with the exception of CNN, a couple of British and Australian newspapers and a few radio networks.

(Information supplied by Earth Negotiations Bulletin)

WOMEN, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POPULATION

Population policies have formed an important part of the present debate on sustainable development. Implicit as well as explicit population policies have been designed to control the growth or the decrease of the population in a respective country. As a consequence, this has brought on anti-natalist policies in some countries and pro-natalist in others.

The anti-natalist policies have been justified with the explanation that the population tends to exceed the means of subsistence, resulting in the deterioration of the environment. This argument has been used to support anti-natalist policies in the majority of the countries in the South.

The reality is that the size of the population alone has no direct impact on the environment and on poverty, neither on the consumption patterns of the populations. Rather, it is the diversified and intense consumption of the rich societies that has exhausted natural resources, intensified the concentration of wealth in the countries of the North and the impoverishment of our countries.

Available data show clearly that the relationship between origin and result, environmental deterioration, poverty and population, constitutes the mistaken link that allows women to be blamed for the problems and puts on their shoulders the responsibility to face them.
(submitted by Dinnys Luciano Ferdinand, Centro de Apoyo Aquelarre, Dominican Republic)

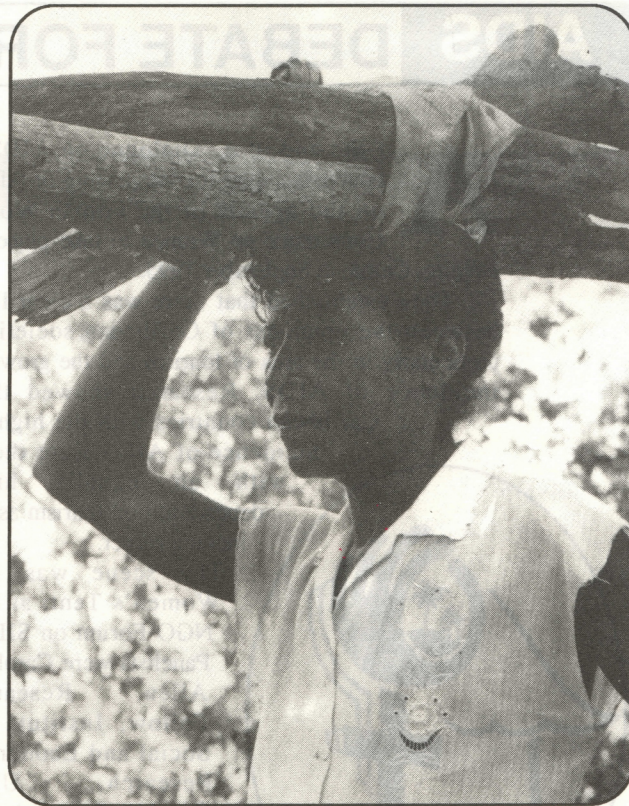


Photo: Sagrada Bujosa/CIPAF

“BIG-UP” TO COURSE PARTICIPANTS

We arrived on or around July 3, from the Bahamas, Belize, Guyana, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Virgin Islands and the Turks & Caicos. With our Barbadian colleagues, we participated in a Certificate Course in Gender and Development Studies, organised by the UWI Centre for Gender and Development Studies, and held at the Cave Hill Campus. There were 33 of us, 32 women and one man.

The course was rich, alive, enlightening and rewarding. Some sessions were controversial but that was largely because of the rich mix of people, with varying experiences.

The first five weeks (the teaching part) was refreshing. The kind of sharing which took place among the participants who stayed on campus cannot be translated into words, and therefore I will not attempt to. I can recall many participants saying that the kinds of interaction, solidarity and sharing which were experienced were invaluable and “we will never be the same again.”

After the first five weeks we (non-Barbadians) returned to our respective countries to conduct a research project over a six-week period. We will return to Barbados on September 26 to present our findings and be assessed.

If the spirit which existed during the first five weeks, prevails, I know that most of the participants cannot wait for September.

“Big-Up” to you my sisters, let not your spirit be tarnished. We have too much at stake, many things are working against us but paradigm shifts in our own attitudes and behaviours will assist our struggles.

Cheryl J. Johnson, Field Research Officer. Projects Promotion Ltd and CAFRA Member, St. Vincent

AIDS DEBATE FOR BEIJING AGENDA

At the end of a "Dialogue on AIDS," panelists called for the placing of AIDS on the agenda of the Fourth World Conference on Women to take place in Beijing, China, in September 1995.

They established that there was a clear link between the openness of Caribbean societies, particularly in the area of tourism and the growing incidence of AIDS. Research showed that Caribbean countries with the highest

incidence of AIDS were those with an equally high dependence on tourism as an income earner.

The scene was the Women's Tent, at the NGO Forum on SIDS.

Panelists were Caroline Allen, Research Fellow, Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI (Cavehill Campus) and Elaine Hewitt, Programme Officer (Health), Women and Development Unit (WAND).

The workshop was chaired by Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, Projects Coordinator, CAFRA.

In the Caribbean at present, there is a threat to development which was more immediate and perhaps as devastating as environmental degradation and that was AIDS. The highest incidence of AIDS in the Third World, after Sub-Saharan Africa, is in the Caribbean. Since the first heterosexual case was reported in 1985, there is now an average of 1.1 male to every female. Heterosexuals also form an increasing proportion of cases.

Given the fact that the economic dependency of small island developing states is increasingly leading to tourism as a development strategy - the selling of sex, sun, sand and sea - the growth of AIDS becomes even more threatening. With the imposition of current structural adjustment policies and growing unemployment among the "at risk age group," selling sex on the tourist market becomes

an important means of economic survival.

Men and women who peddle sex to foreigners also have local partners to whom they transmit the disease. Further, unemployed women are forced into relations of economic dependency with men, through bartering their sexuality.

Violence against women in relationships is an important factor in the transmission of AIDS since women in dependent situations see AIDS as a long-term process which they can defer thinking about, while having to deal with abuse daily. AIDS is therefore directly linked, on one hand, to the unequal economic relations between small island developing states and the north, and on the other, to the unequal power relations between men and women within the Caribbean and other small island states.

Among recommendations made at the end of the workshop were:

- implementation of guidelines to prevent sexism in tourism advertising
- seek alternative ways to attract tourists by promoting cultural products such as music, sport and food
- involvement of local communities in AIDS prevention programmes
- decentralize the discussion of sexuality from genital sex, toward the notions of eroticism, non-genital sex and greater sharing
- more attention to the incidence of and treatment of STDs which are very important in the transmission of AIDS
- address self-esteem among women to give them the strength necessary to insist on the use of condoms in sexual relations and to challenge multiple partnerships.



SYMPOSIUM DISCUSSES VIOLENCE-FREE FAMILY

Following 30 years of research and clinical work on the issue of marriage and family, Dr Hossain Daresh has concluded that women's emergence is now being seen as a threat - "the enemy" which must be dealt with.

Dr Daresh was one of five Bahai men at the International Symposium on Strategies for Creating the Violence-Free Family, held at Labouisse Hall, UNICEF House, New York, from May 23 - 25, 1994.

He shared his observation on the "indulgent" phase all persons go through. He said women gave it up readily and matured but the majority of men never did; they remained adolescents absorbed in self.

He called for "new thinking" families and new thinking societies that will battle poverty, racism, classism, addiction, etc.

His three suggestions for improving the family were:

- promote unity, oneness of humanity in education and international/interpersonal dialogue
- give priority to family - the new family - the most effective institution to teach oneness of humanity
- give priority to education of women and girls (cultures and religions are not exempt from these universal laws).



Elaine Hewitt, a symposium participant from WAND of Barbados, noted that the UN had realized that violence in the family impeded the development of all human society and saw the urgent need to educate men and boys to develop their nurturing skills to grow to their full potential.

Out of the workshop discussions came several interesting suggestions to deal with violence in the family including the re-introduction of moral education in schools; parenting education; mobilization of all violated to speak out; and insistence that all political parties act on issues of violence to provide safe homes/ counselling/ intervention/ resolution/ healing.

The symposium was sponsored by Bahai's International Community, UNICEF AND UNIFEM.

GLOBAL YOUTH MEETING IN CANADA

Approximately 200 youths met in Montreal, Canada, for the Second International Conference for Young Leaders which was held in May. The conference which was sponsored by the Jean Sauve Youth Foundation had as its theme "Education: Key to the Future or Bolt to the Past."

Topics covered during the week-long conference included public and private sector influences in education, international influences on national education strategies, the role of the media and the communication of values.

One of CAFRA's nominees was Sharmane Myvette of Belize. By the end of the first day of the conference, Sharmane had already made an impact on the other participants. She puts it this way: "I had the dubious reputation of being 'that Feminist Woman!' Don't cha love it? A warrior on the trail of women injustice? A sistah with a 'feminist' handle."

CAFRA AND CARIBBEAN WOMEN'S NGO'S MEET IN CURACAO

Discussion within the CAFRA Secretariat, among CAFRA members and at the level of the Regional Committee led to a consensus to produce an Independent CAFRA paper for the Fourth World Conference on Women which is due to be held in September 1995, in Beijing, China.

It was felt that the production of a separate CAFRA paper was justified on the grounds that, as the only regional feminist organisation, it was likely that our perspective on the position and condition of women in the region would be different from that of the governments and maybe that of other NGOs as well.

To this end, the Secretariat invited submissions from members who had been working in areas critical to the women's movement and, as such, did not limit ourselves to coverage of only the areas which had been identified by the UN. In collaboration with DAWN, we planned and organised a CAFRA/DAWN Workshop on June 25th and 26th to precede the Caribbean Subregional NGO Forum.

The draft CAFRA document was subsequently taken to the Caribbean Subregional NGO Forum and it was agreed by a majority of those gathered at the Forum to use the CAFRA document as the theoretical framework within which the submissions by various national and other regional groupings could be situated.

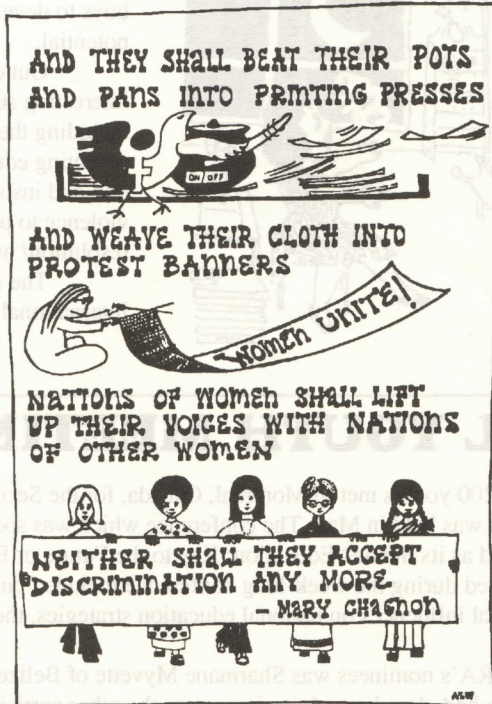
Finally, a Caribbean NGO position was taken to the official government meeting in Curacao which was held concurrently with the NGO Forum.

ON TO ARGENTINA

Caribbean and Latin American NGO's will meet at the NGO Forum in Mar del Plata, Argentina, from September 20th - 24th. The main activities of the Forum will be: Panels, Workshops, Cultural Events and Exhibitions. The panels will focus on three main themes: Violence Against Women, Structural Adjustment and Poverty and Democracy and Citizenship. A fourth panel on the recent major world conferences and the Social Summit scheduled for March 1995 is also being planned. The intention is that the outcome of these panels will impact the Regional Preparatory Governmental meeting which will immediately follow the NGO Forum from September 25th - 29th, 1994.

While the costs involved in getting to Argentina from the Caribbean are extremely high, CAFRA is seeking funding to ensure participation by Caribbean Women's NGO's, at least one - two from each of the language areas.

COUNT WOMEN'S WORK



Caribbean NGOs have called for a change in the development model since under the present system women's unwaged work in the home and the community is the underpinning of wealth generation.

In a 25-page document out of the regional NGO Forum, governments have been challenged to end the chronic sexual division of labour and give equal status and value to waged and unwaged work.

The three-day meeting was held in

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CAFRA YOUTH AT BEIJING PREP

Michelle Cave, a CAFRA youth from Barbados, who attended the NGO Forum preparatory to Beijing, has noted that CAFRA as the focal point for the Subregion, needed to stress the importance of the creative and the spiritual power as well as the artistic component of women in forging alternative models for human development.

Another area of concern for her was the plight of young women in our Caribbean societies. "Many of us seem to be moving forward not as empowered as we could be."

She said the experience of the meetings in Curacao had emphasized the importance of feminist participation in Copenhagen's Social Summit and Cairo's Population and Development Conference on the same level as the upcoming Beijing conference. She noted that those meetings had been transformed, in intent and purpose, into a battle for women's rights - those gained and those essential to women but not yet attained.

"I think feminist representation is essential to offset, in the case of Cairo, the Vatican's

influence. It is most clear that should the Vatican's lobbyists make progress with the governments they have targeted, the potential catastrophe to women's rights, especially to reproductive health and rights, will be unprecedented. Control over our bodies/beings hangs significantly in the balance."

cont'd from pg 11 **Count Women Work**

Curacao from June 27 - 29, in preparation for the UN World Conference on Women, in Beijing, China, next year. It provided an opportunity for women, representing some 40 women's NGOs from the English, Dutch, French and Spanish-speaking Caribbean, to review their achievements and the limitations to progress since 1985, the year marking the end of the UN Decade for Women.

Entitled "Platform for Action," the document also pointed out that structural adjustment programmes had created a "new class of poor" from among public servants, teachers and nurses - professions used by many women to achieve some degree of social and economic mobility.

The Forum condemned all attempts to create a correlation between single parenthood and dysfunctions in the family. The meeting called on regional governments to consider the Family Code proposed by the CARICOM Secretariat so that all family types in the Caribbean could be treated on an equal basis.

On the issue of domestic violence, the Forum noted that the women's movement had been able to effect a change in perspective so that violence against women is now seen as a public matter and in some territories of the region, it has been criminalized.

The meeting also noted several advances made by the Women's Coalition of St Croix. Here, a domestic violence response unit has been created within the police service, with female officers comprising half of the team.

In looking at prostitution in the region, the document called for the empowerment of sex-workers and for dialogue and coalition-building between sex-workers and other working women's groups.

Several resolutions were passed at the conclusion of the meeting including a call for an end to the 33-year US Blockade against Cuba, considering that the action of the US government is a violation of the human rights and sovereignty of 11 million Cubans.

"Platform for Action" represents the first stage in the process of defining Caribbean women NGOs' position on critical areas affecting women. After further consideration by women's NGOs in the region, the final document will be presented at the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Preparatory Conference, towards Beijing, to be held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in September.

DISTURBING ASPECTS OF THE BEIJING PREPARATIONS

by Sonia Correa and Gita Sen of DAWN

Many aspects of the ongoing preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing, in September 1995, disturb us.

While the focus of world attention next year will be on the Social Summit in Copenhagen, in March, where world leaders will debate the themes of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration, and while there is the 50th Anniversary of the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions (that many are hoping to adjust structurally!), the official preparations for the Beijing Conference seem innocent of any linkage to either of these major events or the preparations for them.

The themes of the Social Summit and the need to reform (transform?) the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as the system of global governance, have echoed and re-echoed among women's organizations during the past decade. Women were among the earliest to argue against structural adjustment after all. Then why the official apathy or unconcern?

Some women and groups are working to make the connections, but without more concerted and systematic effort our concern will only weakly be reflected at Copenhagen. Conversely, what happens at Beijing will be viewed by many (including many women themselves?) as peripheral to burning questions of our time.

The guidelines provided for country and regional reports for the Beijing draft do little to dispel our concern. The format of breaking down very quickly into a multitude of sectors ("women and this," "women and that ...") without a framework which attempts to grapple with the large political and economic issues that fundamentally affect women and our lives is a recipe that might have been appropriate



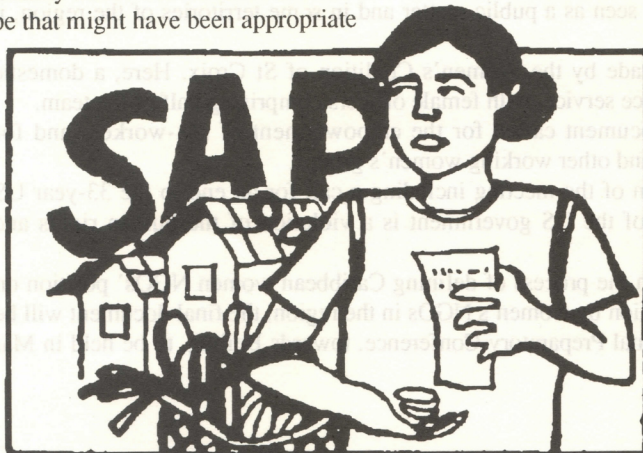
in 1975 or by a stretch of the imagination, 1985, but surely not 1995.

How and in what ways will the Conference debate the transformation of the development paradigm, the changed nature of the global political economy, and their implications for women? Certainly many of these issues will be addressed in the NGO Forum, but are we once more fated to see no cross-fertilization with the official conference? This would be ironic because since UNCED in 1992, followed by Vienna 1993 and preparations for ICPD 1994, women have been key actors, bridging the gap between official and NGO activity in the most creative and successful ways. Can we not do as much for Beijing?

In what fundamental ways will the official debate at Beijing differ from what took place in Nairobi? If there is no progress in this, then the millions of dollars that will be spent will be of questionable value. We believe that the debate at Beijing must focus fundamentally on three issues:

- how, in the dramatically changed political, economic context of the 1990s and the next decade, can development truly be engendered?
- what finances will be required for this, and how can they be mobilized?
- how can we build in accountability at international, national and local levels so that promises are kept?

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IS BEIJING AN ACCEPTABLE CHOICE?

(an editorial, excerpted from *Rangzen: The Magazine of the Tibetan Youth Congress, Spring 1994*)



It is paradoxical that the country which excels in human rights violations against women is given the privilege to host the UN Fourth World Women's Conference, in September 1995. Beijing may not be an acceptable choice but Tibetans in exile, and a section of Tibet supporters, feel that a boycott of the meeting is not the solution either. Nevertheless, the Boycott Beijing Campaign in association with London-based Campaign Free Tibet, is spearheading a boycott campaign and working for an alternative venue.

Women across Tibet have been the target of Chinese exploitation. Untold miseries are inflicted upon them. Hundreds of them were stripped naked and had trained dogs set upon them; electric cattle prods have been inserted in the private parts of nuns and electric wires wrapped around their bodies and charged. Pregnancy is a political crime in Tibet. Tibetan women have no right over their own bodies. Forced abortions and sterilizations are taking place unabated. The pertinent question, however, is will China let the delegates of the conference discuss these stark violations of Tibetan women's fundamental rights?

There is apprehension that China will not allow free and frank discussions. She has an appalling record of quashing democratic rights of her own people and obstructing dissenting voice against her at various UN forums. These have cast a shadow over their commitment to ensure free and fair expression of views.

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Disturbing Aspects of the Beijing Preparations

We believe there is still time to affect the process. But certain things must be done urgently:

- women must seriously challenge and transform official (national, regional and international) drafts, so that they take a more holistic approach to our problems and locate them within the large changes currently under way;
- women must work as effectively to have non-governmental inputs taken seriously in the PrepComs for Beijing as we have been doing for the other conferences;
- we must work seriously to get other (non-women's) NGOs to take Beijing seriously; there is a distressing tendency to view Beijing as a "women's affair." Gender, we must assert, is not just a women's affair!

IMPASSE OVER REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS - population conference still to resolve several fundamental issues

The third preparatory meeting for the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) ended with several significant issues unresolved. While observers declared that the conference's outcome will represent one of the biggest ever shifts in international policy - from the control of mere numbers - to a plan that emphasizes the importance of women's rights, a group of dissenters spoils the party.

The Holy See, Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, Malta, Venezuela, Ecuador, Honduras and Nicaragua opposed many of the crucial advances made during the preparatory meeting including the agreement of nearly all countries that the most effective way to stabilize population growth is to address the issue in a broader "quality of care" context.

The Vatican and several countries opposed wording they said might imply endorsement of legalized abortion, despite the fact that many other delegations supported the approach in the draft prepared by the ICPD secretariat.

"The safe motherhood initiative is a very laudable concept," said Chile's representative, "but it has a component that we are not prepared to accept."

According to Dr Nafis Sadik, Secretary General of ICPD, since there was no unanimity, there will have to be further negotiations in Cairo on the terms "reproductive health, fertility regulation, family planning and safe motherhood."

"Neither the UN nor the Programme of Action proposes legalizing abortion." Its intention, she said, was to "bring to the world's attention the health consequences of unsafe abortion." Figures suggest that there are some 250,000 maternal deaths each year through unsafe abortions.

One light that shone throughout the conference proceedings was the unprecedented level and extent of NGO participation. Not only were the numbers - 1,200 people from 500 organizations - impressive, but the organization and impact of these participants represented a significant step forward for the NGO movement at UN meetings.

They enjoyed access to closed drafting sessions; monitored the negotiations of each chapter; advised "friendly" delegations and the Secretariat; lobbied potentially "unfriendly" ones and scrutinized the document paragraph by paragraph.

As with every other post-UNCED negotiating process, the question of financial resources provoked long and difficult debate. It is currently estimated that more than a two-fold increase is needed for family planning and population expenditures to the year 2000. More than three times that will be needed by 2015.

(excerpted from *The Network*, May 1994)



WOMEN'S RIGHTS AT STAKE

The Vatican's reactionary position, as indicated by the bracketed text in the ICPD document at the end of the PrepCom 111, is essentially a reaction to the Women's Movement and the Movement's impact. What is at stake now is much more than the issues of abortion or contraceptives, but rather "women" and our rights.

In no uncertain terms, the reality of the struggle is between the Vatican (in collaboration with the Fundamentalist forces) and the Women's Movement and the rights for which the Movement has struggled and continues to struggle - especially the right every woman must have to maintain her own bodily integrity.

In the PrepCom process, the Vatican got enormous visibility even as it served to obfuscate the main actors of control in the population issue. In our view, the Population Establishment is very silent. Why is this so? If it is true that a certain section of the establishment has moved positively

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WANTED: **GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN POPULATION POLICY**

by Sheila Rampersad

In 1993, a 28-year old Italian woman, Carla Levanti, chose to die rather than have an abortion to treat her uterine cancer. Levanti's decision was hailed by Pope John Paul II as a "singular sign of hope" and "a moving pact of love."

That anecdote captures the traditional dialectic between the Vatican, which continues to hold an uncompromising anti-abortion position, and the women's movement which has traditionally lobbied for choice.

Women's movements in the Caribbean have joined the international women's movement in opposing the Vatican and in insisting that population policy cannot be discussed in isolation from reproductive rights and therefore women's rights.

The position of the international women's movement is reflected in the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights which stated in its January/March newsletter that "it is important to face the fact that population policy is not just a question of contraceptives or telling people that they are having too many children. To have a broader perspective on population is to realise that a woman gives birth to the number of children that are

relevant to her actual situation.

"That is not the same thing as the number of children she would want if she had a choice. All experiences show that if a woman had a real choice, generally she does not wish to have seven or eight children."

CAFRA echoes that view and

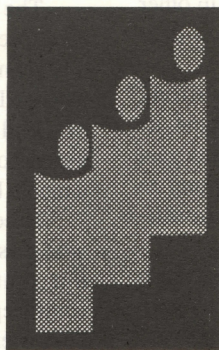
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WOMEN'S RIGHTS AT STAKE

and in support of the rights which we seek to protect, then we are concerned with the hard-liners.

Family Planners have always negotiated with the Vatican (since Teheran). They have never, in fact, openly confronted the Pope. Both sides - the



Vatican and Family Planners - have a long, mutual agreement about trading-off 'language.' Now, as Family Planning finds itself in brackets, and therefore threatened, it is not entirely impossible that some Family Planning sectors will try to sell out feminist language in exchange for the restoration of old and accepted language.

This is certainly very difficult, given the structure of the document, but it seems critical for

those of us who are actively attempting to influence the process up to Cairo, to know exactly what the Secretariat is doing and proposing. What does it mean that the language in the document does not exactly coincide with what has been agreed on? What are the major distortions? It is critical to know exactly what substance has been changed, in what chapters.

Contrary to what was predicted a few months ago, Cairo will not be a formal conference designed to approve documents already agreed upon, but a forum characterized by difficult negotiations and subject to impasse. In the May-September period, many negotiations will take place involving bilateral and multilateral activities. They have to be monitored and critically analysed and their results rapidly disseminated.

Regarding specific strategies to reduce the impact of the Vatican's obstruction, women's NGOs present at PrepCom 111 produced a document for international circulation and endorsement. For NGOs and the women's movement, the final stage of negotiations from now until September has many implications.

Among them is the certainty that it is impossible to abandon the approach that has brought us so far. It guarantees the commitment to the work of the past decade and it also shows the path that will take us to Copenhagen and Beijing.

It is critical for the women's movement to ensure that our positions on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights are clearly articulated in the documents for the Social Summit and for Beijing.

(by Sonia Correa, DAWN Research Coordinator, Reproductive Rights/Population)

WOMEN SEEK GREATER CONTROL OF THEIR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

The participants strongly voiced their opposition to population policies intended to control the fertility of women and that do not address their basic right to secure livelihood, freedom from poverty and oppression, or do not respect their right to free, informed choice or to adequate health care;

That whether such policies are pro- or anti-natalist, they are often coercive, treat women as objects not subjects, and that in the context of such policies, low fertility does not result in alleviation of poverty. In fact, a significant number of the participants opposed population policies as being inherently coercive.

There was unanimous opposition to designing fertility control measures or population policies specifically targeted at Southern countries, indigenous peoples or marginalized groups within both Southern and Northern countries, whether by race, class, ethnicity, religion or other basis.

There was also significant criticism of pressure by donors and efforts to link development aid or structural adjustment programmes to the institution and/or implementation of population control policies and a suggestion that donor countries should not promote in other countries what they do not support for the majority of their own people.

The discussion of fundamentalism brought strong agreement that, whatever its origins or religious claims, its aim is political. Central to fundamentalist attempts to gain political power is the control of women's lives and in particular of female sexuality, including the right to self-determination and reproductive decisions.

There was criticism of the role of major Northern countries in supporting fundamentalist groups for their own political ends. Fundamentalists use religion, culture and ethnicity in pursuit of power; such movements represent a new form of war against women and an aggressive attempt to mutilate their human rights.

A major site of the fundamentalist war against women is over the meaning of "families." The participants at the conference agreed that a definition of family which is limited to a model with a male "head" of household, wife and children, does not reflect the life situation of all of the world's people. Instead it was agreed that all those who voluntarily come together and define themselves as a family, accepting a commitment to each other's well-being, should be respected, supported and affirmed as such.

(Excerpts from the Rio Statement - Reproductive Health and Justice: International Women's Health Conference for Cairo, January 1994)

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Wanted: Gender Perspective in Population Policy

has included it in the NGO's position paper that will be presented at the UN Beijing Conference. In that document, regional NGOs noted that "unsafe abortions are a major cause of death, therefore access to safe abortion should be an integral part of reproductive health services."

Cuba, Barbados and Jamaica are among the few nations in the Caribbean that have decriminalised abortions. A draft Bill to achieve this in Guyana is currently before the Parliament. In the context of the upcoming ICPD, Caribbean governments have agreed to a policy position on issues of population and sustainable development which is contained in the Port of Spain Declaration. In it, population units throughout the region have singled out the abortion issue for special attention.

"Unsafe abortion is also one of the most neglected underlying causes of reproductive ill health in the Caribbean and constitutes a major unrecognised social health issue," they state. "Women, adolescents and disadvantaged population groups are particularly vulnerable to all aspects of reproductive ill health and satisfactory outcomes cannot be achieved without the full involvement of both men and women."

The fall-out from the adoption of a pro-choice, and therefore anti-Vatican, position has already started. In July, a Roman Catholic priest from Trinidad and Tobago, Father Michel De Verteuil, accused the UN of shifting from its original focus on developmental issues and focusing instead on reproductive health and family planning, during a media briefing on the ICPD.

Executive Director of the IPPF, Dr Hernan Sanhueza, who was also present at the briefing, answered by pointing out that 52 per cent of Catholics in Ireland used contraceptives, adding that statistics were similar in other countries where Catholics were predominant. Sanhueza suggested that the hierarchy of the Church be concerned about the disparity between its teachings and the practices of its members.

The abortion debate is likely to continue as it has been for years. The difference this time is that women's groups have enough evidence to conclude that women, Catholic or not, are having abortions whether or not they are legal or moral. And they are making a strong case that governments take responsibility to ensure that women who want to abort have safe and legal opportunity to do so. In effect, women have already made the choice and the question now is whether governments are going to honour that choice.

Sheila Rampersad is a freelance journalist based in Trinidad and Tobago.

VOICELESS WOMEN SPEAK AT THE UN

It is difficult to comprehend with all the delegates and NGOs attending PrepCom 3 that certain groups are not heard. But it was just that concern that brought speakers from various countries together at a forum - "Women Without Voices."

Sponsored by Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), the speakers addressed the ability of women from disparate places such as Puerto Rico, Zimbabwe, Haiti, Palestine, Cuba and on behalf of the United States' African American community to speak up and articulate their concerns.

For Clorinde Zephir of Haiti, the forum was an opportunity to highlight the atrocities committed by the military government now in power. "The country has been taken over by a handful of criminals," she said. "Terror has been cultivated in the general population. The voice of the people has been assassinated. The voice of the women has been buried."

Yamila Azize of Puerto Rico, spoke of the confusion concerning her island's status and the fact that Puerto Rico has no delegation to the ICPD. While she praised the position of the US delegation as "progressive," she said it makes no reference to the Puerto Rican situation.

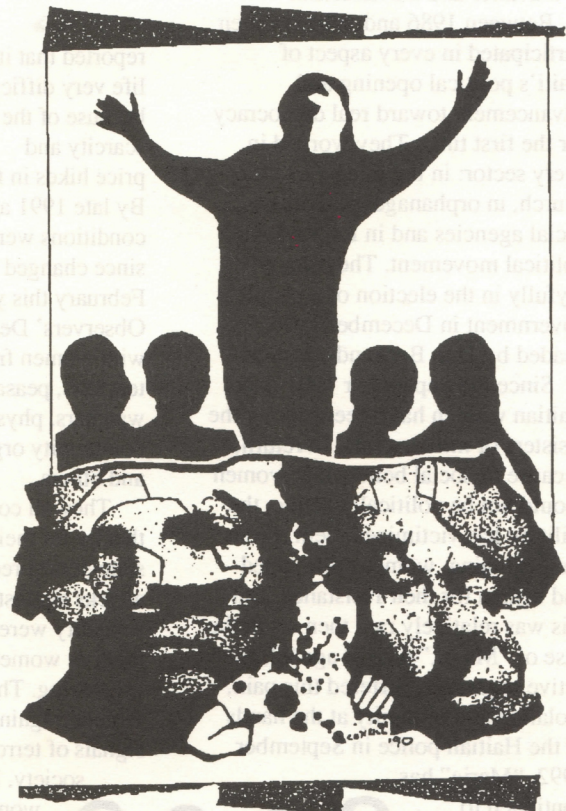
She said Puerto Rican women suffer from an unusual paradox: the country is used for testing and manufacturing contraceptives, yet contraceptives are unavailable on much of the island. "The pressure of the Catholic Church on the government is so high that family planning centres were closed and no public money is available for abortion."

"Sixty per cent of women who have abortions say that they would engage in family planning if it were available. When you ask these women what contraceptives they use, they say the rhythm method or withdrawal," she said.

Patricia Mc Fadden of Zimbabwe, said that poverty and gender bias were the two main reasons why women were voiceless. She said ingrained traditions prevented women from speaking for themselves. She excoriated the Holy See "for appropriating our voice. How dare men who never get pregnant make decisions for women."

The news for Palestinian women is brighter, according to Suha Hindyeh. She cited the history of women's activism despite living in a conservative society. Women's groups were now making their demands for the transitional period. "We are concentrating on legislation to construct within the society a feminist agenda."

And in Cuba, women are being heard, according to Georgina Fajardo, a member of that country's official delegation. She said there has been determination on the part of government in areas of education and health and blamed a "difficult economy and the embargo" for complicating the present situation.



Haiti's women have been politically *presente* since the struggle for independence and emancipation in the 1790's. However, their most coherent social organization of the century was the group, Daksyon Sosyal which organized against US occupation.

In 1934, the Haitian Women's Organization was formed. Women, who got the vote in 1957, were active in the long, costly and finally successful campaign to end 30 years of Duvalier and Duvalierism.

Between 1986 and 1991, women participated in every aspect of Haiti's political opening and advancement toward real democracy for the first time. They worked in every sector: in the ti legiz or little church, in orphanages and other social agencies and in LAVALAS political movement. They shared joyfully in the election of a people's government in December 1990, headed by Jean Bertrand-Aristide.

Since the September 1991 coup, Haitian women have been among the resisters of military rule. In return, because of social beliefs that women should not be politically active, the military has victimized them. From the beginning, women were raped and beaten for their resistance. But this was relatively rare then, as in the case of "Marie," who at age 22, an active organizer, suffered this pain, violation and indignity at the hands of the Haitian police in September 1992. "Marie" has continued to defend the poor and democracy.

What was far more common for women then, was their hunger and their children's malnutrition. Jobs and programmes created by the Aristide government were cut. Later, even though women supported the embargo intended to bring down the military, many

HAITIAN WOMEN: A RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

reported that it made life very difficult because of the scarcity and

price hikes in food and fuel. By late 1991 and through mid-1993, conditions were horrible. This has since changed for the worse. In February this year, the New England Observers' Delegation to Haiti met with women from all walks of life: teachers, peasants, human rights watchers, physicians, journalists, community organizers, intellectuals and others.

They all consistently reported that by far their gravest problem was state-sponsored repression. Direct attacks against their person and their sexuality were intended to break them as women and to destroy their organizing. They believe, the violence against them is used to send signals of terror to the rest of the society. In this sense, the

women of Haiti are suffering as Haitians but also precisely because they are women.

Those with whom we met had been either beaten, raped or forced to commit incest at gun-point; or they knew women to whom this had happened. Women wept as they told these stories. One group of three ti legiz friends, in hiding since the military began looking for them, had dispersed their children in "safe houses" (well-to-do homes)

and had not seen them in nearly two years.

Another woman, a LAVALAS organizer, escaped into the bush in hiding where she contracted infections and eventually lost her womb; another story told of Diana La Guey, the wife of a paramilitary "attache." On a bus one day, her husband dragged her off, accused

her of having an affair, shot and killed her in public view with a

weapon issued by the state, and mutilated her with the weapon.

Women in the agricultural sector who are members of the peasant organization, MPP, reported that their members have been killed and others are afraid to go to their fields because soldiers come after them.

A mother of three whose husband was a voter registration organizer in the December 1990 elections which brought Aristide to office, was viciously attacked. When her husband ran as soldiers pounded the door late one night, she remained, because, she told herself, "I am a woman and I did not think they would harm me." But that moral and ethical line in Haiti which protects innocents and women had been crossed, first by Duvalier, and now by the coup-makers. Alerte Belance, 32, was chopped unmercifully and dumped with other dying people.

Mrs Belance survived, miraculously, without an arm and with large machete welts covering her head and upper body. Speaking in Boston recently, she made it clear the experience had transformed her - she had become an activist for "the return of President Aristide and for democracy in Haiti."

Haiti is full of women like Marie and Alerte who refuse to be victimized into silence.

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORTS

"DOLLY'S STORY"

For its 1994 production, the Creative Arts Centre, St Augustine Campus, UWI, created a production based on the culture of violence, linked by the games of childhood and the story of Dolly.

With partial funding from CAFRA's Technical Assistance Fund, the performers, under the direction of Dr Dani Lyndersay, researched, analyzed and improvised true-life scenarios, current news items, popular songs, calypsoes, original poems and prose which illustrated the topic.

The result, "Dolly Mois,"* a drama which highlighted stories of physical abuse, suicide, child abandonment, prostitution and other drug-related crimes, was performed in ten communities in Trinidad. It messaged the dangers, temptations and risks with which our young are daily accosted. It caused members of an often totally involved audience to stand and voice their opinions, their advice and, their example, presented in matching role-play, in order to help break the cycle of violence and abuse.

The Creative Arts Centre's ARTS-IN-ACTION project plans to use the experience of "Dolly Mois" and other community action/theatre-in-education experiences to see that our theatre continues to research and assess the issues that concern us all and faithfully document the results.

(* *Dolly Mois* is the name of a children's game collected in 1962 by JD Elder and reproduced in his book *Song Games From Trinidad and Tobago* (1973).

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR RE-AFFIRMS SIMILARITY OF EXPERIENCES

"The most valuable aspect of the experience for me was the re-affirmation of the similarity of women's experiences regardless of our country or cultural backgrounds...It was the commonality of experiences both in our personal and public lives that created a strong bond within the group..."

Those were some of the observations of Julie Ifill of Women Working for Social Progress on completion of an international seminar in London, entitled "Women Working for Change: Strategies for Advancing the Status and Contribution of Women."

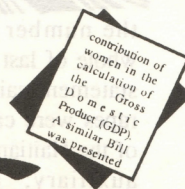
Ms Ifill also noted that the seminar provided an invaluable opportunity to gain a perspective on the position of women globally, to exchange ideas and information and to be energized.

However in terms of the local NGO sector, Ifill said "we have a long way to go in developing a focus and building energy akin to that of our sisters" in countries like India, Pakistan and Zimbabwe.

"Although the history of NGO activity is different, I think the need for the empowerment of rural and urban poor women in Trinidad is as strong."

CAFRA covered the cost of Ms. Ifill's airfare to London from its Technical Assistance Fund.

News News News



REGIONAL

BARBADOS FORUM WRITES MANDELA

"Unwilling to let this moment slip into oblivion, as moments will, into the next

compiled by Cathy Shepherd

crisis, the next "headliner," we the Women's Forum of Barbados greet you.

Our hearts are full as we search them to find the messages that would celebrate with you and the other defenders of human dignity in South Africa; messages that would mourn with you over the many who died in the struggle for just this moment,

and as we would seek to uplift your government for the struggle to come.

We are clear in our minds that the people's voice has spoken and it has signaled many prophetic messages, not only for South Africa but for the world. We know that our planet groans still under the pain of continuing atrocities both in the North and in the South. And we recognize that your government confronts the yet untested challenges of equitable redistribution of economic power, breaching the internal barriers of entrenched attitudes, and letting the people's voice continue to inform your actions.

News

But somehow, your South Africa in 1994 lends hope.

Around you history has created a space, enabled in no small measure by the participation of women in the liberation struggles. We have no doubt that you will continue to acknowledge and draw on this as you act with the tolerance, patience, forgiveness and grandness of spirit that you have demonstrated to the world since your liberation from 27 years of incarceration for the cause.

Mr Mandela, President, our prayers abound for you and the people of South Africa, and we share with you this word:

“Our expectations of you are not challenges merely bright stones in the walls of our confidence in you.”
Walk good.

Eudine Barriteau Foster
Chairperson, *The Women's Forum*,
Barbados

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RURAL WOMEN AS ENTREPRENEURS

Five rural women's associations from the Dominican Republic are satisfied with the results of their projects to commercialise basic foods. They have also totally dispelled the initial fears of men in the communities who stated that “women united are not going far.”

Five shops, offering prices 10-15% below those of competitive dealers and managed by groups of rural women, have resulted in productive projects that, in the main, have already repaid financing granted by the Solidarity Centre for the Development of Women.

A meeting to evaluate the projects concluded that the women have managed and strengthened their projects with considerable efficiency. (*Fempress*)

HAITI

RAPE AS A POLITICAL WEAPON

A total of 32 cases of rape were documented in Haiti between February and May, more than 10 times



the number reported during the whole of last year, a joint UN/OAS statement said. Some of the recent rapes were carried out by members of the Haitian military or its civilian auxiliary, the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FRAPH). Other cases were perpetrated by unidentified armed civilians.

Of the 12 cases said to be politically motivated, the victims were relatives or friends of activists, most of whom are supporters of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The mission said it was particularly concerned with the increase in gang rapes and the readiness of perpetrators to violate minors.

CRAD STAFF MEMBER ARRESTED

On July 21, Olga Benoit, a staff member of the Centre de Recherche et d'Action pour le Developpement (Centre for Development Research & Action) (CRAD), was arrested by the Haitian military and later released. While she was not physically abused, she suffered serious verbal abuse and was subjected to lengthy interrogation and harassment.

Ms. Benoit was in the organisation's jeep on official business when the vehicle was stopped and searched.

Military officials discovered copies of *Sak Pase*, CRAD's Creole magazine, considered subversive by the Haitian Military Regime. This led to her arrest. CRAD is a non-governmental organisation which was founded in 1986 and does popular education work with women and rural communities in Haiti.

The Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) issued a statement condemning the harassment of non-governmental development workers within Haiti in general and the detention of Ms. Benoit in particular. CPDC urged the Haitian Military Regime to “guarantee that development workers in Haiti enjoy the same respect for their rights that is accorded to other development workers” in most Caribbean countries.

CPDC represents 21 NGO networks in the region, including CAFRA.

News

PUERTO RICO

GETTING READY FOR BEIJING

The Puerto Rico National Committee comprising over a dozen feminist, trade union, educational and party organisations, is working on the representation of Puerto Rican women at the 1995 NGO Forum in Beijing. The Committee is preparing a document on the status of Puerto Rican women since 1980, for presentation at the Regional Preparatory Conference in Argentina and later in Beijing. (*Fempres*)

WOMEN'S COMMISSION DISBANDED

In spite of militant and consistent protests from the women's movement, Governor Pedro Rosselló fused the Women's Affairs Commission with four other governmental departments into the Commission for Citizens' Rights. As a consolation prize, he named feminist Albita Rivera of the Women's Affairs Commission, to head the umbrella organisation.

It remains to be seen what effects - positive or negative - the loss of autonomy will have on the important services which the Women's Affairs Commission has provided for over 20 years. (*Fempres*)

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

COUNTING WOMEN'S WORK

Senator Diana Mahabir-Wyatt introduced a private member's Bill in

Parliament to require government departments and public bodies to include the unremunerated contribution of women in the calculation of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). A similar Bill was presented in Britain in 1989, but was not given sufficient government time for debate to finish. The Bill is down for second reading on the Senate Order paper.

WOMEN'S MEDIA

A *Woman's Touch*, a 13-part radio series which sets out to explore the "wealth of knowledge that lies in the realm of women", premiered in July. The brain-child of Judith Laird, a CAFRA member, *A Woman's Touch*, is a magazine programme which weaves layers of legend, tradition, music and information. Themes to be covered include family ties, the environment and ideas. The series is funded by Unesco and UNIFEM. A weekly newspaper entitled *A Woman's Weekly* also made its debut in July.

Published by Caribbean Information Systems and Services Ltd., the first issue featured articles about outgoing US Ambassador Sally Cowal and controversial MP Hulsie Bhaggan, two women who, according to the paper, speak their minds. The 36-page paper also contains articles on food, fashion, family life, health and entertainment.



FAREWELL FAITH

While CAFRA National Representatives were meeting in Curaçao last April, relatives and friends said goodbye to Faith Wiltshire at the Tranquility Methodist Church, Port of Spain. Faith, who succumbed to cancer on April 8 after a brief illness, helped found a number of activist groups such as the Housewives Association of Trinidad and Tobago, the Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women and Researchers for Education, Action and Development (READ).

A dedicated women's rights advocate, Faith Wiltshire was also part of a successful lobby for Trinidad and Tobago to become signatory to the UN Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

At the time of her death, Wiltshire was Director of the Division for Human Development at the CARICOM Secretariat in Guyana, the country of her birth. In her last days, she encouraged her friends and fellow activists to form a cancer support network.

HAITIAN WOMEN

cont'd from pg 19

Their courage and determination for a better Haiti is truly inspiring as everyone who comes face to face with them can attest. Very few women earn a living wage. Pre-coup wages for workers in US baseball factories was as low as \$2.74 a day, a figure increased under President Aristide's LAVALAS government.

(Submitted by a member of the New England Observer's Delegation. Reprinted from *The Peasant, Newsletter of the MPP Education and Development Fund, Summer 1994.*)

News

ORDINATION OF WOMEN

Barbados' Anglican community embraced a new era in its 170-year-old history with the ordination of the country's first female deacons on July 25, 1994. Witnessed by a congregation of several hundred, Sonia Hinds, 34, and Beverley Sealey, 31, solemnly accepted the charge of deacons before Bishop Rufus Brome. Ms. Hinds is a CAFRA member.

The investment which took place during a two-and-a-half hour ceremony at St. Michael's Cathedral, was attended by Governor General Dame Nita Barrow and other dignitaries.

Close friends from Codrington College, England, where they both earned degrees in theology, Sonia and Beverley decided to seek ordination together.

Watching from the balcony, an emotional Mavis Browne of Christ the King Church, said: "I'm very glad I lived to see this. It's very touching." Outside, the unassuming deacons, now titled "Reverend Miss," were swamped by a sea of well-wishers, offering kisses, congratulations and gifts.

Barbados voted for female ordination in 1980. Despite this, the Province of the West Indies, of which the island is a member, moved only a few years ago to sanction ordination to the diaconate but has fallen short of the two-thirds majority required for admission to the priesthood. Jamaica is the only other Caribbean country to ordain women as deacons.

Just three weeks earlier, the Church of England announced the loss of 139 clergymen since the ordination of women priests this

year. On the other hand, Pope John Paul II reaffirmed, in July, that the Roman Catholic Church would not ordain women into the priesthood. "By refusing to ordain women, Christ did not make man and woman unequal but, on the contrary, he recognised and respected the latter's dignity" which is "destined to fill a mission which corresponds to her personality," the Pope said.

In Trinidad and Tobago, Molly Ahye, a 62 year-old mother of three and grandmother of ten, was installed as the new high priestess of the Opa Orisha (Shango) of Trinidad and Tobago, at an historic ceremony on June 8. Her official title is Iyalorisha. Orisha is a Yoruba religious culture in which different divinities or powers called Orisha, are worshipped.

A researcher of African traditions, Ahye holds a Master of Arts degree in the performing arts from American University, Washington, DC and is now a doctoral candidate at New York University, in dance in higher education.

GAY PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

On June 26, thousands of unafraid, unashamed gays marched through the streets of New York City to commemorate a largely unreported street clash between police and the homosexual clientele at a New York City bar - Stonewall Inn, on June 28, 1969. The brief uprising inspired the American gay civil rights movement which is still changing the way Americans view many of their most

basic social institutions

Among the activities of Gay Pride week were the gay games, an athletic gathering with more registered participants than the Barcelona Olympics! And earlier in the month, that "icon of American bourgeois family life", Disney World, welcomed 20,000 gay men and women through its gates. Here in the Caribbean, the prospect of gays marching for their rights in the not too distant future, is very unlikely given that in many territories, homosexuality is regarded as a criminal offence. In the face of widespread hostility, the gay community remains largely underground.

A recent example of Caribbean homophobia are comments made in May by second vice-president of the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (BH&TA), Jeff Kinch. Responding to press reports that a California publishing house had launched the first Caribbean travel guide for the North American gay and lesbian market, and was asking Barbadian hotels about being listed, Kinch told the Caribbean News Agency that BH&TA had always projected the island as a "quality" holiday destination and would continue to do so. Attracting gays and lesbians "was something the island can do without."

But times are changing. In May, the Bermuda House of Assembly voted to decriminalise sex between adult males. The private member's Bill from backbencher Dr. John Stubbs is expected to face relatively little opposition in the Upper House.

In Trinidad and Tobago, an association was recently formed to "educate and empower those who prefer same sex relationships." According to an article by journalist Simon Lee, the association's Chairperson thinks that the only hope for gay rights in Trinidad and Tobago would be if the UN Declaration of Human Rights is amended to include "gays, lesbians,

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transsexuals, HIV and AIDS sufferers.”

CAFRA WRITES OAS SECRETARY GENERAL

In a letter, dated June 1994, to the OAS Secretary General and Members of the General Assembly, CAFRA calls for the signing of the convention to eradicate violence against women.

The full text of the letter reads:

“The Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action strongly urges that the General Assembly of the OAS approve, and that each country sign the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence Against Women in order to guarantee the most basic human rights of women - security, life, equality and dignity - in each country and throughout the hemisphere.”

CARIBBEAN RIGHTS URGES USA TO RETHINK CUBA POLICY

CARICOM Heads of Government have been urged to “use their good offices at all appropriate regional and international fora, in a creative manner” to inspire the Clinton Administration into rethinking its policy on Cuba.

This is contained in a letter to the CARICOM Secretary General from the Caribbean Human Rights

Network, dated March 1994.

The letter states (in part):

It would not have escaped your attention or that of any of our Caribbean Community governments that the President of Cuba, a Caribbean nation with which CARICOM has very good relations, has been excluded from a Meeting of Western Hemisphere Heads of State to be hosted by President Bill Clinton in Miami.

The singular and most notable exclusion of President Castro from this very important initiative by President Clinton, once more underscores the need for restoration of diplomatic relations between the USA and Cuba, one of the nations identified for membership in the Association of Caribbean States that is in the process of being established.

Our hope is that this could lead to new and mutually satisfactory relations between these Western Hemisphere nations as they address such issues as the right to self-determination, human rights, peace and security in the Caribbean-Latin American region.”

On the question of Haiti:

“Caribbean Rights also takes this opportunity to formally draw to the attention of the Community’s governments our strong opposition to the latest “peace initiative” by the Clinton Administration in calling upon the exiled Haitian President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, to name a new Cabinet without linking this call to a specific date for his return to Haiti to function as Head of State.”

FORUM ON GENDER COMMUNICATIONS

Women communicators from Latin America and the Caribbean have called for the establishment of a Permanent Forum on Gender Communications with the aim of coordinating activities and creating a space for reflection and debate on gender communications.

This was stated in a declaration at the end of the meeting on gender communication which was held in Quito, Ecuador, from April 9-10, 1994.

They have also proposed the establishment of a Gender Communications Forum at the Beijing Women’s Conference to promote proposals formulated at previous events such as the Latin American Meeting of Alternative and Popular Media (Quito, 1993), Women Empowering Communication Conference (Bangkok, 1994) and the Regional Meeting on Gender Communications (Quito, 1994).

During the Beijing Conference, an information pool will be set up on the issue of women and their movements, with participation of ALAI, AMARC, APC-Women’s Programme, Fempress, Isis, International Feminist Radio and SEM/WFS. The pool will spotlight the presence of Latin America and the Caribbean and disseminate information to the region. A daily newspaper will also be published by Women’s Feature Service/Servicio de Noticias de la Mujer during the Beijing Conference.

News

REGIONAL NETWORK AGAINST PROSTITUTION

The Latin American and Caribbean Network Against the Exploitation of Women and Girls in Prostitution and Trafficking was created in March this year, in Caracas, Venezuela.

The organization came out of the First Workshop Seminar on Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in Women. The workshop was organized by the US-based Coalition Against Trafficking in Women and the Caracas-based Centro Feminista Latinoamericana de Estudios Interdisciplinarios.

Presentations by women who work directly with prostitutes in different countries - including members of religious congregations, NGOs and other individuals - established the main points of debate. Although the majority of participants agreed that prostitution should be eradicated, there were radical differences in the approaches proposed.

One sector defended an abolitionist stance that rejects all proposals to regulate prostitution or designate prostitutes as sex workers. In contrast, other participants expressed their fear that drastic bans on prostitution would only force prostitution further underground, thus exposing the women involved to greater persecution and violence. **For more information, contact: Zoraida Ramirez, Caracas, Venezuela. Fax: (582) 442-3290.**

(From: *Women's Health Journal* 1/94)

UNDP APPOINTMENTS

The UNDP Office in Barbados has announced the appointments of **Dr. Carol James** as Senior Advisor on Sustainable Development for the Caribbean and **Ms. Celeste St. Hill**, the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Coordinator for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. The latter will be dealing specifically with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme.

The GEF NGO Small Grants Programme is a pilot project of the Global Environment Facility that provides grants to non-governmental organisations and community groups for small-scale activities which successfully address global environmental problems.

INTERNATIONAL

BOYCOTT BEIJING CAMPAIGN

The Boycott Beijing Campaign has stepped up its protest against gross violations of women's reproductive rights in China. A statement from campaign organisers cites the All-China Women's Federation's involvement in the implementation of the Chinese government's population control policy. According to them, such policy denies women the fundamental freedom of choice and

control over their own bodies.

The campaign organisers also said that abuse of women's rights in China is widespread. According to them, independent women's organisations are not allowed. Free speech and political dissent are denied. Those who dare to speak are imprisoned without a fair trial and often suffer systematic torture. Moreover, sexual abuse is said to be common in the Chinese army. For further information regarding the campaign, contact:

30 Hollingbourne Gardens, Ealing, London W13, UK. Tel: (4481) 998-8368. (Women Envision, May 1994).

FEMINISTS' FIGHT FUNDAMENTALIST OPPRESSION

Iran: Dr. Homa Darabi, 53, set herself on fire in a public square in central Tehran last February 21 to protest the oppression of women in Iran. She died in hospital ten hours later.

A medical doctor specializing in child psychology, Homa Darabi returned to Iran in 1976 and became a university professor. In 1990, she was dismissed from

her job for not observing the prescribed rules of the *Hijab* (mandatory Islamic clothing). She tried to continue work as a private doctor but was continually harassed and finally forced to close down her private practice.

Her sister, Parvin Darabi has established a foundation to heighten public awareness of the situation of women in Iran and in other Islamic



News

countries which are succumbing to fundamentalism.

Oppression of women remains mandated in Iran. The continued enforcement of the Islamic dress has led to several incidents of physical violence on the street. In his report to the UN Commission on Human Rights, Raynaldo Galindo Pohl, UN special investigator for human rights breaches in Iran, states that, "Iran continues to rely heavily on a mix of executions, torture, repression, and intimidation" to enforce obedience to specific prescriptions set by the Islamic government.

In November 1993, 26 young women were arrested for not wearing veils at a private party. In February 1994, Mina Kolvat, a married Iranian woman, was stoned to death in Tehran's Evin prison for allegedly committing adultery.

The Sisterhood is Global Institute appeals to all women's groups, other organisations and concerned individuals to protest the inhuman treatment of Iranian women. The group suggests that you write to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in your respective countries and ask what action your country intends to take in the United Nations regarding these ongoing abuses of basic human rights. You may also send protest letters directly to: **H.E. Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, President, Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran, Iran.**

The Homa Darabi Foundation can be contacted at: **11200 Donner Pass Road, #176, Truckee, CA 96161, USA. Fax: (916) 582-0156.**

(Women Envision/The Women's



Watch/News & Letters)

Mauritius: The Muvman Liberasyon Fam (Women's Liberation Movement) (MLF) in Mauritius is urging women's groups and individuals to support them in their struggle against Hindu fundamentalists in their country. In December 1993, Lindsey Collen, a member of MLF, launched her second novel, **The Rape of Sita**, about sexual violence against women and women's rights in general. The book is being received as one of the best works of literature ever produced in the country.

The Hindu Council of Mauritius objected violently to the title of the novel, saying it represented an outrage against Hindu religion. Sita is a very common woman's name in Mauritius, as well as the name of the character in the Ramayana that symbolizes purity and virtue. Hindu fundamentalists consider women's virtue tainted by rape.

Ms. Collen has received

anonymous telephone calls, threatening violence. The Prime Minister, put under pressure by the Hindu fundamentalists, made a statement in the National Assembly declaring the book an "outrage

against public and religious morality", and went further to say that the book was "blasphemous".

Lindsey Collen and Ledikasyon Pu Travayer, the publisher, chose to withdraw the book and have considered altering the title.

Send letters in support of this struggle to: **Muvman Liberasyon Fam, Celicourt Antelme Street (Lakaz Ros), Forest Side, Mauritius.**

(Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights)

Pakistan: Taslima Nasrin, the 32-year old Bangladeshi feminist writer, under death threat for her views, arrived in Stockholm, Sweden, in August under a cloak of secrecy. Islamic extremists in Dhaka, Bangladesh, have posted a \$US2500 reward for her execution. Government authorities had returned her passport earlier this year, after a nine-month international campaign on her behalf.

Nasrin, a physician turned writer,

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newspaper columnist, novelist and poet, has been a controversial figure for some time because of her outspoken defense of women's rights, her criticisms of Islamic traditions and the sexual



Trouble and Strife

content of her writing. In January 1993, the government confiscated her passport on a technical violation as she was en route to a conference in India. The next month her novel *Lajja*, a story of communal riots against Hindus in Bangladesh following the destruction of the Bahri mosque in India, was published and became an immediate bestseller.

Communalists and Islamists consider the book so unpatriotic they have accused Nasrin of being an Indian spy. In July, after months of pressure, the Bangladeshi government banned *Lajja* on the grounds that it "created misunderstanding between communities." In September 1993, the Council of Soldiers of Islam, a fringe group in Sylhet, declared a *fatwa* against Nasrin and put a price on her head.

WOMEN LIVING WITH AIDS

The International Community of Women Living with AIDS has been formed in

Amsterdam. It acts as a clearinghouse for exchanging information and coordinating activities on HIV/AIDS. It will also help HIV positive women to set up local self-help groups. Write to: P.O. Box 2338, London W8 4ZG, UK. (*Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights*)

ROOTS DAUGHTERS

Roots Daughters, a documentary starring 17 strong and varied Rastawomen, who testify about their history, way of life and their personal struggle for equality within a male-dominated culture, premiered in Toronto during the Caribana Festival. Written and directed by Czech-born and Toronto-bred Bianca Nyavingi Brynda, the film has already garnered seven international film festival showings since its initial 1992 Berlin Festival Market screening, as well as nomination for Best Film from the Black International Film Festival in South Bend, Ind.

INTERNATIONAL MIDWIVES' EXCHANGE NETWORK

Midwifery Today announces a new network designed to help birth practitioners

network, share information, travel, teach and grow. It is for midwives, childbirth educators and other birth practitioners who are interested in promoting the midwifery model of childbirth around the globe. Members will receive an annual directory and newsletters full of valuable, helpful information and articles. To join, write to: *Midwifery Today*, P.O. Box 2672, Eugene, OR 97402, USA. Fax: (503) 344-1422.

GLOBAL MEDIA WATCH PROJECT

On a typical day in January 1995, people from all over the world will be monitoring the portrayal of women in the news - via the radio, television and newspapers.

The Global Media Monitoring Project came out of the Women Empowering Communication Conference in February 1994, in Bangkok, Thailand, where women from 34 countries gave enthusiastic backing for the proposal.

Media Watch, a voluntary organization in Canada, working to eliminate sexism in the media is the project coordinator. Monitors will be required to record quantitative data on gender, age, role (reporter/interviewee), and type (expert, politician, paid worker, homemaker, etc). Persons interested in the project should write to: *The Global Media Monitoring Project*, Media Watch, 517 Wellington Street West, Suite 204, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 1G1, Canada.

Rhonda Copelon, IWHR, CUNY School of Law, 65-21 Main Street, Flushing, NY 11367 USA; fax 1-718-575-4478.

MEMBERSHIP MILESTONES

On May 24, Marion Bethel, former CAFRA National Representative for The Bahamas became the proud mother of seven pound *NIA MYRTIS ISAKE*. In a note to CAFRA, Marion writes: "I am still baby-struck and thoroughly enjoying her presence." *NIA* means purposeful (Swahili); *MYRTIS* (paternal great-grandmother); and *ISAKE*, a satisfying gift from God (Benin, Nigeria).

QUOTE:

"To call women the weaker sex is a libel: it is a man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater courage? Without her, man would not be. If non-violence is the law of being, the future is with women." Gandhi

(Submitted by Pamela Redwood, Jamaica)



December 5-9

Women, Media and the Changing Role of the Family in the 21st Century, Manila, The Philippines.

The 26th Conference of the International Association of Women in Radio and Television will tackle such issues as politics and leadership, women's status in the media industry, advertising, types of families, lesbianism, violence, family planning and abortion. The conference sub-theme is Media and Violence Against Women. The conference is one of the preparatory activities for the Unesco Conference on Women, Media and Decision-Making (February 1995), the Fourth World Conference on Women (September 1995) and the UN International Conference on Changing the Image of Women in Media, scheduled for 1996. For additional information, contact: Anna Leah Sarabia, Womedia Manila, 151-A Mahiyain Street, Sikatuna Village, Quezon City 1101 Philippines. Tel: (632) 924-4945; Fax: (632) 911-6239.

December 29-31

Women, War and Peace: The Vision and the Strategies, Jerusalem.

Women from women's peace movements throughout the world are invited to share their experience in an activist conference that will include discussions, workshops, a mass vigil and march through Jerusalem, and award of the first Women in Black Peace Prize. Both activists and scholars are invited. Topics include: creating a culture of peace, feminist strategies for resolving international conflict, dialogue among women at war. For further information and registration, contact Erella Shadmi, 4/11 Dresner street, Jerusalem, Israel 93814, Tel: (2) 718-597; Fax: (2) 259-626.

1995

February 2-5

Midwifery Today Pacific Rim International Conference, Honolulu, Hawaii.

The conference will feature classes on: traditional midwifery; cultural approaches to breastfeeding; natural remedies from around the world; midwives in partnership with women; the impact of the Western model on the birth of the world: medical imperialism; midwifery education for a global future. For further information, contact: Midwifery Today, P.O. Box 2672, Eugene, OR 97402, USA. Fax: (503) 344-1422.



Call for Papers For the 1996 Berkshire Conference on the History of Women

The 10th Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, "Complicating Categories: Women, Gender and Difference," will be held on June 7-9 at the University of Carolina in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA. Submit proposals in triplicate, postmarked by February 1, 1995. Send proposals on U.S. and Canadian topics to: Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Afro-American Studies Department, Harvard University, 1430 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138; on other than North American topics: Merry Wiesner-Hanks, Center for Women's Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201; comparative U.S./non-U.S. topics may be sent to either Programme Committee Co-Chair.

FELLOWSHIPS

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) Educational Foundation is pleased to announce its 1995-96 **International Fellowships** for women who are NOT citizens or permanent residents of the United States, for graduate study or research in the United States. **Stipend:** US\$15,065. **Criteria for Selection:** Strong preference for women: whose credentials prove prior commitment to the amelioration of the lives of other women and girls through civic, community, or professional work; whose study or research proposals show a continued interest in the advancement of women; who can verify that there is definitely a position to which they will return in their home countries. **Eligibility:** Previous and current recipients of AAUW fellowships are not eligible to apply; applicants must hold a B.A. or its equivalent before December 1, 1994; permanent residents and citizens of the U.S. will not be considered. **Deadline:** completed application forms and supporting papers for 1995-96 fellowship must be postmarked no later than **December 1, 1994**, and sent in a complete package (applications are only available until November 15, 1994). Write to: International Fellowships, AAUW Educational Foundation, P.O. Box 4030, Iowa City, IA 52243-4030. Fax: (319) 337-1716.

ON THE BOOK SHELF

1. Ardila, Patricia, et al. **We speak for ourselves: population and development.** Washington: Panos Institute, 1994. 32p.

Collection of articles written by experts and activists in Latin America and the Caribbean with a range of views and analyses on population. Many of the contributions challenge current definitions of "population" with its narrow focus on birth control and call for policy changes to address the wider issues of development, human rights and women's rights.

Available in Spanish and English; free to individuals and organisations in the South. Order from: The Panos Institute, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 301, Washington, DC 20036, USA.

2. Castor, Suzy. **Femmes haitiennes aux elections de 1990.** Port-au-Prince, Centre de Recherche et de Formation Economique et Sociale pour le Developpement, 1994. 160p.

This three part study looks at the evolution of the women's movement in Haiti between 1986-1990, examines the treatment of women's issues in the programmes of political parties which contested the 1990 presidential election and presents a statistical analysis of women's participation in that election.

3. DAWN Panel On Militarism; Nan Peacocke, ed. **Militarism: anathema to sustainable human development and the environment.** St. Michael, Barbados: WAND, 1994. (WAND Occasional Paper 1/94)

Statement issued by participants of the DAWN Workshop on Militarism, held in the Women's Tent, Non-Governmental Islands Forum, April 24, 1994.

4. Dral, Ida F. "Female productivity & reproductivity in Port of Spain Trinidad: a case study of hucksters and factoryhands." Utrecht: University of Utrecht, Social

Faculty, 1993. viii, 79p.

This Masters in Social Sciences research paper looks at the effects of child bearing on the economic activities of petty traders and factory hands in Port of Spain. Conducted in 1992, in cooperation with the Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago.

5. Kerr, Joanna, ed. **Calling for change: international strategies to end violence against women.** The Hague: Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Development Cooperation Information Department, 1994. 65p. (Poverty and Development: Analysis & Policy, no. 8)

Reflects the experiences, discussions and recommendations of the international conference on women and violence, which brought practitioners, activists and policy makers together prior to the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, to develop strategies to combat violence against women.

6. Korea. Ministry of Political Affairs. **Korean women.** Seoul: Ministry of Political Affairs, 1994. 47p.
Report on the status of women in Korea.

7. Mark, Venus, Carmen Machado and Debrah Cumberbatch-Lewis. "Midwifery in Trinidad." **Midwifery Today** 28 (Winter 1993): 24, 42.

Brief overview of the subject.

8. Mootoo, Shani. **Out on main street.** Vancouver: Press Gang, 1993. 128p.

Nine poignant stories about heartbreak, family ties and clashing cultural expectations by an Indo-Trinidadian, Vancouver-based writer, visual artist and video-maker.

9. Moss, Nancy, Michael C. Stone and Jason B. Smith. "Fertility among Central American refugees and immigrants in Belize." **Human Organization** 52(2), 1993: 186-193.

Describes how international migration, including refugee status, affects both child spacing and awareness and interest in family planning.

10. Pro Health. **Violence against women in Suriname: a study of reported cases.** Paramaribo: Pro Health, 1994. 36p.

Analyses cases of violence against women reported to the police and the Casualty Department of the University Hospital, in Paramaribo and surrounding areas during 1990. (English translation of the Dutch original).

11. Saith, Radhica, comp. **Why not a woman?** Port of Spain: Paria Publishing, 1993. xii, 173p.

Coffee-table book containing profiles and photographs of over 80 contemporary women "achievers" in Trinidad and Tobago.

12. Silvera, Makeda. **Her head a village and other stories.** Vancouver: Press Gang, 1993. 128p.

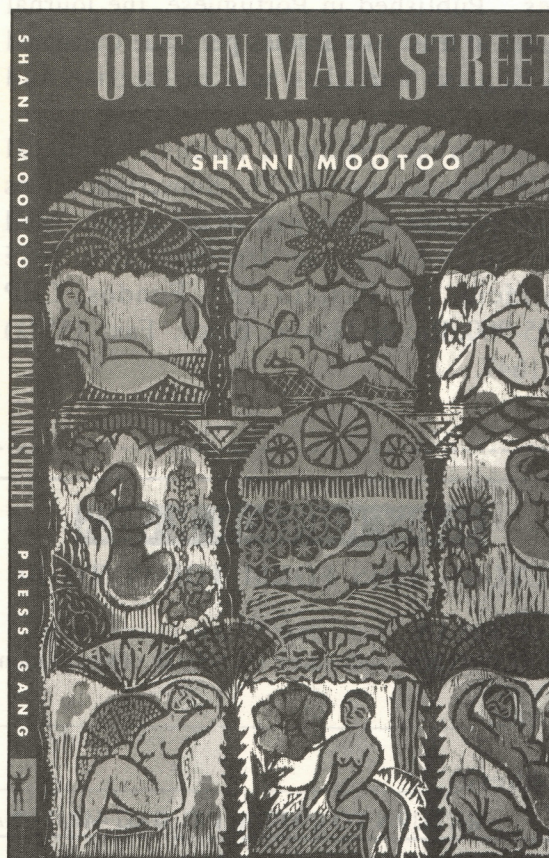
Rich collection which takes an unflinching look at "outsiders", working-class immigrants for whom North America is seldom the dreamed-of land of opportunities. Jamaican-born Silvera is co-founder and managing editor of *Sister Vision*: Black Women and Women of Colour Press.

13. Thijssen, Hans and Judith Saffe, eds. **Women and Islam in Muslim societies.** The Hague: Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Development Cooperation Information Department, 1994. 138p. (Poverty and Development: Analysis and Policy, no. 7)

Contains the text of a policy document on Women, Islam and development cooperation together with an analysis of the position of Muslim women in the Netherlands; and, proceedings of international workshop which took place in The Hague in September 1993.

14. Wells, Diana, comp. **Getting there: the movement toward gender equality.** New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 1994. xvii, 349p.

Anthology of speeches and essays by 29 contemporary American feminists, providing a sampling of feminist work in such disparate fields as medicine, literature, law and politics.



BOOK SHELF *cont'd*

15. Women Working for Social Progress. **Impact of structural adjustment: women in search of alternative economic strategies.** Tunapuna: Women Working for Social Progress, 1994. 8p.

Cartoon booklet describing the social and economic implications of structural adjustment programmes.

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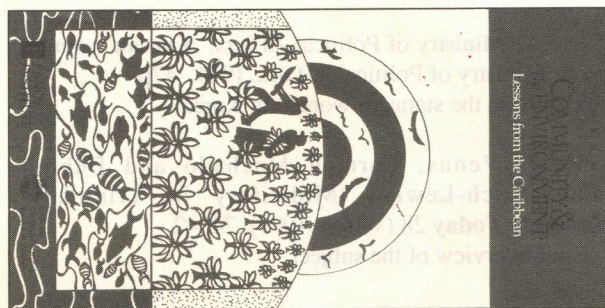
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The following publication is available from the **Women and Development Studies Group**, UWI, ISER, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago: Salisbury, Lutishoor and Sharon Soodeen-Karamath, comps. **Women in agriculture in developing countries, 1985-1990; a selected annotated bibliography.** 73p. Paper, TT\$25.00; US\$10.00 (+ postage).

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