CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
SECOND INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S CONFERENCE
AGAINST APEC

November 17 to 18, 1997

Vancouver, B.C. Canada
Preface

Going into the 1997 APEC Heads of State meeting in Vancouver, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum was a grouping of 18 nation-states (or 'economies' as they prefer to be called) located in the Asia-Pacific region. Each year, APEC leaders and their business advisory councils meet to discuss how to liberalize trade in the Asia Pacific region. Their goal is to create 'free and open' trade and investment in the Asia Pacific by 2020 for the so-called 'developing' countries and 2010 for the supposedly 'developed' countries.

The Second International Women's Conference Against APEC, held in Vancouver, Canada from November 17 to 18, 1997, was a part of the 1997 People's Summit on APEC. The Women's Conference followed upon the work of the First International Women's Conference on APEC held in Manila, Philippines in 1996. In Vancouver, more than 500 women from over twenty countries came together in order to learn more about APEC and its devastating effects upon women's lives. Women shared their experiences of globalization and participated in plenary and workshop discussions geared to formulating and following through with effective strategies of resistance to the 'free trade' agenda.

The Second International Women's Conference Against APEC was organized by the women of the Vancouver Steering Committee which was made up of representatives of women's, community and trade union groups as well as individuals. It was organized along the four main themes identified as crucial the year before in Manila, Philippines. These themes were: labour rights; human rights; the environment and; social and economic development. Each theme was raised by speakers in both of the morning plenary panels as well as in the smaller workshops. The first day's panel was devoted to discussing the main areas of concern to women in regards to APEC's 'free trade' agenda. The second day was spent on strategizing women's resistance to APEC.

These Women's Conference proceedings are a transcription of the plenary sessions, including the panel speeches and the reports/recommendations from the workshops. The proceedings were recorded by Andrea Welling and transcribed by Nandita Sharma.

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Opening Prayer and Welcome to First Nations land
by Fay Egder,
Member of the Coast Salish Nation - the Aboriginal territory upon which the Second International Women's Conference took place.

I'd like to welcome each and every one of you today to the 1997 International Women's Conference Against APEC. It is a great pleasure to know that each and every one of you are from all different territories and I welcome you to our land. It is a great pleasure to know and understand that at this Women's Conference, each and every one of you care for the future of our children. We, as the First Nations, have always been taught respect, love and care for the future of our children and the future of our land. I thank-you. Can we all stand so we can say a prayer?

I thank-you today for bringing us all together. That we are here to share. That we are here together in one mind. I pray for our people that we have left at home. I pray for our elders. I would like to remember our ancestors that have passed on, that we are born into a lot of suffering which we have endured in the past as we still do today in protecting our land. I would like to remember all our ancestors that have stood before us. I thank you that you have brought each and every one of us safely here today.

Nancy Riche
Co-Chair of the Women's Conference for Monday, November 17, 1997,
Executive Vice-President of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), Canada

Thank-you very much Fay. In that spirit and on behalf of my co-chair, Joan [Grant-Cummings], I declare the Second International Women's Conference Against APEC now officially open.

That's how they [the APEC heads of state] will do it next week - very officially. My guess is that the debate and discussion there will not be as good as the ones that we will have here in the next two days. May I just add on to Fay's comments and say that our discussions will be done in the spirit of caring, compassion and sharing. While we may be of one mind - women against APEC, globalization and corporatization, there will be many different views expressed. I think that what's important for us to show the world, or the countries of APEC, is that women can come together in terms of what we want to say for the women's agenda.

I want to thank the organizers. I just arrived yesterday - Joan and I - and here we are up at the front. But it is not the people up at the front that did the incredible hard work that has gone into organizing a conference like this. Just look at the numbers! Those of you in the front should look behind. Any conference that has to bring in more chairs is already a success. So, instead of waiting until tomorrow afternoon to thank everybody, let's thank them now - the massive number of volunteers, the organizers... I want to say on your behalf that thank-you very, very much for the tremendous hard work that brought us here today.

It is now my great pleasure to introduce to the conference and to all our sisters from Canada and many of the countries of APEC, the president of our largest women's lobby group in this country, one that has just celebrated it's 25th anniversary. Many of us in this room have been members for
a long, long time, so I'm introducing, in fact, our president, the president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) to bring her welcoming address - Joan Grant-Cummings.

**Welcoming Address by Joan Grant-Cummings**  
**Co-chair of the Women's Conference for Monday, November 17, 1997, President, National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), Canada**

Thank-you very much. Before I start, I just want to find out whether Anna Maria Nemenzo is in the room. No? Anna Maria Nemenzo was one of the co-chairs at the First Women's Conference in Manila last year and I was hoping she'd be here so she could bring us some greetings from the women in the Philippines. If she does come in, I think we should acknowledge her presence for sure.

I'd also like to share with you the fact that today is the second mock trial of President Suharto of Indonesia. I think it is taking place at the University of British Columbia (UBC) where we have thirteen East Timorese exiles and two Indonesian dissidents who are bearing witness to the atrocities that have been visited on the East Timorese people by the Indonesian government and military. For the first time in Canada, we will be having four East Timorese women who can speak to the struggle and their part in it. The four of them will be joining us for the Women's Conference, but today they will be at the second mock trial. Earlier on this week, we had the first one in Ottawa and a number of social justice groups participated with the East Timor Alert Network (ETAN). One of the shameful things the Canadian government did was that they had promised the East Timorese, Team Timor is what we are calling them, a meeting. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs) had promised to meet with them and later on canceled. One of his top bureaucrats said that she would and then twenty-four hours before, she canceled. So, that is quite a shame and just like what the Canadian government is doing right now in terms of human rights issues.

The 4 women who will be joining us are Isabel (Bella) Galhos... I think she will be speaking tomorrow or will be at one of the workshops, Josefina Robero, Salana Suarez and Inez Almeda. And they will be speaking to the struggles and atrocities that women, in particular in East Timor, have faced. And many of us may know that in Beijing in 1995, rape was declared a war crime. And that is one of the very, very clear issues that the women are saying that given the fact that Canada was one of those countries that paraded as the gender experts in Beijing and pushed for rape to be declared a war crime, as if women didn't know this for years, that on that ground alone Suharto should be barred from entering Canada or if he does enter Canada, he should be put behind bars. And that is the call of the East Timorese Team that will be visiting us.

I think that there is one thing too that we have to acknowledge in terms of our presence here today, because when women get together and decide that we are going to take control of our lives and we are going to come up with an agenda to resist the type of oppression and exploitation that we are facing, it is an incredible act of self-advocacy. And it takes a lot, especially for women who, you know, whose lives are made unbearable by just speaking up for ourselves and resisting. So, I think we should really own the fact that what we are doing is an
incredible act of self-advocacy on our part, because what we are saying is that we reject this anti-woman, global economic apartheid that currently governs how trade and economics are negotiated between our governments and corporations.

And, a few years ago we used to talk about equality postponed, but I think we are now in the era of equality denied. And that really sums up the amount of work that we have to do to make sure that women's equality is put back on the agenda and a globalized women's agenda that...

We are going to be hearing from a woman who has over the past number of years led the democratic movement in Burma, Aung San Suu Kyi. And, in Beijing, again where she was barred from leaving her home and participating in the Fourth World Conference on Women, she spoke to us through video. So at this point what we are going to do is to have a video tape of a message from Aung San Suu Kyi to inspire us for the rest of the two days in terms of our coming up with our transformative strategies and action plans.

Shall we roll the tape?

Videotaped interview with Aung San Suu Kyi (not available for transcription)

Joan Grant-Cummings:

If you want to get some more information about the democratic struggle in Burma, the Dharma Forum will be presenting the Canadian premiere of the documentary by Jean Hallesey on the struggle for democracy in Burma. And this is going to be at the Pacific Cinematheque tomorrow at 8pm.

Since we are running a bit behind time, we want to proceed immediately to listening to Jeannette Armstrong and it is my pleasure to introduce her.

Jeannette is Okanagan and she is residing on the Penticton Indian Reservation. She is a fluent speaker of the Okanagan language and she has studied under some of the most knowledgeable elders of the Okanagan. In her own words, she says, "the Native people of this land developed a lifestyle through a unique world view. I believe its underlying values and structures are important contributions to the pool of knowledge as critical factors in reversing and reshaping a world view whose values foster an attitude of self-destruction." Jeannette is a graduate of fine arts from the University of Victoria. She is a poet. She is a writer. She is a musician. She is also the director of the En'owkin International School of Writing. She was appointed traditional council member of the Penticton Indian Band and she is an advocate of Indigenous rights. She was recently appointed to the Council of Listeners in the International Testimonials on Violations to Indigenous Sovereignty and recently invited to attend as an international observer by the Continental Coordinating Commission of Indigenous Peoples in the peace talks in Mexico. She is an advocate of a healthy environment and social change in which peace between all peoples is central. She is consulted by many environmentalist and social change organizations. Jeannette has had the opportunity to address several conferences across the world
and we take pleasure in having her as the keynote speaker at the Second International Women's Conference Against APEC in Canada. We welcome Jeannette Armstrong.
Good morning. I really would like to say my thanks to the organizers of this conference. Thank-you for the introduction and Fay [Egder] thank-you for the prayer this morning. I'd just like to say good morning to everyone in my own language. I am from the interior of British Columbia and my language is Okanagan. I'd like to say welcome to this land for the people that have arrived here. I know I'm not Coast Salish and Fay (Egder) has already done that but I'm very happy to be here today. I give greetings to the women that are here for the Women's Conference and also the men that are in attendance. I give you the Okanagan's good wishes for your children that are yet unborn. I wish them the best and I wish that the work that we do here during this conference will be for them. I'm really pleased to be here to listen to some of the things that are going to be coming up later today. I'm really happy to be asked to give some thoughts in this keynote address.

I'm quite an informal speaker and don't usually prepare a written presentation for this kind of address, because I really feel it is important to create the kind of dialogue that comes from the heart - one which we can engage in as human to human, that we can engage in as women, that we can engage in as peoples from different areas of the world and peoples from different cultures of the world. I really feel that it is important that we are able to communicate on a level beyond the intellectual and communicate at a spiritual level and communicate on an emotional level. I think that is what is so needed as the world shifts. Now, a new world order is being put into place and situations are being created where people come to be disassociated from their feelings and disassociated from the necessities that we have as human beings. We are moving towards creating more and more dispassion, so that love and compassion and real things like feelings and emotions and caring are not the important issues any longer - so that humans are not important any longer. I like to subvert that wherever I can and create a situation where we can really feel what we are talking about and we can express and share these feelings with one another. I don't think that we have a chance of shifting back to caring and being compassionate unless we can do that.

I want to talk about the New World Order and some of my thinking on it as an Indigenous person. I have had the opportunity to travel and work in areas that are critical in relation to Indigenous people, their lives and their rights. I've been able to see and to witness some of the suffering that takes place as the shifting world order encompasses lands and peoples and creates conditions where usually the people who are at the bottom of the rung in terms of the economy are the Indigenous peoples of the world. I'm not going to speak specifically about Indigenous people this morning, but I'd like to talk about the globalization and with that, its effects on Indigenous people and, of course, the women of those Indigenous nations and territories of the world as well as all women.

I want to begin with talking about the apparatus being used to globalize the economy. The globalization of the economy relies on the power wielding of wealthy countries and their thrusting of 'development' investments into usually poverty-stricken countries and into areas where Indigenous peoples and sustainable local economies have been operating and developing
for centuries and caretaking the land and the people. This has always been done in the form of investments, in the form of aid and loans. These things are used as mechanisms to extract cheap resources and to take advantage of the lower costs associated with a disregard for labour, human rights and environmental protections. It is done in order to provide lower cost goods for competitive trade to countries that are called 'developed'.

It is not coincidental that Indigenous peoples, women, labourers and minorities are found in the lowest income sectors of all such colonized countries. It is no coincidence that they are found living in the poorest of conditions and suffering the lowest life expectancies. In such liberalization of "developing countries," those made destitute are usually the fodder fueling the corporate labour machine to grow and to extract, produce and manufacture goods from the resources of lands that are seized and held through military aggression against these same peoples. Systemic violence which results in genocide is made possible through such policies and condoned through the political will.

In pseudo-democracies (and I use the word "pseudo," because I don't believe that there are true democracies existing in situations where the voters and consumers demand cheaper and cheaper products) it is not coincidental that the human, political and social rights of colonized peoples are wholly ignored in the large world trade agreements and nation-state political forums dominated by the powers heading world economic reorganization, such as APEC's. In 'developed' countries, such as this country and the U.S., there is growing awareness of the negative impact on middle-class living standards and privileges. Beyond that, there are deeper implications for everyone in the new forms of oppression being directed towards the endangered Indigenous peoples of the world and endangered species of the world. Emerging through the globalization of the economy and the further development of corporate trade and corporate markets is the degradation of these people and these lands.

There are a number of issues that I want to refer to that arise out of demands of globalization and increased privatization, increased commodification of all goods and all services and in areas where especially science and health services become pivotal to the profit motive. I'm just going to digress a moment here and talk about some of the issues that I have seen in the area of science and health services, especially in countries where the extraction of resources is creating grave degradation of the environment. One of the things we can see happening in these areas is that there is a downwards affect that has occurred over a number of years in terms of the impact felt by the people. Not only the social impacts in terms of the economy and the kinds of repressions and oppressions that occur, but also in terms of the kind of health problems and the kind of diseases that result from the degradation of the environment and through the lowering of quality of standards of living and also the lowering of the quality of food when cash cropping replaces natural foods or foods that are planted and grown by the people to sustain themselves.

The lowering of the quality of nutrition is a really serious issue where people are suffering under the effects of globalization, especially for Indigenous peoples who are removed and dislocated from their Indigenous foods and where cash cropping replaces locally sustainable economies. These are some of the areas in which you see great suffering and increased mobilization and immigration of peoples away from true sustainable local culture and local economy. Of course,
the people who are at the greatest risk of this displacement are the women and children and people who require health services and special care in some way.

When we are looking at signs, one of the impacts of the globalization of trade is the creation of an approach to science that has had a very grave effect in relation to human beings and in relation to food security. In areas where cash cropping has taken place, the natural biodiversity has been depleted to a point where monocropping is a great risk and famines have been created. There are many grave situations where people have suffered as a result of the failure of the one crop that was the entire basis of their economy and from situations where monocrops have totally replaced the growth of different kinds of food. Monocrop agriculture is making this food diversity impossible.

Also, in the area of new technologies, the development of biogenetic engineering and manipulation of DNA has created nutritionally-deficient food stuffs that are grown for purposes of export. This means that such food stuffs are grown for better shelf life. The result is that they are grown in ways that lowers the nutritional value of the food, often so much so that it cannot even be considered food. These 'food' stuffs are being traded and sold as cheap products to people who can't afford anything better. All peoples of the world are affected by the lowering of the quality of foods as genetically engineered food cropping starts to take place. We know from some recent information that many of the foods being genetically engineered have pesticide properties artificially added to them so that they repel pests. Yet, this increases the toxicity of the foods, so that, nutritionally, they are very poor. It is frightening to think of the lack of regulations that exist in countries where there is not even fundamental protection of human rights, let alone in countries like this where food nutritional quality decreases are rising. We know that these are the kinds of crops being grown and that is what people are beginning to eat. These are some of the areas, in terms of scientific and human loss, that we all face as people.

I was thinking of the motivation lying behind global economic restructuring and the growing development of new trade, new degraded agricultural and other products, as well as the orchestrated inter-relationship between dominant world organizations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and organizations like APEC. Indigenous peoples, especially in countries where Indigenous peoples are being systematically removed from their areas, we are looking not only at the health issues and the nutritional issues, we are actually looking at increased militarization. This occurs where Indigenous peoples are opposing the theft of their lands by domestic government's and the granting of greater access to Indigenous lands to multinational corporations. We are looking at genocide in those cases where Indigenous peoples are refusing to make way and give access to the privatization of lands. Chiapas [in Mexico] is a good example of that. Other countries in other parts of the world are suffering in the same ways.

Indigenous peoples and local communities are saying no, we are not going to allow this kind of privatization of our commonly held lands or reservations or land covered by treaties that have been enacted with Indigenous peoples. Such treaties, such agreements or constructive arrangements, whatever they might be called in different countries, are, right now, the greatest obstacle to multinational corporations and their access to these Indigenous lands. So, of course, domestic governments who play handmaiden to the multinational corporations are increasingly
determined to make Indigenous lands and their resources accessible. As a result, there is increased militarization, increased violence and increased human rights violations against Indigenous peoples and people who are standing in the way of that kind of access.

In terms of our own economies, in terms of our own countries, our so-called 'developed' countries, we can see the disparity that is starting to emerge between the various sectors. In terms of the economy in North America (and I'm talking about Canada, the U.S. and Mexico to some degree), we are looking at a greater and wider gap between those that have and those that have not. We are beginning to see a time in which homelessness, poverty and disease is on the rise. Everything is facing commodification so that it can be sold as good and services that have been privatized for profit and not produced for human need or human caring. Education is one example. We can see the privatization and commodification of education on the increase here in Canada. We can see it even more so in the US and to an even greater degree in countries where globalization has hit hard.

We can see that the services we have been taking for granted here in Canada for the last 15 to 20 years taken and destroyed right out from under us as the domestic governments begin to create policies that privatize these services and put them in the hand of non-governmental sectors. This undermines public services and creates ways that will make it more feasible to be "competitive" in terms of trade and commodification of these services. We see the effect of the privatization of services in Indigenous communities. We see the effect of it on minorities. We see the effect of it on the people who were living close to the poverty line but who are now living in total poverty. We see the immense suffering that is taking place.

I visited several countries this year and what I saw in countries that have been newly liberalized along the terms of the World Trade Organization (WTO) made me feel extremely, extremely fearful of what lies ahead in the future. I feel extreme grief in terms of what I have seen taking place over the past 10 years as I have gone back to these countries and seen the changes that have taken place. Some of the fear that I results from seeing a continuance of the dispassion, the dehumanization and the lack of caring that governments have for people. I think one of the things we need to think about is the inability of governments themselves to extricate themselves from this kind of globalization and their inability to find ways in which local economies, national economies can be supported adequately. I can see that there are a number of ways that it can be avoided, but increasingly, governments are at the mercy of these large, large agreements that are not made democratically, that are not supported democratically or thought about democratically.

One of the areas that I'm very much concerned about is the fact that we are not living in a democracy. We are not practicing a democracy. Democracy has become a myth. It has become a myth when you know that multinational corporations situated in Europe or Japan or somewhere else have more of a right to decide what happens to your world, your environment and your life and your security than you do. When we are in such a state and situation, we are not living in a democracy.
I know that everyone of us sitting here has someone in our families that has cancer or some disease that is created from the misuse of this technological world and from privatization and commodification and consumerism. I know that when we are looking at that, what I'm concerned about is that our human rights, in a real sense, our everyday rights to have good food and clean water and the right to live healthy for 70-some years is not being realized. It is not there anymore. They can't guarantee us any of these things in this New World Order and this new restructuring. All they can guarantee us is lower and lower and lower quality of goods and services, because that is what it is about. That is what it is manufactured for. One of the ways we can look at it is that the cheaper that you can produce something, the more competitive it is going to be. By supporting the production of the cheapest possible goods, we are ensuring the poorest quality services and the poorest quality foods.

That is what is being supported in APEC. There is something wrong with this kind of thinking. There is something wrong with those world leaders who think that APEC is for the human good, because it is not about humans, it is not about health, it is not about life. It is against life. It is against health.

We are in a crisis. We need to find alliances and find appropriate ways for people to deal with this. I really believe that it must be people who lead the resistance and that it is going to be the women of the world who will make the decision to change this New World Order.

So, I just want to leave it at that. I really rely on this kind of dialogue and I really rely on the kind of alliance-making that needs to happen at this kind of level. I implore everyone to work hard to think about this, because I don't know if there is any turning back and, sometimes, I lose my hope for the future. I lose, sometimes, my optimism that there will be a future that is worth having for my children and grandchildren. I hate to think about that. I hate to think like that when my grandson was born just three months ago. What is he going to have when he grows up? What is my granddaughter going to have when she grows up? She is two years old. When she is my age, when she is fifty, what is it going to be like? What are we going to be facing? Some of the things I see happening in the APEC countries are extremely negative and result from the kinds of things being done inside APEC and within large trade agreements.

I just want to leave it at that. I want to thank everyone for listening to me and thank everyone for the work that they are going to be doing. I want to tell you that I love you and that I would like to support you in every way possible, if I can. Thank-you.
Plenary Speeches of Monday, November 17, 1997

Alicia Sepulveda
Mexican Telephone Workers Union, Mexico
Plenary Presentation on APEC and Labour Rights
Monday, November 17, 1997

Good morning sisters, I have been a telephone operator in the Mexican telephone company, Telmex for twenty years. I have been very active in my union. I am a union representative right now. But, I am here unofficially, because my union has not reached a position yet on APEC. I want to share our experience. As you know, Mexico is a part of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement between the U.S., Canada and Mexico) and has been since 1994. I think that the result of free trade agreements will be all to see.

I want to thank the organizers of this Women's Conference Against APEC for the opportunity to share information about the effects of free trade on workers, especially women workers. Without their enthusiasm, hard work and determination we wouldn't be here today. To them, and to you all, my deepest gratitude.

Even though NAFTA was put into effect on the 1st of January, 1994, the Salinas government had been very busy opening up our markets and making Mexico attractive to investors (i.e. privatizing almost all of the public sector, deregulating basic industries, lowering wages, decreasing public spending and so on and so forth). I'm sure that you can give your own examples of this right-wing agenda being applied in your own countries.

After several years of this treatment we can now "proudly" say that we have one of the world's lowest minimum wage, that we have become so "competitive" that workers in our export-oriented zones now earn less than their counterparts in Asia. According to a study of Mexico made by the ILO (International Labour Organization), unionization has decreased by 28% in the last ten years, because stable, good paying jobs have been destroyed. Our earning power has fallen by 75%. In other words, we gave away three-quarters of our earnings. This means that we worked for nothing for seven and half years out of ten.

It saddens me to say that women, of course, were hit the hardest. Most workers in the maquila sector (free trade or export-oriented zones) are young women, less than twenty years old, working for weekly wages of less than $30.00 (Canadian).

But not everything has been negative. We can now "boast" that we have at least some Mexicans who have become the richest men on earth. They are but three or four, but that should be enough to make us forget that forty million Mexicans now live well below the poverty level. This performance was good enough for the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). Mexico is now one of its twenty-five members, along with the twenty-four richest countries on earth. Or should I say "economies", as APEC does?
It is so very convenient. If you focus on econometrics you can call poverty a "genial myth," like our ex-Secretary of Finance, Pedro Aspe, did. It's just a matter of keeping unpleasant evidence out of sight, which is easy to do when you only meet in fancy hotels, travel by limousine and spend millions of dollars on security. I read in one of your local newspapers that the Canadian government is going to spend a million dollars per visiting "economic leader" to keep them safe. Imagine all the things we could have done with that money - all the schools, clinics, universities and anti-poverty programs that could have benefited from it.

Of course, when you care more about capital flows and merchandise exchange than about human needs, you spend that kind of money just to keep the truth away. You really wouldn't want to hear about what your policies are doing to workers, to children, to pensioners, to women. After all, "economic progress" is much more important than human needs, isn't it?

That is why we need to speak in such loud voices. That is why we need to amplify our message, getting more and more people together to get "economic leaders" to understand that we have had enough, that we want a change of policies, that we want our needs to be considered as important and as worthy of protection as trademarks or intellectual property rights.

Last night I went through the background material provided for this conference. I could not find fault with either the Kyoto Declaration or the Manila People's Forum on APEC declaration. The issues are clear cut, the demands very to the point. The only fault I could find is that "we call" on governments to do the right then when we should have the strength to demand it of them.

One of the worst effects of globalization is that it has shifted our attention from national to global issues and, in some ways, has convinced us that there is nothing that can be done against the power of corporations because they are richer, bigger and stronger than our own countries. Our governments have bought into this. It gives them a lot of breathing space, because they can claim powerlessness vis a vis huge economic forces.

Mexico hasn't even tried to regulate capital flows or to tax stock market operations. We have such a fragile economy that the recent Hong Kong stock market plunge hit our currency harder than any other. Of course, we workers don't really have to worry. Our Secretary of Finance, Guillermo Ortiz, declared that "workers don't use dollars." He conveniently forgot that in a country which has become dependent on food imports to feed its people, the appreciation of the dollar's value will result in higher prices all around.

But now is the moment to inject a bright note into all this darkness. As you may know, the last July 6th election was a watershed. For the first time in the last sixty years, the opposition won a majority of the seats in the House of Representatives. Those of you who now live or have lived under one-party, absolute rule know what this means. For the first time in modern history, the Presidency's absolute power has been challenged. Our Federal Budget will be analyzed, discussed and changed by the deputies we elected. But we must remember that, if we don't organize and mobilize to make our needs known, they can be ignored by the politicians.
I think that this is what this conference is all about. Economic cooperation among nations will never come about on its own. A new model for economic development based on satisfying human needs will only be put into effect when we create such a strong social consensus inside our countries and between them that they can resist all the pressure from international financial agencies and from international corporations.

I don't think that the issue is whether we should or shouldn't engage with those corporations and their institutions, but in when, how and why we engage. I think that we have to learn how to win and not only how to fight. And in order to win, we have to have a good action plan and a strong and united popular movement.

Unions have a very long tradition of organizing. We have done it to defend our rights as workers in the workplace, only to realize that this is not enough. As a telephone operator, I was faced with the realities of privatization, competition, and de-regulation and their effects on my job and on the jobs of my brothers and sisters. We found out that very similar things were happening to telephone workers all over the world. To defend ourselves, we strengthened our ties with sister unions around the world. And to defend our own rights and our own jobs we found it necessary to mobilize in defense of the rights and the jobs of social security workers, of teachers, of bus drivers, of informal sector workers.

In the process, we created a stronger, independent union movement. On the 28th of November, 1997, a new central labour body will be born in Mexico. It is called the National Union of Workers (Union Nacional de Trabajadores). In short, it will be called UNT, which is pronounced unete which means unite, join up, work together. This new central body is wholly independent from the government and its party, the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party). We have been working very, very hard for the last two and half years bringing together unions that have very different viewpoints, traditions and ways of fighting. We are creating a strong workers' movement that will make the government put into effect and respect commitments made in UN conventions, national labour codes and laws and collective agreements.

As you know, it is not easy. Corporations dread strong workers' movements and they will threaten our governments with economic sanctions. They will sit down and bargain with us only when they realize that no matter where they run they will find strong workers' responses. We have an example of this occurring right now. The International Federation of Transport Workers has organized an event that will take place simultaneously in all APEC ports of call. They are fighting against flags of convenience that allow ship owners to pay low wages and bypass health and safety measures. Actions will take place here in Vancouver and I'm sure we will support them. If these actions are successful, if we extend them to other sectors, we will face corporation and governments as equals and not as subordinates.

Change will not just happen. We have to make it happen by organizing ourselves. We should make 1998 the year of fighting for decent human conditions, especially for women and children. If that means allotting more resources for anti-poverty programs, for education, for health, for housing, let us push simultaneously for that in all our countries. Let us create a common agenda, like corporations do, and set deadlines, just like they do. In many countries it will mean fighting
for basic human rights, for democracy, for free speech, for representation. If we make it our job
to defend those rights everywhere we will succeed because there are more of us, because we are
everywhere and because they need our work. They can't escape from us.

We made it a reality that an injury to one woman is an injury to all women around the world, we
will have succeeded. Thank-you.
Yayori Matsui
Asian Women's Association, Japan
Plenary Presentation on APEC and Human Rights
Monday, November 17, 1997

Yayori Matsui is a journalist and Director of the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Centre. She was born in Kyoto in 1943. Yayori studied at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, the University of Minnesota and the University of Paris. She worked for Asahi Shimbun for 33 years (1961-1993) as a reporter, senior staff writer and Asia correspondent. From 1981-1985, Yayori was based in Singapore, covering social welfare, environment, development, human rights and Asia-Japan relations from a woman's point of view. She has published 12 books, including Women's Asia (Zed Books, London, 1986). In 1977, she founded the Asian Women's Association and after retiring in 1995, the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Centre.

As a woman from Japan, a country which is in the North and one of the most industrialized economic powers but a country which is not in the West because it is an Asian country, I want to share my experiences and views on APEC and human rights. As you may know, some Asian countries are now challenging the concept of human rights itself as a product of the West and even demanding the revision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the occasion of its 50th anniversary next year. Such debate on human rights in Asia has deep implications, because it has to do with questioning modern industrial civilization and its economic and technological development model.

Before elaborating on this human rights debate in Asia, I want to describe to you the reality of people, especially of women, in Asia, which I have always seen with my own eyes. Asia is becoming the economic growth center of the world and it is often said that the 21st century will be the century of Asia due to the dramatically rapid economic development of NICs (newly industrializing countries)--East Asia, near NICs--Southeast Asia, and aspiring NICs--South Asia and former socialist countries, since the 1980s.

Last August, I visited Thailand as a member of a Women's Study Tour group organized by our Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center and last September I visited Burma as a resource person for a human rights training course. What I saw in these two neighbouring countries gives us a clear idea of the impacts of the economic development promoted by APEC on women, children, Indigenous people and other marginalized people.

Our study tour group traveled to northern Thailand to see the background of growing sex trafficking in Thai women to Japan and other countries. We were shocked to see the sheer poverty in the rural villages, especially in hill tribe areas, which is in dramatic contrast to the accumulation of wealth and prosperity in the capital, Bangkok, where there are traffic jams due to too many cars and more than one thousand high rise buildings.

The economic growth of Thailand on a macro level has been remarkable with more than ten percent annual GNP growth since the late 1980s until the sudden currency crisis which started last summer. However, once you step in the rural areas in the north and the northeast, you see a
totally different world, a world where people suffer from economic deprivation and environmental destruction—in other words, you see human rights violations.

Thailand has been seen as a model economy among APEC countries for adopting quite liberal trade and investment policies without regulation. As a matter of fact, we hardly saw any social policies implemented for the benefit of rural and hill tribe people. This type of economic development in Thailand has widened the gap between rich people and poor people as well as between urban people and rural people. The economic gap between the capital and the Isaan in the northeastern region has been reported as ten to one and between Bangkok and the north: eight to one. Japan, among other foreign countries, has been deeply involved in such unjust and unequal economic development in Thailand as investors and as an economic development aid donor country.

As a result, poor farmers and hill tribe people have to sell their young daughters to the sex industry. The age of these girls is getting younger and younger because the fear of AIDS has increased the demand for younger "safer" girls—those not yet infected with HIV. However, it is reported some 70 percent of these "clean" girls get HIV within one year after they are put into brothels. The total number of people infected with HIV has reached more that one million in Thailand; in many villages we visited, we saw girls dying from AIDS every day.

More and more Thai women are sent abroad by trafficking organizations. I feel ashamed to say Japan is the country receiving the largest number of trafficked women from neighbouring Asian countries because the expanding sex industry in Japan demands Thai girls. It is ironic to notice the sex industry is the most deregulated industry. There are no rules much less a code of conduct. This allows the sex industry to use anything as commodities, especially women's bodies, just as British merchants did to African people during the African slave trade. It can be said such sex trafficking in women is one of the worst cases of human rights violations in the 20th century, in the sense that these victimized women are not treated as human beings but as commodities with price. Thai women are traded at a price of four million yen in Japan.

It is not only Thai women but also Burmese girls who are trafficked into Thailand. According to the Thai NGO working on children's rights, some forty to fifty thousand Burmese girls have been sent to Thailand and they are even more brutally abused than Thai girls. They are at the bottom of the prostitution industry and eighty to ninety percent of them become infected with HIV, due to their extremely low status and little access to knowledge of self protection within the brothels.

When I visited Burma, I heard from a researcher that many Burmese girls who get AIDS and therefore become "useless" to brothel owners are sent back to Thai-Burmese and Thai-Chinese border towns in garbage trucks and just dumped there to die. Even if they manage to reach their families, they are often left outside to be fed like dogs until they die, because of ignorance and fear of AIDS.

This is the plight of thousands and thousands of poor young women in Burma, but it is not talked about. The military government is so oppressive that people are just afraid of talking. Newspapers are government controlled. I managed to learn about how people were suffering
from forced labour, forced eviction, forced selling of rice to the government, and even forced conversion to Buddhism (because many anti-government ethnic minorities are Christian.) Universities are closed for many months. Workers are very poorly paid (only four US dollars a month). Burmese people are deprived of almost all kinds of human rights.

However, in spite of worldwide opposition and protest, ASEAN (the Association of South East Asian Nations) finally agreed to accept Burma as a member country. Now the Burmese military regime is making propaganda around its success in joining ASEAN, claiming its policies are approved by other Southeast Asian countries. As a matter of fact, the Burmese military regime opened its economy and is now entering the new stage of economic development with much foreign investment from ASEAN countries. In Rangoon, you see foreign business men and many new high rise buildings and luxury hotels whose room charge is $200 US in contrast to a monthly wage of US$4 for women factory workers and 10 cents daily wage for brick carrying day labourers. This is the type of development ASEAN is supporting for their own economic interests. In line with the APEC policy of liberalization, this type of economic system is intensifying the structural violence and social injustice against people.

Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahatir, a leader of ASEAN which has endorsed the membership of Burma, has been challenging Western domination and advocating an "anti-Western" position, from an Islamic stand. At the extended Asia-Pacific Foreign Ministers Conference in Kuala Lumpur last July, he even demanded the revision of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Indonesian and Chinese foreign ministers agreed to his proposal. He did not elaborate how the Declaration should be changed, but what Mahatir and other Asian leaders are questioning is the universality and indivisibility of human rights.

His views are in common with those expressed by Asian governments at the World Human Rights Conference in Vienna in 1993. Since then, they have been advocating so-called "Asian values" against universal application of human rights which they consider products of the West. They refuse the West's imposition on non-western countries. Their arguments on human rights can be put into the following three main points: Firstly, state sovereignty should be respected and human rights issues should be treated within a country as domestic issues, therefore, the foreign or international community should not interfere on human rights issues. China has always emphasized this view very strongly.

Secondly, under the "development first" theory, economic development is vitally important for developing countries to overcome poverty and so, human rights and democracy are described as luxuries for hungry people. As a rejection of the indivisibility of human rights, this position criticizes the West as interested in only civil and political rights and emphasizes that economic, social and cultural rights should be more respected. Malaysia, Indonesia and Burma have been advocating this view. Thirdly, cultural relativism is advocated especially by Islamic countries which insist that cultural tradition and customs of each country should be given priority and human rights should not be applied to deny such cultural practices.

Let's look at these arguments from Asian people's perspective. Regarding the state sovereignty theory, we should totally agree to it in the sense that super powers do use human rights for the
national interests. For example, the US imposes human rights principles on certain countries which aren't friendly to it, but condones gross human rights violations by dictatorial governments which it supports, like some Latin American dictators and the former brutal dictatorships in Korea and Taiwan. We cannot accept the double standard of Western powers in the application of human rights principles.

However, we believe human rights violations should not be allowed by any country anywhere. Human rights should be protected across national borders and any violation should be solved by international actions. How can we stop acting for the freedom of Aung Sang Suu Kyi?

Regarding the argument on culture and human rights, we should fully respect cultural diversity and make more efforts to preserve it. We are concerned that local cultures are being destroyed and a global homogenized consumer culture is invading the world. It is the economic globalization by TNCs (transnational corporations)--in other words, the APEC development model--which has promoted such a monolithic cultural phenomenon. The human right to preserve one's own culture should be respected by any means.

However, culture is not static and unchangeable. Some cultural practices are harmful and oppressive to women. The problem is that, in most countries, it was men who decided which cultural practices should be preserved and which ones should be abandoned. The point is that dominant culture is male culture; women should radically change such culture and create new, more feminized culture.

In Japan, when men claim that Japanese women don't respect traditional culture, we argue that women want to change oppressive cultural traditions. The right-wing force is attacking not only the war compensation issue claiming that Asian "comfort women"--survivors of military sexual slavery by Japanese army--volunteered to be prostitutes and were not forcibly taken. They also slander any feminist proposals including the change of the family name system to allow women to retain their maiden names.

I know many Muslim women all over the world are campaigning against discriminatory cultural practices and advocating that violence against women should not be allowed in the name of culture and tradition. At the International Conference on Violence against Women in War and Armed Conflict Situations recently held in Tokyo (October 31-November 3), an Algerian woman from an organization called "Women under Muslim Law" reported on the frightening violence against Afghani women by the extremist Taliban group. Women are not allowed even to go out to street and if they do, they are cruelly beaten.

It should be emphasized that the global women's movement made a vigorous campaign against any form of violence against women in the family, in the community and by the state, as violations of human rights. As a result, the concept of women's human rights was accepted at the Vienna Conference by the international community. The Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Violence Against Women was adopted in 1993 by the UN General Assembly which obliges signatory governments to take effective measures for prevention of such violence. The
Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 also included strategies to be taken by governments on violence against women.

We should expand the understanding of violence against women to include structural violence caused by development projects, such as ecological destruction, forced eviction, mass scale overseas migration and so on. They can be considered as economic social rights.

The third point of the human rights debate in Asia is related to development, which is most relevant to APEC. Women aren't against development itself, but we do have to question who this "development" is for. I have been to Malaysia many times, because it is most closely connected with Japan economically. There are hundreds of Japanese multinational factories in peninsular Malaysia where young women workers are not allowed to organize labour unions. In East Malaysia on Borneo Island which is covered by thick tropical rain forest, I was shocked to see so many precious tropical trees being logged for export to Japan. Japan is the largest importer of tropical timber in the world. In the state of Sarawak, where logging is at its height, more than twenty Indigenous tribal people are suffering due to the loss of their livelihood. They resist by barricading logging roads, but then they are arrested and treated cruelly.

It is Prime Minister Mahatir, the most staunchly anti-West advocate, who is aggressively following APEC globalization policy by inviting so many TNCs in and by exporting precious natural resources for the globalized world market. Therefore, while he is attacking the West and propagandizing Asian values, he is practicing the very western model of development he supposedly despises. His position reminds me of the principle of "Japanese Spirit and Western Technology" which was advocated by Japanese leaders of the Meiji modernization period. They were afraid that Japanese people might be influenced by western democracy because they promoted industrialization initiated by the state and not by the people. It can be said now that the slogan of Asian leaders for economic development is "Asian Values and Western Technology" which deprives people human rights and democratic rights.

Malaysia has been enjoying economic growth, but numerous people have been jailed in Malaysia including Indigenous people in Sarawak, human rights activists like Irene Fernandez who exposed the cruel treatment of detained migrant workers, intellectuals who were just recently detained under the Internal Security Act. This type of economic development which sacrifices the human rights of women, children and Indigenous people is common to most Asian countries. It is vitally important to confront global economic dominance of the powerful countries in the North, but it is also necessary to criticize the countries in the South which follow the North and to hold their governments accountable to the people.

The international economic structure promoted by APEC causes gross human rights violations, much pain and agony and so much inequality and unjust social relations. Moreover, it should be pointed out that the wasteful consumption pattern of people in the North is a part of development model which APEC is promoting. Therefore, if we reject APEC, we should change our lifestyle based on a free market economy which APEC wants to expand worldwide.
It is vitally important for women to reject and resist the APEC system, but it is also important that women start working together to create an alternative development system based on gender justice, ecological sustainability and local-global democracy. Already some women have taken various alternative actions in many Asian countries even if they are still at the small-scale, grassroots level. We can learn from them and step forward to envision an alternative future for the 21st century where women's human rights are guaranteed. For that purpose, human rights should be refined and enriched through women's day-to-day struggle. Thank-you very much.
Hello, my name is Sarojeni Rengam. I am from Malaysia and am with the Pesticide Action Network. We started documenting the impact of pesticides upon women way back in the 1980s. As a result of that, we realized that the issue of women and pesticides is not just an issue of how to deal with pesticides alone. When we first started, there was hardly any information about the impact of pesticide use on women. There was very little information on the effects of pesticides on women's health. Also, how such dangerous pesticides are used was very much a non-issue, both at the policy level and within the mainstream women's movement. This really shocked us. As a result of that, we have become very much involved in rural women's issues and in women and agriculture.

I'm really happy to be here at the International Women's Conference Against APEC. I think it brings the Manila spirit, where the first conference was held and where I was happy to have participated. Also, I think it is the only conference that is really very clear on what its position is - this conference is against APEC. None of the other conferences have that kind of clear position. I am really happy to be here in that sense.

I come from Malaysia where we are known for our tropical climate, clear blue skies and air that is relatively clean. But the last few months, we have been facing a problem. Our skies are dull and gray. We have to breathe in air that is filled with sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide and all sorts of particulates. This is because of the forest fires that have taken place in large areas of Indonesia. In the beginning, the slash and bum cultivators were blamed for this situation. But, then, the fires kept on going for months. Finally, the government had to come out and admit what the real problem was, namely the companies, transnational corporations, and other companies.

Unfortunately, and I'm ashamed to say, Malaysian companies were very much involved in the burning down of large tracts, thousands of hectares, of tropical rain forests. This was because they were clearing land to plant cash crops, plantation crops. One thing that is quite clear is that in the new climate of trade liberalization where massive powers are placed into the hands of companies who are willing to invest, the profitability of cash crops also creates the so-called "comparative advantages" which pushes these kinds of 'development'. So, in Indonesia, because of the availability of cheap labour and cheap land (so-called cheap land because it belongs to the government which promotes 'trade liberalization' at any costs), the free flow of capital has allowed this to happen. Because of greed, you have an enormous number of hectares of land that is burned. We also have a situation where the citizens of many countries, not just Indonesia, but also Malaysia, Singapore and even the Philippines, have suffered as a result of this.

The other thing that is really sad is that the companies that are responsible for this have gotten away with this. Even the naming of companies which are responsible has not happened. One or two companies have admitted that they were involved in the burning, but none of the others have
come out and admitted to their really greedy actions. You find that neither Malaysia nor Singapore nor all the other ASEAN countries have really protested against their actions, because they want to do business with Indonesia. This is the climate which the new trade liberalization has created. A kind of pally, pally spirit exists where the motto is "I rub your back; you rub mine and we are all happy." In this climate, discussions about human rights or other issues that will embarrass these governments are not permitted.

Under this new wave of globalization and liberalization, you have land that is increasingly converted from food crops to non-food, commercial crops or industrial zones, urban centres, prawn farms and fancy projects, such as golf courses and golf resorts. These projects often forcibly throw small farmers off their land, thus violating their very basic human rights. An example of this is that Malaysia has over 300 golf courses for a population of 18 million whom, for the most part, do not play golf. These projects are basically tourist development. It is Japanese players who fly in and use these golf courses. Indeed, it is cheaper to fly in from Japan to play golf for the weekend than to have a golf membership in Japan. So, this is what is happening. It is women who are the caddies, women who carry the golf balls and clubs and boost the egos from all these people from outside Malaysia. Of course, you see some of the elites within Malaysia as well.

You find that forest lands and the biodiversity which supports the livelihood of Indigenous peoples are being taken over by mining and logging projects run by transnational corporations. The Philippines is the classic case where huge tracts lands belonging to Indigenous peoples are being usurped because of these mining and logging projects. If you look at some of the figures, it is mind boggling. Imagine the entire population of Australia being turned out of their homes. But, this is the real magnitude of the problem. Already, 18 million people have lost their land, been evicted from their home and deprived of their livelihood and income.

Families split and spread out causing community bonds to tumble, thereby cutting people off from their most vital resources. These uprooted people are then robbed of their history, their culture and their traditions. They may be forced to adopt an alien diet, an alien culture and alien traditions. You then find higher rates of diseases and mortality, lower earning capacity and education, joblessness, discrimination and inferior social status amongst displaced peoples. These things pursue the dispossessed. Oddly, this happens in the name of 'development' and the victims are described as 'beneficiaries'.

This has happened in India where in the period of 1951 to 1990, over 21.6 million people suffered precisely this fate. They were displaced by dams and canals alone. If you add mining, another 2.1 million people were dispossessed. With this, you have nearly the entire population of Canada being displaced by this so-called 'development'. These are actually bottom-line, low-estimates. These numbers represent only the tip of the iceberg. Also, many more projects came after 1995. If you look at some of the so-called new or emerging 'tigers' in Asia, you realize that such 'developments' are happening again and again and again in the name of industrialization and in the name of so-called 'comparative advantage'. Again, it is really, really scary.
You'll be hearing about the shrimp cultivation and some of the issues and problems caused by mega-development projects both today and tomorrow, so what I'd like to focus on now is the emphasis being placed by many of these so-called new 'tigers' on the export of what they call "high value crops" or the "sunshine industry" or the "growth industry" all of which are, basically, horticulture. Cash crops are being introduced in a massive scale in many of our countries in southeast Asia and also in India and South Asia. In the Philippines, under the medium-term development plan, there is a plan to accelerate the growth and 'development' of this horticulture industry. In Malaysia, vegetable farming is being replaced by cut flower crop exports to Singapore and to Japanese consumers which are the largest markets. If you look at Maharashtra, India, you have horticulture projects being exempted from land ceiling legislation. If you know the history of Maharashtra, land ceiling legislation is a very important piece of legislation which limits the amount of land that can be owned by a single person. But these industries are being made exempt from this kind of protective legislation. Such developments actually effect not only the food security of local people, but of the nation as well. This is because much of the good agricultural land is being replaced.

We see an increased movement from the cultivation of food crops to horticultural cash crops that are basically for agri-exports to the North. Some of these exports are really fancy products that target the consumers of the North so they can have cut flowers all the year round or they will have certain vegetables and fruits all the year round. This kind of 'development' displaces a lot of the local food choices. Much of this industry is dominated by transnational corporations. If you look at Costa Rica, you find that two companies dominate all of the pineapple industry. In Honduras, the Del Monte and Dole corporations monopolize the whole of the pineapple industry. If you look at Central America, 25% of the production of the horticultural "growth" industry is owned by transnational corporations.

At the same time, a lot of small farmers are being forced to switch to this kind of agricultural production. Many of them cannot really compete with transnational corporations so they are losing their land to multinationals. Since they don't have a traditional knowledge on how to grow these type of cash crops, they are also losing much of their crops in this process. You then find a situation where even development agencies, such as US AID and many of the other big agencies, promote this type of 'development'. Yet, small farmers are really having difficulties in terms of getting markets.

The increasing feminization of the rural wage labour force is a change that has accompanied the globalization of food systems. Although women have actively been involved in food production, the agri-export industry increasingly gives women wage-based work. You find that women are predominantly involved in both the production and processing parts of this new industry. If you look at some of the figures, we see, for example, that in Ecuador in 1991, 69% of workers in this high-value crop production were women. In many cases, an important reason why companies or managers prefer women is that they are paid lower wages than men for equivalent work. Women also work longer hours, often without overtime pay. They are rarely promoted or protected by labour laws. And, they are not represented by workers' organizations. In many instances, even if there is a union, for instance there is a national union of plantation workers in Malaysia, women
are rarely represented or their issues are rarely represented by these labour unions. So you have a problem of the invisibility of women's issues.

This production of these cash crops are characterized by a heavy use of pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, insecticides, etcetera. In this sector, the amounts of pesticides applied are particularly high, because crops, such as fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers, are perishable. Just to quote from the women themselves some of the problems they face, one woman plantation worker in Malaysia said, "I use my bare hands to mix pesticides. I don't know if doing it is harmful to me in the long run, but I know it burns my skin." Another woman in Central America said, "when we work in these plantations, a "good worker" is identified if their nails drop off, because of the use of Paraquat in a lot of the plantations." Paraquat actually makes your nails turn brown and drop off. So, if your nails drop off, that is an indication to employers that you are a "good worker," because this means you are constantly using the pesticide.

You find that the victims and survivors of such 'development,' of these trade liberalization strategies, are invariably small farmers, landless workers, minority ethnic groups and Indigenous peoples. As always, women are the worst effected. It is very rare for women, especially in the South, to own their own land, so they have very little rights over the land that is being taken away or grabbed from food production. Women are being very much forced to move into cash cropping. If you look at some of the figures of poverty for rural women, you find that rural women in the South are amongst the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world. The incidence of poverty amongst them, in general, shows an upward trend. In Asia alone, the number of poor rural women living below nationally defined poverty lines is estimated at 374 million. The whole terminology of the feminization of poverty is very real in many parts of Asia.

So, what are women doing about this? We know that they are not taking this lying down. There is so much resistance, so much fighting back that has taken place. In India, for example, in one instance, land, which was not even very good agricultural land, was reclaimed by women. The women's group worked on it, introduced sustainable agriculture, regenerated the soil and was able to grow food for their families on this land. They call it "food from stones." Basically, you know, it really is food coming from stones. So, women are organizing. We have heard about the tremendous seeds campaign in India. Women are at the forefront of this and are actively participating to save traditional seeds and to say no to transnational companies, such as Cargill, that are trying to take control over seeds. We have actions done by groups like Diverse Women for Diversity. These are some of the seeds campaigns that are going on throughout the world, not just in the South but also globally.

There is also mobilization that is taking place against trade liberalization and the 'development' resulting from new trade regimes. In 1996, you had farmers from Thailand fighting for their rights. In Thailand, more than two thousand farmers with the Forum of the Poor began assembling in front of the government house to demand the return of their lands which had been confiscated for state development purposes ten years ago. This was followed by protests by people affected by dam projects, by deforestation, by the establishment of plantations, by state development projects. These people were labourers and people living in slums. The number of protesters under the Forum of the Poor rose to twelve thousand by the beginning of April. At that
time, the Forum's petition letter to the government roughly listed their problems into four categories: the impact of dam projects; land and forest 'management'; state development projects affecting residents and; health security for labourers forced to live in degraded environments.

The Assembly of the Poor, as it became more popularly known, gathered in Bangkok, again in October of 1996, to hit home their concerns. Thai peasant women have been at the forefront of the activities of the Forum of the Poor. Somebody from Thailand told me that Thai people are very sensitive to tradition and culture, so what they did was not to shout slogans, they didn't go there drumming their drums. They just sat there. They just sat in front of the Parliament house for days and days. They had a very good organization where people from the rural areas were coming to replace those that were already there. Food was being provided by a lot of the grassroots organizations in Bangkok and by ordinary people. So, they were being supported in that way. By just sitting there, they embarrassed the government. So, the government had to come out and talk to them. A dialogue was started with the government. Not all of the issues that were presented by the people were met in any significant way, but one of the things the government has promised is support for sustainable agriculture. They are putting a big financial support to NGOs, to people's organization, to get more farmers involved in sustainable agriculture.

That, I think, has some economic dimensions to it. Once the trade liberalization happens, they have to open their markets to agricultural products from elsewhere and so they want to, in a way, safeguard their farmers through providing avenues for alternatives. So, these are some of the ways that farmers, women, people are organizing against trade liberalization. The other has also been the alternative trading and the alternative markets that have been set up in many, many countries. These are the community-supported agriculture. In Japan, there is an old system, the Taikei system where consumers and farmers have come together to form an alternative market system. Farmers are committed to providing organic products or products that do not have pesticides. The community then supports the livelihood of these farmers. This has been a very good exchange. There have also been movements of fair trade within Asia that have bypassed all these new trade regimes. The call is for a lot of women is "resist, then mobilize and then create the alternatives." We really need to do this to counteract some of the trade liberalization 'developments' that are taking place.

I think, for us in Malaysia, 1999 will be a critical year as this is the year when the APEC leaders summit will be in Malaysia. It will be a challenge for a lot of the NGOs that are there, a lot of the people's organizations that are based in Malaysia, to try to organize anything where there are so many difficulties for NGOs even to operate and sustain themselves. We will try to face the challenge next year, but in the meantime, we will continue resisting these developments. Thank-you very much.
Sunera Thobani  
Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair of Women’s Studies, Simon Fraser University  
and member of the Vancouver Steering Committee for the Second International Women’s  
Conference Against APEC, Canada  
Plenary Presentation on Women and Social and Economic Development  
Monday, November 17, 1997

Sunera Thobani is the past-President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Canada’s largest feminist organization. Having co-chaired NAC’s Committees on New Reproductive Technologies and Male Violence Against Women, Ms. Thobani was the first women of colour to become President of NAC. During her tenure, anti-racism was made into a central issue within the mainstream women’s movement as NAC organized campaigns for women’s economic and social rights, immigrant, refugee and migrant women’s rights; as well as the cross-Canada Women’s March Against Poverty with the Canadian Labour Congress.

After months of working on this conference, I can’t tell you what it feels like to actually see all the women who are here and to see the conference come alive with the energy of all the women outside Canada and across Canada who have come here to join us. So, I just want to start off by saying what a wonderful feeling it is for those of us who have worked on organizing this conference to see how successful we have been in bringing all of you here.

Sarojeni made a specific mention that she is pleased to be here, because the Women’s Conference is the only part of the People’s Summit which has taken a clear position opposing APEC. So, remember for the rest of the conference this is our starting position. We want to make it stronger. We don’t want to water it down! So, that is the message to take to your workshops.

The problem with going last is that a lot of what I wanted to say has already been said. I’ll be echoing a lot of what the speakers before me have said. But, I think it is really important to start off by addressing APEC with the recognition that it is one piece of the whole globalization process. It is related to the other trade agreements which have already been negotiated and signed. It is related to the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) that is currently being negotiated. So, it is important to place APEC within this context. It is one part of the jigsaw puzzle. That is how we have to approach it.

The agenda of APEC and the globalization process is very, very clear. It really is about the unrestricted mobility of capital, goods and services. Because of the North/South divisions that have developed historically, it is a transfer of resources mainly from the South into the North and, within the North, a transfer of resources from Third World communities and colonized peoples into the centre. That really is what the agenda is here. The elements of this globalization process are also very, very visible to us. Liberalization of trade and capital flows, privatization to expand business for corporate sectors, the reduction and elimination of state regulations, the dismantling of social programs which many of our movements have fought very long and hard for - these are the key elements of globalization.
What goes hand in hand with these elements of globalization is the strengthening of the capacity and power of the state to control its population and to control borders. So, as we have borders being eased and made easier for the flow of goods and capital and services, the mobility of people is being increasingly restricted. The strength of states to control migration flows is becoming increasingly restrictive. What we are seeing is a real attack on the rights of mobility of people and on the rights of immigrants and refugees. It is very important that we recognize all the different sectors that are being affected by the agenda that we are working against.

As has been said by the speakers before me, globalization is profoundly effecting the status of women everywhere. This is a time of tremendous and very, very rapid change. What I find in every conference I have participated in, in every conversation I have had with women active in the women's movements in their countries, is that the situation is getting much, much worse for women. This is true wherever we are in the world and whichever community we come from. The increased poverty and inequality of women is something that we have to fight against in our communities. We are fighting against that in Canada as well.

It is very important to recognize that this poverty and inequality are not accidental by-products of policies which form the APEC agenda, which are part of the globalization agenda, and which are now part of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment. These are not accidental outcomes. It is not that our political leaders are not aware that women are out there in the world, that it is our labour that creates profits, that it is our work that holds our communities together once corporations come in and devastate people’s livelihoods. In this sense, it is very important to recognize that the agenda of globalization is very much based on the continuation of women’s exploitation and subjugation. It is important for us to stop treating the inequality of women as just a neglected area. Women are not just overlooked in these policies, so saying that all we want are gender sensitive policies is not enough. We have to recognize that the policies, themselves, are based on the continued exploitation of women.

One other thing has also become very clear is that globalization is leading to an intensification of the divisions between the North and the South. It is also leading to an intensification of divisions within countries along the lines of race, gender, class, sexual orientation and disability. All of the inequalities that have existed until now are becoming much more deeply entrenched and their effects are becoming more intense for us. As we are living through this time of change, there is great temptation in saying, "I fought so hard for my piece of the pie, let me hang on to it." As times are getting worse, fragmentation in movements is also growing. I think it is very important for those of us who come from women's movements in different countries to realize that we are in this together. We must build an agenda, a call for action and an analysis which includes all of us. This is because until the last woman is not free from the threat of poverty and violence and all of her rights are not ensured, then none of us can be free!

I am very pleased that Yayori spoke about the debate in the human rights area around so-called "Asian cultural values." I want to present the other side of the picture, the so-called "Western values." The human rights debate has taken place in a very, very racist context. The Canadian government, Canadian business leaders are very much guilty of what Yayori talked about. They point to Asian countries and Asian leaders as human rights violators and they say that it is part of
the cultural tradition of Asians. I want to say to everybody who is here from outside Canada that we do not need to go outside of Canada to see human rights violations taking place.

Go and speak to any First Nations community and they will tell you about human rights violations. Go and speak to single mothers who are living in poverty and struggling to raise their children and they will tell you about human rights violations. Go and speak to any homeless person, the numbers of whom are growing in Canada, and they will tell you about human rights violations. Talk to domestic workers who come in as indentured labour into this country or migrant workers whose numbers are increasing in Canada and they will tell you about human rights violations. I think that first and foremost, we have to turn this human-rights debate on its head. There are tremendous human rights violations that take place in countries like Canada, in countries like the U.S, Australia and New Zealand. It is not just the Asian countries where this occurs, which is how our political leaders are presenting the debate.

I think it is very important not only to recognize the human rights violations that take place in Canada, but also the role of the Canadian government in increasing human rights violations every place else in the world, including in Asia. For instance, if we look at globalization, it has taken the form of structural adjustment programs in many countries of the South. Women from the South are defining this as a process of re-colonization. Now, the Canadian government is part of the G-7, it has representatives at the IMF (International Monetary Fund), at the World Bank. It is in these forums where such policies are developed. This is where consensus is reached on the kind of structural adjustment programs that are going to be imposed on various countries. This is where the power lies to implement the structural adjustment programs. So, I don't think it is enough for those of us who live in the G-7 countries to say, "yes, we condemn human rights violations." We have to condemn the Canadian government's role in creating the conditions for increasing human rights violations globally.

It is very good that there are demonstrations being planned against the APEC Summit, and I hope that most of us will participate in those demonstrations. But, we also have to be very careful about whom we target and how we are organizing demonstrations. We need to look at the racism which has focused on human rights violations as only taking place in Asia. This means we have to look at the leaders who have been targeted so far for demonstrations to take place against. We see Suharto from Indonesia and Jiang Zemin from China being targeted. I am astounded that nobody has targeted demonstrations against Bill Clinton when he comes to Canada. Those of us who live in Canada have to point the fingers at our Prime Minister, Jean Chretien, when he comes to Vancouver as well. So, I think it is very important that we take a consistent position and that it is not a racist one.

Our position should be no human rights violations anywhere! It is not acceptable for us that any woman, wherever she is in the world, to be living in poverty and with violence. That is the bottom line for us. That is the place from which we have to develop our actions and our Women's Conference statement - if there is to be a statement. There has to be absolutely no negotiation on that one point. That is the message that I hope all of you will be taking into your workshops and the one which will be central to your recommendations as you make them.
I think the fundamental question we face in this conference today is what kind of world do the women's movements in the Asia-Pacific region want. What kind of world are we living in and how do we change it to become the kind of world that we want for our daughters, for our grandchildren, as Jeannette Armstrong said this morning? That is the place from which we have to start thinking about strategies and actions. Not from a place that is about protecting what little space we have now. We are losing so much and we don't want to be in a situation where women who are relatively privileged will be fighting to preserve those privileges. We want the fight to be about ending the oppression and exploitation of all women. That has to be the point from which we develop our strategies.

I think if we look at some of the proposals that have come forward, that will come forward possibly here in our workshops as well as the ones that will come to the People's Summit, we see that some organizations have put forward the position that we should be supporting a social clause or a social charter, and an environmental clause or a Green charter, within trade agreements. We really have to think about what this will accomplish. How can we, on the one hand, support policies which are increasing the power of corporations, which are increasing environmental devastation, destroying all of the rights that we have won so far and then say, on the other hand, "yes, but, we want a little clause in those policies to protect our rights." This is one proposal that we have to look very careful at. How can we support policies which are destroying the environment, the very practices of trade and business that are destroying the environment, and say, "yes, we will go along with it as long as you have an environmental clause that you do this amount of cleaning up." I think that these are some of the discussions that we need to have at this conference.

There are also organizations that are calling for "fair trade" and that's fine. All of us want fair trade. But what does it mean to say that we want fair trade, when, for instance, the British Parliament says that the parliamentarians are only going to drink coffee that comes from fair trade? How much change is that going to make? Is that going to stop the globalization agenda? Is that going to transform the world? These are important debates and we have to have them here. Some also say that we want "women to be included," that we want "women to be considered" in these trade agreements and negotiations. Well, the Canadian government is doing just that. Minister Marchi took a delegation of women business leaders and entrepreneurs on a trade mission to the US, because the government recognized that all of the trade missions they have taken overseas so far have not included women. Is this what we want? Is this going to improve the situation of women?

This is why I think we have to be very careful when we call for things like "gender sensitivity" and when we call for things like "fair trade." All of us want that, but what is the political position from which we are calling for this? What do we want to do with that gender sensitivity? Are we calling for an "inclusion" in the globalization agenda or are we calling for a transformation? I don't think there is any hiding where I stand on these issues and, so, when we go to our workshops and develop our strategies that has to be our starting point for drafting recommendations. Is the agenda that we put forward as our alternatives those that will transform globalization?
So, what do we do? What are the biggest challenges that face us? I know that tomorrow the panelists will be focusing specifically on strategies, on calls to actions, speaking of campaigns even, but I just want to say a few words here today to begin the discussion. We have to build and strengthen our independent women's movement in every country in the region. That is the only power that we have. We can come up with the best policies in the world. We can come up with the best economic, financial policies in the world, OK? and they will be meaningless until we are actually able to mobilize women, until we are actually able to mobilize popular support which will force governments to respond to our policies and to respond to our alternatives. So, for me, that is the number one priority. We met in the Philippines last year. We have met in Vancouver this year. And, next year, hopefully, many of you will be in Malaysia. But, what do we do in between the Women's Conferences? That is the important thing. What we should be doing is building our movements and strengthening our organizations throughout the whole region.

I think, ultimately, the fight that we have is really one to democratize institutions. The fight that women are engaged in is to democratize our state institutions, to shape our futures. So, ultimately, the fight for us is to make democracy real in women's lives, in our communities and at every level of society. That is ultimately what our fight is about. Thank-you very much.
Recommendations from the workshops held on Monday, November 17, 1997

a) Globalization Workshop Recommendations:

1) Social clauses are time consuming to achieve and process. They cannot change the force of agreements and are only window dressing for Northern, western countries and should not be a part of our strategies. They are devastating for people in the South.
2) We need to build international institutions to control international capital.
3) We need to replicate redistribution of wealth strategies on an international scale.
4) We must respect economic pluralism and recognize that one economic policy doesn’t fit all situations.
5) There should be compensation for victims of corporate neglect and abuse.
6) There must be a solidarity between South and North non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to act against transnational corporations and governments.
7) We must make consumers conscious about how products are produced, especially the effects of sweatshops on workers lives.
8) We must free all political prisoners.
9) Within our international campaigns, we must have a local focus and build local support.
10) We need more research to prove how few people benefit from trade liberalization.
11) We need to support small business women.

b) Redirecting Capital: Strategies and Actions Workshop Recommendations

1) Develop new anti-corporate campaigns in forestry, mining, energy, food, textiles, electronics, healthcare, education and media industries to unmask and confront the system of corporate rule.
2) Mount campaigns focused on the mechanisms of corporate rule. Four major targets should be targeted. They are: the MAI (Multilateral Agreement on Investments), the WTO (World Trade Organization), the World Bank and the IMF (International Monetary Fund).
3) Build a global network of information providers to share research findings on corporations and corporate rule in ways that are accessible to people and in forms that will enable grass roots groups to develop more effective community-based campaigns for challenging corporate power and authority.
4) Launch an International Day of Resistance Against Corporate Rule each year that is aimed at targeting and exposing the operations of specific transnational corporations at local, national and international levels, utilizing a variety of direct action tactics, including civil disobedience.
5) Develop an ongoing vehicle to help facilitate follow-up action on all these fronts and to build new solidarity networks by/with groups actively engaged in sectoral campaigns and social movements in order to advance the struggle for democratic rights against the global system of corporate rule.

c) Indigenous Women’s Workshop Recommendations

1) Child apprehension from Indigenous women must be recognized as a form of cultural genocide.
2) Land claims/land use/corporate ownership: land claims must be settled and Aboriginal people must be involved in the implementation plan.
3) Voice and representation must be given to Aboriginal peoples living in urban areas in Canada, Bill C-31 should be respected in order to help ensure women's equality within Aboriginal communities/portrayals/violence
4) Media: there is a need for alternative, Indigenous media.
5) Healing and Health/AIDS: there must be training and hiring of health care workers who speak Indigenous languages and are knowledgeable about traditional healing methods.
6) Unions: while recognizing the importance of unions internationally, unions must respect the importance of volunteers in people's organizations; unions must end racist or sexist practices within their own practices; unions should address unemployment generally because so many Aboriginal women do not have jobs; unions must be more proactive in organizing the unorganized (i.e. there are no unions in Chiapas, Mexico where there are many Indigenous women who work as domestics); there must be a cross-cultural definition of work;
7) Education: curriculum development should be based upon traditional teaching methods and values; educational institutions should be accessible to Indigenous peoples in terms of both language and region.
8) The maternal rights of Indigenous women must be respected by the legal system.
9) There must be equality in laws (i.e. racism and sexism must end and there must be equal pay for equal work).
10) The basic human rights of Indigenous women must be recognized and respected.
11) There must be the protection of Indigenous cultures, beliefs and sexual orientation.
12) Indigenous peoples need to have an arena in which to network internationally.

d) Migrant Workers Workshop Recommendations

1) The increased migration of women needs to be understood as taking place as a result of the implementation of neo-liberal policies. The women's movement around the world must fight for the right for women to not be displaced from their homes by corporate-driven government policies (such as those imposed by the International Monetary Fund) that appropriate women's land for the use of corporations and/or state-recognized landowners or economic policies that further promote an export-trade model which leaves many women unemployed in either urban or rural centres.
2) The women's movements around the world should fight for the right of people to freely cross national borders without restrictions being placed on their rights.
3) The women's movement should fight for an end to distinctions being made by nation-states between citizens and so-called 'non-citizens', such as those categorized as migrant (or temporary) workers. Rights must not be based upon a person's citizenship status.
4) The role of patriarchy in forcing women to migrate must be exposed and opposed.

e) Environments for Women Workshop Recommendations:

Corporations and corporate development have a negative impact on most women in cities. Examples of where this negative impact is felt include: housing, zoning, public transit, public space, children's space, and public services. Low cost housing does not yield high profits,
therefore corporate developers/governments are loathed to build it. Zoning by-laws favour industry and big business and hence they are assigned the priority spaces. Public transit plays a secondary role to our road systems, which are designed for cars. Public space is usually designed by those who support corporate business. Accommodating women is not a priority. Space = money, therefore corporate developers confiscate space; the natural environment is often destroyed for corporate development. Public services do not yield profit, therefore corporate developers/government are reluctant to finance them.

**Housing:**
Women need
- increased access to decision making in housing development, design and density
- more affordable housing options
- housing close to jobs and services
- functional housing design

**Zoning:**
Women need zoning by-laws
- which do not separate home and work
- which make getting to work easy
- which allow for convenient child care facilities
- which allow transition houses for battered women and children in convenient areas

**Public Transit:**
Women need
- convenient, efficient, inexpensive and safe transit
- buses which allow easy access and space for buggies and strollers

**Public Space:**
Women need
- safe streets, parks, commercial, industrial and residential areas
- images of ourselves (on billboards, bus shelters, store window displays) which are not sexist and violent and which do not discriminate against women of colour, older women, women with disabilities and lesbians.

**Children's Space:**
Children need
- spaces which allow safe play, laughter and spontaneity

Mothers' need
- worksite daycare
- child care spaces in housing developments and public buildings
- facilities which allow easy access for strollers and buggies

**Public Services:**
Women need
- women's resource centres
• health care clinics
• rape crisis centres
• battered women's shelters
• transition houses
• storefront legal services

Action Plan:

1. Demand the right policy. Incorporate human rights issues in development policies;
2. Demand the right vision for the future. Promote development that alleviates poverty;
3. Demand the right prices. Shift from a profit-oriented ideology to one of sustainability.

Mobilize women at the grassroots level to:

1. Organize educational seminars, meetings, conferences, demonstrations;
2. organize media campaigns;
3. create innovative strategies to express opinions about issues: establish newspapers and magazines and set up women's centres and other alternative services; present skits and plays, compose songs, create visual art, videotapes and films, tell stories, write poetry, express views;
4. write letters to municipal, provincial and federal politicians;
5. meet with and lobby politicians.

f) Child Labour Workshop Recommendations:

1) There is a great need for strong advocacy for children and the protection of their rights.
2) The right to education is a moral human right.
3) We also need strong legislation to protect children's rights.
4) We also need accurate statistics on the child labour situation globally.
5) We need a global information campaign on child labour
   a) target athletes representing companies
   b) identify products
   c) local actions
   d) encourage critical thinking and media literacy.
6) We need both economic and political strategies as well
   a) organize against APEC - no comprising with it
   b) enforce legislation against child labour
   c) develop alternative and sustainable economies so that child labour is not necessary
   d) make human and social needs a priority
7) We need informal sector organizing
   a) labour and community-based groups must work together
   b) we need a more expansive definition of who workers are
   c) international solidarity is key - solidarity with indigenous peoples and all people.

g) Sex Trafficking Workshop Recommendations:
1) Oppose APEC because it increases the volume of trafficking in women and globalizes the sex trafficking industry.
2) There must be the border-free mobility of people
3) Put pressure on nation-states to address the issue
4) There must be the creation of viable job alternatives for women
5) The rights of migrant workers and their families must be fully protected. Therefore, all countries should sign the UN Convention on the Protection of Migrant Workers and their Families.

h) Poverty Workshop Recommendations:

1) We need more women's marches against poverty, including an international march (the Federation de Femmes du Quebec has announced that there will be an international women's march against poverty in the year 2000).
2) Unions must become more inclusive and user-friendly by including the unemployed and the unorganized.
3) The development of the alternative media must be made a priority.
4) Language diversity must be respected and materials in these languages provided.
5) We need to consider work restructuring that includes job-sharing and early retirement. These plans need to be implemented on a global level.
6) Corporations should be taxed.
7) While free trade is currently our reality, we need to build an international alliance to create an alternative reality based upon equality. We must continue our political struggle!

i) Violence Against Women Workshop Recommendations:

1) APEC enforces male violence against women. It reinforces the status quo which is detrimental to women and their children. It also pushes women's gains back.
2) We must make the women's liberation movement more accessible for all women, because as men's oppression increases they look for others to oppress. We must watch out for the myth that poor men are more violent as this plays into racist and classist strategies.
3) In order to strengthen women economically and end violence against women, we must ensure:
   a) training programs for women;
   b) there must be compulsory education for women and girls about breaking the silence of violence experienced by us;
   c) enforcement of child labour laws and human rights legislation;
   d) women must organize collectively through networking
   e) we must re-evaluate and redefine the value of women's work

j) Women's Health and Reproductive Rights Workshop Recommendations:

1) Women demand a health care system that is safe, effective, holistic, affordable and women-controlled. There are many systems of health care that must be recognized. We need scrutiny to be given to other systems with the hope of funding also given to them.
2) Women demand the public promotion of Indigenous and other holistic healing practices.
3) Women demand a decrease in military expenditures and foreign debt payments.
4) Women demand the promotion of women-defined leadership within the planning of the health care system.
5) Women demand the monitoring and evaluation of the healthcare system.

k) Human Rights Workshop Recommendations:

1) Capital investment must be regulated by governments so that it is used in the interests of the people.
2) Industrialized countries of the North should commit to debt forgiveness. There needs to be reform of lending institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.
3) Foreign aid should be directed to social development that will benefit the country receiving the investment.
4) Governments should implement the United Nations-sponsored agreements.
5) We must replace the current way of measuring the well-being of society. We must replace the Gross National Product/Gross Domestic Product, which do not measure many of the contributions made by women and are environmentally inaccurate, with an accurate measurement of women's work and the effects of certain types of development on the environment.
6) Governments should make public all of the processes being carried out in APEC and fund public debate about it.
7) Including standards for labour inside trade agreements will not work as APEC and other formal or informal trade agreements are not being negotiated for the benefit of people.
8) Governments should sponsor forums on human rights and trade for the public.
9) We need to debunk the myths that globalization is good for people and use language that is understandable when doing so.
10) Tibet should be recognized as a country.

l) Export Processing Zones Workshop Recommendations:

1) We should pressure companies to enforce codes of conduct and follow regulations.
2) We should write letters to governments.
3) We should distribute information leaflets in places that people use, such as shopping malls as well as to the media.
4) We should circulate petitions to send to government(s).
5) Instead of focusing on many different campaigns, we should build a relationship with one group and build around a common struggle, thereby creating a sense of solidarity.
6) Stop the creation of a 'free trade zone' in New Brunswick, Canada.

m) Environment Workshop Recommendations:

1) Resistance movements should incorporate consumer power by pursuing consumer boycotts in conjunction with workers.
2) Should be a redefinition of the GDP/GNP to a more accurate measurement of wealth creation that includes women's work and the effects upon our environment.
**n) Heterosexism/Homophobia Workshop Recommendations:**

1) We are opposed to corporate economic rights, because they mean the loss of human rights and, therefore, lesbians' rights.

2) Whereas heterosexism intersects with other forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, ableism, classism and age-ism, and whereas lesbianism is a normal, healthy orientation and whereas lesbians are oppressed internationally and whereas, historically, lesbians have been a powerful movement for social change and continue to commit themselves to oppose the corporate agenda (free-trade agreements; APEC) and whereas, all women have benefited from the lesbian rights movement, therefore:
   
   a) lesbianism must be recognized as a human right.
   
   b) we demand acknowledgment of lesbian contributions and issues and
   
   c) we demand that the effect of APEC on lesbians be included in the proceedings of this conference and the People's Summit, the Third International Women's Conference in Malaysia in 1998 and in all future international conferences and gatherings.

*Note:* The effects of APEC on the rights of lesbians was not made available in time for publication of these conference proceedings.
Rain Daniels  
Co-chair for Tuesday, November 18, 1997  
Aboriginal Women's Action Network  
and Member of the Vancouver Steering Committee for the Second International Women's Conference Against APEC, Canada

It is my pleasure to introduce Sarah Good who is also from the Coast Salish nation which is the territory we are on. So, if I could ask Sarah to come up to the front. Sarah offered to do this and she offered to dress in her regalia so she brought it in this morning. Thanks for being here Sarah.

Prayer by Sarah Good,  
Coast Salish Nation

I'd like to share a little bit about the song before I sing it. The song was given to me in a vision back in 1995. During that time, I was going through some struggles. I believe this song was given to me from my ancestors. They were giving me the message of not to give up. So, I went home to my mother in Nanaimo and I asked her for the words to this song. I knew what the song meant and I explained to her what it meant to me. So, my mom gave me the words to this song. This song is a song of healing and it is a song of gratitude and it is a song of celebration. So, I'd just like to sing this song and then I'll explain the words to you.

Song

This song says, "thank-you richly, thank-you respected one, thank-you richly, thank-you respected one." It says, "creator, great spirit, I'm happy to be alive." It also means that "I'm fortunate to be alive and that its a good day, its a good day, creator." When my mom gave me the words to that song we had to spend a number of hours and go to sleep before the words could be put together. I knew there was "hytchka see-yam" in there and I knew that it said thank-you to my creator, my ancestors. It says thank-you to my mother and my father, my family of origin. It says thank-you to all the ones in my community that were there for me when I was leading a life of using alcohol and drugs. I came close to death a number of times. It says thank-you to the ones that were there-ones on my life line. It says thank-you to my beautiful children who were there through really hard times and really good times. I'm a survivor and I've survived a hell of a lot, like many of us women. It says thank-you to the ones who are in my present life today- the ones that are giving me love and support and guidance. The song says thank-you to everyone here, because we've put a lot of energy together - a lot of good energy. So, this song says thank-you.

Sarojeni Rengam  
Co-chair for Tuesday, November 18, 1997  
Pesticide Action Network, Malaysia

Thank-you Sarah. My name is Sarojeni Rengam. I am standing in for Irene Fernandez who has only just arrived. I will be co-chairing this morning...
Rain Daniels, co-chair:

...Finally, we'd like to give a warm welcome to Interpares. If it were not for their donation of travel costs for both day's panels, if it weren't for these kinds of donations, international conferences like this would be quite difficult to pull off, so, let's give them a hand... We'd like to acknowledge the work of Nuestra Voz, a group of Guatemalan and Canadian women who worked far into the early morning of the previous night to prepare the food for us yesterday. We, again, have the luxury of receiving their food today. Their efforts are not paid. They were paid for their work. However, they don't take the money. They work as volunteers and the money goes to their women's projects in Guatemala.

We have four representatives to discuss strategies on our four themes for the conference: labour, human rights, environment and economic and social development. Rather than us reading out their biographies, we will ask the panelists to explain their background and we will begin with Cheung Lai-ha from the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions. She has brought a translator with her, Lee Yeung Chuen. Welcome.
Plenary Speeches of Tuesday, November 18, 1997

Cheung Lai-ha,
President of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, Hong Kong
Plenary Speaker on APEC and Labour Rights
Tuesday, November 18, 1997

Cheung Lai-ha has been working in the garment industry for eighteen years, from the age of thirteen. Sister Cheung joined the then-Clothing Industry and Retail Trade Employees General Union ten years ago and she has been the president of this union for more than five years. About five years ago, Lai-ha started working full time in the union as a workers organizer. Her main responsibilities as a workers organizer includes encouraging non-member workers to become members of the union; helping workers in dispute settlements or grievances against their employers; attending court hearings or the labour tribunal in labour disputes with the workers; negotiation sessions with the employers for the rightful benefits or compensations for the workers who have been discriminated against.

In 1996, Sister Cheung was elected to be the Vice-chairperson of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU). She also chairs the portfolio of the union's Women's Committee and her responsibilities in the portfolio include: monitoring the labour laws for women workers; advocating for the rightful benefits for women workers; planning and administering labour laws education and; planning recreation activities for the workers. The union and this particular portfolio also help women workers to lobby and demonstrate their call for a just and better working environment.

The objectives of these activities are to empower women workers in their knowledge to understand the well-deserved rights they ought to have in their working environment.

Good morning everybody. First of all, thank-you to everybody who made this conference possible so that people, who like me cannot speak English at all, can be here to share with you our experiences.

We are concerned about the labour situation in China. Women comprise nearly half of the work force in China. In the wake of a declining state sector, women workers, especially those who are thirty years old or above and those with lower educational levels, have become the first victims. Upon retrenchment, women workers have to re-train themselves and can only find jobs in the private enterprises.

Most of these privately-owned enterprises often violate labour regulations, particularly the regulation which limits the maximum working-time to not more than forty hours per week. In reality, these women workers often work overtime. All together they might have to work more than ten hours every day without extra payment. Though receiving just the minimum wage of about 380 yeumenbi per month. Understandably, women suffer from exhaustion and deteriorating health under such working conditions and heavy workload. Many women workers have fallen ill under the stress of their families and jobs.
However, fearing the loss of their jobs, they do not dare to demand improvements of their working environment and quality of life. They also lack the power to fight against unjust treatment and harassment. They usually keep silent and do not complain about the troubles they face. Some private enterprises employ child workers to do the dangerous jobs for more than ten hours per day with very low wages. Some employers do not allow workers to talk in their workplace, imposing penalties of one to three days salary reductions.

Although there is a huge trade union in China it is under the control of the Chinese authorities. It fails to represent workers and is unable to independently supervise the government on behalf of the working class and to fight for their rights. The Chinese authorities also prohibit workers from forming their autonomous trade unions. Although the Chinese government enacted the labour law in 1994 and other laws protecting women, these laws were not implemented and law-breaking employers are often left unpunished. The trade unions have not actively taken up responsibilities to protect workers' rights. These practices harm labour rights and only benefits bad employers who earn money at the expense at the safety and healthy of workers.

In Hong Kong, the unemployment problem of women has always been ignored. Under the present Special Administration Region government the problem has worsened. During the economic restructuring, the problem has been totally ignored. Under the threat of unemployment, women who are thirty-five years old and above are the worst victims. They have never enjoyed the nine years of free education in Hong Kong and most of them joined the workforce when they were under twenty years old. They are the ones who experienced the over-average economic growth of Hong Kong, but they could not share in it. They were forced to work in the low-pay, low-skill sectors, often as part-time workers with no social security. They now face age-discrimination and unfair treatment. Their wages have suffered from a lack of growth and have fallen far behind the rate of inflation. The growth of women among the population living below the poverty line has worsened steadily.

After the hand over of sovereignty on the 1st of July, 1997, the business sector literally runs Hong Kong. The conservative businessmen whose objectives are to exploit workers and suppress the labour rights movement dominate almost all of the power establishments. The rights of freedom of assembly, procession and petition were the first to fall under the new restrictions. The four hundred-member committee selected by Beijing to set up the Provisional Legislative Council lost no time in moving to repeal several new labour laws which were passed by the former legislative council before the 30th of June. These laws protected the freedom of association and collective bargaining. The latest move of the business body in the Provisional Legislative Council is to cry out for the suppression of wage increases.

Before the Special Administrative Regional government released its first executive report, we had a public hearing on the situation of women's employment and invited an executive of the Administration and heads of other concerned government departments, but no one from these institutions came to attend the meeting. This showed the refusal by the government to confront our problem. In the first policy address of the Administrative government, only fifty-one words mentioned women's rights and improving the equal opportunity of male and female workers.
Instead, the government focused on the "high-growth" sector and urged people to join this sector for better income. However, the government refuses to see the problems confronting women when changing their job. Limitations in skills, educational level and age often render it impossible for women workers to enter the "high-growth" sectors. The government also plans to amend the laws to let employers import a large number of immigrant workers which will further harm the job opportunities and bargaining power of local women workers in some sectors, such as elderly care, textiles and clothing.

The Hong Kong government adopts a so-called laissez faire policy and largely does not interfere in the commercial arena. This gives much freedom and advantages to businessmen to go on with their plans to earn big money for themselves. Even for some law-breaking employers who owe workers wages and exploit workers benefits, the government is passive in taking action against them. These businessmen can go on with their lucrative plans with total disregard for social justice and responsibility for workers and societies. Anywhere there are more chances for exploitation the businessmen will go there. And where there are more people to be exploited they go there.

Workers are victims of this economic restructuring. Women workers, in particular, do not have many choices. Many do not even have the right to employment. Many workers do not see the importance of solidarity and they do not the negativity of the impact that APEC has on them. So, what we need to do now is more dissemination of education and we need to organize workers. Today, 130 days after the hand over of sovereignty, we have seen a joining of hands between the government and capitalists to exploit the workers. It is imperative that we women workers stand up in solidarity to demand and protect our own rights and say no to social injustice and strive for a true democratic system. We must stop counting on the so-called women's representatives in China and Hong Kong who share the establishment's interests and who know nothing about grassroots living at all.

As an independent organization, we never give up our initiatives to reflect the situation of the grassroots women. Our priority task is to demand the government to carry out long-term commitments, to improve vocational training programs and improve or change legislation to protect rights of workers. Our most important task is to educate and organize women to join our efforts to fight for our rights. Thank-you very much.
Bella Galhos
East Timor Action Network, Exile in Canada from East Timor
Plenary speaker on APEC and Human Rights
Tuesday, November 18, 1997

First of all, I would like to thank everyone who organized this event and I would also like to thank all of you for allowing me to speak here today. My name is Bella Galhos. I am one of only three Timorese living in Canada. Today, I am not alone. I am with four other Timorese sisters from Australia and Portugal.

I would like to shortly introduce the country where I come from. East Timor is an island country which is located 400 miles northwest of Australia. For 455 years, East Timor was a Portuguese colony. In 1975, East Timor was invaded by Indonesia and since then has been occupied by the Indonesian military.

Today, we are gathering to share our views on APEC. I believe that each of us have different views and things to say about APEC. I would like to share with you, all of you, my point of view about APEC and its impact on my people and my country. In 1994, when the APEC Heads of State meeting was hosted by the government of Indonesia in Jakarta, twenty-nine brave East Timorese took a little trip to the US embassy just to get a little attention for East Timor. They needed this attention, because East Timor has been isolated for almost twenty-three years from the rest of the world by the Indonesian military. It was a remarkable embarrassment to the Indonesian government at the time. However, it didn't last long, because all of the business leaders and economic leaders could not be bothered by a "little group's" action, as they describe it, and the meeting continued and continues to this day.

There is a lot to tell you about the impact of APEC on the people of East Timor and Indonesia. More than ever, these people have no say in APEC, but they are the ones who suffer the most from this kind of meeting. Suharto and his family make the decisions and control the entire population with the military to make sure that there aren't any organizations to defend these people who are powerless, like unions, human rights organizations and so on, like we have here in Canada.

The APEC process is fundamentally undemocratic. Who participates in APEC? APEC officials, ministers and the leaders of eighteen countries or heads of 'economies' as they preferred to be called. APEC is a series of meetings between so-called 'economic leaders'-the leaders of eighteen countries-to organize ways to make it easier to make more money for business people. It is clear that this is what APEC is about and this is what these 'economic leaders' want to accomplish.

For almost twenty-three years, successive Canadian governments have argued that trade with Indonesia increases opportunities for dialogue and that through these "dialogues" Canada has more opportunities to influence the Indonesian government's repressive regime in my country. But in the last twenty-three years, over one-third of my people have died. Torture, rape, murder and imprisonment continue, particularly for women whose situation in East Timor is worse. I am talking about real people here. I am talking about mothers who until today still look for their
sons, their husbands, their daughters. These mothers are still facing intimidation 24 hours a day. My mother faces this intimidation because I am here speaking in Canada against the Indonesian government. I am also talking about young people who flee their homeland and are forced to be a refugee. I am also talking about young people who are tortured, whose fingernails are pulled out, their bodies burned by cigarettes and electricity. These are the people for whom I am talking here today. We are the Timorese who are facing what the reality of genocide is. Not only physical genocide but also cultural genocide. We have been forced to forget our identity by speaking the language of our invaders. This covers up our identity as Timorese which we are proud to be.

In Indonesia itself, conditions are worse than they have been in years. All the leaders of trade unions and pro-democracy activists are in prison. So, the dialogue is not working for either the East Timorese or the Indonesian people. In fact, since the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Bishop Galhos and Jose Ramos-Horta, our leaders, conditions in occupied East Timor have sharply deteriorated. Through APEC, Canada is engaged in more "dialogues" with Indonesia. Meanwhile, we all know that these kind of engagement doesn't help East Timor and Indonesia or even people like us in this country.

What about people in Canada - those who have no job? It is clear that APEC is about forwarding the interest of the private sector. East Timorese are not asking that Indonesia be punished with comprehensive economic sanctions. We believe that economic engagement with a country can, at times, foster positive change to the development of a democratically-conscious society. However, we find it repulsive that western countries make grand rhetorical speeches about human rights when they are the ones who manufactures most of the weapons that have killed more than 20 million people in the 'developing' world since WW II. Land mines, torturing equipment, cluster bombs, chemical weapons - all these are designed to inflict pain and death on human beings. Most victims are civilians - women and children. How can arms manufacturers, weapon designers, plant managers, politicians, all of whom have families of their own that they love, be so insensitive when it comes to the suffering of other human beings?

We East Timorese are as determined as we are optimistic about our future. Sooner or later we know that we are going to win our struggle. To the rest of the world, we are offering a hand of friendship and appealing in solidarity to everyone to help us bring peace and freedom to East Timor.

APEC for us, the people of East Timor, is going to be yet another forum where General Suharto, the president of Indonesia, is going to exert pressure over the liberal democracies to kowtow to his regime and to ignore his regime's actions against the people of East Timor and against his own people in Indonesia. APEC will be a forum whereby people are made to act as fodder for market politics. APEC will further enhance the transformation of human rights into a market commodity. General Suharto will constantly remind his APEC partners that if they want to do business with his regime, you must kowtow to his regime and stop criticizing his policies towards the East Timorese people. And that is exactly what Canada has been doing for almost twenty-three years!
I am going to conclude my talk here today by inviting four of my East Timorese sisters who would like to offer you a song - our freedom song, our resistance song- that we would like to sing for all of you. First of all, I would like to give this present to NAC (National Action Committee on the Status of Women) as a present from East Timorese women and also from ETAN (East Timor Alert Network). Our present is a banner which states No to APEC! In East Timor, as you know, there is no freedom of association, there is no freedom of expression of your ideas, so for the East Timorese people, the way for us to speak our mind, to tell the world that we are fighting, and that we know that we are going to win our struggle, is sometimes through songs. So, that is the song that we are going to sing today for all of you. Thank-you.
Kushi Kabir  
Nijeri Kori, Bangladesh  
Plenary speaker on APEC and the environment  
Tuesday, November 18, 1997

Sisters, I think that Bella will be a very difficult act to follow. But, I really am very happy to be here. I feel energized. I feel anger and I feel the passion, the necessary passion, to try and do something. I think all of us probably share this feeling about the whole globalization of the economy and APEC as an instrument for this process.

I would like to being talking about the environment with a small story from Bangladesh. When we were trying to organize workshops at the grassroots level, with people from the local communities, to talk about a national environment plan and what it should be, the women were sitting together to talk about the "environment." Now, in our culture, the environment encompasses much more than the physical environment. It encompasses relationships. It encompasses social relationships and it encompasses relationships with nature. So, when we were talking about the environment, the women were looking at the environment in a holistic manner.

When we were talking about what the major threat to our environment is, all these women said that it was men. This is because in their homes and in their families, the major problem was the men. The men were going in for neo-liberal economics. Men were not looking out for the situation within the home, within the family, within the relationships and were not looking at the whole question of changing the soil, changing nature, changing everything in order to have a cash economy for a global market.

In order to understand what was meant by saying that "our husbands are the biggest problem," we need to look at the word "husband" in a larger fashion. It is the men who are 'husbanding' the world and the world's economy in a certain manner and with a certain ideology that is the biggest problem. That is why I agreed very much what the women said when they said that men were the major problem to our environment.

Within our countries in the 'Third World', we usually had subsistence economies. We had the majority of the people living in rural areas and having a very symbiotic relationship with nature. They grew their own crops. They fished. They knew when to fish and when not to fish. They knew when fishing became over-exploitation. They knew when tilling the soil became over-exploitation. They knew when to let nature take its course. So, the whole natural system was something that was very related to the people living on the land. And, it was the women who played a major role in looking after it. They are the ones in regards to agriculture who were looking at the issue of seed preservation. They were looking at the issue of looking after the cattle, the poultry, the ducks, the vegetables around the house, the thatch for the roof, the housing materials. Everything was related, because women were the nurturers of the family and they were the nurturers of the land on which the family was surviving.
The change to a market-based economy changed women's role within nature-and women's control and relationship with nature-to a much more market-driven production system. The question of 'development' became controlled by a market-driven system which looks at the issue of the environment only as a means of exploiting resources. The whole capitalist model of the economy exploits people as the workers and exploits nature through extraction of resources. This is commonly known and, yet, despite the fact that the majority of the people are very severely effected by this system, it continues to 'develop' unheeded. It rampages all over the world and takes over our economies. This creates a situation where the majority of people who once had enough to survive on fall further below the poverty line, thereby becoming much more of a victim and prisoner of this whole process.

All of our governments are falling over themselves to prove their commitment to these 'free economies' and 'free trade'. They want to show that no matter what type of democracies we try to achieve or whatever hopes we have of bringing in a different government that will be more nationalistic, have better social policies and will look after the people, that we are ensured that the succeeding government's commitment to a 'free economy' is even greater than that of the previous government's. I think this is something all of us share, because yesterday in the smaller workshops, we found that no matter whether it is Canada or the U.S. or Bangladesh or Malaysia or the Philippines, or any other country- that this situation is the same everywhere.

Our government and the economists in our countries who are determining our lives for us and determining our welfare, they look at the issue of protecting the environment as a luxury. They think the words "environmental protections" are something that we have imported from the western world and that it is not something that we can afford to think about in the South. I'd like to take a few minutes, even though today we are talking about strategies, to say what 'development' has done for us and why thinking about our environment is not a luxury. The environment is something that we have to be very concerned with. We cannot look at it as a separate issue from economic 'development'.

People living in the forest live with the forest and have a relationship with the forest. When we look at agriculture, we see that people who have been living on the land and off the land for centuries have a positive relationship with the land and know how to keep it going. Yet, when the market economy takes over and brings in commercial agriculture, then you start bringing in chemicals, pesticides and genetically altered seeds. So, women's and people's control over seed preservation, about what they would like to do in regards to agricultural production, such as thinking about what to grow, what price to pay and how much they want to keep for themselves-all of this is completely taken over by the market. So, people get totally displaced and the whole agricultural process not only takes away people's own economies, it destroys the land. People and farmers, the women who have been living on the land, can tell you the difference between agriculture based on a chemical, commercial mode of production and agriculture based upon people themselves.

When we look at the whole question of fisheries and aqua culture, we see that Bangladesh had the largest inland fisheries in the world. There was an enormous richness in the variety of fish that we had in our inland waters. Again, the greed of getting profits has taken over natural
resources and privatized the natural water bodies where once everybody would fish. It used to be that when we had the monsoons, the water would come in, yet no matter on whose land the water was, everybody had the right to fish on that land. So, people could get protein during the monsoons and they could fish during the monsoons.

But the bringing in of exotic varieties of fish which are totally unsuited to our culture and conditions has led to the poisoning of the local variety of fish so that the new, introduced, "high-yielding," "quick growth" varieties would not get destroyed. This means that we are losing our natural variety of fish. We have already lost hundreds of varieties of rice. Now, we have lost our local varieties of fish. Because these new fish need special food, we are also destroying the land, the water and soil and everything else. The residue that is moving into the waters is toxic and it is creating problems for our health too.

I have another small story about a small pond which has been taken over for an aqua culture project. The ponds in our country are used not just as a source for fish, but as a source for washing, for cooking and for bathing. Since water plays a very important role in all our lives, there is always a pond near the homesteads. Women are in these ponds for a large number of hours. Before aqua culture projects geared towards export-trade, women were not getting all kinds of skin infections they do now as a result of the kind of feed, the chemicals that are being put in for the fish aqua culture. When we asked a man who was growing these new fish in a pond (all the development projects are geared towards the men) why this was happening, he said "these are foreign fish and they need foreign food. When we had our local fish we used what was locally available." So, again, 'development' policies that are aimed at providing for a global market are destroying our nature.

I think there has been enough discussion on the whole question of the current industrialization process and the kind of disasters we have had with Union Carbide and others. More pollution is being created. There is a rush to get nuclear reactors for nuclear energies. Many of our countries are trying to revive their nuclear reactors so they can bring in nuclear energy. Bangladesh is also trying to revive its nuclear reactor. In Canada itself, there is a whole debate on the issue of your CANDU reactors. These reactors are now going to be shipped to our countries because you are closing down your factories. So, that is all very well known by us here.

Within Bangladesh another issue is gas exploration. One of the companies conducting gas exploration has created massive fires which have been burning for the last six months. The amount of destruction that this has caused is enormous and there is no clause that can ensure that they pay back the damage done to the environment. This is an environmental issue. When we look at the health situation and the kind of drugs and health policies that are being pushed at us, this, too, is an environmental issue. We look at Bangladesh where 'development' project designers were telling us to use ground water pumped in through hand tube wells. This resulted in most of the wells being contaminated with arsenic. So, this is what 'development' does to us and the whole issue of 'development' is an environmental issue.

Now, yesterday those of you who were in the very small workshop I was in, discussed mega-'development' projects and shrimp aqua culture. In many countries of the world, including
Bangladesh, shrimp aqua culture is taking over large tracts of land-agricultural land where people lived- for an export-oriented luxury item for the Northern countries. The major importers of the shrimps grown in Bangladesh are the countries of North America and Europe as well as Japan. The shrimp industry signifies a whole lot of what this export-driven economy is about and what it does to the environment.

What it does to the environment is related very closely to the whole issue of human rights, because when you start resisting the damage and rape of the environment, you get pressure from governments and business to stop this resistance. This leads to the worst kind of human rights violations ever. The kind of war situation that my sister from East Timor was talking about is something that goes on in the shrimp fields in Bangladesh with the women too. You feel totally frustrated by the whole situation that is coming in.

Now, I do want to get into the strategies as I have described the reasons for why the environment is an issue that is totally and intimately linked with the question of the kind of 'development' process that APEC is all about. I think the whole question of strategies of resistance is important. If I take the shrimp industry as an issue, locally, no matter what resistance group we may create, as long as the market exists and is created in the North, our countries and the big companies and the big corporations who are in the aqua culture business will continue to force the shrimp aqua culture industry onto farmers- if not in Bangladesh then in India, in Thailand, in Indonesia, in Malaysia, in Ecuador, in Honduras or elsewhere.

So, what we need to do is understand the global situation and the dimensions of its impact on local issues. I think this is important. I also very strongly believe that until we build up local resistance groups within our own countries, no amount of linkages and networking will be sufficient. We do need to build up local resistance groups within our own countries. I think all of us who have come from countries outside of the Northern hemisphere have to continue to work within our countries. I know that this occurs under very difficult situations, but we must continue to have the strength to work and resist the APEC-style model. Even if initially we are a lone voice, we need to remember that we have sisters over here in the North who are strong enough to support us when we need it.

So, along with the whole question of resistance, we also need to build up local alternatives. But, not local alternatives to feed the market. I want to make this very clear, because often local alternatives are looked at as a way of saying, "OK, this kind of coffee is bad, so we are exporting the 'right' kind of coffee where exploitation doesn't take place" or "we are producing the 'right' kind of shrimp that you can eat." I think that what this does is actually, in a way, continues to support the system, because this will salve your conscious to eat the 'right' kind of shrimp or coffee without questioning the underlying system under which it is produced. I think we have to move away from the whole question of feeding the global economy to working out systems that we need for ourselves. We need your support in helping us. So, the alternatives are basically for ourselves.

We need national support movements. We have to have, within our countries, strong national groups of human rights activists, of lawyers, of journalists, of trade unions and every other group
tolerance legislation regarding these issues. Laws must be written and enforced to protect women and children from violence and that Indigenous women be involved in implementing and evaluating programs that are culturally appropriate.

In terms of media and education, we have three recommendations: 1) curriculum development should be based upon traditional teachings, methods and values; 2) there is a need for alternative Indigenous media; 3) educational institutions should be fully accessible to Indigenous peoples in terms of both language and geographical location.

Whereas Indigenous women's rights are human rights and whereas the state has not recognized the value of Indigenous peoples cultures, including extended families, and whereas governments and the corporate agenda have engaged in cultural genocide, systemic institutionalized racism has resulted in the deliberate destruction of Indigenous people's language, religion and culture through systems such as residential schools and child apprehensions. Therefore, be it resolved that extended families should be financially remunerated the same as foster parents are and also, be it resolved that countries pass an Indigenous Rights Bills that would include, among other things, the right to self-determination and preservation of cultures and access to language and religion. This Bill must be formulated by Indigenous peoples and include equal representation of women and men and also, therefore, be it resolved that legislation governing families return maternal rights to Indigenous peoples.

Whereas Indigenous peoples, specifically Indigenous women, have experienced and continue to be vulnerable to the loss of traditional healing methods, medicines and knowledge which has taken place through cultural genocide and the continued commodification of the above mentioned, whereas this has resulted in the discouragement to seek medical aid in addition to racist, classist and sexist attitudes and policies, whereas we are vulnerable to increased urban migration, increased disease (i.e. HIV rates, TB, STDs and contamination of food), we recommend an acknowledgment and absolute end to forced sterilization as well as the use of Aboriginal women's bodies for scientific experiments.

We also want Indigenous peoples to be fully consulted and have decision-making power over genetic engineering, community-based health care and intellectual property rights.

We recommend that Indigenous peoples be fully consulted and have decision-making power regarding the production, processing and distribution of food.

We recommend implementation of public health and not privatized health. This health care must include traditional healing and Indigenous languages.

In regards to unions and Indigenous Peoples, be it resolved that Indigenous peoples throughout the world have the right to information and access to unions, that unions recognize the basic human rights of Aboriginal and Indigenous people as well as the protection of cultural beliefs and sexual orientation. Therefore, be it further resolved that unions ensure the inclusion of these people in their decision-making bodies and also include their perspectives, opinions in social, economic, political and international policies.
and organization which have a strong voice to be able to take our issue from the local to the national level. This is needed to pressure our governments, our parliamentarians to take a stand. Lastly, and I think this is extremely important, we have to have international support movements too. We need your support. We need you to work within your countries against the kind of exploitative systems that create environmental degradation, that create a lot of poverty and that create the conditions for the displacement of people from their own localities and livelihoods.

You have to be very strong and very clear where you stand on this issue. We need your support and we want you to have very strong movements within your countries that will support us. But, we want this relationship to be working in both ways. We want you to provide us needed information and we want to provide you with what kind of support we need. Very often, our lives are so different and our visions, sometimes, get so different because of different circumstances, that many movements which are supposed to provide support do not do that. We end up struggling and fighting with each other, because we have different agendas.

I think that, today, when we talk about strategies we need to work out a common agenda for all of us. An agenda which looks at our interests in the South and your interests in the North, because what we should be looking out for is the common interest and not just individual ones. Yet, it has to have a South focus. It has to have a South focus, because I think it is the South that is being raped and ravaged. It is the people in the South that are being totally exploited. We have to recognize that.

It is not a question of creating guilty feelings. You, as sisters, are not part of the system. We have the same struggle. We need to do research, we need to have a feminist perspective of the totality and the patriarchal nature of this system and we need to, as women, take the lead. In all the discussions that have been going on, in all of the presentations, it is the women who have taken the lead. It is the women who have taken the risks. It is women who have been killed in all our struggles. They are always in the forefront and we must never forget that. So, we want to take the lead. We want to be at the forefront, like our sisters at home. Like our sisters everywhere. We must continue the history of the women's movements for a better world. I want to end there. Thank-you.

**Sarojeni Rengam, co-chair:**

Thank-you Kushi for the message that the protection of the environment is not a luxury and that women have to lead the resistance. Thank-you.
Tania Paula San-Miguel Suarez
Popular Dialogue Committee Lagulena - Puebla
and the Zapatista Front for National Liberation (FZLN), Mexico,
Plenary speaker on APEC and social and economic development
Tuesday, November 18, 1997

Tania works in anthropological medicine and is an active member of the Zapatista Front for National Liberation. Her particular area of interest is encouraging public art as a form of social protest. Tania is also a member of OLINCHUAME, a women's organization working for the respect of women's human rights in Mexico and globally.

Endurance is the secret of joy.

I'd like to quote from a folk song by Leon Chavez:

"Life fades away, fades into a hole, just like dirt falls down the sink. Room maids and househelpers, nurses and laundresses, waitresses too and teachers, all of them diligent workers, they set their family out to school or to work in order to be on time to check-in, even though in the end they would get nothing out of it. Life is always a serious matter for them, nevertheless they are drowning into poverty."

Also, a quote from Dona Petra de Molcaxac:

"I was mother to eleven children, but four of them died and I had an abortion out of carrying too much weight. I get up at four o'clock in the morning, chop wood to make breakfast, I prepare tortillas, take my children to school, feed my animals, sell in the market place, work in the fields and sell some animals in order to get a living. I take care of my neighbour's animals when the farmers are sick. I manufacture toys, and speak two languages."

A quote from an Aurelia crafts woman from Molcaxac, too:

"I have been a widow for six years now, since the day my husband died of heart attack. I have five children and I have a hard time on my own: all my children are students, except my daughter who got married (she is crying). Sometimes they come over to see me, sometimes they don't. I've got to work hard. I get up a three o'clock in the morning and my job consists of manufacturing sandals and making tortillas. Since I have no gas, I've got to chop wood and pick up trash to light a fire and heat up food. I wash other people's clothes, and that helps me out; on Tuesdays I sell in the market place the sandals I make and that is my daily job. The day I suffered more was the one my daughter left and I had no news of her for one year and I suffered deeply."

Also, from Natalia Teniza, a peasant leader from Tlaxcala:

"I started up with the sinarquistas; I worked with them for five years and they helped me to open my eyes. I realized that we were so poor, and we had no choice left but to invade the land What else could we do? So we worked and eventually achieved to win over the people of our town,"
and then we traveled to other villages and towns inside our state and we decided to invade with guns and rifles. We kept on fighting and attacked San Antonio Michaca, Chiapas, San Jose and other places and we got hold of more than seventeen farms and country houses belonging to the wealthy people. I was arrested and beaten up, because of my participation in the invasion. I was insulted and lost my teeth. They wanted to kill me but neither did I let my people down, not ever did I run away. I was born in 1920 and I am very old and ill now, earth already claims for me, but still we fight on."

Finally, a quote from the Committee for the Defense of People's Rights, Women's Committee made in Oaxaca on August 19, 1997:

"Comrades with different histories and with the same sorry, with different colours and the same dream, even though with setbacks, we are standing in front of you to ask you to put our ideas together, as if we were to light a fire to cook tortillas, since this is the only way we can cook the country we need in a right manner. Neither too simple, not too salted, not too raw, not too half done but just the way we all need it: democratic and just. In our sweat, in our clothes and our white hair that time gave us, do we carry an important part of native women: MIXTECAS, TRIQUIS, TACUATES, NAHUAS, TZOTZILES AND MIXES, we are the ones who dared mingle laundry and cooking with organized fighting. The different villages we represent send their harsh voice, their heart and decision to walk all the way along with you. Let us make out of our heart and strength a rebel fortress, able to build, together with our comrades, a world where we look at one another as brothers and sisters."

Since its origins, capitalism was constituted to raise the income rate. This law for capital accumulation also carried us implicitly along the growth of poverty and starvation for the major part of humanity.

At present, neoliberalism is prevailing through all different forms of violence. It always targets the weakest ones. Its present form is the most aggressive one. It is exactly when we are the verge of a new century and of a new scientific and technological era, that benefits are only available for a few of us. Sometimes Knowledge is used as a weapon of domination instead of being at the service of humanity. Right now, genetic experiments are secret. Anti-contraceptive medicine is undercover and clandestine and women are not told about the side effects that the different types of anti-contraceptive methods carry. Great ecological damages are effecting us all and uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources are growing.

Throughout this whole process, women have become a great source of knowledge for their families. This is because of women's work in the different fields of the formal economy or in the non-structured areas of it. But, even though women's participation in the working filed has always been present, women's ability to do it is twice as difficult, either because of a double or triple working schedule or due to the relationships established at the workplace.

Thanks to neoliberalism, women's situation has become harder and we can speak of the womanizing of poverty. Neoliberalism has brought about an increase in women and child mortality. In Mexico, neoliberalistic measures have brought grave consequences, starting with
the privatization of the main strategic branches for growth and development of our country and
greater income concentration. Twelve of the world's richest families are now from Mexico while
about sixty million people live in poverty. There is also a stronger marginalization of already
marginalized people, 90% child under nourishment, the arrival of illnesses such as tuberculosis,
which were supposedly under control, nervous illnesses, depression, stress and despair. In every
one hundred homes, 64% of women are beaten up or mutilated and sexually harassed, either at
their jobs or at home. 16% of women are dying of childbirth and in Mexico. Eighteen women die
every day of cancer (cervico uterino). We can add to all of the above the fact that there is a
repression of the culture, a pressure we feel for maintaining a set role for women. Inside the
numerous areas, whether they are cultural, economic or ideological, before a girl gets productive
her abilities and skills are degraded in order to rid her of the concept that she is a thinking,
active and rational woman.

The people's resistance measures have come from traditional walks, meetings, the taking of
official buildings and up to armed struggle. In these strategies for popular struggle, women bring
their demands and claims along with them in the same way that they bring their aspirations,
reactions, values, their anger and their dreams, all of which can turn into projects to win
autonomy and create possibilities of change.

The forms that the government uses to force people to resist are numerous and different.
Nevertheless, the government gas not taken one step backwards as far as following absurd and
aggressive policies against the people are concerned. They continue to follow neoliberal policies
which go against humanity. Yet, in the face of all this discrimination and this terrible
neoliberalism, we, the women, have stood up and survived. Every day we are back on our feet.

This struggle has been an historical one. The resistance struggle in Mexico can be clearly seen in
the open revolutionary process. Peasant women, especially mestizo and native women took part
and fought for their right to win their land back - the land that the rich had snatched away from
them. That was the time when people's participation began to be organized and promoted
through congresses like the one of Merida, Yucatan in January, 1916, where revolutionary
strategies and projects were raised by peasant women.

Women also took part in the revolution in a massive way on the side of Zapata. As when China
stood up, in Mexico a peasant leader woman stood at the head of a battalion made up of her and
peasant sisters, daughters and widows. In 1921, women organized and fought for their rights.
One of the most relevant acts was the proclaiming of the female Republic in 1936. That
movement brought many benefits, such as the creation of cooperatives, workshops and schools
for the women's children. At the same time, schools were created for women who wished to
leave prostitution.

From 1970 to 1977, women got organized into different groups, such as the National Women's
Movement, the Mexican Feminist Movement, the LESBOS Group and the Women Cooperatives.
The majority of the afore-mentioned groups understood that sexism was an element which
allowed for the reproduction of the capitalist system.
Now, Zapata lives and the struggle goes on... After four years, we look back at the participation of the Zapatista-Chiapaneca women, women from Oaxaca, Guerrero. Inside and outside of armed struggles, women are still on their feet, from the kitchen to the assembly lines, in dialogues and at meetings. The battlefield is wider now and sometimes it is lead by these very women - women who are mothers, warriors, widows and unsubmissive rebels. Together with them, a considerable number of men and women from all the continents are waking up in order to start a universal struggle where many worlds can fit in. These movements are for humanity and against neoliberalism.

The Mexican women, as well as women from every country and continent, have been forced to participate in new forms to exploit and segregate them. This occurs in her daily activities both at home and at her job. In the last decade the incorporation of women into the job market has grown and spread among all kinds of sectors. Despite the discrimination experienced by women here, the worksite is another arena of women's resistance. In the same way, women are taking part in formal education at a growing rate. Illiteracy among women decreased by 56% from 1970 to 1992. This percentage is level with men's illiteracy. However, as far as wages are concerned, men get 34% more than women in the professional area and 44% more amongst managers and public workers. In general, women suffer wage discrimination in the different working activities. Women has been made to be second class worker within both the family economy and the economy in general.

As far as work is concerned, we are kept out or kept in the fringes of waged employment. Often we are asked for a certificate of non-pregnancy in order to be taken into consideration. We are usually believed to be the weak sex. Though we work twelve hours nonstop. We are considered emotional, sentimental and conflictive. If this is true, how come that 80% of the totality of food is produced by women? As far as stores, we are greatly demanded as up front employees, check out girls, waitresses, tailors or even in night clubs we are asked to be tall and look good. In these kinds of jobs, we are not required to produce too many papers - we just need to be women. The slow establishment of submission through unequal jobs and activities brings up the "frailty" trap and we see women's exploitation.

In Mexico, women represent more than 50% of the population and they are just starting to visualize solidarity and support amongst themselves. Generally we are taught to look at one another as competitors. Yet, we have to listen to one another, with our differences, and stick together. Communications is the answer to organization and to the creation of a true resistance network from within. As Ramona says, "we do have to fight one another, but only a little bit."

We don't give up! Now the time has come. You women throughout the world, and if there are women outside this world with a similar situation, the time has come for you too to re-evaluate yourselves, to leave the scorn of our personality caused by segregation behind us. We are suffering within our societies - neoliberal societies - where we are exploited and left out. Not only are our pleas unheard within society but within our families as well. We are made to do humiliating activities nobody wants to do and that women have inherited through history.
We shall learn that we are prisoners to cultural, ideological and political parameters. We must break off and be sensible enough to see ourselves as an important part of the problem. No one but women have been given the specific role to be submissive and silent servants as if it were a virtue, an inborn part of femininity. This is a chain and a yoke we are dragging throughout our lives. Through this process, women are annihilated in our skills and values. Within this same process, a mutilated being is raised—a being who does not know herself. In Mexico, a woman is supposedly saved by her maternity for only this makes her pure and dedicated and, therefore, valuable. In this process of slavery, just like any other process of order and obedience, women train themselves - saving the job market the cost of training.

But, when women start resisting this process, in the sense of taking a critical and reflexive attitude against the patriarchal system, which also effects men in a brutal manner, and starts changing her life style, her role as a woman and human being is seen as abnormal. She pays a high price for her rebellion. For this, she will be rejected and will be called crazy, stupid and whore. She will be despised not only by her family but also by society.

In this changing world we must call for a dialogue among women. It is a fact that the participation of women is more and more definitive to the struggle for justice. We have to re-evaluate our jobs, imagine new resistance forms. We shall have to have a look at our ideology. Let us learn to be as sisters, let us look for new strategies to transform ourselves and transform our battle, so that one day we might inherit our great bravery as women, so that we can inherit the principles of liberty and equality. Let us start by being stronger day by day and let us build a network among us—not a national network anymore, because neoliberalism is leading us all towards poverty, ruin and individuality faster and faster. Let us set up support networks, a network of productive projects and meetings. We must be able to transform ourselves. Let us stop being unknown creatures to ourselves. Let us start being thinking people who can create not only life but a better world for all of us.

Let us grow the seed of freedom, because oppression or neoliberalism means death under any one of its forms and we must always stand up and fight for life. Let us go on fighting and laughing at the same time, together forever. Life will start when we are equals, men and women. We won't give up!

(Tania followed her speech with a slide show accompanied with music made by Indigenous women and men in Mexico).
Representative of the Federation de Femmes du Quebec (speaking during the plenary session from the floor of the Women's Conference):

I want to talk about a strategy. The poverty workshop this morning talked about a Women's March, the Bread and Roses Women's March, for the year 2000. I want to tell you that in 1995, for those of you who do not live in Canada, the women's movement in Quebec organized a Women's March Against Poverty for ten days. There were five hundred and fifty women who marched twenty kilometers each day for ten days. They started from three different points in Quebec. The women were carrying nine demands. Nine first steps aimed at ending women's poverty. While they were marching, public support grew stronger. There were 20,000 people, women, men and children waiting for them in Quebec City. While they were marching, the women's movement grew stronger as well. As a result of the March, we propelled ourselves to the forefront of resistance to neoliberalism.

Since 1995, we have opposed the "zero deficit" slogan that our government is putting forward and that I'm sure your governments are also putting forward. We are developing the concept of zero poverty. Once again we are doing this and we are gaining public support. Once again, our movement is, as the Malaysian speaker was saying yesterday, resisting, mobilizing and creating alternatives. For the year 2000, we want to propose to the women's movement of the world that we bring our agenda into the open and act upon that agenda.

We are proposing a world march of women for equality, development and peace, called Bread and Roses. I'll say it in a nutshell. The objectives of the March would be to: promote equality between women and men; to stimulate a vast movement of grassroots women's groups so that the March becomes a gesture of affirmation of the women of the world; to denounce patriarchy and capitalism in its present neo-liberal form and; to present alternatives based upon equality and justice. Our demand is that women must possess half of the planet's wealth. This wealth must be shared equitably between North and South, East and West and shared equitably between women themselves. Also, women should only produce half of the planet's wealth, including housework. We are bringing our demand to impact and challenge political powers, economic powers and patriarchal powers.

The action that we are proposing comes in three parts. A world action in the form of a March attended by a delegation from all participating countries. Up to now fifty countries and two hundred women's groups from around the world have said yes to this action. The March will converge on the United Nations headquarters in New York and/or the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Washington. We also invite women to organize a national action in every country - an action of their choice based upon their own national demands. Also, a vote. We would like women all over the world to vote on the demand that we are bringing forward. Everywhere, women would sign a vote card following a large-scale, popular education campaign organized by women's groups in each participating country and the delegation would then take the cards to New York or Washington.

These actions will take place in the year 2000 between International Women's Day (March 8th) and October 17th which is the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. I want to stress...
something that was said yesterday and this morning. It is important to realize that the word "globalization" is not something that was invented by the leaders of the world or the corporations. We have that word too. We have to globalize solidarity and globalize the women's movement. That is what we are calling for. Thank-you.
Recommendations from workshops held on Tuesday, November 18, 1997

a) Researchers Forum Workshop Recommendations

We need to continue communication between those present at the conference as well as between women who are going to continue fighting APEC in the Asia-Pacific countries, especially Malaysia in preparation for the next Summit.

We need to look at various forms of media that can be used.

We need to use and improve existing networks between women within countries.

We need to bring together the research that is being done on how APEC effects women and children in various countries or facilitate this research being done.

Research should be action-oriented and tied to women's groups. It should be rooted in local work as well as having a regional focus.

A conference proceedings will be sent to every participant which includes a list of who attended the Researchers Forum workshop and is interested on building a network to continue the work of the Women's Conference (note: this was not made available as these conference proceedings were put together).

We need to take case studies from our various countries to Malaysia and the next Women's Conference. We will be sending out a call for women to submit case studies. We already have commitments from women in Canada, the US, the Philippines, Mexico and Japan. We are looking for funding within Canada to help begin this process of setting up an international coordinating body that could continue the work of the First and Second International Women's Conferences Against APEC so that we have some continuity and can continue to build on the strong anti-APEC position. This is necessary so that we don't lose this position from conference to conference. The need to keep this strength and then build upon it was identified.

We are also looking for funding in Canada to coordinate research and country case studies. This information will be sent out with the conference proceedings (note: this information was not made available in time to be included in the conference proceedings.)

b) Popular Theatre Workshop Recommendations

We spent our hour and half expressing and exploring with theatre how we felt about APEC and using this to develop our analysis (note: the popular theatre workshop participants performed a live skit for the entire gathering).

Drums
Introduction: We are the participants of the popular theatre workshop. Our position is that we will not engage in APEC in any form, including social clauses. The reasons are: social clauses are not enforceable. Clauses do not recognize women's rights. Social clauses are not concrete. Social clauses are mere lip service towards our rights. Not engaging in APEC is a position of solidarity with the Conference in Manila.

Our strategies for action are: to coordinate nationally and internationally popular education and popular theatre campaigns on a massive level, locally and globally; support free movement of people through a breaking down of borders; building resistance through world strikes; identifying allies and; having an alternative economic system for women.

Chant: Give them life! Give them hope! We have rights! We have hope!

Skit: Popular education! Grassroots level! Popular Education! Grassroots level!

Chant: Give them life! Give them hope! We have rights! We have hope!

Skit: No more borders for people!

Chant: Give them life! Give them hope! We have rights! We have hope!

Skit: We see APEC..., we hear APEC..., we smell APEC..., we taste it... We reject it!

Chant: Give them life! Give them hope! We have rights! We have hope!

c) Regulating Capital Workshop Recommendations

Our session was on redirecting capital. The strategies we arrived at are: 1) the need to resist the strategies used by major corporations to divide us. This includes the need to debunk the myth of corporate "social responsibility"; 2) we need to build upon our existing popular movements; 3) develop economic alternatives, such as workers' co-ops, credit unions and barter systems, otherwise known as Community Economic Development; 4) raising awareness and educating about globalization and its harmful consequences by taking over existing media such as the Women's Television Network in Canada as well as developing alternative media like Kinesis (feminist newspaper in Vancouver); 5) women need to take responsibility for whatever money they have. We need to know where our money is going and what they plan to do with it and; 6) nothing short of the feminist revolution will lead to the regulation and redistribution of capital!

d) Indigenous People Workshop Recommendations

Be it resolved that corporations and governments be held responsible for health, anti-violence and healing of social problems and conditions suffered by displaced Indigenous people by providing financial support to grassroots women's organizations. Indigenous people must be protected from racism, sexism and state-sanctioned violence and exploitation of intellectual property rights by strengthening and enforcing the human rights code and implementing zero-
In regards to land, whereas Indigenous peoples ancestral domain and knowledge has been and continues to be expropriated and exploited by governments, corporate interests and other institutions, we recommend that the right of Indigenous peoples to self-determination and sovereignty be recognized by their respective national governments and international governmental bodies and that the supervision and implementation of this process include all levels of community with specific inclusion of Aboriginal women and others who are independent of the state apparatus.

On the issue of land claims and the use of land-based resources currently being negotiated in various de-colonization processes and where the ownership of land and resources is in question (whether in dispute in or out of court), issues regarding these lands and resources, for example the patenting of plants and human materials, cannot be negotiated by government and corporations involved in APEC, NAFTA, the MAI or similar agreements. The ancestral owners and caretakers of these lands and resources are not bound by previous agreements made by the state after they received freedom from state regulations to determine use of their ancestral lands. In other words, the ability to allow or disallow development projects, in the form of cash crop farming, mining, hydroelectric dams, logging or any projects which may not support their local economies but support globalization. Also, the ancestral owners of the land are not subjected to penalties, fines or lawsuits if they choose to halt or direct any project initiated by the state once they regain control over their resources.

e) Advocacy and the Role for Unions Workshop Recommendations

The historical role of unions in affecting social change and fighting for and protecting rights in the workplace must be acknowledged and respected and the following constitutes ways to build on this rich history.

We began our workshop by reviewing the statement that was devised in the Labour Caucus yesterday. We built on these ideas and came up with the following recommendations:

1) reaching out to youth and involving them in every way by making unions relevant to young people through education, shared ideas and actions that young people identify with;
2) support for migrant workers must be concrete and we must explore ways to link migrant workers to unions through shared expertise in organizing. The recent conference by INTERCEDE which represents domestic workers is pursuing a campaign to end discrimination against migrant workers so that they enter the country with equality with other immigrants. There is a call by domestic workers for unions and their federations to support the implementation of an urgent alert system and to recognize the very great need for resources and expertise to ensure domestic workers rights are respected. We explored the idea of a call for service centres for migrant workers, a centre that is a safe meeting place;
3) there is also a recognition of the critical importance of breaking down the barriers to women in leadership positions. It is understood that in order to make gains for women, we have to have women elected into the positions where they can effect those changes and a recognition of how we mobilize and ensure that women take their rightful place in leadership;
4) ensuring that all programs put on by the union are gender sensitive;
5) a recognition of the need for unions to be identified with the communities. We need to look at how we build links and how we are seen in our community. We must always be strengthening our own organization and our links with like-minded groups, both nationally and internationally. We have a vision of a world that we need and want to live in and we need to clearly advocate for these concrete alternatives;
6) there is a need for continued discussion and debate on social clauses to continue to build and mobilize to put pressure on government and corporations to ensure proper standards environmentally, socially and to never, ever stop the fight of the horrendous violations of human rights that have been the life's experiences of so many of the sisters here today. We have the ability to work internationally with one another and to hold those accountable for these awful, awful violations that occur as we meet;
7) organizing in non-traditional sectors is a must. There is a recognition that if unions are truly to effect social change, there needs to be organization of low-income workers. We must organize in the sectors where we find migrant workers who are often in working on very low-income, with little or no protections and benefits;
8) ensuring that we constantly strive to ensure that our organizations have elected leadership and staff that truly reflect the faces of the workers we represent. These discussions, our group hopes, leads to renewed energy and commitments to the challenges we face to ensure a better place for the children we leave behind. Thank-you.

f) Social Charter-Yes or No? Workshop Recommendations

There was a very long and thorough discussion and debate as to social clause, yes or no. It was clear that there were very serious differences of opinion.

We had consensus that APEC is not a trade agreement, but we had no consensus whether one of the strategies of opposing trade agreements should be a social clause. It was very clear that we supported the rights of women to unionize, to collective bargaining, to human rights and to be free from discrimination.

This workshop recommends that the Second International Women's Conference Against APEC reaffirms the statement from the Manila Women's Conference and that we will continue to build on this for the future.

Farida Aktar of UBINIG, Bangladesh
Intervention and additional comments regarding the report from the workshop on Social Charters, Yes or No? from the floor of the conference:

I want to add to the presentation of the workshop on yes or no to social clause, because the whole issue of social clauses has a lot of implications for the Southern countries, so it is not enough to report in this way that there was debate. This is not enough. This is why I want to add that there was a very clear discussion about why social clauses linked with trade agreements is harmful to the Southern countries, especially to workers from the Southern countries. I think the popular theatre group has come up with very clear position which we really endorse. It came out
clearly that why a social clause should not be supported. We are talking about our rights to unionize and everything. We are fighting for these and other of our rights, but the WTO (World Trade Organization) has no business in penalizing countries. Women should not be fighting for the WTO to be given the power to penalize countries. The WTO was not formed to protect workers’ and women's rights.

g) Consumer Campaigns Workshop Recommendations

We felt that consumer campaigns are very important for building solidarity, awareness and respect. We recommend that:

We pressure corporations to be accountable;
we mobilize the people through education;
we develop alternative economies, e.g. co-ops;
we act from the perspective from those involved and not call for boycotts unless they are asked for;
we provide alternatives that will promote local, ethical businesses;
we look at all the factors in a boycott campaign, e.g. when looking at organic food look at the long-term benefits and not just focus on the cost;
we push governments to protect their people. Not all the onus should be on the consumer.

It is also very important to remember that in building a strategy for a campaign that we map out the audience, that we set goals and objectives that are achievable as well as what we want to achieve, identify resources and power base and that we combine strategies for an overall win situation. Also, in regards to:

1) public education. We need to make it clear not only who we condemn but also who we support. For instance, we should recommend local, ethical and organic alternatives.
2) lobby government to put fair taxes on corporations.
3) We have the right to know the conditions of labour under which products are made. This information should be put on the label.
4) build links between workers and consumers, between workers and employers and between consumer campaigns. We must keep in mind the grassroots perspective and who is most affected.
5) Hold multinational corporations accountable. We must promote incentives for them to reform their practices.

h) Food and Agriculture Workshop Recommendations

Our basic goal is that there be food safety, community food security, access to good food with dignity for everyone and that we work to repair, restore and preserve our water, soil and air.

Slogan: We should feed the family and trade the leftovers. This should be the basis of our food policy.

Breast feeding as a model for the kind of food system that we want.
Slogan: *We must stop treating our soil like dirt.*

Food security is a basic human right and food is not a commodity. Therefore, trade in food and agricultural products should not be part of any trade agreement whatsoever.

We must condemn genetic engineering as the new technology which is being pushed down our throats. There must be a moratorium on the licensing of the products of genetic engineering and that any products of any genetic engineering must be labeled as such. We demand labeling at all levels - at the level of federal policy but also at the local level where we will take actions in our own markets to ensure that we know where the food is coming from, who has produced it and what is in it.

An intermediate strategy would be supporting independent research on agricultural inputs. We should also network to give farmers alternative information for sustainable agricultural systems. We need to honour traditional knowledge. We honour it not only by documenting it, which we must continue to do, but also by using it.

We propose that every NAC (National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Canada) meeting should have a seed exchange as part of the activity. It is important for us to not only pay lip service to the need to keep our traditional varieties and preserve them and grow them but we actually have to do it ourselves.

Finally, at the very personal level, we should support community shared agriculture, to grow food as much as we can, to eat local, to support local food shops, to compost, to use urban land for gardens and to support women's markets and make sure that the market is not in control of our food but is in the hands of women where it belongs.

**i) Environment and Mega-Development Workshop Recommendations**

We focused on the shrimp farms in the South. We also talked about mining, both in the North and the South, especially Canadian mining companies that are going into the South and strip mining and causing much environmental damage.

One of the things we need to do is be informed. We need to do more workshops and leafleting of stores.

We also need to build alliances and to network with unions and churches and educate workers in the industry. One of the suggestions is that if you are going to buy shrimp, ask where it is coming from.

Speak out often and loudly to destroy the myth that the APEC agenda will create jobs. Both the shrimp industry and mining industry do not promote jobs in the South. We should do consumer campaigns around these industries since both destroy the environment.
We should lobby within communities.

j) Self Empowerment through Dance Workshop Recommendations

A quote from Adrienne Rich's, *Of Women Born*, "women are controlled by lashing us to our bodies. We need to repossess our bodies. A world in which every woman is the presiding genius of her own body."

Ratna Roy: We need to release our bodies from the colonized, undermined self.

We explored self-expression of the body by the body. We started to understand our body by using the language developed in South Asia centuries back. They were initially used for the empowerment of male warriors. Well, we changed that. We are often not aware that our body can be as equally strong as the reasoning mind and can control how we feel about ourselves. So, we consciously used the images of self-empowerment and we altered images of ourselves. We practiced creating an image theatre for the People's March (Sunday, November 23, 1997). So, we did a couple of specific actions that we will be able to use as we are marching along. We can tell some of our stories and how we are able to counteract these things.

We came out of this workshop totally different by understanding how powerful our bodies are and how powerful movement is and how we can empower ourselves and be assertive in this way.

k) Advocating for Children and Children's Rights Workshop Recommendations

1) Provide alternative means for children to survive without prostitution and child labour.
2) Expose the people responsible for child labour.
3) Facilitate and incorporate local workers' and people's views.
4) Pressure governments to establish children's centres.
5) There needs to be more funding for children's education.
6) Global tax on corporations, perhaps through the United Nations
7) Laws to prosecute sex tourists in their home countries.
8) Children's rights must be recognized as human rights.
9) Pressure Canadian government to adopt UN Convention on the Rights of Children.
10) Effects of globalization on children should be recognized.
11) Violence against children must be stopped.

The following statement was introduced from the floor of the Women's Conference by the Disability Caucus

One of the reasons the disability caucus was formed was an incident that happened when one of the caucus members came here yesterday. She went to the registration table and identified herself as a member of the DisAbled Women's Network of Canada (DAWN) and the woman volunteering at the table said, "oh, but you're not disabled." When the woman from DAWN responded by saying, "yes I am," the volunteer said, "but you're not physically disabled," and she
again responded by saying, "I'm not visibly disabled." The volunteer then said, "oh, you have a mental disability."

Another example of how we need to be aware of the exclusions that we practice is the dinner that is being called for tonight by NAC (National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Canada). There is a woman who uses a wheelchair who would like to attend, but no one knows whether the restaurant is wheelchair accessible.

Women with disabilities have very high levels of poverty and violence. In many places, we lack access to basic life needs. We lack physical access to services, buildings and information. The women's movement has made some strides in the area of inclusions. However, issues of women with disability are almost always last or left off agendas.

Our energy is very low and often our disabilities don't always allow us to participate in conference planning. Many of us have other life issues which take precedence over this planning or we have no accessible transportation. As well, we have the numerous life issues that all women face. So, we ask that you think about how to be inclusive. Try to keep in mind who is not there to help plan the event and consider their issues. Ask disabled women's groups for help in planning. Some ideas are to study the venue and check out logistical arrangements. Know where things are. Ensure that volunteers have some sensitivity training and don't challenge us when we identify as women with disabilities. Support us instead. It is hard enough to actually say that I am a woman with a disability.

Psychiatrized women are not even recognized. They face stigma and are particularly affected by globalization and end up on the streets. Many of them could not attend a conference like this because of their disabilities.

Have a quiet room set aside for people when they feel overwhelmed.

Have clear information about the conference and where it is.

Ensure that there are ASL signers and assistive devices.

Have materials in large print and Braille and audio tape or disks.

On forms, ask for disability needs and provide a trained volunteer where it is appropriate. Access includes such things as billeting, transportation and food, including dinners. Ask participants to refrain from using scents and perfumes.

Be proactive. Try to anticipate needs.
The First International Day of Solidarity with Migrant Workers and their Families is on December 18, 1997. This is the day that the UN Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and their Families was adopted by the UN General Assembly. People are calling for ratification of this Convention.

Representative of the Alternative ASEAN Network of Burma:

We have been talking about alternative strategies to reclaim ASEAN, a club of repressive governments in South East Asia who are also a block within APEC.

We have been talking mostly about North to South oppression, but the reality is that now we have a lot of South/South oppression through globalization, so please keep that in mind.

Now, most of us when we have these international events expect a solidarity message from Aung Sang Suu Kyi but no one is sending her a solidarity message. So, I am going to put up a clipboard where we can all send our solidarity messages. I will make sure it gets to her and to the other women in the NLD.

If you want to support Burma, you do not have to be an expert on Burma. You can support community activities to get selective purchasing and economic boycotts against the military regime in Burma.

And, if you are planning a holiday in Asia, do not visit Burma or Myanmar until there is political reform in that country.

I would also like to say that there are two women who are based in the border camps of the Thailand-Burma jungle here today. This is their first international conference and they have never been in a room full of so many women before. One is Kin who is from the Burmese Women's Union. The other one is May who is from the Kereni National Women's Organization. The Kereni are an ethnic group who are currently facing a military offensive from Burma's military regime. I hope you appreciate their presence. They have come a long way under great difficulty. Please make them feel welcome and ask us if there is anything you wish to know. Thank-you.

Wang Jiaxiang, China:

I want to discuss whether the 4th UN Conference on Women has had any impact on Chinese women. I want to say that right now, China is in the process of changing from a planned economy to a market-based economy. To be very frank, right now, it is very complicated. Basically, my own experience is that the UN Conference on Women has really had some impact on Chinese women. Before this, we didn't really have any NGOs to speak of. Now we do and they are doing a lot of work for women. I think we all know that this market-oriented economy -
or globalization - and the large movements of capital moving into China and the opening up of "free" economic zones by the Chinese government and so on, is resulting in the increase of sweatshops inside China.

Chinese women are facing new challenges, because what we see is that inequality between women and men is increasing. Women my age use to think we had achieved equality with men, but now we see it slipping through our fingers. I'm OK because I'm a professor and have not been laid off, but a lot of women workers, thirty, thirty-five years old and over, are being laid off with 60% of their pay (and some even less). What are these women going to do? The government is doing some things, but the grassroots, women's NGO are doing things.

For instance, we have some job re-training programs so that women who have been laid off can re-enter employment. In one province, a fund has been started for women who have been laid off. This fund is a sort of micro-credit system for these women. Each can have one thousand to start their own business. We also have a lot of women moving from rural areas into these "free" economic zones and the big cities to find employment. Most of these women would be working in sweat shops or they would be working in the private service sector. Many women's NGOs in these cities have started training programs for these women so they know what lies ahead for them and they provide legal training so these women are aware of their rights.

Also, some of those who can't find jobs are cheated and trafficked into the sex trade. So, we tell them of the dangers they might face and if they have come across such things, where they can go to find help. We also have hot lines which is something new - five years old now. These hot lines deal with domestic violence, marital issues, sexual harassment. You can phone in and get free counseling. We have a group of female lawyers offering free legal service for women who need it and can't pay. Just recently, these lawyers helped a group of eighty to ninety women workers in a factory located in the suburbs of Beijing where they pay was delayed and the working conditions were bad.

These things are happening in China and the real NGO women's groups are trying to do something to solve these problems and help those women who have lost much as a result of the setting up of market-oriented economies. Also, a lot of issues which were not supposed to be discussed before have been raised now. Domestic violence is one example. Just before I came here, we had a national conference on domestic violence. About sixty women participated. We had recommendations for what should be put into the marriage law so that women suffering from domestic violence could resort to law to protect them. We discussed the issue of marital rape. This issue was never mentioned before, because men thought that if they had married a woman, they thought they could do whatever they liked to her. But, now we are addressing the issue of rape within marriage and what we should do about it. Thank-you.

Participant:

I would like to address what I see as a gap in this conference. There have been a lot of recommendations about demanding governments to do something. But, we have to *force* our governments to do what we want. I think that lobbying and boycotts are valuable.
Demonstrations are also valuable. But at the same time, I think we need to go further. I'll give you an example of what we have recently done in Quebec. Some three hundred activists closed down a government complex which meant that we shut out four thousand civil servants. We really believe that non-violent civil resistance is an incredibly powerful tool that we are not using. I am calling on women in Canada, since I know there are countries where this kind of tactic cannot be used, but I call upon the women in Canada to stand up to our governments and stop them from committing treason against us and helping corporations to rape and plunder Third World countries and destroy the quality of life for millions of people around this planet.

Participant:

This is an announcement in the spirit of civil disobedience. I would encourage every one who either works or studies at a high school, college or university to walk out of their classes on Monday, November 24th in protest of APEC. A group of students around Vancouver have organized a Free University Day up at the University of British Columbia (UBC). We have 6 different panels planned on various issues, including: women and APEC, local struggles of resistance; downsizing dissent-the corporatization of culture and education; importing poverty and exporting consumerism; Indigenous resistance; globalization and (im)migration-industry and workers' rights. We also ask everyone else who is able to take time off work, or whatever else they are doing, to come up to UBC in solidarity. Part of this action has to do with taking over and occupying space on campus. We have not booked rooms. We are going to be taking over an administrative building as well as the student union building. I ask everybody to come up to UBC on Monday.

Participant:

I want to make a couple of comments that were not reported here from the Challenging Corporate Rule conference held in Toronto, Canada recently. I think it is really important to develop new anti-corporate campaigns in the areas of forestry, mining, energy, food, textiles and electronics - not just focusing on the government. We need to do this to unmask and confront this system of corporate rule. We need to mount campaigns focused on four major targets that are mechanisms of corporate rule: the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

We need to build a global network of information providers to share research findings on corporations and corporate rule in accessible ways and forms that will enable grassroots groups to develop more effective, community-based campaigns so that we can all challenge corporate power and authority. Another thing that came up was to launch an international day of resistance against corporate rule each year aimed at targeting and exposing the operations of specific transnational corporations at a local, national and international levels. These campaigns would utilize a variety of direct action tactics, including civil disobedience. Lastly, we should develop an ongoing vehicle to help facilitate follow-up actions on all these fronts and to build new solidarity networks between groups that are actively engaged in sectoral campaigns and social movements.
Rain Daniels, co-chair:

Just in terms of what was said in terms of the need to talk about what is going to happen after today. My hope from being on the Steering Committee [which organized the Women's Conference] and witnessing the work that went into that work and all the work that I've heard from the stories from today and yesterday is that continuing the work after today is absolutely essential. There is absolutely no question about that. There is an international networking list being made here. I'd like the person who asked for this list from Langara College [in Vancouver, Canada] to please take responsibility to type it up and mail it to women who are on that list.

Langara student:

We've decided that everyone on that list will be sent a copy of the list.

Rain Daniels, co-chair:

Thanks. We also have some closing statements from the co-chairs to invite some of that work. O.K., so at this point in time, I'd like the Steering Committee to please stand up and be recognized. [Please note: these statements were not presented to the plenary]

Closing Ceremony

Spokesperson one: The youth caucus got together briefly. The main thing we'd like to express to you is how important it is for us to build intergenerational communication and support to overcome the sense of cynicism and hopelessness that goes along with agendas like APEC so that we can fight back against it and keep a sense of hope for the future.

Spokesperson two: One of the things that I want to say about this conference is that it is important for young women to be involved with events such as this and see and make contacts with older women. It is a way to feel connected to a history of women's resistance and women's movement. These connections are very important for young women starting out. I know that in conversations I've had with older women, I've often been told that older women feel that their work is either denied or belittled by younger women involved in the movement today. So, on behalf of the young(ish) women here today, and the younger women, I want to take this opportunity to honour and recognize the work that has gone before us and the work done by older women as well as the privileges, the networks and the possibilities that we have inherited from you. So, thank-you.

Spokesperson three: Just as my sister was saying, this is really a message of reassurance for the older women of the world. Despite what some of you may have been led to believe, young women today are very strong and we believe in a hell of a lot more than NIKE and big hair! We are aware and we are angry and we believe in the fight. What we need, and what we look for when we come to a conference like this, is community and to build a community of women. We think we can create this and we want to create it by building links with other women. With mothers and with grandmothers from across the globe. The other thing that is really important to
remember is that just as you all have so much to teach us, there is a lot you can learn from us too. And, so, in closing, you should have faith in your daughters and your granddaughters. It is OK to pass us the torch, because we've got the fire!

Spokesperson four: One thing I want to say is that I cannot get enough of these strong, clear, international women's voices that I've heard. I cannot get enough of it and I hope that I have the opportunity to have this honour again, this complete and total honour, of inspiration that I've got from everyone who has spoken. One thing that we did discuss in the future of young women is a feeling of being overwhelmed. But even in a few moments of discussing this, we all agreed that the sense of community will ensure our survival and our success. This very conference has basically created an international community that we will inherit. So, I thank-you also for that. Thank-you.

Spokesperson one: So, we want to take this love and energy and political will that we have and pass it on to the women who will be organizing the Third International Women's Conference Against APEC in Malaysia. The way that we've devised for us to do that is to ask you to all stand up. We are going to form a circle around this room and we are going to pass the banner of the Second International Women's Conference Against APEC from hand to hand.

Spokesperson two: OK, in doing this, we want you to think of one woman who couldn't be here today - your sister or your friend and for all the women's voices which are sometimes not heard - let's make some noise!

Note: Women passed the banner around the circle of women with forceful and resounding chants of No to APEC! The banner was then presented to Irene Fernandez from Malaysia.

Irene Fernandez  
Director of Tenaganita (Women Force)  
and Co-Chair of the 1997 People's Summit on APEC, Malaysia  

Thank-you very much. We are happy to take the responsibility for organizing the next APEC meeting in Malaysia. This will be a struggle in itself. Here, you worked very well with the government, I believe you had some cooperation, but in Malaysia it is going to be a struggle. But, we know that with the sisterhood we have globally, with the strength that we have, we will overcome and we will be there. See you in Malaysia!

Rain Daniels, co-chair:  

The co-chairs summaries that I mentioned earlier will be in your package.