

Chapter 6

Future Progress

for Women:

Reshaping

Globalization



Introduction

This report has situated the progress of the world's women in the context of existing globalization, a process whereby owners of capital are enabled to move their capital (whether in the form of money or goods) around the globe more easily and quickly than ever before. This process has been facilitated by the spread of new information and communication technologies and the removal of state controls on trade and investment. Over the last two decades, the process of globalization has given greater impetus to women's participation in the market economy. However, it has contributed to widening inequality within and among countries, and has been punctuated by economic and social collapse in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa and countries in transition (in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union) and by financial crises in Asia and Latin America.

"Globalization is clearly an unfinished business, a work in progress that can be shaped and steered by human interventions and values of equality, poverty reduction and social justice."

— Noeleen Heyzer, statement at Session on Decent Work in the Global Economy, UNCTAD, February 2000

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Copenhagen Programme of Action addressed some of the problems of globalization, with a particular emphasis on structural adjustment programmes that require governments to liberalize markets for goods, services and capital. However, the solutions proposed for women in these documents were largely microeconomic, with a particular focus on enabling poor women to obtain access to credit.

The analysis presented in Chapters 3 and 4 shows that while some progress has been made towards empowerment of women, there has also been regress in some countries. Moreover, it is highly likely that the gains accompanying globalization have been concentrated in the hands of better-off women with higher levels of education and with greater ownership of resources and access to capital. If a wider range of women are to gain, globalization must be reshaped so that it is people-centred instead of profit-centred and made more accountable to women.

Chapter 5 discussed strategies that women are employing to hold governments accountable for

achieving greater gender equality in the ways they spend public money and to hold business corporations accountable for greater gender equality in the ways they use and reward workers to make money. Chapter 6 examines progress towards reshaping globalization, highlighting ways that women are organizing to enter, challenge and change the operation of markets, the use of new technology and the formulation of economic policy at national and international levels.

As Devaki Jain, Indian feminist economist and one of the founders of DAWN, points out (1999), many of the people and organizations who have been promoting globalization are now taking a more nuanced approach. They refer more often to problems of inequality, poverty and social exclusion and to the need to subject the globalization process to some regulation, often expressed in terms of "global governance." They acknowledge the importance of the nation-state as a site for organizing the transformation of economic and social processes. As a result, Jain argues, there are new opportunities for women to intervene and renegotiate globalization in order to enable information and communication technology to be used in equitable ways and markets to be used to serve human ends.

Entering and Transforming Financial Markets

Microcredit programmes have become one of the key strategies for addressing women's poverty. Microcredit programmes come in several varieties: targeted towards poor people or women only; individual or group based; credit-only or credit and other services; and government or non-governmental organization sponsored. Some programmes focus on savings as well as loans and are more properly called "microfinance." Examples of every combination may be found in practice somewhere in the world.

The Microcredit Summit in 1997 set a target of 100 million of the world's poorest families, especially the women of those families, to be receiving credit for self-employment, and other financial and business services by the year 2005. This summit brought together a series of councils representing advocacy organizations, banks and commercial financial institutions, corporations, domestic government agencies, donor agencies, educational institutions, philanthropic foundations, heads of states, international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, practitioners, religious institutions and UN agencies — altogether 2900 people from 137 countries. Large international donors have increased funding for microcredit, channelled through NGOs and



governments. They target women for reasons of cost-efficiency as well as equality, since repayment rates are higher among women.

The 1999 Microcredit Summit Meeting in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, focused on four core themes: reaching the poor; reaching women; ensuring impact; and building financially self-sufficient microfinance institutions. It was reported that by September 1999, member programmes had reached over 12 million of the world's poorest people.

UNIFEM, as co-chair with UNDP of the UN Council of the Microcredit Summit, has been active in promoting a gender perspective. The most important contributions of the UN are building the institutional capacity of microfinance institutions (MFIs), strengthening their networks and alliances, advocating for increased resources, mainstreaming gender in microfinance and financial institutions and developing and sharing best practices in microfinance.

Microfinance schemes have been successful in increasing women's income levels and control over income in many of the world's poorest regions. Research by Linda Mayoux, for example, shows that they have improved perceptions of women's contribution to household income and family welfare and increased women's participation in decision-making in the household, resulting in overall improvements in attitudes towards women in the household and community (Mayoux 1998). However, as she demonstrates, drawing on evidence from Africa and South Asia, microfinance in itself is not the answer to the empowerment of poor women. Many women are disadvantaged by lack of access to complementary resources such as land and know-how, as well as continuing responsibility for subsistence production, which limits the time available for running a business.

"Credit is also debt"

— Susan Johnson and Ben Rogaly (1997)

Moreover, for some women and their families, microfinance programmes have had negative impacts. Impacts vary among women across schemes, and in some cases prove to be disempowering. For example, one study in Bangladesh found

that among female borrowers, a majority reported an increase in verbal and physical aggression from male relatives after taking out loans (Pepall 1998). Other studies in Bangladesh have drawn attention to the fact that women run the risk of losing control of the loans to male relatives because they are culturally excluded from participating in markets outside their homes to buy inputs and sell outputs (Khondkar 1998). In some cases, women are not able to significantly increase incomes under their control or negotiate changes in gender inequalities within the household and community and may become dependent on loans to continue in low-paid occupations with heavier workloads.

The WomenWatch online working group on the Beijing Platform for Action generated a lively discussion of the pros and cons of microcredit for women in different regions. For example:

"In Nigeria this loan, small as it may be, has changed not only the economic capacity of the women who were forcibly evicted from their homes, but has also made them more active in the struggle for a just compensation for their demolished houses. With education and enlightenment campaigns introduced through projects such as micro-credit, women will become more involved in advancing their own rights."

— Social and Economic Rights Action Centre, Nigeria (UN 2000c)

"It is important to ensure that women use and have control over the money. Skills training and training in business management should be a part of these types of projects. Linking women to the market and giving them marketing facilities are also some important factors to be considered. These projects need to incorporate gender sensitivity and awareness training for whole families, as a woman's involvement with productive activities causes her extra burden in her existent reproductive activities."

— CARE, Bangladesh (UN 2000c)

"In our programmes we have advocated monitoring how the profit has been used within the household. My concern here is that women often do not have control of money within the household and men may take control of the credit funds. There are great benefits microcredit programmes can bring to women, as long as they are coupled with empowerment measures for women that ensure access and control of household finances and decision making in consultation with spouses."

— UNIFEM, Viet Nam (UN 2000c)



One of the contradictions of microfinance programmes is the tension between policies designed to increase the financial sustainability of microcredit institutions and strategies for women's empowerment. Financial sustainability requirements lead to pressure to cut costs to a minimum and have obliged many programmes to significantly reduce complementary support services. Services such as

literacy programmes, business training and child-care services are often significant factors in both repayment rates and empowerment, allowing women to make real improvements to their economic and social situation. Ensuring complementarity between women's empowerment and the

financial sustainability of the microcredit institution is critical, and must be strategically addressed and planned. The issue of women's access to markets for their products is particularly important.

Mayoux (1999) suggests several ways in which women's empowerment could be increased within microfinance programmes:

- the registration of assets used as collateral, or purchased with loans, in women's names or in joint names;
- the incorporation of clear strategies for women's graduation to larger loans;
- the provision of various loan options based on participatory consultation, including loans for non-traditional activities, health, education, housing, etc.;
- the provision of a range of savings facilities that include higher interest deposits.

Box 1: Mainstreaming Gender in Microfinance Institutions



Microfin-Afric

Microfin-Afric is a network of 45 microfinance and microenterprise organizations from 17 African countries that advocates for more inclusive policies on microfinance, nationally and internationally. Supported by UNIFEM and SU-TCDC (the UN Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries), the network facilitates the exchange of information among organizations working in this area, increases their credibility with their partners in development, and implements member-support programmes, including training. In addition, the network helps to highlight traditional African experiences in savings and credit, and provides data on funding directed to women and its impact on the overall situation of women.

The Microfin Afric network links sub-regional, national and local microfinance institutions to the global community in an effort to increase the voice, profiles and visibility of practitioners. In 1997 Microfin Afric reached out to 600,000 people, of whom 500,000 were women, and issued more than US\$41,000,000 in credit.

ACCION International

A project to increase access to credit for women in the informal sector was initiated in 1992 by UNIFEM and ACCION International, an NGO network that provides credit and training to microentrepreneurs in Latin America and the United States. ACCION-affiliated NGOs, like most microfinance institutions, while committed to working with women, lacked the necessary capital and gender-sensitive methodology to support women with financial and business services. Although they sought to deliver microcredit and outreach to as many women clients as possible, they knew little about the differential impact that their delivery methodology and the microcredit they provided had on women and men. While women's participation rates were good – over 50 per cent in the region – there was little information on the quality of their participation and the impact of credit on the lives of the women clients. Information on women's savings behaviour, investment patterns, business decisions, training needs and non-credit barriers needed to be better understood.

Five inter-related components addressed these needs:

- research on characteristics of women entrepreneurs and how they operate their businesses;
- gender training for participating organizations and the network;
- improved financial services and increased access to such services for women;
- information disaggregated by gender;
- the extension of credit guarantees to allow access to credit for more women.

The most innovative aspects of the project include the use of standby letters of credit to enable local NGOs to raise capital locally and expand lending to reach thousands of new borrowers, and engendering intermediary microlending institutions and solidarity groups to promote women's capacity as entrepreneurs and producers. A survey on women's microenterprises and the situation of women clients in the informal sector resulted in a book entitled "Women's Microenterprises: Balancing the Double Day."

Furthermore, there is a need to mainstream gender and empowerment concerns throughout all the activities of a microfinance programme. There is a difference in programmes where staff are gender-aware and empowerment issues are raised as a routine part of all interactions between staff and clients, and those where staff fail to question gender stereotypes or suggest ways in which women could overcome gender-based problems. Mainstreaming gender requires a review of norms and regulations from a gender perspective, integrating gender-equitable policies into services for both women and men; integrating gender and empowerment issues into client and staff training; and including indicators of women's empowerment in project evaluations.

UNIFEM supports a process of gender mainstreaming in microfinance institutions to ensure that financial sustainability is combined with specific measures to support women's empowerment and to ensure that women's concerns inform international agendas on microfinance (see Box 1). Women's empowerment should have equal weight with institutional financial sustainability in determining resource flows to microfinance institutions. In support of this goal, UNIFEM organized a panel on Gender Issues in Microfinance at the 3rd Microcredit Summit in June 1999, emphasizing the need to include women's empowerment indicators in the design and evaluation of microcredit programmes. Without such indicators, there is a danger that women will be reduced from active participants in indigenous, participatory savings and credit schemes to passive recipients, dependent on new imported systems. Women's own indigenous, participatory systems also have an important contribution to make (see Box 2).

Whatever form microfinance takes, the ability of women to benefit depends upon their being able to access steadily growing markets in which they can sell their products at remunerative rates. This requires that women have not only management and marketing skills (see Box 3, p. 134) but also bargaining power within markets and an enabling macroeconomic environment, including the way in which markets are regulated. Without appropriate market development and anti-monopoly policy, small producers will tend to be out-competed by large businesses.

"Microfinance per se is not a panacea and other strategies for empowerment are also needed."

— Linda Mayoux (1998)

It is important that a focus on microfinance does not give rise to the illusion that poor women can pull themselves up by their own bootstraps and thus need less in the way of public services. In

Box 2: Women's Microfinance Schemes

Community-Based Savings and Credit Groups

Savings and credit groups (SCGs) provide an effective strategy for addressing women's day-to-day survival needs as well as providing a space in which women can organize to address local development issues. The savings and credit group is a custodian of women's savings. A central concern is to support the livelihood activities that sustain poor households.

In Maharashtra, India, a network of NGOs and women's collectives called Swayam Shikshan Prayog has been experimenting with new ways of learning for communities and organizations. The goal is to build capacity of savings and credit groups to access and manage resources so that they can stake a claim to participate in local decision-making processes that affect the allocation and management of resources. Swayam Shikshan Prayog has set up "learning laboratories" in two districts — Latur and Osmanabad — working with women's groups, savings and credit groups and local governing bodies on a variety of issues including construction, sanitation, local governance, credit and livelihoods. Learning activities, including site visits, dialogue meetings with state officials, study tours and information fairs, have helped expose women to new ideas and strategies, build self-confidence and create an enabling environment for experimentation and innovation. Their experiments include collective income-generating activities, setting up microenterprises, training women in microenterprise activities, market surveys and credit planning for seasonal activities. A key question is how to move beyond mere sustenance to generating a surplus.

The network promotes strategic alliances with mainstream institutions such as government institutions, local authorities and banks. Members of the network also work to create institutional structures such as cooperatives, federations of savings and credit groups and information networks that respond to community-based solutions for accessing and managing resources.

Self-Help Groups in Tamil Nadu, India

Village women in Tamil Nadu are doing microfinance in a different way, through the formation of self-help groups that include semi-literate or illiterate village women. The women pool their household savings into a common fund, which is used to make loans to members on the basis of consensus. The rates of interest and the amount of the loan are decided by the group, which is typically composed of 15-20 village women who meet at least once a month. The government provides training in collective decision-making while NGOs provide support in terms of keeping track of accounts and calculating interest, as well as group formation. Once the women have formed a cohesive group with financial discipline, the next stage is linking it to sources of institutional finance to enable it to provide funds for village-level economic activities. Since the whole process is entirely voluntary, the effects are truly long lasting at the grassroots. As of early 1999, there were 280,000 village women participating in 14,000 self-help groups in Tamil Nadu.

Sources: Gupta et al. 1998; Kumar 1999.

Box 3: Developing Women's Business Skills in Western Asia

UNIFEM is supporting a number of projects to equip women with the vocational and managerial skills to run their businesses. For example:

- "start your own business" workshops in Gaza and Syria which enable participants to meet with women who already run their own businesses and learn how to evaluate the market for their planned activities and how to deal with social constraints business women face;
- technical support (jointly with ILO) for the Directorate of Working Women, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, Yemen;
- development of training to improve women's skills in animal husbandry and fruit and olive tree cultivation in Jordan.

Source: UNIFEM Western Asia Regional Office Annual Report, 1999.

particular, it must be recognized that taking on loans introduces new risks into the lives of poor women. During periods of national financial crisis or recession, poor women are likely to be left with debt that is impossible to repay. Microcredit for poor women implies a need for more, not less attention to systems for social inclusion (social insurance, social protection). It also implies a need for macro-level national and international financial institutions to operate according to social criteria as well as financial criteria. Otherwise systemic risks generated at the macro-level cascade down to micro borrowers, who are poorly placed to absorb them.

Entering and Transforming Markets for Goods and Services

While the extension of markets is at the core of globalization, markets are organized in a variety of ways and women are differently positioned in relation to them. In some parts of the world, women are excluded by social norms from leaving their homes and going to market. In such cases, the challenge is to find a way of enabling women to participate.

One answer may be to bring the customers to women in their homes, as is done by Grameen Telecom Village Phone initiative in Bangladesh (see www.telecommons.com/villagephone). Village women use microcredit from the Grameen Bank to acquire digital GSM cellular phones and subsequently sell phone calls and phone services to other village women who come to their homes. The pilot phase involves 950 phones, but when the programme is complete, it is expected that there will be 40,000 phones in use. Rural women use the phones to make arrangements for the transfer of remittances from family members working in Dhaka and overseas. The lack of telephone connections in these areas makes this a profitable business.



Ken Kabre

In other parts of the world, where women do not face strong social norms of seclusion, they may confront other barriers in selling their products, including lack of transport, storage or information. Home-based women workers may be able to market the output through intermediaries, but they are usually in a very weak bargaining position. Lorraine Corner, UNIFEM Regional Programme Director for East and South East Asia explains:

A key issue here is while there is some commonality of interest between buyer and seller (both will benefit from a better quality product that can command a higher price) there is also a conflict of interest and an inherent inequality in the relationship. As a result the major benefits are likely to accrue to the buyer rather than the producer (Corner 1999).

Some women resolve this problem by establishing their own sales outlet, a space that is under their control. This aspiration was voiced by some of more than 80 women representing 33 Mayan women's groups from the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico, who came together at the First Congress of Mayan Women in 1997. One of the women, Gloria Cauche Vazquez, explained the advantages of direct sales outlets:

This is what will enable us to improve our living standards.... We are trying to find a place that will function as a workshop as well as a shop... Our group, for example, has a piece of land... and we are seeing if we can build our premises there, since it would be a good location for selling... (UNIFEM 1997b).

Women in Peru have addressed this problem by establishing a House of Artisan Women store in Lima, where indigenous women's traditional handicrafts can be sold. With support from the Manuela Ramos Movement, an NGO based in Lima, and from UNIFEM, indigenous women have attended training workshops in producing and marketing for an urban market.

Many women know about local market opportunities, but lack information about how to enter international markets. UNIFEM has supported



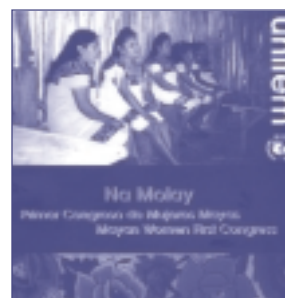
Dennis Richardson



Gabriela Romanow

indigenous artisan women from Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru in taking the first steps through an international trade fair held in Lima in 1998. By the end of the one-week fair, the 25 women artisans invited to attend had sold \$33,500 worth of goods and better understood the financial value of their talents and their economic potential.

As well as access to international markets, women also need to learn how these markets are regulated, and how they can join together with other women to lobby governments, international trade unions, NGOs and fair trade organizations for forms of market organization that improve their bargaining power and protect their intellectual property rights (e.g., to their designs). This was among the goals of a UNIFEM-supported workshop that brought together women home-based



UNIFEM/Simone Duechler



embroidery workers in March 1999. Following the workshop, women set up an embroidery trade group within HomeNet, the international network of organizations of home-based workers. UNIFEM has helped women in other regions to appreciate the importance of the fine print of market regulations and to set up women's desks in important regional intergovernmental bodies that deal with international trade (see Box 4).

All of these dimensions — local marketplaces, international trade fairs, increased bargaining power and the ability to press for markets to be regulated in ways that are fair to women's small businesses — are addressed in the example of "shea butter," a multipurpose oil used in production of margarine, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals (see Box 5, p. 136). The shea butter case also illustrates the impact of changes in market regulations on women producers who wish to sell in international markets, since its export prospects have been substantially improved by changes in European Union regulations to allow its use as a substitute for cocoa butter in making chocolate.

Box 4: Market Regulations, Regional Trade Agreements and Gender Equality.

Trade Policy Harmonization in East Africa

An Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) links Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea and Sudan. A UNIFEM-supported Women's Desk will assist women's businesses operating in the regional market and enable them to benefit from trade policy harmonization. An IGAD Women in Business Forum was set up following a workshop in 1998.

Implementing Trade Policy in the Pacific

UNIFEM has been working to increase awareness of both government officials and gender trainers about the gender dimension of trade policy. In 1999 UNIFEM published a report on gender and trade in Vanuatu, Tonga, Fiji and Papua New Guinea as a step towards ensuring women's interests are represented when policy on international trade is developed. Inputs from women's groups have been solicited during consultations over the renegotiation of the Lomé Convention, which covers development and trade with EU countries.

Specialized Group on Women in the MERCOSUR

As a consequence of UNIFEM-supported studies to examine the gender implications of the Southern Cone Common Market Treaty (MERCOSUR) in Latin America, a regional high-level lobby group was set up to advocate for a gender equality commission to be located within the framework of MERCOSUR. This bore fruit in 1998 when the MERCOSUR Council of Ministers created a Specialized Group on Women, composed of representatives of national women's departments or offices and women's NGOs, which advises the Council of Ministers.



Aster Zaoude



Aster Zaoude

Box 5: Creating Women-Friendly Markets for Shea Butter

Shea nuts, from which shea butter is derived, come from a tree that grows wild in several African countries: Benin, Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Guinea, Togo, Cameroon, Chad and Central African Republic. Burkina Faso has 195 million shea trees that produce 25 per cent of the world's shea nuts.

Shea nuts are consumed locally and exported to Europe and Japan for the production of shea butter, which is used in chocolate, margarine, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. Shea butter is also produced locally in Burkina Faso, with traditional methods by rural women who use it for cooking as well as for medicine, cosmetics and soap-making. There is a growing urban market for high-quality shea butter and its products within Burkina Faso and in neighbouring cities, along with a growing international market.

UNIFEM, in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Studies and International Cooperation, provides training on how to preserve shea nuts so that women can postpone the processing work until after the agricultural season without having the nuts spoil. Training also helps them ensure that the quality of the local butter meets international standards, even if it is produced in scattered,

home-based or village-based units. By 1999, over 300 women in 25 associations had been trained in improved production techniques to meet the quality standards of international markets.

Liberalization policies have opened up new market opportunities. However, when production is scattered and producers are not well-organized, producers are less able to get a good price for their goods and more vulnerable to price fluctuations. To deal with this problem, UNIFEM has pioneered the development of a marketing strategy to link producers more directly to markets through five marketing centres, where women organize sales collectively, setting prices and negotiating directly with exporters. These sales points are linked to a marketing centre in the capital city, Ouagadougou, which serves women in the project along with other women producing shea butter.

To strengthen women's bargaining power, UNIFEM organized Shea Butter Trade Fairs in Ouagadougou in June 1998 and September 1999. The 1998 trade fair proved to be an excellent forum for product promotion, marketing and discussions with various partners. Regional and foreign buyers were invited, and discussion panels enabled women to raise their concerns before a prominent group of government officials, researchers, industrialists, technical experts and local traders, as well as similar groups from neighbouring countries.

After the 1998 fair, UNIFEM helped producers organize themselves in COFEM, a network that empowers them as a group to access larger markets and negotiate better prices. The cosmetic industry has been targeted as the key customer. This is a major breakthrough in the context of the long-standing monopolistic pricing imposed by the large foreign companies involved in the export of shea butter to the international food industries (chocolate makers, in particular).

The trade fair in 1999 was co-sponsored by UNIFEM and the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce and assisted by the Chamber of Commerce and other national marketing institutions. The butter presented at this fair was better quality and women had made significant improvements in packaging. Butter produced by groups financed by UNIFEM were packaged with the same label, identifying each village. Participants presented new products made from shea butter, such as mosquito repellent, margarine and a variety of body creams, shampoos and other cosmetics, as well as ice cream made from shea fruit.

In the course of organizing around better marketing strategies, the women upheld a common basic price, which together with the quality improvements, enabled them to sell the butter at twice to three times the price obtained in 1998 (an increase from about 550 to 1250 CFA/kg). At the end of the fair, members of COFEM gathered the unsold stock and negotiated a common price with an exporter. For the first time, intermediaries were not able to intimidate the women into selling for less, so as to avoid transporting their butter back to the village.

OCCITANE, a French cosmetics enterprise known worldwide for its shea butter products, accepted an invitation to attend the fair. An agreement was reached whereby OCCITANE will purchase high quality shea butter at an improved price from the women in the UNIFEM supported projects, via a contract with CITEC, OCCITANE's main supplier in Burkina Faso.

The marketing centre was strengthened during the 1999 trade fair by the launch of a Website: www.fasonet.bf/karite. In April 2000, women from the project were invited to visit OCCITANE's factory in Manosque, France, to meet the women and men who further process the shea butter they produce.

An important objective of these initiatives is to ensure that the changes in market regulations brought about by trade liberalization result in equal opportunities for women. Trade liberalization focuses on the abolition of quantitative controls on imports and the reduction of customs duties (tariffs) but it also often includes new regulations on intellectual property rights (patents, copyrights, etc.) as well as on health and safety. Liberalization permits new suppliers to enter markets, but this by itself does not create equal opportunities. Large and well-established businesses with well-developed information and political networks are likely to do better than small businesses that lack market information and lobbying clout. One of the things that large and well-established businesses are able to do is to influence the new market rules to their own advantage.

As stated by a UNIFEM regional study on the gender impact of trade, for example:

Disadvantaged groups are often prevented from having access to resources, information and policy development. Strong lobby groups that seek to entrench existing interests often frustrate and hijack the process and the implementation of new rules...

The representation of the affected stakeholders, including consumers and women, and the extent to which they have access to information to make a knowledgeable and informed decision, will determine how trade policies and other resultant policies are shaped (UNIFEM 1999d).

In addition to struggling for gender-aware regulations to counter existing inequalities in market access, however, women must also confront the new inequalities brought about by rapidly changing technology, especially in information and communications. The extent to which groups and individuals are able to take advantage of trade liberalization is strongly linked to their ability to control and use these new technologies.

Transforming Technology to Reshape Globalization

The vastly increased scope of access to information and speed of communication in the digital age is the second important dimension of globalization. Together with reduction in regulations, the new information and communications technologies (ICTs), especially the Internet, reshape the way that markets operate and production is organized. The danger is that just as with deregulation, these technologies will benefit mainly those who are already well placed in terms of their knowledge and skills.



UNICEF/Giocomo Pirozzi

This was one of the findings of an innovative participatory research project UNIFEM supported on gender and new technologies conducted by the United Nations University Institute for New Technologies (UNU/INTECH) in partnership with women's NGOs in Asia. The director of the project, Professor Swasti Mitter, reports that the growth of transnational "teleworking" has opened up many new opportunities for women in the South, including data entry, medical transcription, geographical information systems and software production. But the women who are able to take advantage of these are generally well-educated and from higher income groups. Women with little or no education, especially older women, are losing out. As Mitter notes, there is "an age bias in the distribution of the benefits of globalization":

The work of UNU/INTECH in the context of China and Vietnam shows that globalization has brought new opportunities to young women with familiarity with English in new, service sector jobs, but has made a vast number of over-35-year-olds redundant, either because they are in declining industries, or have outdated skills (Mitter 1999).

The project did not conclude that women's groups should oppose new technology, but rather that they need to strengthen their voice in policy dialogue so that they can press for improvements in training for women and for social protection for those who are negatively affected.

The Internet

With regard to the Internet, the 1999 Human Development Report drew attention to the wide inequalities both between and within countries in use of the Internet. Internet users command a wide range of knowledge and skills, including literacy, access to relevant information in a local language and the ability to utilize this information in ways that are meaningful and empowering. Men typically have greater access to equipment, time and money, and therefore more quickly acquire the necessary skills. The typical user is an English-speaking, university educated, high-income, young white man in a rich country. Poor women, especially those in poor countries, are most at a disadvantage.

Cost, while only one factor, is illustrative: in the United Kingdom, the annual cost of maintaining an Internet connection amounts to 2.7 per cent of per capita GNP, but in Argentina and South Africa it is 3.5 per cent and in Latvia it is 15.3 per cent of per capita GNP (Panos 1998). The problem here is not just lack of Internet hosts and personal computers, but also unequal access to televisions, telephone lines and mobile telephones. Even in the case of radios, there is still an imbalance between high-income countries and low-income countries, as shown in Table 6.1.

Improving Access to ICTs

To address these issues, and promote universal affordable access, several developing countries have focused not on individuals but on communities (see Box 6). Innovative public access sites are being set up through “telecentres,” located in community centres, public schools, libraries and women’s centres, where people can obtain and share information through technologies such as computers, Internet, e-mail, faxes and telephones as well as through linkages between these technologies and more traditional media with broader outreach, such as community radio (see Box 7).

Telecentres are also becoming an important tool for education. One of the Commonwealth of Learning’s “models for success” includes a literacy project that uses technology-based community learning centres to support literacy work in developing countries. Pilot projects to explore ways in which literacy programmes can benefit from information and communication technologies are being carried out in Bangladesh, India and Zambia. The objective for these learning centres is to provide training programmes that develop learner competencies in reading, numeracy and in the use of information and communication tools (see www.col.org/models/literacy.htm).

One constraint on the development of telecentres is the lack of reliable telephone connections, especially in rural areas. Mobile telephones may hold out more promise for the future as they become capable of transmitting e-mail and other forms of information.



Box 6: Women’s Communications Network

The International Women’s Communication Centre (IWCC) is an international network that came together in 1993 at a conference devoted to improving the communication network between grassroots women in Nigeria as well as in Africa as a whole.

IWCC-Nigeria is a locally based organization set up to disseminate information from the international network to Nigerian women at the grassroots. In addition to weekly meetings to share information received over the Internet and workshops on topical issues, the group:

- prints local newsletters in local languages;
- distributes pamphlets to women on market day;
- broadcasts on the local community radio station;
- produces video documentaries on current issues;
- runs a free resource centre/library.

IWCC also serves as branch office to international NGOs such as Groots Super Coalition, Pan-African Women’s Liberation Organization (PAWLO), International Alliance of Women Politicians, Help Women in Distress, Women’s Voice on Radio Link, Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), and WINGS Nigeria-Information Gathering on Women.

Source: Hajjiya Limota Goroso Giwa, Global Knowledge for Development Internet Discussion.

Table 6.1: Indicators of ICT Availability, circa 1997

Income level	Radios per 1000 people	Televisions per 1000 people	Telephone main lines per 1000 people	Mobile telephones per 1000 people	Personal computers per 1000 people	Internet hosts per 10,000 people
High income	1300	664	552	188	269.4	470.12
Middle income	383	272	136	24	32.4	10.15
Low income	147	162	32	5	4.4	0.17

Source: adapted from World Bank, *World Development Report 1999/2000*, table 19, pp. 266-67.

Box 7: WomensNet Community Radio Exchange

WomensNet, a joint project of SANGONet and the South African Commission on Gender Equality, seeks to enable the South African women's movement to take advantage of the potential for advancing women's struggles presented by ICTs, especially the Internet. The project is designed to help women's organizations to meet each other, find people, discuss issues, share resources and sharpen their tools for social activism.

The WomensNet Community Radio Project works with community radio stations, women's organizations and other media projects to create a space where community radio and women/gender orientated organizations can exchange information. The Website allows for "radio ready" information to be downloaded and aired and information to be posted online.

The project aims to:

- increase awareness of women's issues in community radio programming;
- develop capacity among women's groups to generate items for news and programming on community radio;
- improve information and communication skills of women's groups to help them deal with the media and to prepare radio-ready information for community radio.

WomensNet has created an Internet-based information clearinghouse to facilitate the dissemination of locally produced news about women and gender equality in South Africa. The Community Radio Exchange, a clearinghouse of radio-ready text and audio files for use in community radio stations, was formally launched on 29 March 2000 (see <http://radio.womensnet.org.za>).

e-Inclusion

In countries where strict cultural norms and traditions isolate women, the Internet has facilitated some women's access to knowledge and information. In Saudi Arabia for example, an Internet service provider — AwalNet — has created a special branch for women surfers, adding to the many "ladies only" services, such as banks, schools and shopping areas. Here women are able to use the Internet with the support of an all-female staff of computer experts (Sami 1999).

"[The Internet] whetted my appetite to keep up with the world...it gives you more confidence when you can keep up with the world...in knowledge, in culture. Why should we miss out?"

— Salwa Al-Qunaiber,
census bureau computer operator (Sami 1999)



Carol Barron

Improving access is about more than a few more women "logging on." It is about ways to ensure that women who can log on, do so not only for themselves but also to transmit information from the Internet to women who cannot log on themselves (see Box 6 on IWCC). It is also about ensuring a two-way flow of information — not just from North to South — and in languages that are understood by more than the dominant cultures.

Thus improving access is part of a broader discussion on global knowledge, which focuses attention on human development obstacles faced disproportionately by women — ranging from lower income, education and training to gender roles and limited participation in decision-making — that impact upon their successful participation in the "knowledge society."

e-Campaigns

The Internet provides new opportunities to respond to situations such as humanitarian crises and violations of women's human rights (see Box 8). For organizations with limited budgets and no access to national media, it is an effective way to

Box 8: Women's Human Rights Net

Women's Human Rights Net (whrNET) is a collaborative NGO initiative that links partner organizations and women's human rights advocates worldwide via the Internet. This dynamic resource is designed to be an integrated tool for women's human rights advocacy, networking, education and research. whrNET provides information in three main languages — English, French and Spanish — and serves as an on-line space for the exchange of information, the development of advocacy strategies and the provision of resources aimed at building capacity among women's human rights organizations and activists.

whrNET grew out of a 1997 meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, where over 50 women's human rights leaders from nearly 20 countries gathered to develop strategies for strengthening advocacy, networking and capacity-building within the movement. whrNET is jointly sponsored and supported by its partner organizations and receives support from UNIFEM.

Source: www.whrNET.org.

communicate with audiences around the world, enabling them to get information out quickly and to avoid government censorship. It is especially useful for transmitting information requiring urgent action through electronic networks. Electronic campaigns illustrate how women are transforming the technical tool of the Internet into a political tool for advocacy in different regions from their different cultural perspectives.

An example is the Women in Black campaign in Serbia, where women used electronic networks to get the word out globally on what was happening to women during the civil war following the breakup of the former Yugoslavia in 1990 and to get support for their non-violent campaign. Similarly in Kosovo in 1998, women were able to tell the world of the atrocities as they were happening, as well as gain support and learn strategies from other women's groups for assisting the many women who were being traumatized by rape and other human rights violations.

"When the war in Yugoslavia-Kosovo broke out we developed a mailing list where all e-mails received regarding women in Kosovo and Belgrade were forwarded to newsgroups and our international members (around 300). [Our] mailing list strengthened the communication between women in the region and international activists and founders."

— Kristina Mihalec, Croatia, personal e-mail communication



UN DPI/Ron Da Silva

UNIFEM has actively supported the use of ICTs in campaigning against violence against women. An electronic discussion list (<end-violence>) brought together over 2000 participants to share views and strategies in 1998 and 1999. A global videoconference on International Women's Day in 1999, convened women policy-makers in the UN

General Assembly and women's organizations, governments, development agencies and the general public around the world.

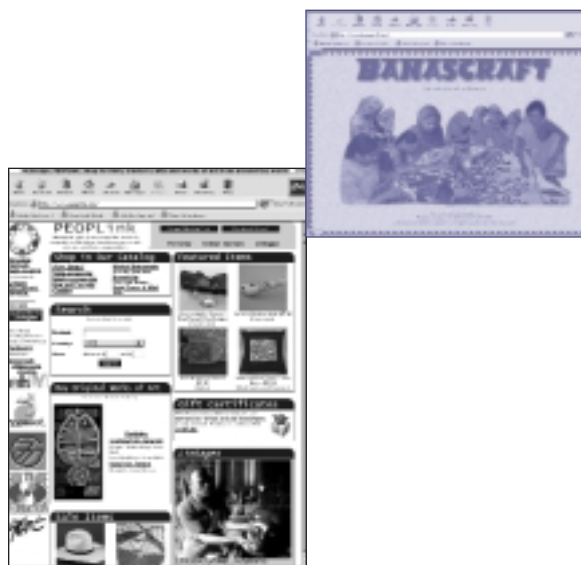
Communication via the Internet has played an important role in mobilizing and focusing criticism of the rules governing the global economy, such as the proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), which was withdrawn in part because of NGO Internet campaigns. E-mail also brought together many of those who protested at the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Seattle in November 1999 against the undemocratic nature of WTO deliberations. Women's groups worldwide played an active role in both the campaign against the MAI and the NGO mobilization at the WTO meeting.

e-Commerce

According to the World Trade Organization, electronic commerce "can be both products which are bought and paid for over the Internet but are delivered physically, and products that are delivered as digitalized information over the Internet" (www.wto.org/wto/ecom/ecom.htm). The Internet offers women entrepreneurs access to a wider market faster and at a lower cost than do traditional market outlets. In some cases, women can also order products on-line. E-commerce training initiatives enable women vendors to develop relationships with interested partners and traders in many parts of the world. On-line sessions allow them to learn about marketing opportunities, explore ways to combine local and productive resources to meet large-scale demand with quality control, and even to design their own Web pages.

Some initiatives are making it possible for small and medium entrepreneurs and producers in the South to work within the framework of electronic commerce despite the difficulties of secure payments (necessitating the use of credit cards) and other logistical constraints. Producers can use the Internet to make initial contact with potential buyers and to show and advertise products. Then, through local Chambers of Commerce or business associations and NGOs, they can be contacted for an order. In India, for example, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) artisan support programme works with 6,000 women artisans from the Banaskantha district north of Gujarat. Over 3000 women artisans sell their products through their outlet, Banascraft, which illustrates digital images of their products (see www.banascraft.org/banascraft/sewa.htm).

PEOPLink, a fair trade organization, supports local artisans through digital cameras linked to the Internet and helps rural women market their products on-line. Such initiatives help women receive more for their products by eliminating the middle person who usually gets most of the profits from sales. The Virtual Souk



"We have plenty of women's projects in this area but many remote villages can't get information on when there is an exhibition where they can bring their handicrafts."

— Elizabeth Amuro, community development officer,
Uganda (Opoku-Mensah 1999)

provides employment opportunities for women in the informal sector, facilitating inclusion of those who risk being left out of the benefits of the information technology because of lack of access and information. The concept of the Virtual Souk goes beyond the marketplace; it is a development tool designed to empower local artisans and NGOs through training and access to information and knowledge (see Box 9).

e-Consultation

The new technologies have made possible the inclusion of a broader spectrum of voices in policy-making. In preparation for the General Assembly review of progress in implementing the Platform for Action, in June 2000, an effort to guarantee broad participation and input from women around the world was carried out through WomenWatch, the UN Internet gateway to global information about women's concerns, progress and equality. WomenWatch, a joint initiative by the UN Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM, and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) held a series of e-mail Working Groups — the Beijing +5 Global Forum — from September to December 1999.

Box 9: e-Commerce Initiatives

PEOPLink trains local fair trade organizations to market their products on the Internet. Based on an earlier mail-order venture called Pueblo to the People, which marketed crafts from artisans in Latin America, it includes the novel marketing idea of presenting the lives of the artisans that created the products along with the products themselves. Typically PEOPLink will buy items for sale in bulk, so they can be shipped to customers quickly. The products are purchased in advance, allowing the producer to buy raw materials and supplies for creating more items. The site also allows wholesalers to buy on-line.

PEOPLink develops trading partner relationships via local NGOs that have links to grassroots groups such as craft cooperatives, widow groups, refugee associations and peasant leagues. Each NGO provides services to several of these grassroots groups, taking pictures of the artisans at work and the products for sale. They can also answer questions about products via e-mail.

PEOPLink supports its NGO trading partners with training - both in person and online - and via e-mail, and equips them with digital cameras. It trains partners on how to capture the images and edit them on computer in a format suitable for the Internet. The trading partners in turn provide training to the artisans and help to develop educational materials about their lives and work. Trading partners will also help groups set up their own Websites that are hosted by PEOPLink. The project has plans to expand and link with Oxfam America and the Smithsonian Institution's Folklife festival as well as to market handicrafts to museum stores and other retailers.

The Virtual Souk (or virtual market) is an initiative of the World Bank Institute (WBI), which links artisans with local development organizations to assist in marketing their products. The WBI provides management training and technical advice to the NGOs to enable them to create Websites and set up a commercial chain that includes pricing products, taking orders, delivering worldwide and handling all related financial aspects. The NGOs in turn deliver training in microenterprise management to participating artisans. Local designers are encouraged to interact with producers in order to protect traditional crafts while providing them with a contemporary commercial outlet.

The Virtual Souk is creating an Internet market for arts and crafts produced in the South and directed at global consumers. So far, artisans from Morocco, Tunisia and Lebanon participate in the Virtual Souk and 75-80 per cent of the artisan partners are women. Through the Virtual Souk it is envisioned that artisans will have better access to international markets and information, increase their income and help preserve their cultural heritage.

Sources: Barton Crockett, "Web crusade for global aid: PEOPLink pursues Net profits for the poor," www.PEOPLink.org/gen/press/98/09/29/msnbc; Gail L. Grant, "PEOPLink," www.PEOPLink.org/gen/press/99/06/23/commercenet; Azedine Ouerghi, 1999; www.elsouk.com/english/mainbazaar.htm.

Each Working Group addressed a critical area of concern from the Platform for Action, and discussed:

- policies, legislation, strategies and partnerships that have been successful in furthering women's equality;
- case studies, best practices and other examples of successful government, business and civil-society efforts;
- obstacles that remain and how they can be overcome.

Participants were from both the North and the South and included government representatives, activists, academics, private sector representatives and many others who shared their experiences and ideas for achieving women's equality. Inputs from all the Working Groups helped inform the March 2000 meeting of the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW) through their presentation as a "Conference Room Paper."

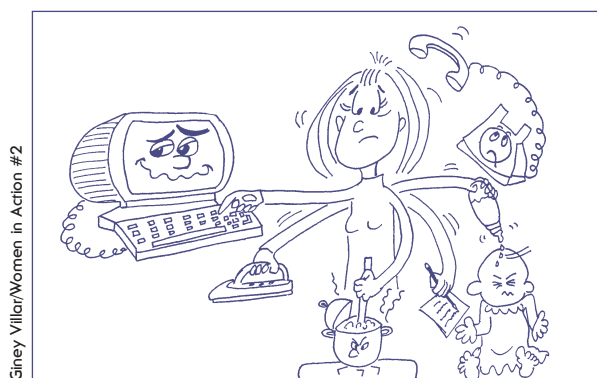
Policy and Regulatory Framework for ICTs

Although more women are gaining access to the new information and communications technologies, the rapid development and spread of these technologies, in languages and formats designed to fit the communication needs of their creators, means that many people, especially poor women in developing countries, are increasingly at risk of falling behind — both in the production and exchange of knowledge and information and in more and more aspects of everyday life, from shopping to paying household bills. In part, this is an issue of the concentration of ownership. The 1999 Human Development Report stated that in 1998, the top ten corporations controlled 60 per cent of total revenues in the computer industry and 86 per cent of the total in telecommunications. As a result:

...the technology, economics and culture of the Internet feel awfully American. The companies that have cashed in on the Internet, from newcomers like Amazon.com and Yahoo to the established technology suppliers like IBM, Sun Microsystems, Cisco and Microsoft, are American. By one estimate, United States corporations collect 85 per cent of the revenues from the Internet business and represent 95 per cent of the stock value of Internet companies (New York Times, 9 January 2000).

The implications are far-reaching, raising issues about women's ability to participate in creating and producing knowledge as well as accessing and consuming knowledge. This was one of the themes highlighted by the Global Knowledge Partnership, a

global coalition of development agencies, NGOs, governments and businesses focusing on knowledge for development, at a conference in March 2000. UNIFEM, along with women's networks from all regions, helped ensure the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all areas, focusing especially on support to women entrepreneurs, women's participation in the ICT sector, and women as decision-makers in the regulatory sector. Other regulatory issues included protection of intellectual property rights in the context of traditional and indigenous knowledge, and protection of public cyberspaces in a sector that is being increasingly privatized.



Giney Villar/Women in Action #2

One forum where regulatory issues could be taken up from a gender perspective is the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in Geneva, an institution within which governments and the private sector coordinate global telecom networks and services. In 1998, the World Telecommunication Development Conference established a Task Force on Gender Issues in the Development Sector aimed at ensuring that the benefits are made available to all women and men in developing countries on a fair and equitable basis. The ITU Development Sector also resolved to act as an enabling force for the development of an active network between various types of organizations of women involved in the information and telecommunication fields.

Gender Imbalances in Production and Use of Technologies

Many of the gender issues in relation to ICTs are similar to those that arise with other forms of technology: a fundamental gender imbalance between the viewpoint and knowledge of those who do the science and design and control the technology and those who use it and feel its impact. Contraception technology is a good example. The scientists who develop contraceptive technologies are disproportionately men, who do not look at the technologies from the point of view of users, who are mainly women. As Carmen Barroso and Sonia Corrêa (1995) show in the case of research on the contraceptive Norplant, gender issues arise at three

critical points: the question of informed consent in medical trials, the assessment of efficacy and safety; and the understanding of the reasons why users often do not use the technology in the way envisaged by the scientists who developed it.

Informed consent is hindered by huge differences in initial knowledge and stereotypes that stigmatize poor women as incapable of understanding complex issues. Assessment of efficacy and risk is biased by a lack of scientific concern with effects that are not easily observed and measured: depression, loss of libido, interference with sexual life, menstrual irregularities, weight gain and permanent infertility. So-called user failure is misunderstood because it is not looked at from the point of view of the woman using the technology. The result is that scientific research in contraceptive technology is steered towards technologies that dramatically reduce women's chance of conceiving but which are not under women's control, leading to potential abuse of women's human rights.

The challenge is to improve communication between scientists and advocates for gender equality, as was achieved in the Norplant debate in Brazil in the 1980s, when what Barroso and Corrêa call "scientific isolation" was broken:

Many other actors voiced their opinions. This diversity of opinion, as well as the effort to make traditionally complex and obscure issues transparent, made the Norplant episode a moment of democratic communication... Citizens will be able to grasp the scope of the issues involved in scientific research only when they have access to basic information and through open communication (1995: 304).

Mainstreaming Gender in Science and Technology

The goal is not only to encourage more women to do scientific research and design new technologies, but also to shift science and technology to being more people-centred. Prior to the Beijing Conference, UNIFEM supported the formation of an international network of NGOs working on issues of gender, science and technology known as the Once and Future Network (OFAN), which advocates for policies that enable women to play a more active role in redefining the direction of research and policy-making. The network was able to inform and influence the work of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD), which in turn raised gender issues with government ministries dealing with science and technology. Since Beijing, UNIFEM has provided opportunities for both OFAN and the Gender Advisory Board of UNCSTD to work to implement a common agenda, most recently at the 1999 UNESCO World Science Conference in Budapest, where gender issues were raised by many of the national delegations.

In terms of information and communications, UNIFEM is working in partnership with NGOs on projects to improve women's access to, and mastery of, these new technologies, ranging from electronic sharing of information to initiatives for e-commerce and ICT policy. Activities include:

- *Policy*: making gender an explicit part of the agenda of ICT policy-making bodies and events and ensuring greater UN-system attention to progress made in the area of women and ICTs;
- *Learning*: consolidation of knowledge about key conceptual issues and successful project initiatives relating to gender equality and ICTs, and support for ongoing systematic sharing and incorporation of gender-related knowledge;
- *Projects*: pilot initiatives and replication — not only women-focused projects but also ways to integrate gender awareness and analysis into "mainstream" projects;
- *Resources*: identification of individuals and organizations available to help develop a gender-accountable agenda in the area of knowledge for development.



Transforming Economic Policy-Making

Many economists see their research as scientific, in the same way that physical scientists do, and argue that their policy advice is scientifically based. There are similar issues about mainstreaming gender in economic analysis and the technologies of economic governance based upon it. Not only do more women need to participate in discussions of economic analysis and policy, but the terms of the discussion also need changing.

At the beginning of the new millennium a vigorous debate is taking place about what kind of economic policy is required to ensure that poor people benefit from globalization, and what kind of global rules are required to regulate markets and guide the operations of international economic institutions. The 1999 Human Development Report made some suggestions about how to get globalization under social control and concluded:

Much debate is underway — but it is too narrowly focused, too geographically unbalanced and driven too much by economic and financial interests. People in all parts of the world need to join in the debate and to make clear their interests and concerns (UNDP 1999).

Women have been contributing to this debate and moving towards formulating women-led economic agendas that put social justice and care for

people before making money. The challenge is to ensure that these are reflected in economic policy agendas at national and international levels.



Critique of Stabilization and Structural Adjustment Policies

Since the late 1980s, women researchers have contributed to a critique of stabilization and structural adjustment policies that are a condition of access to International Monetary Fund (IMF) and

World Bank loans. An initial focus on negative impacts on poor women was followed by a more nuanced critique which emphasized both the impact of these policies on gender relations and the impact of gender relations on the outcomes of these policies (Benería 1995). Groups such as Women's Eyes on the World Bank have analysed in detail the gender implications of the Bank's sectoral reform programmes in areas like health and education.

As a result of public pressure by NGOs and internal advocates, the World Bank has in recent years re-evaluated its position on gender and economic reform. The Bank has also set up an External Gender Consultative Group (EGCG) comprised of fourteen women from around the world who have experience at the operational, policy and research levels to advise it on gender issues. The consultative group includes experts on a wide range of development topics and from a broad spectrum of civil society including NGOs, women's organizations and academic and research institutions in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Europe, Central Asia and other OECD countries. More specifically, the objectives of the EGCG are:

- to provide a mechanism for disseminating information and discussing progress in implementing the Bank's gender policies and in responding to the Beijing Platform for Action;
- to provide a forum for discussing the concerns of the different sectors of civil society about the Bank's approaches to gender;
- to provide feedback to the Bank on lessons from NGOs and other organizations on promising approaches to gender;
- to promote and strengthen NGO-Bank cooperation on gender issues at the regional and country levels.

The External Gender Consultative Group held its first meeting in April 1996 with the president of the Bank, James Wolfensohn, the regional vice-presidents, chief economists, gender coordinators and staff from various sectors of the Bank. In this and subsequent meetings, staff are questioned about their policies and the integration of gender into the decision-making framework of the organization.

Assessments of the consultative group's effectiveness vary. The group itself continues to express both optimism about the Bank's willingness to talk about gender issues and reservations about lack of operational progress, especially at the country level. An independent assessment of the group's effectiveness by Women's Eyes on the World Bank argues that to date, the EGCG has not significantly influenced the Bank's conceptual framework in the area of macroeconomics. Forthcoming World Bank publications, including the Policy Research Report on Gender and Development, World Development Report 2000 and a report on Women and World Bank Adjustment Lending, are eagerly awaited to see if there are signs of new thinking. The IMF has a history of making policy behind closed doors, not even consulting with World Bank colleagues on many critical decisions. It has not engaged in any similar consultative exercises.

"Officially, of course, the IMF doesn't 'impose.' It negotiates the conditions for receiving aid. But all the power on the negotiations is on one side — the IMF's — and the fund rarely allows sufficient time for broad consensus-building or even widespread consultations with either parliaments or civil society."

— Joseph Stiglitz, former chief economist, World Bank, 4 April 2000

Towards a Different Approach to National Economic Policy

Women in different parts of the world have been taking initiatives to promote different, more gender-sensitive approaches to economic policy: improving the economic literacy of women's advocacy groups; securing more participation by women in economic policy processes; advocating a gender-sensitive approach to the design of economic recovery programmes; training policy-makers to look at economic issues from a gender perspective; undertaking research on the gendered impacts of macroeconomic policy at the local level; finding ways to "engender" macroeconomic analysis; and pressing for changes in global economic governance, especially changes in the WTO.

One initiative to improve the economic literacy of women's advocacy groups is the series of booklets produced by the Network Women in Development Europe (WIDE). These are written by women economists, who use imaginative approaches to communicate with women with no training in the field. Hilkka Pietilä

analyses production through a series of diagrams, beginning with the theme of *How the Cake is Cut*. Nicky Pouw contrasts the *HIStory* of household economics with *HERstory* of how households operate economically, drawing upon the classic American story of *Little Women*. Irene van Staveren tells the story of the interaction between the commodity economy and the care economy, using diagrams and examples from the story, much used by economists, of *Robinson Crusoe*, who was shipwrecked alone on a small island and was necessarily a one-man economy. Lois Woestman provides a fresh look at markets and their place in society by describing them from the perspective of an extra-terrestrial visiting Planet Earth (see Box 10). Each booklet has a glossary of technical terms or a technical appendix and suggestions for how to use them in discussion groups.



Securing the participation of women in economic policy processes is the objective of the Council for Economic Empowerment for Women of Africa-Uganda Chapter (CEEWA-Uganda) and of the Center for Policy Alternatives in

Washington DC. CEEWA-Uganda runs a programme on Women and Economic Decision-making that engages economists, planners, district councillors and parliamentarians in policy discussions concerning women and finance and women and agriculture. The Center for Policy Alternatives campaigns for a women-led economic agenda focusing on economic self-sufficiency for women and men, equal opportunities in entrepreneurship, affordable health care for all and better ways of supporting people in combining family and work

responsibilities. It seeks to build an economic agenda from the bottom up to foster a new economy that bridges class and racial divides. In a national opinion survey to learn about women's economic policy concerns, the Center's Women's Voices Project (1996) found:

- time is also a big issue for women: 60% of women with children under age 19 worry about "having enough time to do everything you need to do and still spend time with your family"; 61% of all women under age 45 worry about this.
- women, more than men, believe that government can help solve problems; they strongly favour tax incentives to accomplish many of their goals, even if that means higher taxes.

UNIFEM produced a briefing kit called "Women in a Global Economy" for policy-makers advocating an approach to economic recovery in South-East and East Asia that focuses on removing the barriers to women's productive participation in the market economy, rather than encouraging women to return to their traditional roles in the unpaid domestic sector of the economy. It argues that policies to create new jobs should be sensitive to the different needs of men and women. Policy-makers should take into account the fact that most new jobs in public works projects are likely to be taken by men; and if these jobs require men to migrate and live away from home, a significant proportion of their incomes is less likely to be available for their families. Attention should be paid to the informal sector, where economic crises lead to increasing numbers of participants, putting downward pressure on women's wages and working conditions. The overall message is that

Box 10: Markets on Earth versus Markets on Venus

Economists often tell parables to provide an intuitive understanding of economic processes. They also often compare what does happen with hypothetical alternatives. In the spirit of this tradition, Lois Woestman discusses the way that markets work by comparing those on earth with the way she imagines they might operate on the more gender-sensitive planet of Venus.

Earth

Real markets are to some extent efficient at encouraging innovation and matching up supply of goods with demand for them. However...the common definition of efficiency...fails to consider the fact that production for money uses things that are not calculated into their costs. As well as natural resources these include unpaid labour which helps to provide healthy, productive paid workers, and which absorbs the shocks to society that are inherent in modern markets' design and functioning on earth.

Source: Woestman 1998: 22-23.

Venus

We too use markets for some of our provisioning processes because we share the conviction with Earthlings that they are one of many ways of encouraging innovation. However, we reserve the use of markets for provisioning processes that are non-essential.

Provision of health, education and a minimum subsistence income are provided to every Venusian....Rather than it being considered a drudgery, we prize the time we spend taking care of our young and our elderly, and adults share this time equally.

Box 11: Rethinking Sectoral Policy to Account for Women

Nalini Burn, an economist from Mauritius, has used this exercise in workshops in several parts of Africa. She divides the participants into a number of mixed groups, men and women, from international organizations, government and NGOs and asks them to consider the following statement and answer the following questions:

“Women carry more on their heads and backs than the entire inland transport system in this country.”

1. How would you verify this statement? Give details.
2. What is your answer? Give reasons for it.
3. What are the factors that account for this situation?
4. What are the effects and impact?

Burn reports that the exercise provokes a journey of discovery. The usual statistics for the transport sector make no mention of women's time and energy as a means of transport. But every day, participants see women loading bundles on their heads and carrying small children on their backs. Once this disjuncture is recognized and explored, a whole new way of analysing transport policy and identifying the indicators required to design, monitor and evaluate transport policy starts to be created. She suggests that one important indicator of women's progress would be charting movement towards the goal of women no longer being a means of transport and instead being able to use their time and energy for learning, other forms of creative work, and playing, resting and dreaming.

Source: Personal communication from Nalini Burn.

economic recovery programmes should be designed in ways that directly support women's incomes and do not assume that income will “trickle down” from men to women and children.

Policy-makers are often more receptive to messages about the need to redesign economic policy when they have a better understanding of how gender influences resource allocation, gained through a new look at old questions (see Box 11). More detailed information about the gendered impact of policy is provided by research on the micro-level impacts of macroeconomic policy, such as that conducted by GERA, the Gender and Economic Reform in Africa programme, launched in 1996 (see Box 12). GERA grew out of an initiative at the North-South Institute in Ottawa, Canada but since 1999 has been hosted by the Third World Network in Accra, Ghana. Its management committee is made up of women from all parts of Africa.

To influence economic policy it is also necessary to speak the language of economics, but to inflect it in new ways. This was one of the objectives of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Project on Linkages Between Paid and Unpaid Work in Human

Box 12: Selected GERA Research Projects

- Impact of Currency Devaluation on Men and Women in a Semi-Urban Area in Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso's currency devaluation has affected sectors of the population differently, depending on where they live and their gender. By examining the effects on the gender division of labour within the home and on male-female relations, the project will develop policy recommendations and an action plan to make control over productive resources more equitable.

- Financial Sector Reforms and Women's Survival Strategies in Cameroon

This project will investigate how women's access to financial services has been affected by recent financial sector reforms. Through participatory research, the project team will identify the specific financial obstacles women face, then design and implement training programmes to promote sustainable financial institutions for women.

- Improving the Bank of Uganda's Credit Programme

Women dominate the small and microenterprise sector of Uganda and run their enterprises within the limited financing that microfinancing institutions offer. Because women are at a clear disadvantage in formal financial institutions, this study will examine current Bank of Uganda lending policies, processes, and programmes from a gender perspective.

- Economic Liberalization and Women in the Informal Sector of Rural Nigeria

Both quantitative and qualitative research will be conducted to examine the impact of economic liberalization policies on the output, income, savings, and investment of microenterprises owned by rural women. The project will analyse how women have been able to gain access to resources, appropriate technology and other needs; how enterprise performance has influenced women's roles in rural households; and what prevents women from responding appropriately to changing economic incentives.

Source: GERALinks Newsletter, various issues.



GERA/Joanna Kerr

Resource Policy, which explored how economic policy could become more effective by recognizing that people undertake unpaid as well as paid work. The project covered nine economies: Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Chinese Taipei, Thailand and the United States, and highlighted linkages between unpaid work and economic cycles that are often overlooked (see Box 13). A key recommendation is to broaden the agenda for human resource development to include all kinds of labour, paid and unpaid, formal and informal. Among other steps for governments to consider are:

- reform of the tax system and social security policies to eliminate the concept of the sole breadwinner in a two adult family;
- maternity, paternity and child-care leave for both women and men;
- provision for family-friendly workplaces and social support structures;
- provision of quality, affordable child- and elder-care services;
- financial support of enterprises, such as tax rebates, to encourage them to provide social services for employment.

Box 13: Linkages Between Economic Cycles and Unpaid Work in Canada

Public and private sector goods and services can replace unpaid care work. Alternatively, when household income or public provision fall, unpaid caring work may increase to compensate. A number of tracking projects are underway in Canada which will throw more light on this. One is the Elliot Lake Tracking Study (ELTS) which examines the impact of retrenchment on workers, families and communities. It has found evidence that unpaid work in the domestic sector does increase to make up for shortfalls in income.

An alternative to public provision is the NGO sector, especially the voluntary component. Governments in Canada have continually called on the NGO sector to fill the gaps left by cut-backs in public provision. However, a report by GPI Atlantic (1999) shows that the number of hours of volunteer work per capita declined by 4.7 per cent between 1987 and 1997 — a loss of 110.2 millions of hours. This appears to be related to economic restructuring. Due to falling real incomes, many people are obliged to spend more time in paid work. In particular, university graduates, who were in the past disproportionately contributors to volunteer work, are most affected by the squeeze on time.

Source: Bakker 1999.

National Economic Policy and Global Economic Governance

Globalization has transformed the national economic policy environment. Either for internal political reasons or to comply with conditions for loans from the World Bank and the IMF, governments have opened up their markets for goods, services and capital to the international economy. As a result, they now have to pay more attention to the sentiments of dealers in international financial markets than to the sentiments of their own citizens. Unfortunately, the time horizons of participants in international financial markets are measured in hours and even minutes, rather than the decades of a human life. Moreover, flows of money are quickly reversible, whereas the flow of a human life is not. The result of liberalization of international capital markets has been an increase in volatility and economic instability and new constraints on the extent to which macroeconomic policy can be used to promote social justice (UN 1999b).

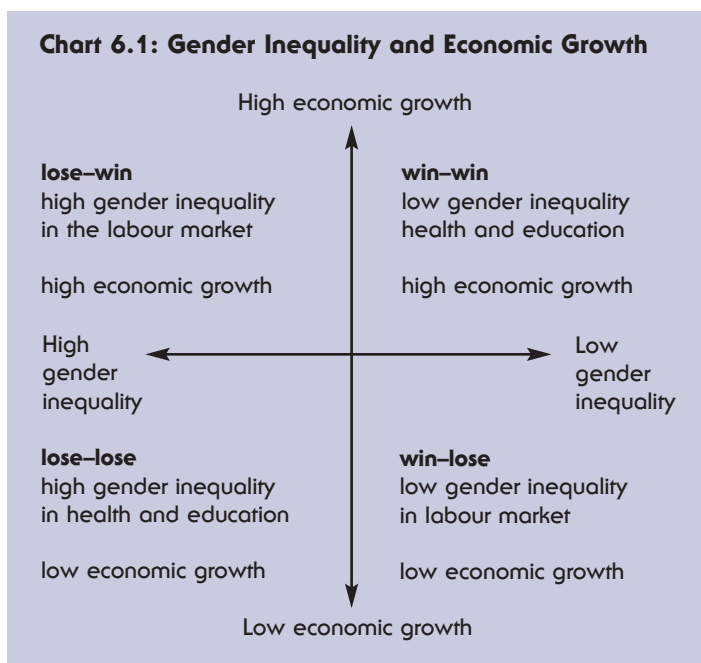
Gender Inequality, Economic Growth, Market Liberalization

Some of the implications for gender equality have been explored by an International Working Group on Gender, Macroeconomics and International Economics, comprising men and women economists from a variety of countries, North and South, who have conducted empirical and theoretical research, published in a special issue of the journal *World Development* edited by Grown et al. (2000).

Exploring the relationship between gender inequality, economic growth and liberalization of trade and investment, the editors note that four scenarios are possible (see Chart 6.1, p. 148): win-win (low gender inequality, high economic growth); win-lose (low gender inequality, low economic growth); lose-win (high gender inequality, high economic growth); and lose-lose (high gender inequality, low economic growth). Different outcomes are related to the structure of the economy being considered (e.g., industrialized; semi-industrialized; agricultural; degree of openness to world economy) and to the dimension of gender inequality being considered (e.g., health, education, labour market). World Bank research has revealed mainly win-win outcomes in which low gender inequality and high economic growth go together (Dollar and Gatti 1999; Klasen 1999). This research measures gender inequality primarily in terms of education and health variables and has been used to make a case for reducing gender inequality on efficiency grounds.

Research by members of the International Working group, using different measures of gender equality, reveals a different picture. Seguino (2000) focuses on the gender gap in earnings and finds that for open semi-industrialized economies (1975-1995), economic growth was higher where the gender gap in earnings

Chart 6.1: Gender Inequality and Economic Growth



was higher (i.e., a lose-win scenario). This does not mean that gender equality objectives should not be pursued. Rather, it shows that some types of growth do not diminish gender gaps in the labour market, even though the absolute incomes of women may increase. Braunstein (2000) develops a theoretical model to show how outcomes depend on whether the economy is subject to low or high capital mobility, and how far women are under patriarchal authority, with male support for the costs of raising families, or are autonomous, but still bear much of the costs of raising families on their own. She shows that in open economies where capital is highly mobile, policies that successfully promote greater autonomy for women can lead to an increase in national income (win-win); but those that increase women's bargaining power in the workplace can have a negative impact on national output (win-lose) if the response of capital is to move to other locations.

The policy implications of this analysis are twofold:

- first, while globalization permits some dimensions of gender inequality to continue to be addressed at the national level (e.g., health, education), it makes it more difficult to tackle other dimensions of gender inequality (e.g., labour-market inequality) at this level;
- second, more concentrated efforts are needed at the international level to develop a harmonized framework for labour-market equality.

Mainstreaming Gender in the Ministry of Finance

The ways in which national economies are analysed and policy is made need transforming. Two frameworks for doing this are presented in the special issue of *World Development* (2000).

Gita Sen (2000) offers a strategy for gender mainstreaming in finance ministries, drawing upon previous work for the Commonwealth Secretariat. She identifies a fundamental constraint in the way that finance ministries operate: they do not deal directly with people but with monetized variables, such as aggregate national income and expenditure, and the aggregate money supply. Three possible points of entry, she suggests, are:

- short-run macroeconomic management, which focuses on budget deficit, the balance of payment deficit and debt;
- structural reforms such as trade liberalization and privatization of public sector enterprises and services;
- financial liberalization and its link to microcredit.

Sen proposes a matrix (see Table 6.2) linking these three dimensions with three gender issues: the differential impact of policies on the well-being of women and men; the implications for human

Table 6.2: Analytical Matrix of Interactions Between Gender and the Finance Ministry

Engendering dimensions →	Differential impact on the well-being of women and men	Human reproduction/ the "care economy"	Gender power relations
Finance ministry's roles ↓			
Short-run macroeconomic management			
Structural reforms			
Financial sector reforms/ liberalization			

Source: Sen 2000.

reproduction of the “care economy”; and for gender power relations (the relative degree of political voice, social/cultural value, and access to and control over economic resources held by women and men). The matrix is envisaged as a tool for use within finance ministries to enable officials to understand how their fiscal and monetary policies and privatization and liberalization measures impact on gender equality and women’s empowerment; and how in turn gender relations impact back upon the economic efficiency and stabilization concerns of the finance ministries.

Sen presents some ideas about likely interactions, drawing upon research on structural adjustment and gender equality, including a 1995 issue of *World Development* on Gender Adjustment and Macroeconomics (Çağatay et al., eds. 1995). These ideas provide a starting point for finance ministries, which with the assistance of local gender experts could gradually fill in information for their own particular economy. The use of the matrix is not envisaged as a one-off exercise, but as an ongoing endeavour that can be enriched as more information becomes available, and which will provide a framework for sustaining the attention of officials to gender issues. It would need to be complemented by a system of incentives and disincentives (through performance appraisal systems) so that finance ministry officials find it in their interest to take gender seriously.

In working with such a matrix, Ministry of Finance officials could draw upon some of the other work of the International Working Group on Engendering Macroeconomics and International Economics, such as:

- computable general equilibrium models incorporating gender variables;
- gender analysis of the East Asian financial crises;
- gendered bargaining models.

Incorporating gender variables into general equilibrium models, for example, Arndt and Tarp (2000) explore the implications of changing technology and marketing structures on the agricultural sector in Mozambique while Fontana and Wood (2000) examine the gendered effects of changes in trade policies in Bangladesh. The results can be entered into the matrix in Chart 6.2, in the rows that identify the interaction of gender issues with short-run macroeconomic management and with structural reforms. Gendered bargaining models, such as that provided for Sub-Saharan Africa by Warner and Campbell (2000) could be used to fill in the row under gender power relations in the last column of the matrix. And gender analyses of effects of the East Asian financial crises could be used in several ways. For example, Lim (2000) finds a differential impact on employment, with male unemployment rising more than female



unemployment, resulting in increased female labour-force participation and longer working hours for women. This information could be used to fill in the row about the interaction between short-run macroeconomic management and gender issues. Floro and Dymski (2000) analyse the crisis to draw conclusions about the gender implications of financial market liberalization, which could be used in considering the last row of the matrix on financial liberalization.

Promoting Social Dialogue on Macroeconomic Policy

Elson and Çağatay (2000) extend the idea of a policy matrix linking gender issues and national economic policy to encompass proposals for a broad social dialogue about the social content of macroeconomic policy and reshaping it to promote social justice (see Table 6.3, p. 150). They look at the issue from the perspective of the implications of macroeconomic policies for poor women, and identify three forms of bias that need to be avoided if macroeconomic policies are to promote improvements in the position of poor women.

The first is *deflationary bias*, the bias that over-emphasises deflating the economy by reducing public expenditure and raising interest rates whenever financial markets show signs of concern about rising inflation or whenever short-term capital leaves the country. Such austerity measures are sometimes called for – but not without a careful analysis of the nature of the problems an economy is experiencing. There is, for instance, no clear evidence that low rates of inflation (below 15-20% a year) have a negative impact on growth rates (A. Sen 1998). There is clear evidence that using deflation to deal with problems caused by inappropriate financial liberalization makes the position of poor people, and poor women in particular, worse – as the financial crises in South-East Asia have shown (World Bank 1998).

The second is *commodification bias*, the bias that turns as many public services as possible into commodities, to be sold to the public by newly

Table 6.3: The Left Hand Side of the Balance Sheet: A Matrix for Macroeconomic Policy

Activities of Different Social Interests	Macroeconomic Prerequisites for Social Justice		
	Avoidance of deflationary bias	Avoidance of commodification bias	Avoidance of "male breadwinner" bias
Government national, provincial, local			
Other political parties			
Civil society organizations e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advocates for rich households • advocates for poorer households • advocates for women's advancement • environmentalists • trade unions 			
Private sector Local: big, small and microbusiness associations Global: TNCs financial institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retail • wholesale 			
IMF, World Bank other multilateral and bilateral institutions			

Source: Elson and Çağatay 2000.

privatized businesses, or to be delivered by a public sector operating on business principles and levying user fees for its services. There may be good arguments for privatization and business principles in the case of some products formerly produced in the public sector — textiles or steel for instance — though even here privatization often frequently fails to deliver the promised increases in efficiency. But in the case of health, education and social security, the replacement of citizen entitlements secured through the public sector by market-based entitlements to buy from the private sector polarizes societies. It excludes poor women from the prospect of access to social support for unpaid care work.

The third is "*male breadwinner bias*," which sees women as dependents of men and constructs what public services and social protections remain upon the principle that men are the breadwinners and direct possessors of citizen entitlements, while women can get access only as dependents of men.

This bias predates the other two, and is often still to be found in the policy alternative put forward by those who are opposed to deflationary bias — but do not look at the economy through women's eyes.

Macroeconomic policy is more and more marked by these three biases (see UN 1999b), but not solely due to finance ministry policy. Much of the pressure that creates deflationary and commodification bias comes from global institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF, and the globalized private sector, especially transnational corporations and international financial corporations. But there are national-level NGOs reinforcing these biases, including organizations that act as advocates for the rich, who benefit, as owners of financial assets, from these biases. In addition, a male breadwinner bias may come from organizations that also fight for social justice, such as trade unions, or may be reinforced by fiscal decentralization to provincial and local

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governments where officials and politicians hold out-of-date ideas about the reality of men's and women's lives.

The policy matrix in Table 6.3 is envisaged as a framework for a dialogue among a wide range of social actors (examples are listed in the left side of the matrix). A key objective is to open up macroeconomic policy-making to consultation, in the way that many other areas of policy are being opened up. As with the matrix proposed by Sen, the boxes have to be filled in at the country level, drawing on country-specific evidence. But some general guidelines are possible. For instance, to avoid deflationary bias, do not automatically assume that:

- low unemployment is a sign that rising prices will automatically follow and that interest rates must be raised to avoid this;
- lower taxes are better than higher taxes, and that all reductions of budget deficits should come by means of cutbacks in expenditure.

Moreover, the dialogue could usefully be guided by the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), as the three biases to which macroeconomic policy is subject could well be in violation of the covenant. Two main obstacles to social dialogue are:

- the IMF, which does not have a consultative approach to economic policy-making;
- owners of large-scale financial assets who can, and do, exercise their option to exit from an economy rather than engage in a mutual voicing of views about the economic policies appropriate for promoting social justice.

The Global Financial Context

Singh and Zammit (2000) take up the issue of gender dimensions of international capital flows and show why it is important for women to begin articulating their ideas about how the global financial system should be changed and what the new global financial architecture should contain. Women have

Box 14: The Informal Working Group on Gender and Trade (IWGGT)

The Informal Working Group on Gender and Trade is a group of individuals and representatives from development NGOs, advocacy organizations and trade unions who share a concern about the impact of globalization, especially trade liberalization, on women and who work to ensure that international trade policy-makers build a gender analysis into their trade policies and procedures.

The Informal Working Group on Gender and Trade developed out of the Women's Caucus convened at the first Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization in Singapore in 1996. Administered through a partnership arrangement between the International Coalition for Development Action (ICDA) and the Network Women in Development Europe (WIDE), it includes:

- Atr-WID, Alternative Women in Development (US)
- CAFRA, Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action
- CEEWA-K, Council for Economic Empowerment for Women of Africa – Kenya Chapter
- CIIR, Catholic Institute for International Relations (UK)
- Education International (EI)
- Gambia Women Finance Association
- ICDA, International Coalition for Development Action
- ICFTU, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
- K.U.L.U., Women and Development (Denmark)
- OXFAM-Ireland
- SEWA, Self Employed Women's Association (Nepal)
- WIDE, Network Women in Development Europe
- WWW, Women Working World Wide (UK)
- WEDO, Women's Environment and Development Organization (US)

Source: Hale, ed. 1998.

not yet done much work on this dimension of global economic governance, perhaps because, unlike trade liberalization and the WTO, there is no World Financial Organization on which to focus attention.

Global Economic Governance and the WTO

Women's organizations have been arguing for at least five years that *world trade is a women's issue*. In 1996, during the Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization in Singapore, women at the parallel NGO forum set up an Informal Working Group on Gender and Trade (see Box 14), and member organizations have subsequently produced a number of publications (Hale 1998; Haxton and Olsson 1999; Vander Stichele 1998). In preparation for the WTO meeting in Seattle in 1999, both DAWN and WEDO produced briefing papers (Williams 1999; WEDO 1999). Many women joined the protests in Seattle to challenge the destructive aspects of globalization.

These organizations share the widespread concerns about the undemocratic and non-transparent character of WTO procedures and the unequal distribution of the

benefits of trade liberalization. In particular, women's NGOs have documented how women have lost their livelihoods as a result of trade liberalization. CEEWA, cites the case of Cotilda, a single mother with five children :



UNIFEM

She is counselled, equipped with skills in leather shoe manufacturing, given a loan, assisted with marketing information, and given a second loan on her business. She is given a third loan to purchase equipment. Government policies on...trade liberalization find Cotilda unprepared. She cannot explain why her shoes no longer sell. The market is flooded with cheaper inputs [and she becomes] unemployed (Kiggundu 1998).

Trade liberalization produces winners as well as losers, however (Fontana et al. 1995; UN 1999b). The expansion of manufacturing exports creates more employment opportunities for women in the South, and in so doing tends to reduce some dimensions of gender inequality. Moreover, women as managers of household budgets gain when trade liberalization reduces the price of everyday goods they have to buy.

Much more serious is the issue of whether WTO policies concentrate losses among the poorer groups and gains among the richer groups. Recent research at the World Bank suggests that this is the case. Openness to the world economy was found to be negatively correlated with income growth among the poorest 40 per cent of the population but strongly and positively correlated with growth among higher income groups. The costs of adjusting the trade reform have thus been borne by the poor (Lundberg and Squire 1999).

Moreover, there are indications that the WTO rules regarding what governments may and may not do may hinder governments in protecting those most vulnerable to the downside of trade liberalization and in building up their economic capacity so that they can take advantage of trade in the future. This is because the WTO agenda goes far beyond the reduction of import quotas and tariffs. It identifies and seeks to reduce a wide range of "barriers to trade," including regulations on foreign investment, environment protection, health and safety standards, laws on the ownership of natural resources and of systems of knowledge and new technology, and systems for placing government contracts and designing and operating social security systems.

For instance, there are moves within the WTO to extend the Government Procurement Agreement, which would restrict the ability of govern-



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ments to award contracts on social and environmental as well as economic grounds. This would, among other things, jeopardize schemes such as that operated by the US government that allocates 5 per cent of the total value of major federal government contracts and subcontracts to women-owned small businesses. In 1997, this allocation was worth US\$5.7 billion and more than half went to small businesses owned by women of colour. It would also put at risk the scheme whereby Telkom, the South African telecommunications parastatal, makes it easier for women's small businesses to tender for contracts by providing them with advice and exemptions from paying the customary performance guarantees. Such government support for women's small businesses is understood within the WTO agenda as a restriction on trade, not a policy for trade development (WEDO 1999).

Among the most important ways in which the WTO has extended the idea of barriers to trade is through the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, the starting point of which is the infringement of patents, trademarks and copyrights. Patents, trademarks and copyrights convey property rights over knowledge and innovations. But TRIPS does not only deal with problems of counterfeiting or copying; rather, it enables a patent to be obtained if the patent seeker adds anything, however small, to existing knowledge. The provision enables multinational corporations to appropriate the knowledge of women and indigenous healers and farmers in developing countries without adequate recompense. One example is the experience of women farmers in India, who for many years have used the indigenous Neem plant as a pesticide and fungicide. There are now more than 35 patents on Neem as a pesticide registered in the United States and Europe and market prices have risen considerably, reducing the access of local communities in India (WEDO 1999).

The agenda of eliminating trade barriers carries with it the implication that markets are the most appropriate way of organizing all forms of resource allocation; and that private property rights needed by markets to function are the most appropriate forms of ownership. It drives the whole system of entitlements towards one that is market-based. It increases the scope for the operations of

Box 15: Gender Issues in the WTO Agenda

DAWN (Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era) presents a gender analysis of the World Trade Organization in a 1999 discussion paper entitled "Free Trade, or Fair Trade?" Among the issues it raises are the following:

The Agreement on Agriculture (AOA): a review of AOA should seek to remedy and remove imbalances so as to benefit women and small farmers. AOA has severely impacted women farmers in Asia and Africa. Women farmers who traditionally produce food and vegetables are unable to compete with inflows of cheap, heavily subsidized products from the North. Furthermore, the food security impact of implementing the AOA has not been widely recognized and adequately dealt with. It is therefore imperative that developed countries follow through on their commitments to liberalize agriculture. A review of AOA should put greater emphasis on eliminating export subsidies and export restraints by the European Union and the United States. It should be gender sensitive and provide mechanisms to promote and ensure food security as an important non-trade concern.

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS): poor people's access to water, schooling and reasonable and affordable health care must be protected. GATS includes not only information and communication sectors but also medical/health, education, human services and public services. GATS therefore has implications for health care/health standards, job security and conditions of work for a large number of people.

Women workers tend to dominate in the public sector as well as the middle and lower rungs of almost all service sectors. Many other areas of service in developing countries rely on women's labour. Before extending the GATS into energy, mail/courier services, maritime and air transportation and environmental services, gender-sensitive impact assessments should be made in each area to ascertain the potential impact on the cost and access to services for the poor and on women workers in the service sector.

An area that has been grossly neglected is the issue of the movement of natural persons. Though developing countries have argued for symmetry between the movement of capital and labour through the inclusion of provisions on the movement of natural persons in the GATS, developed countries have not been willing to discuss this issue and it has so far remained on the back-burner. However, this is an issue of central importance to the lives of migrant women whose rights and working conditions need to be protected and ensured.

Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS): there should be no patents on life and attention should be paid to the recognition of the traditional knowledge of women and men in agriculture, healing and the preservation of nature. Indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage have collectively evolved through generations and no single person can claim invention or discovery of medicinal plants, seeds or other living things. In this regard the Convention on Bio-Diversity should have precedence over TRIPS. Secondly, article 27.3(b), which makes an artificial distinction between plants, and animals and microorganisms, and between essentially biological and microbiological processes, should be amended as per the recommendation of the Africa Group. Finally the developing countries' call for operationalization of mechanisms to promote technological innovation in the South and to accelerate the transfer of technology should also be given priority treatment in the negotiations.

Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMS): developing countries should be exempt from the prohibition on local content and foreign balancing requirements. The objective of trade should be to promote development, which requires governmental assistance to build the capacity of small and medium enterprises. Investment is an area with important implications for women. First, in many of the countries of the South, foreign direct investment is highly female-intensive as it relies on the labour of women in export manufacturing, and in some places, in commercial agriculture. Second, women entrepreneurs in the micro and small business sector may require special assistance from governments to produce goods and services or to protect the markets for the goods that they produce. Third, TRIMS, like all other WTO provisions, must be reviewed in the context of the foreign exchange and foreign debt constraints on developing countries, particularly the least developed countries. Lastly, there should be no attempt to expand the scope of TRIMS until the working group on investment has completed its work.

Government Procurement: particular attention should be paid to the possible negative impact of liberalization of government purchases on small to medium-sized businesses, especially those owned by women. Additional attention should be paid to the possible secondary and tertiary impacts of liberalization of government procurement on the microenterprise sector, which is dominated by women in many of the poorest countries. Since a working group is currently deliberating this matter, there should be no attempt to broaden the scope of the issue, including discussions about transparency of government procurement process, until it has completed its report. The working group also needs to undertake a gender-sensitive assessment of this issue including its implications for the delivery of public services and the potential impact on public sector workers.

Source: Williams 1999.



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already-powerful international businesses and elevates economic competitiveness above all other goals. In fact, this enlargement of the range of what are considered

“barriers to trade” potentially brings all of domestic economic and social policy within the purview of the WTO Trade Policy Enforcement Mechanism. This mechanism is widely recognized as tilted in favour of rich countries that can afford teams of expensive lawyers well versed in international trade law.

Criticism of the WTO is not the same as rejecting international trade, which carries benefits as well as pitfalls for economies in developing countries.

Trade is an important tool in the process of economic development of Southern economies. For least developed countries, trade is also an important tool for promoting development that is anchored in security and rural livelihoods. Trade rules are therefore important but cannot take precedence over human rights and environmental sustainability (Williams 1999: 1).

Thus the issue is one of slowing the operation of the WTO agenda for a period of review, repair and reform, so as to create a global trading system that promotes fair trade as an adjunct to social justice rather than limitless trade as an adjunct to corporate profit. Some of the issues that review, repair and reform needs to consider from the perspective of poor women are identified in Box 15.

Gender Justice and Economic Justice

Women are starting to bring together ideas on gender justice and economic justice in the context of the five-year review of the UN conferences of the 1990s. For example:

- women from a variety of NGOs formed an Economic Justice Caucus during the Beijing +5 Preparatory Commission in March 2000 and produced a Declaration for Economic Justice and Women’s Empowerment;
- supported by WEDO and UNIFEM, the Women’s Caucus worked throughout the Copenhagen +5 Preparatory Commission in April 2000 to make the links between the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Copenhagen Platform of Action.

There is a need to bring together these initiatives, and all the other practical and policy-research initiatives discussed in this chapter in a global campaign for economic justice with a women’s face.

The purpose of this campaign would be to make visible the links between rights for women and economic justice for poor countries relative to rich countries and poor people relative to rich people. A global campaign could build a worldwide coalition for change, using the resources of the Internet, and including UN agencies such as UNIFEM, women’s organizations and businesswomen committed to social and environmental sustainability. It should link up with both the operationalization of the UN Development Assistance Framework and women’s desks or units within regional economic agreements. It should build the capacity of women’s bureaus or departments and harness the energies of gender-aware economists; it should engage the interest and support of journalists in all media.

Such a campaign should seek the commitment of governments, businesses, and international economic institutions for an approach to economic life that:

- recognizes the need for economic democracy as well as political democracy;
- recognizes that compliance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is as important as compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- does not assume that growth and equality can be separately pursued, using separate policy instruments;
- does not wait until the next financial crisis to put in place a set of global economic rules that promote equality and security, and enable both women and men to combine paid work outside their homes with unpaid care work in their homes.

Conclusion

Reshaping globalization to promote the progress of women along the lines discussed in this chapter will not just promote gender equality; it will also promote poverty reduction, human development and the realization of human rights. This is because women and their organizations are pressing for new ways of organizing global interconnections that are more inclusive and more fully human; which recognize people as providers of care for one another and not just producers of commodities; which recognize that it is essential to subject markets to socially negotiated regulations and to understand values as well as prices. Of course, there will have to be changes in global power structures, and these are not easy to bring about in a world that daily concentrates economic power in fewer hands. But globalization has also put new tools at our disposal to mobilize global alliances for change around women-led economic agendas.