

**New Ways
Workshop for Life**

Proposal Booklet of the Women's College

Preparatory document for the Lille Assembly, December 2001 written by

Caroline Brac de la Perrière

and

Nadia Leïla Aïssaoui

Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World

Presentation of New Ways

New Ways – International Alliance for Social Innovation was founded in August 1999 at Istanbul by women working for change in social relationships between the sexes and more generally between all human beings. The aim of New Ways is to contribute towards strengthening the movement in favour of life by deepening knowledge of the different phenomena of violence, the fragmentation of human society and by collecting information on initiatives to promote new forms of relationship and dialogue based on the principles of equality, non-violence, sharing and protection of the biosphere. These are the sources of inspiration for our actions. For New Ways, the Laboratory Against War / Workshop for Life is a meeting place and an instrument for applying its reflections. The proposal booklet, written by women for a responsible, and united world, sets out the ideas and experiences that the Workshop for Life has collected and wishes to develop in order to give hope to our planet.

Foreword

Asking the question "*What proposals are women making for the 21st century?*" amounts to asking "What proposals are being made by are half the world's population, or three billion individuals?". Certainly, three billion pages would not suffice to make an inventory, even it were possible – though uncertain – that women have all the proposals for a responsible and united world.

As a social category "built" to ensure the domination of the patriarchal system, women share a common condition in which they evolve differently according to the economic contexts in which they find themselves, their possibilities and their strategies for survival.

Certain women, like many oppressed people, continue to live according to established orders without having the capacity or audacity, given the straightjackets they have to wear, to imagine anything else. Others may be aware of the world's injustice and irresponsibility, but continue to suffer them, hoping that this resignation will avoid worsening their already excessively difficult conditions. However, because this condition is intolerable and that the injustice they suffer is too great from birth, many of them would like to change the course of events and dream of a responsible and united world. Some of them dream only of a better world for their daughters, though others, fortunately, find the strength and courage to make this dream a reality, by working for changes at every level of society. So, slowly, changes are happening thanks to their perseverance: areas of life and respect are opening up little by little and other types of social relationship are developing.

Thus we have attempted to list their proposals in this booklet, but emphasise that such a task can never be exhaustive and necessarily simplifies and depletes the swarm of ideas that belong to them.

Introduction

For over twenty years women all over the world have been organising to cast off their oppression as a social group. A conjunction of factors such as easier communication, faster access to information, the questioning of religious hegemony and different initiatives in several countries around the world to make equality between human beings a reality, has led to the rapid, international growth of a movement that questions the social, patriarchal organisation that has dominated for the last few thousand years. From the outset, this questioning has included proposals for change to ensure that relationships between women and men are based on equality.

In fact women have always resisted an order that excludes them as citizens and subjects them as individuals belonging to the female sex. One of countless examples is that of Olympe de Gouges who, during the French Revolution, in 1791, proposed an alternative document to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, which she called the Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Citizen. She inserted the word "woman" next to every mention of man and in certain cases called into question the basic premises of the principles and rights announced in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, so as to introduce the standpoint of women. Her proposal was not visionary, but it clearly reflected the concerns, needs and hopes of the women of her time (and unfortunately continues to reflect those of many women in our era as well). Although these ideas have always been around, like all those that demand more social justice and equality (they also received support from men such as Friedrich Engels, Tahar Hadad and John Stuart Mill), they did not become really popular until the great cultural revolution that affected many parts of the world in the 1960s. This moment when this process of questioning the patriarchal order occurred simultaneously and in a co-ordinated way in numerous countries of the world.

It is often said that ideas and thus proposals that question the patriarchal system, such as feminism and the fight for equal rights, spring from the West. In fact, as soon as women started to talk of equality, refusing to be excluded from decision-making concerning how society is run, claiming freedom of movement, expression, and sexual life, they were accused of extremism, and fomenting discord, even by those that defended social justice. In countries that owed their independence to national liberation movements (in which, it should be noted, justice was one of the driving forces), the qualification of Westernisation was ready-made to treat those that criticised the established order with opprobrium.

Nonetheless, for more than ten years now, these attempts to shower women with guilt, which at first dissuaded many of them, no longer work. This is especially so since women living in countries considered as non-Western have started to express themselves through literature and by working concretely, giving rise to a wealth of reflection and experience that now seems to have overtaken that in Europe and North America. The NGO forum that attempted to put pressure on the international conference on women's rights at Peking in 1995 gave a first glimpse of the magnitude and wealth of women's movements at international level and the power of their commitment to change society.

At present meetings that bring together women from around the world (for example, example the two workshops organised with the support of the FPH: the Women and peace Workshop at the Hague in 1999 and the workshop on women's proposals held at Vendome in 2001) provide the astonishing spectacle of people from very different contexts and cultural, social and religious backgrounds who have never met before, finding themselves expressing the same positions and agreeing on the same proposals.

Indeed, thanks to a large number of networks working on violence, health, laws, poverty, structural adjustment, peace, sexuality, etc., the concerns of women from western and rich countries, which focus more on the protection and fulfilment of the individual, and those of women from poor and non-western countries, directly affected by impoverishment, the destruction of community cohesion and the environment, ended by converging and forming a whole.

However, the fact so little is known about these proposals made by women, even in movements working for a better world, although they have existed for years, and that they have been taken up by women all over the world gives food for thought. Other important questions that should be asked at the beginning of such an assembly are: Why are people deaf to proposals made by women? and What weight do we want to give to proposals made by women who intend to make them as a social group?

It is important to understand the mechanisms in place inside the system within which we all live. As a group, men benefit from the oppression of women, thus they are direct actors in this oppression or accomplice to it. As a group, women have suffered this oppression for so long that they have become oblivious to it.

Everyone in a mixed assembly such as this has to make efforts: men must listen and understand what women have to say and give them the same importance as anyone else. On the other hand, women must dare to speak out about what they think without fearing polite indifference and exclusion.

This is why we feel it is important to start at the beginning: the title of our meeting. We gathered in an assembly of citizens, with the support of the Foundation for the Progress of Humankind, thus we presumed that women participants gathered under the banner of citizenship and Humankind¹, which was confirmed by the composition of the assembly. However, taking into account the status of the participants and what they represent raises a question?

If one agrees with what Lacan said, cited by the women members of Attac in their declaration of August 2001, "That which is not named does not exist", then women were not present.

Is it possible to imagine the difficulty for women to formulate proposals for an assembly to which they invited to be invisible? There is nothing anodyne about language, and when a language denies the existence of part of the population it is a means of domination over that part. Hiding the existence of beings by language is a form of oppression. Those who want to change the state of things can refer to brilliant reflection on this subject already carried out by many people (cf. experience record no. 2, Irigaray), which should be taken into account in order to bring about a change of behaviour and reflexes.

The question we ask here, and which has been asked during the different workshops that bring together women from Europe, Africa, the Americas and Asia is the following:

Is the reader (female or male), conditioned by thousands of years of collective memory and objective violence to consider that which stems from women as negligible and of no consequence, prepared to listen to these proposals that come from millions of women –and also several hundreds if not thousands of men?

¹ The difficulty stems from the French origin of the Foundation, whose title is the "Fondation pour le progrès de l'homme", since in French "homme" (man) signifies humankind in general, thus both women and men. (Translator's note).

The proposals presented here are only a sample of all the proposals made by women who want to change the world. Women are everywhere and thus obviously have something to say about every aspect of life: thus they are involved in myriad initiatives around the globe, and in which they work with men who share their points of view on specific changes, as has been demonstrated by the mixed groups that compose this assembly.

However, the fact of belonging to a dominated social group drives women to act together to stop this domination and make proposals directed at radically changing the system; these proposals attack the foundations of patriarchy, an order based on their oppression.

This booklet contains several types of proposals:

Some of them are very practical and have already been implemented locally on various scales while others, though practical, depend on the goodwill of different centres of power and are more difficult to achieve. These proposals are aimed at making the existing system more bearable, though with a major limitation of which women are well aware: such a system can only be organised for certain persons, since all systems based on domination require setting up divisions and hierarchies.

This is why most of the proposals aim at the essential, which is why they are both very difficult to implement and very rich in content, i.e. the values considered positive in our society must change. Thus the values that prevail (in this respect globalisation acts to homogenise human society) must be subjected to severe criticism and replaced by other values that celebrate life, creativity and contact.

They cannot change by heavenly decree or by a power not possessed by ordinary mortals, only by our own decision at individual level and then at a collective one. If women, once aware, want to change the world, **since the personal sphere is also political**, let's change ourselves first and the relationships in our families, in our daily lives and there wherever we find ourselves. This theme always recurs in every thought and action of women around the world. The participants of our electronic forum agreed that we cannot achieve positive changes in this world unless we forge a new awareness based on the cultural components that exist already in every human society. This new awareness, as they stated, implies breaking "the vicious circle of the dominated individual who internalises the practices and models of the dominator, throwing off the straightjacket of inhibiting perceptions that block that which is male and female and the divine ready to flower or already flowering within us all. It demands being at peace with oneself, being in harmony with nature and therefore working towards respect for all forms of life, starting with oneself".

This is the only condition via which thinking, attitudes and behaviours can be modified, leading to the transformations necessary to achieve the more responsible world desired. There is nothing new in this idea. Many philosophies and religions, perhaps all of them at their outset, preach these principles: improve oneself so as to open out to others and to life. Unfortunately, most of them are also based on divisions in categories and reinforce a hierarchical structure.

Naturally, it is the people that suffer from this propensity to hierarchy who criticise it, not to propose another but to claim an a-hierarchical structure. This is why the **principle of equality** combined with the **principle of transversality** in human relations is one of the most important principles put forward by women who seek to change the world. According to the participants of

the electronic forum “The use of transversality in power relationships makes possible respect for diversity, freedom of expression and the elimination of hierarchical traces in our subjective perceptions”.

The other principle put forward by women is that of **non-violence**, which must be based on a new social organisation. Violence against women, independently of age, income, social class, culture and place, is rampant. They suffer from psychological, physical and sexual maltreatment in the forms of harassment, rape, genital mutilation, sexual aggression, forced heterosexuality, pregnancy, forced sterilisation or abortion, the obligatory or non-obligatory use of contraceptives, "crimes of honour", and slavery, without mentioning the symbolic or real violence of discriminatory laws, cultures, economies and religions. (UNFP 2000). These forms of violence are all used to maintain domination over women.

Consequently, they are now gathering in increasingly active movements such as “**The World March of Women Against Violence and Poverty**” to denounce these practices. A multitude of groups are combating violence against women at local level, and the number of anti-war organisations is growing with the spectacular rise in civilian victims, estimated by UNICEF to have increased from 10% since the Second World War to 90% today. These victims are mostly women and children whose lives have been shattered in the conflicts since the beginning of the 1990s .

Women's thoughts and initiatives are all influenced by the necessity and urgency to develop a culture of peace that allows everyone to free themselves from all forms of violence, whether physical, psychological, economic or otherwise. This culture of peace cannot develop without denouncing the dominant values on which most human societies are founded and which are promoted as positive by the dominant patriarchal and capitalist system. However, these values are the seeds of violence, giving rise to competition, aggression, selfishness and disrespect for life and its diversity.

Lastly, another basic principle for women should be integrated and digested to the point of becoming a reflex, i.e. everything that affects women affects the whole of humanity. Humanity is humiliated every time a woman is downtrodden.

What is more, since women are involved in social movements that work to contribute hope, the actors in these movements must also involve themselves with women's movements if they sincerely want to change the world. Otherwise, an assembly of citizens will simply be just another assembly of citizens and the world will remain as it is.

The proposals we present here have been discussed collectively. They are above all the fruit of at least thirty years of action by women's movements. They make use of different sources of analysis, experiences and reflection from around the world. They have been structured following discussions on the electronic forum, several international meetings of women committed individually and collectively to changing the social relationships between the sexes, and other documents produced by women's organisations and individuals working in the same direction.

We have decided to list the proposals starting from the individual to progress to social relations in general and then, finally, to the biosphere, according to the major themes of the Alliance for a responsible and united world. This is why awareness and culture are dealt with first.

Culture

Apart, perhaps, from certain rare little known islands, current world culture is patriarchal in which women have the status of object at best and are completely denied at worst.

The dominant ideology creates a dichotomy between culture and nature, making it correspond with the dichotomy of male/female. Thus women are correlated with nature, with the assertion of their highly "natural" character, whereas man is seen as the creator (in himself, all alone) of human society, the socio-human artifice and, lastly, of conscience as project or organisation (Guillaumin, 1992). It is not only this blinkered dual vision, but what it implies in terms of violence that women decry with increasing vehemence. Men use their predatory appropriation to achieve domination over nature, women and over other men by using violence and destruction; and to maintain this domination requires the repeated use of violence in all its forms.

From birth, when they are branded as "women", women all experience this violence whether of the most subtle type (such as indifference) or the most abominable (such as rape and murder). This is the factual violence that obliges most women to submit to the patriarchal order.

Those who – in increasing numbers – manage to throw off this yoke, refuse this culture laid like a slab on top of them as a culture of war whose acts lead to mutual destruction and eventual self-destruction. They emphasise that in the hierarchy of values of prestige, each social function appears to be inversely proportional vis-à-vis its importance for life and directly proportional to its power of destruction (Horvat, 1985).

They also observe that whatever attempts are made to inculcate more egalitarian and pacific human relationships, or relationships that give more respect to nature, they are hindered by the culture of war that characterises contemporary societies. Thus they can only develop if both women and men promote overall social change.

This is the reconciliation that women call for: rediscovery of symbiosis between human beings and between humanity and nature before it is too late for us all. This requires a voluntary effort to inculcate another way of being, together and for the world, and thus forge another culture, one of peace for which no preconceived model exists.

A new culture, new conscience and new vision are words that often recur in the discussions and writings of women to describe the need for radical change on both individual and collective levels, though also and to a great extent on the personal level in which praxis and theory are related and preserved. Transformations are already in progress, not only enacted by women, whether in various areas such as health, agricultural and industrial production, education, administration or others. They all lead in the same direction: they challenge monopolies that create dependency, gigantism, the devastation of single crop farming, as well as industrial and cultural dependency, and encourage the discovery of a wealth of potential; the use of living and renewable resources, while respecting their nature and qualities: the development of each person's faculties with respect for diversity.

Thus it is clear that this first chapter on culture and its values is the central pillar around which all the others will refer without cease.

Replace a culture of war by a culture of peace

Main proposal: Develop a new conscience

The participants of the electronic forum and those of the different meetings organised by the women's college were unanimous in saying that it is urgent and vital to develop a new conscience, a new vision of relations between human beings, with each other, nature and themselves.

The main focus of this new conscience is to overthrow the current hierarchy of values by making life the supreme value instead of those that are now given priority: money and profit. On this basis, inspired by what women have already built thanks to their capacity to create networks, transmit to others, and organise meetings without stakes of influence, priority should be given to what constitutes life and helps to promote it, connection, and weaving links of affection and solidarity.

It must be founded on the values of:

- equality,
- co-operation ,
- non-violence
- respect for all the creatures of the Earth in all their diversity,
- belief in the subjectivity of all creatures,
- sense of community,
- self-sufficiency,
- creativity,
- the joy of rediscovering non-hierarchical human relations

and refusing the dominant values of today that lead to the destruction of the planet and links between living creatures, such as violence, competition, the absence of solidarity, categorisation, disregard for diversity and individuality.

Thus the following is a series of proposals related to the construction of this new conscience:

Proposal I: Create, forge and consolidate links and accept the interdependence of beings and things with each other

Women feel that the culture that has dominated over the centuries and still prevails, though in a more accelerated form, is that of dissection, the fragmentation of a whole into

separate elements, i.e. that of living beings into molecules, human beings into categories, that of social relationships into antagonistic hierarchical relations.

However, women recommend the exact opposite for the possible future of the world. Recreate links, reduce distance, focus on small units, re-establish connections with oneself, others, between the sexes, between generations, between different peoples, with other living beings, and with the whole of nature. Finally, accept one's dependency on the rest and as a part of the whole.

Proposal II: Link the personal with the political and thus start from the self to impel social changes

One of the most important principles put forward by international women's movements over the last thirty years, backed up by increasingly pertinent arguments, research and reflection, is most certainly that "the personal is political", with as corollary the refusal to separate the private from the public.

Since their bodies are the very focal point of their oppression as a social group and because they continue to suffer in their private lives from oppression by the very persons who fight against it in movements active in public life to change society, women are sharply aware that it is vital to restore respect for oneself and then for one's closest relations in order to impel more global changes.

The changes needed from women and men vis-à-vis their attitude to the world are very different, given that women make up the dominated social group while men are the dominators.

Women feel that two kinds of change can be implemented:

- **rediscover self-esteem and learn to make the best of oneself** without this being to the detriment of the other. Women want to instil the desire to make the best of oneself **and** of the other.

After thousands of years of oppression, with its violence and the implicit disregard experienced by all colonised peoples, women are unable to suddenly love and respect themselves.

Thus efforts must be made against the main vector of violence permitting domination: shackling the possibilities, scope of action and thoughts of the oppressed.

Women around the world have worked for many years in this direction, which requires awareness of the oppression suffered, its analysis and the use of means to win back a positive image of oneself, such as financial independence, obtaining all sorts of knowledge and access to these means.

With the rediscovery of this self-esteem they can then bring about the second change and:

- **cease to be cogs that transmit patriarchal culture that treats life with disregard**, whether it is their own or that of the entire world.

Due to their position in families and their role in educating children, it is astonishing that women have not already attempted to influence the course of things since long ago, by dispensing a different type of education. However, it is necessary to take into account

their training, given from conception wherever they are, that teaches them to fear the danger of defying this domination rather than acceptance of the domination itself (Mathieu,1991). Indeed, the dominated subject is aware that real violence is permanent, concrete or hanging over her head. This is why this proposal for change does not only demand awareness and self-esteem, but also and above all great strength and courage to break through these false truths. One only has to see the huge numbers of women who suffer violence, even murder, because they dared to stray off the path traced out for them (United Nations Fund for Populations, 2000)

For men too, change must occur at two levels:

- refuse to dominate or be accomplice to domination

This implies denouncing the use of violence, and on a more prosaic level that of power given at birth, learning empathy – putting oneself in the other's place (those that are socially disadvantaged due to their origins and colour can understand the power of oppression more readily), consider the other as one considers oneself and also develop attention, listening and understanding of what the other says.

Achieving this requires in parallel

- learning to know oneself and refusing to play roles

In order to profit from their privileged position, men must obey certain constraints: that of showing that they are clearly members of this group, confirming their alignment with very simplistic social standards according to which they must be seen to be aggressive, enterprising, cold headed, reasonable, solid and ruthless. The weight of the armour they must wear prevents them from being in contact with themselves and their deepest feelings.

Now, more and more men – some men participated in our discussions while others publish works – are changing their way of being. They are aware that acceptance of losing their advantages allows them to draw closer to women, children and the rest of the world.

Proposal II a: Deconstruct social perceptions

Social perceptions are a kind of collective memory that builds images not always based on reality or rationality and which are inculcated very early in life according to what is termed a thematic built around concepts of good and bad. This binary categorisation where the latter term is always defined in comparison with the former, in an implicit negative hierarchic relationship, has conditioned the way in which all categories are judged, such as man/woman, strong/weak, white/black, rational/intuitive, etc. Consequently, the entire process of deciphering the situations confronting a child is performed according to this system. Later, the child must build her/his own opinions that will recall and constantly reactivate this method of classification.

To deconstruct perceptions it is important to first understand that men and women are not subjects with identical consciences, since their situations are contrary.

It is not the same thing:

- 1) to use an idea or a perception (e.g. men are superior to women) to explain an act of violence suffered (I was wrong to have stepped out of line, which, after all, is that of my dignity as a woman)
- and
- 2) use the same idea to mete out this violence (She'll stay in her place, won't she? Otherwise she'll harm my dignity as a man) (Mathieu).

Thus deconstruction must occur from two different points of view. Hence the male/female relationship in societies has been undergoing radical redefinition since women started questioning the established order and the categories on which it is based. This redefinition is not occurring without resistance since the identities of both sexes are under pressure to change.

This implies restructuring social organisation by starting with the deconstruction of female/male categories, transforming the core of socio-cultural perceptions of roles and the emergence of new standards and values. This process requires sacrifices and sometimes painful self-questioning, above all for men.

Proposal IV: Accept oneself as a part of nature instead of wanting to control it at any price (the most expensive!)

Perhaps it is because patriarchal ideology identifies women with nature, because they have the potential to give life, and because of the strength of the relations they form with children and the eldest –those that arrive into life and those that depart from it, and also with each other, those that have least power – that women are aware, even in the worst cities, of their relationship as members of the human race with nature. Many women emphasise the urgent need for a new ethic according to which humanity realises that it belongs to nature rather than continuing to think that nature belongs to man, since such thinking can only lead him and all of us to destruction.

Proposal V: Ensure equality in one's own relations with others

The term equality was analysed by women all over the world because, on the one hand, they suffer from unequal relations with men everywhere and, on the other, when it is not replaced by the term "equity" (which allows all kinds of discrimination to remain as they are), it is interpreted in the same way as it was during the French Revolution, restrictively taking man, preferably western, as reference.

For women, equality must be understood as an a-hierarchical, horizontal relationship. It is related to respect of diversity and justice and its practice is valid for everybody. There is no denial of the differences between women and men, on the contrary, but they are seen as belonging to two types of very distinct orders. There are biological differences that are considered to be individual differences, i.e. as having no more or less meaning than other physical differences between individuals, and which cannot therefore have more importance than other individual differences, since they are the common lot of humanity and subsequently cannot justify inequalities. On the other hand, there are the differences of social roles and places that are built by the process of domination (Delphy, 1995) and which, by consequence, must be called into question, since "constituting a difference and controlling this difference is an act of power as it is an essentially normative act.

Everybody attempts to present the other as different, though not everybody succeeds. Success requires social dominance" (Faugeron and Robert, 1978)

Proposal VI: Modify relations within families

The critique of the patriarchal family has been the subject of many works and events written and organised by women. The structure of the family as it exists at present is where one first learns one's role and the sexual division of labour. The hierarchical position occupied by men sets up asymmetric relations based on the balance of power. The tools of this power can vary from authority wielded tacitly to psychological and even physical restriction (domestic violence, crimes of honour, incest, etc.). Women propose making the family a place of sharing and comfort so that it can provide fulfilment for its members. This implies:

- abolishing hierarchical relations between its members,
- equal education of children regardless of sex and age,
- participation and involvement of everybody in domestic life according to their physical capacities and not according to sex,
- and time used for care, communication, education of children and attention given to the other.

Proposal VII: Transforming language so that it finally speaks for all

Gendered language gives greater value to the masculine and generically devalues the feminine. This has consequences on the levels of intellect and thought, relations with the other, and on the psychoanalytical level in children of both sexes. In French, for example (though all languages have one way or another of making man the norm and reference) all the grammatical concords concerning pronouns, participles, articles, demonstratives, etc. are in the masculine. In French a woman must be the only subject in a sentence or in one describing a social activity in which no men are involved (outside marriage) to permit the use of "elle"/she/it. All collective life is described in the plural masculine, as in the couple and family. The "elle"/she is erased by conjugal and family life" (Iragaray). It is therefore vital to modify linguistic paradigms that are often thought to have little importance (though the neutral is expressed by the masculine, which is very important), in order to structure perceptions differently.

Several proposals have been made and some have already been put into practice.

- a-** make visible the invisible – in this case women – even if this appears to weigh down reading. This has been done at the United Nations after recommendations by experts in 1996 under pressure from women: "new measures and standards concerning human rights and existing standards must be written in non-sexist language. The centre for human rights should write a directive to this end in every official language of the UN that guides the drafting of its communications, reports and publications (...)" (Bauer, 1996)

- b- vote a law that recommends that the mixed plural (non-existent in English) should be masculine one year and feminine the next. This would be bound to have an effect in bucking the inertia of linguistic norms.
- c- invent neutral terms that satisfy everybody.

Proposal VIII: Develop a new sexual and reproductive ecology

Undoubtedly, as the most intimate relationship with oneself and the other, sexuality should be a subjective individual expression. However, it is above all a social institution of violence (Wittig).

As was mentioned by the participants of the Women's meeting on sexuality and social changes in the Mediterranean and the Middle East: "Sexuality is not only a personal and private question, it also linked to political power and domination in society.

The means of controlling sexuality are not only institutionalised by cultural and social norms and customs, but also by programmes and legal practices.

For example, various legal systems accept crimes committed against women, such as child and forced marriages, virginity tests, discriminatory laws concerning divorce, female genital mutilation and shorter sentences for murders committed to protect family honour. Sexual repression is aggravated during periods of mobilisation and war, because these political contexts promote rigid notions of masculinity and femininity and perpetuate a culture of aggression and intolerance." (Istanbul, October 2001). Thus, from the standpoint of women, sexuality is another issue where change is vital.

Firstly, so women can start to overcome their alienation with their own bodies and learn to be one with them. This alienation has been introduced by capitalist, patriarchal views of reproduction and technologies, affecting the women of industrial countries more than those of developing countries. The latter are still aware of their bodily rhythms and always recognise signs of fertility and infertility. However, women that have "benefited from development" have all but lost this intimate knowledge and increasingly rely on medical experts to explain what is happening inside them.

Furthermore, freeing sexual relations from patriarchal domination and exploitation is not only a question of contraceptive technology but one of a change of attitudes and lifestyles, institutions and the daily behaviour of women and men. Developing this new sexual and reproductive ecology is vital to enable women to conserve their human dignity. In a military-patriarchal society it is even more important for men, who identify their sexuality with aggression. This aggression is first directed against themselves, since to channel it, they must reject and eliminate characteristics such as attention, love and affection, generally attributed to women and thus devalued (Shiva). This relation of love and attention gives rise to new understanding of sexuality – not as a selfish and aggressive urge but as a human capacity for relations with oneself, with others and by extension with the earth and all its inhabitants.

This proposal becomes very concrete with respect to many areas, such as:

- educating both boys and girls to know their own bodies;
- deconstructing the myth of heterosexuality as being the natural relationship between human beings, whereas it is first and foremost a relation of domination of one group over another.

- being aware that prostitution and pornography play a role in the institutionalisation of sexuality as a process of domination over women, negating them and the most disadvantaged, by clearly establishing a subject/object relationship between the customer and his goods. The fact they are legal is the proof of their cynical acknowledgement by society.

Education

Women have involved themselves in education in the widest meaning of the word, instruction, apprenticeship and training, though this action also aims in particular at giving women more autonomy, since one woman in four is illiterate and all of them consider that exclusion from education is a means of oppressing them. Every day groups of women around the world set up classes to teach reading to women and children or develop small training projects. Furthermore, even though they work to change the content of the education they dispense, they are very aware that education as it stands today remains a vector for transmitting a culture mostly created by and for the dominant group with the intention of maintaining this dominance over its environment.

Consequently, they make two types of proposal:

The first concerns development, thus they turn to their governments to demand that they implement the commitments made by them at the United Nations, by signing and ratifying different conventions, such as the Convention of Children's Rights and the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and that they improve the conditions of citizens by providing them with concrete and continuous education.

However, even when education is obligatory and free (in spite of attempts to develop less sexist, racist and elitist education in certain countries) it is still dispensed in a culture of domination and exclusion that pervade its foundations, the language and references it uses and the standards it dictates.

Without raising the least question as to their validity, it perpetuates division hierarchy between culture and nature, between body and soul, between modern and old, and technology and emotion and between men and women.

What is more, women are not only interested in being able to obtain education, they also want it to be based on the values of equality, respect, sharing, and non-violence and they consider that its cultural foundations should encompass all the knowledge accumulated by the whole of humanity rather than be limited to the tiny scope of modern, western, male time and space.

These proposals require a radical and profound change of awareness and an upheaval of values in order for education to fulfil its role, i.e. to permit the genuine development of human beings.

Proposal I: Push governments to honour their commitments to the United Nations to provide education for all

Most of the alternative reports sent to the UN by feminist NGOs on the progress made by women's rights in different countries observe that governments fail to meet their commitment to devote 6% of GNP to free and obligatory education for all, as stipulated by the Convention on Education for All.

The right to education, which is stipulated in many international conventions, must become a reality, but achieving this requires that citizens must put pressure on their governments to respect their commitments.

Proposal II: Push governments to ensure that education for all is non-discriminatory

Thanks to pressure by women, several articles of international conventions, such as article 10 of the convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and article 18 of the convention for children's rights mention the obligation to ensure that education is

non-discriminatory. However, like so many other articles contained in conventions, they are not applied.

Thus citizens must put pressure on their governments in order to ensure equal opportunities and education for all, including positive action. Furthermore, in the least advanced countries, women demand that an international fund be made available to support non-discriminatory education for all, to prevent these governments from justifying their failure to respect their commitments on their lack of resources.

Proposal III: Make independent education structures aware of sexual and other forms of discrimination

All international, national and local organisations and networks involved in education should take into account social-gender relationships and eliminate discrimination in their approach to education.

Proposal IV: Review education systems to ensure education for a culture of peace

Since education as it is structured does not imperil military organisation and culture in the modern world, the foundations of education systems must be reviewed so as to instil a culture of peace and eliminate discrimination, introduce awareness of the social relationships between the sexes and teach respect for oneself and others, non violence and democracy that embraces the participation of all, and creativity and co-operation.

To avoid this approach to education from being in total contradiction with the ambient culture, as is the case at present, for example, with civic education programmes in Europe, teachers should first call their own training into question. They must be capable of rehabilitating the different types of knowledge accumulated by humanity, link them together and give precedence to knowledge that promotes life in all its forms.

Therefore, this requires:

- Transmitting humanity's accumulated knowledge and know-how.
Much knowledge and know-how handed down from the past is now forgotten or denigrated, although they could serve as the basis for a culture of peace.
Different approaches to protect nature, form links and the development of knowledge through the senses and intuition must be explored anew so that they provide wisdom and knowledge of the world.

Women propose to identify, among other things, ways of making knowledge their own, since their position in society makes them more co-operative than competitive, more inclusive than exclusive and more capable of learning from methodologies, i.e. conceptualising their attitudes and including them in teaching in schools.

- Develop education that favours manual work as much as intellectual work.
- Develop a critical mind vis-à-vis new technologies and knowledge and recognise that which can contribute to the whole of humanity and the world.

The Media

The media are the real makers of opinions and the vectors of mindsets in the service of contemporary dominant ideology. They obey the logic of consumption and profit and are dedicated to the commercialisation of both body and goods.

Television, the radio and texts all willingly make use of sexist clichés and traditional schemas of male domination via advertising and programmes designed to distract the public (cartoons, entertainment, TV series). These programmes invariably diffuse dominant rationales, blatantly praise consumption and luxury, and they all justify the male culture of war and violence.

The effect of globalisation and the flagrant reduction of diversity in the media result in the standardisation of schemas to the detriment of cultures and introduce single track thinking into households, thereby moulding the thoughts of future generations. Information is thus designed to sell a dream, a certain dream, and divert citizens from reality in order to serve the interests of multinationals and other groups such as military-industrial corporations, etc.

Thus women severely criticise the media and their contents and they want to formulate strategies, such as identifying journalists of both sexes sensitive to the condition of women so that they act as relays of change; alternative electronic news networks (Womenet, Awid, Mujeres in red, "Sexisme et citoyenneté", etc.); pressure groups against sexist advertising, films and other messages; media, radio and television productions. These are all strategies designed to win over arenas of information and communication free from all oppressive ideology.

Proposal I: Establish an ethical code and civic morality

Citizens should have a say in the quality and content of what the media diffuse. The media should take into account their concerns and aspirations and undertake radical reform of their communication and diffusion policies.

Among other things, they should consult with women's groups to draw up a moral contract that commits them to respecting women..

Proposal II: Deconstruct the founding myths of patriarchal society

Greater participation by women in the media would lead to rethinking of the images diffused to the public. Women are very critical of the over-appreciation of physical beauty, youth, maternity and heterosexuality in which they see the construction of myths that serve to subjugate them. Likewise, they analyse the praise of violence as a component of maleness and the construction of a myth intended to maintain men in their socially dominant role.

Women have produced a large number of productions and alternatives. However, these productions are derided and even censored since they go against the traditional conservative grain. This enterprise of deconstruction calls for the participation of all those who want to build a non-violent and egalitarian society, in particular by:

- a-** Giving greater visibility to expression by women, especially that which is important to strengthen a culture of peace, publishing women's productions and stories, since in male productions, only male heroes are given the leading roles. Restoring balance can be achieved, for example, by diffusing the work done by historians over the last twenty years to highlight the contribution of women to the history of humanity.

- b-** Using the educational potential of the media to deconstruct the myth of war and the warrior as the first step necessary for a culture of peace and equality. Indeed, if people learn to become violent, then one might hope that they can unlearn such behaviour, or never learn it in the first place.
- c-** Involvement by assistance in the production, for example, by the Puntos de Encuentro organisation in Nicaragua, of artistic television programmes to promote awareness of the situation of women in societies and, by consequence, inculcate values in the public, such as respect for the other, diversity, non-violence and solidarity.
- d-** Highlighting collective heritage, with greater emphasis given to women.
- e-** Appealing to women and men to rewrite fairy tales and legends so they no longer convey dominant representations.

Proposal III: Set up observatories based on the principle of responsibility

Finally, set up civic observatories to monitor the media based on the principle of responsibility. They would ensure:

- a-** The diversification and transparency of the sources used by the media is a way of acting against media censorship and manipulation
- b-** Pass anti-sexist laws and enforce them. They would act as a filter and a framework for different advertising and cultural broadcasts.

Religion

So that religion ceases to be an additional tool of oppression

In every religion, women are either idolised or stigmatised. Sexually unsoiled saints or soiled sinners, they are denied the status of human beings endowed with souls and intelligence. Nor is there any intermediate stage between the good childbearing mother of the faithful with a loving and docile nature and the dangerous, wild and demonic she-devil.

A classic and abominable example of this black and white view of women is that of witch-hunting. Throughout the past, midwives were accused of sorcery, pursued and killed under the direction of the men of the Church. Midwives came from poor backgrounds and they not only contested the new ethical, legal, economic and social standards of the rising bourgeoisie that restricted the role of women in the family, but they possessed primordial knowledge (Michel). In India today, they still symbolise the devil and impurity because they have intimate knowledge of the mystery of life, so wherever they go homes are purified from top to bottom. Not so long ago, the Catholic Church also purified women that had just given birth.

Many examples could be given from every region of the world and from every era to illustrate the instrumentalisation of religion to assert male domination over women.

The most blatant examples of this oppression now come from fundamentalist religious movements that assert the inferiority of women due to their difference and use extreme violence to maintain them in very simple and stereotyped roles, going as far as burying them alive. However, religions generally use much more subtle ways of achieving this by their use of language, rites and interpretations of texts, and continue to exclude women. Rather than acting as a source of spirituality necessary for human fulfilment, they serve as an additional instrument of patriarchal domination. Women are still excluded from religious concerns and practices in which they have no say, especially on subjects that directly concern them.

However, over the last few decades, women believers have started to invest the area of religion and have assumed the right to participate in formulating religious thinking. They criticise the interpretation of texts according to androcentric precepts, which taken to their extreme, promote an image of women as bereft of rationalism and common sense, and as both weak but formidable creatures that must be contained and controlled at the same time.

Reflection by women aims at escaping from this logic of domination and making their religion (whatever it is) a spiritual message for peace and harmony between human beings, whereas others make it a catalyst for war.

Proposal I: Make God neutral and impartial

The male representation of God and her/his appropriation by man – especially white men – in his image has pushed most of the human race, which does not possess these two characteristics, into a position of inferiority. This masculinisation of God also serves to interpret religious texts in a most discriminatory way vis à vis women.

The expression of spirituality outside power relationships requires not only an overall revision of language, which designates God as male, but also opening up religion to multiple interpretations that take the path of peace and equality between the sexes.

Work must also be done to promote seeking and diffusing information on alternative religious sources including those with feminist interpretations and reflections. In this respect it is interesting to underline that work has already been carried out by many women in Islamic countries and they are contributing to the reinterpretation of religious texts in the light of feminist thinking. (Women read the Coran for themselves. 1998)

Proposal II: Make the practice of religion a personal choice first and foremost

Practising a religion and spiritual pursuits must be the result of personal choice and remain in the private sphere. Even though it represents a form of community cohesion for many of us through its rites and traditions, in no way should it be considered as a unique moral and ethical code, but only as one way of sharing and practising solidarity, non-violence, reciprocity and mediation.

Proposal III: Education for tolerance and the promotion of religion's progressive values

Given the importance of religion in most societies, a framework of dialogue must be created in which those most concerned by it can meet and express themselves, whether they are believers or not. Few frameworks of this sort exist outside places of worship or often exclusive and elitist committees. Citizens should be capable of understanding the debate on religious issues and build genuine schools of tolerance and dialogue that respect the rights of the individual.

Proposal IV: Abolish the monopoly of religions over debate on and the management of religion

Set up observatories at national and international levels to prevent any use of religion for oppression and acts against human dignity and life. These could be cross-linked networks and groups composed of equal numbers of believers and non-believers, and women and men (politicians, priests, jurists, philosophers, human rights workers) that act as observatories. These organisations could issue proposals to manage religion in a new way in society. The missions of these observatories could be to:

- a-** Ensure that religion is in no way involved in managing secular authority;
- b-** Denounce and ban violence against women by fundamentalists and violence whose source in general stems from religion;
- c-** Encourage research teams and the diffusion of all kinds of works intended to deconstruct founding religious myths that contain elements of discrimination and inequality;
- d-** Incite religious personalities to promote inter-religious dialogue and prevent the use of religion as an arm of war and destruction;
- e-** Estimate the number of human lives lost due to religion (wars, executions and massacres, AIDS due to the ban on condoms, etc.), with the aim of setting up legal and other procedures to render justice to individuals suffering from violence in the name of religion;
- f-** Underline the contradiction of religion with the Declaration of Human Rights; the institution of religion as it exists today is unacceptable:

1-it oppresses women and denies their existence as individuals in their own right;
2-it oppresses individuals of different religions or those with none.

- g-** Put pressure on international organisations such as the United Nations in order to set up measures so that countries can find peaceful solutions for situations where their constitutions are in contradiction with their institutionalised religions, in particular by setting up councils of religious persons and citizens (parity is especially important here) that take into consideration societal changes and the need to adapt to them.

Governance

There is always something hidden by words as can be seen in the bewilderment provoked by the term "governance", even among educated people. This raises the question of why it has invaded our lexicon: why has it emerged and what ideology does it serve?

The women participants of the Vendome meeting on the proposals mentioned that the emergence of this term coincided with the inception of a new world order and the positions taken by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund as authorities wielding real power. It is a word promoted by the World Bank and represents an ideology devoted to profit, restrictions, structural adjustments and the increasing control by multinational corporations over the world. Thus the concept of governance is not neutral. It strengthens still further the extremely violent oppression and exploitation occurring around the world, whose principle victims are women, and which dispossesses local politics of any real power. We now understand why the relative ease with which women attain positions in local politics is tolerated. Even though many of us may think this recognition of women as players in the realm of politics is an extraordinary advance, it nonetheless signals how the centre of power has shifted outside its previous confines and the growing importance of the stakes in the macro-economic sphere. Therefore the concept of governance in these proposals is not approached as a method of managing and exploiting the worlds' resources by economic powers, but as a new way of managing interaction between human beings and between them and their environment. It is seen as a means of setting up participatory democracy and transparency, and civic management of the community life to which women aspire.

For women, governance for a responsible and united world implies non-hierarchical relations based on equality and calling into question the separation between the private and the public.

Rejecting the distinction between the private and the public is a way of bringing all the issues and players that are confined to the private sphere into the public sphere, both politically and symbolically. As one mother at the Place of May in Buenos Aires rightly said: "*We were able to bring the dictatorship down when our motherhood became a public affair*".

Women contribute a vision that takes into account the global and the specific in every area, because life is everywhere, in the road, at work and in the home; because global awareness of the world includes awareness of what is happening in the family and in the couple; and because oppression is everywhere, both within private and public relationships.

Thus all questions related to the task of reproduction (maternity, bringing up children, their education, etc.), for example, should be perceived not as individual cases but as being an intrinsic process of society. It is essential to integrate awareness that throughout history social relationships between the sexes have been based on unequal principles, in order to procure the means to transform them.

This is another facet of good governance from the standpoint of women: instituting real equality. In this respect, applying the parity system in France and quotas in Argentina does not wholly meet their aspirations since they are aware that this creates a tiny space in which they have been given token permission to play with men. This throws doubt over the validity of struggling for

acceptance in jobs of the same level as men in a society whose very structure is based on the submission of women and the exploitation this makes possible.

When seen as a whole, the question of equality demands the transformation of every social relationship. This is why women insist, on both private and public levels, on the need to set up a-hierarchical and egalitarian relationships between all individuals.

Not only must they be changed in the public and political spheres (the public sphere should not be considered as the extension of the private sphere with what it implies in terms of unequal relationships, which is the case of patriarchal societies) but as a new space that is both a material and moral reality and in which a number of shared values and commitments can be discussed (Siebert 1989).

This means that the functions of reproduction and those related to the household should be given greater value, as they create life itself, whereas the social esteem for salaried activities should be reduced; that greater consideration should be given in the economy to the quality of everyday life and interpersonal relations than to increasing production and profits; that politics should embrace a culture of collaboration and sharing in order to seek common solutions to collective problems; and that in cultural life, we should put an end to patriarchal monopoly and give greater importance to relations based on reciprocity.

These changes could lead to radical upheavals in the way people think about the world.

Lastly, although it is true that women are more detached from authority, institutions and the myths that propagate war culture, they are far more motivated in rejecting them. However, this does not mean that the process will be easy; on the contrary, it will long and difficult for all of us. This does not entail transferring powers or reversing the pyramid. The change must come from changing the shape of the pyramid into something completely different, something for which no preconceived model exists, though it is in the process of formation (Horvat).

Proposal I: Rethink the concept of equality to establish the foundations for real democracy

Given that the concept of equality was originally defined by men – "non-barbaric" or white depending on the era – women propose that the concept should be widened to encompass all human beings by including all individuals regardless of their class, sex, origins, sexual orientations or other characteristic marking difference. This new concept of equality must include equal social and economic rights.

It also implies practising participatory democracy as a basic principle of governance and as a condition for the collective redefinition of power.

Proposal II: Implement non-hierarchical and egalitarian relationships

Changing oneself in order to change society appears to be a basic approach to going beyond the division between public and private. It is also our responsibility to apply the principles of horizontality in both family relationships and those linking the community.

At family level, persons active in social movements must above all engage themselves in their personal lives to change social relationships between the sexes in which they are involved. Far from being banal, sharing household chores and fighting against intra-family

violence are essential to give women the means to involve themselves in public life and work for a genuine change of mentalities.

Regarding the community, the long experience of women's groups clearly shows the possibilities for developing non-hierarchical means of action.

The pyramidal and centralised structure of power only reinforces competition and the abuse of this same power. Women share the idea that no single person can take on the heavy burden of power alone. They also propose to increase the number of places where collective and equal decision-making and management of society are carried out. Posts of responsibility should be held on a rotating and equal basis as this would involve citizens more in political life and prevent personality cults from developing.

Proposal III: Strengthen public administration and mechanisms for drawing up accounts

Free international trade has become the principal goal of most governments. The role of the state has been reversed. Its new role now consists in providing transnational corporations natural resources, essential basic services, concessions, protection of infrastructures and patents to protect them from claims made by populations regarding laws on labour, health, the environment and human rights. This implies the reduction of public services, economic austerity, and increasingly aggressive use of legislation and law and order to preserve the interests of these corporations. The state no longer acts to protect the public interest (Shiva).

This is the analysis of many women who live in countries affected by the new world order and thus the first victims of economic austerity policies. However, a change in the position of the state in relation to the citizen changes almost nothing as far as they are concerned: as a social category to be kept under domination, they were not under its protection but under its control by virtue of often discriminatory laws and the refusal of governments to intervene in the private sphere, there where their oppression is greatest.

Women only view the state from the point of view of service. It must permit everybody to improve their conditions and ensure both the fair distribution of wealth and the protection of resources.

Decentralised community observatories must be set up to prevent any attempt to stray from this direction. They could take the form of community committees to control mechanisms and supervise the application of the egalitarian principles mentioned above. This also implies setting up national and international legislations to permit citizens to:

- a-** Make sure that political parties, religious organisations and other social organisations work to make the public aware and genuinely involve themselves in building real democracy based on equality and respect of human rights.
- b-** Control that priority is given to social justice, education, health and peace for everybody, in particular by changing the amounts accorded to them by budgets.
- c-** Make the proponents of violence face up to their responsibilities: stop impunity and recognise victims' rights.
- d-** Control the actions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, responsible for the impoverishment of indebted countries.

- e- Demand that multinational corporations operating in these countries face up to their responsibilities and are made accountable by setting up legislations with universal competency to permit the pursuit of companies that violate human rights.

The economy

During the NGO forum held at the same time as the Peking Conference on Women's Rights in 1995, followed five years later by the World Women's March, women from all over the world debated on the need to radically transform the system of global industrial expansion and what is presented as its corollary, i.e. development.

In the light of the experiences of the populations of poor countries, they focused their criticism on the present patriarchal capitalist system enforced by the measures decreed by the World Bank, the structural adjustment programmes of the International Monetary Fund, the policies of the WTO and other means of coercion that impoverish most of the world's inhabitants and women in particular. What is more, they demonstrated the links between capitalist economic growth and the destruction of the environment, impoverishment and the growing violence against women. The objectives of international solidarity and equality, the main principles of this meeting, were reactivated. Women from poor countries called on the middle class women of rich countries to fight against their materialist ways and self-centredness, and against their willing or unwilling participation in strengthening this economy that destroys all others and life in general. Indeed, the women of countries that suffer the exploitation of rich countries are far more aware of the limits of claims for equal pay, nurseries, stopping sexual harassment, however legitimate they are, in a world economic context founded on man's domination over nature, over women and the West over non-Western peoples.

This is especially so since all these efforts made by women in every country of the world to participate in public economic activity demand they wholly accept the rules already made by men. (How many women are refused employment contracts because they are old enough to have children or under the pretext of absenteeism due to their "biological fragility"? How many companies give precedence to male candidates or require commitments from women not to become pregnant during their employment? How many women see their professional lives burdened considerably due to their inability to reconcile work with family responsibilities?) Even though characteristics related to reproduction constitute a not inconsiderable dimension of the female identity in male dominated public life, these vital questions are nonetheless eluded and the social relationship between the sexes tends to disappear behind a gamut of inequalities judged to have precedence.

Women have been aware for several decades (the Beijing conference being an opportunity to highlight the state of things in many parts of the world) of the noxious nature of the present system of economic development, with the absolute domination over the world and living things it permits for a few. They are also aware that this economic system is the real seat of power and thus the principle tool for implementing oppression and violence against women.

This is why the World March of Women Against Poverty and Violence Against Women now counts 5,200 groups in 161 countries and territories. It proposes to attack the structural causes of poverty and violence and identifies the actors who manipulate this system and whose interests reinforce each other, i.e. the great powers, the arms industry, transnational companies, corrupt governments, dictators, religious fundamentalists, organised crime, drugs traffickers and prostitution networks (appeal of November 2001)

This awareness sharpened by the urgent need to save protect and share the world's resources equally, incites women to think of their relationship with resources in another way, that of subsistence.

To achieve this, they call on the responsibility of human beings and their creativity to abandon this doomed structure. Other economic systems are being implemented with emphasis being placed on the importance of remaining local, so we remain integrated in a biological cycle in which all living creatures belong.

Many and varied initiatives exist at local level (here we refer to the report and proposals made by the Women and Social Economy Workshop which illustrates the variety of initiatives that exist and provides detailed analyses), that aim at sharing decision-making, tasks and tools rather than at the totally hegemonic system of hierarchical order, competition, productivity and exploitation. They are often described as being anti-economic because they aim at refocusing the economy on people and social cohesion, "by enhancing the value of free, convivial, non-monetary activities and non-productive time as well as the distribution of wealth by privileging activities that generate social cohesion rather than speculative financial activities".

More particularly, by approaching the role of women in the economy from the standpoint of gender, the women's movement has forced politicians and intellectuals to recognise that housework by women is work and exploited work at that (Delphy, 2001). It should be recalled that nearly 70% of the work done by women on the planet is unpaid; it concerns supplying food, education and social relations, the home, gardening and work in the field (World Women's March). Over the last thirty years, many women's groups have fought to obtain recognition for domestic work as real work done in families exclusively by women (studies show that only insignificant changes have occurred over the last twelve years concerning housework in European families). Although strategies may differ, they all seek to highlight this work and give it value as the essence of human relations in terms of attention, solidarity and communication with the other and the importance of sharing it.

The proposals we make here therefore complement those made by the Women and Social Economy Workshop.

Proposal I: Call the current conception of development into question – implementing other indicators of development

Women are increasingly critical of modern development and integration in the world market since both lead to even greater ecological destruction, and greater inequality and poverty, whose first victims are women and children. They can see that these processes lead to increasing violence against women, especially in regions that have achieved success. Vandana Shiva gave the example of the green revolution in areas of Indian such as the Punjab, where new prosperity is accompanied with more murders of women for non-payment of dowries. Likewise, abortions of female foetuses after amniocentesis have increased in these regions.

The only valid form of development is that which reintegrates human beings in the nature of which they are part, rather than that of "growth for all", which, is impossible and suicidal for the Earth if one considers the ecological consequences of generalised industrialisation and the mode of development of industrial societies for current and future generations.

This is why women propose that development indicators should include the status of women and children, as well as the state of the environment. Current indicators take no account of environmental protection and its inhabitants are not used as references.

Proposal II: Make major corporations responsible for their actions and reduce their size

The development of major production centres has made all human beings, and extremely vulnerable, especially women who have been dispossessed not only of their know-how but of the links they weave with between their production and consumption.

This why women propose to take a first step to make major corporations responsible for their first acts:

a- The goods acquired by multinational corporations must be declared to the last penny and shared with their workers and the societies in which they operate, in the form of payment for education and health services.

Above all they should be transformed or stopped:

b- Ecological sustainability, autonomy and making a priority of the needs of women and children will require much smaller and more decentralised production units that cannot be ensured by huge economic combines. Synchronising production with consumption will also permit people to become genuinely involved in decisions on production.

Proposal III: Extol what has been up to now the main work done by women, whether it be for non-commercial activities or those in subsistence economies

Women consider that the aim of economic activity is not always to produce more goods and money for an anonymous market but to create and recreate life, i.e. the satisfaction of basic human needs by mainly producing things for their use and not the purchase of merchandise.

Up to now, "the prestige of each social function seems to be inversely proportional to its importance to life" (Horvat), but now life must be restored as the fundamental value and more value should be given to everything that maintains it. In this respect, the contribution made by women through their daily and invisible work in families and social relations can be seen to be inestimable.

The women participants of the Vendôme meeting also emphasised how important it is to preserve traditional economic activities run by women (craft industries, agriculture), and encourage them, since they also preserve culture and diversity.

Proposal IV: Tax financial transactions to support communities:

One of the measures recommended by the World Women's March was the Tobin Tax.

The women from the globalisation group and Attac who reflected on the use and management of the (future) revenue from this tax emphasised that the female dimension of poverty, illiteracy, lack of care, insecurity and migrations of labour should be taken into account. Therefore they propose:

a- equal representation in the organisation managing the allocation of the funds,

b- women should have priority access to these funds, since they represent 70% of the poor of this planet.

Proposal V: The combat against the sale of women's bodies

Many economic studies show that women are the main victims of globalisation and there is no doubt that the most extreme form of exploitation to which they are subject in the patriarchal capitalist system is the sale of their bodies. Liberal globalisation has spurred the phenomenon of female slavery around the world while governments either take a complacent attitude or are accomplices to the act.

The UN estimates that 4 million women and young girls are bought and sold every year and that prostitution around the world generates an annual turnover from 5 to 7 billion US dollars (Loncle, 2001). Needless to say, these women undergo the most awful humiliation and unspeakable physical violence from their pimps and customers.

Women consider that prostitution is a serious violation of human rights and that the human body is inalienable.

It is urgent to set up co-ordinated legal measures between different governments to dismantle prostitution networks and eradicate this new form of slavery. This also calls for real equality between men and women and education on the need to respect and know the other.

This would also lead to much reflection and commitment to changing our economic parameters, combating poverty, and radically changing our current system of development.

Proposal VI: Establish new perspectives

The new forms of economic activities that many women would like to see come into being and that some are already carrying out, alone or with men, are based on new relationships:

1/ with nature: nature is respected for its wealth and diversity, its protection demands respect and it is a prerequisite for the survival of all the world's creatures. Human interaction with nature should be based on respect, co-operation and reciprocity. Domination of man over nature should be replaced by acknowledgement that humanity is part of nature, and that nature has its own subjectivity.

2/ between people: since the domination of nature by man is related to his domination over women and other human beings, a different and non-exploitative relationship with nature cannot be forged without changing human relationships, especially those between women and men. This entails a change not only in various divisions of labour (sexual, manual/intellectual and urban/rural divisions, etc), but principally the substitution of monetary and commercial relationships by those of reciprocity, mutual aid, solidarity, trust, sharing, attention for the other, respect for the individual, the development of all the faculties of each and everyone and responsibility for the whole"(Mies, Shiva, 1993).

Thus another form of economy, called "perspective of subsistence" by some, and "perspective of survival" by others, is based on the principle of an economy outside the notions of growth and profit and the violence that these generate.

Science

A series of written works by women on the history of modern science postulates that the current definitions of the objectivity, rationality and universality of science often incorporate the vision of the world of the people that have created this science: western males from the dominant classes (*Dictionnaire critique du féminisme*). Different analyses emphasize that the sciences, whether human, hard, natural, physical or otherwise, have all built their theoretical foundations on the dual and hierarchical vision of a division between human beings and nature. The white man on the side of human beings and savages, women and non-whites on the side of nature. As the model human being, the white man has the right to reign over the whole of nature and promote his own creation, i.e. culture.

Modern natural sciences, in particular mechanics and physics, are above all based on the destruction and subordination of nature as a living being: an organism perceived as female. At the end of this process, nature is considered as nothing more than dead matter dissected into its smallest elements and then recombined by the great white engineer into new machines that completely obey his will (Merchant 1983). The new developments in biotechnology, genetic engineering and reproductive technology have made women very aware of the deviant designs of science and technology and the creation of a new scientific paradigm aimed at dispossessing women of the capacity to give birth in the same way as has happened with the productive capacities of nature.

The basic methodological principles of genetic engineering and reproduction are the same as in the other "hard" sciences. The dissection of organic and non-organic entities into ever-tinier components and their recombination into new machines is based on the eugenicist principle of selection and elimination. The particles desired are selected and those that are not are eliminated.

In the sphere of reproduction, this dissection, this principle of division and rule, starts by dividing the pregnant women into the "mother" and the "embryo". The symbiosis between the pregnant woman and her embryo – the living relationship that conserves the life of both entities – is broken both symbolically and in reality by new reproduction technologies (Shiva, 1993). In 1985, during the Bonn conference organised by the "Féministe International de Résistance au Génie Génétique et Reproductif – women against reproduction and genetic technologies", the participants came to the conclusion that the objective of new reproduction technologies was not to assist infertile persons, rather it is to promote a new reproduction industry intended to overcome the problems of industrial capitalism. A new field of investment has been discovered in the generative power of the female body". (Shiva and Mies, 1993). Women have decided to use this extremely critical view of modern science as the basis for completely reassessing not only the role of science, but its very definition.

Proposal I: reintegrate the laboratory with the rest of life: consider ethical dimensions before and within the process of research and set up institutions of responsibility and control

Since Bacon, Descartes and Max Weber, scientists have constantly hidden the impure relationship that exists between knowledge and violence or force (e.g., in its military and governmental form) by defining science as the pure quest for the truth. By doing this, they extracted science from the political, that is to say from force and power. According to women, the separation between politics and science is not only non-existent, it has never existed. Scientists that satisfy an irresistible desire for knowledge and pure research can only do if subsidised, and this is not possible unless such research satisfies militaristic, political and economic ends (Mies, 1993). Since pure research does not exist, research cannot elevate itself "above" the human world.

However, due to the conception of a science freed from values, morality plays no role in biotech laboratories. The question of ethics only arises outside the laboratory when it is too late.

It is necessary to examine the scientific process as being part of the understandable and global process of life and therefore consider ethical aspects upstream of and within the research carried out. The basic principle is that research should be done in the service of the world's people and not to despoil some for the benefit of others.

Along the same lines, it is necessary to create institutions with responsibility and social control, without which only a small part of society will continue to monopolise knowledge and the profits generated by the biological revolution. The rest of society will not only be excluded from this revolution but be obliged to pay the ecological, political and economic costs.

Proposal II: Make science responsible vis-à-vis the entire biosphere

The critique of science made by women, doubly strong since Chernobyl, clearly shows that sciences and technologies are now fundamentally military in nature, and not only when they are applied to bombs and missiles. Taking our responsibilities seriously with respect to women, children, the future of the world, and our own human dignity means condemning this science as being irresponsible, amoral and immoral.

Lastly, a new science should show itself to be responsible vis-à-vis the whole of society in its methods, theories and in the application of its results. This new responsibility should take into account the fact that the world's resources, human life and time are limited. Infinite progress, growth and research cannot exist in a limited world without exploitation of its peoples.

Science and technology should not be used to strengthen disparate social relationships; on the contrary, it should lead to greater social justice.

Proposal III: seek interconnections and give greater value to ecological systems, and biological and social symbioses as a "living whole"

With new reproduction technologies, woman is no longer a whole object, which she always has been under the patriarchal system, but a series of objects that can be isolated,

examined, recombined, sold, rented or simply thrown away, such as ovums that are not used for experiments and fertilisation. This approach amounts to destroying the integrity of women as individuals and as indivisible, whole human beings.

The example of reproduction technologies has made one thing very clear for many women: more opposition is needed against the vivisection of living relations; symbioses should be understood not as a form of stifling dependence but as the interdependence required to maintain the balance of all living things.

Proposal IV: Develop new scientific approaches that integrate and respect old and empirical knowledge

The promoters of modern science have occulted and even eradicated all forms of know-how from the realm of knowledge that could endanger their power, accusing it as being irrational.

Remember the example of the witch hunts that lasted from the 12th to the 17th centuries in Europe: a genuine genocide perpetrated against women considered as dangerous due to their control over traditional know-how in medicine and obstetrics in particular.

This process of eradication and occultation of ancient know-how is still going on today, for example, women's knowledge of their own bodies and that of peasants' of the conservation of seeds and the medical uses of plants, in order to maintain domination and its corollary, profit.

It is urgent for women to put an end this process and develop new scientific approaches that combine wisdom, knowledge and ancient traditions of survival with modern knowledge and use the physical, intellectual and intuitive capacities of each and everyone. Thus we should rehabilitate our senses as sources of knowledge so that they can be our guides once more in reality and not simply obsolete organs, because machines have replaced them.

This implies shaking up the whole conception of research according to which any ends are good if they permit the accumulation of knowledge.

The principle of reciprocity between subject and subject are central in the proposals made by women. This presupposes that the object being researched is considered anew as alive and endowed with its own subjectivity.

Furthermore, a new science should never lose sight that we-ourselves are part of nature, have a body, depend on the earth, are born women and are mortal.

Biosphere

Many recent studies of the impact of environmental deterioration on women, especially the poorest women in the South, have highlighted the fact that not only are women and children the main victims of this war against nature, but that women are the most committed and creative members of movement to protect and conserve the environment. Although many have recognised the role of women in protecting the environment, few have mentioned the fact that these grassroots women's movements also implicitly and explicitly criticise the dominant patriarchal and capitalist paradigm of development, oriented towards profit and growth, and recommend a new alternative of subsistence (Shiva). Women are both aware and critical of the way certain policies, laws, scientific approaches and technological choices tend to push them to the sidelines. And there are many who call into question the positivist approach and denounce the more or less institutionalised indifference to women's priorities regarding technologies, in plant selection in the case of agricultural diversity and in that of access to natural resources and to the Earth.

Proposal I: Give greater value to the role of women in conserving biodiversity

Biodiversity is a fabric of relations ensuring balance and permanence: it implies the coexistence and interdependence of resources, their uses and their users.

Women have been the guardians of biodiversity in most cultures since time immemorial. They produce, reproduce, consume and conserve agricultural diversity. However, as with other aspects of women's work and knowledge, their role in the development and conservation of biodiversity has been assimilated with non-work and thus non-recognition. Their work and capacities have been defined as natural (thus without value in the context of patriarchal commercial culture), whereas they are based on sophisticated scientific and cultural practices.

Their knowledge and competencies in biodiversity should be respected and given greater value, for they are the foundations of strategies to improve harvests, and should be taught like any other form of knowledge.

Proposal II: Decommission nuclear power plants and abandon the applications of all technologies that do not serve the interests of humankind

Now, in the 21st century, it is obvious that our scientific systems are completely insufficient for combating and eliminating the risks, whether present or potential, that threaten the Earth and its inhabitants. Each disaster appears to be an experiment, with children used as guinea pigs, that provides us with more knowledge about the effects of lethal substances used in daily production and utilisation. Man is creating an artificial world with genetically modified organisms to prove that anything is possible. The fact that risk of biological war is now looming over the world, in addition to that of nuclear war, should serve to awaken minds to the absurdity of developing lethal technologies.

The systems in place want to silence protest against these poisoned substances, but as mothers women cannot ignore the dangers that threaten their children of now and to come. Children are extremely sensitive to chemical contamination; they suffer deformities and are handicapped after ecological disasters. After Chernobyl, it was women that had to keep children inside buildings, and occupy and calm them. Scientists and politicians who defend nuclear technology and are responsible for the disaster simply attempt to make

soothing and cautionary statements, without having had to have kept children locked up, a task that naturally befalls to women.

Groups set up everywhere during the month after Chernobyl, such as "Women Against Nuclear Power", "Mothers Against Nuclear Energy", "Parents Against Nuclear Energy" to demand that this technology of war against nature be stopped (Shiva, 1993).

They feel it is urgent to establish a relationship with nature based on goodwill and reciprocity. The time has come to end this war against nature, by giving up technologies of destruction (nuclear, genetic, reproduction, etc.) that are based on its dissection. It is time to stop treating nature like an enemy but as a living entity of which human beings are an integral part

Proposal III: Put women to the fore: change the rationale that considers women as subordinate subjects because they create life and men as superior because they destroy it

This entails considering the creation of life rather than its destruction as a truly human occupation and considering the essence of humanity as being its capacity to recognise, respect and protect the right to life.

It is women who ensure the subsistence of their families and communities, and who constitute a driving force in reducing the production of waste and recycling resources. However, they are not invited to participate in the formulation of policies or decision-making concerning the appearance and the regeneration of the environment.

Hence the need to promote the active participation of women in natural resource management and conservation.

Proposal IV: Develop "spirituality" linked to the sacred nature of life

Many women feel that spirituality is identical to the life-force that links us all, and to other forms of life and the elements. The ecological pertinence of this standpoint on spirituality is based on the reassertion of life's sacred nature, according to which life on Earth can only be preserved if people start thinking of all forms of life as sacred and giving them respect as such. This sacredness is not related to an unworldly god, in transcendence, but in everyday life, in our work and in the objects that surround us, in our immanence.

Proposal V: Weave the threads that link our lives with children and the world

In different contexts in both North and South, in ecologically eroded areas and contaminated places, women identify the good of the planet with that of their children to find solutions to the crisis of survival, thus they try to weave the threads that connect their lives with those of their children and the world they live in.

Women do not think that sustainable development can be achieved without environmental justice and that this is impossible without justice between the sexes and generations.

The example of the Chipko women in the Himalayas who organise to combat the destruction of their environment subsequent to the exploitation of their forests illustrates the depth and wealth of this commitment.

Record no. 1 Ecofeminism

by Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies, Editions l'Harmattan 1993

Ecofeminism was founded by different feminist, pacifist and ecological movements during the 1970s and 80s. The term was first used by Françoise d'Eaubonne and has become widely used in a large number of actions against environmental degradation.

The authors quote Ynestra King regarding its definition: "ecofeminism deals with the relations and completeness between theory and practice. It asserts that every living being has its own force and integrity. For us, the snail darter (a small fish of the cyclopteridae family) must be taken into consideration in the same way as the community's need for water, a porpoise in the same way as the desire for tuna, and in the same way as Skylab and the creatures on which it risks falling. We constitute a movement identified as feminist and we believe we have a special task to carry out in these perilous times. We see the devastation of the Earth and its beings by corporate wars and nuclear annihilation by military warriors as feminist problems. These scourges stem from the same male mentality that wants to alienate us from our own bodies and sexuality and which relies on a whole range of systems of government and domination to achieve its ends." p27

When women in different ecologist, pacifist and feminist movements, and above all those concerned by health, also rediscover that everything is interdependent and interconnected, they also rediscover what is called the spiritual dimension of life. The state of awareness of this interconnection has sometimes been called spirituality. The spirit is inherent to everything. (Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies),

and especially to our sensual experience, since we are unable, even with our bodies, to separate the material from the spiritual. The spiritual is the love without which no life can fulfil itself. It is the magic contained in everything. (...)

The ecological pertinence of this insistence on spirituality is founded on the rediscovery of the sacred nature of life according to which life on Earth can only be preserved if people start perceiving all forms of life as sacred and respecting them as such. This sacredness is not related to an unworldly god, in transcendence, but in everyday life, in our work and in the objects that surround us, in our immanence.

The book is published in the form of several chapters made up of separate articles sometimes written by Maria Mies, by Vandana Shiva or both together. They draw from their basic understanding of ecofeminism, which sets out the fundamental needs of life that they term the perspective of subsistence. They think that women are closer to this perspective than men, and that the women of the South who work and live by fighting for their immediate survival are closer to it than the middle class women and men of cities in the industrialised world. However, the bodies of all women and men are directly affected by the destruction meted out by the industrial system. This is why all women and finally all men have a material base that permits them to analyse and change this process.

The authors continue in the chapters that follow to discuss the different questions that have arisen during their combats and reflections. These questions cover many of the issues and problems that confront us today and must be solved if we are to preserve life on this planet: the question of our

concept of knowledge, science and technology, that of poverty and development, that of the industrialisation of all life-forms, the search for identity and roots and the search for self-determination within a finite world.

Lastly, they give their view of a society respectful of nature, women, children and men.

Record no. 2

Rome, 8 April 1988. Preparation of the forum

"The time of women" organised by the women of the Italian Communist party and the journal
RETI

For the civic identity of women

2nd part: The effect of grammatical rules that over-privilege the masculine vis-à-vis the subject
Luce Irigaray

According to Luce Irigaray, a triple dialectic is required in order to restore ethics to politics. That of the masculine subject, that of the feminine subject and that of their relationship in a couple and in the community. She claims the existence of a crisis of identity and puts forward several suggestions for mediation in order to solve this crisis. However, she warns that achieving this mediation requires a twofold effort from women, i.e. the interpretation of their present status not only in economic terms but also in symbolic ones. Analysis of this dual reference now requires much patience from women who work and women that think, think themselves.

Luce Irigaray uses a linguistic study carried out on one hundred and fifty women and a hundred men to demonstrate the impact of grammatical rules that generally over-value the masculine on the representation that the subject portrays of itself and of the other. The results confirmed the following facts on possible and impossible relations between the sexes: Men designate themselves or other men as the subjects of a sentence. Men speak and communicate with each other, though rarely address women except when the content of the message places them in a position of mothering (e.g. they sometimes complain to "her"). Women rarely designate themselves or other women as the subjects of their sentences. They place men in the position of the subject of their statements far more often. When women use *I* as the subject of a sentence, this female *I* is usually addressed to a man and not to one or more women, nor does it refer to herself (i.e. I ask myself, I look at myself, I gather my thoughts, etc.).

Luce Irigaray interprets this type of response as a difficulty of women to: represent themselves, express themselves as an empirical subject, respect their mothers and other women as being different from themselves, set themselves examples, and conceive projects, ideals, divinities, etc.

This raises a certain number of ethical problems since it means that men are almost the only subjects and only interlocutors in verbal dialogues. There is nothing surprising about this, since to manage a city, earn money and govern communities men have appropriated the rules and norms of discourse. As for women, whose reproductive and household tasks do not require that they use sophisticated linguistic codes, their language is reduced to the minimum. They speak of others – men and children – and what they say concerns immediate and concrete things. In their relations with themselves, all that matters is their appearance for seduction and questions concerning motherhood and education. On the other hand, men above all speak of the competitive production of consumable and tradable objects. Thus becoming a man implies standing away from oneself and one's living environment and entering into a coded universe to acquire the capacity to compete, wage war, etc. In spite of exceptions to these norms and social and linguistic rules they are maintained by a fabric of customs and attributions of values.

Proposal:

1/ Compared to the male discourse, Luce Irigaray observes that statements made by women include subjective and objective values that should be retained, whereas others should be acquired. Women pay much more attention to setting the stage for their relationship with the other sex. Their statements illustrate an attraction for relations with the other sex that stem from the culture they live in. They are more interested in others in general. They are more attentive to the question of place: they are closer to things and others (corresponding to the Indo-European roots of the verb *be*). They are more concerned about the nature of persons, things and actions, since their discourses contain more adjectives and adverbs than those of men. They are more interested in the present and the future while men seem more concerned by the past. They are more concerned about the message they want to convey.

2/ Access by women to work, public life and social relations requires linguistic changes. For them, it is vital to structure representations in another way so as to change linguistic norms often considered as unimportant because so ingrained in different cultures (e.g. the neutral subject is invariably masculine in French). To start with, she also proposes that a law be voted to require that plurals with mixed feminine and masculine components should be feminine one year and masculine the next. This genuinely democratic procedure would undoubtedly have an effect on the inertia of linguistic norms.

Comment: Although this linguistic study was not exhaustive, it shows to what point language structures thought and social perceptions. Priority should be given to changing systems of values and perceptions through language in order to give women the status of subject so that they can at last express themselves and be heard as they should, as half of humankind.

Key words: feminine, masculine, linguistics, identity, proposals, values, perceptions, politics.

Bibliography

- Andrée Michel " Le féminisme ". Que sais-je. Ed Puf
- Andrée Michel " Citoyennes militairement incorrectes ". Collection Femmes et changements. Ed l'Harmattan 1999
- " Pour nous-mêmes, les femmes lisent le Coran ". Edition Women Living Under Muslim Laws Coordination Internationale, 1998
- Renate Siebert "Le Sud des femmes ". Femmes et pouvoir. Peuples méditerranéens n°48-49. Juill-déc 1989.
- Carolyn Merchant " The death of Nature, women, ecology and the scientific revolution " Harper and Row. San Francisco 1983.
- Vandana Shiva et Maria Mies " Ecoféminisme " ed l'Harmattan 1993
- Luce Irigaray " Pour une identité civile des femmes " Rome, 8 April 1988. Preparation for the The time of women forum; Organised by the women of the Italian Communist Party and the journal RETI
- Ina Preatorius " A la recherche de la condition Feminina " A plea for an ecumenism of women Marche Mondiale des femmes: <http://www.ffq.qc.ca/marche2000/fr>
- Nadia Leïla Aïssaoui & Edith Sizoo " Réconcilier le masculin et le féminin ". Atelier de Delhi. 1997
- Caroline Brac de la Perrière & Nadia Leïla Aïssaoui " Femmes et paix ". Atelier de la Haye. 1998.
- Hannah Arendt " La condition de l'homme moderne ". Les paradoxes de la mondialisation. Cahiers du Gedisst n°21. Ed l'Harmattan.
- Colette Guillaumin " Sexe, race et pratique de pouvoir; l'idée de nature" Côté-femmes éditions. Paris, 1992
- Lilli Horvat "féminisme et culture de paix" in Nouvelles questions féministes n°11-12 la militarisation et les violences à l'égard des femmes
- Christine Delphy "L'ennemi principal tome 2 Penser le genre" ed. Syllepses 2001
- Nicole -Claude Mathieu "L'anatomie politique" Catégorisations et idéologies du sexe, Côté-femmes éditions, Paris 1991.
- Monique Wittig "la pensée straight"ed. Balland, Paris, 2001.
- Jan Bauer "Seul le silence te protègera: les femmes la liberté d'expression et le langage des droits de l'homme". Essays on human rights and democratic development no. 6 , edition Centre international des droits de la personne et du développement démocratique, Montréal 1996
- Margaret Schuler ed. From Basic needs to basic rights Women, Law and Development International, 1995.
- Dictionnaire critique du féminisme sous la coordination de Helena Hirata; Françoise Laborie; Hélène Le doaré; Danièle Senotier. Ed PUF, Paris, 2000.
- United Nations Fund for Populations, Report 2000 on violence against women. Hilka Pietila and Jeanne Vickers "Making women matter. The role of the United Nations", Zed Books 1994
- Symposium "Women, sexuality and social changes in Mediterranean and Middle East Region" Press statement. Istanbul October 2001
- François Loncle " L'Europe de l'Ouest, proxénète des femmes de l'Est ". P 8. Le monde diplomatique. November 2001.
- Plate forme du groupe Femmes et mondialisation du Mouvement ATTAC- France

The following people collaborated in writing this proposal booklet

Aissaoui Nadia: Alliance for a responsible and united world (Algeria/France)
Baba Aïssa Fouzia: New ways (Algeria)
Brac de la Perrière, Caroline: New Ways (Algeria/France)
Buttin Christine: New Ways (France)
Chérifati Doria: University of Algiers (Algeria)
Giral Marta: New Ways (France/Spain)
Gross Nasrine: (Afghanistan/ USA)
Ilkcaracan Pinar: WWHR (Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR))- New Ways (Turkey)
Kozyreva Yevgeniya: Feminist League (Russia)
Lavecchia Rosa: (Argentina)
Menon Sen Kalyani Undp (India)
Ronge Karin WWHR- New Ways (Germany/Turkey)
Santiago Quindoza Lilia, University of the Philippines (Philippines)
Sibazuri Marie Louise: Playwright (Burundi/Belgium)
Yaziji Nawal Syria Women's League (Syria)
Lipszyc Cecilia University of Buenos Aires, ADEUM (Argentina)
Tuininga Marlene, Foundation for the Progress of Humanity (France)

Participants of the electronic forum

Christine Molle (France)
Cécile Sabourin (Canada)
Claudine Drion (Belgium)
Edith Sizoo (Holland)
Janaina Mattos (Brazil)
Malika Bounfour (Algeria)
Sangita Prasad (India)
Khadidja Benadieu (Canada)
Nahhed Uzma (India)
René Grenier (France)
Marion Lary (France)
Louise Yanga (Cameroon)
Anna Maria Vidal (Spain)
Shelley Anderson (IFOR Holland)
Julia Kharashvili (Georgia)
Kanta Devi (Bangladesh)
Anny Poursinoff (France)