



Informationsbrief

Weltwirtschaft & Entwicklung

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Exactly ten years ago the United Nations World Conference on Women adopted the Beijing Platform for Action – a comprehensive action package to globalise women's rights. The Heinrich Böll Foundation will take this as an opportunity to host an international conference in Berlin this coming September. We will contribute to this conference with two Special Issues: In the present first issue, Barbara Unmüßig gives a short introduction into the state of affairs ten years after Beijing. Charlotte Bunch sketches the challenges women's policy is facing after the 10-year review by the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York. Christa Wichterich looks at the perspectives of gender equality and social justice in view of neo-liberal globalisation. Gitti Hentschel examines activities and strategies developed by women to overcome gender blindness in national and international foreign and security policy. And finally, she also presents approaches which – despite all obstacles and opposition – promise true potential for the Federal Republic of Germany.

Sustainable Success but Fundamentally Puzzled:

Gender Perspectives in the 21st Century

The 1995 UN World Conference on Women in Beijing was a milestone in the history of international women's politics and the impetus for numerous government initiatives world-wide for more equality between the genders. A large number of actors from civil society and government were able to achieve a historic consensus that women's rights are human rights; that gender justice is a basic precondition for socially and economically just development; that it must be a constituent element of democracy and that all countries commit themselves to systematic and public women's and gender policy. From the standpoint of women's rights, this was an interim result of the centuries-old project to overcome women's exclusion from the political domain:

- Women have won terrain both on the political and economic levels. In the past 25 years, women have caught up significantly in the fields of education and health. The income disparity between the genders has also declined noticeably.
- Moreover, in the context of economic globalisation, women's participation in gainful employment has increased on nearly all continents. New workplaces and income sources essential for women's survival have been created.
- Some improvements have also been made in women's participation in institutional politics, science and the economy. In international organisations such as the World Bank and the UN organisations,

important institutional courses have been set for the political and social equality of women and men with global impact (see the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women – CEDAW).

Continuing discrimination in all regions

Despite all the successes that have advanced women as actors in social change, discrimination of women still characterises nearly every field of political and social life in all regions of the world. The type and scope of discrimination varies enormously from country to country. However, most women are affected by similar forms of inequality:

- Women have fewer social, economic and political rights.
- Their income opportunities are worse and they have nearly no own property at their disposal. Today the income gap between men and women is still a global average of approximately 30%, even if it varies greatly according to country and industry. Despite a high proportion of women employed, women continue to perform the greater part of the socially invisible and at the same time extremely underpaid or even unpaid care work. 70% of the global poor are female. In reform projects in social, labour market and employment policy issues of gender justice continue to play a subordinate role.
- Women have significantly fewer opportunities for political participation and oc-

cupy significantly fewer central power positions in politics and the economy. However sobering this balance, international gender and women's policy is on the defensive, has no real lobby within governments. Legal accomplishments and the course set, such as the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), are repeatedly called into question and disputed by religious and political fundamentalists. It is already a political success if such attacks, like those by the USA, can be thwarted as in the recent New York session of the Commission on the Status of Women (see W&E 04/2005).

The international women's movements and women's networks worldwide have relied increasingly on institutional change and above all on the United Nations as frame of reference. Yet even here there has been a rude awakening.

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Femme Globale (I)

In the context of reforming the United Nations and balancing of the UN conferences of the 90s (see note), the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women has played a subordinate role. Even directly following the 49th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), held in New York at the beginning of March and now exclusively devoted to the 10-year assessment of the Beijing agreements, Kofi Annan's report to the UN General Assembly "In Larger Freedom" (see W&E 04/2005) contained not a single significant reference to the challenges of global gender justice and its implementation in the UN. The strong concentration of international policy, including the NGOs' campaigns, on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has diluted the broad social and legal policy approach of the Beijing Platform for Action and reduced the necessary economic and political gender justice to a few indicators in the fight against poverty. Even NGO campaigns

like the *Global Call for Action against Poverty* are shockingly gender-blind.

Women's movement in crisis

Women's movements and actors are in a political crisis nearly everywhere throughout the world. How can the political initiative be regained? Which strategies can again turn gender justice into a mobilising issue? Hasn't the strategy of institutional policy such as gender mainstreaming led to a dead-end? Or to put it another way, how can gender justice again become a category of socio-political transformation? Despite all the doubts, perceived political impotence, deliberate obstacles and the organisational fragmentation of the women's movement and its political core: the discussions on regaining political influence and power have begun. They are still tough to conduct with much critical retrospection, self-reflection and differentiation. This is because more than ever, there is no homogenous collective subject in women's policy or feminism.

The enormous social and political differentiation, the hierarchies between women (and men) have to be understood as a challenge. Women's and gender policy cannot avoid making issues of the heterogeneity and complexity of social and economic context, social norms and relations of domination if they want to regain the capacity for political action. Above all, it is mainly women who suffer from this failure to pursue these issues continuously. With the guideline *Gender Democracy (Geschlechterdemokratie; see reference)*, the Heinrich Böll Foundation has attempt-

ed for some years, together with its partners worldwide, to contribute to changing the prevailing power relationships between genders and to the struggle for equal rights to political and economic participation and implementation of human rights. Ten years after Beijing, we extend our invitation to Berlin for an international congress: "Femme Globale: Gender Perspectives in the 21st Century", from 8 – 10 September 2005 (see details on page 8). We want to place important current and future areas of political action in the centre of the discussion of international gender justice – global labour market policy, peace and security, information society as well as global bio-policy. The conference will be accompanied by information supplied on the internet (www.glow-boell.de) and by publications such as these Special Issues of *Weltwirtschaft & Entwicklung* ("World Economy & Development").

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- * Feministisches Institut (Feminist Institute) der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2000: *Die großen UN-Konferenzen der 90er Jahre – eine frauenpolitische Bilanz* („The Big U.N. Conferences of the Nineties – A Women's Policy Review“), Berlin (www.glow-boell.de)
- * Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung: *Die Gemeinschaftsaufgabe Geschlechterdemokratie in der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung* („Gender Democracy at the Heinrich Böll Foundation – A Common Task“), Berlin (www.boell.de)

geopolitical questions of the global context that impedes implementation of the BPfA. They look at the impact on women of militarism and armed conflict, of inequitable globalisation, and of fundamentalisms that seek to re-entrench patriarchal power over women. This was also the space where women could bring up emerging issues not covered adequately in the platform such as sexual rights, HIV-AIDS, widows and other minorities. Another challenge addressed by the side events is how to defend the human rights of the defenders advocating for women's rights who often face intense repression and ostracism, personal attacks on their morality and sexuality, etc. from family and community as well as organized religious forces. A campaign to "defending women defending rights" has been organized to address this issue.

How to strengthen the UN's commitment in a time of backlash

The Resolutions adopted at the CSW included a proposal to consider appointing a Special Rapporteur on Laws that Discriminate Against Women (2000 commitment from BPfA) and new resolutions on Indigenous Women, Economic Advancement, and Women and Natural Disasters which represented gains based on women's organizing as well as commitment to making CSW a more effective instrument. Resources are needed and the challenge is how to strengthen the UN and national government's institutional commitment to gender equality in a time of backlash.

After 30+ years of focus on women's rights in the UN context, gender sensitive norms and strategies have been evolving – in conference programs but also through national plans of action, UN agency programs, CEDAW and other international and regional Human Rights instruments. This is a rich body of work to draw upon. However, the national and international commitment to the resources and institutional infrastructure necessary to realize these evolving norms and strategies at every level – local to global – has not grown adequately with the demands.

Progress requires both more effective gender mainstreaming and effectively resourced women-specific units. UN reform should include upgrading of the gender related mechanisms within the UN as well as more serious commitment to gender integration and to advancing women in high level positions.

Advancing gender equality and women's human rights is not 'rocket science.' There are many practical strategies to address this, but it requires deeper commitments not only to resources but also to changes in institutional attitudes. For example, why has it been so difficult – nationally and globally – to even approach the goal set in Beijing of a critical mass of at least 30% women in political decision making nationally and at the UN? We know how to make it happen: affirmative action measures. Look at Ruanda which now number 1 in percentage of women in government; similarly almost all those countries that

Reflections on Beijing+10 and Challenges for Women's Human Rights:

No Strong UN without Stronger Inclusion of Women

At the Beijing +10 session of the Commission on the Status of Women last March, the promise of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) was reaffirmed and remains a building block in the interpretation of the meaning of human rights from the perspective of women's lives – despite initial opposition from the US. While some said that the BPfA does not create 'new rights', what has been gained throughout the past three decades is a growing body of work interpreting human rights from the perspective of women's lives.

Continuing strength of the global women's movement

From the convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to the BPfA, to the work of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and the work on integration of gender into other areas of human rights – these interpretations have evolved especially since the early 1990's. These are not 'new rights' per se, but they are the application to women's lives of the

human rights principles spelled out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – to freedom of speech and assembly, to freedom from torture and degrading treatment in all spheres, to food, shelter, property rights, meaningful work, etc. The challenge now is to continue in this process of interpreting human rights from the perspective of all women's lives – in spite of backlash against it – and to find more effective responses to cultural undertow of resistance to women's rights that runs deep in all our societies. Thousands of advocates for women's rights from all over the world attended the Beijing + 10 review with the high energy of record numbers as at Beijing and Beijing + 5. There was also great diversity – governmental ministers and grass roots activists – and diversity of age and race, sexualities, culture and religion, from every region of the world etc. This presence and the side events on strategies demonstrated the strength of the global women's movement and continuing importance of issues of gender equality and women's human rights.

These side events also took up the big

have reached critical mass had some affirmative action in the parties or national structures.

Take the BPfA into the Millennium+5 summit

One point of major agreement in the Beijing +10 process was the need to take the BPfA and gender equality forward into the Millennium+5 summit. It has been demonstrated that women's participation and empowerment is central to ending poverty in communities, to children's well being, to stemming the HIV/AIDS crisis, to peace-making and peace-keeping, etc. The Millennium Declaration states that empowerment of women is an effective way "to combat poverty, hunger, disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable," and it resolves to combat violence against women and to implement CEDAW. Yet, so little political capital and even fewer real resources have been expended toward these goals of gender equality that one has to question the commitment to this rhetoric. When every CSW resolution requires the statement that "there are no resource implications," to it, one asks: Are governments serious about these issues? Of course resources are needed and greater political will also. Another challenge therefore is to take the BPfA and Beijing +10 into the Millennium +5 summit and seek recognition that gender is central to all the MDGs as well as to the Security and Human Rights agendas. These are the places where the UN agenda is being determined for the next decade. For example, no issue better illustrates the insecurity that plagues half the world's population than violence against women. Yet, the MDGs and the report of the Secretary General barely mention it and especially not as an aspect of security as well as of rights and development. Implementing Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security must be seen as an integral part of peace-keeping if peace is to prevail.

Beijing +10 demonstrated again that women are one of the strongest constituencies supporting the UN in a time of grave threats to multilateralism. Discussions of reform of the UN in all areas – MDGs to the Human Rights Council and Security Council – must reflect gender perspectives and include women as decision-makers.

The purpose of a stronger UN – to promote peace, security, human rights, and sustainable development – is of critical importance to women and cannot be achieved without the inclusion of women and of gender equality. The opportunity is here to ensure that inclusion of women now in the changes being discussed for the Millennium +5 summit. Women must be present or we will be working to catch up later.

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The Impact of Neo-liberal Globalisation:

Gender Equality and Social Justice Ten Years after Beijing

In the same year as 189 governments signed a multilateral agreement for the globalisation of women's rights and gender equality, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), the World Trade Organization began its work globalising the global governance regime of market liberalisation. The BPfA sets new standards of social and economic justice for all women, demands the elimination of gender-specific discrimination in access to resources and employment as well as a review of macro-economic policies from a gender perspective. The WTO as well sets universal standards, namely for free trade and minimised government interventions in the markets, for market access and competition, and promises thereby to increase growth, wealth and the living standards of all people. Ten years later, various UN organisations reviewed whether the crucial concept of the BPfA to globalise women's rights was realised in the face of the neo-liberal globalisation process. Did liberalisation, deregulation, and privatisation create economic and social win-win-situations for women? Does economic restructuring advance gender equality?

Macro-economic opportunity structures?

One central axis of women's experience in the post-Beijing decade was the weight of neo-liberal globalisation. As a result of neoliberal policies based on the Washington Consensus, the macro-economic conditions have changed since 1995. Inflation, which made the supply of essentials for women in many countries a daily price struggle, has been reduced worldwide. However, this stabilisation success did not eliminate the risk of crises. Rather as a result of liberalisation of financial markets and lack of control over capital flows, the risks of financial volatility grew. As experienced in the Asia crisis, the instability effects of a financial crisis are downloaded on the paid and unpaid work of women, making their livelihoods more insecure.

Apart from China and a small number of South East Asian states, market liberalisation resulted in only low growth rates and did not eradicate poverty. In most regions, the employment crisis with a broad unemployment base, declining formal employment and growing informal employment make existence more difficult to secure. The result is rising income inequality both between countries and within the societies. Public institutions are being forced to cut spending due to lower tax and customs revenues and higher indebtedness, leading to the dismantling of public services and hindering the access of the poor to essential services and social security. According to the UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD, see references), neo-

liberal policies taken as a whole create more inequality and unfavourable conditions for gender justice.

Precarious progress: Feminisation of employment

Nonetheless: women are seen as the job winners of globalisation, benefiting from capital mobility and foreign direct investment. Where countries with labour-intensive export production have entered the world market, women were a competitive advantage as a source of cheap labour: e.g. in the clothing, electronics and toy industries, non-traditional agricultural export sectors such as vegetable, fruit and flower production, and in the service sector with pink-collar jobs based on the information and communication technologies.

The question is how much of the objective formulated in the Beijing Platform for Action – "women's economic rights and independence" – was achieved through the feminisation of employment. Did modernisation and adjustment of economic structures result in women's empowerment and emancipation from social destitution, poverty, and patriarchal subordination?

Since the First World Conference on Women in Mexico, there has been a quantum leap for women in the employment markets. 40% of all income earners today are female, 1975 it was only half as many. Most women are concentrated in flexible, temporary, casual and unprotected employment with low income, poor working conditions, without social or legal security. A comparatively small number of middle class women managed to advance to medium income, management and prestige positions in government and media, commerce and financial services. Thus, progress made in terms of job gains is ambivalent and extremely uneven not only between regions but also among women in the individual countries.

On the one hand, the market liberalisation destroys livelihoods and previous subsistence oriented economies. Small peasant agriculture dominated by women farmers in many regions of the world is in a process of erosion in the course of new expropriation of land and resources, and due to the import of highly subsidised agricultural products from the North. Cheap imports of consumer goods out-compete local artisans and small industries.

On the other hand, trade liberalisation accelerates the access of women to employment like a revolving door – spins them in and also out again. In the intensified cost-cutting global competition, relocation to cheaper production sites and informalisation are two methods whereby women's jobs are made extremely insecure. The "race to the bottom" leads to new relocation waves for production – above all, currently to China – intensified by the lapse

of the World Textile Agreement. Textile workers in Sri Lanka and Mexico lose their factory jobs and change to the informal economy where they are trying to earn a living e.g. by either working in sweatshops or subcontracted homework for export at worse pay or self-employed in street trade. Thus in many countries, de-feminisation of industrial production is already occurring.

Integration, but no equality

Governments deregulate and make labour markets flexible so as to adjust them to the interests of investors. Women as cheap wage labour, as so-called supplementary earners, as prototypes for casual labour and discontinuous professional careers are pushed into the most flexible employment sectors within this global dumping competition. In the entire production and trade chain, from the Chilean fruit plantations to the Canadian supermarket, women do most of the informal, seasonal and low-wage work; the permanent work is done mostly by men. Gender-specific division of labour has also been created in the information and communication sector: women predominate in the lowly-paid data processing and call centre jobs, often performed as homework or in small offices: men are more in well paid programming work. According to the ILO, women “stick” to such informal insecure or precarious work without career chances – with the result that 60% of the working poor are women. Two indicators illustrate that despite increasing women’s employment, gender inequality persists. For one, there has been no change in segregation within the labour markets: women predominate in few, mainly the low wage segments. Often the growing share of women coincides with a devaluation of work. Secondly, the gender wage gap has not narrowed substantially. It is especially large in high skilled labour, for elderly employed and it widens with investment liberalisation and export orientation, presently e.g. in China. Where it has declined in Latin American countries, this is often due to decreasing wages for men. Even where young women are not only equally well educated but have a qualification advantage over men, this does not translate into equal employment and income opportunities. Due to the lack of bargaining power, women workers have not been able to translate productivity increases into wage increases, e.g. in the Bangladesh textile sector while at the same time, companies were able to nearly double their profits. This implies that wage discrimination against women still is the motor for export-oriented development strategies.

Transnational mobility of the economic resource woman

Ever more women are forced by various survival crises to search for new ways to earn a living in the global markets. Increase in mobility and migration of women, both within and beyond the borders of their home countries, imply chances for women to leave traditional gender regimes, and take on new roles, especially as breadwinners for their families. Currently, transna-

tional migration is becoming more temporary, more undocumented and more feminised. Women constitute half of the 180 million people migrating worldwide. Particularly in Asia, ever more women are leaving their home countries on their own and not for family reunification.

In the destination countries, the market induces new social differentiations: a small elite, usually recruited specialists, find high-skilled well-paid jobs while a second group of legal immigrants obtain restricted work permits for the processing industries, plantations or services. However, the largest group works informally and unprotected in private households, in sweatshops and the entertainment industries, often despite good education in the home country.

Regardless of income—women count as reliable remitters to their families. Remittances from immigrants of USD 100 billion annually (compared with ODA funds of around USD 70 billion) are seen increasingly as a significant contribution to the development of the countries of origin, and migration is considered to be a means of poverty reduction. Ironically the liberalised financial markets profit even from this method of fighting poverty: transnational banking groups charge high fees for the money transfers made by migrants.

Governments are more concerned to choke the inflows of work-seeking people through immigration laws or to target shortages in the domestic labour market through green card rules than to guarantee female migrants fundamental social and economic rights. The trans-national corridors in which Mafia-like networks make enormous profits on the commodification and enslavement of women constitute extreme poles of human rights violations in the global markets. Again, governments have failed to take legal action, enforce human rights in these lawless areas and protect women from trans-national criminals, despite new laws against the booming business of trafficking.

Modernisation of the division of labour – internationalisation of care work

Growing employment of women has left one fundamental element of gender inequality virtually untouched: the gender-specific division of unpaid labour. Women spend twice as much time as men with unpaid care and reproductive labour within the household and community.

More waged labour means additional stress and time poverty for women often compounding resource and income poverty. Wherever the State does not help women to reconcile paid and care work by offering childcare, women are forced to find individual solutions. They take on flexible and casual labour or part-time jobs although these are poorly paid. Grandmothers, aunts and daughters take care of the youngest. Well-paid professional women solve the problem by employing cheap cleaners and nurses for the children and the elderly, often undocumented migrants, who in turn leave their children in the care of female relatives or neighbours. Men’s chronic abstinence from care work has been only

slowly reduced, even where governments – such as those in Northern and Western Europe – provide paid “parental leave” to allow men to care for small children and be more active fathers.

Thus a new allocation of care work has taken place around the world but not – as hoped by women’s movements – between men and women. Instead a global care chain has emerged between women of various social classes, ethnic groups and countries. For poor women, additional pressure on their time and household budget arises from cutbacks in public budgets and privatisation. The tendency to dismantle public services while introducing cost sharing and user fees, and to privatise the health and educational sectors as well as infrastructural provisions such as water supply makes access to essential services more expensive, and forces women to assume more care work into their household economy. This additional burden has taken dramatic proportions with the care of AIDS patients in Africa.

Only in a few industrialised countries is it possible for women to derive pension claims from their unpaid care work. The bulk of the labour performed by women – unpaid, informal, unprotected and low-waged – does not pay in terms of social security. This makes the survival of elderly women more precarious where the traditional social safety nets collapse, the States cut social supports, introduce pension reforms and women with poor and irregular income cannot afford any private insurance. Thus dismantling of the public sector and privatisation intensify the social differentiation within societies among women.

Is the neo-liberal regime capable of justice?

Globalised markets constitute a terrain of power struggles: Whose rights will be enforced? Which violations of rights will be sanctioned? Are the social and economic rights formulated in BPfA even compatible with the rights of investors and owners of capital imposed by the WTO-regime?

Open markets and free trade integrate more women into the global value chain, global supply streams and information highways. A growing number of young, high skilled middle class women have achieved parity with men in their professional and income career. However, the majority labour under flexible conditions, which are inexpensive and profitable for business and exploitative for women, decoupled from social security. Flexibilisation and economic volatility make securing a livelihood extremely precarious under the regime of turbo-globalisation.

Governments are faced with the dual obligation of implementing both the Beijing Platform for Action and the WTO’s neo-liberal agenda. Subjected to intensified competition, they pursue the priority objective to strengthen comparative advantage and attract investors. To do this they de-regulate and flexibilise markets instead of imposing workers’ rights, anti-discrimination measures, social standards and

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living wages on the private sector. At the same time, the WTO-agreements urge them to reregulate markets in favour of foreign investors, and budget constraints force them to de-invest in the social sector and privatise. Amazingly, even for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) gender-specific inequality of access to employment, resources and social security as causes of the feminisation of poverty is not made a key issue.

Ten years after Beijing, women's increased participation in the market economy has not led to a redistribution of resources and wealth or to a shift in the parameters of economic power. Countries gain competitive advantage and promote economic growth by allowing wage and resource discrimination against women. The violation of the social and economic rights of women has proven to be a structural principle of neo-liberal globalisation. The market uses gender as a vehicle for constant social differentiation and flexible adjustment of human resources to the demands of corporate profitability.

A perspective of justice has to transcend the numbers game of gender quotas and parity and the efficiency approaches like those of the World Bank, that want to transform women into a *homo oeconomicus* fit for global competition and productivity increases. Rather liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation must again be subjected to the fundamental criterion of their ability to generate justice and redistribute the tremendous wealth created. No gender justice is possible in unfair economic and trade structures.

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References:

● The following is outstanding among the reviews:

* United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2005: *Gender Equality. Striving for Justice in an Unequal World*, UNRISD: Geneva (www.unrisd.org)

● Additional fundamental information can be found here:

* International Labour Organisation, 2003, *Global Employment Trends*, ILO: Geneva (www.ilo.org)

* UNCTAD, 2004: *Trade and Gender. Opportunities and Challenges for Developing Countries*, United Nations: Geneva (www.unctad.org)

* UN Economic and Social Council, 2004: *Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the 21st Century"*, Report of the Secretary-General, E/CN.6/2005/2, United Nations: New York

* United Nations, 2005: *2004 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development. Women and International Migration*, United Nations: New York

Women have an „important role... in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building“. They must “fully participate in all efforts for maintenance and promotion of peace and security and ... their participation in the decisions with respect to prevention and resolution of conflicts (must be) increased.” Since its adoption by the UN Security Council on 31 October 2000, this declaration in UN resolution 1325 has become binding international law. It has been substantiated by international studies: “The systematic exclusion of women from official peace processes has had a detrimental effect on the sustainability of peace agreements” (UNIFEM 2002), and: “When women are present the nature of the dialogue changes” (UN Secretary-General 2002).

Nonetheless, there are still very few women occupying central positions in the field of security policy and exercising decision-making power on a par with men in negotiations about war and peace, post-war reconstruction or on other central issues of conflict management. The prevailing security strategies remain “gender blind”; i.e. they consider gender relations for the development and dynamics of (armed) conflict mostly irrelevant. Given the number of current international conflicts and military interventions and in the interest of exhausting all—civil—possibilities for crisis prevention and conflict management, the gender perspective is on the global agenda just as much as the consistent participation of women in the decisions about war-relevant processes and measures to promote peace.

Women in peace policy and conflict management

For decades women have been principal actors in the resistance to war and armed conflict at local, national and international levels, even if this does not mean that women are more peace-loving than men. Just like men, they are responsible for wars. However, their socially designated roles provide them with other forms of action. There is a “female face to war” (Wassmuth 2002), which manifests itself in that women justify and defend violent confrontations, act as supporters and carers to combatants, as nurses and helpers. They also belong to the fighting troops of an army or liberation movement and are directly involved as perpetrators (e.g. in the Rwanda genocide) – a fact which is hardly discussed due to role clichés. On the other hand, women also play an essential role in the consolidation and reconstruction of destroyed societies (see Europäisches Parlament 2000, UNIFEM 2002, UN Secretary-General 2002).

Their exclusion from the formal levels of conflict management is in crass contradiction to their active role in civil society – especially considering that they bear the principal suffering from wars – together with other civilians – above all children and the aged.

● Activities at national level

Many women who have experienced and survived violence, suffering and social and economic hardships develop new economic and political abilities in the absence of men. In this exceptional situation, arising from war or the post-conflict environment, they to some extent break with stereotypical societal gender roles and assume new, non-traditional roles. They often find support in new women's initiatives and other NGOs engaged in humanitarian aid, where women comprise an especially large proportion of activists. Particularly those women, who were socially and culturally disadvantaged before the war and know family violence, experience this as “liberation”. However, when the men return from war and captivity, many women are pushed back into their positions and return to their traditional women's roles. For example, this could be seen in many parts of ex-Yugoslavia, and it is particularly likely when the state institutions and political decision-making bodies remain male dominated and women find no institutional backing. Often their lack of resistance is attributed to the desire for a return to “normalcy”. The return to traditional gender roles also means a lost opportunity to introduce sustained socio-cultural changes.

As a result of experiences of war and violence, concern for men involved, sons, husbands, fathers, desperation, threats and humiliations, women often join peace organisations and anti-war groups or found their own initiatives. Most of them are active at regional or national level and try to make an impact through public protest. To some extent women's peace organisations deliberately exploit traditional gender role stereotypes, for example, the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* (“Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo”) in Argentina, which attained world fame in the 70s. Since the role of mother and caring wife enjoys special authority in society, women who become active for personal motives such as the disappearance of their husbands or impressment of their sons are conceded protest that normally would be subjected to massive state repression or social opposition during times of war or in generally repressive societies. Thus their reference to traditional gender roles can even be seen as subversive under repressive regimes. However, it is also a trap

since this link potentially reinforces traditional gender role clichés. Other initiatives such as “Women in Black”, first active in Israel, have become models for world-wide women’s protests, e.g. against the war in ex-Yugoslavia and Afghanistan. Their approach is to bring the women from the conflicting parties together for joint vigils.

Other and especially more recent women’s peace activities want to exercise direct political influence and participation. They draw on the concept of women’s / human rights developed by feminists in the 90s. The so-called “Sixth Clan” in Somalia is an example: during the wars among the five established clans in the 90s, women created a cross-clan alliance and attempted to stop the violent conflicts by exerting pressure. When in May 2000, the men in the five Somali clans finally conducted peace negotiations, the excluded women from the various clans formed their own clan. By applying massive pressure they imposed a women’s quota in a transitional parliament and won at least 10% of the seats for women of their choice. In addition more women were elected from the other clans. The charter for rights of women, children and minorities adopted in the parliament as a result is considered one of the most progressive in the Islamic world—thanks to the unremitting efforts by the women and their coalition.

● *Women’s activities at the international level*

In the 90s, women’s movements and organisations have also been active at the international level for adequate participation of women in conflict situations, peace negotiations and post-war reconstruction – drawing on the women’s rights concept. Particularly important is the UN-recognised “NGO Working Group on Women and International Peace and Security” which was formed by numerous renowned peace organisations and women’s rights organisations after the 1995 Beijing women’s conference and was then called “Coalition on Women and International Peace and Security”. It prepares reports and studies, etc. about the status of implementation of UN Resolution 1325, the most important statement of women’s peace policy. However, it does not try to exercise direct political influence. Among its members are the Women’s Caucus for Gender Justice, International Peace Research Association and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF; in Germany: “Internationale Frauenliga für Frieden und Freiheit” – IFFF). WILPF is the oldest and largest peace policy women’s organisation in the world. Founded in 1915 by about 1,200 “women from the warring and neutral states”, as a protest against the war raging in Europe, WILPF has national branches in various countries and enjoys “consultative status at the UN and its subsidiary organisations and ...is accredited and engages in intensive lobbying for women’s rights and peace issues” (self description).

In addition, two UN institutions, the CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discriminations against Women) and UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women), are of major importance for the women’s and peace policy lobbying at the UN. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) monitors implementation of the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. UNIFEM conducts women’s peace conferences and international studies on the situation of women, supports women in electoral processes in conflict-troubled regions and monitors reform processes in the interest of women’s rights. As representatives of civil society, together with actors from the (inter)national women’s movements, they contributed the interests, perspectives and demands to the numerous UN conferences in the 90s. Through high levels of expertise, targeted strategies and clever tactics, they performed tough lobbying and with persistent negotiating skills brought these into numerous final documents (Feministisches Institut/DGVN 2000). These documents are an instrument for the women’s movements to pursue their interests and rights internationally and in their own countries (see box).

Women’s approaches for peace-keeping and conflict management in the globalised world

Since the end of the 90s and the end of the East-West confrontation, international politics and security policy discourses exhibit different trends. On the one hand military and military alliances have been called increasingly into question. Concepts of civilian conflict management have received greater attention and a new understanding of security as “human security” has emerged. On the other hand, there has been a militarisation wave in the Western world – even in Germany, which has become a new power factor in Europe – given the background of globalisation, the collapse of states in individual regions and the “new wars”. For the Federal Republic of Germany, this has meant a paradigm shift from its traditional defence policy to (potential) intervention policy manifested in new military concepts and security strategies.

With this situation and the extremely hesitant implementation of UN documents of the 90s relevant for women’s policy and UN Resolution 1325, women’s policy and feminist peace and security activities have struggled for more attention world-wide since the beginning of the new century. A trans-national understanding and co-operation can be found between actors from different generations and advocates of different approaches. Their concepts for action draw on socio-political changes and the discussions and experiences since the 90s. As the March 2005 session of the UN Commission on the Rights of Women showed, these concepts are shaped by the recognition that international women’s lob-

bying in the UN context consumes enormous resources and energy and despite the successes has led to a de-radicalisation of the political ideas and demands.

Often there was scarcely any communication between actors engaged at international and local or national levels. The result: the content of the conferences and the UN Resolution 1325 as well as the work of the UN women’s policy institutions such as CEDAW and UNIFEM are little known among women’s peace organisations working regionally and base-orientated, although their work is coupled to the targets. This is a contradiction that established and newly created organisations try to resolve by emphasising links between local, national and international levels and networking. Thus local and national fields of action again gain in significance in the sense of “think global, act local”. In order to communicate the substance of UN Resolution 1325, for example the WILPF initiated the *Peace Women* project. It bundles information about the resolution on a website dedicated to this issue and is intended to support *inter alia* NGOs locally in pressing their claims and applying pressure on their own governments to get the resolution implemented.

Women’s Security Council in Germany

Even in the Federal Republic various women’s policy initiatives and organisations from the peace and security policy fields have intensified networking with experts and researchers in order to promote the practical application of Resolution 1325. The central vehicle for this purpose is the *Frauensicherheitsrat* (FSR – Women’s Security Council/WSC). It developed new forms of co-operation and a pragmatic concept for action based on previous experiences. With the military intervention in Afghanistan, announced as a reaction to the 11 September 2001 attack destroying the New York World Trade Center, and taking advantage of the German federal government’s two-year UN Security Council term in 2003/04, experts from women’s, peace, development and human rights policy activities and organisations, as well as research and political foundations joined together in early 2003 in an attempt to generate adequate attention to gender perspectives in foreign and security policy and to the living conditions of women at least in German federal foreign policy and UN policy. With the gender deficit in German federal and international security policy, the WSC first set itself the task of monitoring federal government policy during the two-year UN Security Council term, exercising a consultative function and providing critical analyses. From the very beginning, three levels of work emerged from the international experiences in women’s peace policy lobbying:

- * direct influence on German federal security policy;
- * public information and action;

* sustainable networking and co-operation of committed women, organisations and groups involved in peace and security policy.

Consequently, the target groups are not just the political bodies (federal government, Bundestag [parliament] and diplomatic corps), but also scholars (esp. peace and conflict research) and the general public, above all NGOs and the media. The activities are organised and co-ordinated by a steering group of 10, reflecting both the broad range of participation and competencies. The WSC has formulated the following agenda for its work:

* development of a criteria catalogue for evaluating implementation of UN Resolution 1325 and precise definition of the vague targets such as “increased” participation of women;

* a more precise or even new definition of “security” and “peace” considering the debate on “human security” and the “expanded” security concept in order to adequately account for the specific threats to women during and after wars and the social relations of violence;

* development of a gender-index for foreign and security policy that also contains criteria for a gender-sensitive security concept, for assessment of violence against women and participation of women in field operations and democratisation processes;

* gender-specific evaluation of missions in conflict regions and development of a gender-sensitive criteria catalogue for civilian missions;

* critical analysis of the activities of the German federal government in this field. The establishment of the WSC was positively received by the public, all the way to the federal government level. The WSC entered into a dialogue with leading politicians, especially in the Foreign Office and development ministry. It started initiatives to promote adequate participation of women in the reconstruction process in Iraq and Afghanistan and the imposition of their rights. It began networking activities with women experts (groups) at the national and international levels and presented the Foreign Office with a “Plan of Action for accelerated implementation of Resolution 1325” with proposals for specific targets and measures. It was a co-operation partner in a compact forum on global issues held by the Federal Foreign Office on implementation of UN Resolution 1325. At the same time, it critically monitored the government’s work and prepared a “shadow report” on the government’s report to the UN Secretary-General about its activities to implement UN Resolution 1325. To further develop its own competence and its ability to reach specialists and the media, the WSC in co-operation with other organisations conducted expert conferences and discussions on the issues. In a post card action and with a website, it campaigns for mass support of the demand to immediately implement UN Resolution 1325.

Gender relevance in international documents

● The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA)

One milestone on the way to UN Resolution 1325 was the Platform for Action adopted at the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women. The Platform already emphasised the connection between peace and gender justice within the society and the specific impact of war and armed conflict on the living conditions of women. Proposals for and demands on national governments were formulated as to how to protect women on the one hand from specific dangers arising from armed conflict and on the other hand to involve them more intensively in the decision-making processes. Beyond that, the Platform contains demands for military disarmament and measures supporting non-violent conflict resolution. In the final document, “Beijing + 5”, particular aspects were even further elaborated. These documents form the basis for numerous UN Security Council resolutions in which the Council fundamentally acknowledges the significance of the gender perspective for “peacemaking”, “peacekeeping” and “peacebuilding activities” and recognises the important function and role of women in these processes and their special need for protection.

● UN Resolution 1325

The UN Resolution 1325 “Women and Peace and Security” is the most far-reaching UN Security Council resolution in this area. It was unanimously adopted on 31 October 2000. Like all UN Security Council resolutions, it is binding international law. The resolution postulates in 18 points addressed to the UN member states, conflicting parties and/or the community of nations to assure that:

* women are more intensively involved in all issues of war and peace, in all decision-making bodies and processes in crises and armed conflicts, prevention and conflict resolution as well as new social orders after an armed conflict, at regional, national and international levels;

* gender perspectives are integrated in peacekeeping missions and peace agreements and adequate training and education guidelines;

* protection of women and girls due to the gender-specific risks arising from armed conflicts and in refugee facilities is assured and that consideration is given to their specific needs and conditions.

For the first time, the Security Council acknowledges the essential role of women’s groups in civil society in conflict resolution processes or the imple-

mentation of peace agreements. In addition, more women are to be appointed special representatives and envoys in the service of the UN Secretary General and deployed in UN field operations, e.g. as military observers and civilian personnel.

With the adoption of UN Resolution 1325 it is finally a violation of international law to exclude women from processes relevant for peace and security, their underrepresentation in decision-making, to ignore the gender perspective in this policy area. It is a violation, though, that is practised world-wide both in Western democracies and in traditional, patriarchal, autocratic countries. This was also apparent in the most recent session of the UN Commission on the Rights of Women in March 2005 and it can be seen clearly in the process of state formation underway in Afghanistan.

There are immanent reasons why Resolution 1325 is widely disregarded: it contains no specific requirements like timelines by when it is to be implemented or quotas to adequately quantify women’s participation. This leaves interpretative leeway meaning that depending on the gender relationships in individual UN member countries it may be very broadly construed. The Secretary-General can commission studies to review the resolution’s implementation. On the anniversary of the resolution, he usually submits the results to the Security Council based on studies and reports from UN member-countries. However, here the emphasis has been the – very minimal – progress achieved. Even when complaints of deficits or violations are raised, these have no consequences. There are no sanctions for violations of the resolution. The Security Council also dispensed with other instruments such as incentives in the form of increased material, financial and personnel aid or generally linking funding to recognisable, defined progress in considering gender relationships. Even the Secretary-General does not fulfil the requirements, e.g. increased deployment of women as special representatives and envoys or providing guidelines and material for member-states to prepare and train women for participation in peacekeeping and peace building. Moreover, no funds are provided for accompanying programs. This points to the deeper causes: foreign affairs and security policy belong to the core of power politics and are thus a traditional and especially resistant male domain where the gap between proclamation and realisation is particularly wide.

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Altogether the WSC has also earned great international respect for its work. Nonetheless its balance after two years and the end of Germany’s term in the UN Security Council is rather ambivalent.

It is true that its recognition by institutions and ministries, broad NGO support and the demand for WSC expertise show the need for such an organisation and illustrate its successful public relations and

networking efforts. However there was no resonance at government level for its specific impulse to implement the UN resolution. While ministries repeatedly stated their interest in co-operation and readiness to implement proposals, no specific implementation steps followed. This gap between proclamation and implementation points to the silent and almost impenetrable resistance to gender approaches in the male domain of security policy – a resistance which is rooted in the threatening loss of power but also in the fear of anything new or a change in perspective. Thus the WSC considers its fundamental double strategy confirmed – lobbying institutions and the government, building up pressure through targeted public relations and networking. Thus and in order to increase public pressure and influence on European security policy, it currently tries to strengthen its network, not only at the national but also at the international level. The foremost aim is to develop together with other peace and women's policy initiatives and groups of women experts in Europe a European women's security policy alliance based on the German WSC model.

Conclusions

National and international peace and security policy is a special bastion of men's power with extreme resistance to injections of gender-sensitivity. However, women's policy approaches have demonstrated considerable success in promoting participation of women and inclusion of their viewpoint, above all at the national and regional levels. This is particularly true in acute crisis situations, war and its aftermath. Ultimately it was the massive international pressure of women's policy coalitions and feminist lobbying that led to the adoption of binding norms of international law. Yet they are still not implemented and violations of their prescriptions are a daily matter. As a consequence of these experiences of the 90s particularly with international lobbying, women's policy coalitions and organisations rely on a multi-pronged strategy to impose gender-oriented peace and security policy and make women visible while promoting their participation:

- * influencing the policies of national governments and international organisations;
 - * creating links to regional organisations and groups for national and international networking and co-operation;
 - * building up pressure through public relations aimed at various target audiences: NGOs and groups of women experts, the media and the general public.
- They develop new organisational forms and networks for women's policy whose work is characterised by systematic expansion of own competencies and skills, high degree of professionalism, further development of own fields of action and empowerment. Above and beyond the continued development of own theories

and issues this implies confronting prevailing theories, policies, explanatory approaches and definitions from feminist perspectives in order to break dominant definitional power and display gender-differentiated approaches and alternatives. At the same time, there are further questions and contradictory positions in the feminist debate, which still need to be clarified. These include the relationship of women to violence and the military and women's participation in the military. The latter acquires new explosiveness when coupled with the demand for gender quotas in UN missions. It is the constructive resolution of such issues that will prove whether new feminist approaches will have the ability to prevail and sustain their effectiveness in international peace and security policy.

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Translations: *Patrick Wilkinson, PhD*



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