

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN
ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES**

**Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales**



IAW ACTION SHEET No. 1 - September 2003

**IAW ACTION
PROGRAMME 2002 – 2004
GLOBALISATION**

In order to make the best use of globalisation for the benefit of women it is necessary for them to understand the mechanisms of the process and to develop strategies both to combat the negative effects and to grasp the opportunities it provides. In order to achieve this, we must remind ourselves that economic development, social justice and environment are interlinked.

Equal Rights

**World Trade Organisation (WTO) Fifth
Ministerial Conference
at Cancun, Mexico 10-14 September 2003**

Here is an excellent opportunity to become more informed about the effects of globalisation - Follow the proceedings at the WTO 5th Ministerial Conference

The internet offers us this opportunity too, certainly if you are interested in economic development, social justice and environment, as emphasised in the

IAW Action Programme. A good website to visit is www.ictsd.org of the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, with daily updates.

Click for example on Events <http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/cancun/events.htm>

and you will find an amazing range of subjects to be discussed by all kinds of organisations from all corners of the world. Scanning them I found only a few on women's issues, on GATS and Gender and on Women's Rights in Trade Agreements. How I wish the Alliance could have been there with a workshop! On the other hand, I am sure some of our members are part of delegations where the decisions are to be made.

On http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/cancun/documents_and_links.htm you will find reports of issues in the work programme already agreed in Doha, issues that in many cases still need implementation. Also "New Issues" (paras 20-27), members to decide by "explicit consensus" modalities (including whether/when) for launching negotiations on investment, competition policy, transparency in government procurement and trade facilitation, "Environment", paras 32- 33 and "Agriculture" paras 14.

Daily Updates on the negotiations will be produced in English, Spanish, French, German, Portuguese, Chinese and Russian, by Bridges. The English versions will be distributed via email on ICTSD's BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest listserv. To subscribe, send an email to: bridges_weekly@ictsd.ch and type the words 'subscribe bridges' in the message header.

Note a Disclaimer: views expressed in the Events and other non-ICTSD material in this section do not necessarily reflect the views of ICTSD.

Latest news

Participants and civil society organisations are already convening in Cancun, Mexico, for a number of workshops, teach-ins, meetings and informal talks between Members. Meanwhile, WTO General Council Chair Carlos Perez del Castillo, with Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi, issued a cover note to accompany the draft ministerial text at Cancun, highlighting areas where major divides persist between

Members. While the process generally has moved from Geneva to Cancun, members managed to agree on a pre-Caucun solution to **poor countries' access to essential medicines** in Geneva over the weekend. For background information see the article by Sarah Bosely in the Guardian: "Millions of poor people die for the lack of affordable medicines" on <http://www.guardian.co.uk/wto/article/0,2763,1035800,00.html> A special report on WTO is to be found at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/wto/0,2759,180969,00.html>

DEBTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

An important issue which also will come up at Cancun is the enormous amount of debt that has been built up by developing countries. A good website for NGOs to get informed about origin and impact is <http://www.eca-watch.org/>

Export Credit Agencies or ECAs

Citizens worldwide are increasingly aware of global institutions (like the WTO and the World Bank) and their impacts on the environment and human rights. But other secretive government bodies, export credit agencies, have as big, if not bigger, impacts on the process of globalization.

Export Credit Agencies, commonly known as ECAs, are public agencies that provide government-backed loans, guarantees and insurance to corporations from their home country, that seek to do business overseas in developing countries and emerging markets. Most industrialized nations have at least one ECA. A list of major ECAs is to be found on <http://www.eca-watch.org/eca/directory.html>

Environmental and Social Policies

ECAs are now the world's biggest class of public IFIs (international finance institutions), collectively, exceeding in size the World Bank Group. Yet, like the World Bank Group 20 years ago, **most ECAs have no social and environmental standards**. As a result, ECA-backed projects often despoil the environment and disrupt the lives of the communities.

The International NGO ECA Reform Campaign objectives are to see that all ECAs adopt and upgrade environmental and social policies and to support the advocacy efforts of affected people against specific harmful projects.

Debt Aspects related to ECAs

Developing countries incur debt from export credit agencies by either borrowing directly from export credit agencies, or by guaranteeing a project that may not be productive. Export credit agencies universally require the government to guarantee their investment or to counter-guarantee their own guarantee extended to the project. **Export credit agencies operate in secret**. Therefore, people do not know that the government is incurring new debt, or guaranteeing a particular private sector project.

Impacts of borrowing

Like the World Bank, export credit agencies often support projects with questionable or negative development impacts. Mines, large-scale dams, pulp and paper, all kinds of development debacles are financed by export credit agencies.

Read more <http://www.eca-watch.org/eca/directory.html>

From DEBT ASPECTS RELATED TO EXPORT CREDIT AGENCIES, prepared by the NGO Working Group on the Export Development Corporation, a working group of the Halifax Initiative Coalition, in Canada. For information on the European ECA Campaign, go to: www.fern.org.

Note: the attachment of this Action Sheet is saved as a word-document.

Contacts

IAW Newsletter / News Flash	:	Joke Sebus	<joke.sebus@inter.nl.net>
International Women's News	:	Priscilla Todd	<iaw@toddsec.com>
Membership Officer	:	Pat Richardson	<iaw.membership@tsn.cc>

You can find this IAW Action Sheet also on the IAW website: <http://www.womenalliance.com>