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Spring 2011

This is first edition of the EWG newsletter in 2011.

We welcome your contributions. **Remember to share** your resources and reports with others in the EWG. If you send material soon, we will produce another edition before Congress. Send links and examples to Lorraine Mirham - lmirham@hotmail.com

In this Edition

We share the contributions sent by Sections who responded to our call about work on environmental sustainability issues for the Congress report.

We also look at the opportunities for WILPF to contribute to world fora on environmental matters and invite suggestions about how we promote WILPF's unique position as the only International women's peace organisation viewing militarism and the military industrial complex as major contributors to global environmental problems plus looking at resource grabbing and depletion as root causes of conflict and war.

Please look at the **Resources Section** and where possible use these to inform work in Sections on Environmental matters. WILPF's knowledge and unique perspective is interconnected with all our work and themes. There are links to WILPF policy as well as good quality argument and facts produced by WILPF members and allies.

You will also see '**Action**' in this e-news and this lets you know we need your participation, thank you.

Section Contributions

WILPF India, Environment Working Group Co-convener Sushma Pankule explains that:

1. In Nagpur WILPF have signed the protest against the Jaitapur nuclear plant in India in Maharashtra
2. In Nagpur the conflict around water is big issue and the Section organised a meeting of the women and conducted a workshop on the same. Nagpur is in central India which means they have extremely hot climate in summer (March to June) when the sun 'burns like a fire'; the maximum temperature reaches 48 degrees Celsius. With no electricity

and no water, especially in rural areas, women have to fetch water from ten to twenty kilometers, so conflict occurs due to the shortage of water.

This year WILPF India planned and organised a workshop for the women on the water crisis which included:

- An expert to deliver a lecture
- Flyers distributed which gave the women ideas on how to save water and also mentioned how important it is to 'save our mother earth'
- They asked the women to save water by rationing it
- The group also organised a seminar to create awareness amongst the youth to create awareness nuclear power and military expenditure.

3. In Nagpur WILPF have carried out tree planting with students

4. The Section report the high incidence of farmer suicide and Sushma will be writing a paper about food security/sovereignty.

WILPF Italy has:

1. Continued to monitor the FAO for WILPF and discussed on Food Sovereignty to WILPF Europe meeting.

WILPF Costa Rica Cariari Goup: tell us they are actively working to have Costa Rica Ban shark finning in its waters, as the shark population is being decimated with the unfortunate consequence of destroying an entire ecosystem of which the sharks are an important link.

Estilita Grimaldo - Coordinator, Cariari Group April 1 reports:

"We are sponsoring a Lecture with world-renowned Environmentalist Randall Arauz at Los Arcos Kiosk to learn and inform the public about this problem. We want Costa Rica to force vessels shark finning in Costa Rican waters to have refrigerated holds to store the sharks after they have finned them. At present, the sharks are thrown back into the water to die. This is creating cannibalism as sharks are rushing to eat the meat of their own.

"We are further insisting that the refrigerated shark meat be distributed among the many hungry here and elsewhere. If these vessels, originating mainly in Taiwan and China do not install refrigeration, we will insist that the vessels be seized and the Crew members imprisoned."

The group has planned an event to bring Randall Arauz, the 2010 winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize for Central & South America to speak at their WILPF event to draw international attention to the inhumane and environmentally catastrophic shark finning industry, Randall Arauz led the campaign to halt the practice in Costa Rica.

WILPF Germany has:

1. Worked with the Greens in Europe and other WILPF women to produce the book 'Listen to Women for Change' which explores where we are 15 years after the Beijing Conference on Women. It has a chapter on Ukrainian energy policy which explores the uphill battle that the anti nuclear lobby faces, despite the rejection of nuclear power by Ukrainians being 'stronger than almost anywhere', according to Rebecca Harms, co chair of the Greens/EFA group in Europe, given the very real trauma they have experienced following Chernobyl.

WILPF Norway has:

1. Written and published a book on water, "Kvinner, liv og vann" (Women, life and water) in 2009. It covers a wide range of issues and can be used as study material for discussions. www.ikff.no An English version will be available on the internet before the Congress.

2. Written and will be publishing a book on nuclear energy this spring. They say we must remind ourselves that the research into and production of nuclear energy would be impossible without high subsidies from public money needed for other purposes. The mining and production processes emit greenhouse gases, are dependent on the use of scarce water resources and produce long lived radioactive and poisonous waste materials, as well as raw materials for nuclear and uranium weapons. They hope to have an English version available on internet this year.

3. An active Bergen branch working on the theme of Depleted uranium weapons and has enabled cooperation between Norsk Folkehjelp, (Norwegian Peoples' Aid), the MFA, and ICBUW and WILPF- Norway.

4. Continued to engage in the question of IAEA /WHO, anti nuclear energy and anti nuclear weapons work and in general demilitarization work, exposing how the military sector is a major contributor to pollution and environmental deterioration. Every year the Section marks the environmental and security problems of militarization of space.

4. Worked with other organizations in three working groups at the Norwegian the umbrella ForUM (Forum for Development and environment) on water and sanitation, climate and energy, peace and security. The Section has lobbied their government before and during international meetings on these themes.

5. Continues to work on food and food security problems in their Hedmark/Oppland branch and are planning a seminar in cooperation with the Small Farmers Union.

WILPF US Section reports:

The environment continues to be a major concern of members of the United States. The US Section programme work is currently now done by issue committees, by active branches in about 40 cities and by individual members. At this time, programme materials are primarily produced locally and in collaboration with other organizations rather than by the national US Section board or staff. The US Section 'Save the Water'

Committee is the only committee focusing on an environment-related issue.
<http://www.wilpf.org/water-about>

Many members make linkages to environmental concerns with their work on military spending, on the Middle East (particularly Israel and Palestine), on disarmament, and on the wars and violent conflict over access to and control of oil and other resources.

The environmental perils confronting the planet are a high priority among their members and those with whom they find alliances. For example, in the northeast United States WILPF members join with other organizations and citizen groups concerning the hydrofracking process now used to extract natural gas from deposits deeply embedded in Marcellus shale formations. Some drilling goes as deep as 8,000 feet in sediments deposited 350 million years ago. The technology sacrifices forests, water, soil, fish and wildlife with damage worth far more than the finite energy source produced.

The Section urges WILPF as an international organisation to recognise the grave concern that members have for the survival of the planet's ecosystems. No one knows this better than our members from the South and in disaster areas such as Japan and southern USA.

The Disarm Project in the US continues and is a valuable source of information on the Military Industrial Complex.

Currently the Boston Chapter has recently been involved with Anti-Nuclear Lobbying and Advocacy Training in Washington, DC. They joined expert nuclear "watch dogs" from sites around the country. WILPF members continue to participate in educating decision makers in Congress, the Pentagon, Department of Energy and the White House on the need to eliminate nuclear power, nuclear waste and nuclear weapons. More details here <http://ananuclear.org/DCDays/tabid/99/Default.aspx>

WILPF UK:

1. Facilitated, (with other WILPF Sections in Europe – Germany, Italy and France) supported Clorinde Zephir, from a feminist organization in Haiti, to travel round Europe to denounce the situation for women and girls in Haiti. During the trip she spent time with Barbara Lochbihler (previous WILPF Sec General) during which they spoke about water issues in Haiti and the affects of climate change in coastal areas. Clorinde also spoke at the Francophone Institute about Gender and Climate Change in Haiti. The Section hope to receive the report soon.
2. Ran a 'Women,, Militarism and Environment' workshop at a parallel event, in Sheffield, with the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth running in Bolivia in April 2010.
3. Travelled round to branches to raise awareness about food sovereignty and the right to food asking members to think about the issues and link them to human rights and women's rights themes. Members were also asked to consider the potential for conflict arising from food shortage and the removal of generations of knowledge and self sufficiency in seed production as large seed companies blackmail women into using GM varieties and the obvious manifestations of that.

- Objections to planning applications for a new 'super' dairy were lodged as this seen as an assault on the environment in addition to removing the local and small scale production of milk.
- 5. Opposed the notion that nuclear power can address our energy and 'security' needs.
- 6. Opposed the renewal of Trident Nuclear Weapons System

WILPF Democratic Republic of Congo group:



In discussion with Annie Matundi Mbambi (Chair of WILPF-DRCs) and Eulalie Kintenga, from the DRC WILPF Environment group, we have heard about tree planting programmes that work with women to educate about deforestation.

Annie also presented at the Francophone Institute, in Paris, in January 2011 on the struggles of women's organizations in the Democratic Republic of Congo against deforestation. This was the same event that

Clorinde Zephir (Haiti, referred to in the UK Section report) spoke on the vulnerability and adaptability of Haitian women in coastal cities to climate change, specifically the case of departments of south-east, west and north-west.

Recap of WILPF's main UN work on Environment since last Congress

WILPF attended conferences and ran side events at:

- The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poznań, 1-12 December 2008
- The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, 7-19 December 2009
- 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul, Turkey 16-22 March 2009

Rio +20

WILPF was very active in the three years leading up to the Earth Summit in 1992 and provided support and leadership on key aspects of Agenda 21, especially on the impact of military activities on the environment, the use of resources, and on finances. Edel Havin Beukes (Norway), Regina Bircherm (USA) and others participated in UN preparatory meetings, organized WILPF seminars through the international WILPF Women of Vision project, developed UN side events and wrote reports. We supported the concerns of the South and of Indigenous Peoples informing all of WILPF regularly on our work.

In March 2011 the UN Preparatory Committee completed its 2nd major planning meeting for “Rio+20”. The two main focus areas for the review conference are (1) a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and, (2) the institutional framework for sustainable development.

Action - We need an active presence in the preparatory meetings and work with other organisations. Certainly the corporate profit-takers will be even more engaged than in 1992. It is not sufficient to just passively attend the conference in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012.

For more information, see Press Release [ENV/DEV/1198](#) of 4 March 2011

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/envdev1200.doc.htm>

What next? Action

1. The Environment Working Group has a range of work to consider but two of its priorities for 2011 are to:

a). Work against mining of uranium and thorium and the production of nuclear energy, nuclear weapons and uranium weapons.

b). Work to expose the resource wars and the interests of the military /industrial complex and certain regimes' efforts to get control of the resources they need.

What can/will **YOUR** Section do? Please tell us: email edel@beukes.net

2. Also, what can your Section contribute/do for Rio+20? Please tell us: email edel@beukes.net

3. We must have more input from Sections to the EWG – will you send a representative from your Section to the EWG meeting at Congress? If so, email us to tell us who we should liaise with lmirham@hotmail.com

Coming up soon Action

Rio+20 Preparatory meetings <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?menu=46>

June - **World Environment Day** <http://www.unep.org/wed/about/> - host country India, this year. Let us know if your Section is planning something lmirham@hotmail.com

Resources

WILPF EWG E-newsletters and other useful information can be found on the International Website: <http://www.wilpfinternational.org/environment/index.htm>

Action - The two themes of the Rio+20 Conference will focus on the creation of a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and on the related institutional framework. Newsletters leading up to the Conference 4-6 June 2012 can be found here: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?menu=40>

Remember WILPF's POSITION & BACKGROUND PAPER ON CLIMATE CHANGE 2008 - you will find it here:

<http://www.wilpfinternational.org/PDF/2008ClimateChange.pdf>

Also, WILPF statement on Climate Security

http://www.wilpfinternational.org/statements/24nov08_on_climate_security.html

WILPF statement on the Right to Water – Disarm for Water

<http://www.wilpfinternational.org/PDF/humanrights/HRC12/disarm2hydrate.pdf>

For an excellent source of information about Dismantling the War Economy see the DISARM website also with links to Keep Space for Peace initiatives

<http://www.disarm.wilpf.org/about>

PLEASE JOIN to receive your EWG e- Newsletter, ESPECIALLY IF YOUR SECTION IS NOT REPRESENTED! To email the group and/or receive the e-news, the address is: environment@wilpf.ch Forward to your Sections.

REMEMBER TO SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AND IDEAS TO: Lorraine Mirham or Edel Havin Beukes lmirham@hotmail.com or edel@beukes.net

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