

Shut down U.N.'s Beijing Conference on Women

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Preparations for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, scheduled to take place in Beijing, China on Sept. 4-15 as part of the U.N.'s 50th anniversary celebration, have turned into a battlefield between, on the one side, developing nations, represented at the Preparatory meetings by the Group of 77, and the Vatican; and on the other, the oligarchical designers of the conference, whose voice is heard through the U.N. bureaucracy, delegations from industrialized nations, and the 60,000-odd representatives expected at the conference from the so-called non-governmental organizations (NGOs), most of whom are funded by the governments or semi-private foundations of western Europe, the United States, and Canada.

The draft declaration and draft platform of action represent the continuing effort of the U.N., especially through the NGOs, to dictate policies to governments. In Beijing, as in all other U.N. conferences of the same type, the 60,000 NGO delegates, including 5,000 press, far outnumber the governmental delegates. U.S. statesman Lyndon LaRouche has called for shutting down the conference as an abrogation of the concept of national sovereignty. No supranational agency can be allowed to dictate policy to sovereign nation-states, LaRouche said, pointing to the extravagantly expensive role of the NGOs, which presume to order governments to conform to their radical feminist and environmentalist constituencies.

Further, the document continues to peddle the same malthusian program of "sustainable development" as was peddled at the September 1994 Cairo U.N. Conference on Population and Development. A phrase conjured up allegedly on behalf of environmentalism, it is used to force acceptance, in the developing countries, of the sole use of "recyclable," low-technology energy resources; technology which is "appropriate" to a backward civilization, like hoes and shovels;

and "indigenous," unscientific, and dangerous medical practices. As the contested paragraph 37 of the opening manifesto reads:

"The major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable patterns of consumption of production, particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances. Therefore, equitable social development that recognizes empowering people living in poverty, particularly women, to utilize environmental resources sustainably is a necessary foundation for sustainable development. Women as citizens can help change consumption patterns in their multiple role as consumers, householders, workers, and voters."

The core idea of this statement is that women learn how to *adapt* to the poverty which in fact is responsible for their poor health and nutrition, early deaths, lack of medical care for their children, and so forth.

The answer for women, the U.N. document claims, is "empowerment"—a nebulous term evidently meaning that women would be given powers they do not currently have. In reality, the idea is to forge a "women's" constituency to enforce the program of enslavement represented by "sustainable development." Women in the developing sector, particularly those dubbed "indigenous," such as narco-terrorist and Nobel Prize-winner Rigoberta Menchú, are particularly targeted as potential leaders in a force of maenads, which would demand backwardness and policies of population control, such as sterilization and abortion. In addition, the implementation section of the document calls for an absurd agenda of "genderization" of data and economic impact studies, and affirmative action-type measures to be taken globally to bring women into the workforce.

Thus, the agenda of the U.N.-NGO apparatus deployed

on behalf of the international oligarchy, is represented throughout the document, particularly in the implementation section. However, this agenda is running into severe problems.

Reality's backlash

As originally conceived, the Beijing conference was to be the last of a tripartite plan by which a U.N. world dictatorship would be imposed for the purposes of carrying out malthusian policies of population reduction, by any means. The Cairo U.N. conference of last September was to impose a universal "consensus" for population reduction upon countries; the March 1995 Copenhagen conference on Social and Economic Development, according to the U.N. Development Program Report of 1994, was to create the global institutions—Economic Security Council, Global Central Bank, global police, global taxation, and global "peacekeeping force"—to enforce such population reduction, by sanctions or military force if necessary. The Beijing conference was to consolidate the constituency of "women" as the on-the-ground enforcers for such policies.

The design did not work, because an alliance of the United States, the Vatican, developing countries, Muslim forces, and the LaRouche movement internationally was able to draw the line against the destruction of national sovereignty embodied in the Cairo declaration, as originally proposed, and denied any consensus that alleged "overpopulation" is the prime source of the world's current crisis. As the U.N.'s own peacekeeping apparatus continued to be discredited in Somalia, Bosnia, and Africa, the March Copenhagen conference was a non-event.

The Beijing Conference on Women ran into trouble early in the game in regards to venue. In a move that could only be taken as a protest against the infringement of national sovereignty represented by the NGOs, China, the host nation, refused to allow the thousands of NGO delegates to hold their "parallel conference" in the last week in August near the main conference site. On March 31, China announced that it had decided to move the site for the NGO forum from the 1950s-vintage Workers' Gymnasium at the Workers' Sports Service Center, to a site 45 kilometers outside the city. Despite enraged protests from the NGOs, backed by the governments of Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, the conference was up in the air until mid-June, when U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali sent personal envoy Ismat Kittani to Beijing to work out a compromise. With certain concessions from Beijing, the NGOs have been forced to accept the out-of-town site for their parallel conference.

A strong dissenting voice can also be heard in the draft document for the Beijing conference to the U.N.-NGO malthusian agenda, again coming from the Group of 77 developing countries, the Vatican, and Muslim forces. As a result, nearly 50% of the draft document is in brackets, including

paragraph 37 quoted above.

The major achievement of the opposition, as reflected in the draft, is repeated denunciation of the "structural adjustment policies" imposed by the International Monetary Fund on developing nations. For instance, paragraph 15, entirely in brackets (indicating its rejection by malthusians), reads: ". . . Moreover, debt burden has forced many developing countries to undertake structural adjustment policies that are detrimental to their social development. The number of people living in poverty has therefore increased disproportionately in most developing countries, particularly the heavily indebted countries, during the last decade."

From this point on, the entire first half of the document is a harsh and realistic portrayal of the conditions of "unspeakable poverty" that the vast majority of the world's women confront every day (see *Documentation*). Although noting that 25% of the world's households are headed by women, the document fails to acknowledge that the terrible conditions for most women described are 1) an accurate barometer of the general collapse of economic and cultural life; and 2) that women confront this "unspeakable poverty" as the primary care-givers and protectors of their families, especially their children. Only by stating as a goal the reduction of infant and under-five mortality globally, does the document offer backhanded acknowledgement of women's primary concern for the welfare of their children, and hence, for all society.

In general, in the implementation section of the document, the solutions offered to the dire crises of survival which many women face, are ludicrous and criminal. For instance, bracketed paragraph 166 proposes: "Promote women's economic self-reliance, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions, and control over economic resources—land, capital, and technology"—as if the world economic crisis could be solved for women only.

However, a different voice is also heard, as in paragraph 61c, also bracketed, which reads: "Cancel or substantially reduce the debt burden, or convert debt services of developing countries, in particular the highly indebted low-income countries, in order to help them to finance programs and projects targeted at development, including the advancement of women, and to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development, without falling in to a new debt crisis." Or, paragraph 19, which states, "Only [a just and equitable social and economic international order . . .] will enable the world to meet the challenges of the next century."

Thus, despite the best-laid plans of the malthusian blueprint behind the Beijing conference, it is becoming increasingly difficult for governments to escape the reality that the only hope for reversing the collapse into barbarism described in the Beijing document, is the reorganization of the world monetary system to generate global industrial development, as Lyndon LaRouche has placed that urgent necessity before governments around the world. This is the central issue, which even the United Nations is no longer able to block out.

Documentation

Excerpts from the Draft Platform for Action of Proposals for Consideration in the Preparation of a Draft Declaration and the Draft Platform for Action Commission on the Status of Women at its 39th session. Numbers indicate the paragraph numbers of the document. Those paragraphs, sentences, or phrases that are bracketed indicate that the words are under contention and must be debated in Beijing.

18. A widespread economic recession as well as political instability in some regions, have been responsible for setting back development goals in many countries. This has led to an expansion of unspeakable poverty. Of the more than 1 billion people living in abject poverty, women are an overwhelming majority. The rapid process of change and adjustment in all sectors, has also led to increased unemployment and underemployment, with particular impact on women. In [many] cases, structural adjustment programs have not been designed so as to minimize their negative effects on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups or on women, nor have they been designed to ensure positive effects on those groups by preventing their marginalization in economic and social activities. . . .

20. Recent international economic developments have had in many cases a disproportionate impact on women and children, the majority of whom live in developing countries. For those States that have carried a large burden of foreign debt, structural adjustment programs and measures, though beneficial in the long term, have led to a reduction of social expenditures, thereby adversely affecting women, particularly in Africa and the least developed countries. This is exacerbated when responsibilities for basic services have shifted from governments to women. . . .

22. Macro and microeconomic policies and programs, including structural adjustment, have not always been designed to take account of their impact on women and girl children, especially for those living in poverty. Poverty has increased in both absolute and relative terms, and the number of women living in poverty has increased in most regions. There are many urban women living in poverty; however, the plight of women living in rural and remote areas deserves special attention given the stagnation of development in such areas. In developing countries, even those in which national indicators have shown improvement, the majority of rural women continue to live in conditions of economic underdevelopment and social marginalization. . . .

24. One-fourth of all households worldwide are headed by women and many other households are dependent on female income even where men are present. . . . Family disintegration, population movements between urban and rural areas within countries, international migration, war and

internal displacements are factors contributing to the rise of female-headed households. . . .

39. According to World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, by the beginning of 1995 the number of cumulative cases of AIDS was 4.5 million. An estimated 19.5 million men, women, and children have been infected with HIV, since it was first diagnosed, and it is projected that another 20 million will be infected by the end of the decade. Among new cases, women are twice as likely to be infected than men. In the early stage of the AIDS pandemic, women were not infected in large numbers; however, there are now about 8 million women infected. Young women and adolescents are particularly vulnerable. It is estimated that by the year 2000, more than 13 million will be infected and 4 million women will have died from AIDS-related conditions. . . .

72. . . . Approximately 100 million children, including at least 60 million girls, are without access to primary schooling, and more than two-thirds of the world's 960 million illiterate adults are women. . . .

77. . . . Girls are often deprived of basic math and science education and technical training, which provide knowledge they could apply to improve their daily lives and enhance their employment opportunities. Advanced study in science and technology prepares women to take an active role in the technological and industrial development of their countries, thus necessitating a diverse approach to vocational and technical training. . . .

93. In many countries, in particular in developing and least-developed countries, [structural adjustment,] [the deterioration of public health systems, a decrease in public health spending, and in some cases, increasing privatization of health care systems without appropriate guarantees of universal access] further reduce health care availability. . . .

98. . . . Complications related to pregnancy and childbirth are among the leading causes of mortality and morbidity for women of reproductive age in many parts of the developing world. . . .

115. Other acts of violence against women include violations of the human rights of women in situations of armed conflicts, in particular murder, systematic rape, sexual slavery and [forced pregnancy]. [Acts of violence against women also include terrorism, forced sterilization and [forced abortion,] coercive/forced use of contraceptives, [female foeticide/prenatal sex selection,] and female infanticide.] . . .

137. Women and children constitute some 80% of the 23 million refugees and of the 26 million [internally] displaced persons in the world. They are threatened by deprivation of property, goods and services, and deprivation of their [basic] right to return to their homes of origin as well as by violence and insecurity. Particular attention should be paid to sexual violence against uprooted women and girls employed as a method of persecution in systematic campaigns of terror and intimidation and forcing members of a particular ethnic, cultural or religious group to flee their homes. . . .