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for women

Soroptimist



International

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AWARENESS

This month, to tie into the 64th Annual DPI/NGO Conference on Sustainable Development, we are focussing on Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Sustainable development emerged as a 'concept' many years ago, under the realisation that development, peace, and environmental security were intertwined and interconnected. The apex of the movement was a conference held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, called the Earth Summit. The outcome documents, "[Agenda 21](#)" and the "[Rio Declaration on Environment and Development](#)", codified the priority challenges and issues relating to the then-adverse relationship between human development and environmental protection. As we approach the 20th Anniversary of this meeting, the international community is reviewing progress and working to identify current challenges and issues.

Back then and still today, the world needs to pay more attention to what we call sustainable consumption and production. Generally, human beings consume much more than we can produce, damaging the environment, wasting resources, and leaving less and less for future generations. Yet change requires global behavioural change and government commitment, neither of which is easily achievable.

Sustainable development is closely linked to poverty eradication, empowerment of marginalised groups who are often more reliant on natural resources, and grassroots participation in decision-making. Social and economic factors play as much a part as environmental.

Of particular importance to SI's mission and programme goals and objectives is the education, empowerment, and enabling of women and girls in sustainable development. Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration make particular reference to the unique role women and girls play. Chapter 24 of Agenda 21 is wholly dedicated to "global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development." The following objectives, all of which are still relevant today, were set:

- (a) To implement the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, particularly with regard to women's **participation** in national ecosystem **management** and **control** of environment degradation;
- (b) To increase the proportion of women **decision makers**, planners, technical advisers, managers and extension workers in environment and development fields;
- (c) To consider developing and issuing by the year 2000 a strategy of changes necessary to eliminate constitutional, legal, administrative, cultural, behavioural, social and economic **obstacles** to women's full participation in sustainable development and in public life;
- (d) To establish by the year 1995 mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to **assess** the implementation and impact of development and environment policies and programmes on women and to ensure their contributions and benefits;
- (e) To assess, review, revise and implement, where appropriate, curricula and other **educational** material, with a view to promoting the dissemination to both men and women of gender-relevant knowledge and valuation of women's roles through formal and nonformal education, as well as through training institutions, in collaboration with nongovernmental organizations;

(f) To formulate and implement clear governmental policies and national guidelines, strategies and plans for the **achievement of equality** in all aspects of society, including the promotion of women's literacy, education, training, nutrition and health and their participation in key decision-making positions and in management of the environment, particularly as it pertains to their access to resources, by facilitating better access to all forms of credit, particularly in the informal sector, taking measures towards ensuring women's access to property rights as well as agricultural inputs and implements;

(g) To implement, as a matter of urgency, in accordance with country-specific conditions, measures to ensure that women and men have the same right to **decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children** and have access to information, education and means, as appropriate, to enable them to exercise this right in keeping with their freedom, dignity and personally held values;

(h) To consider adopting, strengthening and enforcing legislation prohibiting **violence against women** and to take all necessary administrative, social and educational measures to eliminate violence against women in all its forms.

The Rio Declaration explicitly address women in Principle 20:

“Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.”

All of these issues and points are as relevant today as they were 20 years ago. Soroptimist International advocates for:

1. **educating** women and girls about sustainable consumption and production, green economy, and environmental governance
2. **empowering** women and girls with skills and confidence so that they may be prepared to participate in resource management, agricultural business, and policy setting with regards to sustainable development and environmental security
3. **enabling** opportunities for women and girls to have a voice in decision-making regarding sustainable development.

SI would also recommend reading “Agenda Ya Wananchi”, a document created in 1991 in preparation for the Earth Summit, which can be found here:

http://www.envirosecurity.org/edrc/YAW-All_light.pdf.

ADVOCACY

READ: [Final DPI/NGO Conference Declaration Released!](#)

Soroptimist International is delighted to share with you the final version of the [DPI/NGO conference declaration](#). The declaration addresses the alarming state of the environment, poverty and global inequalities. It also expresses its disappointment with the failure of governments to live up to the commitments of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio and calls on governments worldwide not to miss the opportunity of Rio+20 to embark on radical change.

The declaration focuses on the following two broad topics:

1. Green Economy in the context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication (para 184)
2. The Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (para 413)

SI is delighted to see that the suggestions made both prior to the conference and during the feedback sessions have been incorporated. We are delighted that we have been able to push for more gender sensitive language and, in particular, we are pleased to see the recognition of women as producers and consumers included in the declaration:

“Recognise and support by all means possible, the important role and special needs of women as the primary producers and purchasers of food, along with the implementation of women’s property and inheritance rights” (line 577-578).

In addition to these areas, the statement also forwards a number of other issues to be considered at Rio+20. Finally, several Sustainable Development Goals have been crafted which address the wide array of issues taken in by the Sustainable Development agenda. These can be found in lines 442 - 622.

The content of the Declaration will be submitted by the German Government to the UN General Assembly and will also feed into the Rio+20 process.

DPI was all about the run-up to the Earth Summit taking place in Brazil next July ('Rio+20'), 20 years after the first Earth Summit. It is shocking how little has been accomplished since that conference. Watch this incredible video of a young woman, speaking on behalf of a generation, at the first Earth Summit - and ask yourselves what we can do to advocate for change so that she doesn't have to say all this again next July.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5g8cmWZOX8Q&feature=player_embedded

Follow the SI delegation at this year's DPI/NGO conference on Twitter and Facebook! We're posting real time information from the plenaries, roundtables, and workshops. Be an advocate for sustainable development!

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ACTION



Stop Talking, Start Planting:

When Felix, aged 13, met Harrison Ford he had one message - Stop Talking, Start Planting. The same message was conveyed to Mary Robinson, Former UN Commissioner for Human Rights, by 8 year old Usukhbayar. And to Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the UNEP, by 10 year old Nadim.

Perhaps it's time Soroptimists also got in on the Stop Talking, Start Planting campaign! For more information about this youth driven initiative please visit

www.plantfortheplanet.org. As a club or as an individual you can sign up to donate trees which will then be planted by children all over the world through organised 'planting groups'.

When you donate trees, you are supporting the children to reach their goals. For each Euro donated one tree can be planted. To dedicate your donation to a [Planting Group](#) please sign up through the website. Your profile will show you how many trees have been planted with your support and you will also receive a digital tree certificate for each donation. With the certificate number you can follow up on the status of your tree.

7 Billion People, 7 Billion Actions:

By the close of 2011, the global population will reach 7 billion. A world of 7 billion has implications for sustainability, urbanisation, access to health services and youth empowerment. It is also an opportunity to renew global commitment for a healthy and sustainable world. 7 Billion Actions, a global movement for all humanity, was established by the United Nations Population Fund to highlight positive action by individuals and organizations and inspire others to join the movement. Sounds like 90,000 Soroptimist could be very useful here!

The 7 Billion Actions campaign is collecting stories of individuals all over the world who are making a difference in their communities - and globally. Women and girls empowerment, and reproductive health are key themes for the campaign, alongside poverty and inequality, young people, the ageing population, environment and urbanisation. Share your story here: <http://7billionactions.org/about>

For more information, click [here](#).

[LINKING TO EDUCATE TO LEAD](#)

Monthly Message from International Programme Director Hilary:

Through our new programme goals and our new theme we dedicate our work to improving the lives of women and girls through education and leadership. This theme impacts on all area of work, including sustainable consumption and production.

We have just been part of a strong delegation to the DPI NGO conference in Bonn with the theme “Sustainable Societies; Responsive Citizens”. By our very nature we ARE responsive citizens and we are making a difference at the highest level. Please make sure you read the report from the conference - this is a great source of information which you can use to educate others about the importance of this issue. [Click here](#) for the news story.

Here is how SI's **3E model of Educate, Empower and Enable** can be used to tackle the issue of Sustainable Consumption and Production:

Educate: We need to educate women about the importance of resource management, the green economy, sustainability, food security and responsible consumption.

Empower: We need to increase access to economic empowerment and sustainable opportunities for the employment of women. We also need to empower women to influence decisions in their local communities which impact the environment.

Enable: Can you provide opportunities for women to have their voices heard in the sustainable development debate - locally, nationally or internationally? What opportunities can you provide which enable women to have a positive impact on their community in terms of ensuring sustainability and environmental sensitivity? If you are not working in these areas then perhaps try and raise awareness of the issues.

Finally, we will be represented at the Commission on the Status of Women in New York early next year. This conference is focussing on rural women, empowerment and rural development. Are you working in this area through your projects? We want to know about this so that we can showcase your work and influence decisions at this high level.

Keep up the good work!