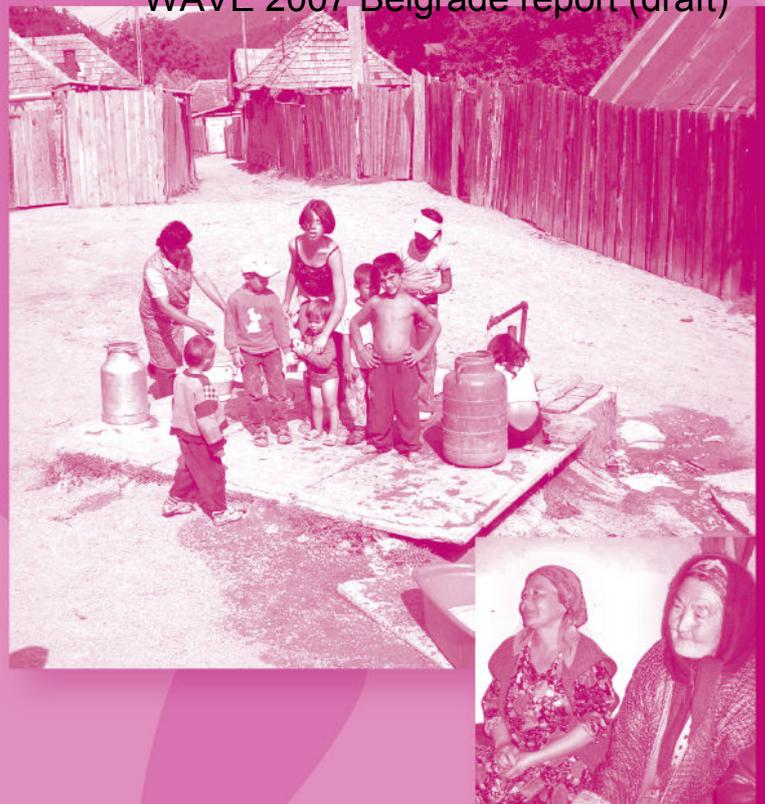


Women as the Voice for the Right to a Healthy Environment

WAVE 2007 Belgrade report (draft)



WAVE 2007 Report

Women as the Voice for the Right to a Healthy Environment

Background

Women's participation and experience are central to environmental management and sustainable development. Recognizing this, UNEP brought women's voices to the forefront of the environmental agenda in a landmark event, the Global Women's Assembly on Environment, "Women As the Voice of the Environment" (WAVE), which took place in Nairobi, Kenya, October 2004. The event intended to make women's crucial roles in conservation and sustainable development visible to all. A Manifesto on Women and Environment was written with concrete policy recommendations and a portfolio of specific project ideas.

3 years later: WAVE Belgrade 2007

Exactly three years later, Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) together with Environmental Ambassadors (EA) and UNEP, collaborated for the follow-up to that 2004 meeting, with the overarching theme of the right to a healthy environment and women's role herein.



S. Gabizon, Exec. Dir., WECF, at WAVE Lunch

The WAVE events were two-fold; a High Level lunch held October 10th as a Side Event within the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, and a High Level Conference held October 13th to deliberate the issues and approve the WAVE Belgrade Declaration. The Lunch hosted representatives from government agencies, national parliaments, and NGOs where testimonies of environmental rights breaches were shared, and political perspectives were given. The conference, divided into a morning and afternoon session, was a forum for testimonies and presentations of examples where women mobilized to implement change in the environmental arena. The afternoon session was devoted to deliberation on the Draft WAVE Belgrade declaration with the themes: right to biodiversity, right to safe energy, right to water and sanitation, and the right to safe chemicals.

WAVE Lunch: Outcomes

-Taken from event press release-

Women Environmental Ministers join UNEP Executive Director and Grassroots Women Leaders in Support of a Women's Agenda for the Right to a Healthy Environment.





Minister of Environment Norway, Helen Bjornoy

Belgrade, SERBIA: At a standing room only luncheon attended by nearly 100 government delegates, citizen organizations and the international press, sponsored by WECF and EA, three women environmental Ministers – two former and one present, were joined by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environmental Program to support including grassroots women’s concerns in the UNECE -- Environment for Europe -- deliberations.

Helen Bjornoy, Minister of Environment from Norway, gave clear credit to the women’s movement for her rise not only to being the most prominent woman in environmental advocacy in Norway, but also to the realization of her earlier career as a Lutheran minister, saying that without the encouragement of women’s activism, it is doubtful that she would have had the ability to create such a strong public life. She said that women have an important role to play in Europe’s environment – bringing together a community that she believes is often needlessly splintered into small, separate groups working, for example, on climate, biodiversity, toxics, and energy policy.

“Women have some expertise about how to do more than give small solutions,” Bjornoy stated. “There are three answers on how women can build bridges to the future – continuing the struggle for women’s rights, networking, and making the connections on the issues.”

Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP and former Director General of the World Conservation Union, praised the organizers of the event:

“I am particularly pleased with the way that you have chosen to link the environment with gender and with health.”

Steiner announced that he was launching a new, five-person strategic implementation team, essentially, the “Blue Berets” of UNEP and that he had specifically named Janet Macharia as a member of the team to serve as a strategic advisor on gender. Steiner stated:

“I would like to have gender issues become more and more part of how [UNEP] breathes, thinks and acts.” He continued: “What you are doing is very important. We will continue to work with you, and with the networks – WEDO (the Women’s Environment and Development Organization) the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) and WECF – together, we can make a difference.”

Sascha Gabizon, Exec. Dir. of Women in Europe for a Common Future responded, “Be assured that we will work with you [Steiner and UNEP] especially to bring the voices of grassroots women up to the decision making level,” recalling a photo displayed earlier of the G-8 where only one woman was present, in contrast to the leaders in the room.

“We want to ensure more participation in decisionmaking by women and other groups less well represented at the policy negotiation tables.”



Achim Steiner, Exec. Dir., UNEP



Andjelka Mihajlov, former Minister of Environment-Serbia

Andjelka Mihajlov, former Environmental Minister for Serbia, currently representing Environmental Ambassadors, one of the co-sponsors of the event told the group:

“In the Eastern European countries, women are the most affected by both environmental and energy insecurity, and as a result, we are often more motivated than men for our future.” Mihajlov, who holds a PhD in chemical engineering, continued:

“We are working very hard to promote sustainable consumption patterns, advocating for green procurement at the governmental level and promoting partnerships between women and men, NGO’s and governments. Only if we work together can we make real change.”



Irene Dankelman, International Advisory Council, WECF with Jacqueline Cramer, Minister of Environment- the Netherlands

The Minister of Environment for the Netherlands, Prof. Jacqueline Cramer, whose prior engagement precluded her from attending the WAVE lunch, received the WAVE Belgrade Declaration draft, during her visit to the WECF Exhibition stand, with great interest.



List of Speakers and Topic (Lunch)

- Sascha Gabizon, Exec. Dir. WECF with Andjelka Mihajlov, Pres. EA, former Minister of Env. Serbia
Human rights and the environment
- Prof. Tamara Steger, Centre for Env. Policy and Law
Environmental Rights in the EU and EECCA
- Sabine Breuckmann, Agr. Coord.-WECF (DE)
Bio and Cultural Diversity, Unserland Project
- Anna Tsvetkova, Mama-86 (UA)
The Right to Sanitation and Water
- Svetlana Tsvetskova, Mama-86 (UA)
Energy Poverty in Odessa
- Marie Kranendonk, Pres.-WECF (on behalf of Nadjesdja Kutepova, Planet of Hopes (RU))
Mayak Nuclear Plant: Lessons are not learned
- Achim Steiner, Exec. Dir UNEP
UNEP Perspective on Gender and Environment
- Karine Danielyan, former Minister of Env., Armenia
Women’s role in achieving a healthy environment
- Helen Bjornoy, Minister of Env. Norway
Final Thoughts: Women building bridges to the future

WAVE Conference: Outcomes

The WAVE Conference, chaired in the morning by Sascha Gabizon, Executive Director, WECF, and Andjelka Mihalov, President, EA, and former Minister of Environment for Serbia, was opened by an informative and inspiring speech from Janet Macharia, Senior Gender Advisor of UNEP. In her remarks she noted,

“today more than ever, to preserve a healthy environment for human well-being, environmental considerations must be embedded in a wide array of human activities. ‘Mainstreaming’ of environment is thus requisite if we are to address the underlying forces that drive environmental degradation. “



Her key recommendations included 1) building alliances, 2) promoting equal participation, 3) research, 4) gender analysis of natural resources management policies, 5) gender impact assessments of environmental policies and actions, 6) gender budgeting, and 7) the development and use of local sustainable development strategies.

Lena Sommestad, former Minister of Environment for Sweden, was regrettably unable to join at the last moment, however, she sent along her keynote address to the participants. There were notable parallels with the remarks of Janet Macharia, particularly regarding the mainstreaming of environment and gender into other policies. From her past experiences, including that as a former professor of Economics, she noted,



S. Gabizon-WECF, J. Macharia-UNEP, & Prof. T. Steger-CEPL

“ the key challenge for the women’s movement of today is to identify the most successful strategies to be used by women in their struggle for equality, empowerment and sustainable development. “

She paralleled this with her insights from the Swedish model, which notes that the long-standing discourse on population and health as drivers of economic development was instrumental in advancing a gender rights and later environmental agenda.” She went further to describe, “We must make women visible, by bringing women’s issues into the mainstream political debate.”

The conference then continue with women NGO leaders giving testimonies of environmental rights breaches in the fields of water and sanitation, biodiversity, affordable energy, consequences of nuclear power, and a chemical trespass- breast cancer as an environmental diseases. This session was followed by positive experiences of women’s and environmental groups mobilizing and affecting change in their region. Examples included a new



Elena. Manvelyan, AWHHE, Armenia

project on helping parents-to-be create a healthy environment for their baby (the Nesting project), participation in the EFE and IPEP process, and sustainable income generating projects.

In the afternoon, delegates debated a draft Declaration which called for the right to a healthy environment on specific issues, namely biodiversity, safe water and sanitation, safe and affordable energy, safe chemicals in everyday products and the right to information, participation and justice. After working in thematic groups and then engaging in a direct text amendment negotiation session, the delegates approved the WAVE Belgrade Declaration.

WAVE Belgrade Declaration: Excerpts

The approximately 120 participants, from 30 different countries in the PAN-European region, call on Governments and all other sectors of society to recognize the environment as the foundation and sustainer of our societies, our economies and our lives...

We urge Governments in our region to implement existing commitments to **biodiversity** protection, in particular the Convention on Biodiversity.... We call for the promotion of a sustainable, bio-diverse, fair, ecological and regional agricultural production, which includes the reduction of subsidies for industrial agriculture, and support for the environmental as well as social services of farmers. We demand the recognition of the cultural heritage that our (agro-) biodiversity offers...We demand the recognition of the right of citizens to safe, diverse, fair, and locally produced agricultural products....We call for a moratorium on [GMOs and nanotechnologies] until all health, safety, and even human rights aspects have been thoroughly studied by independent experts...



We are deeply concerned about the lack of access to clean drinking **water** and the absence of safe **sanitation** for more than 100 million people in the EU, EECCA, and SEE region (particularly in rural areas), and the morbidity and mortality this causes, especially for babies and children....We demand the safeguarding of the right to safe and affordable water for all, and call for the promotion of preventive water source protection, including sustainable and affordable sanitation, and water saving approaches... We demand communities and citizens have access to information and the possibility to participate in decision making on water issues at all levels....

We are alarmed by the detrimental **energy** situation for poor households and schools, hospitals and other public institutions and facilities in our region. Poverty forces people to burn waste (e.g. plastics, tar, oil, kerosene, traditional biomass) indoors for heating and cooking purposes, emitting toxic fumes and causing major health problems...We are concerned about the effects of **climate change** and the burdens that climate-related changes and disasters put on women, men and children, including health, environmental, and economic impacts in our region and globally...We are deeply concerned about the promotion of **nuclear energy** as a solution to climate change...We demand access to affordable, efficient, renewable and clean energy for all in the region...We demand our Governments remove subsidies for unsustainable energy sources such as nuclear and instead give financial support to safe, efficient, sustainable clean and renewable energy resources and to promote these technologies...

We are concerned about the effects of harmful **chemicals** in our food, environment, and everyday products on our health and that of our children and families...Pregnant women can unwittingly transfer hazardous substances accumulated in their bodies to their child...We therefore demand Governments put the principles of substitution, precaution, liability and compensation (polluter pays), and the public right to know in every international and national legislation on chemicals...Children should be protected and born free of a toxic body burden and we call on Governments to put the health of children and the pre-birth environment high on the agenda of all chemicals strategies, agreements, plans and programs...We call on Governments to ban all hazardous chemicals in children's products (e.g. toys, clothing, food)...We demand the phasing out and mandatory substitution of all carcinogenic, mutagenic, bio-accumulative and toxic, repro-toxic, persistent, endocrine disrupting and neuro-toxic substances, all which can harm the health of women, men and in particular children...We demand the effective implementation of REACH¹, and call on governments in the EECCA and SEE region to take the initiative to adopt similar measures...

We demand the increased **participation** of all citizens in environmental decision and policy making...We also demand the right of all citizens, women in particular, to have easy and full access to environmental **information** and environmental **justice**. This needs to be guaranteed through the full implementation of the Aarhus Convention...



¹ Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of Chemical substances (REACH)



We call on our Governments to guarantee the right to a healthy environment, taking into account the full protection of communities, in particular our children and future generations, by implementing existing measures and introducing new legal means...

We commit ourselves to work together, exchange information and lessons learned, to share ideas and visions, and cooperate with scientific and technical experts and socially responsible businesses. We will dialogue and build partnerships to demonstrate and implement sustainable lifestyles and practices and bring together our unique and diverse strengths for our common goal: a just, peaceful and healthy planet.

We call on all Governments and stakeholders in the region and worldwide to join our efforts to promote the right to a healthy environment for all!

Next Steps

The adopted WAVE Belgrade declaration will be used as a lobby, dialogue and engagement tool, circulated widely to relevant politicians, government officials and other organizations to boost communication on the right to a healthy environment and specific intervention points therein. WECF will use the document throughout her network and, alongside other activities, hopes to present key results of the conference within the UNEP Governing Council meeting in Monaco 2008, sharing main messages, consequences for implementation and recommendations, calling for a strong place for gender and environment evidenced by, e.g., the establishment of regional WAVE events. WECF will also strengthen the lobby of EU, EECCA and SEE Ministers of Environment and Health in order to advance the goal of a healthy environment for all.



List of Speakers and Topic (Conference)

- Sascha Gabizon, Exec. Dir., WECF with Andjelka Mihajlov, Pres., EA, former Minister of Env., Serbia
Welcome and Introduction
- Janet Macharia, Senior Gender Advisor, UNEP
Keynote Address
- Prof. Tamara Steger, Centre for Env. Policy and Law
Environmental Rights & Justice in the EU and EECCA
- Marie Kranendonk, Pres.-WECF (on behalf of Nadjesda Kutepova, Planet of Hopes (RU))
Mayak: Nuclear lessons not learned
- Emma Anakyashan, Coordinator, AWHHE (AM)
Improvement of sanitation in rural areas in Armenia
- Diana Iskrevva, Pres., Earth Forever Foundation (BG)
Sanitation and Water in Bulgaria
- Sabine Breuckmann, Agr. Coord., WECF (DE)
Bio and Cultural Diversity, Unserland Project
- Helen Lynn, Co-Chair, Health Group, WECF (UK)
Breast Cancer, an environmental disease
- Elena Manvelian-President, AWHHE (AM)
Video: The Cost of Poverty-Energy Poverty in Armenia
- Sybille Schneehage, Dir., Katachel, DE/Afghanistan
Sustainable Income Generating projects
- Sonja Haider, Dir. WECF
The Nesting project
- Fay Mansell, Chair, Women's Institute (UK)
Successes and Challenges for the Women's Institute
- Olga Speranskaya, Eco Accord (RU)
IPEP in the EECCA Region
- Anna Golubovska, Pres. Mama-86 (UA)
Public Lobby Campaigns
- Victoria Elias, Eco Accord (RU)
Participation in the EFE Ministerial Process
- Karine Danielyan, former Minister of Env., Armenia, with Gordana Comic, Member of Parliament, Serbia
Dialogue on Consequences for Policymakers
- Marie Kranendonk, Pres. WECF
Closing Remarks

About Women in Europe for a Common Future- WECF

Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) is a Network of 80 Organisations in 31 Western and Eastern European countries, the Caucasus and Central Asia, working on sustainable development, health and environment, and poverty reduction.

www.wecf.eu



About Environmental Ambassadors-EA

Is a not-for-profit, project oriented consulting group of leading experts in sustainable development and environment related issues, environmental: policy, governance; security, diplomacy, strategic planning, impact assessment, due diligence, accession, as well as waste management, cleaner technologies, infrastructure, local development, climate change and renewable energy related issues.

<http://www.ambassadors-env.org/eng/index.php1>



About UNEP

UNEP, established in 1972, is the voice for the environment within the United Nations system. UNEP acts as a catalyst, advocate, educator and facilitator to promote the wise use and sustainable development of the global environment. To accomplish this, UNEP works with a wide range of partners, including United Nations entities, international organizations, national governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society.

<http://www.unep.org/>

