

4th World Congress of Rural Women

23 to 26 April 2007
Durban, KwaZulu-Natal
South-Africa

United in our diversity: Working together towards the total emancipation of rural women from poverty and hunger

**DECLARATION OF THE 4TH WORLD CONGRESS OF RURAL WOMEN
HELD AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER, DURBAN, SOUTH
AFRICA: 23 – 26 APRIL 2007**



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We, the Rural Women participating at the 4th World Congress of Rural Women in Durban, South Africa from the 23rd to the 26th April, 2007 representing government, rural women organizations and civil society:

Recognise that since the First World Congress of Rural Women was held in Australia in 1994 followed by the 2nd and 3rd World Congresses of Rural Women in the United States in 1998 and Spain in 2002, governments and civil society have made active efforts to take legislative and policy measures to promote awareness, research and understanding of rural women's issues;

Recognise that the objectives of the Beijing Platform of Action remain a binding and practical guide for our actions towards gender equality that is still unfulfilled;

Recognise that rural women still have less access to land, natural resources, infrastructure, financial and information and communication technologies; and that globalization and further exacerbates the marginalization of rural women in accessing opportunities, wealth and resources;

Note with deep concern that the economic and financial challenges in many developing countries have severely affected the socio-economic status of



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women, especially those in rural areas, and the continuing rise in the number of rural women living in poverty;

Further note that these economic and financial challenges as they affect rural women are by and large as a result of inequities in trading regimes between the developed and developing countries;

Further note that current economic growth theories and practices continue to place a disproportionate burden of poverty on rural women and that water and health are the pillars of development;

Recognize the urgent need to take appropriate measures aimed at further improving the situation of women in rural areas;

We therefore call upon our respective national governments, international and intergovernmental organizations, civil society and the corporate sector to take collective responsibility to work in partnership with rural women organizations to:

ECONOMIC

1. Elevate the matter of employment and freedom from hunger as a central focus of the development agenda
2. Undertake necessary measures to give rural women full and equal access to productive resources, including the right to inheritance and to



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- ownership of land and other property, credit/capital, natural resources, appropriate technologies, markets and information, and meeting their basic requirements for water and sanitation;
3. Combine the provision of financing with the provision of seeds, skills development, other resources and market access to guarantee success in poverty alleviation programmes;
 4. Support the increase in agriculture production to ensure food security through investments in rural physical and institutional infrastructure and the generation of employment, focusing on development of micro and small enterprises;
 5. Support national and regional efforts to make an inventory of cost-effective and appropriate technologies and work towards evolving a mechanism for technology transfer by using the services of national, regional and international organizations;
 6. Increase investment in the human resource development of rural women, particularly through health and literacy programmes and social support measures;.
 7. Increase investments in the generation of data to understand the nature and impact of HIV-AIDS on rural women's livelihoods and coping strategies



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SOCIAL

8. Address the issue of rural poverty in a comprehensive, integrated and holistic manner through mobilizing political, economic and social resources for sustained development and by channeling the flow of national resources and international development assistance for this purpose;
9. Strengthen partnerships to eradicate diseases such as HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria and all other diseases and ensure availability of primary health care to the women in rural areas;
10. Protect and promote women's full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by ensuring that gender equality principles are mainstreamed into the national and international development agenda and gender sensitisation is carried out at all levels;
11. Take necessary legal, policy, administrative and other measures for the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence and other harmful practices against rural women and girl children;
12. Adopt affirmative measures including scholarships at all levels for female students in rural areas, promote non-formal education and literacy programmes for rural women, including women with disabilities and the girl child, in order to address gender imbalances in education and training;



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13. Support technical assistance and capacity building programmes including exchange visits, skills and competency training among agriculture extensionists and rural development facilitators;
14. Strengthen and support solidarity amongst women in developing countries and the rest of the world to enable them to play a meaningful role in the socio- economic development of these countries and regions;
15. Empower rural women through capacity building and skills development to enable them to participate in the global political and economic forums, for example WTO, UN, AU and other international and regional agencies;

PEACE AND SECURITY

16. Support increased peace and security in the world. In this connection the three EEEs, namely, empowerment, employment and education (particularly knowledge and understanding of rules, laws and treaties which affect their wellbeing) and are critical to women's peace and security
17. Re-orient policies from nation centered security to human centered security which address human rights, including access to basic services e.g., housing, water, land and infrastructure



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GOVERNANCE

18. Integrate the concerns of rural women into national, international and intergovernmental policies, strategies and programmes, in particular by placing a higher priority on resource allocation related to the practical and strategic interests of rural women;
19. Improve the representation of rural women in all structures of power and decision making including leadership positions in institutions of governance, public and private sector and civil society organizations nationally and internationally;
20. Work towards exploring the possibilities of collaborative research on problems and solutions concerned with rural development and women by establishing partnerships for technology transfer and narrowing down the digital divide and technology divide;
21. Ensure adequate availability of young professional rural extension workers and creation of knowledge centers in our respective countries;



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CALL TO ACTION

We declare that we remain fully committed to the realization of the aspirations of rural women as reflected in Beijing Platform of Action and this Declaration.

We commit to continue to work together in the coming years to mobilize political and financial resources and to establish enduring procedures globally, regionally and nationally to monitor the implementation of this Declaration.

We call upon rural women from developing countries, in partnership with their national governments to take up the space created by the non alignment movement to advance their cause.

We call upon the members of WTO to accelerate their engagement in the interest of levelling the global trading environment for the betterment of all.

We further call upon the peoples of the rest of the World to support us in our endeavours to change the world for the betterment of all its peoples by improving the social and economic circumstances of rural women.

Durban, SOUTH AFRICA – 25 April, 2007



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