

Women's Rights Groups call on Governments to reject the WTO Declaration on Women's Economic Empowerment.

We, women's rights organisations and allies¹, call on state parties to the World Trade Organisation to refrain from adopting the proposed "Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment". We appreciate that governments are increasingly recognising the gendered impact of international trade and trade rules imposed through the WTO and preferential trade agreements. However, this declaration fails to address the adverse impact of WTO rules and instead appears to be designed to mask the failures of the WTO and its role in deepening inequality and exploitation.

The declaration takes a very narrow approach to assessing the gendered impacts of trade. Even if the benefits the WTO bestows on the richest 1% of the world's population were evenly split between men and women, the majority of the world's women would not benefit. Increasing access to credit and cross border trade for a few women will not benefit women's human rights overall. The declaration is a 'pink herring', an attempt to obscure the harm WTO provisions have on women while ensuring the WTO can bring in 'new issues', likely to deepen inequality.

The removal of tariffs and import limits alone have been detrimental to women's rights. Tariff reductions reduce government revenue essential for public investments in health, education, energy, water, transport and social protection. Reduced public expenditure impacts most heavily on the economically poor and particularly poorer women. Governments are increasingly replacing that revenue with regressive taxes, such as Goods and Services Taxes which have discriminatory effects². The influx of subsidised food and inputs displaces local production and the WTO has forced governments to remove valuable policy instruments that allow them to regulate the flow of imported goods in order to support local production and to provide local, pro-poor subsidies.

It is now clear, that the neoliberal project involving austerity, privatisation, deregulation of finance, markets and corporations, and trade and investment liberalisation has had a devastating and discriminatory impact on women.³⁴ Neoliberalism is sexist and is simply incapable of supporting gender-equitable and just sustainable development, no matter how it is spun.

The proposal for the WTO to deal with 'new issues' threatens women's human rights even further. Those 'new issues', include harmful services provisions that deepen corporate power and the inclusion of e-commerce that will limit regulation of the world's largest, tax avoiding corporations. If governments are genuinely interested in advancing women's human rights through just trade arrangements, they would allow for pro-poor public stockholding of food, allow any domestic regulations a state deems necessary to advance women's human rights and the public interest, ensure that states can fully utilise intellectual property flexibilities to provide access to medicines, seeds, technologies that advance women's human rights and refrain from entering into any bi-lateral or multi-lateral agreements that further restrict the capacity to use domestic regulations in the interests of the public in any way they deem necessary

We do not seek a retreat to combative nationalism in the name of trade protectionism. We support multilateralism. However, multilateralism must be based on solidarity, democracy and human rights, rather than the interests of unaccountable multinational corporations or wealthy states.

*Spanish translation of the statement can be found [here](#).

¹ This statement was drafted by the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) endorsing organisations can be found here.

² Barnett, Kathleen/ Grown, Caren: Gender Impacts of Government Revenue Collection: The Case of Taxation, Commonwealth Secretariat, London, 2004.

³ See for example the Report of the UN Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and practice, presented to the 26th session of the Human Rights Council, see A/HRC/26/39

⁴ For example, the Committee on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights issued a statement on public debt and austerity and concluded that "reductions in the levels of public services or the introduction of or increase in user fees in areas such as childcare, and preschool education, public utilities and family support services have a disproportionate impact on women, and thus may amount to a step backwards in terms of gender equality" CESCR 2016: para. 3 and 10

Endorsement have been closed at 12 December 7.30PM Bangkok time/9.30AM Buenos Aires time

ENDORISING ORGANISATIONS

1. Alliance of CSOs in Clean Energy Access (ACCESS) Global Coalition
2. Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)
3. ActionAid International
4. Bangladesh Model Youth Parliament
5. Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF), International
6. Project Survival Pacific - Fiji
7. RITES Forum - India
8. YouthNet for Climate Justice, Bangladesh.
9. Diverse Voices and Action (DIVA), for Equality -Fiji
10. Pacific Partnerships on Gender, Climate Change and Sustainable Development (PPGCCSD) - Pacific SIDS
11. Gender and Environmental Risk Reduction Initiative (GERI) - Nigeria
12. Feminist League - Kazakhstan
13. Society For Rural Education and Development - India
14. Tamil Nadu Women's Forum - India
15. Alliance of Concerned Teachers - Philippines
16. Indian Social Action Forum - India
17. Echoes of Women in Africa (ECOWA) - Nigeria
18. Nijera Kori - Bangladesh
19. African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)
20. Adéquations - France
21. Trade Collective
22. South African Women in Dialogue
23. Women for Women's Human Rights - New Ways, Turkey
24. Women's Coalition - Turkey
25. PWESCR International (Programme on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)
26. JANPAHAL - India
27. Feminist Learning Partnerships - India
28. We Women Lanka- Sri Lanka
29. Akina Mama wa Afrika - Uganda
30. South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE)
31. Centre d'appui aux initiatives locales de développement et d'Assistance aux personnes vulnérables (CIDEP) - BURUNDI
32. CPDE Feminist Group (CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness)
33. European Network of Migrant Women (ENOMW)
34. Free the Marginalised Women Advocates (FREMWA) - Ghana
35. Roots for Equity - Pakistan
36. African Women's Rights Collective
37. Association Nigérienne des Scouts de l'Environnement (ANSEN) - Niger
38. Alliance de Lutte contre la Faim et la Malnutrition du Niger (ACFM Niger)
39. Centre for Research and Advocacy - India
40. Insan Foundation - Pakistan
41. National Indigenous Disabled Women Association Nepal (NIDWAN)
42. Sathi ALI for Partnerships India
43. Afrihealth Optonet Association [CSOs Network]
44. Society for Conservation and Sustainability of Energy and Environment in Nigeria (SOCSEEN)
45. Dr. Uzo Adirieje Foundation (DUZAFFOUND)
46. Coordinadora de la Mujer - Bolivia
47. Centre for 21st Century Issues (C21st) Nigeria

48. Women Fund Tanzania
49. Centre for Human Rights and Development - Mongolia
50. Development Observer - Mongolia
51. People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty - Mongolia
52. WIDE+ (Women In Development Europe plus) Network
53. Centro de Estudios e Investigación sobre Mujeres (CEIM) - Spain
54. Citizen News Service (CNS)
55. National Forum of Women with Disabilities - Pakistan
56. Haurralde Foundation
57. Fundacion para Estudio e Investigacion de la Mujer (FEIM) - Argentina
58. South African Women in Dialogue
59. GDMR-Grupo Para o Desenvolvimento da Mulher e Rapariga
60. Haus of Khameleon - Fiji/Pacific
61. Fundación Mexicana para la Planeación Familiar AC MEXFAM
62. TIYE International - The Netherlands
63. ANANDI - India
64. Mahila Kisan Adhikar Manch (MAKAAM)
65. StandUp Movement Lanka (SUML) - Sri Lanka
66. Organisation des Femmes Autochtones pour la Lutte contre la Violence (OFALV) Rwanda
67. Alliance des Peuples Autochtones et Locales d'Afrique centrale (APALAC coalition) Pays-Bas.
68. Keturah Cecilia Babb - Individual
69. Equality Bahamas
70. Pacific Womens' Indigenous Networks
71. Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM)
72. Pacific Women's Watch - New Zealand
73. YWCA of Solomon Islands
74. Participatory Research Action Network (PRAN) - Bangladesh
75. IT for Change - India
76. EMPOWER - India
77. Women Against Rape Inc.
78. Gramya Resource Centre for Women
79. Rainbow Pride Foundation Fiji (RPF)
80. Equidad de Género, Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia - Mexico
81. IMA Research Foundation - Bangladesh
82. Penn Thozhilalargal Sangam (Women Workers Union) - India
83. Independent Democratic of Informal Economic Association (IDEA) - Cambodia
84. Fiji Trades Union Congress - Fiji
85. Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (CTUHR) - Philippines
86. KABAR BUMI (Migrant Workers Families Association) - Indonesia
87. Reacción Climática - Bolivia
88. Aksi! for gender, social and ecological justice - Indonesia
89. Indonesian Migrant Workers - Hong Kong
90. Indonesian Migrant Workers in Hong Kong (ATKI-HK)
91. Centre for Community Economics & Development Consultant Society (CECODECON) - India
92. Public Advocacy Initiative for Rights & Values in India (PAIRVI) - India
93. Mahila Dakshata Samiti/Women2030 - India
94. National Alliance for Women (NAWO) - India
95. NGO Federation of Nepal - Nepal
96. Nepal SDGs Forum - Nepal
97. Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha (BNPS) - Bangladesh
98. International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRRAW) Asia Pacific
99. Federation of Women Farmers Rights -Tamil Nadu (makkam) - India
100. Rural Women's Liberation Movement -Tamil Nadu - India
101. Women's Coalition For Change-Tamil Nadu - India

102. Tamil Nadu Dalit Women's Movement - India
103. Govind Kelkar - Individual
104. Dristi Nepal (Rights to Existence) - Nepal
105. Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) - Thailand
106. Maati, Uttarakhand- India
107. National Alliance of Women Human Right Defenders - Nepal
108. Agricultural Missions - USA
109. Servicios Ecumenicos para la Reconciliacion y Reconstruccion (SERR) - USA
110. ENLACES por la Sustentabilidad - El Salvador
111. Solidaritas Perempuan - Indonesia
112. Women Forum for Women - Nepal
113. Naga Indigenous Women Network (NIWN)
114. Women Rising - India
115. Asociacion Ciudadana por los Derechos Humanos - Argentina
116. DEWA Project (Development and Empowerment for Women's Advancement)
117. Women for Peace and Gender Equality Initiative (WOPEGEE) - Nigeria
118. Peoples Development Community (PDC) - Bangladesh
119. AwazCDS - Pakistan
120. LDC Watch
121. IBON International
122. WAVE (Women in Adult & Vocational Education Inc.) - Australia
123. Society for Appraisal and Women Empowerment (SAWERA) - Pakistan
124. Youth Association for Development - Pakistan
125. Human Rights Focus Pakistan
126. Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) - Bangladesh
127. AWAJ Foundation - Bangladesh
128. Rural Reconstruction Nepal
129. Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)
130. Indigenous Women's Network of Thailand (IWNT)
131. PROGRESS (Palangkaraya Ecological and Human Rights Studies) - Indonesia
132. Nething - India
133. Worker's Information Center (WIC) - Cambodia
134. Women Network for Unity (WNU) - Cambodia
135. Social Action for Change (SAC) - Cambodia
136. The BPO Industry Employees Network (BIEN) - Philippines
137. Unified Employees of Alorica - Philippines
138. Cambodian Food and Service Workers' Federation (CFSWF) - Cambodia
139. Association pour le Développement Global des Batwa au Rwanda (ADBR) - Rwanda
140. Women's Centre - Sri Lanka
141. Journalists for Human Rights - Macedonia
142. Mothers & Daughters of Lanka - Sri Lanka
143. Women Workers for Justice Group
144. Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)
145. African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests (REFACOF)
146. Institute for Gender Studies, Unisa - South Africa
147. West African Young Women Leaders Network (ROAJELF) - Senegal
148. Le Conseil Senegalais des Femmes (COSEF)
149. Health Poverty Action - UK
150. Asia Dalit Rights Forum
151. National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights - India
152. Young Associates for Integral Development (JADI) - Democratic Republic of Congo
153. Adivasi Women's Network - India
154. India HIV/AIDS Alliance
155. Koperazzjoni Internazzjonali (Kopin) - Malta

156. Instituto del Tercer Mundo of Montevideo - Uruguay
157. Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
158. Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies - Jordan
159. Trade Justice Movement - United Kingdom
160. Ruth Kruger (individual) - South Africa
161. International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
162. Right to Food campaign - India
163. Fundación Vía Libre - Argentina
164. Public Services International (PSI)
165. Regional Centre for International Development Cooperation
166. Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)
167. Feminist Task Force
168. General Confederation of Labor of the Argentine Republic
169. SENTRO Labour Center - Philippines
170. Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services (IDEALS) - Philippines
171. Women Environmental Programme (WEP) - Nigeria
172. Women for Peace and Ecology - Germany
173. Women Empowerment and Human Resource Development Center of India
174. FOKUS – Forum of Women and Development, Norway
175. BRICS Feminist Watch
176. People Over Profit
177. Savisthri National Women’s Movement - Sri Lanka
178. Women’s Action for Social Justice - Sri Lanka
179. Network of Rural Women Producers - Trinidad and Tobago
180. Nga kaiawhina o Wai 262 - New Zealand
181. Sawit Watch - Indonesia
182. Asia Pacific Women’s Watch (APWW)
183. Movimiento Manuela Ramos - Perú
184. Radanar Ayar Rural Development Association (RDA)-Myanmar
185. Community Reference Group (CRG) - Myanmar
186. APVVU - India
187. SAHANIVASA - India
188. Shobujer Ovijan Foundation (SOF) - Bangladesh
189. Gender and Development Initiative (GENDI) - India
190. Right to Food Campaign
191. Italian Climate Network
192. Embun Pelangi Foundation - Indonesia
193. CADIRE CAMEROON ASSOCIATION - CAMEROON
194. Gender Centre for Research and Training - Sudan
195. Fundación Étnica Integral (FEI) - Dominican Republic
196. Mujer y Salud en Uruguay (MYSU) - Uruguay
197. SILAKA - Cambodia
198. INESC - Brazil
199. Society for International Development (SID)
200. Center for the Development of Civil Society - Armenia
201. Social and Policy and Development Center - Armenia
202. World Animal Net - USA and South Africa
203. AMIHAN National Federation of Peasant Women Philippines
204. War Against Rape (WAR) - Pakistan
205. Forum International des Femmes de l’espace Francophone (FIFEF) - Congo
206. Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement
207. Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR)
208. Women for Human Rights Single Women Group - Nepal
209. National Indigenous Women Forum (NIWF), Nepal

210. Forum for Women's Rights and Development (FORWORD)- INDIA
211. Center for Indigenous Peoples' Research and Development (CIPRED) - Nepal
212. National Indigenous Women's Federation (NIWF), Nepal
213. Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO) - Nepal
214. Unión Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Acción Social - UNITAS, Bolivia
215. Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (EMPOWER) - Malaysia
216. Asia Pacific Women with Disabilities United
217. MONFEMNET National Network - Mongolia
218. GABRIELA Alliance of Women - Philippines
219. Women's Initiatives (WINS) - India
220. Emony Yefwe International- Kenya

*** Please add your organization's name at the end of the list, instead of inserting it in the middle of the list. Also, please check the existing list of endorsement in case the organization that you are adding is already in the list.**

Endorsements have been closed on 12 December 7.30PM Bangkok time/9.30AM Buenos Aires time