



## THE MEXICO 2006 KNOW HOW DECLARATION

### “WEAVING THE INFORMATION SOCIETY; A GENDER AND MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE”

Hosted by Programa Universitario de Estudios de Género (PUEG) and UNAM, in cooperation with the Know How Secretariat August 23-25, 2006

#### PREAMBLE

1. We, the Know How community, women and men from 60 countries gathered together at Palacio de Minería in Mexico City, are a part of the global community of information and communication specialists, librarians, archivists, academics, journalists, politicians, activists, media specialists and representatives of indigenous women’s movements, excluded groups and sectors, and rural women’s information initiatives. We are dedicated to the creation and dissemination of information and new knowledge for the empowerment of women and the promotion of gender justice. Our goal is to advance gender justice and respect for every nation’s cultural diversity within the information society, and to promote access to information and communication as a fundamental women’s and human right.
2. 60 years after the Declaration of Human Rights and 31 years after the first United Nations World Conference on Women that took place in this same historic venue that is Mexico City, we recognize that some achievements have been made, but that lack of data disaggregated by sex, gender, ethnicity and age, the failure to leverage information and the lack of access of women around the world to information are key factors contributing to the inability of States to achieve the objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action.
3. Global democracy can only be obtained when equality, justice and respect exist. At present, social and economic inequality between sectors and regions is growing, and fundamentalism has increased. However, women have gained experience and have opened

spaces for economic and cultural participation. There are new opportunities developing in health, education, economics, human and reproductive rights. The capacities and tools for making positive contributions in every single sphere of human action exist. The women's movement has fostered legislative reforms and created platforms of action for women's progress. We the Know How community have accumulated historical capital that enables women as leaders of national, regional and international programmes to close the gendered digital gap, design social politics and produce information that can be transformed into knowledge by the appropriation of the ICT's. We have constructed networks that connect women and enable the circulation of useful information to solve urgent needs.

4. Worldwide, increases in social inequality, discrimination, social exclusion, racism, discrimination based on class, caste, ethnicity, sex and gender are developing at an alarming rate. Women from all social sectors face political, cultural, religious and economic conservatism that prevents them from reaching their full potential. This gap inhibits the access of women to better life conditions. Corporate capital has gained such power that it determines the direction of social policies of many governments. Globally, women's contribution to economies and to political life is neither recognized nor documented.
5. Women continue to face grave familial, institutional, military, and criminal violence. Women face other violations of their basic rights with impunity, including those caused by persistent armed conflict and gender based violence, lack of property rights, and physical and sexual violence. Women continue to bear the brunt of the HIV/AIDS crisis, carrying the burden as care givers and as those who are infected. Despite these grave injustices women have limited mechanisms to record, capture, publicize and redress damages caused by these violations. As a result, there is no reliable sex disaggregated data to inform public policy makers. Despite their knowledge and experience, women are marginalized, making it impossible for them to promote their dignity and transform their lives.
6. In all regions of the world, refugees, internally displaced persons, migrants, women who have been trafficked for sex, indigenous and rural peoples, Afro-Caribbean women, women with disabilities and lesbian women continue to be deprived of their basic freedoms and continue to face discrimination. Such marginalization is aggravated by the lack of access to relevant information.
7. Throughout the world, low-income working women face exploitation and marginalization in the informal economy and in the so-called Export Processing Zones that offer long hours for little pay, domestic slavery and in the informal work sector. The problems are exacerbated by corporate strategies such as just-in-time technologies and short-term contracts that avoid corporate responsibilities for pregnant workers.
8. Because of all the above, we demand the full implementation of Section J of the Beijing Platform Action, and of the agreements taken in the World Summits on the Information Society (WSIS -Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005), which call on nations to take measures and actions to transform the role of women as mere subjects of public opinion, into

producers of communicative interactions, defenders of human rights and citizens demanding major participation in every single sphere of human action.

9. The WSIS served as an important platform to put forward women's media, information and communication issues. It was a valuable space to lobby and advocate for women's rights to communicate including the use of people-centred media such as community radio, as well as overall access to information. However WSIS failed to adequately develop policies that would close the gender digital divide as the agreements on the utilization of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for development did not extend beyond the borders of globalized markets. For example, women entrepreneurs utilizing ICTs for small business, migrant care workers staying in contact with their families back home by using Internet and mobile telephones, women peasants sharing their realities and experiences for learning purposes, all of which contribute to poverty alleviation, are not addressed in the final WSIS documents.
10. We recognize the enormous effort of women to close persistent global and gender digital divides that disproportionately exclude women. We further recognize the imperative of challenging inequalities in access to and participation in information mechanisms and generation of knowledge at the national, regional and international levels and the need to hold accountable the private corporations, governments, and civil society organizations in redressing these imbalances.
11. We recognize the value of information in the indigenous and rural peoples' struggle to preserve biodiversity and the health of the planet and recognize that, for the future of our planet, indigenous and rural knowledge must be preserved. We recognize the value of information in the indigenous and rural people's struggle for self-determination.
12. We recognize the multiple ways in which ICTs support people with disabilities to participate actively in generation of knowledge and sharing of information and experiences. ICTs could also open up a new world of possibilities and opportunities for women with disabilities worldwide.
13. This scenario underscores the need to generate, reproduce, distribute and share information and knowledge including reliable data and statistics that would enable women to assert their rights and demand justice.
14. With urgency, the Know How Conference 2006 demands that the United Nations and other international and regional institutions, funding bodies, national and local governments, private sector civil society organizations and media take the following immediate actions to close the gendered digital and non-digital divide, and ensure that women and girls are able to exercise their right to communicate and generate, repackage and disseminate information in such a way that they have full access to information and knowledge that will transform their lives and allow them to enjoy their fundamental human rights.

## CONTEXT

15. Recognizing that the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) highlighted the information economy and markets more than social development and that it missed the opportunity of adequately addressing gender issues and divides in the information society, and being instrumental in eradicating global poverty,
16. Reaffirming the commitments made through the following United Nations agreements and resolutions:
  - “Indigenous Women beyond the Ten-year Review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action” resolution adopted at the 49th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 2005
  - The Indigenous Peoples and Information Society the Plan of Action adopted at WSIS, Geneva, 2003
  - The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the United Nations – which range from halving extreme poverty, to reduction of maternal mortality and halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, 2000 - 2015
  - The Declaration from the Asia-Pacific UNESCAP Workshop on Women and Disability in Bangkok, Thailand, August 2003
  - The Report from the Expert Group Meeting, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), Beirut, 2002,
  - The Report of the Expert Group Meeting, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 2002, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and UN ICT Task Force Secretariat,
  - The Platform for Action of the United Nations 4th World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995, in particular Section J, Women and Media section and the outcomes document of Beijing + 5
  - The Declaration of the United Nations Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 1994
  - The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979
  - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly Article 19, 1948,
17. Underlining the recognition of information and communication as an instrument for women’s and human rights in the following civil society declarations:
  - The Declaration of Montreal on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Human Rights, 2006
  - The outcomes of the Third Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on Indigenous Women, 2004
  - The Declaration of the Kampala 2002 Know How Conference, and the Declaration of the Amsterdam 1998 Know How Conference on the World of Women’s Information
  - The Declaration of the International Indigenous Women’s Forum, New York 2000

- The Bangkok Declaration from the Women Empowering Communications Conference held in Bangkok, Thailand, 1994
  - The People's Communication Charter, Rio de Janeiro, 1992,
18. Noting with concern that there have been backward steps and lack of coherence in policy implementation in the area of media, information and communication as was evident in the exclusion of the women and media section (Section J) in some of the processes of the 10-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action,
  19. Noting that access to ICTs and the media is more than a tool in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals as these cut across various women's issues and concerns including health, violence against women, armed conflict, economy and governance,
  20. Emphasizing that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals depends on the availability of, and access to, the generation, availability, sharing and leveraging of information,
  21. Recognizing the importance of the ongoing UN reform process and the need to ensure that the women's architecture in the UN system is strengthened and that any new independent women's agency that is created must have a broad mandate, led by a director with Under-Secretary-General (USG) status and with greatly enhanced resources,
  22. Acknowledging that funding for gender mainstreaming, which includes the creation of and dissemination of information towards the attainment of gender justice, must be carried out at a national level under the highest government office and be subject to monitoring. While women's information organizations must continuously ensure that their services meet the needs of their stakeholders,
  23. Recognizing the need to gather qualitative and quantitative statistics and data to influence policy making and hold governments accountable for the implementation of global policies impacting women,

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND PLAN OF ACTION**

24. The 2006 Know How Conference adopts the following plan of action to enhance the access to, the affordability of, and the ability of women to generate, share and leverage information and knowledge to transform their lives. The participants in the 2006 Know How Conference put forward the following recommendations to corresponding stakeholders:

### **UN**

25. Support Free and Open Source Software programs, and ensure women are involved in developing the programs. In particular, free software, with its freedoms of use for any purpose, study, modification and redistribution should be promoted for its unique social, educational, scientific, political and economic benefits and opportunities. Its special advantages for developing countries, such as low cost, empowerment and the stimulation of sustainable local and regional economies, easier adaptation to local cultures and

creation of local language versions, greater security, capacity building etc., need to be taken advantage of, recognized and publicized.

26. Demand that States formulate public policies and legislation that facilitate the use of and access to communication media by indigenous and rural peoples according to international instruments and conventions in force.
27. Demand that States adopt international instruments which recognize indigenous peoples rights such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the Human Rights Council.
28. Demand that States adopt international instruments such as the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO Convention 169), 1989.
29. Ensure that a strongly mandated UN women's agency support the implementation of the Mexico 2006 Know How Declaration.

### **Governments**

30. Honour conventions, treaties, declarations and all local, national, regional and international instruments, as noted in the context of this Declaration.
31. Construct national and regional programmes, to counter the growing power of multinational corporations in public policy processes by introducing gender mainstreaming at all levels, in all sectors. Governments must agree to develop, implement and monitor these initiatives at national and international levels, while making all relevant information available to women.
32. Formulate public policies and legislation that facilitate the use of and access to communication media by indigenous and rural peoples according to international instruments and conventions in force.
33. Respect and protect indigenous customary laws, in particular protocols and cultural responsibilities and the ethical standards of traditional indigenous knowledge.
34. Ensure, in addition to traditional library practices, wider access to virtual libraries by harnessing existing communication technologies and the new ICTs.
35. Ensure that women's organizations, including women's health organizations, have adequate funds to fulfil their tasks. This must include information dissemination activities.
36. Promote the use of free software in schools and higher education and public administration.
37. Formulate public policies and legislation in consultation with indigenous peoples especially indigenous women, in order to facilitate the use of and access to communication media, according to international instruments and conventions in force.

38. Repeal repressive laws relating to media and television that inhibit the freedom of information and expression for women. Participants of the Know How Conference support the demand of the Mexican hosts to the repeal of the recently approved media law (Television Law) by the Mexican Council of Representatives which dramatically inhibits the development of community radio and limits the access to the airwaves.
39. Ensure that the regulation media is in the hands of independent institutions and its focus is to promote the public interest, including the establishment of measures that encourage diversity and plurality of views on a broad range of issues.
40. Promote the creation of communications media that respond to the linguistic and cultural realities of indigenous and rural peoples, respecting the autonomy and the ways of using these media, ensuring strategies for long-term continuity and sustainability.
41. Create communication media that help preserve peoples' mother tongue and minority languages and increase access to materials in those languages.
42. Ensure that women have the right to communicate, access and control information and share knowledge for their self-determination.
43. Adopt and implement policies, laws and regulation supporting community and independent media initiatives including women's community media initiatives.
44. Ensure that the regulation of the media is by independent bodies and that media regulation is aimed at promoting public interest including the setting up of measures that encourage the diversity and plurality of views on a broad range of issues.
45. Respect and promote the freedom of expression – the right to seek, receive, express views and impart information and ideas. It is a fundamental human right that is integral to the struggle for women's rights and attainment of gender justice. It is a key element in enabling women and all other marginalized groups to have access to information and allows them to express their views and to influence public action.
46. End repression of media and communicators, in particular community media, alternative media and independent media. Protect the rights of journalists and communicators and ensure that the appropriate authorities prosecute those who commit crimes and violent acts against them.
47. Support the Digital Solidarity Fund as recommended by WSIS and specifically support women's ICT initiatives.
48. Enforce standards for media that respect women's and human rights.
49. Support gender research as a basis for policy change.

### **Private sector**

50. Corporations must ensure that production and services policies take cognisance of their effect on women, their rights and well-being.
51. The private sector must commit resources in support of governments to set up universal access funds that promote equitable distribution of information and communication infrastructure and services in rural and urban areas.

### **Funding bodies**

52. Support sustainable development of local organizations by
  - Respecting and engaging with local organizations to undergo research and provide services and develop products, rather than perform the tasks themselves.
  - Promoting the financing of indigenous peoples' projects, giving special consideration to those of indigenous women, respecting diversity.
  - Avoiding short-term approaches such as outsourcing to commercial agencies activities that are otherwise undertaken within NGO organizations which in the end inhibits the sustainability of our organizations.
  - Avoiding the "multi-stakeholder" model as an imposition that determines the conditions of funding provided to women organizations.
53. Support initiatives (such as the Know How Conference) that bring together women communicators, librarians, media practitioners and information activists.
54. Provide long term support to women's information organizations.

### **NGOs and civil society**

55. Develop programmes of training in organizational transparency, organizational structure and funding strategies.
56. European civil society organizations must pressure their governments and the European Union to continue supporting women's (information and communication) organizations in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific.
57. Women's organizations throughout the world must continue to communicate with funding and potential funding organizations to ensure they are not forgotten in the funding rounds.

### **Media**

58. Produce and distribute media materials that project balanced, positive and non-stereotypical images of women and men. Information must be generated that strengthen and dignifies women, free of gender stereotypes that humiliate women, violence, discrimination and racism. Particular effort must be made to eradicate the image of indigenous women as exotic objects and merchandize.

### **Know How Community**

59. Enlarge the capacity of francophone women to actively participate in the Know How processes.

60. Develop and share innovative databases that include ethnic, gender and age indicators.
61. Develop training programmes in organizational transparency, organizational structure and funding strategies.
62. Train women's information organizations in developing fundraising strategies, which will include self-financing through product development.
63. Collaborate with women-only organizations working and mixed-membership organizations to ensure that they develop adequate communication and information strategies for women. These strategies must include training on how to write and disseminate online information as well as other traditional channels.
64. Create a database of funding organizations that will support women's information and communication organizations.
65. European women's information and communication organizations must pressure their governments and the European Union to continue supporting women's (information and communication) organizations in Europe, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific.
66. Document the everyday human rights abuses experienced by all women, acknowledging where necessary discrimination based on gender, sexuality, disability, race, ethnicity, caste, civil status etc. and make these available to governments and UN bodies.
67. Document the lives of migrant women.
68. Continue to support initiatives (such as the Know How Conference) that bring together women communicators librarians media practitioners and information activists.
69. Increase the participation of women, and especially rural, indigenous, poor and marginalized women (including those from under represented countries and territories) in the Know How conference, and ensure their contributions to the outcomes and recommendations of critical intergovernmental meetings such as the WSIS and the Internet Governance Forum.
70. Ensure participation in the Know How community of women activists from politically isolated countries or territories and countries where women activists face security threats for their work.
71. Promote the implementation of recommendations and plan of action.



The Know How Community Secretariat is hosted by the International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement (IIAV) [www.knowhowcommunity.org](http://www.knowhowcommunity.org)

