

## **XIV CONGRES WOMENS INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION - WIDF**

### **CARACAS STATEMENT**

The Fourteenth Congress of Women International Democratic Federation held in Caracas from 8-14 April 2007, assumes the legacies of the historic struggles of women throughout the world.

Our 62 years of existence are rooted in the struggles of the women against fascism and for peace around the world. In December 1945 when we held our first world congress, women from 44 countries from the most remote regions brought with them the hope, the expectation, the conviction of better world without discrimination, without unemployment, without hunger; a vision of peace, worthy of being enjoyed.

The clear and vibrant of Madame Cotton, the first president of the WIDF still resounds clear when she spoke of the "legal status of women", the need to unite women in defense of our rights and those of our children, and the urgent need to rise up a high wall of actions and determinations to build lasting world peace.

Since then there has been a lot of water under the bridge: the Cuban revolution, the defeat of the US imperialism in Vietnam, the liberation of Asia and African colonies.

How can we not proclaim ourselves to be the heirs of the valiant Cuban women, the Vietnamese, the Palestinians, the Africans and the Asians? They are the examples that fill the WIDF and its women with pride and dignity.

The world has changed, not always for the benefit of the great majority of the Universe but today, new winds blow over the planet and especially in our Latin America.

It is not coincidence that our 14<sup>th</sup> Congress take place in the Venezuela of Bolivar and Manuelita Saenz. The revolutionary process of Venezuela next to Cuba, the dignified and heroic beacon of America in nights of anguish, is the hope for our continent and the world.

For this reason and with the same passion, vehemence and the same commitment of that time we declare: we are the powerful heirs of the women who fought against fascist nazi falangists, the Africans who fought against colonialism occupation, the soviet and European combatants. In recent history, the Vietnamese, the Cubans, the Salvadorians, the Guatemalans, the Nicaraguans, the Palestinians are those who in the most difficult conditions raised our rights: for our rights to vote, to a fair and equal wage, safe working conditions, health and social securities, equal treatment of women before the law. They are the workers, indigenous women, intellectual professionals, who always stood with people.

The Venezuelans women who defended and continue to defend the Bolivarian Revolution even at the cost of their lives and their children.

We are and will be women in struggle to transform the world and to achieve continuation and sustainable well being with social, political, economic and gender justice, including the crucial struggle for the rights of working women.

We are women of all ages, creeds, faiths, identities, cultures; we are confident of our strength and commitment to life, responsive to the sufferings of our peoples, we open our hearts, our minds to the millions of human beings who need, want and are working to bring down the unjust economic social and patriarchal order that rules the world today imposed by Neo-liberal globalization.

Because we want a peaceful world free from nuclear weapons, we denounce the imperialist military escalation across the planet in particularly the war of aggression sustained by the US government and its allies against Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine. We repudiate Plan Colombia, whose bloody tentacles extend to Ecuador and Venezuela; the attempt to appropriate the Guarani aquifer in the Triple Frontier; their aim of militarization establishing new military bases in this zone under pretext of terrorism.

Peace for us is not merely the absence of war or armed conflict, it is not the peace of cemeteries nor the peace of the subjugation of our peoples. The peace we seek is achieved through bread, work, health, education, free public social security, housing, and respect for difference, national sovereignty, economic and political independence, the integration of our nations. For us we will not have peace so long as there exist the exploited, the hungry, the excluded, and the marginalized. For this reason it is necessary to change the capitalist system. It is also necessary to change the patriarchal system in order to eliminate the imbalance of power between men and women.

We want a world of equality between men and women where equal opportunities are real and effective. We condemn the undeclared war that transnational corporations has imposed with its neoliberal policies giving way to world hunger, poor nutrition, misery, illiteracy, inequality, which particularly and powerfully affect women.

We condemn the invasion of transnational media conglomerates whose informational and entertainment forms strive to eliminate our cultures and national identities.

We seek a world of sustained and sustainable development and demand decisive actions which will stem destruction of the environment which threaten life of the planet.

We seek a world where the rights of each citizen are respected, and demand the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women; displacement, trafficking and killing, including elimination of obstacles to equal access to resources and employment as the means to economic independence. We believe this can be achieved through the creation of a full citizenship, development of a legal, economic, social and ethical sense of life, building a historical project of participatory democracy. We cannot claim full citizenship exists if people are hungry, marginalized, excluded, illiterate, and women are subject to patriarchy.

We want a world with full access to culture and knowledge for all, and demand the abolition of all ways and means used for the homogenization and commercialization of goods and

services that has been transformed into the privileges of the rich and really are the patrimony of women and of all humanity.

For us empowerment is not limited to quotas of power, to vote and be elected. It is to take ownership of how we choose to lead our lives, to actively participate in assigning the plans for national developments, to have an active presence in the economic, social, and political decision-making sectors by this only we can affirm and execute our rights.

Empowerment is fundamentally building popular power that takes men and women into account, the power which will make both men and women of our nations invincible in the face of imperialism. It means creating a different power which does not exploit, oppress, subjugate, which is capable of definitely destroying the patriarchy and imperialism.

Women are not a sector, a group or topic. We are found in all spheres of society, and for this reason, we are convinced that it is our diversity which gives us the volcanic richness of our visions and proposals. This diversity is behind our creative initiatives, that undoes the mediocrity of one way of thinking.

For this reason our demand is based on the historic necessity of incorporating our accumulated experience, our reflection takes into account the present economic, social, cultural and political situation of each continent, each region, and each country which integrates our body.

This reflection enriches our daily practice, while allowing us to develop our theory as the Women International Democratic Federation. That theory comes out of our own practice and action capable of incorporating the most advanced revolutionary and feminist thought.

Caracas, April 13<sup>th</sup> 2007  
Adopted unanimously

(Non official translation)