

8<sup>th</sup> of March, **STATEMENT**  
**International Women's Day**  
WIDE, Globalising Gender Equality and Social Justice



Brussels, March 5, 2009

**Women call for a future based on alternatives to the current mainstream economic system**

International Women's day is an occasion for us, women, all over the world to celebrate and to unite for social and gender justice, environmental sustainability, peace and equality and make our voices heard!

We are in the midst of the most serious crises since decades. The lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of women and men, girls and boys worldwide are threatened by the complex set of the financial, economic, energy, food, climate, and inequality crisis.

WIDE is deeply concerned that again **women will have to carry the major burden of this multiple crises**: indeed, prior economic crisis in Latin America and in Asia in the 1990's, have largely affected women and children by increased unemployment and decreased household incomes, cuts in government costs on social services and most of all additional reproductive and unpaid care work.

WIDE believes that **the current financial and economic crisis signals the failure of the mainstream economic system** -that favours large capital interests at the expense of people's lives and sustainable livelihoods- to respond to the enormous global challenges. WIDE understands current situation as an opportunity to call for a change of the unsustainable, gender-blind economic development system that is built on women's subordination.

In this context, WIDE urges the international community:

- to promote people-centered sustainable development including empowerment of women, social justice and equality as well as an equal distribution of resources;
- to acknowledge and value in economic terms the unpaid and invisible care work and contribution of women to economic and social development as being essential for the reproduction of the labour force and the well-being of societies;
- to pursue a truly cooperative and participatory solution to the current systemic crisis where all countries are able to voice the concerns of their most vulnerable groups;
- to increase political and financial support to women's networks and organizations working for social, economic and political change in the South, East and West.

*It has been more than nine decades that women's day is celebrated on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March to commemorate centuries-old struggle of women to participate in society on an equal footing with men and to build a new model of society based on gender equality, social justice, democracy and peace. Today, in the XXI century women, who make half the population of the world have not achieved equality with men in any country. It is estimated that nearly 70 per cent of the world's poor are women; the majority of them earn less than their male counterparts; in most countries, women work twice the unpaid time men do; worldwide, 20 to 50 per cent of women experience some degree of domestic violence (United Nations Economic and Social Council).*

We congratulate our colleagues, women activists all over the world with the International Women's Day and express our gratitude for their effort in struggle for peace, women's empowerment and independence.

Together we can make the change we want!

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Not for publication: for further information please contact; WIDE, Natalie Giorgadze, Natalie[at]wide-network.org, +32 2 545 90 77, [www.wide-network.org](http://www.wide-network.org). WIDE is a European network of women's organisations, development NGOs, gender specialists and human rights activists. WIDE monitors and influences international economic and development policy and practice from a feminist perspective.