

# **Extractive Industries and Women's rights - Balance and Sustainability, Transformation for Survivability: Extractivism, Post-Extractivism (and beyond)?**

## **Extractive Industries and Women's rights . Balance, Sustainability, and Transformation for Survivability: Envisaging a post-extractivist future**

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*"We reject models based on extractivism, and current production and consumption patterns that do not contemplate an integral vision of development ..."*

Young women advocates working on the intersections between gender, economic and ecological justice<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

In the SDG and Post-2015 Development Agenda negotiations most States, UN agencies and civil society have already affirmed universal human rights, equality and sustainability as core principles to guide discussions. However, it is not possible to realize such crucial principles without addressing the multiple converging crises of food, fuel, finance and climate change, all of which have been caused by anthropocentric development models rooted in unsustainable production and consumption. These crises have been triggered by runaway neoliberal globalization, which has brought with it a highly militarized and financialized political economy, and an ongoing dependence on fossil fuels which is being held tightly in place by closed and politicized oil regimes.

A new, alternative and genuinely transformative approach will clearly necessitate a strong and principled position on extractivism, which is itself centred on maximising production and consumption at all costs. But what might that position entail? And why is it a gender equality, human rights and sustainable development issue?

Firstly, it is critical to recognise that terrains of control, violence and extractivism are many, and interlinked. These terrains are extending as industrialised countries and transnational corporations are looking beyond tapping the last drops of oil, gas, water and minerals from existing sources; they are also prospecting for new resources in the oceans and the polar regions in particular,<sup>2</sup> threatening food supplies, biodiversity,<sup>3</sup> and ultimately the global ecological balance as never before. Private sector interests are also using new and untested geo-engineering technologies to explore our land and oceanic depths for oil, gas, rare earth and minerals despite strong opposition from many local communities and civil society groups and networks.<sup>4 5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> References:

i GEEJ Combined statement - Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean:

[http://www.dawnnet.org/uploads/documents/GEEJ%20Statements\\_Combined\\_PacAfLatC\\_2011-Jun-23.pdf](http://www.dawnnet.org/uploads/documents/GEEJ%20Statements_Combined_PacAfLatC_2011-Jun-23.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See: <http://www.asoc.org/issues-and-advocacy/antarctic-environmental-protection/biological-prospecting>  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/19/science/earth/arctic-resources-exposed-by-warming-set-off-competition.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/19/science/earth/arctic-resources-exposed-by-warming-set-off-competition.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)

<http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/2012/12/deep-sea-mining-is-closer-than-you-think>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ias.unu.edu/resource\\_centre/Bioprospecting%20in%20the%20Arctic.pdf](http://www.ias.unu.edu/resource_centre/Bioprospecting%20in%20the%20Arctic.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> For example, The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has instituted a de facto moratorium against ocean fertilization, one form of geoengineering, at its Ninth Conference of the Parties in Bonn, Germany in 2008. This moratorium was expanded to cover all geoengineering technologies at COP 10 in Nagoya, Japan held in

Private sector interests including transnational corporations (TNCs) are also uncomfortably prominent in recent multilateral negotiations offering considerable resources but engendering few transformative results for local communities. Slick corporatised development packages assist states to tick boxes on gender equality, sustainable development and human rights, but not so readily acknowledged by these corporatised development agencies and state backers is the extent to which such consultancy driven public relations exercises are also the latest public face of a corporatised elite that is intent on changing the very nature of overseas development aid (ODA) and development.

These transnational companies and their lobby groups are increasingly synchronising their lobbying efforts, co-opting trade, aid and development agendas on a scale never seen before. They are often, for example, behind pushes for weak voluntary agreements in place of enforceable multilateral treaties. With the complicity of some states, they have also set their sights on watering down long-agreed Agenda 21 development principles including 'common but differentiated responsibilities', 'technology transfer', 'the precautionary principle', and more recently 'prior and informed consent'. They also show a remarkable capacity to reinvent themselves time and again in various facets of development tracks.

It is instructive to consider how such companies interact to control the direction of the global economy. Recent research shows that there is a 'bow-tie' shaped network, where the centre knot of the 'bow-tie' represents a core group of 147 transnational companies collectively controlling around four tenths of the economic value of all global TNCs. Another relevant fact, especially in light of the players in the recent global financial crisis, is that three quarters of that core are financial intermediaries. Overall, the top holders within this group of 147 can be thought of as an economic 'super-entity', because of the influence they wield.<sup>6</sup>

One of the most interesting aspects of this analysis is the contrasting extent to which these core actors are still generally treated as separate and disparate development actors rather than a 'political' power bloc, both in terms of theoretical analysis and practical advocacy. Is this really the most useful framing, when these economic agents hold such *defacto* sway over economic and development agendas by sheer economic weight and (hidden) numbers? As with the economists who ignored the signs of the impending global financial crisis, are governments effectively ignoring a form of development coup, which is taking place partly by stealth and partly by invitation?

The possibility that this core group of TNCs intentionally acts in a coordinated fashion, as a bloc, is an urgent political and economic question that needs to be dealt with by the SDG and Post-2015 Development Agenda process, but it also needs to be addressed more broadly because of its implications for global financial instability. To what extent are these institutions exposing themselves and the financial system to 'contagion'? If one thread of the bow-tie frays, do other parts unravel as well? Which ones? In predictable ways or not? And what are the most effective multilateral, governmental and civil society responses if and when they do?

Meanwhile, while states and corporations are locked together in frequently exclusionary and

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October 2010. [www.etcgroup.org](http://www.etcgroup.org)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.criticalcollective.org/?publication=geopiracy-the-case-against-geoengineering>

<sup>6</sup> Vitali, S; Glattfelder, J.B. and Battiston, S. 'The network of global corporate control.' 2011. [http://arxiv.org/PS\\_cache/arxiv/pdf/1107/1107.5728v2.pdf](http://arxiv.org/PS_cache/arxiv/pdf/1107/1107.5728v2.pdf)

semantic battles in various multilateral and bilateral processes, feminist, women's rights and other wider social justice networks have been strenuously advocating for change, to address the breadth and depth of development crises, and the adequacy or otherwise of policy and social movement responses. Even before the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, women advocates from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America and the Pacific had been conceptualising struggles for social justice, rights and sustainable development, "*on diverse territories and geographies including the body, land, oceans and waterways, communities, states, and epistemological grounds.*" recognising these terrains as, "*fraught with the resurgent forces of patriarchy, finance capitalism, neo-conservatism, consumerism, militarism and extractivism.*"<sup>7</sup>

They also assert that the care of individuals in society should never be bargained away by governments negotiating economic, trade and environmental agreements and that all policies focusing on social needs such as health, education, water, livelihoods and such, must protect and promote the right of all women to fully control their bodily autonomy and integrity, and gender identities and sexualities.<sup>8</sup>

Women have also called for policies and programmes that hold in ecological balance all humans, animals, plants, art, medicines, staple food, livelihoods, symbolic wealth and social relationships, including women's informal networks of mutual support.<sup>9</sup> They therefore insist that large-scale land and ocean-rights acquisitions by states and the private sector, for mining, gas, oil and export-oriented agriculture, should be re-examined in the light of human rights-based, social justice and ecological sustainability. Many reject continued economic prioritisation of the export of raw materials, such as minerals, fossil fuels and agricultural commodities, as being ultimately unsustainable and ecologically unsound.

There is also an increasingly loud call by feminists for recognition of the deeper structural roots of the current crises and for analytical clarity on interlinkages between them. Specifically, they recognise that multiple global crises are caused by an anthropocentric development model rooted in unsustainable production and consumption patterns, and the financialisation, militarisation and extractivisation of an economy based on, and exacerbating a wide range of gender, ethnicity, class and other inequalities.<sup>10</sup>

### **Survivability and Sustainability: Moving toward Post-Extractivist Futures**

Given that the prevailing extractivism and neo-extractivism approaches are inadequate responses to the development challenges of this time, there is a need for major paradigmatic shifts.

It is prudent to look back for previous large-scale successes emanating from the women's movement, for ideas and strategies. Southern feminist analysts Gita Sen and Anita Nayar of DAWN recently re-examined some of the key shifts in population, environment and human rights, focusing on the period since the pivotal United Nations Conferences of the early 1990s,

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<sup>7</sup>Joint Statement by Women Activists from the Economic South at Rio+20: '*Governments Gamble with Our Future. South Feminists Demand Responsible Action Now*'. 22 June, 2012, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: <http://www.dawnnet.org/advocacy-cso.php?id=248>

<sup>8</sup> In contrast to the strategic approach implicit in 'malestream' development, which involves both women and men in addressing gender issues. To read more:

[http://www.zwrcn.org.zw/index.php?option=com\\_easyblog&view=entry&id=12&Itemid=100](http://www.zwrcn.org.zw/index.php?option=com_easyblog&view=entry&id=12&Itemid=100)

<sup>9</sup>GEEJ Combined statement - Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean:

[http://www.dawnnet.org/uploads/documents/GEEJ%20Statements\\_Combined\\_PacAfLatC\\_2011-Jun-23.pdf](http://www.dawnnet.org/uploads/documents/GEEJ%20Statements_Combined_PacAfLatC_2011-Jun-23.pdf)

<sup>10</sup>Ibid

held in Rio de Janeiro, Vienna, Cairo and Beijing.<sup>11</sup> Two of their observations are particularly pertinent to discussions of gender, extractivism, corporate accountability and human rights.

Firstly, they highlight the joint work of environmentalists and women's groups over the past 30 years to transform a then-hegemonic Malthusian approach to population and environment<sup>12</sup> linkages towards one based on human rights, and cognisant of gender equality concerns. This has been a process in which the debate about issues of women's bodily autonomy, and their sexual and reproductive health and rights, has directly influenced the wider development and human rights discourse.

Secondly, and just as usefully, they describe the extraordinary catalytic momentum of the immediate years prior to, and work at 'Planeta Femea,' the women's tent at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. This was where women's organizations thrashed out a consensus position on population policy that would bridge the considerable differences that existed among groups from different regions and backgrounds prior to that time.

Women now find themselves at a similarly crucial moment in time, and are urgently calling for catalytic and paradigm-changing elements to be included in the Sustainable Development and Post-2015 Development Agenda. Women's movements are again required to influence global development trajectories, with a view to bringing about development solutions that are both pragmatic and realistic, but of a sufficiently transformative nature and scale to move humanity away from the current dangerous development path which is based on extractivism and geopyracy,<sup>13</sup> which involves the use of dangerous and untested technologies including experimental seabed mining.<sup>14</sup>

Such old-school development can only persist when enabled, unwittingly or otherwise, by the current hegemonic trade, financial and corporate systems. Thus social coalitions have to challenge these underlying systems, and to do so need to be wide, sure and sharp. Successful and transformative challenges need to be exponentially strong.

## Conclusions and recommendations

We currently find ourselves in the midst of a global financial crisis, which neoclassical economists previously said could never happen. They simply ignored the signals of impending crisis.<sup>15</sup> So what other signals should we now heed, before it is too late? What must we do to reclaim and transform sustainable development for the needs of our time?

With respect to issues of ecological balance and sustainability, gender equality and human rights, the Women's Major Group therefore recommends the following:

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<sup>11</sup> Sen, G and Nayar, A. 'Population, Environment and Human Rights: A Paradigm in the Making' in *Powerful synergies: Gender Equality, Economic Development and Environmental Sustainability*. UNDP. 2012.

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=13&sqi=2&ved=0CIcBEBYwDA&url=https://www.stanford.edu/~ranabr/2FMalthusian%2520and%2520Neo%2520Malthusian1%2520for%2520webpage%2520040731.pdf&ei=Iq0TUdOXK6eq0AXixIDwDQ&usg=AFQjCNEJ\\_mHNvy7-dONRNH57DUiH0AgaUQ](https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=13&sqi=2&ved=0CIcBEBYwDA&url=https://www.stanford.edu/~ranabr/2FMalthusian%2520and%2520Neo%2520Malthusian1%2520for%2520webpage%2520040731.pdf&ei=Iq0TUdOXK6eq0AXixIDwDQ&usg=AFQjCNEJ_mHNvy7-dONRNH57DUiH0AgaUQ)

<sup>13</sup> EtcGroup. Geopyracy: The Case Against Geoengineering. 2010. <http://www.etcgroup.org/content/geopyracy-case-against-geoengineering>

<sup>14</sup> Rosenbaum, Dr. Helen. The Deep Sea Mining Campaign (DSM). Report: 'Out of Our Depth'. <http://www.deepseaminingoutofourdepth.org/tag/experimental-seabed-mining/>

<sup>15</sup> Keen, S. *Debunking Economics*. Revised and Expanded Version. 2011. Zed.

**Overall:**

\*Development approaches must be both analytically and procedurally transformative, calling for interlinked core changes, focusing equally on the roles of states, civil society, private sector and other development actors.

\*Development approaches must be based on human rights, democratisation and demilitarization, ensuring international solidarity action in times of social, economic, environmental and humanitarian crises.

\* Development strategies must be comprehensive, and should include human rights principles, goals, targets, indicators, and means of implementation and financing for structural transformation. They should focus on public policies implementable at national and local levels, and ensure maximum available resources.

\* There should be greater dialogue and strategic articulation among social movements, particularly among women's movements, in order to participate and influence the political, social, economic, and ecological processes including SDGs, and in all areas of the Post-2015 development agenda processes.

***On gender equality, erotic justice, human rights and sustainable development:***

\*Broad and full recognition of women as rights holders, especially of economic, social and cultural rights, rather than casting them as welfare recipients and labour supply.

\*Constitutional recognition of Economic, Social, Cultural and Ecological Rights by all governments, including explicit recognition of internationally agreed gender equality and human rights commitments and normative frameworks, and the creation of mechanisms to ensure the enjoyment of these rights.

\*Recognition of the intersectional nature of gender and sexual identity, and the design and implementation of development policy that precludes discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, class, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, ability, or beliefs.

\*State compliance with agreed international, regional and national agreements to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence and discrimination against women as their human right, in order that women can fully participate in sustainable development. This will include the elimination of all forms of violence and fundamentalism based on misogynist, homophobic, lesbian-phobic, and trans-phobic ideas

\* The meaningful participation of women and young people in designing development models.

\*Recognising the intrinsic links between sexual and reproductive health and rights, care and social and the productive economy, which should be fully reflected in macroeconomic policy-making, in a manner that also includes robust social protection systems.

\*Movement away from vague and generalised references to 'women's unpaid care burden' toward concrete policy recognition of unequal and unfair burdens that women endure to sustain care and wellbeing, which is further exacerbated in times of economic and ecological crisis.

\*Universal access to social protection and public services for children, youth and the elderly as well as the execution of policies focused on the equitable redistribution of paid and unpaid work, by all.

***Specifically on extractive industries,***

\*State resistance to corporate interests that have warped the sustainable development paradigm toward the economic pillar, with a move towards emphasising sustained socio-economic and ecological sustainability for all instead.

\*An increased policy focus on food insecurity, soil degradation, land alienation, and long term socio-cultural impacts of extraction on affected communities, including indigenous and migrant peoples, fisher and forest peoples, pastoralists, and many other marginalized communities.

\*Specific attention to the risks and burdens disproportionately borne by women and girls as a consequence of extractive industries.

\*Ultimately, the re-orientation of national agricultural plans, away from the extractive industries and export-oriented agribusiness and towards local women-led and small-holder agroecology practices. This should include strong protection of local and free seed supply and distribution systems.

### ***On macroeconomic, trade and finance practices,***

\*Transform systemic inequalities driven by current international monetary, financial and trading systems, and give ecology and equality equal priority along with economic development.

\*Reaffirm that poverty and economic injustice cannot be alleviated by more 'growth' on its own, but rather through increased economic-social inclusion, and by re-emphasizing human wellbeing in equilibrium with the environment as the key focus of development.

\*Reassert states' responsibility to uphold, through policy regulation and enforcement, the interests of the public and of the environment over that of corporate industry.

\*Ensure all macroeconomics policies are in compliance with human rights, and social and ecological justice, and include a reduction in volatility and debt burdens; endogenous, employment and food-security focused development; and policies focused on gender-related redistribution of assets including land, credits, technology and resources.

\*Overcome inequalities through progressive income taxation and effective taxation of corporations, incentivising small and medium enterprises over transnational corporations, and tackling structural discrimination and inequalities of labor markets, including horizontal and vertical segregation, and informality.

\* Move from Freedom of Investment Models (FOI) toward Investment for Sustainable Development Models (ISD) that recognise that foreign direct investment benefits to host countries are not automatic, and that regulations are required to balance the economic requirements of investors and states' needs.

\*Ensure that Agenda 21 and Rio+20 commitments on technology transfer, skills development, research, and establishment of firm local economic linkages are explicit in all investment and trade regimes, and in line with the precautionary principle and principle of prior informed consent in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

\*Refrain from entering into future bilateral trade agreements on extractives products wherever possible, and gradually phase out first generation trade agreements.

\*Strengthen sub-regional and regional trade alignments and agreements for increased negotiating strength, especially for SIDS, AOSIS, and LDCS regarding extractives products;

\*Strengthen national legislation with respect of protection offered to foreign investors by codifying typical BIT-provisions into domestic law;

\*Across-Government approaches to trade and finances, through Inter-Ministerial Committees and translating this through to high level and technical work at the regional level on extractives products;

\*Domesticate and codify BIT-provision protections into national law, so that they are far better clarified and accountable in terms of overall alignment with the National Constitution. This potentially allows more close oversight on issues of human rights and justice, including gender equality and women's empowerment.<sup>16</sup>

\*Articulate these transformations in all Post-2015 development agenda work, explicitly

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<sup>16</sup> 'South African Minister: New approach needed on investment treaties' *South Views*, No. 48, 7 Dec 2012. *South African Trade and Industry Minister, Robert Davies, recently explained his country's change of policy on investment treaties. Extract from his speech at the session on UNCTAD's Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development (IPFSD), Geneva, 24 September 2012.*

clarifying associated gender equality-related gains and losses resulting from such policy

***On geo-engineering and other extractive technologies,***

\*Reaffirm the decision of the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity taken in Nagoya, concerning an ongoing global ban on geoengineering.<sup>17</sup>

\*Multilateral bans on new technologies including fracking, experimental seabed mining and black sands mining.

\*Establishment of an independent, broadly-supported and representative civil society oversight body with the right, agreed by governments, to comment on all phases and aspects of intergovernmental climate change negotiations;

\*Cut greenhouse gas emissions (GHCs) immediately, directly and deeply.

***On agricultural and food sovereignty issues:***

\*Food sovereignty, in particular the protection of traditional knowledge and indigenous biological resources as well as the right to safe and nutritious food must be guaranteed;

\*Put food sovereignty and security at the centre of national regional and global development policies, above export-oriented agriculture.

\*Strengthen the World Food Security Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests in the Context of National Food Security; and reconfigure toward enforceable multilateral agreements, including on responsible agricultural investment;<sup>18</sup>

***On environmental and climate justice,***

\*Accept that there are ecological limits to the 'growth' paradigm and that sustainable development concepts must be safeguarded from corporatised frames and initiatives that prioritise profit over all;

\*Developed countries to re-pay their climate debt by transferring environmentally-sound technologies and financial resources required for south states to shift to low-carbon growth;

\*National level prioritisation of renewable energy access for rural communities and the urban poor;

\*End financialization of emissions management caused by trading, outsourcing, and subsidies;

\*Strengthen accountability mechanisms, resources and capacity of UNCLOS, as the only international multilateral UN governance mechanism on oceans;

\*Strengthen planetary systems measurement and monitoring through both satellites and ground-based initiatives that are open and available to all states;

\*Advance policies relating to 'Loss and Damage', as advanced at COPs 16, 17 and at the recent UNFCCC COP18 in Doha (Dec 2012), with particular attention to gendered analysis of levels of loss and damage associated with adverse effects of climate change and global warming, and attention to added vulnerabilities and responsibility arising through delayed state action;<sup>19</sup>

\*Increase the global and local transparency of all climate-related programs, measurements and technologies through a UN technology assessment facility as proposed at Rio +20<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.iisd.ca/vol09/enb09544e.html>

<sup>18</sup> 2012 Global Hunger Index. Pg. 48

<sup>19</sup> Neelormi, S and Ahmed, A U. Loss and damage in a warmer world: Whither Gender Matters? Gender Perspectives on the Loss and Damage Debate. Nov 2012. <http://www.lossanddamage.net/4807>

<sup>20</sup> ETCGroup. 'The Artificial Intelligence of Geoengineering'. ETC Group Communiqué : Jan-Feb 2013. Issue 109. [www.etcgroup.org](http://www.etcgroup.org)