

against women. i) New and additional financial, technical, and other resources to successfully implement the plans and commitments from the Nairobi, Rio de Janeiro, Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen, and Beijing Conferences, and that member states fulfill their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. j) An end to sexual exploitation, the harassment of, and trafficking in women and children, as well as sex tourism.

12. WE DEMAND AN END TO RAPE AND TO ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE. WE REAFFIRM THAT WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS. WE WILL WORK TOWARDS A SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY JUST WORLD.

13. We seek these transformations in the spirit of service to humanity, partners with youth as agents of change, keeping our children, grandchildren, and future generations in our hearts. We are convinced that as women achieve full and equal participation in all the affairs of the planet, peace will be realized, and the well-being of every individual secured.

This document is the result of three days of intensive consultations and participation among the NGOs present in Beijing. We hope that it reflects the essence of NGO thinking worldwide. We hope that groups and individuals will both endorse the current document and send suggestions for revision to: plenty@igc.apc.org; sekaiholland@mango.zw; mporter@plato.ucs.mun.ca: Linda Christiansen-Ruffman, Sociology Department, Saint Mary's University Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 3C3. Tel: (902) 420-5886. Fax: (902) 420-5121. Email: ruffman@husky1.stmarys.ca

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¹The Platform for Action can be obtained from the UN Department of Public Information, S-1005, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, USA. Fax: (212) 963-4556.

²See Stienstra and Roberts for an analysis of how well Canada has lived up to its previous UN obligations.

³The Sisterhood is Global Institute (SIGI) can be reached at 4343 Montgomery Avenue, Suite 201, Bethesda, MD 20814, USA. Tel: (301) 657-4355. Fax: (301) 657-4381.

References

Canadian Beijing Facilitating Committee (CBFC). *Take Action for Equality, Development, and Peace: A Canadian Follow-up Guide to Beijing '95*. Ottawa: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 1996.

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RHEA HARMSSEN

The Road to Beijing The Pendulum Swing

The world of women is moving.
Like the cream to the surface,
Like a groundswell slowly rising,
Like a mighty river flood,
Soon a torrent to the sea...
First a trickle down the mountain,
Then a rivulet to the stream.
Coming from each hill and byway
Joining at each pass and glimmering
Like a spidery web of lava,
Molten lava shimmering
Down the side of a volcano.

Women the world over
Have been birthing and then giving
Babes into the arms of death.
Sacrificing sons in battle.
Women, victims of rape and beating,
Alcohol and malnutrition.
Eating out subsistence living
The world over just like cattle.

All is born upon the back
Of this illiterate beast of burden,
This ignominious chattel.
Yet the beast is slowly rising
From its knees and from its burden
To tip the scales with its yearning,
Set the pendulum to swinging.

Let the good women now step forward
Bearing ancient tender mercy
As a mark upon their brow.
Not the greedy or the froward,
Lusting, hungry just for power.
But the noble and courageous.
To be swept up in the tide
Of this great momentous hour
When the wave is gently washing
All the sorrow in its motion,
And revealing only hope
And a birth of possibilities.
An expectant dawning healing,
Loving arms and deep devotion
Nurturing, cradling, giving
To the cause of humankind.

Reprinted with permission from Pendulum, Spring 1995 (University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg). Rhea Harmsen writes about issues of gender equality and race relations with the hope of inspiring social change.