

Ecumenical women translate technical, financial language into theological language in order to consolidate advocacy

Ecumenical Women delegates to Commission on the Status of Women were given the opportunity to translate Ecumenical Women's input into the agreed conclusion into prayers of confession, petition and thanksgiving during morning worship on Thursday, February 28th.

This document contains excerpts from the draft of the agreed-upon conclusions, Ecumenical Women's suggested additions and changes to the draft agreed upon conclusions, followed by prompting questions. Then three short sentence prayers were created from the thought around those agreed upon additions; a prayer of confession, a prayer of petition and a prayer of thanksgiving.

We hope you might pray these prayers with a deep and committed heart for the sake of the disproportionate number of women suffering abject poverty. On Monday, governments began to determine the language needed within the agreed-upon Conclusions. By augmenting the agreed-upon conclusions in such a way as Ecumenical Women have desired, it is just possible that we will begin to rebuild an economic system which has at its core a desire for more resources for development, more decisions for development, and less injustice in the financial mechanisms, in the hands of those who are unable to access them under the current mechanisms: the poor.

DRAFT AGREED UPON CONCLUSIONS (to be debated in the Commission on the Status of Women on Monday, March 3 - 7, 2008). For full text of the Draft Agreed upon Conclusions, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw52/Draft%20Agreed%20conclusions%2012Feb08.pdf>

Paragraph 7:

The Commission also recalls the 2005 World Summit, which reaffirmed that the full and effective implementation of the goals, and objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly is an essential contribution to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in Millennium Declaration. (A/RES/60/1, para. 58) **And also recognized the importance of gender mainstreaming as a tool for achieving gender equality and to that end the need to promote the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, and to strengthen the capabilities of the United Nations system in the area of gender. (A/RES/60/1, para 59)**

Gender Mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a strategy, an approach, a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy/ dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gendermainstreaming.htm>

What ethics are being emphasized by this addition to the text?

Create a prayer for a world where that would be the ethic by which we shared our resources.

Prayer of Confession: Dear Lord, we humbly confess our failure to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with you at all times.

Prayer of Petition: Empower and guide us and remind us to act justly with our sisters, as well as with persistence in our actions towards social justice, demanding inclusivity and equality.

Prayer of Thanksgiving: We are thankful for this opportunity to be made aware of our need as a people, the earth over, and we thank you for the comfort of knowing that some needs are being met. We thank you for the strength to work for change.

Paragraph 10

The Commission is also concerned that insufficient budgetary resources continue to undermine the effectiveness and sustainability of both national mechanisms for the advancement of women and women's organizations in advocating for, supporting and monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. (E.CN.6/2008/2, para. 86) **The Commission is further concerned that there is a serious under-resourcing of the gender-specific bodies, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for Advancement of Women, UNIFEM and INSTRAW. (E.CN.6/2008/2, Paragraph 80)**

Office of the Special Adviser on Gender issues:

OSAGI is charged to follow-up on the implementation of the Platform for Action and Beijing+5 through the [Division for the Advancement of Women](#), servicing the General Assembly, ECOSOC, the CSW, and CEDAW Committee.

Women's rights, gender analysis, advisory services and outreach, mainstreaming of a gender perspective. It is a programmatic and strategic office for gender equality. It advises the Secretary-General on gender issues. It facilitates, monitors and advises on overall policy goals of the U.N. It provides leadership in the Inter-Agency network on Women and Gender Equality, the Inter-Agency Task force on Women, Peace and Security.

Division for Advancement of Women:

Main responsibilities:

- To support formulation of policy, global standards and norms on gender equality and women's empowerment at global level, including through analysis and research;
- To promote, support and monitor the implementation of international agreements on gender equality and empowerment of women, including the Beijing Platform for Action, at international and national levels;
- To support the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol;
- To promote the mainstreaming of gender perspectives across all sectors, both within and outside the United Nations system;

UNIFEM:

UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality. Placing the advancement of women's human rights at the centre of all of its efforts, UNIFEM focuses its activities on four strategic areas: (1) reducing feminized poverty, (2) ending violence against women, (3) reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls, and (4) achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of peace as well as war.

INSTRAW: Since its inception UN-INSTRAW, in collaboration with governments, civil society and the United Nations System, has carried out research and training

activities on different topics at the national, regional and international levels. Specifically, the Institute highlights the gender perspective as an essential element in the analysis and implementation of programmes and projects aimed at achieving peace, sustainable development and good governance.

INSTRAW has developed conceptual frameworks and methodologies for measuring and **valuing women's household production** and including such contributions into the system of national accounts, for **tracking women's migration** and the **gender dimensions of remittances**, for looking at **women's access to credit** and **water in Africa, Asia and Latin America**; and for **monitoring governance and women's political participation at local, national, regional and international levels**.

By under-resourcing these areas, what do we compromise about God's world?

By adequately funding these areas, what might we gain?

Prayer of Confession: We (I) have not utilized all our God given talents to help achieve full empowerment for women. Forgive us, Lord, that we want to put down this paper and not deal with these complexities or sometimes even women's contributions in the first and third worlds.

Prayer of Petition: We ask God for the Holy Spirit's guidance to speak out in difficult times, to bring men and boys along with us and to recognize how women contribute to gender inequality. Lord, please encourage people who understand these financial concepts to continue in this work to benefit women, and help us all as women and men to understand these concepts and have our hearts opened. Today, may we work together for effective advocacy, to elicit favorable responses in a timely manner.

Prayer of Thanksgiving: Thank you God for being a God of justice and for international protocols as a first step toward peace, love and equality. Lord, we're thankful for the many men and women who work so hard on these issues for justice and mercy for women.

Paragraph 11:

The Commission is further concerned that there are a number of global factors that have had an adverse impact on financing for gender equality, among them: economic growth patterns that increase inequalities between and within countries, trade and financial liberalization, privatization of public services and enterprises, and the international security agenda.

Trade and financial liberalization: These are policies which focus on the movement of capital, and goods and services with as little resistance as possible.

Privatization of public services: This is built on the premise that private companies, with profit motives, can service our public services better than governments to which we pay our taxes. By moving away from public services, our tax \$\$ are freed up for national security measures and for debt payments.

What about the world we want to build is not happening through these kinds of policies?

Write, Draw a prayer about this.

Paragraph 12 and 12a

The Commission urges Governments, the United Nations system, and invites the **International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization**, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, including the private sector, as appropriate, to take the following actions:

- a. **Democratize global economic governance structures through balanced representation and equitable vote allocation for all countries.**

What is the kingdom value in such a move?

Write, dance, that into a prayer

Prayer of Confession: Lord, many people have no voice. I, too, am guilty of silencing.

Prayer of Petition: Help me hear your voice and thereby all voices. Guide me to help break the walls of silence. Today, we pray especially that the alternative proposals be truly heard and seriously considered.

Prayer of Thanksgiving: We give thanks for this gathering which has broadened our horizons and deepened our faith.

Paragraph 12 and 12 b

The Commission urges Governments, the United Nations system, and invites the **International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization**, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, including the private sector, as appropriate, to take the following actions:

b. Strengthen representation and participation by women and other marginalized groups in international financial and trade institutions.

What kingdom value is in this suggested language?

Write, dance a short prayer.

Prayer of Petition: God, our mother and father, transform, we pray, the international financial institutions so that they represent the interests of the poor, marginalized, especially the world's women – our prayer is for all the world's women – our prayer is for all the world's people – so that economic structures serve everyone, with justice for everyone.

Prayer of thanksgiving: We give thanks for those who by their life and witness have opened our eyes as they have been like the persistent widow, demanding justice.

Paragraph 12 and 12 c

The Commission urges Governments, the United Nations system, and invites the **International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization**, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, including the private sector, as appropriate, to take the following actions:

- c. **Strengthen global regulatory frameworks to ensure international institutions', governments' and corporations' adherence to human rights, labour standards and environmental agreements.**

In current economic paradigm, financial policy is built without speaking of human rights, labour standards and environmental agreements.

Write a prayer as to why these are so important to our movement into the kingdom.

Prayer of Confession: Dear Lord, we have failed to take into account that all resources in the world are yours and that all of us should share equally with each other.

Prayer of Petition: We pledge ourselves to work for justice in the global financial framework to ensure even distribution of wealth.

Prayer of Thanksgiving: We praise you and thank you for all your gifts. We are thankful for the opportunity to gather together and to work for justice for women for women across the world.

Paragraph 12 and 12 f

The Commission urges Governments, the United Nations system, and invites the **International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization**, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, including the private sector, as appropriate, to take the following actions:

f. Allocate resources for capacity-building in gender mainstreaming within finance and relevant line ministries, to ensure that domestic resource mobilization and allocation is carried out in a gender-sensitive manner; (E.CN.6/2008/2, para. 88 (g))

Gender Mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a strategy, an approach, a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy/ dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects.

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gendermainstreaming.htm>

What does the mobilization of resources in a “gender sensitive manner” mean to us?

What might be changed because of such a goal? What ethic is behind the goal?

Write/Draw a prayer around this desire for a better world.

Prayer of confession: We are sorry for times when we have let corruption within international financial organizations go unnoticed.

Prayer of petition: We pray that powerful international, financial organizations would consider the impact of their dictated policies on women.

Prayer of thanksgiving: We thank you for the opportunity to meet as women in solidarity, to voice these issues and to commit ourselves to action. We thank you for organizations like the U.N. through whom we can effect change.

Paragraph 12 and 12 h

The Commission urges Governments, the United Nations system, and invites the **International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization**, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, including the private sector, as appropriate, to take the following actions:

- h. Cost and fully resource national gender equality policies, strategies and plans and ensure that they are incorporated into overall national development strategies and reflected in relevant sector plans and budgets, **including gender responsive budget allocations for critical social sectors such as basic health and education services**; (Based on E.CN.6/2008/5, para. 90 (e))

Why is it important to name “gender responsive budget allocations” and to name critical social sectors such as: “basic health and education services”.

What about this are based upon values of the kingdom?

Write/Draw/Dance a prayer about this.

Prayer of confession: We confess that we have not always sought to be an instrument of blessing, but have always sought your blessing.

Prayer of petition: God, give us the wisdom and courage to touch lives positively with impartiality so that in our joint humanity we may be a blessing to one another.

Prayer of thanksgiving: We thank you, God Almighty, because you are the source of all care and goodness. Thank you for your direction, patience, and love.

Paragraph 12 and 12 l and m

The Commission urges Governments, the United Nations system, and invites the **International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization**, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, including the private sector, as appropriate, to take the following actions:

l. Assess the gender impacts of revenue raising measures, including user fees as well as the taxation structure and composition, and develop mechanisms to ensure gender-sensitive revenue raising **such as implementing progressive taxation measures, e.g. stiffer taxation regimes for arms and further monitoring and reduction of tax havens;** (E.CN.6/2008/2, para. 88 (d))

m. Impose taxes on the movement of short-term capital flows and review foreign reserve structures to build up global public funds to finance development with gender equality objectives.

Short term capital flows are monies which move into a country, to set up an industry or infrastructure, i.e. but then leave. Why must this be restricted, or deterred?

Foreign reserve structures currently are monies which are invested outside a country's own banking system so that there's some kind of stability if the country suddenly experiences a huge downturn in its economic picture. This can happen if a country is in conflict, i.e. and foreign investment flees. It can happen if a country dependent upon aid has its aid withdrawn. It can happen if a country's debt is recalled.

By adding these sentences to agreed conclusions what kingdom priorities are being emphasized?

Write/Draw/Dance a prayer about this.

Paragraph 12 and 12 p

The Commission urges Governments, the United Nations system, and invites the **International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization**, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, including the private sector, as appropriate, to take the following actions:

Implement regulations to end agricultural import dumping and establish international commodity agreements setting stable base prices for products in order to protect women's livelihoods and right to food.

Using data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), IATP analyzed price information from 1990 through 2003 and found that U.S. commodities continue to be sold well below the cost of production. Analysis of 2003 data revealed:

- Wheat was exported at an average price of 28 percent below cost of production;
- Soybeans were exported at an average price of 10 percent below cost of production;
- Corn was exported at an average price of 10 percent below cost of production;
- Cotton was exported at an average price of 47 percent below cost of production;
- Rice was exported at an average price of 26 percent below cost of production.

Dumping is one of the most damaging of all current distortions in world trade. Yet, since its inception the WTO has refused to address or even acknowledge its negative impacts on rural economies around the world. Developing country agriculture, vital for food security, rural livelihoods, poverty reduction and generating foreign exchange, is crippled by the predatory competition from major commodities sold at well below cost of production prices in world markets.

<http://www.newfarm.org/news/2005/0305/030205/dump.shtml>

“Write”, Draw, Dance a prayer around this destructive practice and for the construction of a prayer on kingdom values.

Prayer of Confession: Dear Father in Heaven, your name be praised above all. We come to you as humble deer. Please hear our prayer. These unfair trade policies are affecting and devaluing the efforts of certain populations, especially those in developing countries. We confess that we have seen and experienced poverty but have forgotten to use our God given talents to speak more in the interest of our most deprived people.

Prayer of Petition: Please intercede on behalf of these people. Touch the hearts of our leaders, as we advocate, to become more socially conscious in their actions, decisions, strategies and implementation.

Prayer of thanksgiving: We thank you for your bountifulness for you have done us well. We thank you for giving us a unity in our thoughts to do your will. We are grateful because you have heard us and our hearts leap with joy in all things.

Paragraph 12 and 12 q

The Commission urges Governments, the United Nations system, and invites the **International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization**, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, including the private sector, as appropriate, to take the following actions:

- q. **Strengthen multilateral frameworks and national policy spaces to manage foreign direct investment with the end of ensuring technology transfer, restricting repatriation of profits, upholding labour standards and promoting gender and racial equality**

Foreign direct investment with the end of ensuring technology transfer: The point of this is that much foreign direct investment allows temporary use of technology but does not transfer ownership of the technology.

Repatriation of profits: When \$\$ are earned through overseas investment, that \$\$ comes back to the country of origin and is taxed. In 2004, that tax was up to 35%, in 2005, a tax law was passed that allowed for repatriation of profits at 5.2%. This thus encouraged

.....

Write, draw, dance a prayer about such practices and the end of them.

Prayer of confession: We ask forgiveness for not recognizing our wrongdoings, of hoarding our knowledge in order to secure our own power.

Prayer of petition: We ask for your grace to give us strength and courage to create a new paradigm and act within it for the mutual benefit of all.

Prayer of thanksgiving: We are grateful for the knowledge we have and the opportunity to change and to love. We are grateful for the resources of our country and what we are able to share.

Paragraph 12 and 12 s

The Commission urges Governments, the United Nations system, and invites the **International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization**, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, including the private sector, as appropriate, to take the following actions:

s. Take measures to develop and implement gender-sensitive programmes aimed at stimulating women's entrepreneurship **by ensuring equitable access to productive resources** and assist women-owned business in participating in and benefiting from, inter alia, international trade, technological innovation and investment; (CSW Agreed Conclusions 2002/5/A, para. 5(w))
.....

What is at stake by not having equitable access to productive resources?

What is God asking of us?

Write, Draw, dance a prayer around this

Prayer of confession: Wealthy and powerful elites do not take into account the people forced to live in poverty by creating policies that harm all peoples, especially women. We confess that we have not kept in our consciousness and actions, the needs of the poor.

Prayer of Petition: Help us to take on this responsibility. We ask that the governments of the world move toward a more equitable distribution, management and use of resources, challenging structures that allow for extreme wealth and power.

Prayer of thanksgiving: we thank you for the women of the world, sharing common problems and victories. We are especially grateful for the opportunity to be present in the midst of these women, this energy and the privilege to speak truth to power.

Paragraph 12 and 12 t

The Commission urges Governments, the United Nations system, and invites the **International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization**, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, including the private sector, as appropriate, to take the following actions:

t. Reduce remittance transfer costs, eliminate double taxation of migrants, and conduct studies on the long-term implications of remittances for development and gender equality.

.....

All around the world, migrants are very rarely fully given their economic rights.

What is at stake in this paradigm?

Write, Draw, Dance a prayer around this.

Prayer of confession: We confess our complicity in the economic system that allows the human rights of migrants to be compromised.

Prayer of petition: We pray for justice for migrants the world over and courage for us as we work for them. Give us wisdom as we seek to change this system to be more just.

Prayer of thanksgiving: We thank you for people of all backgrounds and for the compassion, knowledge, and ability we have to influence the powers that be.

Paragraph 12 and 12 u

The Commission urges Governments, the United Nations system, and invites the **International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization**, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, including the private sector, as appropriate, to take the following actions:

- u.** Increase the share of development assistance specifically targeting gender equality and women's empowerment, through both gender mainstreaming and targeted activities **for social development**, and strengthen mechanisms to effectively measure resources allocated to incorporating gender perspectives in all areas of development assistance; (E.CN.6/2008/2, para. 88(1))

Why add "for social development"? What is at stake here?

Write, Draw, Dance a prayer about this.

Prayer of confession: We pray for forgiveness for forgetting to remember and for not having the courage to speak up about the way decisions about development assistance touch the lives of women.

Prayer of petition: We pray for the opportunities to join together in order to speak out.

Prayer of thanksgiving: Thank you for those women who haven't and don't give up.

Paragraph 12 and 12v and w

The Commission urges Governments, the United Nations system, and invites the **International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization**, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, including the private sector, as appropriate, to take the following actions:

v. Take measures to incorporate gender perspectives in new aid modalities and efforts to enhance delivery mechanisms, including through the Development Cooperation Forum; (Based on E.CN.6/2008/2, para. 88(m))

w. Strengthen and engender institutional aid frameworks to increase aid effectiveness and mutual accountability of donor and receiving governments.

.....

Why is it essential that gender is taken into account in aid “modalities” and in the deliverance of aid?

Write, draw, dance a prayer about this.

Prayer of confession: O Creator of all resources, we confess that we have failed to use our resources for the benefit of all; to challenge the power imbalances which make it difficult to share equally.

Prayer of petition: Give us wisdom, courage and the desire to act for the fullness of life for all God’s creation.

Prayer of thanksgiving: We thank you for the possibilities that we have to follow this through. Amen.

Paragraph 12 and 12x

The Commission urges Governments, the United Nations system, and invites the **International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization**, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, including the private sector, as appropriate, to take the following actions:

- x. Eliminate conditionalities in debt relief **and cancellation** initiatives and debt financing measures that lead to the perpetuation or exacerbation of gender inequalities, and **introduce gender responsive budgeting to earmark liberated resources** to address specific targets and benchmarks agreed upon in the Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals; (E.CN.6/2008/2, para. 88(k))

Why is the word “cancellation” added? What is at stake if we do not cancel these debts? Who is indebted to who?

Write, dance, draw a prayer about this.

← - - - - Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

Paragraph 12 and 12 z

The Commission urges Governments, the United Nations system, and invites the **International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization**, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, including the private sector, as appropriate, to take the following actions:

z. Increase resources for gender equality work throughout the United Nations system, including for gender mainstreaming (E.CN.6/2008/2, para. (q)) and for the interagency work on gender equality to enhance coherence and coordination; (E.CN.6/2008/2, para. 88(r)) **and for the creation of a consolidated, stronger and fully-funded UN entity for women led by an Under Secretary General that combines normative and operational functions to effectively enhance results at the country level; (based on A/61/836 para. 17 and 18)**
.....

What is at stake here?

Why do we need such an entity?

What would be the benefit?

Write, dance, draw a prayer for such.