As a prologue – The 5th International March Action

The World March of Women is organized in 17 countries and territories in the Americas. We are women from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru and Macronorte of Peru, Venezuela, Panama, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, United States and Quebec. We resist to live, we march to transform!

That has been the slogan that unified us between March 8 and October 17, 2020, when we carried out our 5th International Action.

We did it with feminist rebellion and creativity, learning to articulate online our actions that have always been deeply rooted in our territories. Likewise, from each place where we are organized, we’ve been engaged in processes of resistance, solidarity and a lot of common work to sustain life and continue fighting during these months. Not only the covid pandemic but the policies of the right-wing governments and corporate power attack life in our region.

Our 5th international action has been a process of building political synthesis, where we advanced in our shared view on the current context, on the challenges faced by social movements and feminism in the Americas, and especially, we advanced in our programmatic synthesis on what it means to put the sustainability of life in the center of our practices and proposals for transformation.

The contents that we present in this regional document, written for the closing of the 5th internacional action, are the result of that programmatic synthesis that we have built among the women of the March in the Americas. This has been a process of collective elaboration, in which we have carried out three workshops during the months of July and August, in which around 40 companions participated.

Thus, it is a document for the closing of an action, which at the same time positions and strengthens us to continue together as an anti-capitalist and anti-racist feminist movement.

We resist to live, we march to transform!

World March of Women - Americas

October 2020

1 A summary of the debate was edited and turned into a series of three podcasts that can be heard (in spanish) on: https://soundcloud.com/sempreviva/sets/analisis-feministas-americas
Women of the Americas in resistance

The Americas constitute a region where, the main imperialist power in the world, the United States and its neighbor and ally, Canada, on one side, coexist with Latin America and the Caribbean on the South on the other side, the latter deeply impacted by the former’s presence and the relations which result from it. Living and being in the Americas, where indigenous peoples have resisted colonization of their cultures, worldviews and spirituality, characterizes us as a region of struggles and alternatives from below.

Right now, the advance of the right and conservative groups have an impact on us as a region. Military, religious fundamentalist, business and government groups have come together to control our political systems and women’s bodies and work. Through coup d’etats like the ones we are experiencing in Haiti, Paraguay, Honduras, Brazil, Bolivia, new legal, institutional and political orders have been put in place to suppress the rights of peoples and expropriate the territories and the commons.

The market wants to control our lives and put an end to the processes of social change and the assertion of sovereignty led by people. The ongoing imperialist offensive in our region is reflected in the rise of neoliberal governments and their alignment with US policy. These governments are responsible for rescuing businessmen from old debts of businessmen and by forming alliances with large companies by facilitating the exploitation of our territories and work. “We are witnessing new forms of colonialism: now they are no longer caravel ships, but transnational corporations” our Salvadoran sisters remind us.

The imperialist expansion movement also has costs for the peoples of the United States. Looking at their realities, we see great precariousness at work, growing unemployment – especially among black and Latin American women – and COVID-19 death
rates among African Americans 2.3 times higher than among whites. At the same time, 600 billionaires have earned $434 billion since the general shutdown due to the pandemic began.

The advance of control over Latin American countries, of poverty and violence against the black and migrant population in the United States and Canada are part of the same process to reorganize capitalism in our region. We therefore denounce it as an ongoing process of re-concentration of wealth and power in the Americas.

In the context of the pandemic, deaths are unevenly distributed among social groups, and these neoliberal political and economic dynamics are also deepening. Faced with the economic crisis, the IMF has already launched new lines of credit which we know will increase the indebtedness of countries. In the name of urgency, these loans are granted in a non-transparent manner, as was the recent case of Bolivia where a debt was contracted with the Fund without the approval of the National Congress’ payment mechanisms. This issue comes back strongly to the agenda of Argentinian movements who demand: “Suspend all payments, investigate the debt and stop wasting the available currency in the payment of an illegitimate, illegal and odious debt”. And in El Salvador, women denounce that “the pandemic has served as the justification for a large number of millionaire loans and for spending them without much control and with little investment in health”.

In this context, there is also a growing incorporation of our feminist discourses by multilateral organizations and even businesses. While at the same time are talking about the differentiated impact of the pandemic on women, the World Bank, with its care economy program, continues to encourage the indebtedness of our countries, which then stop investing in public policies that support the shared responsibility of domestic work. We know it because we have already experienced it: on the flip side of the countries’ indebtedness are the widening inequalities between women and men.
A step forward in inequality – The COVID-19 pandemic

The political and economic dynamics established in the context of the pandemic have worsened inequalities. The containment measures have had a strong impact on the millions of people involved in informal and dangerous jobs, with a significant loss of income. In addition, the precarious sanitary conditions of millions of people, the low investment in public and universal health and limited access to water, limit prevention and treatment for most of the population. Furthermore, working and educating children and adolescents from home has directly resulted in the overwork of women.

There are profound differences between governments and countries in terms of measures to deal with the COVID-19 crisis. These range from insufficient to non-existent, with the most serious cases of denial being those in Brazil and the United States. Venezuela and Cuba face restrictions and blockages that have not diminished amid the pandemic. On the contrary, there is a strong supply crisis in Cuba caused by the largest economic blockade, but to which they have responded with COVID-19 health and care policies on the island and in other countries. This is the case in Venezuela, which, even with the blockade, is among the countries with the lowest rates of infections and deaths from COVID-19 across the continent.
The main government measures announced so far to support the population have been cash transfers, food deliveries and the exemption or extension of payment terms for basic services such as rent. Dedicated public resources are insufficient, support is given to employers rather than workers, there are no clear policies for informal or unemployed workers and even less for migrants. The increase in the volume of domestic work and care was not taken into account, without support for women, nor for more comprehensive care systems.

In general in the Americas, the countries – with the differences between them – have opted for measures that restrict movement and activities, but without guaranteeing the necessary conditions for social isolation to be possible and with actions of repression, criminalization and militarization.

In Brazil, the number of poor and black youths murdered by police continues to rise, with support to the racist and genocidal state through militarization. In the case of Colombia, Ecuador and Chile, the pandemic slowed down important processes of social struggle. The criminalization of social movements and activists is not confined.

“The strengthening of the criminalizing apparatus of the State after the social explosion and now during the pandemic is brutal: the police and the forces of order have equipped themselves with a large number of repressive instruments (...) such as the passing of laws violating the right to protest, proof of state preparation against all forms of manifestation and mobilization. It goes without saying that the territories that are fighting against the extractivist and monoculture model, such as the Mapuche territory and the communities that have resisted for centuries, are militarized in these times of confinement” (World March of Women of Chile)

In Honduras, there is a curfew, persecution and death threats against activists, in addition to total impunity for the army. The militarization is also deepening in Guatemala with the state of siege and the expansion of the army’s functions. The soldiers took the streets under the pretext that it was necessary to protect the population. But in times of COVID-19 contamination, resources that could be used for health are invested in repressive structures such as the military and police, as in the case of the United States.
The Americas is a region of migrants, who move because of war, violence or serious economic need. Another face of repression is therefore the closure of borders in the face of the continuous exodus of immigrants and the precarious situation of migrant communities detained in concentration centers in the United States. In Quebec, the racism of migration policies is made explicit when the migrants who are in charge of the harvest are not able to enter the country, while migrants are the majority of primary health care workers.

In many countries of the American continent, the reality is of overcrowded prisons, with terrible hygienic conditions, populated principally by black people, where preventive measures against COVID-19 have not been implemented. In the United States, it is women who lead the liberation movements of their relatives and who stand up to punitive policies and the private corporations that take over the management of the prisons.
The commodification of life

While we, the people, die from the virus or now live in worse conditions than before, companies are increasing their profits and becoming more powerful, most of the time with the support of the governments of our countries. In the midst of a health crisis, the pharmaceutical industry imposes unbearable prices both on regular use drugs and by offering false treatments for COVID-19 as is the case of chloroquine.

Far from prioritizing the well-being of populations, most governments have pushed for emergency measures which, in the first place, have favored international capital by stimulating economic reactivation based on the intensification of extractivism, which continues to be the main cause of the devastation of territories and common goods. These impacts are felt by entire communities without access to water, making sanitation measures for staying at home even more unequally felt.

In the United States, oppressed communities do not have access to water and land, and indigenous territories are subject to violence and disappearances, in addition to cases of sexual violence. Racism is reflected in this dispute over the territories, and in some regions there is a veritable ethnocide of indigenous peoples. Pressure from Coca Cola and Nestlé is pushing forward the privatization of water in Brazil. Peru has more than 21 rivers contaminated by mining and is listed as the country that attracts the most capital for this activity, with investments of US $ 609.7 million.

The pressure on the territories has increased due to the expansion of agricultural borders, real estate and extractivist projects which are part of the economic recovery, but which endanger entire communities. In the countryside of Peru, Brazil, Bolivia and Colombia, food...
production has increased, but family farming is not recognized. Big corporations responsible for the monocultures are now negotiating their “economic revival,” funded by governments with public resources, at the same time as small scale and women farmers are attacked and kicked off the land.

These regimes of death are growing and gaining space and commodifying the commons (land, water, seeds) as if they were resources to be monetized. This is leading to the collapse of the planet through a patriarchal logic which treats nature as if it were at service of people, thereby justifying policies of dispossession. The recent fires in the Pantanal (wetlands) and Amazon in Brazil, on the west coast of the United States and in the Paraná basin in Argentina are devastating huge areas and also affecting urban centers.

In urban centers, working from home has a strong impact on gender inequalities. There are reduced possibilities for access to livelihoods but also increased pressure and demands on women. In Argentina and Chile, new regulations have been created for home based working and are being used to relax existing labor rights. The closure of schools and universities, as well as online education highlight the digital inequality in the region: while in Chile 80% of people have access to the Internet, in Nicaragua only 25%. The same gap applies to home working opportunities and possibilities. Women’s bodies, life, time and work are being used to cushion the effects of the pandemic.

The digital inequality contrasts with the growing power of companies in the technology sector. The media reveals that Netflix, for example, has doubled its revenue since the start of the pandemic, compared to the same time last year, with the addition of around fifteen million new subscribers. Amazon, for its part, increased its revenues by 27%, to the point of having hired 100,000 new workers in the United States alone to meet the boom in demand.
Women, work, life

Faced with states that manage nothing but unrest, women are at the center of solutions. We are organized across the continent, finding solutions to a lack of income and collectively managing common resources and care. We ensure the daily survival not only of families and those dependent on us, but through the organization of community initiatives. We are those who face the lack of services in the working class neighbourhoods, those who manage popular soup kitchens, food aid, water and gas supplies.

This signifies an additional load of invisible and unpaid work, which supports economic recovery and contagion prevention programs. Surveys show that 50% of women in Brazil have started caring for someone affected by the pandemic, in the case of rural women, this number goes up to 62%. Without this unpaid work by women, at home and in communities, the economy would come to a complete halt and survival would be even harder.

Modes of production and consumption are designed for people who never get sick, who have no children, who are able to carry out production activities all day in order to survive. This social system that doesn’t care is a system that puts disease at the center.

The capitalist economy disregards the domestic and care work which is culturally and traditionally the responsibility of women and on which this capitalist system is sustained. In this period of “stay at home” we have seen how women have been over-exploited. The pandemic and isolation has exposed with more clarity, the crisis of care...
of human life and the fragility of social organization within capitalist way of life. If at the beginning of social isolation, there was greater visibility of life at home and of all the work necessary to maintain it, it very quickly it became invisible again, as part of the naturalization process.

Growing inequalities and isolation have had a huge consequence through the increase in violence against women and girls. The number of complaints of violence, femicides and requests for legal abortion for rape is a scandal silenced by many governments. Conservative groups and governments are hampering access to abortion rights with the criminalization of women and the suspension of public services.

In the context of the pandemic, precariousness is experienced by a majority of women whose health is exposed on a daily basis in order for their families and communities to be able to survive. Women are also 75% of those working in health, 80% of those working in food sales and 95% of those working in cleaning jobs across the region.

Governments and multilateral organizations, large businesses and corporations are discussing and implementing their solutions to the crisis they are going through in facing the pandemic. However, they offer solutions according to the same principles that organize the concentration of wealth and the exploitation of our work and our territories.

Businesses have gained power against the backdrop of the fragile nature of our democracies, becoming actors in politics, advancing their influence in everyday life and establishing themselves as organizers of post-pandemic responses. This is how the market wants to present itself as an alternative to the extreme right, integrating some of our demands and painting itself in new colors. In practice, transnational corporations appropriate the women’s rights discourse to increase levels of exploitation. This is the case of agricultural exportation and/ or mining industries in Peru, which have hired a high number of salaried women faced with 12 or 15 hour workdays without dignified conditions, increasing the levels of exploitation of their work.

It is through feminism that we want to change this “every man and woman for him/herself” sentiment that has emerged from the present
moment, and instead to create proposals together, placing life at the center. In this way, we affirm our alternative vision to the dominant economy whose objective is private profit, the accumulation and concentration of capital in the hands of a few and where life has no place.

Finally, we know that today’s struggle to defeat neoliberalism in the Americas is inseparable from rebuilding democracy. This presents us with a new dimension to political and social conflicts, in which feminism is essential. The upcoming elections in the United States will surely have a profound impact on our peoples since the continuity of the Trump administration is the victory of a regime that promotes death and violence. We stand in solidarity with the American peoples and we know that, in our resistance to authoritarianism and imperialism, we are all part of the same movement. The resistance and solidarity of Venezuela and Cuba also inspire us and call us to assert popular power.
We march to transform. What does it mean to put life at the center?

The World March of Women international actions are always moments of political synthesis of our movement. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the collective creation of the 5th Action has not stopped. On the contrary, it has made us grow and to learn new means and tools to continue to build practices and proposals where life and its sustainability are at the center: a premise of our “We march to transform” which accompanies our “We resist to live”.

Putting life at the center is the way to overcome the life–capital conflict. Our action aims to break with the capitalist, heteropatriarchal, racist, colonialist system which destroys nature and our lives. It means affirming a political project that defends the sustainability of life and learning to recognize the set of processes, types of work and relationships that support it – their contributions, lessons and logic – and to reorganize them based on that foundation. In short, putting the sustainability of life at the center is to break with the logic of capital accumulation and organize society on the basis of the values of equality, justice and solidarity.
The World March of Women is committed to the feminist economy as an analytical tool that guides us and helps us to understand the world in order to transform it. Therefore, our challenge is to build another paradigm which places the sustainability of life at the center, which recognises that we are eco-dependent and interdependent. We understand that nature is the basis of life, so it is necessary to break with hierarchies and anthropocentrism, as well as to consider the set of processes that show the centrality of domestic work and care, the need for its reorganization and the co-responsibility of men, the community and the State in this area.

At the same time, our accumulated experience shows how women have always carried out economic practices based on the principle of sustainability of life. A humanized capitalist market is not possible and that is why, through our actions as movements, we demonstrate that there are alternatives and that the people have solutions to the crisis.

If we look at the reality of where women are situated, we recognize that there is a network that we are part, based on community, collective and good living (buen vivir) concepts. From there, experiences and initiatives are germinated and created that allow advancement in alternatives to the model of death and oppression. In the Americas territories, it is obvious that the capitalist offensive of occupation and dispossession uses the tool of expropriation, but also the destruction of alternatives and counter-hegemonic experiences. Threatened territories have their own way of life, which is under attack. For this reason, in our region it is evident that our processes of organizing life in common, based on other logics, are a strength in our path of permanent resistance.

It is essential to look at the practices we promote, the experiences of community kitchens, peasant agriculture, work and supply cooperatives, the promotion of new consumption and production practices such as urban community gardens and agroecology in the field: all of them are collective experiences based on the principles of solidarity,
reciprocity and complementarity. They show that we are interdependent, that we all need care and that human and non-human beings are eco-dependent and part of nature.

Many of these experiences intensify in times of deep crisis, such as now in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thus, community kitchens are organized throughout Chile or popular soup kitchens in Peru – experiences linked to the memory of resistance to dictatorships – while, additionally, we have seen the intensification and expansion of various types of urban gardens in countries like Cuba, Honduras, Venezuela, and the defense of the regenerative economy as resistance to “sacrifice zones” and environmental racism by black communities in the United States.

The worker’s cooperatives in the supply and consumption sectors organized in cities and urban gardens provide alternatives and inspiration. Our challenge is to consolidate these initiatives and to work in collaboration with other organizations, recognising that reciprocal relations begin with the reorganization of care work. In Chile, for example, these initiatives are being mapped in order to make them visible and strengthen their reach. The recognition of the diversity of experiences is also a strength.

The hegemonic discourse of reactivating the regional economies aims to save businesses, it does not reflect the reality of peasant and artisan economies and the ways in which we women continue to seek food for our families in the streets, guaranteeing life in our
neighborhoods and communities with our domestic work. And this is very evident in our practice and our movement building principles. We do not separate economics and politics in our action. This is why all our resistance, in Chile, Brazil, Bolivia or Venezuela links the economic and political resistance of women on the move. From our experience, we can affirm that the care economy has not stopped functioning during the pandemic. The peasant, agroecological and fishefolk economies are more active than ever, acting out of solidarity and guaranteeing food for us. In Brazil, the existence of networks of solidarity and agroecological consumption, either consolidated or in construction, between the countryside and the city has been very important to guarantee access to healthy food in a crisis also characterized by price speculation.

For all these reasons, we believe it is necessary to affirm once again that our feminist economic experiences are proposals for the construction of society, they are not only means of surviving times of crisis, blockade and emergency. From our territories and in all our diversity, we demonstrate that there are other possible, viable and desirable ways of organizing the production and reproduction of life, based on the logic of emancipation that rebuilds the commons and communities. We look towards a horizon in which we overcome the dichotomies and hierarchies between production and reproduction.

Years ago, in alliance with the peasant movements, we built the struggles for food sovereignty and agroecology as a strategy. Today talk about feminist agroecology, and on this path we have built powerful practices and syntheses.

In the context of “stay at home”, urban territories are also in dispute and, as feminists, we affirm that urban territories are an alternative. We want to give visibility to the fact that the community and the territory are an essential part of survival, care and the search for shared alternatives, and that working from home is not the only way to support life.
More and more, we are betting politically on the ruralization of the urban. Thousands of women produce food and alternatives in back yards and urban gardens. The city becomes rural by bringing the countryside and the urban peripheries closer together, by establishing shorter routes between producers and consumers, where agroecology supports our alternative to market-based agriculture and transnational supermarket chains.

We put our principles into practice and build alternatives based on grassroots self-organization, community and local experiences that indicate ways to changes in the economy.

As an anti-capitalist women’s movement, we have been defending life and territories, denouncing racist and sexist violence, and the democratic setbacks of our countries for a long time. We claim the political role importance of the participation of diverse and different women for ourselves, and we want to be political actors in formulating plans during and after the pandemic.

The political, health and welfare crises that we are going through in our countries favor, conceal and justify the violation of women’s rights and the fundamental rights of the population in general.

We have learned from our sisters that personal and collective memory/her-story, experiences, knowledge, learning help us understand the women’s body as a place marked by a history plagued with
violence, dispossession, racism and discrimination. However, by recalling the history of violence, they also teach us to look at the continuity of resistance, resilience and knowledge located in ancestral practices of care of life.

Confronting racism is part of our actions and alternatives to put life at the center. Capitalism is structured in a sexual and racist division of labor as well as an international division of labor, thereby widening North-South inequalities.

From the women’s movement, we reclaim, defend and take care of water, seeds, earth, harmonious relationships, affection, care and ancestral practices for life. The defense of the sustainability of life is based on another way of thinking and building the economy, in which all knowledge, all types of work are valued, the contribution of women is recognized and the cycles and times of nature are respected.

All of these principles contribute to the process of collective struggle through which we dispute our present and the future of humanity and the planet. As part of this struggle, we challenge and break with the commodification of life and strengthen the dimensions of the public and the common. It is from here that we look at the role of the State and public policies. The governments and States that we need are those that put their population’s life at the center, that build their public policies with participation of the people, that work for the consolidation of a self-managed grassroots, people led power, free from racism and patriarchy.

The recognition and reorganization of essential work that sustains life, of social reproduction in general, cannot be disconnected from what is considered “production”. By putting the sustainability of life and its processes at the center, we propose changes in the whole production, distribution and consumption system, rethinking what to produce, how to produce and for whom, as well as what we consume and how it reaches our communities and homes. All this is fundamental to systematically confront the current hegemonic logic of dispossession, extractivism, exploitation and expropriation.
In the Americas region, to put life at the center is also to confront militarization and the penitentiary policy which together reactivate racism in the United States and Brazil and in almost all of our countries and on our borders. Northern economies are supported by the precarious work of migrants in sectors like services and care. Likewise, the life of white elites is sustained by the precarious work of racialized people. Fighting for liberation and for a region without walls is therefore key to our transformative agenda, as is the expansion of our struggle to guarantee peace in our countries through the demilitarization of the police, the rejection of US military bases in our countries and the end of interventionist aggressions, blockades and sanctions by the United States government on sovereign countries like Cuba or Venezuela.
For all of these reasons, we affirm the following as key to the sustainability of life:

- The free self-determination of bodies and territories;
- The importance of looking back at our history, our memory, our knowledge and our ancestral practices of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and women;
- A change in the way of consuming, producing and reproducing life;
- Making visible, recognizing and above all reorganizing domestic and care work, with joint responsibility between men, communities, the State and women;
- Designing justice systems that do not reinforce oppression and recognizing the citizenship of migrants and the diversity of sexual identities;
- Sovereign peoples and democracies founded on popular power;
- Public services which guarantee social reproduction and States that are founded on the common and the recognition of community values, such as self-management;
- The de-commodification of life and the end of transnational corporate power;
- Challenging the financialization of life and debt, strengthening the real economy – in the other words, the economy at the service of humanity and its life – in harmony with the planet and the rest of its inhabitants.
Dynamics of movements, feminist and popular responses. The challenges of our action

The pandemic comes at a unique time in the Americas. On the one hand, we are experiencing an advance of the extreme right in almost the entire region, which results in the further loss of rights and advancements, as well as the resurgence of arbitrary and coercive measures, such as the blockades and sanctions against Cuba and Venezuela. On the other hand, the reaction of the people: popular revolts and uprisings and large mobilizations in countries like Chile, Ecuador, and Colombia, resistance to the dictatorship in Bolivia, growth of popular networking and organisation in the United States against Trump, to name a few.

In this context, the confinement necessary to face the pandemic poses challenges for social organizations to maintain mobilization and resistance actions, especially in countries where right-wing governments have used it to justify repression (Chile) and the militarization of territories (Honduras, Guatemala).

The political dynamic of social movements and feminism make it necessary to interconnect this current moment with our history of regional resistance and organization. Only in this way can we understand how our responses to the current context are in a dialectical relationship with historical experience.

Based on this memory and “her-story” of where we come from and what precedes us we access a double source of learning: to understand the violence that we have experienced and that we are currently experiencing, but also the resistances and the alternatives that have enabled us to to survive.
Resistance to colonialism, the affirmation of our identities as peoples and the reclaiming of our people-led sovereignty: this is a struggle that involves the search to overcome class domination and oppression, racism and patriarchy. To this perspective, we are able to integrate other dimensions such as sexuality, culture and memory – in other words, our plurality – including in the debate about the State. Within the WMW, we have accumulated this anti-colonial understanding that the defense of our territories is not limited to one fixed locality, but rather the defense of our body–memory–territories. This perspective has been promoted on our continent by the resistance of indigenous and Afro-descendant women.

Over the past 60 years, we have been guided by the hope of a profound transformation demonstrated by the Cuban revolution. We have faced the strength of US imperialism, with the star of Cuba as our constant reference and anti-capitalist strength.
Feminism and popular struggle

Our historical trajectory as peoples of this region defines the particularities of women’s organization and feminism, while at the same time it is important to highlight that there are both common and very different elements in women’s experiences in North America, South America, Central America and the Caribbean.

We remember the presence of women in all resistance struggles against slavery and colonialism and for the independence of black women, indigenous women and the working class as a whole. We also recognize the plurality and diversity of the region’s feminist movement.

We remember experiences like the one in Quebec, where with decisive feminist participation in the quiet revolution of the 1960s, women gained inspiration and wisdom to start weaving a proposal for the World March of Women in the late 1990s. In the United States, diverse strands of feminism were developed, such as the radical feminism of the 1960s, an important socialist strand, and undoubtedly the great contribution of black feminism. At the same time, a liberal sector developed, which has posed great challenges for grassroots, working class feminism sectors in ensuring the existence and development of a feminism committed to transforming the world and women’s lives.
The organization of the WMW in North America is marked by an intense solidarity process. For example, the actions of Quebec’s women against extractivism, or the strength that sisters in the United States have given to a feminism based on grassroots, anti-racist and anti-systemic organization. It is also important to make visible the networking and alliance building with indigenous organizations, as well as the presence of the LGBTQ struggle from the perspective of the working class and the grassroots.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, for over 100 years, women’s organizing experiences have integrated feminist ideas, as well as their activity and contributions, to revolutionary processes in the region. A variety of feminisms and women’s organizations have a permanent and daily presence in all grassroots, people-led, peasant, indigenous and Afro-descendant struggles, and in the trade union and youth movement.

The feminist experience in the region was also marked by an institutionalization and “NGO-ization” process of in the 1990s. This led to the co-optation and restriction of the movement’s critical action against the functional and normative policies of neoliberalism. In the movement’s dynamics, this meant that dissenting voices were silenced.

Throughout the region, resistance to neoliberalism, framed by struggles against free trade agreements and the WTO, have been fundamental for the reorganisation of a grassroots, people-led and anti-capitalist sector within the women’s movement. Within this framework, the WMW began to organize itself from 1998 onwards, and in the year 2000 organized its first international action with a large street mobilization, built together with working class and grassroots sectors. The WMW became a voice against neoliberalism, questioning the causes of poverty and violence, and has continued to maintain a critical and radical position against the hetero-patriarchal, racist, capitalist model. In this way, the WMW has become a movement built on the basis of international solidarity which marks its anti-imperialist vision and action.
Our construction combines women’s self-organization with alliance-building between social movements. It is part of our organizational principles and our political vision that women, self-organized in mixed social movements, are part of the women’s movement and are fundamental to the strength of feminism.

From our her-story, we highlight our international alliances with CLOC/Via Campesina, the trade union movement and the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas and with the people-led environmentalism of Friends of the Earth International. During these 20 years, we have constructed powerful processes with these allies such as, for example, the campaign against the FTA of the Americas and networks such as ALBA movements and the Continental Convergence for Democracy and against Neoliberalism (*Jornada Continental por la Democracia y contra el Neoliberalismo*).

The WMW, in its 20-year journey, has understood the differences within feminism. Our organization knows that this implies a conflict of positions and building a consensus; that the challenge is to build unitary processes through discussion and the creation of common agendas that respect diversity, without fragmenting the unity necessary for struggle.

Today, 20 years after our beginnings as a movement, we are embracing a new dynamic: broadening our call for mobilisation and building an intergenerational movement that recognizes young women’s contributions. In the Americas, there is a feminist explosion in the streets that produces a lot of strength and energy and we are
thinking about how to build bridges with these new waves of women and mobilizations to strengthen each other. At the same time, we consider who is excluded from the media spotlight and how we can also show our solidarity with their struggles.

We are facing a conservative counter-offensive in our territory. We fight, for example, against a gender ideology proposed by the most reactionary sectors of the right-wing that argue that the rights of the LGBTIQ community and women are not legitimate because they obstruct the individual rights of those who defend white, male and Jewish-Christian supremacy.

The collective exercise to understand how oppressions are interrelated and the forces and interests in conflict in our territories is daily and constant. We women activists who struggle and organize face the reality that the advancement of conservative powers creates political tensions both externally and internally within our people-led movements. We keep hearing that feminism is dividing the struggle, while at the same time we experience in our bodies, or in those of other women, the violence and harassment of our supposed comrades. The work related to the sustainability of life, necessary both for our community and for activism to be possible, remains invisible.

As feminists, we focus on creating spaces for debate, reflection, meeting and dialogue between various organizations and movements, in order to make visible the alternatives to combat the current right-wing offensive and crisis.
Feminist responses to COVID-19

How do we ground our principles and values as a movement – equality, freedom, solidarity, peace, justice – in the current context of the pandemic, from a feminist and people-led internationalist perspective? This is a question we ask ourselves as a region.

The development of practices based on solidarity is the key to our strength as a movement, and it is a fundamental requirement to ensure the sustainability of life when facing the COVID-19 pandemic dangers and risks. In the Americas, there is a constant creation of social movements, proposals, experiences of solidarity and cooperation, which indicate how social life is being reorganized in our region.

Solidarity is at the origin of our movement

It is with solidarity that we overcome the situation, as a political practice on which our movement is built and which is more necessary than ever in the midst of the pandemic. Our solidarity is one of the founding stones of the society we want and are fighting for.

In Brazil, the WMW has organised solidarity actions as the center of its political strategy in the “Fora Bolsonaro” (“down with Bolsonaro”) campaign and actions. Solidarity actions anchor and strengthen the economy centered on life, women’s autonomy and food sovereignty. Food donation initiatives strengthen links between groups of women farmers and reduce the domination of supermarket chains that are working to increase their profits during the health emergency. All these actions promote people-led education processes about the need to distribute wealth and tax the big fortunes.

In Chile, since the social insurgency in October 2019, women have been involved in multiple territorial assemblies. They are facing the pandemic and the crisis in the most marginalized territories, abandoned by the State and public policies, through multiple initiatives of community organization that aim to respond to the basic need for food. Community kitchens are expressions of this organization. These are spaces usually run by women who cook daily and deliver food to people who need it. It is an action that has always been practiced.
In Venezuela, women are facing the blockade through communal organization to guarantee food, planting in the countryside and in the city, composting, medicinal plants, knowledge sharing and strengthening their work locally.

In Honduras, women run urban gardens and have made progress in the political construction of food sovereignty. While at the same time they resist the criminalization of social protest, social leaders and the dispossession of territories.

In Cuba, it is the responsibility of grassroots leaders to be the link between public policies and the containment of the pandemic by the revolutionary government and the people. They also promote productive urban backyards to support family economies. Feminist organizations have focused their actions on establishing protocols for action to help control violence against women, girls and boys, which on the island as elsewhere has experienced an increase due to confinement.

In the United States, women’s grassroots organizing is facing COVID-19 and going further. They denounce the economic and social infrastructure in the United States as totally incapable of serving the population, as demonstrated by the pandemic. African-American women are actively joining with their male comrades in defending black lives. At this point, movements have shifted from resistance and mobilization to presenting proposals, such as the police divestment agenda and regenerative, feminist economic recovery.

In all corners of the continent, women are resisting at home, sometimes alone. They face threats and attacks from the men with whom they live. Women organize themselves through social networks to share information and support their economic initiatives. We must give visibility to these micro-resistances and to the fact that, although the whole family is at home, women are still the most burdened with domestic work, care and protection from COVID-19.
The separation between the public and the private continues to exist and is brought to light in the pandemic, forcing the re-concentration of life inside homes. While, at the same time, women occupy public space to make themselves visible.
The challenges of the World March of Women in the context of the pandemic and within the framework of our 5th International Action

At this time, it is essential to strongly present our proposal for change as a response to the crisis. To this end, we must consolidate our strength and our legitimacy in order to establish and position our political project. It means strengthening anti-capitalist and anti-racist feminism as a collective emancipation project based on the freedom and self-determination of women and peoples, on the freedom to decide on our bodies, sexualities and territories.

Collective construction is a great challenge, because just as there is no individual solution for people, there is no individual solution for movements. Alliance building is strategic, because it is not possible to promote alternatives in isolation. Every day we discover more and more organizations in the streets and in the construction of alternatives, and with them we forge new links that allow us to support and broaden our struggles. Just as important, is the strengthening of already forged alliances, and continuing to recognize collective political issues that promote anti-systemic actions but that do not yet include the feminist struggle.
We know how difficult it is to build a locally rooted international movement. The dual movement of weaving and concretization at the local, regional and global level means influencing agendas, building political syntheses in the anti-capitalist, anti-racist and anti-patriarchal struggle and promoting cultural, social and political change at the grassroots. In the process of building alliances, it is essential to advance the anti-patriarchal agenda, which means combating sexism at all levels, as well as expressions of violence and sexual harassment against women and those with diverse sexualities and gender identities.

We seek to ensure that all movements with which we build relationships share a broad vision of the economy and sustainability of life. We know that we need each other to foster changes in production and the creation of non-extractive production models that respect nature. And we also recognize the need to meet women from other movements to integrate the concept and practice of care into our allied organizations, understanding this to be a key part of the common solutions we are building.

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