

Center for Women's Global Leadership



# **WOMEN TESTIFY:**

## **A PLANNING GUIDE FOR POPULAR TRIBUNALS & HEARINGS**



María Gerardina López Cortés from Costa Rica (left) delivers her testimony at the *1998 Global Tribunal to Celebrate and Demand Women's Human Rights* as Claudia Hinojosa (right) translates her testimony from Spanish to English. (Photo by Joan Roth)

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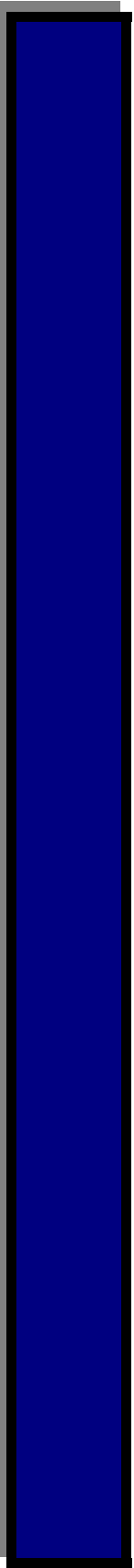


## INTRODUCTION

**Women Testify: A Planning Guide for Popular Tribunals & Hearings** draws on the Center for Women's Global Leadership's experiences of organizing women's human rights tribunals and hearings over the past decade. The Center's tribunals and hearings include:

- 500 Years of Violations of Women's Human Rights in the Americas (1492-1992) in New Jersey, USA (November 1992)
- The 1993 Hearing on Gender-Based Persecution and Women's Human Rights Abuses in New York, New York, USA (February 1993)
- The Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Austria (June 1993)
- The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights at the NGO FORUM at the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt (September 1994)
- The Copenhagen Hearing on Economic Justice and Women's Human Rights at the United Nations World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, Denmark (March 1995)
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- The Global Tribunal: Celebrate and Demand Women's Human Rights on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in New York, New York, USA (December 1998)
- Women 2000: A Symposium on Future Directions for Human Rights on the eve of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly - Beijing + 5 Review in New York, New York, USA (June 2000)
- Women at the Intersection of Racism and Other Oppressions - A Human Rights Hearing at the NGO Forum of the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Other Oppressions in Durban, South Africa (August 2001)

While the Center's tribunals and hearings have focused principally on women's human rights issues and gender-specific violations, we believe that the methodology outlined within this text will be a valuable resource regardless of the specific topic--or topics--that future tribunal organizers intend to address. For example, the first chapter of *Women Testify*, En-gendering Popular Tribunals/Hearings, is intended to give readers a brief introduction to the history of popular tribunals and hearings as they have evolved over the past half century. This historical background provides a context in which organizers might locate future women's human rights tribunals and hearings as well as other varieties of tribunals and hearings.



There are no definitive criteria for distinguishing between a popular 'tribunal' and a 'hearing.' Different organizers bring their own interpretation to these terms. However, based on the Global Center's experience as an organizer or co-sponsor of several such events the following differences can be noted. The term 'tribunal' tends to suggest a process that is somewhat more formal and more structured than a 'hearing.' For example, a tribunal is likely to use 'judges' and 'expert witnesses' whose judgments and contributions are deliberately framed in terms of specific human rights agreements and standards. There may also be an emphasis on preparing and presenting testimonies according to established human rights documentation standards. The remedial actions called for are likely to be quite concrete and to relate to existing campaign goals. On the other hand the term 'hearing' suggests a less formal gathering. Individual testimonies may vary in structure and style. There might be 'commentators' or 'respondents' rather than 'judges' who make more general statements about the implications of the testimonies presented and the need for redress. In this sense, the primary emphasis of hearings is on raising awareness about abuses of human rights. However, due to similarities in the preparation, facilitation and organizational processes, we have opted to refer to the two proceedings interchangeably as "tribunals/hearings" throughout the text that follows.

While *Women Testify* commences with a helpful overview of the objectives of popular tribunals and hearings, Chapters I through XI comprise the heart of the publication. These chapters have been organized in such a way as to provide a useful and comprehensive guide to the planning and execution of popular tribunals and hearings. These pages contain an extensive amount of detailed information based upon our own experiences of planning tribunals and hearings over the past decade. Accordingly, each chapter is designed to address a specific task or set of tasks that will help organizers structure their own events.

As mentioned above, Chapter I offers background information on the history of popular tribunals and hearings. Chapter II delves into the detailed organizing process including what issues and themes the tribunal or hearing will address and the logistical details of where and when the event will take place. Chapter III provides guidelines to both selecting and supporting testifiers at the planned tribunal or hearing while Chapter IV suggests ways to shape the testimonies of those testifiers that have been selected. The specific role of judges or respondents is addressed in Chapter V and defining and understanding human rights accountability is covered in Chapter VI. Chapter VII provides guidelines for developing and structuring the program that the tribunal or hearing will follow while Chapter VIII provides essential information about reaching out to and interacting with the media. Chapter IX instructs in the technical arenas involved

in recording the tribunal or hearing including audiotaping, photographing and videotaping the event. Chapter X encompasses all of the numerous details, plans and processes that go into the intensely busy day of (or day preceding) the tribunal or hearing. Finally, Chapter XI outlines suggested follow-up activities to be accomplished in the days, weeks and months that follow the tribunal or hearing. As there is a great deal of procedural information included in all of the chapters of this publication, readers are encouraged to utilize only those chapters, details, and portions of the text that will be most helpful to their own unique planning process.

At the conclusion of *Women Testify* we have compiled an appendix of documents and statements that will hopefully prove useful to the planning of future tribunals and hearings. The appendices can be broken down into two main categories. The first category includes the sample testimonies of women who participated in tribunals and hearings organized by the Center for Women's Global Leadership (see Appendix 2). Throughout this publication, a considerable amount of emphasis has been placed on the methodology for shaping the testimonies of participants and supporting their technical and emotional needs during the often hectic and difficult process of taking part in a tribunal or hearing. These sample testimonies are intended to provide actual, substantial examples of testifiers' statements that were given at tribunals and hearings organized by the Center. We hope that the strength and courage of these testifiers comes through clearly in these sample testimonies and, additionally, that these statements illustrate the powerful impact that popular tribunals and hearings can have.

The second category of documents in the appendices includes sample Support Documents, also from past tribunals and hearings held by the Center. For example, we have included a sample press release from the Global Tribunal to Celebrate and Demand Women's Human Rights, held in New York City on December 9, 1998. While the text of *Women Testify* focuses on methods for--and the importance of--engaging the media in the tribunal or hearing process, this sample document provides an actual model for future tribunal organizers to follow (see Appendix 4) in broadcasting news of their own events.

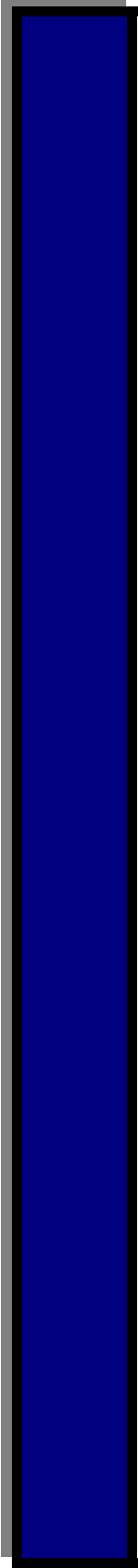
Finally, we recognize that the methodology used in organizing popular and peoples' tribunals and hearings will vary with the goals of the organizers. Some undertake to gather evidence and documentation systematically in order to meet the most rigorous requirements of international legal norms with a view to building legal or quasi-legal precedents. Others are more focused on giving voice to carefully prepared testimony as a means of human rights education with a specific target audience or community, and/or to underpin lobbying ef-

forts for remedial action. The majority of popular tribunals and hearings, including the ones organized or co-sponsored by the Center for Women's Global Leadership, are of the latter type.

While the form popular tribunals and hearings may take can vary, they all aim to achieve greater public awareness and accountability for abuses that are being ignored by the powers that be and by established systems of redress. This publication aims to be a resource for potential organizers of popular tribunals and hearings who want to bring attention to critical human rights issues at a local or global level and to lobby decision makers for change. While it is based on the Center's experience of organizing women's human rights tribunals and hearings, we hope that the methodology outlined and the guidelines given will be relevant and useful regardless of the particular issues that tribunal organizers wish to address. Additionally, it is our hope that *Women Testify* will prove to be an interesting, enlightening and informative guide to the planning of future popular tribunals and hearings.

Because of the Center's experience organizing popular tribunals and hearings, it frequently receives requests for information and guidance on how to organize similar events. We hope that this online publication will help to meet some of the demand for such information. *Women Testify* is the result of a collective effort and reflects the accumulated knowledge and experience of dozens of individuals who were involved in planning, organizing and documenting the Center's tribunals and hearings. First mooted shortly after the Beijing Tribunal (1995), this publication has taken longer to finalize than anticipated due to busy schedules and the scattered locations of the staff members involved. The most important participants in any popular tribunal or hearing are the testifiers who demonstrate enormous courage in publicly recounting their stories. At the same time, given that this is an organizer's guide it is also appropriate to note the invaluable contribution of the behind-the-scenes people who have made the Center's tribunals and hearings a reality. Over the years, the Center has been extremely fortunate to have had dedicated teams of staff, interns and volunteers who worked on different aspects of the tribunals.

While it would be impossible to list everyone who contributed to the development of realization of these events, in addition to the authors and the Center's director, Charlotte Bunch, this includes Mallika Dutt, Susana Fried and Elmira Nazombe. Student and junior staff also played a particularly dynamic and indispensable organizing role, especially those who worked on the center's first global tribunal in Vienna in 1993, including Raahi Reddi, Andrea Romani and Tamara Xavier. Finally, the completion of this publication was made possible by Sue Yacka, Lucy Vidal, Sara Nordstrom, and Margot Baruch who have demonstrated great skill as an editing/production team. Together



they have expertly pulled together the different elements of the guide and applied excellent copy editing and writing skills throughout.

## **AN OVERVIEW: OBJECTIVES OF**



## POPULAR TRIBUNAL/HEARINGS

*"As women testify, they not only make visible the abuse to which all too many females are regularly subjected. They also move from being victims to becoming survivors engaged as political actors in changing their own lives and creating the conditions necessary to end such abuse in the lives of millions of women around the world."*

Charlotte Bunch, *"Without Reservation: the Beijing Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights"*

Perhaps the most important overarching objective of a popular tribunal/hearing is to provide women with a supportive public space in which to articulate and make visible their human rights concerns. In most cases, tribunal/hearings include personal, and at times emotional, accounts of abuse and highlight inaction by particular actors in preventing or ending these human rights violations. But tribunal/hearings can also aim to celebrate innovative organizing being carried out around certain themes and issues. Consequently, tribunal/hearings can be shaped according to your own goals and objectives: who do you want to address, what themes do you want to highlight and what would you like the outcomes/products to be from the tribunal/hearing.

While popular tribunals/hearings are not official legal proceedings, they can be used in a variety of ways to further the protection and promotion of women's human rights. The goals and objectives of a tribunal/hearing, therefore, might include one or more of the following:

### **INCREASE VISIBILITY, EDUCATION AND AWARENESS**

A popular tribunal/hearing can serve as a media event to bring women's human rights concerns to a wider national or international audience. Additionally, a tribunal/hearing can be used to:

- Highlight concrete action-strategies that women are using to secure their human rights and achieve accountability.
- Facilitate education and awareness of women's rights as human rights among target audiences – the local community, schools, government departments, policymakers, service providers, etc.
- Educate and sensitize public representatives, decision makers, and opinion shapers about women's human rights concerns at local, national, regional and/or international levels.
- Help inform mainstream human rights organizations about the issues

surrounding women's human rights.

## **RECORD WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS**

A popular tribunal/hearing can provide an opportunity to document violations of women's human rights through written transcripts, photographs and audio and video footage. The tribunal/hearing can:

- Create a historical record of human rights violations during specific periods in time such as war and armed conflict situations.
- Highlight the failure of existing human rights mechanisms to promote and protect the human rights of women.

## **PROMOTE GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

The tribunal/hearing can act as a forum for public accountability around gender-based human rights violations and challenge public representatives and decision makers to account for their role in perpetrating violations, or allowing the violations to occur and/or go unpunished.

## **STRENGTHEN AND PROVIDE TOOLS FOR LOBBYING EFFORTS**

A popular tribunal/hearing can serve as a powerful central event for a particular lobbying effort or wider campaign for women's human rights. Additionally, it can provide the basis for developing specific demands and recommendations with respect to legislation, policy, and/or remedial action and redress for violations.

## **MOBILIZE AND BUILD CAMPAIGNS**

Tribunals/hearings empower women who testify as well as those who listen or hear about the event. They also:

- Situate particular or local struggles by women within a broader global movement.
- Demonstrate the growing determination of women worldwide to demand accountability for gender-based violations and the avenues available to seek redress.
- Serve as a focal event around which to extend and strengthen activism for women's human rights.



## **EMPOWER WOMEN AND SHOWCASE THEIR STRENGTH**

Finally, a popular tribunal/hearing provides an opportunity for women to showcase their strength and highlight successful women's human rights organizing strategies.

## **I. EN-GENDERING POPULAR TRIBUNALS/HEARINGS**



The use of popular (or peoples') tribunals and hearings first emerged in the 1960s. Since the 1990s, however, the use of tribunals/hearings by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), coalitions and social movements has surged around the world. Over the last ten to fifteen years there have been countless tribunals and hearings bringing attention to critical human rights issues at local, national, regional and global levels. At the international level, this has included, for example, more than thirty sessions of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (1979-present), the Vienna Tribunal on Women's Human Rights (1993), the International Peoples' Tribunal on Human Rights and the Environment (New York, 1997), and the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery (Tokyo, 2000). More recently, the Jubilee South campaign concluded its International Peoples' Tribunal on Debt at the World Social Forum (Porte Alegre, 2002). In April 2004, the "BRussells Tribunal" brought together a group of "academics, intellectuals and artists in the tradition of the [1967] Russell Tribunal" to highlight war crimes in the current war in Iraq.

What are the roots of this vibrant tradition? In what ways have women's movements defined and used popular tribunals/hearings?

The Bertrand Russell Tribunal is widely regarded as initiating the tradition. Russell, a British philosopher and activist, was responsible for the first international People's Tribunal, which was convened in Sweden and Denmark in 1967. The goal was to raise public awareness of atrocities being committed in Vietnam by the United States and its allies. The Russell Tribunal brought together well-known figures from around the world, including French writers Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, as well as Vietnamese witnesses.

It was not long before women began to use tribunals and hearings as a way to make visible gender-based abuses that are often hidden in the "private" contexts of home, family, personal relationships, religion and traditional practices. "Second wave" women's movements, which gathered momentum in the 1970s, were committed to breaking the silence around the subordination of women in both private and public spheres. Naming gender-specific abuses as crimes -- whether committed by strangers or spouses--became and remains a pivotal rallying point for these movements. Not surprisingly, feminist organizers were among the first to see the potential of popular tribunals as a way to claim the "public" space of a tribunal to expose previously "private" violations. Inspired by the Russell Tribunal, the first International Tribunal on Crimes against Women was held in Brussels in March 1976. Emphasizing the power of personal testimony, the tribunal brought international attention to issues including "violence against women, forced motherhood, compulsory heterosexuality,

crimes within the patriarchal family, economic crimes, dual oppression of Third World women and migrant women [and the] sexual objectification of women.”

In June 1979 the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal (PPT) initiative was launched in Italy by the Lelio Basso International Foundation for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples. The PPT, which also acknowledged its roots in the 1967 Russell Tribunal, aimed to deepen the tradition by establishing a long-term tribunals program to build a body of “peoples’ law” that would provide a “resource base of peoples’ actions and judgments and a capacity for intervention [towards] . . . the humanisation of world orders.” Such a peoples’ law “is premised upon the political force of contemporary peoples’ mobilisations against corporate-military appropriations of the state as the legitimate means of transformational politics” (Jayan Nayar, Coordinator, Peoples’ Law Programme).

Since it was founded, the PPT initiative has worked with other NGOs to convene dozens of tribunals on a wide range of abuses in specific countries, from Argentina and Afghanistan, to the Former Yugoslavia, Philippines, Tibet, and West Sahara. Tribunals have also examined human rights and accountability issues vis-à-vis the policies of the IMF, World Bank and transnational corporations, as well as environmental catastrophes such as the Bophal and Chernobyl disasters. In the 1990s, PPT sessions examined abuses in the garment industry worldwide and threats to the human rights of children and asylum seekers globally.

The end of the cold war in 1989 prompted a renewed interest in human rights thinking and practice as a framework to challenge injustice. The growing use of popular tribunals by diverse social movements has been part of this development. Arguably, women’s movements have led the way in promoting this wider use of popular tribunals/hearings to advance human rights education and advocacy.

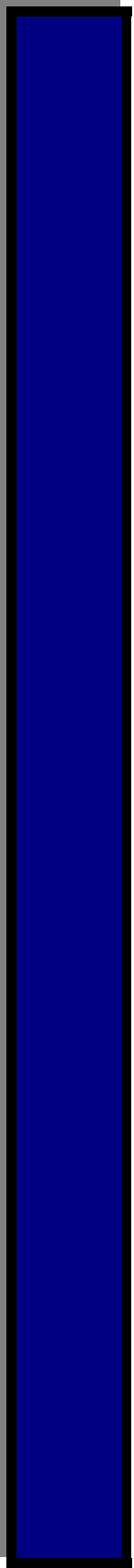
In 1991, cognizant of the 1976 International Tribunal on Crimes against Women and the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal initiative, the Center for Women’s Global Leadership began working with a loose international coalition -- the Global Campaign for Women’s Human Rights -- to plan and organize the Vienna Tribunal on Violations of Women’s Human Rights. The Tribunal, which was part of the NGO Forum of the Second World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), reflected a particular moment in transnational women’s organizing that sought explicit recognition of “women’s rights as human rights” by the United Nations and the international human rights community. The decision to use a semi-formal tribunal format conveyed the message that established human rights law and forums had failed to include women’s human rights concerns. At the same time, the Vienna Tribunal claimed the moral and legal authority of hu-

man rights standards in seeking justice for women. Further, it challenged existing definitions and interpretations of these standards, which have been biased toward the experience of men and the agendas of states in the global North. As a result of the wider Global Campaign and the Vienna Tribunal, the proceedings of which were presented to the intergovernmental conference in Vienna, the Vienna Declaration and Programme for Action recognized women's rights as human rights and, in particular, defined violence against women as a violation of human rights.

Before and following the Vienna conference, however, many women's organizations around the world started to organize hearings and tribunals at the local and national levels. This included hearings and speaks-outs in Argentina, Nepal, Pakistan, the United States, and Zambia. The Center also co-sponsored a series of hearings on women's human rights at the UN Conference on Population and Development (Cairo 1994) and the World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen 1995). The series culminated in a Global Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights at the NGO forum of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in (Beijing, 1995). The Beijing Tribunal, together with the World Public Hearing on Crimes Against Women (coordinated by the Asian Women's Human Rights Council) helped to demonstrate the centrality of a human rights framework to negotiations on the Beijing Platform for Action. Building on this tradition, the Center also organized The Global Tribunal: Celebrate and Demand Women's Human Rights on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human in New York in 1998, as well as a women's human rights hearing at the UN World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa in 2001.

The Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery (Tokyo, 2000) was also a major milestone in "engendering" popular tribunals. This tribunal combined a feminist commitment to exposing previously invisible atrocities of sexual violence (perpetrated by the Japanese military against "comfort women" during World War II) with the methodology of the "People's Tribunal". Organized by Asian women's and human rights organizations, the Tribunal took two years to plan while the final judgment took over one year to complete. Sixty-four survivors from throughout the Asia-Pacific region took part in the five-day Hearing, which was viewed by more than one thousand observers from around the world. The Tribunal heard the testimonies of survivors, academics, and war veterans and received extensive evidence submitted by nine country prosecution teams and two chief prosecutors. The final 200-page judgment issued on in December 2001 found the accused guilty of crimes against humanity.

Thanks to the work of these and other women's human rights advocates, gen-



der issues and violations of women's human rights are being given greater visibility in other "Peoples' Tribunals" initiatives. For example, the report of the 1997 International Peoples' Tribunal on Human Rights and the Environment: Sustainable Development in the Context of Globalization refers to women's human rights throughout the judgment. Similarly, the Concerned Citizens' Tribunal - Gujarat 2002 collected extensive oral and written testimonies from survivors, experts, human rights groups, and NGOs – including many women's groups. Further, the final report of the Gujarat Tribunal has a separate section on violence against women and, in particular, condemns the systematic sexual violence perpetrated against Muslim girls and women in the state of Gujarat as "an instrument for the subjugation and humiliation of a community."

We hope that this publication will contribute to the ongoing development and use of popular tribunals and hearings as spaces where the voices of survivors and advocates around the world are heard and where the struggle for global rights is advanced.

## II. THE ORGANIZING PROCESS



Popular tribunal/hearings can take many forms and serve a variety of purposes; there is no single way to organize a tribunal/hearing. It is important, however, to begin the planning process months in advance to allow sufficient time to create an effective and manageable structure that is consistent with your objectives and desired outcomes. Below are suggested steps to help guide you in the initial development of your tribunal/hearing.

***Select and invite relevant organizations, groups, and/or individuals to assist with various aspects of the tribunal/hearing organizing process.***

### **CO-SPONSORS**

Members of this core planning committee can be asked to advise and collaborate in the overall planning and organization of the tribunal/hearing. The parties invited to participate should constitute a diverse range of groups and individuals that bring different skills and perspectives to the organizing process. At the outset it is important to take into consideration the need for "regional balance" (within a local, national, or international context) and, in particular, to seek to include the voices and perspectives of activists from marginalized or discriminated-against groups.

### **TRIBUNAL/HEARING COMMITTEE**

An effective tribunal/hearing committee is vital to the success of a tribunal/hearing. The tribunal/hearing committee primarily should consist of individuals who are in a position to identify possible testifiers in the areas being addressed by the tribunal/hearing. In the weeks leading up to the tribunal/hearing, a member of the committee should work closely with individual testifiers to help in preparing and revising the testimony in accordance with time and format constraints as well as overall objectives (see Section IV). Ask tribunal/hearing committee members to suggest appropriate people to carry out moderator and other roles in the tribunal/hearing program.

The tribunal/hearing committee should consist of individuals who have substantial knowledge of, and experience working on, the issues and themes identified. It is also very helpful if the committee includes people with other relevant skills, for example, media and communications expertise, proficiency with audiovisual/multimedia technologies, and multiple language abilities.

## **ISSUES/THEMES THAT COULD BE ADDRESSED AT A TRIBUNAL/HEARING ON WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS**

- Violence against women
- Trafficking in women and girls
- Women in conflict situations
- Socioeconomic rights
- Development and women's human rights
- Refugee and migrant women's human rights sexual rights
- Culture, religion and/or fundamentalism
- Indigenous women's rights
- Health and/or reproductive rights

## **DECIDING ON THE SPECIFIC ISSUES AND THEMES TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE TRIBUNAL/HEARING**

While single-issue tribunal/hearings can be effective in allowing for in-depth examination of one topic, connecting a number of issues throughout the tribunal/hearing can attract a wider audience and generate more momentum. The tribunal/hearing should also be used as a vehicle to highlight cases or issues that are currently being pursued legally and/or politically.

## **IDENTIFYING OBJECTIVES AND DESIRED OUTCOMES**

Use the Overview Section as a guide in identifying tribunal/hearing objectives and desired outcomes. Once decided, the objectives should inform all subsequent decisions about the content and format of the tribunal/hearing.

## **SELECTING A TIME AND VENUE**

If possible, the tribunal/hearing should coincide with a larger upcoming event or conference. In addition, it should also be scheduled for a significant date or during a period of time that will attract more attention from both the public and the media, for example, International Women's Day (March 8) or the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence (November 25- December 10). Such strategic timing of the event will maximize the potential audience and media attention while providing the tribunal/hearing with added momentum.

Try to choose a central location that is easy to reach by public transportation while also keeping in mind disability access. Other things to take into consideration when choosing a venue are the availability of simultaneous translation and if possible signing for the hearing impaired. In addition, consider the scope for us-

ing audio/visual equipment to heighten the effectiveness of the testimonies.

## **FORMING AN ADVISORY GROUP OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND**

### **16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence**

The annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign from November 25 to December 10 has been used as an organizing strategy by individuals and groups around the world to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women. Growing out of the Global Center's first Women's Global Leadership Institute, the Campaign links violence against women and human rights, emphasizing that all forms of violence, whether perpetrated in the public or private sphere, are a violation of human rights. The dates that participants chose for the Campaign symbolically make this link: November 25 marks the International Day Against Violence Against Women and December 10 is International Human Rights Day. The 16-day period also highlights other significant dates including December 1, which is World AIDS Day, and December 6 which marks the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre.

## **POLICY EXPERTS**

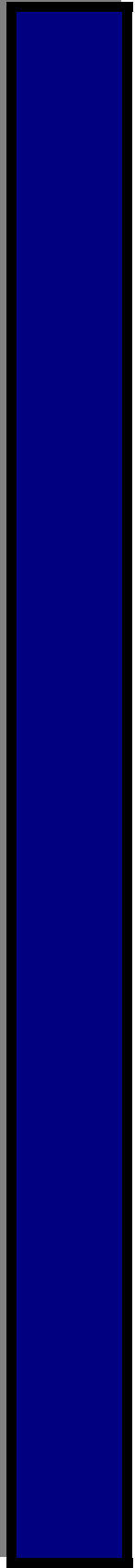
Identify key individuals to assist with selecting "judges" or "respondents" and advising them with respect to their role and input in the tribunal/hearing (see Section V). The Advisory Group is particularly important if,

1. The tribunal/hearing aims to be a source of documentation that might be used subsequently in a more formal context; or
2. One of the tribunal/hearing objectives is to provide the basis for very specific policy or legislative changes.

The role of Advisory Group members also includes assisting with the development of testimonies and judges' or respondents' statements with a view to highlighting relevant human rights standards and shaping targeted recommendations. These individuals should have familiarity with relevant international human rights mechanisms and/or the national legislative frameworks.

## **ASSIGNING A TRIBUNAL/HEARING COORDINATOR**

A tribunal/hearing coordinator should be assigned who has overall responsibility, in collaboration with members of the tribunal/hearing committee and/or the Advisory Group, for tracking and shaping developments during the organizing process. The tribunal/hearing coordinator is responsible for delegating tasks as appropriate and for communicating all necessary information and briefings to those involved. The various aspects of the organizing process include:

- 
- Testimony development in line with chosen themes and objectives (Section IV)
  - Coordination of participation of moderators, respondents, and/or judges (Section V)
  - Deciding the overall format and structure of the Tribunal/Hearing program (Section VII)
  - Development and implementation of a media strategy (Section VIII)
  - Coordination of event documentation procedures (Section IX)
  - Managing venue logistics (Section X)
  - Planning an effective follow-up strategy (Section XI)



### III. SELECTING AND SUPPORTING TESTIFIERS

A tribunal/hearing can include first-person, advocate, or joint testimonies. Any testimony can include accounts of violations against an individual or against a wider class or group. A “first-person testimony” is usually one that is delivered by the person who experienced the violation(s) recounted. However, it is also possible for an appropriate person to introduce and then dramatically represent such an account as a first-person narrative. An “advocate testimony” is one that is presented on behalf of one or more individuals who have directly experienced certain types of violation(s). A “joint testimony” has more than one individual presenting the testimony and can comprise a mix of advocate and/or first-person accounts.

Participating in a popular tribunal/hearing involves a significant degree of stress. By definition, human rights tribunals/hearings addresses issues and recounts events that are likely to be upsetting for all tribunal/hearing participants. This includes members of the audience, who are present to bear witness to grave injustices, and in some cases, horrendous atrocities.

Given the stressful nature of the tribunal/hearing process, it is imperative that all potential testifiers fully understand the political nature of the tribunal/hearing and their role in speaking out as politically conscious survivors, or as advocates on behalf of survivors. It is especially important to be sensitive to the well being of potential testifiers and to ensure that the tribunal/hearing process does not exacerbate any trauma that they may have experienced previously. In the case of first-person accounts of direct violations presented by the victims, a number of years should have lapsed between the time of the abuse and the tribunal/hearing.

Prior to the selection of testifiers, it is advisable to establish clear and rigorous criteria for the selection process. Together with the guidelines in Shaping Testimonies (Section IV), these criteria will help to safeguard against sensationalism and ensure that the emphasis is on documenting abuses for the purposes of demanding accountability rather than on the details of the abuse *per se*.

#### **GENERAL GUIDELINES ON SELECTING TESTIFIERS**

An effective tribunal/hearing will feature strong and compelling testimonies delivered by articulate and assertive speakers. While public speaking skills and

styles differ from person to person, generally, the selected speakers should speak as clearly as possible, and be easily understood in the language in which they testify. This is particularly relevant when the venue selected is large and/or where simultaneous translation will be provided. **It is very important to keep in mind that testifiers with certain disabilities may require assistance and support to ensure the effective delivery of their presentations.** For example, such supports could include:

- A co-presenter
- A longer time slot
- Sign interpretation
- Simultaneous display of the text of the testimony
- Pre-recorded video testimony

Thorough preparation and rehearsal will improve the delivery of any testimony. However, even a strong testimony may fail to do justice to the case if a testifier with very limited communications skills is expected to deliver a testimony without adequate supports. With the foregoing caveats in mind, some of the attributes to look for in testifiers include:

- Individuals who are good public speakers/presenters and who will be able to deliver their testimony – either alone or with support -- clearly and effectively.
- Speakers who are not vulnerable at the time of the tribunal/hearing. Do not include testifiers who are currently experiencing abuse or who may be in further danger if they participate in the tribunal/hearing. If there is an urgent situation, which the tribunal/hearing committee and a potential testifier feel must be addressed, it's advisable that the true identity of the victim be concealed and the case presented by a third party, or as an advocate testimony.
- Testifiers who are politicized and/or activists. That is, invite speakers who are conscious of the wider context and set of issues reflected in their own experience and who readily think in terms of demanding accountability from policymakers, governments, agencies and the UN. Such speakers can be particularly effective in articulating the violations they experienced as well as suggesting remedies.

## THE SELECTION PROCESS

The tribunal/hearing coordinator, working closely with members of the tribu-

nal/hearing committee and Advisory Group, manages the selection of speakers. To begin this process, the tribunal/hearing coordinator, with assistance from the committee, should draft a concise 'briefing document' that can be circulated to those involved in the selection process. This document might include:

- A concise list of the tribunal/hearing objectives in order of priority.
- A list of key issues to be addressed by the tribunal/hearing.
- A statement of general guidelines on selecting potential testifiers.
- A set of agreed diversity criteria to assist in ensuring the inclusion of testifiers across a range of significant categories. For example, the tribunal/hearing committee may decide that it is important to have a cross-section of testimonies in order to reflect diversity with respect to region, race, religious or ethnic background, social status, sexual orientation.

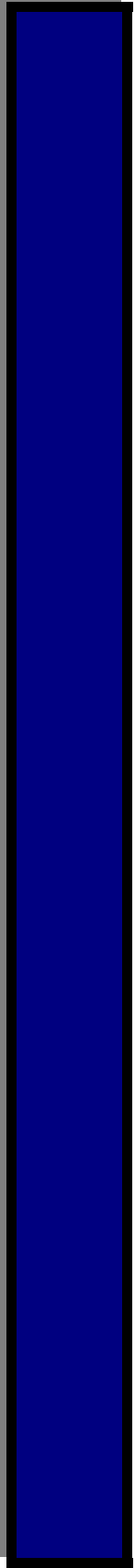
Once the 'briefing document' has been completed, it should be circulated to members of the tribunal/hearing committee and Advisory Group to begin to identify and compile information on existing cases with which they are familiar and which reflect the established guidelines. At this point, it is also appropriate to contact any other collaborating organizations that would be helpful in identifying possible cases.

The information collected on possible cases should not only relate to the agreed tribunal/hearing objectives but should also provide basic answers to the questions listed in Section IV, Shaping the Testimonies. Gathering this information early on and systematically will help in making informed decisions during the final round of selection.

It's useful to give each member of the tribunal/hearing committee the responsibility of locating a particular number of testimonies and testifiers in a specific category. The specific category can be either thematic or regional. For example, a committee member may be responsible for identifying three cases on the issue of "women in war and conflict situations" or "women and AIDS." Alternatively, a committee member may be charged with sourcing the European or Asian cases across a number of issues.

## **ENSURING PROPER SUPPORT FOR TESTIFIERS**

Once the testifiers have been invited and have agreed to participate, it's important to ensure that there are support persons in place who can provide them with both technical and moral support, as needed. Potential testifiers will need technical assistance and guidance in drafting and refining their testimonies.



They will also need moral and emotional support in managing the general stress associated with making public presentations about experiences and issues that are disturbing to recount (especially where the media are present).

- Technical support: Assign a member of the tribunal/hearing committee to work closely with each testifier to help prepare and revise the testimony in accordance with the overall tribunal/hearing objectives as well as with the time and format constraints you have set in Sections II and IV respectively.
- Moral support: Assign a person to support the testifier prior to, during and after they deliver their testimony. Because testifying can be emotionally taxing, it is important to recruit individuals willing and able to support the speakers on this level as required.

For these roles it is most beneficial to choose persons who are familiar with the subject matter of the testimony and have had some experience in shaping public presentations. In some instances, both the technical and moral support roles may be filled by one person. In other instances, it may be helpful to bring an additional person along for the day of the tribunal/hearing. (Be sure to keep this expense in mind as you plan and budget for the event.)



## IV. SHAPING THE TESTIMONIES

In addition to identifying good public speakers/presenters who will be able to deliver their testimony clearly and effectively, it is just as important - if not more so – to ensure the development of the human rights dimensions of testimonies that will be delivered. The foundation of a testimony should be based on answers to core questions (such as those that follow below) focusing on the human rights issues involved. This is especially relevant when one of the tribunal/hearing objectives is to gather documentation that may be used later in making an official complaint within the UN or other human rights machinery.

### **What is the violation?**

Provide as much detail as possible concerning the nature of the violation(s). Dates, times and locations should be stated as well as the names of individuals who and/or organizations which can support the victim's account (more detailed contact should be provided in background materials accompanying the testimony). For example, in the case of spousal battery, a hospital emergency room may have repeatedly treated injuries that are clearly related to assault rather than being "accidental." The testimony should also state the international or regional human rights agreements and relevant articles that have been violated.

### **Who is the violator?**

Where the testifier's safety is not endangered, the testimony should name the individuals or entities that have perpetrated the violations. This might include private individual(s), state agencies or officials, corporations, private associations, or social/cultural institution(s). Violations can be the result of direct actions by such perpetrators, or they may be the consequence of a failure to take the necessary actions to ensure the protection of human rights as laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or other human rights instruments.

### **What is the remedy sought?**

The remedies sought can vary greatly and include:

- Policy remedies such as demanding the repeal, amendment, or effective implementation, of specific national legislation.

- Legal remedies, wherein state in question brings criminal or civil charges against the violator, or the state itself is challenged in an international human rights forum.
- Financial remedies that provide compensation to the victim(s)
- Moral or political remedies such as public apology from the state entity or other actor to the victim(s).

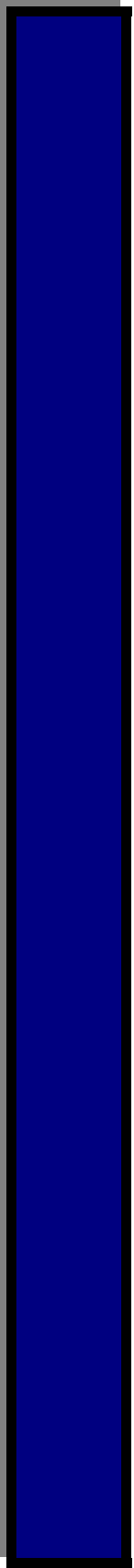
(The above scheme is based on a workshop at the Center's 1994 Women's Global Leadership Institute led by Dorothy Thomas, Director of the Women's Rights Project- Human Rights Watch. Also, see Appendix 6: "Confidential Violence against Women Form" prepared by the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences.)

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF TESTIMONIES

The drafting process for testimonies should start several weeks prior to the tribunal/hearing. Working with the testifiers and members of the tribunal/hearing committee, the coordinator should develop an appropriate schedule for completion of each testimony. Keep in mind that if the initial draft of the testimony is forwarded to the tribunal/hearing coordinator for review approximately 3-4 weeks before the tribunal/hearing, the testimonies can then be returned with helpful comments and revised by the testifier with their support persons.

As with the briefing document in Section III for selecting testifiers, it can be useful to establish guidelines that all the testifiers can use in developing their testimonies. General information about the tribunal/hearing such as objectives, key issues, etc. should be combined with more specific requirements for testimonies such as time limitation and capacity for including audio-visual elements as part of the presentation. In addition to structural guidelines, it's also important to outline some key elements that you would like included in the content of each testimony. These guidelines can be based on the questions outlined above in combination with the following points:

- The testimony should 'frame the issue' according to your key objectives and desired outcomes - media attention, documentation, highlight successful strategies, etc.
- The tone of the testimony should convey the activist role of the testifier and/or other women in challenging the violations described and avoid casting the victim as wholly powerless.
- Where possible action-strategies that have been utilized, or are in process, should be highlighted including: law suits, complaints procedures, lobbying efforts, or examples of grassroots mobilization around the case.



Encourage both the testifier and the tribunal/hearing committee member acting as their support person to arrive at least one day before the tribunal/hearing. It is valuable to ask all the testifiers to present their testimonies to each other prior to the actual event, with time afterwards for exchange and minor revisions as appropriate. This creates a greater sense of mutual support among the testifiers, as well as allowing for more coherence among the testimonies.

## **USING AUDIO/VISUAL ELEMENTS AS PART OF THE TESTIMONY**

If your chosen venue is suitable, the use of audio/video clips, photographs, and images as part of the testimony can add greatly to the impact of that testimony and to the overall event. All audio/visuals should be carefully evaluated with a view to avoiding sensationalism. If it is decided that audiovisuals will be used, the written testimony needs to be adjusted accordingly and steps should be taken to ensure that the necessary technical equipment and support is in place at the venue on the day of the event.

## **GATHERING AND PREPARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

Ask tribunal/hearing committee members, testifiers, and the Advisory Group of human rights experts to provide you with all relevant information they have on each specific case, as well as on the general issues addressed by the testimonies. This can include media articles, statistics, articles from scholarly or activist journals, etc. This information is vital in the preparation of judges' or respondents' statements as well as briefing documents for the media.



## V. THE ROLE OF JUDGES OR RESPONDENTS

- Affirm the rights of the testifiers;
- Highlight the ways in which the events recounted in the testimonies violate international human rights standards;
- Situate the struggle for the human rights of the individual testifier within the broader global movement for women's human rights and accountability;
- Make recommendations and/or calls for action toward eliminating the violations recorded in the testimonies;
- Outline steps that the testifiers, support persons and members of the audience can take to end these human rights violations;
- Validate the tribunal/hearing process; and,
- Provide closure to the tribunal/hearing as an event.

The decision of whether to have judges or respondents depends on the context in which you are holding the tribunal/hearing, the target audience, and the primary goals of the event. While there is likely to be considerable overlap between those who would make good “judges” and respondents, and the kinds of statements they will make, there are some distinctions between the two roles.

A panel of high-profile “judges” conveys an air of gravity and authority, which is useful within more formal contexts and when targeting specific policymaking forums. Judges tend to have strong legal, human rights, or policymaking backgrounds, and their statements at the tribunal/hearing pay particular attention to the ways in which specific human rights agreements, treaties, and articles have been breached as well as identifying the bodies or individuals that are accountable.

Respondents can be drawn from a wider variety of backgrounds and could be media figures, leaders in social movements, or people with expertise around specific issues (for example, violence against women, women in development, or reproductive rights). Respondents' statements reflect this diversity and can include specific policy or legal recommendations from the local to global level. In addition, they can include more general indictments regarding the causes and consequences of violations of women's human rights and the need for perpetrators and governments to be held accountable.

In either case, using high profile judges or respondents can be a very effective

way of calling the attention of governments and/or the media to your event. (In other cases, a high profile testifier or testifiers may also bring such attention.) Once you decide whether to form a panel of judges or respondents, the following guidelines are useful.

## **CREATING A PANEL OF JUDGES OR RESPONDENTS**

Begin your selection process for judges/respondents right after you have identified the issues that will be addressed at the tribunal/hearing and your selection of testifiers is largely complete. Some key steps in this process can include:

- Decide the number of judges/respondents you would like to preside at the Tribunal/Hearing. This can be just one, or a panel of 2 - 4, depending on the duration and scale of the tribunal/hearing along with their placement in the program (see Section VII, Judges or Respondents Statements).
- In consultation with your tribunal/hearing committee and Advisory Group of human rights and policy experts (see Section II), make a list of suitable judges or respondents in order of preference. In addition to their areas of interest/expertise, keep in mind factors such as the geographic and gender balance of the panel as appropriate.
- While a panel of 1- 4 judges/respondents is optimal, the list should contain *all* possible candidates for the role, given that your first choices are likely to be people who are in high demand and therefore less available.
- Write a letter of invitation to the first 1- 4 on your list – depending on the number you want on your panel. Ask relevant members of the tribunal/hearing committee or Advisory Group of human rights and policy experts, who know or have a good connection with the potential judge/respondent, to follow the initial invitation with a phone call or meeting shortly thereafter. Once again, because the individuals you invite are likely to be in high demand, beginning the process well in advance may make the difference in securing those at the top of your list.
- Write to the next person on your list only after one of the original 1- 4 invitees has declined, otherwise you may end up with too many judges/respondents accepting the invitation. Proceed in this way until you have confirmed your chosen number of judges/respondents.

## **SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF JUDGES'OR RESPONDENTS STATEMENTS**

After confirming the participation of each judge/respondent, the following should be forwarded to them at least 7-10 days prior to the tribunal/hearing:

- Copies of the specific draft testimonies that the judge/respondent will be addressing;
- Summaries of the remaining testimonies to be presented at the tribunal/hearing;
- Clear guidelines indicating the tribunal/hearing organizers' expectations of the judge/respondent;
- A full description of the form, content and objectives of the tribunal/hearing; and,
- Contact information for a member of the Advisory Group in the event that the judge/respondent has questions or needs guidance in preparing their statement prior to the tribunal/hearing.

It is important to schedule a meeting with judges/respondents and their advisor(s) on the day before or morning of the tribunal/hearing in order to review this information and answer any outstanding questions or concerns. It will also provide you with an opportunity to hear judges/respondents reactions to the testimonies and thoughts on their statements for the tribunal/hearing.

## **THE WORK OF JUDGES OR RESPONDENTS AT THE TRIBUNAL/HEARING**

At the tribunal/hearing, judges or respondents should be prominently seated with their advisor(s) close by. They should continue to develop their statements throughout the tribunal/hearing in order to respond effectively. The final statement issued by judges or respondents should meet the objectives set out in the opening paragraph of this section. The main difference between statements prepared by "judges" as distinct from respondents will be in the degree of detail and specificity on the particular human rights treaties, agreements, or recommendations by UN bodies that have been violated in the testimonies under discussion.

Depending on the number of testimonies being presented, judges/respondents can deliver statements at various points during the program – at the close of a particular block of testimonies; at the conclusion of the entire event; or, brief comments following a particular block of testimonies with final statements presented at the conclusion. However, keep in mind that you may lose some of the

momentum of the event if you break it up in this way. Depending on the profile of the judges/respondents, keeping their statements for the end can be a way of maintaining interest and ending with a dramatic closure.

## **SAMPLE STATEMENTS OF JUDGES OR RESPONDENTS**

### **I. Excerpt from Judge's Statement by Pierre Sané, Secretary General - Amnesty International, at the "Beijing Tribunal/Hearing on Accountability for Women's Human Rights" at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, September 1995**

"...At all levels, the question is: Does the government concerned have the political will to face up to its responsibilities and to halt human rights violations? Testimony after testimony demonstrates that the answer can be summarized in two words: government failure. The failure of governments to stop detention without charge, the failure to end torture by security forces, and the failure to investigate cases of torture like the cases we have heard from Cameroon and India. These are all violations of the governments' solemn treaty obligations under the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture. There is also the further failure of governments to ensure even the rule of their own laws - in Bangladesh the Constitution includes the right to be treated in accordance with law and only in accordance with the law. Yet, the government has consistently failed to ensure that the local Salish do not assume functions for which they have no legal authority. In Brazil, there are comprehensive guarantees for the indigenous rights in the Constitution. But the authorities have consistently failed to prevent abuses or to bring those responsible to justice.

The testimonies of each of these women symbolize the multitude of women for whom this decade has meant terror, deprivation and the imperative of fighting for justice, but whose fate has been largely hidden from history. Today, what united women internationally - transcending class, race, culture, religion, nationality, and ethnic origin - is the denial and violation of their fundamental human rights together with women's dedicated efforts to claim those rights. The great failure of the world's community of governments is not just that they have been unable to prevent, and in some cases have sanctioned the violation of women's civil and political rights: the rights not to be tortured, raped, killed, made to disappear, or imprisoned. What we want from governments is not simply that they give their assent to the need to protect and promote women's human rights in yet another piece of paper. If it is to achieve anything, the Beijing Conference must be more than just another occasion for fine rhetoric and conviviality. It must be a genuine catalyst for action and for the swift delivery of real

protection..."

**2. Excerpt from Commentator's Statement by Julia Häusermann, President - Rights and Humanity, at the "Copenhagen Hearing on Economic Justice and Women's Human Rights" at the United Nations World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen, March 1995**

"...To call the issues we have heard about today human rights issues means that they are non-negotiable. Health and safety at work should never, and can never, morally or legally, be sacrificed for profit. Many of the issues we have heard about fall within three categories of human rights which are protected by international law, under two major instruments - the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Both of these instruments clearly state that there should be no discrimination on any grounds, such as sex, race or other status, in the enjoyment of human rights. And yet, in every testimony, we heard about some form of discrimination. We heard about discrimination against women because of their gender. We also heard about one of the most common forms of discrimination: discrimination against those living in poverty. Unfortunately, the international legal instruments do not at present state that discrimination on the grounds of income is a form of discrimination. Yet it clearly is...."

**ALTERNATIVES TO USING JUDGES OR RESPONDENTS**

There are a number of effective less formal ways to conclude a tribunal/hearing instead of a panel of judges or respondents. The event can end with a 'speak-out' where members of the audience, the media, or other appropriate group, act as informal respondents. However, it is important to ensure that tribunal/hearing participants (and testifiers in particular) are not put at risk of harassment or verbal abuse if such an open format is adopted. Another alternative is to invite a panel of "expert commentators" who can offer impromptu responses and suggestions for change. Finally, the tribunal/hearing can end with a collection of short statements presented by representatives of women's groups around the world about the actions they are taking to end violations of women's human rights.



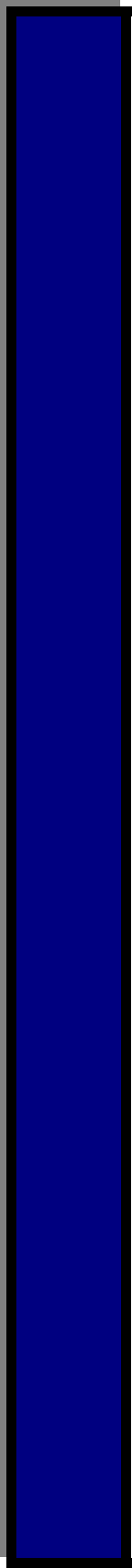
## VI. DEFINING ACCOUNTABILITY AND DEVELOPING TARGETED DEMANDS

The political dimension of a popular tribunal/hearing involves identifying who and/or what entities are accountable for the violations recounted and formulating specific, targeted demands toward the elimination of these and similar abuses of human rights in the future. This section aims to assist those directly working on drafting of testimonies and/or the statements of judges and respondents, to identify and flesh out the accountability issues involved. It also seeks to guide the process of developing targeted recommendations and demands with respect to each testimony.

As stated earlier, the overarching objective of a popular tribunal/hearing is to “provide women with a supportive public space in which to articulate and make visible their human rights concerns.” This objective should remain central throughout the preparatory process, especially as testifiers and their support persons work to define issues of accountability and to develop targeted demands in each testimony. It’s important not to eclipse the powerful, personal accounts of testifiers with a lot of technical details on treaties and international agreements. At the same time, each testimony should strike a balance in highlighting both the personal responsibility of the individual perpetrators (where applicable), as well as the institutional responsibilities of relevant state and non-state entities. Each testimony should also conclude with a set of specific targeted demands aimed at eliminating the kinds of violations recounted in the testimony. However, bear in mind that the statements of judges and/or respondents will serve to reinforce and reiterate the main arguments around accountability and the specific recommendations for each case, including the more formal and technical aspects involved. However, the testimony must provide the basis for these statements. The following subsections provide a brief overview of some key issues and debates, as well as a suggested framework for a more comprehensive and gender-aware approach, in the definition of accountability within a human rights framework.

### UNDERSTANDING HUMAN RIGHTS ACCOUNTABILITY

The preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims: “member states have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.” Similarly, the covenants on economic, social and cultural, as well as on civil and political rights assert the “obligation of



states under the Charter of the United Nations” to achieve the same goals, while the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW or the Women’s Convention) proclaims that “states parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights have the obligation to secure the equal rights of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.” It is clear, therefore that the framework of international human rights as set out by the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the subsequent treaties defines states as accountable for the promotion and protection of the human rights of all people living under their jurisdiction. To be accountable is to be obligated to take responsibility for one’s actions and to be “subject to giving an account,” as the dictionary puts it. Further, even if a state is not directly responsible for private acts, it may be guilty of a lack of diligence to prevent, control, or punish such private acts through its executive, legislative or judicial offices. In every situation of human rights violation, therefore, the state is answerable for its role in the failure to protect and promote the human rights in question. Nonetheless, the human rights machinery that has evolved over the last 50 years focuses almost exclusively on states whose officials engage directly in human rights abuses.

In bringing gender-specific human rights violations to light, women continue to challenge and expand the understanding of what accountability for human rights entails. The international human rights system has generally focused its attention on state-sponsored violations (especially abuses of civil and political human rights that are more likely to be exercised by men in public contexts), including denials of freedom of expression and movement, arbitrary detention, and torture at the hands of state authorities. But women’s experiences demonstrate that violations of the human rights of women often take place in the private contexts of home, family, religious, and cultural practices, and in the increasingly privatized arena of economic production and exploitation. Even within the traditional understanding of human rights, violations directed at women such as rape by the police or military have often been “privatized” and made invisible. While it is essential to fully address such gender-based state-sponsored violations, it is also necessary to expand the definition of “accountability” so that abuses of women’s human rights perpetrated in private contexts and by non-state actors can also be effectively challenged.

## **TOWARD AN EXPANDED DEFINITION OF ACCOUNTABILITY**

A more comprehensive understanding of accountability that would be truly responsive to women’s human rights concerns requires that states are held accountable for:

- Violations resulting from direct state action or policies either within their territories or abroad;
- Violations perpetrated by non-state actors of one state - including private citizens, multinational corporations and/or private institutions - within the territory of another state;
- Violations perpetrated by non-state actors against any person living and/or working within their territory, or over whom they have regulatory powers;
- Violations resulting from the actions or policies of any international institution of which the state is a decision-making or voting member, including the international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, the IMF, the World Trade Organizations.

### **The Role of States**

In order to achieve this level of accountability for human rights, each state must:

- Refrain from directly perpetrating violations of human rights;
- Monitor and address the human rights impact - including the gender dimensions - of all national legislation and policymaking.
- Take proactive steps to prevent human rights abuses by non-state actors - either private individuals or institutions - and to promote respect for human rights throughout the society.
- Hold accountable non-state actors - individuals or institutions - who have violated human rights, including ensuring appropriate punishment for violators and compensation for victims;
- Be accountable as members of collective governing or policy-making bodies such as the UN General Assembly, Security Council, or the international financial institutions, and adhere to international human rights obligations in these contexts.

### **The Role of the United Nations**

In defining accountability, we also include the United Nations both as an international governing body with the mandate to protect and promote human rights and as a collection of agencies and programs that carry out or sponsor programs in many regions of the world. Throughout the entire range of its operations, the UN is obligated to respect the human rights of those affected by its programs and policies and to give special attention to gender concerns. In addition, the UN as an institution has a particular responsibility to eradicate gender-based discrimination and harassment within its own bureaucracy. In particular, the devastation in women's lives wrought by international economic policies that improv-

erish women, and foster economic and sexual exploitation, demands the development and implementation of UN measures that will monitor the human rights costs of current and emerging macroeconomic policies enforced by international financial institutions. Such measures must include the provision of avenues for redress for those who have suffered human rights abuses as a result of the imposition of harsh economic regimes.

In summary, accountability for women's human rights means that the UN must:

- Monitor the gender-sensitive compliance of member states with all human rights agreements and standards.
- Integrate women's human rights and gender perspectives throughout the entire human rights machinery, including in the work of the International Criminal Tribunal/Hearings, all of the human rights treaty bodies, working groups, rapporteurs and commissions, as well as in the work of the specialized agencies.
- Ensure respect for women's human rights in the UN policy and program areas.

### **The Role of NGOs**

Achieving accountability for women's human rights is a multi-layered process and will require diverse strategies. NGOs (preferably in partnership with and supported by governments) have a key role to play in the process to secure accountability, which includes the following major elements:

- Documenting violations: this entails naming the perpetrators (public or private, individual or institution) and detailing the violations along with the international treaties and agreements that have been breached;
- Identifying and utilizing existing human rights mechanisms and legal processes on behalf of women in order to secure the punishment of perpetrators and the provision of gender-sensitive remedies on behalf of the victims. It may also be necessary to demand and develop new processes and procedures;
- Securing explicit commitments to women's human rights from governments in national and international forums;
- Calling for, developing and executing local and national women's human rights implementation plans;
- Mobilizing, organizing and lobbying to build public support and political will toward implementing women's human rights;
- Using the media to expose situations of abuse.

## IDENTIFYING ISSUES OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN TESTIMONIES AND DEVELOPING SPECIFIC DEMANDS

Answering the questions below (in conjunction with the guidelines provided in Section IV) will allow you to build a fairly comprehensive overview of the accountability issues in each testimony. The same process, by exposing serious breaches and omissions in each case, will also help to suggest a targeted list of demands and recommendations.

A compilation of principal human rights international agreements and additional instruments relating to the human rights of women can be obtained from:

***Women and Human Rights: The Basic Documents***

Center for the Study of Human Rights  
Columbia University  
420 West 118<sup>th</sup> Street  
1108 International Affairs Building  
Mail Code: 3365  
New York, NY 10027 USA  
Ph: (1-212) 854-2479; Fax: (1-212) 316-4578  
E-mail: [cshr@columbia.edu](mailto:cshr@columbia.edu);  
Website: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/humanrights>

For a list of women's human rights resources, regional ratification charts indicating which country has signed which treaties, and the full text of key international human rights documents order:

***Rights of Women: A Guide to the Most Important UN Treaties on Women's Human Rights***

International Women's Tribune Centre  
777 UN Plaza, 3rd Floor  
New York, NY 10017, USA <http://www.womenink.org>

Specific international human rights documents can be obtained by visiting:

**UN Website**  
<http://www.un.org>

**UN Womenwatch Website**  
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch>

If time permits, ask testifiers and their support persons (in collaboration with a member of the human rights advisory group if needed), to prepare a 1-2 page summary of accountability for each testimony prior to the tribunal/hearing. Such summaries are extremely useful in identifying patterns in the failure of states and other parties to be accountable for their actions and/or inaction; ensuring that the demands and recommendations put forward by testifiers are technically and legally accurate; and informing the process of advising the judges in making their recommendations.

### Who is responsible for perpetrating the violation(s)?

- Private individual or institution;
- State actor, institution or agency; and/or
- UN entity

**What are the international human rights treaties and/or agreements that have been breached and how?**

**How is the state culpable?**

- Did an agent of the state carry out the violation(s) recounted?
- Did the state permit, condone, or ignore the actions of a non-state actor in committing the violations?
- What actions did the state take in response to the abuses described in terms of: (1) policing and judicial measures; (2) policy implementation; and, (3) legislation?
- What should the state have done?
- What do we want the state to do now?

**Do existing human rights instruments and processes work to ensure redress in this and similar cases?**

**What is required to ensure that the human rights standards most relevant to the case at hand are upheld and implemented at the local, national, regional, and/or international levels?**

Tribunal/hearing testimonies should not exclusively highlight the failure of states and/or United Nations entities to be accountable on any of these levels. They should also develop recommendations to remedy the situation and make demands that will strengthen the protection and promotion of women's human rights.

**STATEMENTS BY JUDGES OR RESPONDENTS**

As outlined in section V, judges or respondents will use the testimonies and supporting material to produce a final statement detailing what entities are accountable in each case. In doing so, they will provide a brief introduction to existing human rights instruments and mechanisms which were established to protect against such violations. As far as possible, the statement by a judge or respondent will also make recommendations on the steps that must be taken to prevent such violations in the future; to secure reparations in the case in question; and, to punish the individuals responsible. As stated in section V, it is imperative that copies of the testimonies and all supporting documentation be sent to the judges and respondents well in advance to allow them sufficient



time to produce a powerful and effective statement of recommendations and demands.

## **POST-TRIBUNAL REPORT OR STATEMENT**

Immediately after the tribunal/hearing, a statement should be drafted that provides a brief overview of the program followed by the core recommendations and demands made by the judges and testifiers. Producing and distributing such a statement to the media/press, governments, and other targeted groups (see list in Section VIII) is an effective means of amplifying the impact of the event and ensuring that the core messages and demands of the tribunal/hearing reach a wider audience. The statement can also be used as a lobbying tool in the weeks and months after the tribunal/hearing to pressure governments to strengthen their protection and promotion of women's human rights (See Appendix 3 for a sample post-tribunal/hearing statement issued after the *Vienna Tribunal/Hearing for Women's Human Rights* in 1993).



## VII. DEVELOPING AND STRUCTURING THE TRIBUNAL/HEARING PROGRAM

Having identified the overall content and focus of the tribunal/hearing, the remainder of the program should now be planned in as much detail as possible. When deciding on the structure for the program, the makeup of the target audience should be kept in mind. Generally, the goal is to arrange an overall program structure that enhances the delivery of your key messages. This includes ensuring that testimonies within sections flow well and maintain interest, and that there are smooth and logical transitions between sections. As you move forward in the organizing process, it is useful to sketch out a preliminary program that you can add to and/or modify as the planning process progresses. This way, when you arrive at the moment of finalizing program details, you will already have a preliminary sense of the structure as well as the information to answer any outstanding questions and/or concerns.

Once all testimonies are confirmed, compile a preliminary schedule which includes projected times for all speakers including the opening and closing speaker(s), testifiers, moderators and judges. The draft schedule will be helpful when deciding how much, if any, additional time you have to fill in the program. At this time it would also be useful to identify any additional segments or presentations that would be important to include in their own right and/or which would enhance the program. This can include cultural activities and performances, refreshment breaks, and so on. The subject matter of tribunals/hearings is extremely serious and can be quite difficult for audiences (as well as judges and respondents) to hear and absorb. One or two brief interludes with a positive focus - a poetry reading, short film, or musical/dance performance, for example, will be very welcome at an appropriate point in the program. At the same time, it is important to think about ways of maintaining audience attention within sections and throughout the delivery of testimonies. For example, if possible, some of the testifiers might use film/video and/or other visuals as part of their presentation. The following points highlight the main issues and considerations that need to be considered when developing the tribunal/hearing Program.

### OPENING/INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Prior to the delivery of testimonies, an appropriate member(s) of the organizing team should make brief welcoming and introductory remarks. This commentary should provide the audience with an overview of the program for the day,

an introduction to the tribunal/hearing's purpose and objectives, and any relevant background information on women's human rights that would help to contextualize the forthcoming presentations.

## **DECIDING THE ORDER AND GROUPING OF TESTIMONIES**

There are a number of variables to consider when determining the order in which testimonies will be presented.

### **Grouping Testimonies**

If you have more than 5-6 presentations, it is useful to organize the testimonies into sections according to a common issue or theme. Grouping the testimonies into separate sections of roughly equal numbers, helps to give the audience a clearer picture of the overall issues and concerns being highlighted by the tribunal/hearing. If you decide to group testimonies into sections, you need to decide on the order of the sections as well as the order of testimonies within those sections.

### **Ensuring Diversity**

Whatever the themes or issues the tribunal/hearing committee chooses to highlight, aim to achieve balanced representation among speakers across lines of race, ethnicity, socio-economic background, disability, sexual orientation, regional/geographic location, and so on. It is particularly important for the organizers of an international or global event to ensure that the order and number of testimonies are regionally balanced.

### **Ordering Testimonies Within Sections**

In general, it is a good idea to begin and end on a particularly strong note. Try to alternate testifiers according to their speaking/presentation styles and mode of testimony delivery. Aim to balance formal speakers with those who tend to be more lively and informal, for example, or try to include at least one testimony in each section that utilizes audio-visual resources, or perhaps includes a poem.

### **Ordering Sections Within the Overall Program**

Use the order of the sections to foreground priority themes and issues. If you are planning a half-day or shorter event, the first issues and testimonies presented will get the most attention. If the tribunal/hearing is a day-long event,

the beginning of the second half is also a timeslot that can be used effectively. If the judges or respondents are a major draw for the event, and they are slotted to speak last, the section just before the judges' presentations will also be an advantageous timeslot in which to highlight key issues. As suggested before, in terms of the overall program, aim to begin and end with the themes/issues that are likely to attract greater attention. This is not a comment on the merits of individual testimonies or sections, but a reminder that when a tribunal/hearing is a public/media event, sustaining interest among the audience and the members of the media is an important goal of the event. This will vary according to whichever issues are timely or topical, as well as with the content and mode of delivery of specific presentations.

### **Use of Visuals and Performance Arts**

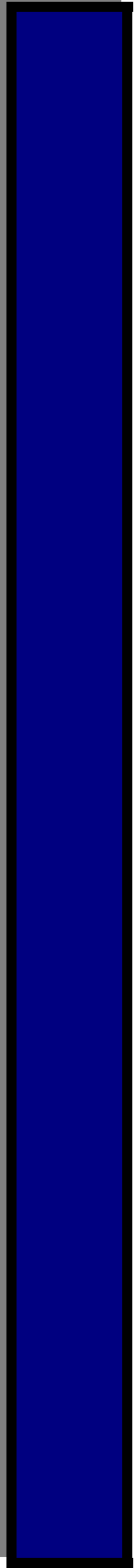
Intersperse any presentations that use visuals (slides, video clips, posters, etc.), or music, dance, or poetry throughout the program. As testifiers prepare testimony, encourage the use of visuals as part of presentations, if available. If meeting the requirements of human rights documentation is less important, it is also a good idea to encourage some testifiers to deliver their testimonies through performing arts. Otherwise, music, dance, and/or poetry can be performed by non-testifiers in order to provide important breaks in the program.

### **JUDGES OR RESPONDENTS STATEMENTS**

As outlined in Section V, judges or respondents statements can be delivered at two different points in the program. If testimonies are grouped into sections, each judge/respondent can be assigned to respond to a section consistent with their areas of expertise. This works best if the comments are made at the close of the respective section. If time permits, the judge/respondent could also deliver brief final remarks toward the end of the program. Alternatively, all of the judges/ respondents can deliver their statements at the conclusion of the program.

### **SELECTING MODERATORS**

Moderators play an important role in the tribunal/hearing program. In addition to providing the audience with brief introductions to the sections and speakers, they also keep the program moving forward within the timeframe that has been established. Depending upon the length of the program and how you structure the presentation of testimonies, you should choose approximately 3-5 moderators for the tribunal/hearing. When selecting moderators, choose individuals who are familiar with the tribunal/hearing process and the issues that are being



discussed in the section they will moderate. It is advisable to select individuals from the tribunal/hearing committee or Human Rights Advisory Group since they are most familiar with the goals and objectives of the tribunal/hearing.

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

Following all of the presentations, the tribunal/hearing should conclude with a very brief commentary from a key player in the tribunal/hearing organizing process. Closing remarks can include thanks to all participants (especially the testifiers) and to the individuals and organizations that played an instrumental role in shaping the tribunal/hearing; a call to action based on the demands issued from the tribunal/hearing; and, a positive statement about future avenues to be pursued.



## VIII. MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS (PR) STRATEGIES

The extent to which you involve the media will vary significantly depending on the overall objectives you have set for the tribunal/hearing. If gaining wider visibility for women's human rights issues, raising public awareness, and influencing policy makers are primary goals then a more comprehensive media strategy is required than if the goal is community education or the empowerment of a particular group of women. Developing and implementing an effective media strategy ensures that the message of the tribunal/hearing will reach a wider audience, both at the time of the event and subsequently.

Keep in mind that there are many barriers to getting the right kind of media coverage for women's concerns. Achieving constructive, non-sensational and non-sexist visibility in mainstream media - at the local, national, or international level - can be a difficult goal to realize. The following points are provided as guidelines to help shape a media strategy to suit your goals. They are not intended to be exhaustive and the extent to which you implement them will depend on the degree and type of media attention you want to attract.

### **GETTING STARTED – THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PHASE**

#### **Using Outside Media Consultants**

If resources permit, engaging an outside media consultant can be very helpful in ensuring that your media strategy is targeted and effective. If necessary, a consultant can also assist with training staff and tribunal/hearing speakers on how to conduct media interviews and take advantage of opportunity for media attention. As the tribunal/hearing approaches, it can be difficult to develop and manage an effective media strategy alongside all the other demands of the tribunal/hearing, especially if you are new to the process. If media attention is high on your list of goals and resources permit, you should identify a consultant who is familiar with and sympathetic to the issues you want to highlight and has well-established contacts with various media outlets. If you do not know any consultants in the area, contact some of your key partners or other NGOs to ask if they can recommend someone. It also may be possible to secure reduced fees for social justice events such as a tribunal/hearing.

## **Creating a Media/Press Contact List**

Make a list of newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations as well as specific radio/TV programs, and websites that you want to target including both mainstream and alternative media. At the same time, identify specific journalists that are likely to be interested in the planned event and the issues that will be addressed. The list might include daily news journalists as well as columnists and broadcasters who specialize in women's and/or social issues, community/local stories, education and health, human rights and justice issues and so on. Compile a list of telephone and fax numbers as well as email addresses, if available, for each one. It is better to obtain the names and contact details of individual journalists and editors as distinct from general titles (like "news editor" or "health correspondent") and general contact information. Again the media contacts you include will depend on the issues to be highlighted by the tribunal/hearing.

Ask sponsoring organizations, testifiers and all committee members to forward any relevant media contacts that they have established. Combine and update your media/press lists to include these additions. Pay particular attention to those media outlets that have provided positive media/press attention for previous events, or for work on a particular issue; be sure to build on this success and establish contact early on with these journalists. If this is the first media event you are organizing, it is important to take some time to research the interests and earlier work of journalists and particular newspapers or programs so that you can highlight the aspects of the your tribunal/hearing that will grab their attention.

## **Timing and Preliminary Notice of Event**

In selecting the date and time of your event, ensure that it will not clash with another event that your target audiences may also wish to attend. Once the time, date, and venue of the event have been decided, it is a good idea to send everyone on your media/press list a preliminary notice. The notice should indicate the title and nature of the event, in order to flag the date and give editors working on longer cycles the opportunity to include it in their schedule of features and programs.

## **Consent of Testifiers and Tribunal/Hearing Participants**

Before releasing names of tribunal/hearing participants to the media, it is very important to ensure that you have their written permission to do so. Create a "media release form" to be signed by each participant indicating that they are

willing to speak to journalists and are giving the tribunal/hearing organizers permission to include their names and copies of their testimonies/statements in the materials circulated to the media/press.

At this time, it is also important to identify any special requests or safety concerns around protecting the identity of testifiers who may be put in danger through their participation in a tribunal/hearing. Where necessary, tribunal/hearing organizers should use pseudo-names for testifiers who wish to conceal their identity and ensure that these testifiers are not photographed, videotaped, and/or audio-taped during the tribunal/hearing.

### **Preparing a Media/Press Packet**

A media/press packet should be compiled to distribute to journalists on the day of the event, either at a specially convened Press Briefing (before or after the tribunal/hearing) or at the event itself. The packet can also be given out selectively to interested journalists prior to the event. However, this should not discourage attendance at the event, the main objective in terms of achieving media coverage.

### **Contents of a media/press packet**

- A copy of the press release
- A program/schedule for the event indicating approximate times and order of speakers
- Basic information and bibliography of resources on women's human rights
- Short biographies of each testifier alongside a brief summary of the testimony they are presenting
- Optional one-page background papers aimed at educating the media on specific issues being addressed by the tribunal/hearing (for example, violence against women, reproductive and sexual rights, women's health, gender and poverty, and so on).
- Short biographies of judges/respondents
- Information about the sponsoring organizations

### **Design and Production of media/press packet**

A media/press packet that provides the necessary information can be produced relatively inexpensively on a personal computer (PC) using word processing or desktop publishing software. However, a well-designed and professionally printed media/press packet that makes good use of color and images can be a

very effective tool in capturing media attention. It may be possible to have these services donated or obtained at a reduced rate by contacting individual graphic designers and/or design or print businesses. All such in-kind contributions should be acknowledged in any promotional materials for the tribunal/hearing.

## **Press Release**

Your press release for the event should be a concise 1-2 page document that includes:

- The words “Press Release” printed prominently across the top of the front page
- Name, phone number, and email address of the contact person at the top right front page
- Title, venue, date and time of the tribunal/hearing at the center top third of the front page
- A 2-3 paragraph description including the reasons for holding the event and what it aims to achieve; a list of the main issues to be addressed; some details about the cases which will be presented; 2-3 effective one-line quotes from testifiers and, 1-2 lines on each of the judges/respondents
- A list of sponsoring organizations and brief organizational profiles of the main organizing group(s)
- Brief directions on how to reach the venue

When identifying the contact person, choose someone who can respond to inquiries from the media at anytime. It is also important that they be familiar with the organization(s) involved, the tribunal/hearing objectives and process and the cases to be presented. If possible, include two names as contacts in order to make it easier for the press/media to get in touch with someone.

The Press Release should be sent to everyone on your media/press list 2-3 days prior to the tribunal/hearing. If your tribunal/hearing is taking place within a much larger national or international conference at least two Press Releases should be sent - the first about two weeks before the event and a revised/updated release nearer the day of the tribunal/hearing. Your designated media/press contact person(s) should follow up any Press Release with a phone call within 24 hours. If necessary, repeated attempts should be made to talk directly to editors and journalists who have received the Press Release and to obtain a commitment that a journalist will be sent to the tribunal/hearing and/or Press Briefing.

## Reaching Target Audiences

While media attention is important, it is also critical to ensure that you attract a sizeable, supportive audience to the actual event. This can be achieved through the strategic placement of flyers and posters in the days leading up to the tribunal/hearing. In addition, coordinate mailings of invitations (regular and/or email) anywhere from 2-6 weeks before the tribunal/hearing depending on the scale of the event and likely competition for audience attention. Again, if you are planning a large-scale event that is part of a wider conference, it is advisable to send out two announcements a number of weeks apart.

- Promotional materials – flyers, posters, websites: Use the information compiled for the Press Release to create flyers/announcements that can be posted at various venues and mailed to target lists to publicize the tribunal/hearing. Producing these materials and displaying them in high traffic areas will help promote the event. Where possible, use bold graphics and colors to draw people's attention. Also, consider producing larger posters that can be used for publicity purposes leading up to the event and as visual props at the event.
- If your organization has a website, include a copy of the flyer in a prominent position on the opening page. You can also distribute the flyer to key partners to post on their website, along with circulating it to news-groups and email lists.
- Mailings: In addition to Press mailings, take some time to consider your target audience and compile a list of all the individuals, groups and agencies that you would like to receive a flyer/announcement. The list can include:
  - Government departments and statutory agencies
  - UN, international and regional agencies
  - Women's NGO's
  - Other NGO's including community development, human rights groups, trade unions, etc.
  - University institutions and school groups
  - Relevant internet sites

Most NGOs, government agencies and educational and international organizations put out regular newsletters. It can be advantageous to obtain publication schedules for these newsletters, which are often quarterly, and request that notice of your event be included in appropriate sections. In addition, you could provide flyers to be used as inserts in upcoming editions.

In the case of "VIP" guests it is a good idea to write personalized letters of invitation and request that they RSVP.

## **ENGAGING WITH THE MEDIA**

### **Identifying Potential Speakers/Interviewees**

In the weeks leading up to the event, try to identify the issues and cases that the media are most likely to be interested in covering. Prepare testifiers, judges and human rights experts to address these issues, if requested. Selecting interviewees in this way, beforehand, will allow time for preparation, especially for those who are not familiar with media interviews. It will also allow you to schedule interviews in advance. Availability is key with the media so it is good to be prepared and punctual for interviews.

### **Providing Media Training**

Even if you do not hire a media consultant to assist with the development and implementation of your overall media strategy, it is advisable to seek the assistance of someone with significant practical media experience to facilitate a media training session a few weeks prior to the event. Such a session should include all staff and speakers (where available) and help them prepare for media interviews before, during and after the event.

One task of the session could be to compile a list of responses to some commonly asked questions. Among others, this might include responses to the following:

- What is a tribunal/hearing in this context?
- Why are you holding the tribunal/hearing?
- What will women achieve by testifying if the tribunal/hearing has no real power?
- What do women want out of the event?
- What progress has been made for the realization of women's human rights?
- What does your organization do and what is its mission?

### **Press Briefing**

Organizing a 30-40 minute Press Briefing, either directly before or after the tribunal/hearing, can be a good way of attracting journalists and shaping the “stories” that emerge from the tribunal/hearing. It can include a panel of 2-4 speakers that includes at least one well-versed person from the organizing committee, 1-2 testifiers, and 1-2 judges. Panelists should deliver brief 1-2 page pre-

pared statements - which are made available to journalists in a printed format - followed by a Question and Answer session. Generally, if there is major media interest in the cases and testifiers, a pre-tribunal/hearing Press Briefing works best and draws the media into the event. On the other hand, if the judges or respondents are well-known figures, a post-tribunal/hearing briefing highlighting the judges' findings can work well.

### **Coordinating Interviews**

In the time leading up to and during the tribunal/hearing, a dedicated media/press person should liaise with media and the tribunal/hearing participants to schedule interviews throughout the day at appropriate times and locations.

### **EVALUATING THE VENUE**

When deciding on the set-up for the tribunal/hearing space, keep in mind the requirements of the media. Be sure that the media contact person evaluates the space in conjunction with other staff to ensure that media requests are taken into account at the beginning of the planning phase. The media are generally clear about specific needs they may have. Their requests usually focus on the sound system, a central system for all TV cameras, lighting for TV and photographers, and the positioning of posters/banners and other visual props at the venue. Again, a professional media consultant can be especially useful here as they have a better sense of media needs.

When evaluating the space, also ensure that there is a small room or space nearby, in a relatively quiet area, where the media can conduct interviews on the day of the tribunal/hearing. At the event, be sure to have media/press packets, additional press releases, as well as any other information about the event, issues, and speakers readily available.



## IX. RECORDING THE TRIBUNAL/HEARING

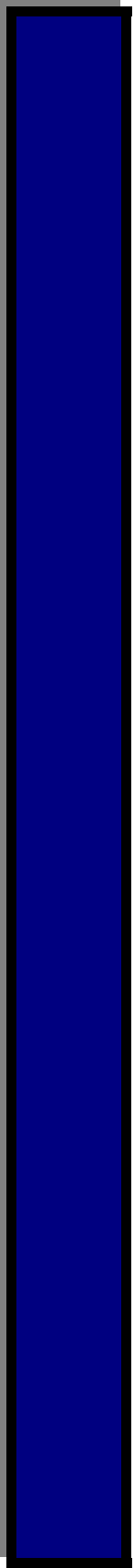
Planning for appropriate documentation at the tribunal/hearing will ensure an accurate record of the presentations and the event as a whole. There are a number of methods that can be used to document the proceedings including audiotaping, photography and or videotaping. Before deciding on the method, consider all possible future applications for the materials. It is likely that you will require some form of documentation to meet your core tribunal/hearing objectives and carry out related follow-up activities. More generally, good quality documentation will facilitate the following purposes:

- Producing publications including articles, books, information packets, pamphlets, and posters.
- Developing videos, radio programs, and materials for posting to web-sites.
- Conducting outreach and awareness raising activities with a wider constituency.
- Providing resources to organizations working on women's human rights issues.
- Creating human rights education (HRE) manuals and modules and supporting HRE programs.
- Preparing official documentation of women's human rights abuses and concerns for submission to the UN, human rights bodies, and/or governments.
- Contributing to the historical documentation of women's human rights activities and movements.

The level of staff time and resources you are able to invest in documentation will be a significant factor in deciding your approach. Audiotaping, for example, can be a relatively uncomplicated and inexpensive task. However, ensuring high quality photographs and videotape footage will require someone with substantial professional experience and may necessitate hiring outside consultants. In either case, assign an individual to coordinate both documentation and follow-up activities as the two are closely linked (see section XI).

### AUDIOTAPES

It's extremely important to have a set of quality audiotapes of the tribunal/hearing proceedings. An accurate, full transcript of the event gives you a com-



plete verbal record of testimonies, moderators' commentaries, as well as the statements of judges/respondents. Because actual presentations can vary somewhat (often in ways that enhance the delivery) from the pre-prepared scripts, audio taping will allow you to capture particularly effective moments that go beyond the written word alone. High quality transcripts greatly facilitate the task of producing subsequent reports and publications. They are also invaluable in retrieving more memorable quotes that can be used for a variety of purposes including playing excerpts on radio and/or on the World Wide Web.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

A diverse range of photos will make tribunal/hearing books and reports more engaging and attractive to the reader. Photos can be used to produce publication or videotape covers and related promotional materials. Additionally, they can be easily scanned for use on a website. Other uses might include a traveling "Photo Exhibit," or the production of a calendar or set of postcards as part of awareness raising activities. It's also useful to keep photos from the event on file to send to the media in the promotion of follow-up events and/or publications and videos.

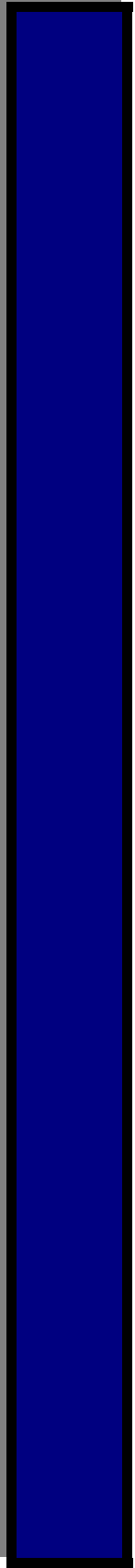
## **VIDEO**

Videotaping the tribunal/hearing requires the greatest expenditure of resources because it generally involves a small videotaping team and the purchase or hiring of video equipment. However, costs are coming down as small video cameras become more sophisticated and computer-based editing software allows video films to be made without incurring high studio costs. In order to warrant the allocation of substantial resources to professionally videotaping the event, however, the production of a videotape for training/education purposes and/or for mainstream TV viewing, should be primary goals of the tribunal/hearing committee. In addition, video clips or a video film can be used on the Web or to provide interested media with clips of the program.

## **ORGANIZING PROCESS**

Once you have assigned an individual to coordinate documentation for the event, the following guidelines will assist them in planning the remainder of the process:

1. Discuss with the tribunal/hearing committee and the Advisory Committee the methods of documentation that are necessary to meet your objectives and gather recommendations for possible outside consultants/



production companies.

2. Prepare preliminary budgets for different options including estimated costs of outside consultants/production companies based on the experience of collaborating groups.
3. Evaluate the staff time and resources available for documentation and decide if an outside consultant/production company is desirable, necessary and/or financially feasible.
4. If you opt to use a consultant/production company, collect references from people who have worked with them before.
5. Contact at least 3 recommended consultants/production companies and ask them to submit samples of their work and cost estimates based on preliminary information you can provide.
6. Put together a suitable sub-group of the tribunal/hearing committee and/or Advisory Group to select the most appropriate consultant/production company for your purposes.
7. Provide the chosen consultant/production company with up-to-date information about the program, any specifications you have for the final product(s) (transcripts, tapes, video etc.) and ask them for a summary of their needs on the day of the tribunal/hearing.
8. Liaise closely with the consultant or production team on the day of the event.

*If you do not hire outside consultants, similar guidelines can be followed with the staff/volunteers who have been assigned to different aspects of the documentation strategies that have been selected.*



## X. ON THE DAY OF (OR DAY PRECEDING) THE TRIBUNAL/HEARING

As you approach the day of the tribunal/hearing, it's very important to keep lines of communication open - with staff, testifiers, judges, moderators, support persons, participating organizations, outside consultants, as well as media. If you are organizing a large event, schedule regular meetings with staff members to keep informed about the ongoing progress, last minute issues and problems that arise, and possible changes to the schedule.

The following points are important to consider as you plan the final days leading up to the tribunal/hearing. Add additional points as they come up throughout the planning process.

### **PRACTICE SESSION WITH TESTIFIERS, SUPPORT PERSONS, MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY GROUP AND MODERATORS**

If time permits, a pre-tribunal/hearing practice session where all the testifiers meet and present their testimonies to each other can be a valuable exercise. A practice session can create a greater sense of mutual support among the testifiers. If testifiers are nervous about public speaking it gives them an opportunity to become more comfortable presenting their testimonies in front of a supportive audience. It also fosters greater coherence in the overall program, as testifiers have time to make minor adjustments to their scripts that will complement and/or reinforce points being made by other speakers. Such a session will also give you a chance to evaluate, and adjust, if necessary, the ordering and grouping of the testimonies.

In general a practice session should allow for:

- Introductions of testifiers, advisory group members, support persons, and moderators.
- Individual presentation of testimonies to the group.
- Feedback from the group.
- Time for testifiers to work with advisory group members and/or support persons on revisions to the final draft of their testimony.

At this point, moderators should be provided with brief biographical information for each testifier that they will introduce. There should also be an opportunity to review both time and content guidelines you have established for

moderators (section VII).

## **PRODUCE COPIES OF FINAL VERSIONS OF TESTIMONIES**

After the practice session you will need to produce copies of final drafts of testimonies for distribution to translators, judges, members of the advisory group to judges, moderators, and the media (if specific testimony is requested on the day of the event.)

## **MEETING OF JUDGES AND HUMAN RIGHTS/LEGAL EXPERTS**

Schedule a meeting with judges or respondents and human rights/legal experts the day before, or the morning of, the event. The meeting should be used to:

- Clarify any queries on the guidelines for judges/respondents established by the tribunal/hearing committee (Section V).
- Discuss any specific requests regarding the judges' presentations.
- Distribute copies of the final testimonies and any additional material available (press kits, press releases, etc.).
- Review the program/schedule for the event.

## **VENUE/SITE ORIENTATION**

When booking the tribunal/hearing venue, ensure that you also schedule an on-site orientation for staff/organizers a few days before the event. All staff involved with the program should survey the space prior to the event in order to become familiar with the layout and to be better able to assist with the final logistical planning. In addition, allow ample time to set up the day before (or earlier on the day of) the event. Remember to notify the venue manager well in advance of specific requests and time needs and to verify these verbally as well as in writing as the date of the event approaches.

## **STAGE MANAGEMENT**

As you compile a task list, select a staff member who has been closely involved in planning the tribunal/hearing to be the "stage manager" for the event. The stage manager should be situated on the side of the stage throughout the event to troubleshoot and coordinate details with the technical crew (lighting, sound, audiovisual equipment, etc.). In addition, they should monitor the timing and flow of the program and ensure that all speakers are on stage at the proper time.

The stage manager should meet with the technical crew the day before (or morning of) the event to do a run through of the entire program. This will help preempt and address any last-minute technical issues/problems.

## **STAFFING THE EVENT**

Ensuring that proper support is available for the day of the tribunal/hearing requires a full evaluation of staffing needs well in advance. Depending on the size of your staff as compared to the expected turnout for the event, it may be useful to recruit some volunteers to work on the day of the tribunal/hearing. Volunteers can assist with tasks such as registration, distribution of programs, seating people in the audience, and so on. This will free up time for staff to assist with key aspects of the program. Other assignments that staff will need to cover include: stage management, overall logistics troubleshooter, media liaison, support to presenters, as well as all tasks associated with production including technical requests, translation/interpreter back-up, etc. Keep an ongoing list of tasks that will need to be monitored/completed on the day of the event.

## **LOGISTICAL CHECKLISTS**

In order to have all logistical information in a clear and accessible format on the day of the tribunal/hearing, it is very useful to compile a checklist of some of the major tasks/elements associated with the tribunal/hearing. A sample site planning checklist is attached (Appendix 5), and can also be used as a guide for drawing up similar checklists for other aspects of the event - including media, program development, written materials and supplies.



## XI. TRIBUNAL/HEARING FOLLOW-UP

### GENERAL FOLLOW-UP

As part of the planning and organizing process, the tribunal/hearing committee and Advisory Group should plan an effective follow-up strategy that begins immediately after the tribunal/hearing when it is important to capitalize on the momentum and energy generated by the tribunal/hearing. Your follow-up strategy will be closely linked to the overall tribunal/hearing objectives and the ongoing work and priorities of the organizations and groups involved. It is important to devise a division of labor and that the collaborating groups each make firm commitments to carry out specific aspects of the follow-up strategy. An effective follow-up strategy will include some of the following objectives:

- Expanding the reach of the tribunal/hearing message(s);
- Highlighting and supporting the work of women's human rights activists who participated in the tribunal/hearing;
- Further developing and shaping the documentation of the violations of women's human rights presented;
- Publicizing strategies and recommendations for actions made by the judges;
- Lobbying and pressuring governments to recognize, remedy, and prevent future women's human rights violations;
- Investigating and pursuing ways and means of applying different human rights instruments to specific tribunal/hearing cases violations in order to seek redress; and,
- Utilizing the tribunal/hearing proceedings to affirm the many women who cannot speak out for various reasons and to mobilize more groups and individuals to take up women's human rights causes.

### FOLLOW-UP WITH TESTIFIERS

Because delivering testimonies can be quite stressful (Section IV), it's important that you follow-up with testifiers and ensure that they have a proper support system once the tribunal/hearing is over. It can also be advantageous to request that support persons, if available, remain in close contact with testifiers for an extended period following the tribunal/hearing.

In addition, testifiers should also receive copies of any materials that have been

produced during and after the tribunal/hearing. These will help in tracking the tribunal/hearing process and can be used as a reference when and if they conduct any follow-up to their specific cases.

## POST-TRIBUNAL/HEARING MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

The production of post-tribunal/hearing materials and resources will play an important role in any follow-up strategy. The chart below summarizes the different kinds of post-tribunal/hearing materials/resources already referred to throughout this guide and their possible uses:

Post Tribunal/ Hearing Materials/ Resources	Description and Applications
Press Briefings, Flyers, Circulars, Updates	Short 1-2 page timely summaries of the main tribunal/hearing message(s) and demands to be sent to the media, distributed immediately after the tribunal/hearing at press conferences and circulated (mainly via email) to a wider network of NGOs.
Lobby documents	Longer (3-5 page) reports of recommendations and necessary actions for distribution to relevant policy makers in the context of lobbying at the time of tribunal/hearing and in subsequent weeks/months as appropriate. Lobby documents should always begin with a one– page summary.
Information Packs, Manuals, and Modules	Collections of materials developed in the weeks/months after the tribunal/hearing for use in popular education and awareness raising activities.
Audiotapes	Unedited complete tapes can be made available as a resource to interested groups, journalists, radio producers, and researchers. Such tapes also provide the basis for written transcripts, which are vital in the production of more detailed publications. A more compact edited audiotape featuring highlights of the tribunal/hearing is a good idea for use in community or popular education activities or in classrooms.
Books, Pamphlets, and Reports	Full accounts of the tribunal/hearing proceedings that contain substantial excerpts or complete versions of the testimonies and other statements made at the event, as well as the recommendations for action and policy changes. These publications can also include commentary and analyses of the themes and issues presented. The production of books and pamphlets should be tied to a comprehensive distribution strategy, which will insure that all relevant audiences receive or can easily obtain a copy of the publication. If possible publications should be translated into one or more additional languages to maximize the audience. Such publications can also be posted on the internet.

Video	Video footage provides the basis for producing a professional training/ education or documentary video, or a multimedia web– based resource, as part of education and awareness raising activities, and more generally in widening and increasing tribunal/hearing audiences. Unedited video footage is also a useful tool for evaluating the tribunal/hearing from an organizational perspective.
Photographs	Use in all publications, in promotional and press/media materials, and the production of visually-oriented projects like exhibits, calendars, postcard series and so in the months and years following the tribunal/hearing.
Multimedia	Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and multimedia technologies are constantly developing and increasingly converging. This means there will be more options for how we use materials/resources on the Web. This dramatically enhances outreach efforts making the tribunal/hearing accessible to people worldwide. The most basic approach is to post all publications, reports and statements on a relevant website and encourage others to visit and link with the resources. (For these purposes, make sure that all publications you produce are available in Adobe Acrobat, as well as HTML, while will allow people to download the publication in the same format as it appears in print.) If the tribunal/hearing is videotaped live broadcasts of the entire event or a portion of the event can be posted and made available online. If the event is audio taped, sound bytes can be uploaded and made accessible through the web so that people can listen to portions of testimony online. It is also possible to post the transcripts of the tribunal/hearing, once they are available, online.

# APPENDIX I

## CENTER FOR WOMEN'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP SUMMARY OF TRIBUNALS AND HEARINGS

### **Global Campaign for Women's Human Rights: Building Human Rights Accountability to Women**

#### **I. 500 Years of Violations of Women's Human Rights in the Americas (1492-1992)**

*Place:* New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA, November 24, 1992

*Objectives:*

1. To emphasize the ways in which sexism, racism, and poverty, as well as discrimination in the judiciary and in the provision of social services, serve as major obstacles to securing the human rights of women.
2. To include survivors of domestic violence and incest, women organizing around racism, women who organize immigrants and refugees in the women's human rights dialogue.

*Focus:*

- Human Rights Violations in America
- Raise Awareness about Violations

*Publications:*

- Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women's Human Rights, 1994  
<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/demand.html>
- International Campaign for Women's Human Rights 1992-1993 Report, 1993  
<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/92-93report.html>

#### **2. The 1993 Hearing on Gender-Based Persecution and Human Rights Abuses**

*Place:* 777 UN Plaza, New York, New York, USA, February 19, 1993

*Objective:*

1. To have women testify about the gender-based persecution and human rights abuses inflicted upon them throughout the world.
2. To specify ways in which women have challenged their own local and national governments to more seriously address violations of women's human rights.

*Focus:*

- Militarism and Fundamentalism
- Lesbian Persecution

- Trafficking
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Immigrant and Refugee Procedures
- UN Personnel Policies

*Publications:*

- International Campaign for Women's Human Rights 1992-1993 Report, 1993  
<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/92-93report.html>
- Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women's Human Rights, 1994  
<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/demand.html>

### **3. Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights**

*Place:* United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, Austria, June 15, 1993

*Objectives:*

1. To make a strong statement protesting the failures of existing human rights laws and mechanisms to ensure women's human rights.
2. To have women's rights recognized as human rights by the United Nations and its member governments as well as by international organizations.

*Focus:*

- Human Rights Abuse in the Family
- War Crimes Against Women
- Violations of Bodily Integrity
- Socio-Economic Rights
- Political Persecution and Discrimination

*Publications:*

- Testimonies of the Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights, 1994  
<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/testimonies.html>
- Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women's Human Rights, 1994  
<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/demand.html>

### **4. The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights**

*Place:* NGO Forum of the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, Egypt, September 1994

*Objectives:*

1. To emphasize that women's health (including matters of reproduction, sexuality and environmental impact) is a fundamental human right which cannot be compromised by any of the actors that claim control over

women's bodies.

2. To demand recognition of women's right to health, and the indivisibility of civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights as well as the right to development.

*Focus:*

- Jeopardy to women's health from family, religious and cultural institutions
- Rights violations by the state and international financial institutions

*Publication:*

From Vienna to Beijing: The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights, 1995

<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/cairo.html>

## **5. The Copenhagen Hearing on Economic Justice and Women's Human Rights**

*Place:* United Nations World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen, Denmark, March 1995

*Objectives:*

1. To highlight U.S. government complicity in violations of socio-economic rights both in the US and internationally.
2. To challenge the world's governments to incorporate a holistic understanding of women's human rights into their economic and social policies.

*Focus:*

- Economic Adjustment and Marginalization
- Sexual Exploitation and Violence
- Trade Policy
- Economic Policy, Health and Environment

*Publication:*

From Vienna to Beijing: The Copenhagen Hearing on Economic Justice and Women's Human Rights, 1995

<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/copen.htm>

## **6. The Global Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights**

*Place:* NGO Forum of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Huairou, China, September 1, 1995

*Objectives:*

1. To document women's human rights violations and to foster a political climate in which such abuses would no longer be tolerated
2. To demonstrate the strength and creativity of the movement for women's human rights for concrete strategies and recommendations for achieving accountability

*Focus:*

- Violence Against Women - In Situations of Conflict, In the Family
- Economic Discrimination and Exploitation
- Violations of Health and Bodily Integrity
- Political Persecution

*Publication:*

Without Reservation: The Beijing Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights, 1996

<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/without.html>

**The 1998 Global Campaign for Women's Human Rights**

**Global Tribunal: Celebrate and Demand Women's Human Rights**

*Place:* On the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, New York, New York, USA, December 9, 1998

*Objectives:*

1. Highlighting achievements advancing women's human rights
2. Exposing the continuing impunity, lack of accountability and inadequacy of actions responding to violations of women's human rights

*Focus:*

- Violations of the Rights of Immigrant Women
- Legal Breakthroughs: U.S., Zimbabwe and South Africa
- Trafficking in Europe

**Women 2000: A Symposium on Future Directions for Human Rights**

*Place:* On the eve of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly - Beijing + 5 Review, New York, June, 2000

*Objective:*

To present specific examples of how women are using the tools available to them (as well as inventing new ones) to organize locally, regionally and globally to demand and defend their human rights

*Focus:*

- Current Challenges in Women's Human Rights
- Innovative Praxis
  - Violence Against Women: New Strategies for Confronting Discrimination and Abuse
  - Women's Economic Rights; Challenging the Structures of Injustice

*Publication:*

Holding on to the Promise: Women's Human Rights and the Beijing +5 Review, 2001

<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/holding.html>

## **Women at the Intersection of Racism and Other Oppressions - A Human Rights Hearing**

*Place:* NGO Forum of the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Other Oppressions, Durban, South Africa, August 31, 2001

*Objectives:*

1. To give voice and vision to a comprehensive women's human rights vision which recognizes that women's experiences differ from each other and from men because of the interlocking influences of discriminations based on gender, race, ethnicity, class, caste, culture, religion, sexuality, language, health status, physical abilities, marital status, age and other basic human characteristics.
2. To identify some of the courageous strategies being used by women's organizations to struggle against intersecting discriminations

*Focus:*

- Bodily Integrity and Sexuality
- Migration and Immigration
- War, Conflict and Genocide

*Publication:*

Women at the Intersection: Indivisible Rights, Identities, and Oppressions, 2002

<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/intersect.html>

**Additional Publications:**

- Los Derechos de Las Mujeres son Derechos Humanos: Crónica de Una Movilización Mundial, 2000  
<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/cronica.html>
- Les Voix des Femmes et « Les Droits de L'Homme », 2000  
<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/voix.html>

## APPENDIX 2

### SAMPLE TESTIMONIES

#### I. TESTIMONY GIVEN AT THE "GLOBAL TRIBUNAL/HEARING ON VIOLATIONS OF WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS" AT THE UNITED NATIONS WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, VIENNA, JUNE 1993

##### *Lin Lap-Chew reading for Grazyna*

My name is Grazyna. I am 30 years old and I come from Poland. I used to work in the ship-building industry, but since the so-called "revolution" there is no more work for me. The economic crisis has turned my life upside down. I am divorced, and I have two children.

In September 1991, I was working in a restaurant in Yugoslavia, and had just come to the end of my contract. Through some acquaintances, I met a man, John G. He asked me whether I was interested in going to work in a restaurant in Germany, where I would earn three times as much as in Yugoslavia for the same kind of work. I was interested because the situation in Yugoslavia was becoming more and more unstable. A few days later, he introduced me to another man, Robert, who said that he was the manager of a restaurant in Germany. It was agreed that I would work as kitchen help and that I would be paid a salary between DM1500 and DM1800 per month. A few days later, Robert came with two other men to fetch me. There was another woman with him who was also going to work in Germany. At the border with Germany, I had to give him my passport because he somehow convinced me that it was better if he was the one to hand it to the immigration officers. He never gave it back to me afterwards.

On the way, we stopped at a hotel somewhere in Germany. Robert and one of the men, Mario, stayed there with me, and the other man went with the other woman somewhere else. There, they told me that I had to work as a prostitute. I protested, but to no effect. When I kept on refusing, Mario raped me while Robert took photographs. He threatened to send the photographs to my mother if I continued to resist. I became very frightened after that. I was afraid that my mother, being a staunch Roman Catholic, would have a heart attack if she saw those photos. Then we drove on to Essen. There, I was sold to a third man, Josef. Later I discovered that Robert had received DM3000 from Josef for me. Josef brought me to the Netherlands. I did not see the other woman again.

In the Netherlands, I was forced to work as a prostitute in a "window," in a street full of "prostitute windows." They brought a big, dark man to me and said that he would watch me all the time as I worked, so I should not think that I could escape. They also said it was no use going to the police, because they were paying the police too. I had to earn at least 600 guilders per day. If I did not earn enough, I was beaten. They beat me on the head and kicked me in the belly. I still suffer pain from this mistreatment. They showed me guns and said they would not hesitate to use them if I did not cooperate. They would throw my body in the canal and no one would be able to identify me.

I was terrified. I was sometimes allowed to keep some money. Then, I sent the money to my mother and children in Poland, but did not dare tell them of my predicament. After I had been working a few weeks under close guard, there appeared to be a chance to escape. A customer seemed to like me. I asked him for help. After some hesitation, he finally helped me to escape and took me to his apartment. Two weeks later, a furious Josef appeared on the doorstep. The customer who helped me became afraid and let me go. From then on, I was guarded even more closely and was not allowed to go anywhere unaccompanied. I pretended submission, and worked and laughed in the hope that my captors would relax their guard and that I could avoid any more physical assaults. I was still determined to escape. Finally, it worked. In an unguarded moment, I fled without knowing where to go.

On a street, I tried to ask an old couple for help. But they didn't understand me. I spoke to another woman passerby but she too did not understand me. But at least she understood that I was Polish. As luck would have it, she had a Polish neighbor. The neighbor understood my story. The woman allowed me to sleep in her house that night. The next day, she brought me to a center for asylum-seekers near her house because I told her I was afraid to go home. There, the staff helped me to apply for asylum. I was interviewed by the contact officer for the Ministry of Justice. I told him how I had come to the Netherlands, how I was forced to work as a prostitute. I told him I was afraid to return to Poland because I feared that the traffickers might take revenge on me for running away, and also because of the compromising photos that Josef had made and would send to my mother. But the Ministry of Justice decided that I did not fulfill the criteria for recognition as a political refugee, and rejected my request for asylum. Luckily, my lawyer recognized that I was actually a victim of trafficking. He contacted the Foundation Against Trafficking in Women (STV). They explained the laws against trafficking in the Netherlands; they told me what my rights were as a victim of trafficking and that I could press charges against the traffickers. Since I had nothing more to lose, and I was terrified that Robert and Josef would still keep on looking for me. I decided to press criminal charges. STV

contacted the anti-vice police, but strangely to me, the police did not believe me. They thought I had made up the charge of trafficking after my asylum request had been rejected, so that I could stay in the Netherlands. They could not understand why I had not filed the trafficking charges in the first place. Again I was fortunate. In another city, the woman with whom I had been brought to Germany had also been brought to the Netherlands and had also filed charges against Josef and Robert. The police in that town had contacted STV for assistance for her. Finally, with these two charges, my case was taken seriously. This gave me some sense of security, and it also meant that I would be allowed to stay in the Netherlands until the case had been tried in court and all judicial procedures were ended. I was relieved because I felt safer in the Netherlands than in Poland. But my relief was short lived. On the basis of the two charges, Josef had actually been arrested, but through a procedural mistake he was released. Robert was never found. After some time, my case was dismissed for lack of evidence and I would have to leave the Netherlands. Meanwhile, my mother had informed that "some strange people" had visited her and were asking where I was. How could I go back, what could I do? Fear and desperation overcame me, and I broke down. STV and my lawyer are helping me to obtain a residence permit for the Netherlands on humanitarian grounds, but it will take months, maybe years for a decision. Meanwhile, I miss my children and family.

Lin Lap-Chew: Grazyna's experience is typical for most of the 400 women we have assisted over the 6 years we have been working. There are at least 5000 women who have been trafficked into the Netherlands - but nobody knows how many women have been victimized in this way in the whole of Europe, in America, all over the world. Thank you for listening to Grazyna.

## **2. TESTIMONY GIVEN AT THE "GLOBAL TRIBUNAL/HEARING ON VIOLATIONS OF WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS" AT THE UNITED NATIONS WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, VIENNA, JUNE 1993**

### ***Ayesha Arshad***

I am Ayesha Arshad, member of the National Council of the Bangladesh Trade Union Centre, and General Secretary of the Garments Federation of Bangladesh. I would like all my sisters and brothers participating in this human rights conference to accept warm greetings from myself and from my country.

I joined Aristocrat Garments, Dhaka, in 1980 as a training operator. About 50 men and 300 other women were also employed there. The men earned a monthly wage of Taka 1200 (US\$30), while women doing exactly the same

work earned 2/3 of the men's wage, a sum of Taka 800 (US\$20). Management was more repressive toward women; men were given leave and wage raises if they demanded them, but any woman who raised her voice faced the threat, too often carried into action, of dismissal. Women are so afraid of losing our jobs and face so many social obstacles that we often silence ourselves from protesting, and tolerate extreme exploitation. Another strong inhibiting factor against women's organizing to demand their rights is that if women lose their jobs, they face increased tension in their homes and may even be subjected to family violence. Women who are struggling for their economic survival continue to face extreme repression and violence in society, in the workplace, and in the home. Being women is our crime.

I want to share a personal experience with you. This happened a few days after I started working. Another woman worker, in the same job as me, was earning a quarter of my wages, Taka 150 (US\$4). There was no way of protesting this kind of injustice. We just had to tolerate it and continue, or we risked losing our jobs.

Suddenly, one morning, this woman fell unconscious on the floor. The doctor could not find anything wrong with her. Later, when she regained consciousness, we heard the reason for her falling ill. Her husband was dead and she had a baby son. She had no source of financial support. Her house was almost three miles from the factory, and every day she had to walk all the way, work from 8 am to 8 pm, and then walk back again. On many occasions, she couldn't afford to eat all day and had to spend whatever money she had to buy food and milk for her son. In the last six months, she had sold her blood on three occasions in order to buy milk for him. This is why she fainted.

Other women arranged to take her home, and gave donations for her treatment. We also raised the issue with the management and tried to persuade them to raise her wages. They refused to listen to us, because we were only workers. We were unorganized and we had no bargaining power. Although this woman had been working in the same factory for over a year, she had not received any increase in her wages. Month after month, the management exploited her weakness to deny her rights. Men protest, but women face greater difficulties in protesting: social and cultural perceptions, and restrictions on our mobility limit our employment possibilities.

Soon after this incident, it was May 1, International Solidarity Day for all workers and a national holiday. Management told the women workers that we would lose our jobs unless we worked on May Day. Men workers were given a holiday. Women were not given a holiday. We were told that women do not

need to take part in meetings and processions, and so we didn't need a holiday. But they should understand that we are also workers. We are never given any concessions as women on the factory floor. The Government never took any action against those who kept factories open, illegally violating worker's rights. We know of many violations of this type, but no employers have ever been prosecuted and they continue to violate our rights, year after year.

I couldn't square this with my conscience, and felt that I couldn't tolerate this kind of violation of our rights. Some women workers met with the senior operators to inform them that we refused to work on May Day. But the management refused to accept our demand. I then raised the case of the woman who fell unconscious and told them that they never acknowledged our problems, they totally subordinated our interests, and treated us like animals. The day after we refused to work, we were blocked from entering the factory. But united pressure from the workers ensured that we could enter.

But again two days later, when we were working inside, I suddenly felt suffocated, and in front of my eyes, ten to fifteen women slipped unconscious to the floor from their machines. I rushed to the gate, but found it locked. Several of us kept screaming for the gate to be opened, but no one came. We lay the unconscious women below the fan. I opened the windows and called for help and for the police. Some time later, the gate was opened. I kept shouting for people to call ambulances, or the women will die. We carried the women down and took them to the emergency ward. The doctor's report said they had been affected by some kind of gas. Management insisted we had fainted due to the heat. Our protest began.

Stories appeared in the daily newspaper. The main issue around which our struggle was held was 'Repression of Workers and the May Day Incident.' On that issue, I called all workers, women and men, together to discuss what action could be taken to resolve the dispute. We marched to the Press Club and we met trade union leaders. With their assistance, we decided to form a trade union. With a lot of difficulties, we collected the necessary forms and deposited them with the Labour Directorate. The management began a policy of repression against all the workers and particularly targeted me. They used both the police and mastans (thugs) to harass us. Everyone on my committee had their employment terminated. When we were told of the termination, the management's mastans were present. I left in fear of my life. After this, another nine workers were dismissed.

The Joint Labour Directorate informed us that they had been threatened that if they registered us as a trade union, they would all lose their jobs. They ad-

vised us to seek legal protection.

I sought legal help, and after nine months the court gave judgment recognizing us as a trade union. We formed a new committee and I worked with them on organizing the union.

The leaders of the Trade Union Centre appointed me as a member of the National Committee. I joined Singa-Bangla Garments. I formed another union in 1983 and was elected as the President of the Union. I also helped in the formation of seven unions in neighboring factories, with the help of trade union leaders and organizers.

In Bangladesh, as in other countries of the Third World, women and women workers in particular, suffer inhuman exploitation. The economic exploitation of their labor and patriarchal oppression results in severe violations of women's human rights. Many women workers are forced to work until ten pm daily. There is no provision for rest, for transport to the workplace, for medical assistance, or for childcare. Women are rarely able to obtain their legal entitlement to maternity benefits. We are also denied access to legal protection of our rights.

The situation of women working in rural areas is even more desperate. Women are involved in a range of occupations, including construction, but in every area they are denied fair wages. In all these cases, their human rights are being violated. The IMF and the World Bank dictate our official policies.

Discrimination between women and men in the workplace is pervasive. Women are the victims of inhuman behavior and harassment.

Child workers are also being dismissed in the thousands as a result of the recent Harkins Bill to be passed in the United States. They are being thrown out of work in the name of ending child labor. But no alternatives have been provided for them, and they are left abandoned in the streets.

I work at the grassroots level. When I meet these children, I discuss their problems. I feel like a criminal for being unable to do anything for them. We observe the laws and denounce child labor as illegal, but the law must serve the people-people cannot be forced only to serve the law. These children want to develop as human beings. They have a right to survival and to full development with human dignity. But has anyone thought of how this will be possible? We need to consider this urgently. They are our future generation. The only way to ensure their human rights is to ensure their survival. Every person with a con-

science has a duty to ensure their survival. I appeal to you on behalf of all workers and on behalf of my country to consider the economic situation before enacting laws. Otherwise, not only will human rights not be protected, but human rights violations will occur. Children will be forced into illegal and hazardous activities.

It is not only children, but also women who are being forced by economic desperation to migrate overseas in search of work. We all know of their problems. What are we able to do for them? We need to first consider that the women and children of our country are similarly disadvantaged, in that both are kept in ignorance of their rights and are denied access to justice. We should view them not as women and children, but as human beings suffering violations of their rights.

It is impossible for me to communicate the twelve years of my life as a worker to you within a space of ten minutes. There is no end to the discussion of the problems and difficulties faced by workers. I organize workers, and I am a worker myself. We will struggle and fight for our rights whenever we have to. But we also need your cooperation. One day we will be successful. I end with my thanks to you all.

**From:**

***Testimonies of the Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights, Compiled by Niamh Reilly, Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1994.***

**3. TESTIMONY GIVEN AT THE NGO FORUM OF THE 1994 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN CAIRO, EGYPT**

***Loretta Ross***

I actually got introduced as a political activist, and I have about 20 years as a political activist. But the purpose of my talk today is to talk about why I became a political activist. I represent many women of color in the United States whose stories are invisible. The abuses that women of color face in the United States are largely unknown. A lot of people don't know that they match the abuses that women face in developing countries.

My own story started when I was 11 years old. I was raped when I was 11 years old. I was a child to whom too many adults had access. I was a victim of child sexual abuse. This abuse went on so that by the time I was 14 years old I was pregnant. I ended up having that baby at 15, and the abuse continued, so

that by 16 I was pregnant again. At 16, I decided that I didn't want to be a mother of two children so I decided to have an abortion. But I couldn't get permission from my parents to have an abortion, so I had to forge my mother's signature. It took so long for me to go through the process of both saving the money and making the decision to forge the signature that I had a very late term abortion. I was well over six months pregnant by the time I had the abortion.

After I had that abortion, I decided that I didn't want to even begin to possibly risk getting pregnant again. And so I sought a birth control method that would not fail me as other methods had. So, at age 21, a few years later, I decided to accept the Dalkon Shield, an IUD that is no longer on the market. But if you all remember, the Dalkon Shield was a device that they made free and available to all poor women who asked for it; and I fit all of those criteria. I was a woman receiving public assistance, who already had a child, who didn't want to have more children; so, of course, I was able to get a Dalkon Shield inserted into me totally for free.

Two years later, I started developing major problems. I began to suffer from all types of infections that I kept going to the doctor for. They kept telling me that I had some form of venereal disease, some kind of STD. They kept treating me for all of these diseases for well over six months that it later turned out I didn't have. What I had was a defective Dalkon Shield.

One night I almost passed out while I was at home. I ended up calling a taxi to go to the hospital. If you live in a poor neighborhood you get to the hospital quicker if you call a taxi than if you call an ambulance. When I got to the hospital I was barely conscious. I remember them putting me on a stretcher. Within a half an hour they were wheeling me into surgery. On my way to surgery they put a piece of paper in my hand that I signed. When I woke up eight hours later I had been sterilized. My entire reproductive organs had been removed. I was 23 years old at the time.

What had happened medically was that my fallopian tubes had ruptured as a result of the Dalkon Shield, so my entire reproductive career lasted from age 14 to age 23. They didn't tell me why. They couldn't tell me why I had been sterilized. All they could tell me was that I was that unlucky woman that they didn't catch in time. But they never explained to me why through six months of treatment, it never occurred to the head of the OB/GYN facility at a major hospital to remove my Dalkon Shield. Even when I was admitted to the hospital in a coma, I still had the Dalkon Shield in me. They never removed that until it was part of the surgery.

This is actually a story about victory though; even though up until that time I had been a victim. Fortunately, I was so angry at what had happened to me that I immediately found a lawyer, and I became the first black woman to sue the maker of the Dalkon Shield, A.H. Robbins. It turns out that they knew more than five years before mine was inserted that it was unsafe, yet they were still making it freely available to women, like me, who got their health care through public family planning clinics. It also turned out that the hospital I was treated at knew that the Dalkon Shield was unsafe. But because it was a teaching hospital, they wanted their students to see what would happen to a Dalkon Shield patient who did not have it removed for six months. So I sued them, too.

I actually made a commitment in that moment that I would make sure that all the things that had happened to me would never ever, ever happen to another black woman in America without somebody like me being there to fight for her. At the time these things were happening to me, my parents didn't understand, my community didn't understand, and the woman's movement such as it was at the time didn't understand. They didn't understand that we who were black, who were poor, who were women of color, had a special kind of human rights abuse that America saved just for us, and that we had to be as vigilant in fighting to protect our lives as anything because the rest of the world simply did not care. This doctor told me that what happened to me was a mistake, but as I pursue the fight to get rid of his medical license, I'm going to convince somebody that licensing that man was the real mistake.

**From:**

***Vienna to Beijing: The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights, Compiled by Malika Dutt, Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1995.***

#### **4. TESTIMONY GIVEN AT WOMEN 2000: A SYMPOSIUM ON FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEW YORK**

***Elizabeth Khaxas***

Namibia is a country in Southern Africa which gained independence in 1990. Namibia has a democratic constitution based on the principles of equality, human rights and freedom. In fact, the first sentence of the preamble states that recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is indispensable for freedom, justice and peace. However, this does not mean that the human rights of all Namibians are respected in practice. In fact, many citizens still do not know that they have hu-

man rights and what these rights are. Women, in particular, need information and education on their human rights and need to acquire the skills to claim these rights.

However, while our government claims to acknowledge and respect the human rights of all women in general, lesbian women in Namibia are regularly told by our government leaders that they have no human rights at all. The attacks against lesbian and gay people in Namibia began in 1995, shortly after the outburst by Robert Mugabe, President of Zimbabwe, who stated that homosexuals were worse than pigs and dogs. This discourse was taken up in Namibia by senior government leaders, who made statements such as, "Homosexuality is like cancer or AIDS and everything should be done to stop its spread in Namibia," and, "Homosexuality is an unnatural behavior, a behavior disorder which is alien to African culture." Even the president of Namibia publicly condemned homosexuality as "exploiting our democracy" and called for it to be uprooted from Namibian society.

This hate speech creates an atmosphere of fear, considering that sodomy between men is still illegal in Namibia, while the same sexual practice is not criminalized between a man and a woman. We do not yet have equality for all members of the human family, not even in the law books. In fact, in 1998 the Minister of Home Affairs stated in Parliament that his ministry was preparing legislation to ban homosexuality altogether.

Sister Namibia was the first organization in our country that became active in defending the human rights of lesbian and gay people, and we would like to share our experiences with you today. We are an autonomous non-governmental women's organization, which was founded in 1989 on the eve of independence with the following aims: To increase awareness among women, men and young people of the ways in which political, social, cultural, legal and economic systems of power control girls and women; and to oppose and challenge racism, sexism, homophobia and other discourses and practices that divide and oppress people. We utilize our bimonthly magazine, *Sister Namibia*, to promote the human rights of all women, including lesbian women. We also run a resource center that collects materials on women and gender issues. Furthermore, we conduct research and run training programs on women's leadership, human rights and HIV/AIDS.

### **The Namibian Women's Manifesto**

Last year, Sister was given the mandate to compile a document called The Namibian Women's Manifesto, in collaboration with women and some men from women's and human rights NGOs, women in Parliament and all levels of gov-

ernment, political parties and individual women activists. We agreed to compile the Women's Manifesto in order to unite women's voices in holding government accountable to the implementation of the national gender policy and the many international conventions on gender and human rights it has signed since independence. The Namibian Women's Manifesto aims to mobilize women to participate in elections as candidates and as voters, and to place women's issues on the national agenda. It covers women's human rights in areas such as democracy, education, health and reproductive rights, the economy, the environment and the media.

Women from all major political parties participated actively in the drafting of the Women's Manifesto. However, at the time of going to print, the ruling party, SWAPO, withdrew its support because the document made references to the human rights of lesbian women. Allow me to read you the relevant two sentences from the twenty-five-page document that has been used by the ruling party to undermine the women's united call for the human rights of all women. I quote:

*The human rights of all women, as guaranteed in the Namibian Constitution, need to be ensured, including the rights of the girl child, women living under customary law, women in marginalized ethnic groups, sex workers, disabled women, old women and lesbian women.*

and:

*We advocate that political parties state their policies on human rights, including violence against women and children, the rights of gay and lesbian people and customary practices that are harmful to women and children.*

### **Lesbian and Gay People's Human Rights Not Recognized**

The SWAPO Party Women's Council called a press conference just before the launching of the Women's Manifesto stating that it was confusing the Namibian women because the rights of lesbian women were, in their view, not a gender issue. This stand was already taken by our government leaders in the preparations for the World Conference on Women in Beijing, where the Namibian delegation was instrumental in keeping references to sexual orientation out of the Platform for Action. In contrast to this narrow definition of gender, we believe that issues of sexuality and sexual orientation are central to an understanding of gender. A further attack on the Women's Manifesto came from the Director General of the Department of Women's Affairs, who heads the newly established Ministry for Women's Affairs and Child Welfare. At a meeting of elected women from different political parties, she stated:

*The so-called Women's Manifesto being circulated has no other message than asking women in Namibia to promote homosexuality. The same document calls for comprehensive sexuality education to be introduced into our schools, which is nothing more than a call for our children to be taught how to become gays and lesbians.*

However, the call for comprehensive sexuality education in the Manifesto was made with reference to the high rate of AIDS infection in Namibia, which is the third highest in the world. We have regions in Namibia in which 50 percent of the people are already infected with the virus and the majority are girls and women. Are the Namibian people destined to die out for lack of comprehensive sexuality education because of the homophobia of our Minister of Women's Affairs and other top politicians?

Not if Sister Namibia can help it.

### **An Organizing and Lobbying Tool**

In spite of the withdrawal of support for the Manifesto by the ruling party and the Department of Women's Affairs, many women in the thirteen regions of Namibia rallied around the Manifesto and used it as a tool to mobilize women on human rights issues. In the regional workshops, the issue of human rights of gay and lesbian people came up time and again and this led us to discuss the history of the development of the concept of human rights.

We explained that in 1948 it was mainly white middle-class men from Western countries sitting at the table to draft the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This meant that violations of women's human rights through domestic abuse and rape, for example, were not part of the agenda. However, over the years more and more marginalized groups have joined the table to call for their rights as human beings—for example, ethnic minorities and indigenous people, differently-abled people, children, women, lesbian and gay people. Thus, the concept of human rights is expanding as our knowledge and understanding of specific forms of human rights violations grows.

The rural women attending our workshops in all regions of Namibia were pleased to learn that they had human rights not granted to them by the government of the day, but by virtue of being human. They said that this knowledge would empower them to stand up more strongly against domestic violence and harmful cultural practices and to assert their own dignity. By the same token, an overwhelming majority did not hesitate in embracing the human rights of lesbian women and having this included in "their" Manifesto. Without prompting, they came up with arguments against the ruling party on this issue. They made statements such as:

*The Minister did not ask us for our views on this issue. Lesbian women are our mothers, sisters, and daughters. We cannot just throw them out. They are taxpayers like everyone else, and have the same rights as everyone else.*

They even included these arguments in humorous role-plays, practicing how to bring the Women's Manifesto to their communities and sat up half the night debating these issues. Thus, The Namibian Women's Manifesto has become a lobbying tool for all women's human rights, including the rights of lesbian women, far beyond the expectations of its authors. It has also contributed to breaking the silence on issues of women's sexuality, which is so crucial for the prevention of unwanted pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. The Women's Manifesto Network is currently fundraising for and starting new projects in the areas of women's leadership, women's human rights, and women and HIV/AIDS.

### **Lesbians Denied Full Human Rights**

When we campaign for the human rights of lesbian women, what do we mean? Take my case as an example: I have lived with my partner for ten years and we are raising our son together. Yet, we have no legal rights to live together as a family because we are two women and my partner is not a Namibian citizen. Her application for permanent residence has been rejected twice by the Ministry of Home Affairs without reasons given. Fortunately, a public interest law firm has taken up our case as a human rights issue, and we won a victory in June last year when the High Court of Namibia ordered the Ministry of Home Affairs to grant my partner permanent residence within thirty days.

The court recognized our relationship as a universal partnership, just like any heterosexual couple living together in community of property, but without a marriage license. However, the government has appealed against this decision and the case will be heard by the Supreme Court in October 2000. In the meantime, the Ministry of Home Affairs has not even renewed my partner's work permit, thus putting our life together on tenuous hold. Will we have to seek political refuge in South Africa, our southern neighbor, which has enshrined the human rights of lesbian and gay people in its 1994 constitution and has recently ordered the Ministry of Home Affairs to grant permanent residence to foreign partners of lesbian and gay citizens? This will be our last resort as we plan to stay put and continue our struggle for our rights as lesbian women in Namibia, including the rights to adoption, joint medical aid and pension fund, and the many other rights and benefits accorded to heterosexual couples. We are here to speak out in support of all lesbian women denied their human rights the world over, and we speak with the voices of many urban and rural women in Namibia who have understood that human rights are indivisible.

From:

*Holding on to the Promise: Women's Human Rights and the Beijing +5 Review*, Edited by Cynthia Meillón in collaboration with Charlotte Bunch, Center for Women's Global Leadership, 2001.

**5. TESTIMONY GIVEN AT THE UN WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCES HELD IN SOUTH AFRICA IN 2001 DURING THE PROCEEDINGS OF "WOMEN AT THE INTERSECTION OF RACISM AND OTHER OPPRESSIONS: A HUMAN RIGHTS HEARING," ORGANIZED BY THE CENTER AS A PART OF THE NGO PARALLEL ACTIVITIES DURING THE CONFERENCE.**

***Maria Toj Mendoza***

My name is Maria and I come from Kiché in the western part of Guatemala. I am forty-nine years old and during my life I have lived many painful experiences. Today I am going to share with you not only some of my painful experiences, but also the values of the Mayan people. These values and principals helped our grandfathers and our grandmothers. They have helped me, and they will continue to help the Mayan people.

Guatemala has had a history of colonization and exploitation since the time of the Spanish invasion. But today we have only a short amount of time, so I am going to focus on the years of my own life. I will talk about the 1970s and the '80s and '90s, up till today. During the war that took place in the '70s and '80s, which was supported and financed by the United States, the Mayan people experienced genocide. In the past, the Maya were great scientists. They studied astronomy. They were great healers who knew about natural medicine. They lived without fear of the threat of destruction of our Mother Earth. But my own reality has not been that way. My reality was filled with the threat of destruction. It was full of terror and torture, kidnappings and bombings.

The war left more than 40,000 widows, thousands and thousands of disappeared people, over one million internally displaced people, over 300,000 refugees, and, and over 150,000 dead. They burnt our forests, destroyed thousands and thousands of homes. They burned our corn, and for us corn is sacred. They burned our crops. They burned our Mother Earth. And those of us who survived were psychologically; physically, and spiritually affected. In those years, we never knew when or where we were going to be attacked, nor where the bombs would come from. From the sky, from the earth. By day. By night.

We lived in constant terror. The nightmares of that terror have remained with us.

I am going to tell you about the cases of two women. The first is a young woman of seventeen, named Micaela, from the municipality of Chiché. On November 2, 1982, the army, accompanied by some military commissioners - one of whom was Cándido Noriega - surrounded the community and captured five people, including Micaela. The soldiers tortured and raped Micaela in front of the community. After raping her, they urinated and defecated on the floor. Then they mixed their filth with ashes and forced her to eat it.

The second case concerns a woman named Juana. In the same municipality, in the village of Tuluché, on a day in December 1982, the army and the judicial police entered the community. After several people had been captured, the Women and children took a few of their possessions and tried to escape. They hid down by the river, but the soldiers saw some of them. They fired at them and several were wounded. Juana, who was the mother of three children, was captured. They shot her two-month-old baby and then they raped her in front of her two other children, who were two and five years old. Then they killed her.

What happened to me took place in 1982, when we were attacked by the army. I was in Joyabaj, in Kiché province. When they saw us from a distance, they began to fire grenades with shrapnel at us. When one of them exploded, the left side of my body was hit. My ear was affected. I fainted and when I regained consciousness, I was covered with blood and a lot of matter was coming out of my ear.

My whole family was separated by the war. I didn't see two of my sons for seven years. Can you imagine what it would be like not to see your children, not to know how they are, not to see them grow up, not to be able to give them a mother's love and affection? I had to separate from my husband. I was alone in my community. The women of the community helped me when they found me abandoned. It is thanks to them that I had the strength to recuperate from those difficult moments. Although I did not die, I did not completely recover. I remained deaf in one ear. And more than anything else, I remained traumatized.

The military accused the people of those communities of being members of the guerrilla. They said that we were all guerrillas just because we were indigenous. The military accused the people of those communities of being members of the guerrilla. They said that we were all guerrillas just because we were indigenous.

people, because we were women, because we wanted to defend ourselves.

These are just three examples of many thousands of cases. The report of the of the Commission for Historical Clarification, Tz'inil Na 'Tab'al, recognized that there was genocide and ethnocide, but the government does not recognize it, because to recognize it would mean that there would have to be restitution, and they don't want to do it.

In 1996, the government of Guatemala, the *Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* (URNG), and the army signed the Peace Accords. Supposedly, the Accords would ensure that there would be peace. They were supposed to ensure that there would be respect for our collective rights, for our culture, for our right to health care and education, for our land and our territory. But so far, there have been only words and promises. They say that they are willing to do it, but in practice, we have not seen concrete results. All we hear are fancy speeches.

Even after all that has happened, I still have hope. And when people ask me how it is possible to have hope, I answer that I don't feel alone. There are women who have helped me very much through their example. They are the Mayan women of Guatemala and the women of civil society. But they are also you. They are the South African women who have given us an example of struggle and of hope. They are the Palestinian women, the women of Nicaragua and of Vietnam. And they are the indigenous women, like the Samis, the Kunas, the Miskitas, and all the women of Asia, of the Americas, of Europe and of Africa that inspire me and fill me with hope to be able to struggle to achieve a truly dignified and human future with real diversity and with all of our rights assured for ourselves, for our daughters and sons, and for our grand- daughters and grandsons.

WOMEN UNITED WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED!

**From:**

***Women at the Intersection: Indivisible Rights, Identities, and Oppressions*, Edited by Rita Raj in collaboration with Charlotte Bunch and elmira Nazombe, Center for Women's Global Leadership, 2002.**

## APPENDIX 3

### REPORT OF THE GLOBAL TRIBUNAL/HEARING ON VIOLATIONS OF WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

Submitted to the World Conference on Human Rights,  
Vienna, June 14-15, 1993

Delivered by: **Charlotte Bunch (USA) Director,**  
**Center for Women's Global Leadership**  
**And**  
**Florence Butegwa (Uganda) Coordinator**  
**Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF)**

On Tuesday, over 1,000 people attended a day long Global Tribunal/Hearing on Violations of Women's Human Rights. We heard moving testimony by 33 women from all regions of the world about abuses they have suffered. These accounts demonstrated dramatically that the United Nations and governments have failed to promote and protect women's human rights.

Women testified to specific abuses in five basic areas:

- Human Rights Abuses in the Family
- War Crimes Against Women
- Violations of Women's Bodily Integrity
- Violations of Women's Socio-Economic Rights
- Political Persecution and Discrimination

This Tribunal/Hearing was the culmination of an international campaign by over 900 women's organizations around the world seeking to bring women's human rights issues onto the agenda of this conference. As I speak, women are delivering the signed petitions that started this campaign. This petition has been circulated in 124 countries and translated into 21 languages. It has been signed by almost half a million people. The petition reads:

*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights protects everyone "without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language...or other status" (art.2). Furthermore, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person (art.3) and "no one shall be subject to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment" (art.5. Therefore, we, the undersigned call upon the 1993 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights to comprehensively address women's rights at every level of its proceedings. We demand that gender violence, a universal phenome-*

*non which takes many forms across culture, race and class, be recognized as a violation of human rights requiring immediate action.*

In presenting these petitions and reporting on this Tribunal/Hearing, we ask this body to consider, “Why was such a Tribunal/Hearing necessary” Why has this area of massive violation of women remained invisible for so long? And what will the world community do to redress this abuse in the future?”

Abuses of women have too long been dismissed as private, family, cultural, or religious matters. Today we demand that they be seen for what they are: fundamental violations of the “right to life, liberty and security of person,” as guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Violations of woman’s rights not only rob us of our own human dignity and freedom, but also cause physical, mental and psychological damage. Millions of women die from these abuses every year.

The Global Campaign for Women’s Human Rights, a coalition of women’s groups from around the world, organized this one-day Tribunal/Hearing to bring to you and to the listening world these moving stories of women whose lives have been violated. In doing this, woman are tearing down the wall of silence that has prevented the world from recognizing the abuses women face.

We hope this concrete evidence of abuse will galvanize all of you to take decisive action to end such violations.

The coalition would like to present here the conclusions reached by our panel of distinguished judges. They are:

- **Gertrude Mongella**, Secretary-General of the UN 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women;
- **Ed Broadbent**, President of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development in Montraeal;
- **Justice P.N. Bhagwati**, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India;
- **Elizabeth Odio**, Minister for Justice in Costa Rica and member of the UN Committee Against Torture.

We submit the recommendations of these judges to you for your urgent action. We hope you will be moved to assume responsibility for defending women’s human rights in the 21<sup>st</sup> century so that the promise of universal human rights will be realized. This is not an appeal on behalf of a special interest group, but rather, a demand to restore the birthright of half of humanity.

In response to the testimony given at the Tribunal/Hearing, a distinguished panel of judges issued the following statement:

*We have heard with anguish and profound regret the first-hand testimony of 33 courageous women from all parts of the world. They have borne personal witness before the Global Tribunal/Hearing on Violations of Human Rights to prove beyond any doubt that violations of women's human rights continue to be cruel and pervasive on a world scale.*

*These violations remain both unremedied and unrecognized as discriminatory or as an affront to women's human dignity. This widespread failure to recognize, honor, and protect women's human rights poses a challenge to the credibility and justice of international human rights law. We note with dismay that international human rights law has not been applied effectively against injustices women experience solely because of their gender.*

*We hereby affirm the principle of universality that protects all of humanity, including women. Universal human rights standards are rooted in all cultures, religions and traditions, but those cultural, religious and traditional practices that undermine universality and prove harmful to women cannot be tolerated.*

The judges then issued the following recommendations:

We call upon this World Conference on Human Rights, the United Nations and member states to establish mechanisms to prevent, investigate and provide redress for violations of women's rights. Here are the specific recommendations:

1. The establishment of an International Criminal Court for Women to protect and enforce women's human rights, including the rights to freedom from sexual abuse, mass rape and forced pregnancy in armed conflict;
2. The strengthening and enforcement of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Specifically by:
  - Universal ratification;
  - Withdrawal of all reservations made upon ratification which perpetuate women's subordination
  - Effective implementation, combined with elimination of cultural, religious and traditional stereotypes and practices which impede implementation;
3. The integration of gender perspectives in all human rights committees estab-

lished under human rights treaties to ensure application of all human rights treaties to all forms of subordination of women;

4. Expansion of the work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies for preventing and redressing all violations of women's rights. We recognize that these cruel and pervasive violations of women's rights retard the progress and development of society and can be prevented by treating women fairly and justly;

5. Recognition that many of these violations take place in the private sphere of the family, and that domestic violence is a violation of human rights. We recommend that the 1994 Year of the Family recognize all forms of supportive relationships that exist within and outside institutionalized family arrangements;

6. Adoption by the General Assembly of the Draft Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women; and

7. Establishment of a Special Rapporteur with a broad mandate to investigate violations of women's human rights.

Further, we call upon the non-governmental organizations and the world media to investigate and report all violations of women's human rights, and to help empower women through training to expose denials of justice by individuals and by all organs of the state.

We would like to close by underscoring the cruel and pervasive nature of the violations inflicted upon women. We congratulate the women who testified before us for their courage in bearing witness, and for their determination to give visibility to these violations that occur continuously against the rights of millions of women around the world.

The courage of these women will inspire many other women to speak out and to demand their human rights, and will encourage others to work for vindication. The voices of these women have broken the silence. Their appeal to the world must be heard. It must be recognized, investigated and sanctioned, and the violations of their human rights must be redressed.

## APPENDIX 4

### **SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE FROM THE “TRIBUNAL/HEARING TO CELEBRATE AND DEMAND WOMEN’S HUMAN RIGHTS,” DECEMBER 9, 1998.**

[Letterhead]

#### **Press Release:**

Contact: [insert contact person's name]  
[insert contact person's phone number]

Global Tribunal/Hearing Demands Women's Human Rights

Speakers spotlight women's rights victories and violations.

	Contact Name	Contact phone #	Contact phone # on the day of the event
Space Coordinator			
Language/ Sign Interpretation			
Translation Equipment			
Technical Equipment (audio-visual)			
Caterers			

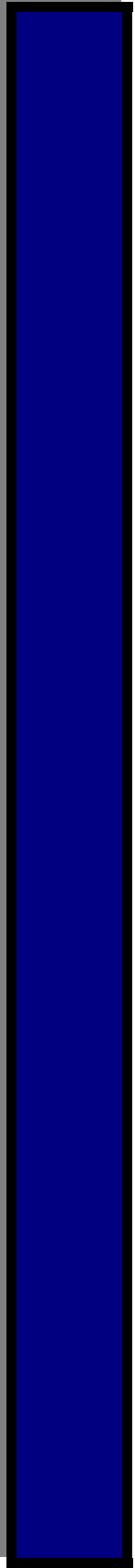
New York, NY- San Francisco Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr. joined international women's human rights advocates to demand far greater attention from governments and the United Nations to issues such as forced prostitution, gender apartheid and domestic violence. Zarghuna Waziri, a teacher from Afghanistan spoke about her own experience with the systematic abuse of women in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan today. Under Taliban rule, women are not allowed to work outside of the home except in a very few, limited circumstances. Women cannot attend universities and girls over eight are banned from going to school.

"Fifty years after governments of the world proclaimed the fundamental principles of all human rights for all, women throughout the world remain woefully unprotected. The failure of governments to respect and protect, promote and fulfill women's human rights undermines the principles upon which all human rights are based," said Charlotte Bunch, Executive Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership that organized the event.

Also at the Tribunal/Hearing, Justyna and Paulina H. told of their abduction from Poland to Germany, where they were forced into prostitution and subsequent deportation. Many women are trafficked from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus to brothels in the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, the United States and Israel. Polish women are most often taken to European states and sometimes to Israel.

Anbereen Hasan from Sakhi for South Asian Women in New York City addressed domestic violence among immigrant women in the United States. Domestic Violence is the leading cause of injury to women between ages 15 and 44 in the United States - more than car accidents, assaults, and rapes combined. Women of all cultures, races, occupations, income levels, and ages are battered - by husbands, boyfriends, lovers and partners. Isolated in this country without command of the language, access to the legal system and social services, battered immigrant women face particular difficulties.

Alda Facio from the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice in the International Criminal Court, described how an international group of women's human rights activists facilitated the inclusion of a gender perspective throughout the International Criminal Court treaty. In many instances, rampant sexual violence during armed conflict has been ignored or trivialized. As a direct result of the work of the Women's Caucus, the Rome treaty has expanded the definitions of war crimes and crimes against humanity to include rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization and other forms of sexual violence.



Other speakers include Lydia Zigomo Nyatsanza of Zimbabwe, discussing women's property rights; Maria Gerardina Lopez from Costa Rica who spoke about the reproductive health of women workers; and Palesa Beverly Ditsie from South Africa, who told of the guarantee of sexual rights in the new South African constitution.

This event was organized as part of the Center for Women's Global Leadership's 1998 Global Campaign for Women's Rights, in observance of the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Tribunal/Hearing was followed by a multi-media vigil in Ralph Bunche Park at East 43rd Street and 1st Avenue.

## APPENDIX 5

### WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS TRIBUNAL/HEARING SITE PLANNING TASK LIST

**Event:**

**Location:**

**Date:**

**Time:**

#### **Contact Information for Key Individuals Set-Up Details**

##### Seating Arrangements

##### Total number of seats

- audience seating
- set-up style (classroom, theater, etc.)
- reserved seating for:
  - media
  - tribunal/hearing participants (if seated in audience) and support persons
  - collaborating organizations
  - advisory committee members
  - other key partner organizations
- stage
- welcome area
- technical and translation needs
- information display area
- catering/ refreshment area

##### Tables (+ tablecloths)

##### Total # of tables needed

- stage
- welcome area
- media information

- information display area
- mechanical and translation needs
- food/ refreshments

#### Audio/ Visual/ Translation Services

- # of microphones for the stage and set-up
- # of microphones in the audience and set-up
- screen and projector
- materials – tapes, slides, etc. – to be displayed
- availability of audio taping equipment
- videotaping needs, if applicable
- technical set-up needs (as instructed by coordinators)

#### Media

- set-up and technical needs as indicated
- space in welcome area for sign-in and distribution of press packets
- interview room set-up

#### Stage/ Platform

- podium
- microphone(s)
- lighting
- appropriate # of tables and chairs
- banners
- posters
- flowers
- name placards for speakers
- water for speakers

#### Catering

- refreshments (as decided by coordinating group)
- supplies provided by caterer
- supplies which you need to bring
- trash cans

#### Display Area

- organizational information
- information provided by:
  - tribunal/hearing participants
  - collaborating organizations
  - vendors



### Welcome Area

- appropriate # of tables and chairs
- sign-in sheets and pens
- programs and other organizational materials
- promotional items produced for the event (posters, buttons, t-shirts, etc.)

### Miscellaneous

## APPENDIX 6

### CONFIDENTIAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN INFORMATION FORM

#### **INFORMER:**

**Name of person/organization:**

**Address:**

**Fax/Tel/e-mail:**

#### **VICTIM(S):**

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Date of Birth:**

**Nationality:**

**Sex: female**

**Occupation:**

**Ethnic background (if relevant):**

**Marital Status:**

#### **THE INCIDENT**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Location/country:**

**Number of assailants:**

Are the assailant(s) known to the victim?

Description of the assailant(s) (include any identifiable features):  
**CONFIDENTIAL**

Description of the incident:

Does the victim believe she was specifically targeted because of gender?

If yes, why?

Has the incident been reported to the relevant State authorities?

If so, which authorities and when?

Actions taken by the authorities after the incident:

WITNESSES: \_\_\_\_\_

Were there any witnesses?

Name/age/relationship/contact address:

**PLEASE RETURN TO THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, UNITED NATIONS, 1211 GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND. FAX (41-22) 9170212**