

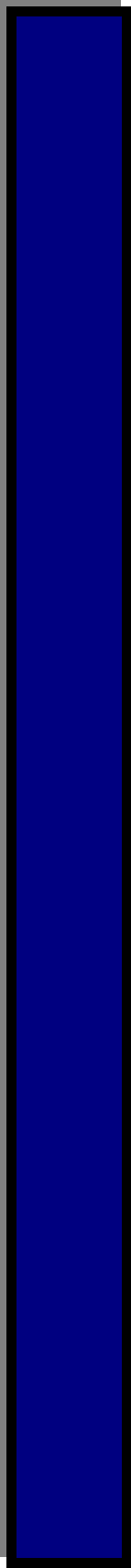


INTRODUCTION

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)
- The Global Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights at the NGO Forum of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Huairou, China (September 1995)
- The Global Tribunal: Celebrate and Demand Women's Human Rights on the occasion of the 50th 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)

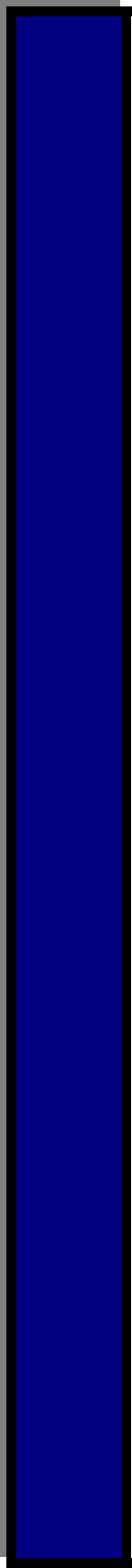
While the Center's tribunals and hearings have focused principally on women's human rights issues and gender-specific violations, we believe that the methodology outlined within this text will be a valuable resource regardless of the specific topic--or topics--that future tribunal organizers intend to 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

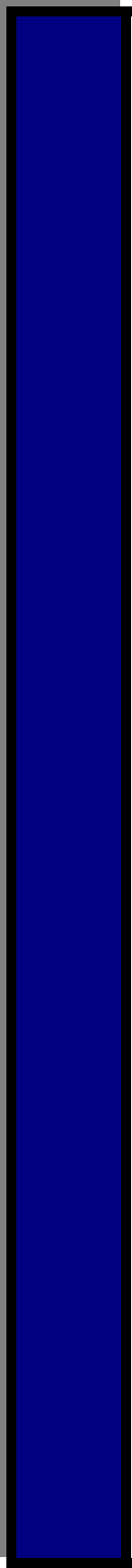


in recording the tribunal or hearing including audiotaping, photographing and videotaping the event. Chapter X encompasses all of the numerous details, plans and processes that go into the intensely busy day of (or day preceding) the tribunal or hearing. Finally, Chapter XI outlines suggested follow-up 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-

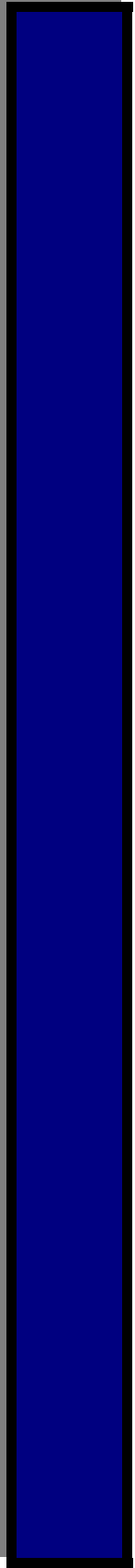


forts for remedial action. The majority of popular tribunals and hearings, including the ones organized or co-sponsored by the Center for Women's Global Leadership, are of the latter type.

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