

Welcome to the WIDE discussion forum
on the pro's and con's of a
5th high level UN Conference on Women in
2005

In June 2000, at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Beijing +5, the governments unanimously agreed:

" . . . to regularly assess further implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action with the view to bringing together all parties involved in 2005 to assess progress and consider new initiatives, as appropriate, 10 years after the adoption of the Beijing PFA and 20 years after the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies."

The UN is not yet committed to having a fifth high level World Conference on Women (WCW) in 2005. The possibility of convening regional meetings instead is apparently also taken into consideration.

In the women's movements the pro's and con's of having an adequately resourced, high level WCW are also discussed.

Whereas some gender activists argue that the fifth WCW in 2005 is crucially important for keeping up the global momentum and continuation of the process for empowerment of women, others fear a backlash: the risk to lose what was gained at earlier UN women's conferences seems greater than the chance to influence global players with a feminist agenda. Instead of entering another time-, energy- and resource- consuming assessment process it seems more important to define our own feminist agenda and to work on alternatives.

In order to facilitate this ongoing discussion process WIDE has opened this discussion forum.

WIDE cordially invites you to actively participate in this important debate. Please send your contribution to Barbara Specht at bs.wide@xs4all.be. We will post your statement on our web page and make it thus available to a broad public (1).

PRO's and CON's of having a high level UN Conference:

PRO'S	CON'S
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• women's issues will obtain mainstream media attention• women's issues again on agenda of governments and international institutions• opportunity for the different women's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• expensive, not cost - effective enough• time- and energy- consuming• Conference - fatigue• BPfA is an excellent tool for empowering women, we do not want to re-open a discussion on the BPfA

organisations to improve networking, to strategize together <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • important for keeping up the global momentum and continuation of the process for empowerment of women • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • problems of co-ordination, monitoring, evaluation of such a big event
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Alternatives:

PRO's and CON's of organising REGIONAL MEETINGS:

PRO'S	CON'S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional focus in voicing concerns at more specific level • Regional highlights and emphasis on local media • More active participants (i.e. larger delegations, better representation) • Better and strengthened NGOs representation • Strengthened forum for dialogue of specificities • Strengthened opportunities for networking and impact at regional level • Would be an excellent follow-up to Preparatory Regional Conferences • If based on good coordination mechanism, may create new opportunities to make use of ICT (including video conferencing between regions) • More cost effective than high level international meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability on coordination mechanism with Organisation Committee and funding • May create gap with top decision level • May dilute advocacy efforts instead of concentrating them towards better "governance" of Global Conferences

Contributions: Please send your contribution - mentioning your name & organisation & and country where you are currently based in - to Barbara Specht at bs.wide@xs4all.be.=====

From the Finnish NGO Committee for UN/WCW 2005:
Subject: The Fifth UN World Conference on Women in 2005

Dear Sisters and Friends,

After a long while we would like to inform you that both the Finnish Government and the NGOs in Finland are accelerating their efforts for the Fifth World Conference on Women.

It is well known that the Finnish NGOs have been campaigning for the Fifth World Conference on Women in 2005 since the beginning of the Beijing+5 process. This suggestion received broad support of the NGO Community already in ECE Regional Conference for Beijing+5 in January 2000. Since then it has been widely supported by the NGOs during the preparatory process for the 23rd General Assembly Special Session on Women 2000 as well as in the Special Session itself. It has also been discussed in innumerable NGO events and conferences in various places and during the CSW and ECOSOC sessions last year.

The Government taking firm steps

On the 31 May 2002 the Finnish Government has firmly decided to pursue an active policy for the Fifth UN World Conference on Women. It supports the efforts to develop further the substantive aims and forms of the Conference. And it also works actively for achieving the widest possible support of other UN Member States to this goal, first with the particular emphases on the other Nordic governments and the governments of EU countries.

We also recall that the Governments adopted in the Special Session 2000 a Political Declaration where they agreed “to assess regularly further implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action with a view of bringing together all parties involved in 2005 to assess progress and consider new initiatives, as appropriate, ten years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action and twenty years after the adoption of the Nairobi forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women”.

A new NGO Committee in Finland

The Finnish NGOs have now established a new national Committee for the Fifth World Conference on Women 2005 under the auspices of the Finnish UN Association. The purpose of this Committee is to continue the NGO Campaign for the World Conference, and cooperate and support the efforts of the Finnish Government for this goal.

We know that also many of you have been working in various ways for the Fifth World Conference on Women in 2005. Now we appeal to all of you that we join our efforts towards making this aim to become true. A particular task in every country is to persuade the national government to see the purpose and importance of having the UN World Conference on Women in 2005 and be prepared to support this issue when it comes to the decision table in the UN either in the 57th session of General Assembly this year or in the Commission on Status of Women next year.

In the spirit of Sisterhood and Cooperation for the common aim,

Helsinki, June 20, 2002.

On behalf of

Finnish NGO Committee for UN World Conference on Women 2005

Eila Alanko, Chair,

Päivi Varpasuo , Vice Chair,

Hilkka Pietilä, Senior Advisor

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