

## FLORA PLACES GENDER AND BIODIVERSITY IN EUROPE ON THE AGENDA

On April 23 and 24 2007 a European workshop on gender and biodiversity was held at the Alterra research institute in Wageningen (the Netherlands) dealing with (sustainable) nature conservation and management and the specific role of women therein. The workshop was an initiative of the European research Network of Excellence (NoE) ALTERNet.

Participants were policy makers (IUCN, WWF, the Dutch ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality), biodiversity managers (Unesco Man and Biosphere Reserves/national nature park managers), researchers from various ALTERNet partners and other universities and research institutes (from Norway, Finland, Sweden, Austria, England and the Netherlands) and NGO's from the Netherlands. Comparing experiences and research results, the main conclusion was that gender and biodiversity has begun to be recognized as an issue in developing countries (Asia and Africa) but not yet in Europe.

Women who have been studying this issue or have been active in this field of work as a manager or policymaker in Europe have been working in relative isolation and results had not yet been compared and discussed before this workshop.

The United Nations Convention on the protection of Biological Diversity (CBD), signed in Rio in 1992 and ratified by the European Union and its Member States, specifies that the role of women requires special attention. However, targeted (policy) actions in Europe have neither been developed nor implemented.

To fill this gap the workshop participants decided to cooperate in a new European task force called "FLORA" that will focus on:

- the Convention on Biological Diversity
- awareness raising on the role of women in biodiversity conservation and management, natural resource use and food production
- collecting data (information and research)
- networking

Important future actions for the "FLORA" group are:

- cooperation between NGO's and women organizations, the national CBD secretariats and the European Commission
- putting gender and sustainable European biodiversity management on the international agenda (e.g. IUCN congress 2008)
- research to collect missing data and information for instance by carrying out comparative case studies within Europe (and outside) using an interdisciplinary approach
- dissemination of the results of good practices in Europe and implementing good examples from outside Europe

The group decided explicitly not to create a new network but to cooperate with and to disseminate their activities and actions within existing gender networks such as WOCAM (Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and natural resource Management), ENED (European Network for Endogenous Development), IUCN, WWF, WIDE etc. For this reason this press release can be announced on all relevant gender related websites and announced in gender networks.

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