

Participants in the seminar, "Women Subverting the Exclusive Information Order," met in San José, Costa Rica, from September 24-28, 2005. At the event, which was organized by Feminist International Radio Endeavour (FIRE), they wrote the following letter addressed to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). All are welcome to sign the letter, see below for information.

### Letter to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS):

Our human rights are universal, inalienable and unrenounceable. History shows that as women, we are the main transmitters of local and popular wisdom and knowledge. We also create science, culture and art. We participate in politics and intervene actively in the public sphere in our countries.

Our voices have kept alive the memory of those who have struggled for social justice. We produce community and alternative mass media that promotes the discussion and creation of responsible and informed public opinion.

To ensure that women's insights and knowledge are incorporated into the information and knowledge societies, it is imperative that we be included within a framework of equality and gender justice.

Even as we begin this new century, few communities and peoples exercise the full right to communication and information. Structural systems of marginalization and deep digital and social divides affect women in particular, each time moving us farther from full human development.

In such a complex and changing world context, in which globalization leads to greater concentration of media power and homogenization of information content, we consider fundamental to full citizenship the appropriation and expansion of our rights to information and communication, which are inseparable from other human rights.

The growing gap between formal rights and the full exercise of those rights has excluded from decisionmaking women in particular, and civil society in general. Only the consolidation of these rights will make it possible for all to achieve full citizenship.

Such efforts require the adoption of measures that enable participation of multiple social actors in the debates and decisionmaking at all levels.

Until now, States have failed to develop the full potential of an information society that is fair and inclusive, and directed toward improving the living conditions of all peoples and communities.

The objectives of a democratic information society are not being achieved because:

- The voices, interests, needs and contributions of half of humanity: women, have not been included;
- Knowledge has been privatized instead of shared and made available to all social sectors;
- Information has become a commodity, to the detriment of the majority of the population;
- Under the pretext of "world security", the right to privacy has rendered very vulnerable;
- Technological advances do not guarantee social justice, democracy, sustainable development, nor full citizenship, unless societal structures that perpetuate exclusion are transformed;

We stand for a knowledge society and communications that are free of violence, sexism, discrimination, racism and oppression, with information that is accessible and responsible to the public, and in which child pornography is not acceptable, being a clear violation of children's rights and human dignity.

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) presented a new opportunity to lay out conditions and mobilize the contributions of women and all citizens to develop more democratic information societies, in which communications reflect the expression and interaction of a diversity of voices and knowledge, and are open to the public.

However, governments have lacked the political will to take on this challenge. The measures agreed upon to close digital divides have not even included mechanisms of financing. Nor do we see commitments toward equality being translated into concrete measures, such as strengthening of women's capacities and full participation in decisionmaking.

The commitments made in the Geneva Declaration of 2003, as indicated in Article 12 about gender equality, should be incorporated into public politics, designed to ensure the inclusion of the women and to promote the construction of this new societal project. Without such efforts, the objectives of the WSIS Plan of Action will exist in word only.

Governments should guarantee transparency, gender equity and equality of opportunity in the use of international funds and those that result from negotiations of external debts as part of the Free Trade Agreements (Final statement, Latin-American Chapter of the Gender Caucus (Buenos Aires, May 2005))

The goals of the information society should comply with the commitments of the Platform for Action of the the Fourth UN World Conference of Women (Beijing, 1995), and the Geneva Statement (2003), as well as Goal #3 of the Millenium Declaration, referring to the promotion of equality between the sexes and the autonomy of women.

The voices of half of humanity will not be silenced. As women we will continue contributing to the information and knowledge societies from our diverse perspectives and experiences, conscious of the principle of equality that inspires and motivates us. We are confident that our full participation will guarantee a more equitable and supportive world among human beings, today and for the future.

San José, Costa Rica, September 28, 2005.

Signed by the participants in the Seminar, "Women Subverting the Exclusive Information Orders", San José, Costa Rica, 28 of September of 2005:

Name	Organization
Laura Asturias	La Cuerda
Andrea Alvarado	Radio Internacional Feminista/ FIRE
Margarita Antonio	Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaragüense –URACCAN
Katerina Anfossi	Radio Internacional Feminista/ FIRE
Gabriela Ayzanoa	Red de Mujeres de la Asociación Mundial de Radios Comunitarias/ AMARC- ALC
Anabella Benedetti	Cátedra Regional UNESCO Mujer, Ciencia y Tecnología en América Latina.
Sally Burch	Agencia Latinoamericana de Información/ ALAI
Ivana Calle	Red Latinoamericana de Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir
Beatriz Cavazos	Modemmujer, Red de Comunicación Electrónica
Gabriela De Cicco	Red Informativa de Mujeres de Argentina/ RIMA
Ochy Curiel	Colectivo lésbico-feminista Las Chinchetas, de Lesbianas Feministas en Colectiva y de Brecha Lésbica
María A. Entenza	Red de Educación Popular entre Mujeres/ REPEM
Adriana Gómez	Red de Salud de las Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe/ RSMILAC
Ana Milena González	Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres
Yarman Jiménez	Radio Internacional Feminista/FIRE
María Esther Mogollón	Movimiento Amplio de Mujeres Línea Fundacional
Ana Elena Obando	Women's Human Rights Net/ WHRNET, sección de contenido en español.
Ana María Portugal	ISIS Internacional
Laura Queralt	Programa de Equidad de Género del Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica
Mirta Rodríguez	Red Dominicana de Periodistas con Perspectiva de Género: A Primera Plana
Tania Rodríguez	UnMUndo América Latina-One World
Daphne Sabanes	Programa de Redes de Mujeres, Asociación para el Progreso de las Comunicaciones/ APC
Margarita Salas	Bellanet LAC
Erika Smith	Programa de Redes de Mujeres, Asociación para el Progreso de las Comunicaciones/ APC
María Suárez	Radio Internacional Feminista/ FIRE
Ana Ugalde	Radio Internacional Feminista/ FIRE

### Others who signed this Letter to the World Summit on the Information Society:

Carmen Castro	Sin GENERO de DUDAS: Género y Democracia
María Eugenia Chávez	México
Ana Lidia Murillo Camacho	Asociación Sinaloense de Universitarias, AC, Culiacán, Sinaloa. México
Guadalupe López García	Coordinadora de Enlace y Asesores PATLATONALLI AC Equidad para vivir, Diversidad para convivir.
Ana Maria Felipe	Memória Lélia Gonzalez, Podermulher, Brasil
Sandra Peniche	Servicios Humanitarios en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva, México
Consuelo Ramírez	Unidad de Atención Sicológica, Sexológica y Educativa para el Crecimiento Personal, México
Sonia de la Cruz Malavassi	Escuela de Comunicación Colectiva de la Universidad de Costa Rica
Denise Viola	Radio Fala Muhler
Madalena Guilhon	Cemina
Silvana Lemos,	Rede Cyberela
Gloria Careaga	Escuela de Psicología de la UNAM
Cecilia Lipszyc	Asociación de Especialistas Universitarias en Estudios de la Mujer, Argentina

### ALL ARE WELCOME TO SIGN ON TO THIS LETTER:

Write to: [oficina@radiofeminista.net](mailto:oficina@radiofeminista.net) with your name, organization and country of residence.