

Khabir said the problems affecting all people included loss of biodiversity, environmental degradation, displacement of people, lack of access to resources such as water and pollution, and introduction of exotic species. And, as Khabir explained, there is a domino effect to the new agenda: "Foreign fish need foreign food," causing more environmental degradation to her country.

Khabir's strategies focused on widening the understanding of the global situation, and building local resistance and alternatives that do not feed international markets. To women outside Bangladesh, Khabir reiterated the importance of building strong movements as a means of supporting women in her country.

Tania Suarez of the Zapatista Liberation Front in Mexico concluded the morning strategy speakers' session with a heartfelt and inspiring call to action. "This was my

dream, and now it's a reality" said Suarez. "We're all here together."

Suarez outlined a number of issues that connect women in Mexico to women's struggles in many other countries: the oppression of women, the harmful and unknown side effects of birth control, ecological degradation, child undernourishment, the rise of tuberculosis, and women's deaths from childbirth and cancer. Suarez then spoke of the resistance in Mexico, particularly the Zapatista women, inside and outside the struggle, "the widows, the warriors, the rebels."

"Us, the women," said Suarez, "we stand up and survive. Every day we are on our feet." Telling the assembled delegates "you're my sisters now," Suarez called for women to "listen to one another about differences, and stick together."

DOMESTIC WORKERS November 15 and 16, 1997

The 4th Annual INTERCEDE Domestic Workers Conference was held November 15 and 16. The conference was organized locally by the Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers' and Caregivers' Rights, and held at the Hospital Employees' Union in Vancouver.

"It was very productive," said Cenen Bagon, one of the conference organizers. "The conference was educational, and the conversations very encouraging." The 40 domestic workers, together with five advocates, used popular education and discussion to build on the work of past conferences. Included in the discussions were how domestic workers' lives are affected by cutbacks, and how "they are pushed out of their countries because of the economic conditions." The delegates also discussed how APEC will affect domestic workers.

A number of resolutions came out of the Domestic Workers Conference, including a resolution to continue to lobby the Canadian government to change its immigration policy so that domestic workers can enter the country as landed immigrants under the point system. Under the current system, domestic workers do not receive the same points as other workers. "If domestic workers are good enough to work here, they are good enough to stay," said Bagon. "They should be treated like any other workers."

The delegates also agreed to push governments in the Asia Pacific to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Their Families. The convention was adopted by the general assembly in December, 1990, but has received only nine of the 20 signatories required to have it ratified. Bagon pointed out that it is the countries that receive domestic workers – like Canada and the US – that are refusing to sign.

Delegates resolved to ask the Women's Conference and the People's Summit on APEC to support these resolutions, and include them in their calls for action.

The delegates, most of whom work in BC, also had local successes to celebrate: provincial government lobbying in BC led to changes to the Employment Standards Act, including minimum wages for domestic workers, hours of work changes, and the creation of a central registry for employers. The delegates will continue to work to see that those changes are enforced.