

Berlin, March 30, 1995

To:

**Dr. Angela Merkel, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Nuclear Safety of the Federal Republic of Germany,**

and

**Chair of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Framework Convention**

## **Open Letter from the International Women's Forum to Minister of the Environment Angela Merkel**

**Dear Ms. Merkel,**

We are addressing ourselves to you in your capacity as host and Chair of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Framework Convention, as the new Minister of the Environment, and as the former Minister for Women's and Youth Affairs.

We women of the global networks *Women for Peace and Ecology* and *Women in Environment and Development* spent three weeks in the Women's Tent *Planeta Famea* in Rio de Janeiro, together with women's environmental groups from all over the world, drafting perspectives for protection of the climate and the environment.

***According to the targets which Germany has set for itself, the Climate Conference cannot be permitted to become a disappointment.***

We are supporters of our colleagues and friends in the Climate Networks of Africa, Asia, Latin America, North America and the South Pacific, and are ourselves members of the Climate Network in Europe.

**It is time for the industrialized countries to at long last accept the responsibility that goes with the use of 80% of the world's resources, and to set an example to the threshold countries.** We urge you to follow in the footsteps of such small countries as Denmark and New Zealand in not only welcoming the AOSIS Protocol, but in fighting vehemently for it within the EU. One way would be to show some willingness to cooperate with Ambassador Bautista, Speaker of the G-77 countries.

Ms. Merkel, we would like to know your response to the speech by Pene Lefale from Western Samoa, who complained of the cynical equanimity of the conference proceedings toward the island inhabitants and toward the coral reefs. Or how do you respond to the fears of Kushi Kabir, Chair of the Association of NGOs of

Bangladesh, whose foundations of life are threatened by flooding? And what is your reaction to the latest balance sheets of insurance companies, which show millions in damages due to the effects of global warming?

How do you respond to our demand that NGO representatives from women's and environmental organizations have as much influence at the UN Conference as the business lobbies from the coal and oil-producing countries who are preventing an energy tax not only by the Clinton-Gore administration, but also in the EU and in Germany? If the conference bows to the pressure from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in setting up its rules of procedure and adopts a consensus rule, every step toward CO<sub>2</sub> reductions will be nullified.

We will not give up working for alliances and coalitions in support of the AOSIS countries and of all those who are affected by and are fighting the climate catastrophe, as the ICLEI is doing. Together with the Global Ecological Marshall Plan, we will collect signatures for the AOSIS Protocol, and support their demands for a 20% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the industrial countries by the year 2005. This must be practically implemented by means of a political turn in energy and environmental policy. We intend to support this effort through practical work in our own local areas.

We assume that you have not forgotten your experience from your tenure as Minister of Women's and Youth Affairs since becoming Minister of the Environment. In that light, we expect you to take seriously the demands of the women's NGOs during the period leading up to the Conference in Peking.

The slogan of the World Women's Conference in Peking is Peace, Development and Justice. This will only be possible through a responsible, future-appropriate climate protection policy. How are we supposed to represent a sustainable, future-appropriate Germany in China, if, in Berlin, an alliance of OPEC and industrial countries has just postponed the essential decisions by a number of years once again? Environmental policy, social justice and women's equality go hand in hand and must also be recognized as interconnected, and be integrated into UN policy.

***Therefore, even if the Climate Conference is unsuccessful, we will introduce the AOSIS Protocol at the UN World Women's Conference in Peking.***

In order to discuss these steps, we would like to invite you and Ms. Quennet-Thielen to our ***International Women's Forum***, which will take place on **1-2 April** in the **Cultures of the World Building**.

Sincerely Yours,

*Eva Quistorp, Alexandra Handl*

***Women for Peace and Ecology***

***Frauen für Frieden und Ökologie***