

## The NGOization of Women's Movements and its Implications for Feminist Organizing

This panel co-organised by **Pathways of Women's Empowerment**.

**Summary:** This session is a moderated debate which looks retrospectively at women's organizing in a number of countries in South Asia, Latin America, West Africa, and the Middle East. It explores the impact of NGOization; shifts in funding and support, and in the structures, agendas and constituencies of women's movements, in these countries.

**Presenters:** Maheen Sultan, Sonia Alvarez, Saba Khattak and Dzodzi Tsikata.

**Pathways of Women's Empowerment** is an international research consortium funded by the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID). Co-ordinated by the Institute of Development Studies in Brighton, UK, the consortium is collectively run by six partners: BRAC University, Bangladesh; the Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA), Ghana; Institute of Development Studies (IDS), UK; the Nucleus for Interdisciplinary Women's Studies (NEIM) at the Federal University of Bahia, Brazil; the Social Research Centre (SRC) at the American University in Cairo; and UNIFEM, who in turn work with partners within their regions. Our research seeks to ground emerging understandings of empowerment in women's everyday lives, trace the trajectories of policies affecting women's empowerment and explore promising stories of change to find out what works and why to advance gender justice and equality for all.



## Presenters Bios:

**Maheen Sultan** is Coordinator of the Research Programme on Pathways of Women's Empowerment, South Asia Hub which is part of the Development Studies Programme of BRAC University, on a part-time basis. She has been doing free lance consultancies on social development and gender issues for several years and earlier has worked in various multilateral/bilateral development agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF and the Swiss Development Cooperation. She has been working with programme appraisal, annual reviews and formulation missions. She is a member of Naripokkho, a Bangladeshi women's activist organisation. She has worked closely with the Government in the post-Beijing conference period on gender mainstreaming and CEDAW reporting. Her research interests include women's mobilisation and organisation. She lives and works in Bangladesh and has a family with two young children.

**Sonia Alvarez** is the author of numerous ground-breaking books and articles on feminisms, social movements and democratization in Latin America. She has been active in feminist, anti-racist, solidarity and alter-globalization activism. She holds the Leonard J. Horwitz Professorship in Latin American Politics and Studies at College of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Massachusetts Amherst. She has been a visiting fellow at the State University of Campinas and the Federal University of Santa Catarina, both in Brazil. From 2004 to 2006, Sonia Alvarez served as President of the Latin American Studies Association, the largest professional association in the world for scholars of Latin America, with over 5,500 members in countries spanning the globe.

**Saba Gul Khattak**, independent scholar, holds a PhD in political science specializing in comparative politics. She is a Visiting Fellow at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad where she was Executive Director between 2002-2008. She works on rights-based issues from feminist perspectives. Her recent work looks at women's political representation, women's land rights in Pakistan, and issues of conflict and security. She divides her time between teaching, organizing trainings and researching development issues. Some of her recent publications include "Women's Concerns in International Relations: The crossroads of politics and peace in South Asia" in *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs*, September 2008, and "Living on the Edges: Afghan Women and Refugee Camp Management in Pakistan" in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, University of Chicago Press, Volume 32, Number 3, Spring 2007 (pp 575-579).

**Dzodzi Tsikata** is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) at the University of Ghana. In the last ten years, she has been engaged in research and writing on a range of issues pertaining to rural livelihoods, land relations and state policy from a social relations perspective. She is a lawyer by training and has degrees in Development Studies and Sociology from the Institute of Social Studies and the University of Ghana respectively. Her publications include a co-edited volume with Joanna Kerr entitled "Demanding Dignity: Women Confronting Economic Reforms in Africa" (2000) and an article, jointly written with Ann Whitehead- Policy Discourses on Women's Land Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa.