
[International Women's Day 2006: Homage to Women's Struggle in Forests and Plantations](#)

By the World Rainforest Movement. 8 March 2006.

On the International Women's Day, the World Rainforest Movement wants to pay homage to the innumerable women that have played and still play an essential role in the governance and nurturing of forests and other ecosystems.

Forests provide the source and means of survival for millions of people, who find there firewood, medicinal plants, food, compost for agriculture, and a full range of uses. They are also vital for the healthy state of our global environment.

Though the historical contribution of women to forest conservation has often been made "invisible" --as in many other areas-- it has been them, the indigenous or peasant women, with an intimate knowledge of the forest, who have been the principal caretakers and guardians of the forests. Femininity is linked to nature, to the origins and to mystery and women are those who make life, suckle the species, communicate oral tradition and are the committed guardians of secrets.

At present, the encroachment of global commerce and "development" projects into the forests --such as oil exploitation, logging, mining, shrimp farming, dams and others-- have not only destroyed nature but also distorted ancestral relationships of forest peoples between them and with the forest. Such forest change or loss has not been gender neutral and has had a double and differentiated impact on women, depriving them of their traditional rights to and link with the forests while reinforcing a patriarchal society model.

The corporate greed that has led to the destruction of forests now also imposes the large scale monoculture pattern against the diversity, complexity and interconnectedness of ecosystems. All over the world, pervasive industrial tree plantations of eucalyptus, oil palm, pine, teak and others are spreading erosion and deforestation, dismantling whole ecosystems and livelihoods, poisoning with pesticides water, soil and people, converting women who formerly nurtured forest into exploited plantation workers.

Yet, women continue resisting both in the forest and in the tree plantations. They are speaking loud telling the world about their knowledge, their wisdom, their own definition of what development is and how it should be undertaken.

On this 8th of March, their struggle should be made visible and supported by all of us and especially by the women's movements sharing a vision of equality, solidarity and gender justice.

To them we pay our homage and render our full support.

