

# World's women stake their

By Jacklyn Cock

The World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet, held in Miami from November 8 to 12, brought together over a thousand women from 90 different countries.

It was one of the meetings to prepare for the Earth Summit in Brazil next June when heads of state from around the world will attend and develop an Earth Charter to regulate economic development and environmental protection for the planet. The World Women's Congress aimed to ensure that the Earth Charter has "a women's dimension".

The predominant emphasis of the congress was on the linkages between the global economic and environmental crises. The major sessions featured a panel of five women judges (from India, Sweden, Australia, Kenya and Guyana) to hear testimony from diverse women ranging from Wangari Maathai, founder of the Green Belt movement in Kenya speaking on deforestation, to Rosalie Bertell from Canada talking on the threat of nuclear power and weapons to public health and the environment.

The congress exploded a powerful myth: that the military protects and defends us.

The reality, numerous women insisted, is that the military is the greatest single threat to security. As Rosalie Bertell said, "it is the military who are destroying the earth and they are doing it in the name of 'national security'. The main source of environmental destruction is 'the smart bombs, not aerosol deodorants'".

Three other themes emerged from the wealth of papers, films and talks presented: the first is that globally women are the shock absorbers of environmental problems. It is women who deal directly with the resource base, who, for example, gather wood and carry water in rural areas. It is mainly women who struggle to grow crops on eroded land and who are responsible for food preparation. The main victims of environmental degradation are underprivileged people and the majority of these are women.

The second theme is that increasingly it is women who are providing the energy and commitment to address environmental problems. But as Peggy Antrobus from the University of Barbados stressed, while women are cleaning up the mess at the local level, they are largely excluded from the institutions which create the mess in the first place. So the third theme was the political empow-

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Dr Jacklyn

## The 'double shift' taking its

By Ida Gartrell

With high hopes and great determination, Eshwe Child and Family Welfare launched Idasa's "Women in a New South Africa"

workshops as part of a women's rights project in August. Four workshops later (that's



The end of that first workshop, "The Double Shift" was everyone determined to com-

and want commit

structures. The modest option would be to repeal the unentrenched section of the current constitution that indicates that a minister must become a Member of Parliament within 12 months. This would mean that the State President can appoint any South African to the position of minister and impose an all-party cabinet.

The bold option would be to remove own affairs ministers' councils and to amend Section 67 of the Constitutional Act to allow the three houses to sit and vote together.

"That would leave us with an intact parliament, a potentially non-racial multi-party executive that would rely on unanimous agreement and be nominally accountable to a sympathetic, non-dominant parliament."

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**'Counterposing collective rights with individual rights negates the struggle for national equality'**

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Dr Frene Ginwala, head of the research unit of the ANC, emphasised that the playing ground had to be levelled in the negotiation process. Transitional arrangements were needed for control over areas such as the security forces, the SABC, the management of financial resources and the civil service.

She said the government's view on this amounted to offering the liberation groups consultation but no decision-making powers - these groups were therefore in danger of getting responsibility without power.

Dr Ginwala also argued that the timing of the constitution-making procedure was vital, as once principles had been agreed upon it would be in the interests of the National Party to prolong the process. Participants to the negotiations need to agree on the agenda, the constitutional principles and time frame.

Following on Prof Davis' assertion that the biggest constitutional battle would be fought in the area of economics, Prof Brian Kantor of the University of Cape Town, said

PEACE

# In the peace b

By Steve Collins

Until the beginning of 1991 the lower South Coast of Natal was associated with holidays in the sun and a place for a peaceful retirement home. That has changed this year as the violence that characterises the rest of the province began spreading into the area. At times as many as 70 people a month were being killed in the conflict between the ANC and Inkatha.

Peace talks and meetings - initiated by the police, the churches and even the regional leadership of both parties - had no tangible results. With the help of Natal Portland Cement, who have a quarry and factory in the area, Idasa brought together the major business interests in the area to discuss the violence.

The group which came together were motivated by concern for their workers as well as the adverse effects of the violence on business. A particular problem was the fact that many workers were being forced to "camp" during the night and were sleepy and tired at work. It was decided that rather than act of their own accord the business group would meet with both the parties and the SAP and that these discussions would be facilitated by Idasa.

Another decision was that Idasa would collect information and evidence about the violence as it was clear that there was very little trust in the police. The SAP accepted this and gave the business group the assurance that they would give their co-operation in these peace efforts.

One of the key issues was a Shaka's Day

Rally scheduled to take place in September in the township of Gamalahke outside Port Shep

the SAP and two years counts. It reached b area was n

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## Almost an Oscar

The Idasa video "Democracy" awarded several medals by the M Association.