

Social Concerns

Table 3 comprises the major social issues and concerns highlighted by the organizations. The table basically shows the social impacts of globalization on the groups' constituency.

Table 3. Results of Data (see annex for detailed matrix):

Area of Concern		
Women	Indigenous peoples and environmental concerns	Labor
Labor migration and trafficking of women	Intellectual Property Rights – Issues on biopiracy	Workers' rights and benefits
Prostitution	Safe Trade and trade of hazardous technology	Trade union rights and labor standards
Women workers in the informal sector	Environmental standards in trade rules	Wage Policy
Women in urban and rural communities	Sustainable development program on environment	Sub-contracting and job contracting
Homebased workers	Strategic Environmental Plant for Palawan Act	Labor flexibility schemes
Child Labor	National Integrated Protected Area Systems	Export Processing Zones
	Plant Variety Act	Policy on trade and investments
	Mining Act of 1995	Safety Nets
	Industrial Tree Farms and Forest Corridors	Economic liberalization
	Implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA)	Corporate Social Responsibility
	Alternative Traditional Medicines Act (ATMA) of 1997	Policy on Overseas Filipino Workers

A. Impact on labor

The labor groups in the study jointly expressed concern that the goal of transnational and multinational corporations to spur production in the name of global competition has led to *labor flexibility schemes*, which undermine labor rights and weaken the role of trade unions in the protection of such rights. They cited the changing employment patterns and downsizing of companies in the search for the cheapest cost of labor. KPD, TUCP, BMP and APL chorused on the increasing army of casuals, contractuels and unemployed as a result of economic

globalization. According to the Sosyalistang Partido ng Paggawa (SPP), the wage-freeze policy and measures to cut down on labor cost by implementing sub-contracting, contractualization and casualization have degraded workers to mere commodities in the global market.

The intense economic global competition, according to APL, has started the “wage race towards the bottom” intensifying unemployment and labor flexibility. For COPE and Gabriela, conversions of farms into subdivisions and export processing zones contribute further to the loss of jobs. Padayon noted how economic liberalization has expanded “the army of the unemployed, informal sector, peasant ruin, and thus, poverty that breeds social ills, prostitution and crime.”

Other issues of concern are the expanding of the informal sector and the services sector that filled the loss in the shrinking industry base specifically the manufacturing sector in the country. While the government touted the institution of safety nets for dislocated workers, the Women’s Action Network for Development (WAND) expressed skepticism on safety nets, if there are any. The group stated that these safety nets are more focused on skills training and not on developing technology in the country’s agricultural and industrial sectors. FEF and TUCP on the other hand, opened up the possibilities of corporate social responsibility, corporate governance, social clause and verification of labor standards as mechanisms to cushion the negative impacts of economic liberalization on labor.

On another front, SPFL and MRC raised the government’s policy on Overseas Filipino workers. MRC compared that while the government’s policies on globalization of trade exports are clear, the same cannot be said on the export of labor. The organization believes that “this will negatively affect future generations.”

B. Women and women workers

The exclusionary side of globalization has been mentioned repeatedly in identifying the organizations’ concerns and issues. The preference for economic development at all costs has prevented the marginalized and the least mobile sectors to participate and to benefit from the opportunities of globalization. The rules that favor a few have worsened poverty and have damaged the social fabric of communities worsening the conditions of women across sectors. Widening poverty in the country has pushed more women and children into the flesh trade or prostitution. Related to this is the problem of labor migration and trafficking. The export of labor policy of the government has opened the doors wider for legal and illegal recruiters preying on Filipinas ready to accept whatever jobs will ease the poverty of their families. According to COPE and the interviewed women’s groups, the drive towards profit and material goods has led to the commodification of women as well.

As workers, more and more women are working abroad to earn a living. In the expanding informal sector, women started the phenomenon of home-based workers and sub-contractuals. In the industrial sector, women workers are readily available as casuals or contractuals leading to the feminization of precarious labor.

C. Issues on environment and indigenous peoples

Environmental issues are also being addressed, not just by environmental groups but major political blocs and indigenous peoples groups. Greenpeace links the current trade liberalization to environmental degradation and social inequity that undermines democratic rights of peoples and communities. The group explains that “trade rules are clashing with environmental standards” such that national measures on environmental protection are slowly being removed. One example is the lack of restriction on trade of hazardous technology at the WTO level.

Likewise, Ugnayang Pang-Agham Tao (UGAT), an NGO for indigenous peoples, singled the WTO agreement on intellectual and property rights as a form of “bio-piracy that undermines the rights of indigenous peoples to their environment and culture.” UGAT currently focuses its attention to monitoring the Implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA). In the same view as UGAT, Tebtebba^[1] is concerned in trade-related intellectual property rights such as the patenting of biological resources which prevents IPs to benefit from the natural resources.

Tebtebba Foundation cited the homogenizing culture of Western economic systems affecting our socio-cultural systems particularly at the expense of the indigenous peoples in the country. The free market paradigm of globalization translated by Western countries to “accumulate more resources” disadvantages the indigenous peoples because “their philosophy is so much different from Western thought.” Tebtebba pronounced that IPs view nature as “being integrated with them and with globalization, they are being harmed.”

The Philippine Association for Intercultural Development (PAFID) puts its efforts in monitoring legislations relating to intercultural and environmental issues such as the Strategic Environment Plan for Palawan Act, Industrial Tree Farms and Forest Corridors, National Integrated Protected Area Systems, to name a few.

Most environmental groups and Greenpeace in particular, are very cautious of matters such as genetic engineering and trade of hazardous technology. The Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE) concerns itself with the issue of biodiversity conservation as the key means to achieve sustainable human development.

D. Consumer issues

For consumers, globalization can be viewed as positive or negative depending on its impact on the interests of consumers. The Citizen's Alliance for Consumer Protection (CACP) raised the importance of control and access relating to globalization. CACP believes in the importance of people having control in the decision-making process which would lead to issues of representation for consumers in the globalization process. The organization is particularly concerned about the access of products touted by globalization. However, if products are expensive such as medicines which can be controlled by big corporations, then it is no longer accessible to the majority of consumers.
