

Report of the Woman Caucus
at the World Urban Forum (WUF) IV Nanjing, China,
on 4 and 5 November 2008¹

This report captures key concerns and provides the background as well as key action points for WUF IV (Annex 2) from different networks. It reflects the continued discourse on women and habitat at WUF within the Caucus attended by over 60 representatives of various groups responding to the Caucus invitation (Annex 1).

The Women's Caucus at WUF IV raised the following concerns:

An evaluation of this WUF with a gender perspective will inform what needs to be amended at the next WUF. From the sharing of views within the Caucus, it was found that:

1. None of the presentations and speeches at WUF IV presented the gender-disaggregated data that explains what women have as resources and how they can be promoted and protected better.

¹ The Women's Caucus in WUF IV was represented by Habitat international Coalition, Huairou Commission, Consult for Women and Land Rights, Yangtze and Nanjing Women Federations, NGOs and local Government representatives.

2. Panelists could not fully respond to questions and comments that called for women increasing their resources with the GAD framework. Rather, the discourse was limited to using women to show a difference (efficiency approach).
3. Capacity building on gender mainstreaming at senior levels within the UN and government is obviously wanting, and members of the Women's Caucus offer assistance to fill this gap in the next year such that WUF-V more adequately apply the GAD framework.
4. Addressing climate change, disaster preparedness, trafficking of women, violence, scope for women to claim and manage remittance from migration processes, resource rights, HIV/AIDS in the context of habitat was among past recommendations from the Woman Caucus. However, they still do not figure on the WUF agenda within a framework of women's rights. These issues need to be taken on at the next WUF.
5. Organizers slotted grassroots women presenters at the very end of sessions, and time constraints prevented them from speaking. WUF should move away from seeing women as beneficiaries, and the next WUF should treat them as co-planners and a finance control group for urban development.
6. The role of panelists like UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing was appreciated, especially her plan to work with urban poverty-alleviation programmes to ensure that women participate sufficiently in urban planning.

Concerns within the Women's Caucus:

Consult for Women and Land Rights (CWLR) and Habitat International Coalition (HIC) organised the Women's Caucus at WUF IV. The Huairou Commission expressed a concern about this fact, whereas Huairou Commission had organised the Caucus for the past ten years.

In the preparatory work, all previous Caucuses had registered participants' concerns and presented recommendations to the Forum and developed a strategy to work with UN Habitat. These could not be shared adequately before the Forum. Thus, a shared understanding on common concerns was lacking. The Caucus must develop common goals for urban women and habitat with different civil society actors before the next WUF. Printed brochures from HC, as well as CWLR were helpful to convey key concerns.

Day one of the caucus resulted in sharing common concerns and taking it to events at the forum. A working group drafted common recommendations and redrafted them as a "call for action" (annex 2). These are representative of the long list of recommendations that were drafted in longer debates and academic consultations. Each network presented its own concerns to the Women's Roundtable and gender-equity event organised by the Gender Unit and GLTN of UN Habitat.

Day two of the caucus concluded with organising thoughts around how the Women's Caucus can be organised at the WUF V in Brazil. Huairou Commission called for bilateral agreements within women's networks and housing-and-

planners networks. CWLR called for a new name under which all could share work across areas of specialisation. One suggestion was to ask for specific resources from the government and speak from specific action and duty holders responsible for carrying women's agenda forward.

As women working on urban development and women resource rights, we need WUF to have a greater focus on;

1. Developing skills on building partnerships to make gender equality work within local governance and national resource management.
2. Training on translating policies into programmes, and managing these better.
3. Sharing the process of past learning and growth such that newer members interested in women's empowerment can learn and contribute.

Representative from Nanjing University shared good practices, while recognising that there are problem in women's enjoyment of land rights in China. She observed that women suffer more than men, as women are dispossessed of land rights upon marriage. Urbanisation has consequences on rural families that need to move away due to development projects. Chinese law applied in Yangste development has protected women, along with men, and this needs to be shared and applied in other countries. China has practiced Marxist feminism and, today, a city like Nanjing has women planners and mayors.

Comment: Women in positions of power in China have yet to work on creating the sex ratio balance in the country. The survival of girls and women in the country perhaps would depend on their enjoyment of an equal share of resources in urban and rural budgets and family inheritance.

Representatives from Huairou Commission (HC) recommended what issues should be considered by WUF. The Asia Academy, organised by HC, expressed the view that, even though their members such as Ms. Witzman from Women and Cities International were asked to be on panels and did speak at different events, their participation was invited as planners, and not as representative of women's movement. Professional concerns overshadow realities that grassroots women and women generally face in their technical capacities. They contribute as part of organised workforce, and the structured settings of the workplace provide little space to promote gender equality.

Habitat International Coalition (HIC) representatives shared work done on women and habitat. The HIC Women's Housing and Land Rights Forum (hosted by Observatori DESC, Barcelona, 2007) issued recommendations on women housing and land that have come out of six years process of consultations organised by the previous UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing. Each ministry concerned with urban management and development across the world should take those recommendations on board. They are sufficiently specific to assist government and civil society create and incorporate a women's resource

right agenda in ongoing projects, programmes and policies. The Barcelona Forum recommendations have been combined with CWLR recommendations to provide specific action points for each of the dialogues and Women's Roundtable for UN Habitat to use in their report for WUF IV (Annex 3)

Consult for Women and Land Rights (CWLR) had a single point agenda to include in the larger list drawn out by others. This was a specific demand to create women resource zones (WRZ). The WRZ need to be implemented urgently by government, market and religious leadership, in order to specify women's fair share in land ownership and related resources required to sustain their livelihood and well-being. This support has to be promoted by government, as private ownership is framed on patriarchal control of resources. Thus, when women do get inheritance or buy property, it goes back to family control, which is organised within the male ownership lineage.

Comment: Grassroots and entrepreneur women should be encouraged to develop their specific proposals for submission to resource agencies to get land, housing and infrastructure in women collectives name on long term lease. Gender advocates for women resource rights need to be trained. Sathi All for Partnerships – Secretariat and CWLR shared the framework of a proposal it has submitted to UNIFEM toward training gender advocates to seek an increase in women's resources such that UN Habitat also could call for similar proposals and support activity that links grassroots with policy and planning initiatives.

The Way Ahead

1. A report with action agenda for gender mainstreaming needs to be presented by caucus members to the WUF IV plenary, on 6 November. This report is the record to take forward for gender mainstreaming of next WUF planning.
2. The Women's Caucus participant representatives (CAP, HC, CWLR, HIC, and Chinese Women Federations) need to meet in Nairobi to submit a plan for the WSF V to be held in Brazil within one and a half years time.
3. Exhaustive recommendations need to be added from the Women's Roundtable report for WUF IV, in particular, empowerment processes for grassroots women to obtain land grants. Resource provision should be a theme to take away from this Forum to be showcased at the WUF V.

Annex 1: Email invitation



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Invitation

You are invited to attend the **Women's Caucus** at the World Urban Forum, on 4 and 5 Nov, at MR 206, from 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM.

4 November 2008

- 8:00 AM: Introductions and context setting
- 8:10 AM: Gender concerns as listed by different groups.(Nanjing Women Federation, Yangtze Women Federation, HIC, CWLR, HC, Women in Cities and others)
- 8:30 AM: Addressing issues against priorities planned by WUF (UN Habitat)

5 November 2008

- 8:00 AM: Opening and introductions
- 8:10 AM: Reporting of responses generated thus far
- 8:20 AM: Concerns listed for inclusion in the WUF report and plan to impact the next stage of the program

8:45 AM: Collating lessons for work that individuals groups take back from the Forum

Annex : 2 Call for action for WUF –IV and beyond

- Recognize women as first responders in all the concerned issues in the WUF and prioritize their participation in the Forum.
- Establish participation of women in planning, decision making, budgeting, taking their expertise with respect to knowledge and best practices to reduce the impact of disasters, continuing state of emergency, climate change and resource utilization,
- Design financial mechanism in collaboration with the governments to maximize the control of women over land and housing with special emphasis on collective ownership and women resource zones.
- Recognize and enable research to generate data on women’s access to credit for land and housing and make plan accordingly to increase resource base for women.
- Budgets for studies on migration to the city and the housing stock and to meet the needs and services (placement and remittance) for the migrants.
- Encouraged planners to build and support university-community partnership
- Vulnerability mapping of the grass roots women assisted by professionals to develop action plan for themselves.
- Ensure urban planning reports are revisited to create a separate chapter and statement on gender mainstreaming into all aspects of planning, all future terms of reference for reports are gender proofed.
- Encourage planning education with specific training in gender issues and include best practices from the grassroot communities in planning.
- Support and encourage governments which have increased the number of women in their governments with special recognition from UN-Habitat.
- Separate budgetary allocation by lessening tax burden for women entrepreneurs to escalate the status of women in production process and business.
- Establish **Women’s Resource Zones** within residential and commercial area for women’s collectives which can work as land banks, space for marketing, collective entrepreneurship, and all such services which ease out the functioning of women entrepreneurs.

- Housing should be allotted by the government in the names of landless women with work opportunities created near their place of work.
- Provide space for women to represent their work in International and National forums.
- Increase budgets of agencies like UNIFEM, and National Women Commissions to recognize and provide financial and technical support to the local organization and network.

Annex 3

Recommendations from Groots and HC

Around the world grassroots women are at the center of pro-poor settlements development. Grassroots women are compelled to organize themselves to negotiate for basic services, secure land, housing, livelihoods and food for their families and communities. Grassroots women and their communities are also first responders in disasters and the safety and security of their communities is a priority for them.

THEREFORE:

1. For development programs to impact the lives of the poor, we need mechanisms that establish the ongoing participation of grassroots women in planning, decision making, and monitoring of policies and programs at local, national and global levels. Grassroots-government partnerships, participatory and gender budgeting, representation of grassroots women's organizations in planning committees and local to local dialogues are examples of effective mechanisms for women's participation in planning.
2. There is a need for funding mechanisms that provide resources for demonstrating women-led practices; for knowledge transfer and scaling up of effective practices that respond to grassroots women's development priorities.

3. Policy makers must formally recognize and respect grassroots women's indigenous knowledge and their community organizing practices that reduce the impact of disasters and climate change on communities.

4. In the context of safety and security, autonomous women-managed spaces and women-led safety audits should be supported for grassroots women to organize and gather information key to building safer cities.

5. Design financial mechanisms in collaboration with grassroots women's participation in order for women to access and control land.

The World Urban Forums (and all other UNHabitat programs) should be a venue that demonstrates the centrality of grassroots women and poor communities in agenda-setting for pro-poor development programs.

Recommendations from HIC and CWLR

Women's Roundtable organised by UN Habitat:

Local Scope:

- Articulate housing needs of unorganised sector women workers, immigrant women, sex workers, destitute women (victims of gender violence, communal violence, caste violence, etc) and other women's groups in particular situations of vulnerability or facing multiple discrimination.
- Where there are town councils (or municipal boards), request the appointment of an interlocutor for women's group housing societies and associations under the prescribed law or where there is no law in existence create such laws or mechanism to enable the local governing units towards the goal.
- Require that municipal services establish an information system on policies developed for women's housing and commercial space, for evaluation and critique from women's associations and groups.
- Creation of land banks for women locally for them to utilise the same for their collective activity.

National Scope:

- Wherever there is the law of the land to provide alternative land for livelihood or housing, a specific provision to prioritise the right of the women over it.
- Promote national networks for resource rights with a gender perspective to reflect women's specific needs. Collaborate on the dissemination of progress and commitments made in relation to international human rights, and support national institutions in fulfilling their obligations
- In the event of any acquisitions, displacements, evictions, the government should be under the obligations to take the consent of the women where she is part of the household and her interest/consent should be considered the foremost, before furthering the process of rehabilitation and resettlement.
- Promote the implementation of the document "Guidelines on the prevention of forced evictions in connection with 'development' projects" by the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, in order to combat violence against women in relation to housing

International Scope:

- Support different international network working on resources (housing, land and livelihood) and to coordinate partnerships and joint actions
- Encourage the exchange of information between various organizations to share progresses achieved in a region, country, province, city or town, in terms of the recognition, implementation, and protection of the right to housing, land and livelihood, and to maximize their performance, especially from a gender perspective
- Encourage networks to drive the adoption, signature or ratification of international instruments to strengthen the recognition, development and protection of social rights, housing and land rights, and the rights of women (Protocol ICESCR)
- Influence international agencies, mainly credit, development and financial institutions, to ensure that they refrain from sponsoring or running any programs (especially those that involve the commercialization and privatization of basic goods and services) that could lead to the violation of the right to land and adequate housing, taking into consideration the special vulnerability of women and the multiple forms of discrimination they may face
- Document progresses made in the development and recognition of the right to adequate housing for women, the difficulties to make it effective, the real situation of housing in different regions and countries, and experiences in women's struggle to access housing, land and habitat

Dialogue 1: Territorial Balance in Urban Development:

- Include a model of an equitable and sustainable city in urban planning
- Urban space be designed according to the needs of the most vulnerable section of the city dwellers.
- Assess the impact that urban housing laws, policies, and programs have on specific groups of women.
- Promote women's autonomy, security and ownership of public space through urban planning that promotes relations between neighbours and the shared use and realization of different activities in the same space
- Enhance legal forms of tenure security as distinct from private property such as affordable private and public housing, combined property, and cooperative housing with waiving or minimising taxes and other charges for such collective or ownership.
- Ensure women's access to credit, financing, subsidies with minimal interests and other levies and the means of production, training, improvements, and technology with productive tax waivers.
- Develop indicators on women's housing conditions and access to infrastructure and basic services (water, sanitation, electricity, etc.)
- Demand that administrations' surveys and consultations on urban needs reflect women's particular needs (and the needs of different groups of women), giving particular prominence to the most disadvantaged groups of women
- Conduct surveys on women's specific needs in urban areas regarding housing materials and housing rights (services and security of tenure)
- Urban planning must ensure the access to essential services such as immediate medical for the women and children within their area of residence or work.
- Provision for a space for crèches at the site of work with basic services and congenial atmosphere for children below 6.
- Adapt the schedules and physical facilities of municipal services (such as libraries and medical clinics), to women's' needs (for example, by providing work sheds and home based livelihood, transport for elderly and women with children).
- Acknowledging that workforce from rural areas will be pushed and pulled to urban areas centres for safe migration, placement should be established to ensure remittance.

Dialogue 2: Promoting Social Equity and Inclusiveness:

Data and Budget for Planning

- A pilot study in each city to generate gender disaggregated data on ownership of land and immovable property is crucial to establish the deprivation of women.
- Need to assess the number of homeless women and children on seasonal basis and make special and adequate provisions for their housing and other needs. Budgetary provisions need to be increased to have shelter homes (immediate, medium and long term) to be run by State and NGOs in partnership.
- Need to demand information from States to give detailed information on the number of women with entitlement of any kind and whether they fall under higher, middle, lower or economically weaker sections through Right to Information applications.
- There is a need to generate data on women's access to credit for land and housing and make Plans accordingly to increase resource base of women.
- There is a need for more data on migration to the city and the housing stock required to meet the needs of the migrants who swell the city's workforce and sustain its industries, services and infrastructure.

Legal policy and program framework

- A land and housing allotment policy for women (marginalised and mainstream both), as individuals as well as collective groups and institutions, needs to be drafted through a participatory process involving all stakeholders.
- Women from the lowest income groups, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, minorities, single women (including widowed, unmarried, divorced and deserted women), women with disability etc should be prioritized in allotment of both individual and collective land and property leases. This policy should subsequently be endorsed by the government and implemented.
- Women's resource zones that reserve residential and commercial land for ownership by women's collectives these zones could cater both to the market and marginalised.
- Married women's rights to matrimonial property need to be legislated. Women's ownership of property should also be promoted through more measures to give rebates in taxes and stamp duties to women-owned properties.
- Credit policies for land and housing should be made women friendly with lower interest rates and some more market oriented benefits.

Dialogue 3: Making Cities Productive and Equitable

Women's role in production processes remains hidden. Their role needs to be reflected at the neighbourhood as well as national productivity processes and figures. Singular measures or even a combination of efforts do not bring about a change in the market and patriarchal control of resources. The state machinery must intervene by establishing a specific package that increase women's resource base zone in each municipal ward.

Recommendation :

Promote the recognition of a broad concept of work or economic activity which enables the visibility and revaluation of the role of women as the main (or only) people responsible for unpaid reproductive work and their monetary and non-monetary contributions to economic and social development. Reproductive activities must be reflected in the design of urban development plans and agrarian reform.

As part of area development plans residential, commercial and livelihood services zones under women only ownership need to be demarcated. The pricing for properties and maintenance of these zones should be subsidized by corporations as well as community welfare funds. This will encourage private investors to invest in the name of women members of their family.

Women collective enterprises need to be granted at least 40% of already developed infrastructure to run safe migration, information and care centres as neighbourhood livelihood projects.

Compulsory generation and maintenance of gender disaggregated data and records pertaining to women's ownership of land, women tenants, distribution of ceiling surplus land to women, land available with women's collectives for livelihood.

Training and transport funds need to be made available for civil society and community based groups to take on the setting up and implementing of the neighbourhood projects.

Land Banks of unused land should be set up and women entrepreneur groups should be given priority to accessing land through the land bank to provide services.

Housing should be allotted by the government in the names of landless women with work opportunities created near the house.

Dialogue 4: Harmonising the Built and Natural Environments:

Concerns:

Local governing bodies have limited role in decisions regarding land use, land management and maintenance of records. The bureaucratic control over land and records in practice leads to denial of access over land by women and other marginalized groups. The role of the local governing bodies and institutions should be strengthened for implementation of land reforms by training and financing efforts to promote the individual and collective rights of women over land and productive assets.

Recommendations:

1. 50 % participation of women must be ensured in local governance and similar bodies.
2. The women's local council should be legislated into local governance law and made effective.
3. Resolution of women's local council should be mandatory for acquisition of land belonging to women.
4. Women's local council should be utilized to assess the priorities and concerns of women.
5. Gender integrated budgets and development plans should be made at the local governance level.
6. Land use plans, regional plans, master plans should be made by or in consultation with the local governance council. Land use plans, regional plans, master plans should be made public at the concept stage itself.
7. Government should make provision for availability of technical inputs to women entrepreneurs through local governance council.
8. Compulsory registration of marriages and maintenance of marriage records at local governance level.
9. Compulsory recording and tracking of migration at ward level with active assistance from women's collectives and other organisations.
10. Special Economic Zones (SEZ) should be under the local governing bodies.
11. Disaster preparedness and management

Dialogue 5: Preserving Historical Roots and Soul of the City

Urban renewal process has always lead to devastation of the city's aesthetics. Introduction of any new project or the planning of the city has to be done with due respect to the historicity and integrity of the city. The newer forms of city structures with unmindful planning have lead to a non-negotiable situation for women. Historical spaces have always been used by women as their common spaces such as the water reservoirs, parks, monuments, etc. This has also lead to the destruction of the green cover of the city.

Recommendations:

- Allocation of women in maintaining and participation in any planning with respect to the historical monument and heritage.
- Inviting women collective to maintain and use the historical spaces for the tourism purposes and generate income through it.
- Preservation of traditional water bodies and making women access to natural resources would not only improve the environment but also stop the depletion of the ground water of the city.
- Government's conservation and preservation policies should include the women collective.
- The women collective should be provided with resources to conduct training to other city dwellers on Natural Resource Management.

Dialogue 6: A City for all Generations

- Every city need to maintain a data base on sex, age, and income of the population.
- Comprehensive data collection on the basis of socioeconomic and demographic indicators to assess the need of the city should be a precondition for planning and designing the city under the reforms agenda.
- Create a group at the national level to explore the possibilities of challenging laws or practices that contradict matters of equality

Eviction Prevention:

- Ensure that evictions are fully justified and comply with the particular protection assured to women guaranteed through international standards on human rights
- In cases of eviction, legal, forced or otherwise, promote the timely and appropriate relocation and resettlement of all women to areas where they may continue to access basic services and sustain a livelihood, and assure them access to legal consultation and a fair hearing.
- The resettlement process should be done with full consultation with women of the evicted areas. Any resettlement should enhance the opportunities for the women instead of depriving them further. Adequate spaces under the resettlement scheme should be allocated for women collective.
- The area should have a fully equipped government information centre which should be doubly used as information centre and a single window for all the government schemes for women.

Address gender and generation violence:

- Create inventories of unprotected areas and potentially dangerous neighbourhoods for submission to their respective administrations.
- Include gender and generation violence (actual or potential) as a priority cause for granting official protected housing or its equivalent
- Ensure that supportive groups for women subjected to violence have the necessary training and information on women's housing needs, and that there is a proper coordination of their services with those of housing services
- Formulate a chapter dedicated to the prevention of violence against women to be included in the plans for urban and rural development

Multiple forms of discrimination

- Identify, through inclusive and participatory decision-making processes, the adequate housing and livelihood needs of specific groups of women including: older women; female-headed households; women with different abilities; refugee and displaced women; widowed, divorced

or separated; female victims of violence, armed conflict, or natural disasters; homeless children and youth; migrant, domestic and sex workers; women belonging to racial, ethnic, or national minorities

- Promote and give counsel to the creation of classrooms and workshops among women's associations specifically designed to ensure the participation of all groups of women in housing and income generation matters
- Revise the procedures of public information meetings at the municipal level to verify that the groups and associations that defend the interests of different groups of women are specifically invited to the meetings
- Require that the terms and conditions for the granting of socially protected housing comply specifically with the housing needs of particular groups of women

Inclusion of women in the democratic management of housing and resources:

- Enable the best avenues for all groups of women in discussion and decision-making processes in order to ensure their democratic, equitable, and autonomous access to rural and urban land for housing
- Technically and financially support women's participation in the design, implementation and management of land and housing to ensure that their rights and specific needs are met
- Promote the recognition of women's right to adequate housing understood as a space which is protected, private, and secure, with a sense of belonging and connection to their ancestry, where they may realize their other rights and develop various reproductive and productive activities
- Foster women's relationship to land and natural resources, extolling women's responsibility as water collectors, food producers and in other agricultural labour
- Foster the family and community networks which women belong to and are supported by to avoid destruction of these social networks
- Conduct surveys among women to determine their ideal conditions for habitability of housing, specifically among those who already enjoy social housing (or its equivalent) to detect possible breaches in the planning or execution of housing
- Demand that spaces devoted to housing facilities distinguish a specific percentage dedicated for women
- Require the creation of community spaces within housing areas (especially of official protection) suitable to foster relationship networks between women

Titles to Women on Private Property

- Automatic recording wife's name as co-owner and co-cultivator along with husband in record of rights. This should be linked to compulsory registration of marriages.

- State government must evolve incentive-based programs and schemes to be implemented at local level to encourage landed families to legally give land to women in the household with individual titles.
- Group titles need to be granted to women's collectives to help them access government land for livelihood.
- Rights over land should be awarded as maintenance to women and laws should be amended accordingly.
- Special courts / mobile courts should be gender sensitive and give priority to women especially the marginalised and single women
- There should be representation for women in agencies set up to monitor land distribution by the state especially the marginalised and single women
- Gender sensitization programs should be mandatory for administrative officials at multiple levels, with attendance of training courses being linked to their promotions.
- Set up Women's Resource Centres at the local level to be linked with the State Commission for Women and National Commission for Women to facilitate women's issues around land, labour, migration, legal counselling etc.
- Mandatory powers to National Women's Commission especially in asserting rights of landless and assetless women.
- Strengthen, revitalise and democratise existing women's agencies with budgetary provisions and statutory powers to address issues of women relating to land and property.
- Legal aid and counselling should be made available to women at the local free of cost.
- Fast track courts should be set up with specific jurisdiction of handling women's cases pertaining to civic amenities, land and property.
- Alternate dispute resolution mechanisms i.e. mediation, conciliation and arbitration should be available to women in cases of land disputes and in these mechanisms the presiding officer should be a woman
- Registration fee should be waived if property is registered in the name of woman.

Women's access to common property resources

- Joint membership of male and female heads of families should be made mandatory in co-operative agencies and NRM-based committees like Civic Services Management Committees, Local Budget Committees, water users committees etc.

Woman Caucus Report and Call for Action

- Common land user rights or custodianship should be given to women's collectives through long-term 49-year leases.
- Women's collectives should be given tree, water body, green area lease right to gain usufruct rights.

Personal Laws and Customary Laws

- The customary traditions and practices need to be reviewed and modified to ensure tribal women's access and control over productive land resources as economic and livelihood rights in urban areas linked to rural place of origin.
- Personal Laws should be reviewed and amended to ensure women's equal rights over family and community property.
- Women should have right to enforce partition under personal laws to take control of her share.

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Woman Caucus Report and Call for Action

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Woman Caucus Report and Call for Action

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Woman Caucus Report and Call for Action

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Woman Caucus Report and Call for Action

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Woman Caucus Report and Call for Action

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Woman Caucus Report and Call for Action

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