



***“So long as women do not go cheap
for power, please women more than men.***

***Ask yourself: Will this satisfy
a woman satisfied to bear a child?***

***Will this disturb the sleep
of a woman near to giving birth?”***

Wendell Berry

In honor of Mother’s Day, we wanted to share with you a Pledge to Mother Earth and All the Other Mothers.

Last November, in the face of dysfunctional governments making sorry policies that threaten future generations of all beings, we at SEHN convened the Women’s Congress for Future Generations. We gathered as part of the resistance to government bodies passing laws and budgets that eviscerate the public good and our ability to take care of each other and the things we share. We wanted to show that there are other models than Washington DC and its horse-trading in back rooms dominated by lobbyists for transnational corporations.

We created the Women’s Congress For Future Generations to be a shadow government, modeling new ways to make decisions that affect us all, but especially our children and our children’s children.

The November Women’s Congress was our third event. We convened all three of the Women’s Congresses as an experiment in lifting up women’s voices, preventing the preventable suffering and caring for the future.

We set in motion different principles than those short-sighted notions that guide Washington DC. We knew that we needed to watch out not just for our own children but our neighbor’s children and their great, great grandchildren. Our neighbor included the oak tree, the white pelican and the dragonfly.

We knew that statistics about birth defects, hurricanes, breast cancer or whale beachings translated into stories of suffering. We knew that many of those tragedies could have been prevented. We felt in our bones that if suffering can be prevented that we had a moral obligation to prevent it and that tolerating suffering to grow the economy was a false choice.

So we created the Women’s Congress for future generations to experiment with different policy-making processes that reflected a sane reverence, collaboration, and wisdom.

Each Congress we’ve focused on a different set of questions. We’ve primarily used a caucus format that resembles a [Council of All Beings](#) to answer those questions.

The outcome of the first two Congresses were Declarations. The first was the Declaration of the Rights of Future Generations. The second was the Declaration of the Rights of all Waters. (provide a link to both Declarations)

The outcome of the third Congress was a Pledge to Mother Earth and all the Other Mothers.

This goal of caring for the Mothers arises out of a poem by Wendell Berry where he asks,

*“So long as women do not go cheap
for power, please women more than men.
Ask yourself: Will this satisfy
a woman satisfied to bear a child?
Will this disturb the sleep
of a woman near to giving birth?”*

In this recent Congress we examined what environmental problems and social injustices disturb the sleep of a woman near to giving birth. We asked if our policies will satisfy a woman satisfied to bear a child. We wanted to make policies by asking if this would harm a mother or her children.

Congress participants chose a major domain of human activity such as agriculture or medicine and agreed to become a guardian of that domain. The caucuses returned with pledges that we synthesized into a single pledge.

We invite you to read this and see if one of the guilds calls to you. Imagine this pledge as a plan of work, as guidance for policies that we need to adopt.

We are facing difficult and dire times. In Washington Congress has passed federal tax legislation that is a transgression against future generations and the poor among us. We hope that the work of the Women’s Congress is a model of a different way of making policy that alleviates the fears of women, of parents and grandparents, that shows future generations that we stand with them and won’t rob them of their heritage, that reflects our best and most creative, generous selves.

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