

# WILDAF WEST AFRICA

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## Newsletter

Women in Law & Development in Africa

Number 15 – July 2003

### EDITORIAL

After Benin, Burkina Faso, Togo and Ghana, this publication of the WILDAF West Africa Newsletter is a Senegal Special. It contains among others, an article that will greatly enlighten you on the women's rights situation in this country and the activities of the network with respect to the women's rights promotion. It also contains an article in which it positions itself against a recent initiative by a group of Muslim associations of Senegal aimed at adopting a new code of rules governing the status and capacities of persons in replacement for the present Family Code in force since 1973.

Promises are made to be kept! In our previous edition we informed you of the holding of the second meeting of governmental experts followed by that of the ministers on the draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights relating to Women's Rights and did promise to provide you with an account of the two meetings in our future editions. This publication has an extensive coverage of this event. We also informed you of the departure of Suzanne OUELLET, Communications Officer at the WILDAF West Africa Sub- Regional office. The editorial board of the newsletter met her and she granted a short interview concerning her experiences of the past two years working for WILDAF and consequently African women.

This edition as usual, offers stakeholders involved in the implementation of the «*sensitisation and capacity building of judicial and extra-judicial stakeholders for the effective implementation of women's rights in West Africa*» project, the opportunity to talk about the impact of the project in their day to day work.

The «Did you know that ...?» heading of this edition informs us of the laudable initiative of the African Women's Development Fund. This Fund has just established another fund called the "Solidarity Fund". This new fund will assist African Women to take part in exchange programmes, conferences, seminars, and workshops and will thus avail them the opportunity for networking and exchanging of information which are crucial for the reinforcement of the African Women's Movement.

Good reading !

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**The Wildaf West Africa Newsletter is also available on our website**

### WARNING

**Our website address is changed.  
It is now: [www.wildaf-ao.org](http://www.wildaf-ao.org)**

**E-mail address: [wildaf@cafe.tg](mailto:wildaf@cafe.tg)**

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## RESTORING WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EFFECTIVELY APPLYING THEM. WILDAF/ SENEGAL ON THE MOVE

Of the ten (10) million inhabitants that constitute the total population of Senegal, 52% are women. The literacy rate for persons of 15 years and who know how to read and write is around 39.1% (51%) for men and 28.9% for women according to the results of ESAM II (Senegalese Homes Survey). Is it possible to develop a country by leaving over half the population high and dry? We, together with everybody else think that it is no. WILDAF/Senegal has since its establishment in 1992 been determined to strive together with women and for women in other that this lack of education ceases to be a pretext for violating or totally ignoring their rights and depriving them of their role of major development stakeholders.

### WILDAF/Senegal

The national chapter is one of the oldest circles of the dismemberment of the original WILDAF through its establishment in 1992 under the auspices of the late Mrs. Seyni DIAGNE who was the first President. Since then, WILDAF Senegal has grown in terms of experience and members, distinguished by their dynamism and commitment. Today, it has over hundred individual members of varying disciplines (traditional and religious rulers, doctors, police officers, lawyers, and grassroots women, etc..) and about ten NGOs, formal and informal associations and groups. Here are some of the member organizations: African Network for Integrated Development (RADI), African Human Rights Defense Meeting (RADDHO), Urban Areas Women's Programme (PROFEMU), Association of Senegalese Women Doctors (AFMS), AFDEA, AFDES, FEFGA, etc..

Legal status of the Senegalese woman:

Senegal is one of the African countries whose law better guarantees gender equity. It has ratified all the international

standards recognizing women's rights as well as the fundamental human rights and reaffirming gender equity before the law. The constitution that emanated from the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2001 referendum reaffirms the principle in its preamble and retains the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as an integral part of our legislation.

The right of the woman to land-ownership and the prohibition of forced and early marriage are for the first time affirmed in the preamble of this latest Constitution. Considering the upsurge in violence against women and under pressure from women's and human rights organizations, the Senegalese government adopted a law in January 1999 punishing violence against women most severely. This same law furthermore, provided for new offences, which until then were neither provided for nor curbed.

In spite of all the constitutional and legal guarantees, women continue to suffer all forms of violence thus draining them of their contribution to the development of the country. The existence of some discriminatory legal provisions contributes to this. The Senegalese woman cannot transfer the nationality to her child; only the Senegalese father has this right irrespective the nationality of the woman. The customs and excise department is still reserved for the male sex only and the working woman is double levied on the only basis of Article 152 of the Family Code, which stipulates that the husband is the head of the family. From this, the legislator deduces that the woman has no responsibility and she is even prohibited from catering for the needs of her husband and children. This is the basis of the struggle of civil society organizations to obtain the replacement of the paternal power in the Family Code with the notion of parental authority from the authorities.

The demand if it is made will solve the double taxation of the working woman. However, violation of women's rights is basically explained by the fact that in our society, we continue to believe in the supremacy of the man over the woman. She remains confined to household duties and still has no say with respect to decisions concerning the family or the children.

If the school attendance rate of girls has significantly increased, through the major mobilization campaigns of the government structures and the civil society for the enrollment of girls, keeping them in school is an entire different problem. In fact, the education of boys is preferred to the detriment of that of girls. Women continue to till lands that belong to men and they still find it difficult to access to credit.

### Activities of WILDAF/Senegal:

Since its establishment in 1992, the national network has tirelessly continued to work for the better grasping not only of women's rights but also for their revision and effective implementation. WILDAF/Senegal quickly brought the idea of the training of para-legals at the national level in order to handle issues of violence against women. Through debates organized for women's associations and radio programmes, women are better aware of their rights and accept to report when they fall victims of violation. In partnership with the Belgian organisation VECO based in Dakar, WILDAF has trained facilitators on violence against women. These trainees from the East Pikine women's union, a community situated at the outskirts of Dakar, were supervised for six months by the WILDAF coordination for the successful circulation of the knowledge acquired.

WILDAF/Senegal is also working at the capacity building of its members. Hence, thirty leaders of member associations of the network were trained in legal studies in 2000.

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## RESTORING WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EFFECTIVELY APPLYING THEM. WILDAF/ SENEGAL ON THE MOVE

Continued from page 2

They were charged with imparting their knowledge acquired, through the organisation of knowledge-sharing sessions within their respective structures and debates with women's groups of their communities.

Within the framework of the implementation of the sub-regional project supported by the European Union, judicial stakeholders such as judges, lawyers, police officers and extra judicial stakeholders such as religious and traditional leaders, and doctors were sensitized and trained on violence against women, CEDAW, gender relations and the management of women victims of violence. In undertaking these activities, WILDAF hopes for awareness on the part of these targets of the important role they have to play in the formal and informal settlement of disputes involving women.

WILDAF/Senegal and the members of its network are furthermore very active in the national consultative committee on women for the organisation of the annual editions of the Senegalese Women's fortnight. This year, two member associations organised panels, one on reproductive health, and the other on violence against women, conducted respectively by PROFEMU and CLVF. The network itself is a member of the Scientific Committee of the Women's Right Sub-Commission for the Evaluation of the second National Women's Plan of Action (PANAF), a theme that was selected this year for the fortnight. The president of WILDAF Senegal Mrs. Mariame COULIBALY was a member of the delegation led by the honorable Minister of Family and National Unity to participate in the 47<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Commission on the Condition of the Woman held in New York from 5<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> March 2003. The themes of the session focused on fundamental rights and violence against women, the use of ICT by women for their promotion.

Within the scope of the annual 16 days campaign on violence against women, WILDAF/Senegal organised a panel on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2002 on violence against women. The religious aspect was explained in detail by very prominent personalities of the country and the legal aspect by resource persons of the network.

In Senegal, it is the WILDAF network that chairs the Oversight Committee of the Additional Protocol to the African Charter relating to Women's Rights. A wide-ranging information campaign of government institutions and civil societies organisations on the process of drafting and adoption of the said Protocol was embarked upon. The network took part in the second meeting of experts of African government followed by that of the Ministers. These two bodies have adopted the draft protocol and the last stage is its

examination by the Heads of states and government that will take place in July 2003 in Maputo. Within the scope of its programme "Advocacy, for the implementation of CEDAW and follow up", UNIFEM has just entrusted the material and scientific organisation of a sub-regional trainers training workshop aimed at building the advocacy capacities of government members, parliamentarians, and the civil society. This workshop will bring together 30 participants from Benin, Burkina, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Togo and Senegal. It will take place in Dakar from 30<sup>th</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2003. WILDAF will collaborate with RADI for the organisation of this workshop.

**Oulèye DEMBA DEME**  
**Programme Officer**  
**WILDAF/Senegal**

### EVENTS - EVENTS

**The protocol to the African Charter on Human and peoples' Rights, a priority confirmed by the Second ministerial Conference on Human Rights in Africa.**

After the Grand Bay (Mauritius) in April 1999, African human rights Ministers met in Kigali, Rwanda from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> May 2003. The WILDAF/FeDDAF sub-regional office attended this second Ministerial Conference within the framework of the ongoing lobbying activities for the adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter relating to women's rights in Africa.

At the end of the meeting and after giving an overview of the human rights situation in Africa, the conference adopted a declaration in which it appealed to institutions of the Africa Union to take all the necessary measures for the adoption, signing and ratification of the Protocol. The implementation of the Kigali declaration shall be evaluated during the next conference on gender, which will henceforth be a regular activity of the African Union.

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# Mobilising ourselves to preserve our gains

It is a new code of rules governing the status and capacities of persons that the group of Islamic associations of Senegal is proposing in replacement of the present Family Code that has been in force since 1<sup>st</sup> January 1973. This draft code is supposed to govern both the extra-patrimonial law as well as the patrimonial law of the senegalese family.

In other words, it should apply to all issues pertaining to marriage and inheritance. For it to be operational, it would require the establishment of new jurisdictions to be especially responsible for the application of family law.

Yet so far, the Family Code in force in Senegal is a pride even it remains perfectible. This is evidenced by the numerous neighbours of the sub-region who wish to build upon it to develop their own code.

According to the initiators, the new code of rules governing the status and capacities of persons would apply to only Senegalese Muslim men and women. This runs the risk of being a serious affront considering the other religions represented in the country; in fact even if the Moslems constitute the majority of the population (94%), it would be an aberration to establish two separate codes, one applicable to Moslems only and the other to Christians and others.

So therefore, which code will apply to mixed couples and to the children born of such unions? Have the precursors of this new code asked themselves about the risk of affronts, the consequences that this could entail for social unity,

A real contradiction! A real setback to the rule of law!

In fact, if the major argument of the precursors of the new draft code for the rules governing the status and capacities of persons remains the majority of Moslems, the fact still remains that the difficulties in respect of its application are real.

How can you think of establishing new jurisdiction when the existing ones are facing operational difficulties: as evidenced by the recent strike of court clerks.

Also however, and especially at the time when the country should concentrate on solving other pressing problems concerning the populace (the Casamance is still bathing in a war with its trail of deaths and destruction, Senegal is still struggling to be an emerging country, the rural world still depends on the tricks of the weather, education is in crises, urban drift still continues to drifting to the capital with its consequences, infant and maternal mortality on the rise, etc.).

Why would we accept to throw in the towel after so much efforts both at the national level (introduction of new provisions in favour of the promotion of the woman in the constitution, voting of the 1999 law, the draft law on parental authority) and the international level with the impending adoption of the additional protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights relating to women's rights?

Some men have always, without even first of all taking the pain to read and understand the spirit and for that matter the letter of the Family Code, held that it is a document that protects only women. Meanwhile, it is important to understand the code in force as a Family Code and not a women's code. It should be also mentioned that several privileges are even accorded men in the Family Code. An example is Article 239 that stipulates the superiority of the man over the woman.

Basically, this draft code of rules governing the status and capacities of persons jeopardises many legal rights that constitute significant achievement for the family in general and women in particular.

As an example, we can mention the repudiation prohibited in the Family Code, which is re-appearing in this draft code; which constitutes a serious breach, an insult to the dignity of women. The same goes for the adoption prohibited by this draft code, which fails to conform with the values and freedom of choice recognized to the individual.

With respect to the issue of inheritance, it should be acknowledged that the code in force is a consensus code, the fruit of a long exacting work among the different strata of the population. (lawyers, traditional and religious leaders, administrators.) So therefore, the choice had always been allowed between the inheritance devolution of modern law and that of Islamic law.

Considering this situation, Senegalese women sounded the alarm bell to the Head of State.

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# Mobilising ourselves to preserve our gains!

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His Excellency, Abdoulaye WADE, Head of State of Senegal in this regard, made a pronouncement that honours not only our people but every well-thinking person desirous of preserving social unity and democracy in his country.

In fact the Head of State, through a declaration assured us of his disagreement with the draft code of rules governing the status and capacities of persons of the family being raised for sometime now by a group of Moslems.

According to the Head of State, quoted by the commentator of the «Vieux SAVANE» day in the southern daily newspaper edition N° 2033 of 20<sup>th</sup> June 2003, « what urgency is there to warrant the jeopardising of the Family Code which is a consensus code, the fruit of a very and arduous preparatory work of about ten years»

Apart from the 1962 crises and the arms struggle in Casamance, Senegal has experienced no major upheaval to warrant the amendment of and indeed to disrupt its institutional architecture. Rather on the contrary, it is one of the rare countries in the sub-region to enjoy a relative political, economic and social stability; from independence till date, no one is looked down upon for his religious convictions. Everyone can marry, organise his heritage as he/she wishes, and worship at the mosque, the church or the shrine.

So what is the urgency for wanting to suddenly change the order of things, disrupt this balance with the risk of awakening the old demons of division?

Very much up against the proponents of the draft code of rules governing the status and capacities of persons, the President of the Republic opined that they insert it into their electioneering campaign programmes, if they so desired. The Head of State as a man of culture and law, was able to take up his responsibilities by backing his assertions with arguments not only on the field of law but also in relation with the relevance of the Holy Koran on the field. He recalled that there are two ways of amending the law, given that the Family Code is a law. There is the Executive or Parliament that can submit a draft bill. He also affirms that the Executive or the Government he heads has no intention of doing so. The surprising aspect is that this code of rules governing the status and capacities of persons was submitted in 1972 and rejected during the time of President Senghor. Why did its precursors allow Senghor to implement the present code for 30 years, and then Abdou DIOUF his successor for 20 Years without crying fowl?

Islam should not be used to blindfold us because we also know Islam because we are Muslims.

There are many practices in the Holy Koran that are not practiced in Arab countries. Who in Senegal today will go on air (television) to say that women who commit adultery should be flogged, or that thieves should have their hands cut off? Meanwhile this is decreed in the Holy Koran. We therefore leave out what we want and wake up the next morning to design one's Sharia. This chaotic situation must be stopped! We need to act fast to seek solutions to the development of Africa, which is of concern to all of us.

Today, we can consider ourselves fortunate, because the custodian of the Constitution has identified himself with this problem that has disturbed the sleep of Senegalese women for some time now by stating that and I quote «...for as long as I remain the President of Senegal, the Family Code shall never be amended».

We are of the view that this problem affecting us today spread to other countries in future; hence, our belief that we remain not only more than ever vigilant, but also united in our actions for the promotion and protection of women's rights in Africa.

**Mariame COULIBALY**  
**Officer in charge, Network**  
**and Civil Society**  
**Department of RADI**  
**President of**  
**Wildaf/Senegal**

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# Brief portrait of Suzanne Ouellet

## 1. Suzanne can you briefly enlighten us on the terms of your mandate with WILDAF/FeDDAF?

My mandate was to improve the internal and external communications system of WILDAF/FeDDAF West Africa. The major tasks of this two-year mandate were: taking an inventory of the network's communication system and the designing of a communication enhancement project, the boosting and coordination of the publication of the *WILDAF West Africa Newsletter*, Programmes and projects management and monitoring assistance, the restructuring of the Website, and the coordination of the production of national network directories.

## 2. How did a young lady from Quebec like you find herself at a post of communications officer in Africa?

It is the culmination point of a personal course and a career orientation embarked upon in the wee hours of my thirty years! I moved from television production to a growing involvement over time with various organisations working for human rights, to finally decide join my humble professional skills with my militant convictions and a dream: that of working in Africa. It is through the intervention of one or another voluntary worker in communication that WILDAF/FeDDAF had addressed to the Canadian NGO CUSO that I was able to join the network.

## 3. What do you hope to have left at WILDAF/FeDDAF after these two years spent with us?

Apart from the communication working materials, I hope I have impacted at least a little of my conviction that fluid and rich communications are the guarantee for the success of the work of the network. It is therefore the responsibility of each of the stakeholders of the network to strive to give and take in order that the network really becomes vibrant. If this message has reached the stakeholders of the network, I would have the feeling of having achieved an important objective.

## 4. On returning to Quebec how would your militant convictions materialise?

First of all I am going to start my masters degree in communication this autumn, specialising in international development. This full time studies will still leave me with a little I hope, to continue to involve myself in the Women's Network of Amnesty International and also, Equiterre (a Canadian organisation devoted to the promotion of both ecological and socially equitable collective and individual choices)

One thing is certain: the two years that I have spent with WILDAF/FeDDAF will no doubt remain engraved in my mind. Two years of sharing and discoveries, two years of building bridges across the Atlantic...

**Suzanne, thanks.**

## EVENTS-EVENTS-EVENTS

### Awarding of Scholarships to the civil society for the PrepCom3 of the WSIS

**The international community is organizing a World Summit on information society which would take place in two stages : Geneva in December 2003 and Tunis two years later.**

In order to encourage the participation of civil society entities of developing countries, the organizers are announcing that a limited number of scholarships has been put at the disposal of participants. Interested candidates must register for the conference on the web site and fill out the scholarship form on the same internet site (financing heading): the forms of applicants should be dully filled out, signed and approved by the candidates nomination officer of their organization. They should be sent by fax to : [fellowship@geneva2003.org](mailto:fellowship@geneva2003.org).

Categories chosen for candidates, selection criteria, selection process, details of boarding and lodging : consult the website: <http://www.geneva2003.org><http://www.geneva2003.org>  
[http://www.geneva2003.org/wsis/index\\_c02\\_3\\_13.htm](http://www.geneva2003.org/wsis/index_c02_3_13.htm)[http://www.geneva2003.org/wsis/index\\_c02\\_3\\_13.htm](http://www.geneva2003.org/wsis/index_c02_3_13.htm).

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**You have participated in information and sensitisation open days, in training workshops organised in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Senegal or in Togo.**

**This space is yours, express yourself here, exchange experiences after the activity in which you participated**

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**Tit-bits - Tit-bits - Tit-bits - Tit-bits - Tit-bits - Tit-bits - Tit-bits - Tit-bits –**  
**MINUTES OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> MEETING OF EXPERTS AND MINISTERS ON THE DRAFT PROTOCOL TO THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS RELATING TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN AFRICA**

The second meeting of Experts and Ministers on the draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights relating to Women's rights in Africa was held from the 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2003 followed by that of the Ministers, 27<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, at the African Union Conference Centre in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), to study and finalise the text of the protocol for its submission to the next Summit of Heads of States and Governments scheduled for July 2003 in Maputo, Mozambique.

41 member States attended the meeting as well as 34 organisations as observers.

Mrs. Clémence R. ILBOUDO, Chairperson and Head of the Burkina Faso delegation officially opened the meeting. In her short address, she stressed on the objective of the meeting, which emanated from the decision of the first meeting of experts held in November 2001.

On behalf of the African Union Commission, Ambassador Said Djinnit, acting Commissioner responsible for peace, security and political affairs, welcomed the experts, and stressed on the need to study the three Articles in brackets and finalise the draft Protocol for submission to the next AU Summit in Maputo.

After an in-depth study of the Articles in brackets and the Articles concerning which reservations had been expressed as well as the necessary amendments and withdrawal of some reservations, the experts adopted the Articles concerned.

With respect to the Articles requiring improvements or reformulation, the delegations identified the following Articles 4.2(m), 6(d), 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20, 21 and 23. These same delegations split up into groups to study and make amendment proposals that were submitted to the plenary by their respective spokes-persons.

You are member of WILDAF/FeDDAF West African Network and wish to publicize your activities? Your realisations? Your association ?

Send us your text (Long or short, what counts is the content!) by e-mail to WILDAF West Africa to the following address: [wildaf@cafe.tg](mailto:wildaf@cafe.tg). The deadline for the reception of the texts are : august, 25, 2003 (for october 2003 issue) November 24, 2003 (for January 2004 issue)

Who are the Newsletter readers? The Wildaf West Africa Newsletter is distributed to WILDAF West Africa members in 9 countries of the sub-region, our partners in Europe and America. BUT ALSO to judges, lawyers, medical doctors, law enforcement agents, traditional rulers and religious leaders

**For any question or comment, don't hesitate to contact us**

In his brief closing remark, Ambassador Said Djinnit, expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the experts for the work done over the three days. He expressed the hope that, even if there still remained a lot to be done with respect to the improvement of the text, at the level of the ministerial meeting, certain reservations expressed by member States on the draft Protocol will be withdrawn and the text duly adopted.

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### **EVENTS-EVENTS**

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#### **State of the World's Mothers 2003**

A report published by Save the Children deals tens of millions of mothers and children whose lives have been destroyed by armed conflicts. A list of protection against conflict analysis the 40 most dangerous conflict zones in the world and an "Mothers Index" provides information on the conditions provided to women and children in 117 developing countries of the world.

<http://www.savethechildren.org/sowm2003/index.shtml>

**MINUTES OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> MEETING OF EXPERTS AND MINISTERS ON THE DRAFT  
PROTOCOL TO THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS  
RELATING TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN AFRICA**

**Continued from page 7**

The Ministers devoted the next two days to the study of the Protocol.

Ambassador Mahamat Habib Doutoum, acting Commissioner, on behalf of Mr. Amara Essy, Acting Chairman of the African Union Commission, officially declared the meeting of ministers open. In his opening address, he recalled the importance that member States attach to human rights and for that matter, the position reserved for the observance and respect of women's rights in the Constituent Act of the African Union as an essential component of human development. He also recalled that the values of civilisation, be they religious or cultural, to some extent, have the tendency of rigidly assigning specific roles and duties to men and women, often limiting the participation of women in political life and even purely and simply ignoring them. The Protocol, he said, will modify the cultural behaviours and mentalities inherent to the ancestors and will form a basis for redesigning the conceptions of the role and dignity of women in modern African societies.

He insisted on the fact that, once adopted, the Protocol will be one of the international instruments and will play a role in the promotion of women's rights and consequently, their contribution to development.

Like the meeting of experts, the meeting of ministers was presided over by Burkina Faso in the person of Mrs. Mariam Marie Gisèle Guigma, Minister for the Promotion of Women. Taking the floor, she first of all expressed her gratitude to all for the confidence reposed in her and her country, and undertook to conduct the deliberations of the meeting to a successful end, with the cooperation of all the delegations. She mentioned that the meeting was being held at the ministerial level to study the work done by the experts during their first and second meetings.

She expressed her gratitude to the experts for the quality of the document submitted to the ministers, both in terms of substance and thoroughness. She congratulated African countries for having drawn up an efficient legal instrument for the promotion and protection of women's rights in Africa.

At the close of its deliberations, the ministerial meeting adopted the 32 Articles featured in the draft Protocol (the draft protocol of the two meetings may be consulted on our site at the following address: [www.wildaf-ao.org](http://www.wildaf-ao.org).) However, some delegations expressed reservations on certain points of the protocol. The ministerial meeting recommended that the said draft Protocol be studied by the competent organs of the African Union and adopted by the African Union Conference in Maputo (Mozambique) in July 2003.

**GOOD WEBSITES**

**Women in Africa**

**DO YOU SURF ON INTERNET ? HERE ARE INTERESTING SITES**

Annotated Guide of Internet resources on women in Africa.

<http://www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/women.html>

**UN INSTRAW GAINS Database**

<http://www.un-instraw.org/en/resources/index.html>

INSTRAW is the United Nations Institute devoted to serve as a vehicle at the international level to promote and undertake research and training programmes to contribute to the advancement of women and gender equality worldwide. INSTRAW assist the efforts of intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations. INSTRAW's Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS) is an innovative electronic system serving as a "virtual community" for collaborative research, training, networking and information sharing

An online library of over 1000 gender-related resources from around the world, including: bibliographic references to articles, books, research reports, and conference papers; summaries of and links to online documents; contact information for gender research and training organizations; websites that focus on gender issues and discussion forums and newsletters. Some issues dealt with are: Gender aspects of conflict and peace, gender and financing for development.

From *La toile d'elles* 2003 (by Femmes-Afrique). Femmes-afrique@enda.sn

***If you know Internet sites which can help WILDAF members in their work don't hesitate, share this information!***

## **DID YOU KNOW THAT...?**

**African women's development fund** launched a new fund called "**Solidarity Fund**". It is a new project for the purpose of creating another source of funding to its present and future beneficiaries and to enable them to undertake activities capable of promoting apprenticeship and the exchange of experiences at the local, national and international levels. To this end, the Solidarity Fund will assist African Women in taking part in exchange programmes, conferences, seminars, and workshops and will thus provide them with opportunities for networking and exchange of information which are indispensable to the strengthening of the African Women's Movement.

The Solidarity Fund is for Local, national, sub-regional and regional African Women's organisations in search of funds for sending their representatives to strategic workshops, seminars, or conferences in or outside Africa.

Applications for the Solidarity Fund may be addressed any time but at least three months ahead of the date of the programme for which the funding is being sought.

**For further information, kindly contact:**

**The Grants Administrator  
The African Women's  
Development Fund  
Aviation House, aviation Road  
PMB CT 89 Cantonments,  
Accra, Ghana  
Tel: 00233 21 78 04 76  
Tel/Fax: 00233 21 78 25 02  
Email: awdf@awdf.org or  
awdf2000@yahoo.co.uk**

## **NETWORK NEWS**

### **African women organising themselves more to make their voices heard...**

From Durban (28 - 30 June 2002) to Maputo (23 and 24 June 2003) through Dakar (24 - 26 April 2003), African women are organising themselves to make their voices heard within the institutions of the African Union. WILDAF/FeDDAF West Africa took active part in these three meetings.

Through these meetings, African Women's networks aim at better organising themselves for a better participation in the deliberation of the African Union and the better consideration of gender issues by the Union.

The first opportunity they want to seize by all means in order to have an impact is the next Head of States and Governments Summit scheduled for Maputo in Mozambique from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> July this year. They have consequently adopted a declaration which recommends inter alia to the Summit: the adoption, signing, and ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter relating to Women's rights in Africa; the adoption of an African Union policy on gender and strategies for its integration into the work of the Union and the establishment of a coordination framework of this initiative; the establishment of a specialised committee on women and gender; the setting-up of a working group responsible for ensuring that adequate solutions are sort to the specific problems facing poor women and this, within the framework of the poverty reduction strategy of NEPAD; the quick implementation of paragraphs 132-137 of NEPAD concerning agriculture; the adoption of a law, concrete action policy and programme to reduce the high rate of maternal mortality.

Through these initiatives, Africa women are demonstrating that they are aware of the need for them to speak with one voice and thus avail themselves of the means of being listened to. There is no doubt that these actions will enable them obtain from the Heads of States Summit, concrete decisions assuring them of a better participation in the decision making structures of the African Union and an improvement in the condition of women.

With over 50% representation at the African Union Commission decided in Durban 2002, let us hope that with Maputo 2003, African women will make a real forward leap.

**Kafui KUWONU,  
Sub-regional programme officer**

# NETWORK NEWS

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU 2 PROJECT

We publish below an excerpt of a monitoring report on the implementation of the «*sensitisation and capacity building of judicial and extra-judicial stakeholders for the effective implementation of women's rights in West Africa*» project. This report is based on a mission of a consultancy firm commissioned by the European Union to Togo. The monitoring also covered the activities of both the West African Regional Bureau, coordinator of the project and those of WILDAF-Togo, one of the beneficiary national networks.

This excerpt highlights the strong points and weak points of the project as observed by the monitor. If upon examination, it appears that there is far more strengths than weaknesses, it is to the credit of all whom from far and near are involved in the implementation of this project. We remain focused on the results we hope to achieve namely: a better respect, observance and enjoyment of women's rights in our sub-region. To this end, we appeal to all, (coordination at the national level, target groups involved, etc.) to redouble their efforts in order to ensure that the present weak points identified will be rectified and will also become strong points.

### SUMMARY OF THE CONCLUSIONS \*\*

1. Relevance and quality of the conception:	<b>a</b>
2. Effectiveness of the implementation till date:	<b>b</b>
3. Present efficiency:	<b>b</b>
4. Present impact:	<b>a</b>
5. Potential viability:	<b>b</b>

\*\* a = very satisfactory; b = satisfactory ; c = problems; d = serious problems

### The strong points of the project

#### 1. Relevance and quality of the conception.

The project is very relevant and aims at sensitising and building the capacities of a critical mass of judicial and extra-judicial stakeholders, namely: Judges, lawyers, police officers, doctors, and traditional and religious authorities. The original conception is well planned; the specific and general objectives are correctly defined and presented in a logical framework. The expected outcomes are focused around three basic issues: i) The sensitisation of the target groups on women's rights; ii) The good application of the legal provisions pertaining to women's rights; iii) The definition of the correct procedures to follow during the admittance of distressed women.

#### 2. Effectiveness of the implementation till date.

The project identified 5 strategic axes: (i) achievement of the collaboration of governmental partners and representatives of the target groups ; (ii) preparation of sensitisation materials ; (iii) the establishment of a framework of exchange among the target groups ; (iv) drawing up of survey modalities on the consideration of women's rights; (v) the association of FeDDAF members to the project. 27 sensitisation materials were prepared and are being used by the project in the 7 countries concerned.

14 national sensitisation workshops for doctors, traditional and religious authorities were run between August and December 2002 and 10 workshops for Judges and Lawyers have taken place since November 2002. Negotiations are currently on going in each country for the integration of the modules drawn up into the training programmes of the trainee target groups. Each national chapter has a programme officer capable of seeing to the programming and sourcing for funding, outside the project.

### 3. Present efficiency.

The first group (persons having participated in the activities) has access to the results and services of the project and it is as though they are already putting them to good use. Activity 5 linked to survey and the validation of results on the ground is yet to take off, it is too early to access the extent to which the second group is conversant with the materials...According to evidence gathered during this mission to Togo, the entire beneficiaries have a good perception of the intervention, in spite of the initial reluctance. The project attaches great importance to the association of sector Ministries of the target groups without whom the project implementation capacities as well as the potential viability of the intervention would have significantly reduced. Both the participants as well as the trained peers can therefore be assured of the tacit agreement of their authorities to participate in the sensitisation. Facilitators recruited to conduct the workshop are professionals from each target group (in exception of the traditional and religious rulers) a situation that enhances communication with the target group.

### 4. Present Impact.

It is too early to state the extent to which the OVI (Objectively Verifiable Indicator) relating to the percentage of women who have enjoyed their rights after a counselling by the sensitised stakeholders has been achieved. It is as though the project is contributing to the achievement of the general objective. In Togo, the Young Lawyers Union just elected a 7 member-Executive Board (including two women) in March 2003. All the 7 members participated in the workshops of the project and are conscious of ensuring a good application of women's rights in Togo. Several beneficiaries have integrated the materials of the programme into the various fields of their professional lives, especially traditional leaders who use them spontaneously in daily and weekly ceremonies without waiting for women's rights to be violated. Several religious leaders organise religious widowhood ceremonies to enable widows to live out their mourning in dignity and avoid the sufferings of a traditional widowhood. The establishment of the "rapid alert chain" at the local level, which is in for women when their rights are violated, will reinforce the viability of the results.

*Continued on page 11*

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# Sensitisation and capacity building of judicial and extra-judicial stakeholders for the effective implementation of women's rights in West Africa

**Statements of stakeholders that can not be ignored in the implementation of women's rights**

**MRS. SOLADOYE ABIOLA, CHIEF MAGISTRATE at TINUBU SQUARE MAGISTRATE COURT in LAGOS, NIGERIA**

.....I also have another case of battered women and child, the battered woman reported to zone 2, I educated her on the procedure to follow and the police did their work and forwarded the docket to the Attorney Generals Department.

Every week, I educate lawyers during the weekly district meeting. We then review cases, especially those involving women.

« « « « « «

**ALFA TEMITOPE, a Moslem religious leader in Lagos ? Nigeria**

Through discussions and disputes resolution, I educate people individually while I give them the sensitisation material. Many of them are men because I think that they are the ones that need to be sensitised because they are the very ones who deny women of their rights.

« « « « « « « « « «

**Diallo/Zoromé Mariam; Commissioner of Police, Boulmiougou Police Station, Ouagadougou Burkina Faso**

On my return from the training, I organised a restitution day concerning all that I learnt on women's rights with my superior and all my colleagues at the Police Station. This is to share the knowledge acquired on women's rights

I then held individual and group discussions with some colleagues who are very sympathetic to the protection of the rights of women victims of violence. Together we have set up a committee for the defence of women victims of violence at the police station. I was also able to organise restitution meetings with other colleagues in two other police stations in order to share the knowledge acquired with them, and to encourage them to lay particular emphasis on the resolution of cases of violence against women.

Hence, in terms of tangible impact, I can mention: the establishment of a committee for the defence of women victims of violence at the police station, which exclusively handles complaints lodged by women and which observes the following slogan "no to the bullying of women"

**Néya Ali, Lawyer in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso**

« - All the law chambers present at the training have since made financial concessions to enable women whose rights have been violated to have access to their services; some even defend the most deprived women free of charge.

- The weeks 24th February to 10th March were reserved for free legal consultations for women victims of violence across the whole country,  
- Contacts will be made with the future President of the bar, for the use of part of the Legal Assistance Fund for deprived women and the children and to extend it especially to women victims of violence.

An increasingly high number of lawyers are desirous of militating in women's rights defence organisations especially that of WILDAF ».

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## News from our network IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU 2 PROJECT

**Continued from page 10**

### **Effectiveness of the implementation till date**

The project faced 3 major constraints: (i) only 80% of the initial budget estimates for the first 12 months was released to the project according to the support agreement. As a result the project could not organise all the sensitisation workshops according to the implementation schedule; (ii) the costs of producing the sensitisation materials were above the estimates of the project; (iii) the lapses observed in the de-multiplication system through which participants to sensitisation workshops are to give a number of materials to their colleagues (trained peers) before returning a monitoring form indicating the number and identity of the latter to the project. The forms are well designed but are often wrongly filled and therefore less accurate.

It is too early to analyse the extent to which the second group is conversant with the material, but considering the lapses occurring in the de-multiplication system, it is clear that some trained peers would of course not receive the materials.

