

WILDAF WEST AFRICA

Newsletter

Women in Law and Development in Africa

N°18 - April 2004

EDITORIAL

This new WiLDAF West Africa Newsletter gives some information on the fight against female genital mutilation in Guinea. You will see that the Cellule de coordination sur les Pratiques Traditionnelles Affectant la santé des Femmes et des Enfants, a member of WiLDAF/FeDDAF-Guinea, works hard to stop this practice.

You will also find numerous informations on the representation of women in politic, an important issue for women while the African Union is implementing new structures and institutions like the Panafrican Parliament. The WiLDAF/FeDDAF-West Africa went to the last session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York. The organisation have taken the opportunity to make a statement that will soon be available on its website. A short text gives positions for and against a fifth World Conference on Women and the evaluation of the Beijing platform which will occur in 2005.

Last, the President of the regional WiLDAF/FeDDAF board, Mrs Dorcas Coker-Appiah, sits on the CEDAW committee. We asked her to explain how the committee works and how reports of countries which have ratified the Convention are evaluated.

WiLDAF is reminding you that this publication is yours and that you own it. This is the last of a series of topics dealt with each country where the West African office is present. **We are waiting for suggestions from you to determine the direction of the next topics which you wish to be developed in this newsletter.** Please feel free to contact us by E-mail (wildaf@cafe.tg).

Have a nice reading!

Colette LELIÈVRE
Communication Officer

CONTENTS

In Guinea:

Female genital mutilation, a daily fight to eradicate this practice in Guinea for the rights of women and girls.....2

An Imam of Koloma in collision with CPTAFE2

Representation of women in the delegations to the Pan-African Parliament.....5

Beijing + 10 or a fifth World Conference on Women.....7

Everything you want to know about the CEDAW committee.....9

Sections:

Woman of Honour..... 3

Good websites 6

Network News 7-8

Did you know that?..... 10

News Flash: African and international news 11

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www.wildaf-ao.org

E-mail : wildaf@cafe.tg

Female genital mutilation, a daily fight to eradicate this practice in Guinea for the rights of women and girls

Dr. M. KOUYATE (DK): I am Dr. Morissanda KOUYATE, a Paediatrician. I have held many positions of responsibility at national level in Guinea among which are: Director of External Affairs, National Director of Hospitals, Chief of the Division of Reproductive Health at the Ministry of Public Health. Currently, I am Director of Operations of the Inter-African Committee and General Secretary of CPTAFE (Cellule de coordination sur les Pratiques Traditionnelles Affectant la santé des Femmes et des Enfants – Coordination Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting Women's and Children's Health).

MBW: Could you tell us about the CPTAFE?

DK: CPTAFE is the national branch of the Inter-African Committee on traditional practices affecting women's and children's health (IC-FA). The committee is a non political, non profit-making non governmental organisation established in 1984 by voluntary and unpaid women and men.

The two main objectives of CPTAFE are:

1. Fighting against female genital mutilations (FGM) and other traditional practices harmful to women's and children's health including early marriages, feeding taboos, scarifications, sexual exclusion of women who have attained menopause, etc..

2. Promoting beneficial traditional practices including breastfeeding, respect and assistance to the aged and children, socio-economic education for vulnerable groups (women and children), assistance to the wider family, etc.

Sensitisation through the use of seminars, colloquia, conferences, debates, films, theatre, through media (radio, television, newspaper...) is the main strategy of CPTAFE. Also, we help the reconversion of former excisers

to income generating activities as well as lobbying for anti-FGM law. CPTAFE places its action within the framework of human rights defence in general, women's and children's rights in particular, as well as the fight against violence against women and children.

MBW: What is the status of FGM in Guinea?

DMK: Female genital mutilations constitute a major issue in Guinea, for it concerns all the country; all the ethnic groups practice FGM, irrespective of religion. Despite sensitisation campaigns being conducted for 20 years and the progress achieved, these practices still remain. Latest studies showed that 98% of girls and women are excised.

MBW: What are the achievements of CPTAFE in the fight against

FGM?

DMK: In its fight against female genital mutilations, CPTAFE undertook numerous activities including:

- ◆ Sensitisation of many socio-professional strata including: journalists, excisers, villages communities, women's groupings, associations of Muslim women, association of Muslim youth, youth associations, religious leaders, members of parliament, political leaders, senior servants of ministerial departments, medical and paramedical personnel, trade unionists, artists, teachers, students, customary and traditional authorities (wise men/women), NGOs, Peace Corps volunteers, embassies and international organisations;
- ◆ A national survey conducted on FGM (1997 – 1999) followed by the development of a 10-year strategic plan (2001-2010);
- ◆ The production of ten (10) films on female genital mutilations

(continued page 3)

An Imam of Koloma in collision with CPTAFE

On 6 February, 2004, the international community celebrated the first International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilations. In Guinea, this day was celebrated at Kissidougou in the presence of several personalities among whom were Hadja Mariama Aribot, Minister of Social Affairs, Women and Childhood Promotion, the Governor of Faranah as well as Dr. Morissanda Kouyate, Director of the Inter-African Commission Operations, General Secretary of CPTAFE who travelled from his headquarters to give a special touch to this event.

Several women, including excisers, took part in the festival to say No to Excision! In the fight against female genital mutilations, our country took a great step through the tremendous work of sensitisation carried out by CPTAFE for 20 years the countrywide. But we are still far from proclaiming victory over this plague even if the Managers of this NGO encourage us to be optimistic and persevere.

Indeed, despite all the achievements including the law passed in 2000 and which is still yet to be enforced, we unfortunately observe that female genital mutilations (excision) still continue in Guinea and we should all stand up to support CPTAFE in order to protect health and rights of our daughters.

A dangerous phenomenon is complicating the task of this NGO: the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalists. One remembers that three years ago, the national Islamic League had made an official statement on radio and television, supported by a circular in which it denounced the action of CPTAFE and asked all imams

(continued on page 4)

Fighting against FGM in Guinea

(suite de la page 2)

- ◆ in French, English and Guinea local languages, (Neither the Koran, Nor the Bible; The Burden; Tradition Tradition...); **The Archbishop of Conakry (Bishop Robert SARA) and the former Minister of Religious Affairs (El Hadj Abdourhamane BAH) made statements against female genital mutilations in these films;**
- ◆ The establishment of a national theatre group on FGM that toured Guinea;
- ◆ The organisation of many radio-TV programmes;
- ◆ The editing and publication of a book on Guinea (Guinea means Women) with the collaboration of a former Peace Corps volunteer (Connie K.) and RAINBO;
- ◆ The deposit of knives by excisers and women in the districts of Kouroussa, Kerouane, Conakry, Mamou, Dalaba and Kissidougou;
- ◆ The lobbying for the enactment of the law against excision by Parliament and the President of the Republic (on 10 July, 2000);
- ◆ The development and implementation of economic reconversion and training projects for women who deposited knives (with the support of the World Bank);
- ◆ The preparation and implementation of community training project through the use of video in the fight against female genital mutilations.

MBW: Could you tell us something about the exciser reconversion projects?

DMK: On November 6, 1999, after the deposit of knives by the excisers/women of Kouroussa, CPTAFE won the first Marketplace prize on the submission of a reconversion project for these excisers. After an in-depth analysis and a vast consultation between CPTAFE, the former excisers/women and the World Bank experts, it was suggested to draw maximum profit thereof for the women. Therefore, important actions were undertaken, namely:

- ◆ Training of 24 national senior core trainers in order to provide the women of Kouroussa to be reconverted with management capacity without which no project would be sustainable. Other women of Guinea and even of Africa should eventually follow this course. The training of the 24 senior has been completed. The determination of these national senior trainers is a great achievement for it helps not only to directly train women who deposit their knives, but also to support any other project of basic training in management in the country.
- ◆ An ongoing training of junior proximity trainers who will be in charge of directly training the former excisers.
- ◆ Assessment of training needs and the determination of reconversion guidelines. This assessment was conducted by the members of CPTAFE and the former excisers themselves. This resulted in five reconversion guidelines: dyeing, local products processing (in particular shea butter), marketing of local products, soap making and market gardening.
- ◆ Six basic management training modules were developed with the support of the World Bank experts and will be used for the training of the former excisers/women. These modules were adapted to illiterate populations.
- ◆ The setting up of associations by the former excisers/women enabled to confer them group and entrepreneurship spirit. Today, the women who deposited their knives at Kouroussa, Kerouane and Conakry have organised themselves into network and undertake together almost all the activities, including agricultural production activities even if the resources they have are small. It is for this reason that they toured their respective districts in order to continue the sensitisation on female genital mutilations.

(continued on page 4)

WOMAN OF HONOUR

Launching of an internationale search for 1000 women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005, Switzerland

1000 women all over the world working for peace in their countries, communities, neighbourhoods will be found and nominated for the **Nobel Peace Prize**. The idea is to call the world's attention to the vital but largely unheralded role of women in peace making and peace building.

To support this campaign, make a nomination or receive further information, contact:

rebecca.vermot@1000peacewomen.org or

maren.haartje@1000peacewomen.org

Price : www.1000peacewomen.org

Source : EWL Newsflash, December 2003 – January 2004, www.womenlobby.org

John Humphrey Freedom Award 2004

Rights & Democracy (International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development) presents the **John Humphrey Freedom Award** each year to an organization or individual from any country or region of the world for exceptional achievement in the promotion of human rights and democratic development. The winner will be selected by an international jury.

Deadline: April 30th 2004

Rights and Democracy: www.ichrdd.ca

Kenya: National award honours women's activist state investiture

Moran of the Burning Spear

Ms Murungi was born on 25th December 1960 in Meru South District. She is an advocate of the High Court of Kenya and currently serves as director, Urgent Action Fund – Africa. Prior to this appointment, Ms. Murungi served as legal advisor to the Women's rights Program at Rights & Democracy, Montreal Canada. She was a member of the International Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC). Ms Murungi sits on the board of the East African Center for Constitutional Development, Kampala Uganda. She is actively involved in matters of Human Rights of Women, gender, governance, and rule of law, democracy, constitutional development and the Truth & Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone. Ms Murungi has authored several articles and book chapters in international law. She is awarded the **Moran of the Burning Spear (M.B.S.)** for her excellent achievements in matters of law.

Source: Pambazuka, www.pambazuka.org

Fighting against FGM in Guinea

(continued from page 3)

These series of activities carried out through Marketplace enabled to give hope to women and to maintain their enthusiasm and their decision to not only stop performing excision but also to fight against it.

MBW: What about the anti-FGM law in Guinea?

DMK: Article 265 of the criminal code of Guinea provides that the perpetrator of female genital mutilations shall be sentenced to life in prison. In the event of death, the perpetrator shall be sentenced to death. This article is so severe that no one thought of enforcing it. In order to be more realistic, a new specific law was passed in 2000; unfortunately, the adoption of the enforcement texts were delayed. Thus, the law is yet to be enforced. We firmly hope that it is enacted.

MBW: Are there constraints in the fight against the FGM?

DMK: There are three main constraints we must face, namely: the strong opposition of some Muslim leaders, the illiteracy and the ignorance of a great majority of the population and the lack of resources.

MBW: Who are your partners in the fight against female genital mutilations in Guinea?

DMK: Many partners collaborate with CPTAFE including WiLDAF/FeDDAF-Guinea; local, African and international NGOs and many financial partners.

MBW: What are the "rights" dimensions of this fight?

DMK: The fight against female genital mutilations is first and foremost a fight for the restoration and the protection of women's and girls' rights for FGM are obvious violation of these rights. Through excision, girls and women are assaulted in their body and spirit; this is the worst violence against women and children. It is this "right" dimension which is the link and collaboration between

CPTAFE and WiLDAF/FeDDAF-Guinea. We highly appreciate the WiLDAF/FeDDAF-Guinea programme and we will involve ourselves in its implementation by coordinating it with ours.

*Interview written by Madina BAH
Of WILDAF/FeDDAF-Guinea*

(continued from page 2)

An Imam of Koloma in collision with CPTAFE

in the country to combat the activities of this organisation considered to be anti-Islamic. Since then, it is believed that everything became normal again after the handing over of knives by excisers from several prefectures. However, the impressive images of February 6, 2004 at Kissidougou, showing an immense crowd and excisers handing over their knives, reawakened the old demons.

Indeed, the fundamentalists of Koloma (called the Guinean Talibans) violently reacted during their special prayer of Friday on 13 February whose sermon ended by a new "fatwa" against CPTAFE. The imam called on the congregation to observe the basic tenets of the Koran among which excision of girls as practised on the wives of prophet Abraham features prominently. He requested that a selfless and merciless battle be waged against all those who sought to liberate girls and women from their sacred duty which is to serve men. An unexcised woman is impure and sexually insatiable, he declared (...).

*Auteur : Abdoulaye Diallo
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*Source : GuinéeNews on AllAfrica.com
le 22 février 2004*

Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

Twenty nine (29) countries have signed the Protocol up to March 26th 2004. None have ratified yet. As long as it is not ratified, countries which have signed won't have to implement it in their own country. It is thus important to make pressure on African countries so it is ratified quick.

To follow-up on countries which have signed and eventually ratified, go on the African Union website, section **Official Documents** and check out the list.

African Union: www.africa-union.org

West African Civil Society Organizations Forum in Accra

The secretariat of the West African Civil Society Forum has just released the report from the last, and first, meeting that took place in Accra, Ghana in December 2003.

The report will soon be available at:

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/actu_ii.htm

A new Togolese organisation for the defense of women's rights in Togo is born: Consultative Council for Women in Togo

The constituent meeting of the Consultative Council for Women in Togo took place on March 18th in Lomé with the support of the 'Groupe de réflexion et d'action, Femme, Démocratie et Développement' (GF2D), a member of WILDAF/FeDDAF-Togo. This new organization will be apolitical and will represent all social spheres of society.

For information: gf2d_criff@hotmail.com

EVENT

African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights

Next ordinary session: May 3rd to 17th 2004

Venue: Dakar, Senegal

Commission: www.achpr.org

Source: Human Strategies for Human Rights list

WiLDAF/FeDDAF West Africa Network was at the 48th session of the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations

In addition to the two workshops that were organized, WiLDAF/FeDDAF West Africa has read a statement on March 4th 2004 at the general debate during point 3 of the agenda on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women in 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

The declaration will soon be available at: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng

On CSW: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/

Representation of women in the delegations to the Pan-African Parliament

On March 23, 2004, 41 States out of 46 signatories of the Protocol to the treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to the Pan-African Parliament sent a delegation for the inauguration of the first parliamentary session, which took place from 18 to 20 March.

Of the 205 members of Parliament, 51 are women (24,9 %). Seven (7) countries sent two (2) women per delegation over a total of five members of Parliament. These are Mauritania, Namibia, Rwanda, Arabic Saharawi Democratic Republic, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia. Two (2) countries sent three (3) women per delegation, namely Mozambique and South Africa. Finally, three (3) delegations were exclusively made up of male members of Parliament, including Sudan (one of the two African countries that have not signed the CEDAW yet), The Gambia and Equatorial Guinea. The latter are in contravention of the Protocol which provides in Article 4.2 that the delegation of each Member State must comprise at least a woman.

Those countries that did not send delegations and on whom there is still possibility of putting pressure in order to integrate more that one woman are the Central African Republic, the Comoros, Malawi, Seychelles and Swaziland.

Elections reflecting parity!

The Constitution of Rwanda drawn up in June 2003 bore fruit with respect to political representation of the women. Indeed, following the legislative elections held in October 2003, Rwanda became the most equally represented country in the world, with 48.8% of women elected to the House of Representatives! 24 seats were reserved for women in the House, and those were elected in indirect suffrage by electoral colleges located in each province and in Kigali, the capital city. In addition to these 24 reserved seats, women won 15 others from the 53 seats which were subjected to direct universal suffrage. The total is 39 women elected out of 80 seats available. For the 24 reserved seats, 154 candidates had filled their nominations to be elected. Furthermore, for the senatorial elections, the Constitution provides a 30% quota for elected women which was observed and 6 women were elected out of 20 seats available.

Before these elections, women accounted for only 25.7% of the Members of Parliament. This achievement which, for many Rwanda nationals, is a testimony of the legitimacy of the Parliament, was made possible particularly through the work done in partnership with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Since 2000, these two organisations have been working in order to ensure emergence of women to the political arena and to support their candidatures. It is pointless to specify that Rwandan women are enthusiastic and determined to take part in the political process: it will be interesting to monitor the situation and to see which dynamics will be brought on the political level by this new equal representation.

Source: OREGAND, www.oregand.ca

Authorized reproduction by OREGAND

A woman being elected as the first President of the Pan-African Parliament: congratulation to the Honorable Mrs Mongella for her nomination !

Women in Law and Development in Africa/Femmes, Droit et Développement en Afrique, West Africa sub-regional office congratulates the Honorable Mrs Gertrud Mongella for her election as the first President of the new Pan-African Parliament. Her mandate will last for five years.

She is a woman with tremendous political experience. We wish that her future actions as President will strengthen the presence of women in all African institutions and in its programs and policies on the condition of women.

Follow-up on the Protocol to the treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating tot the Pan-African Parliament

Forty six countries have ratified it up to March 18th 2004. It is in force since December 14th 2003.

Union Africaine: www.africa-union.org

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENTS 2003: NORDIC AND POST-CONFLICT COUNTRIES IN THE LEAD

The latest statistics from the IPU show that by the end of the year, for the first time, women had broken the 15% barrier across all national parliaments. Women today comprise 15.2% of the numbers of both lower and upper Houses. Moreover, of 181 countries with national parliaments, over 94% have at least one woman in parliament. These achievements are tempered, to some degree, by the fact that only 14 countries have so far managed to reach the 30% threshold of women in national parliaments, a figure widely considered to signify the point at which women can make a meaningful impact on the work of the parliament.

Press release 183: www.ipu.org/press-e/gen183.htm

PUBLICATION

Gender issues in the African Union, NEPAD and the Pan African Parliament : two perspectives

In PDF format only:

www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0000608/P622-Gender_NEPAD-AU.pdf

Source: www.pambazuka.org

What's next at the World March of Women in 2005

The next meeting of the International Committee is scheduled for early July 2004 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Remember that all national coordinating bodies are expected in Rwanda in December 2004 for the 5th International Meeting of the WMW. This will be a crucial event since it will lead to the adoption of the Women's Global Charter for Humanity, planned for December 10, Human Rights Day. We want to emphasize most especially the participation of young feminists the world over. Two days of workshops will be held before the meeting to trade ideas and experiences, and gain new energy as a movement and individually.

Some national coordinating bodies have accepted coordinating responsibilities at the international level. Thus Brazil will take on the world launch of the Charter on March 8, and Burkina Faso will coordinate the world relay of the Charter and the patchwork quilt in 2005.

Agenda

March 8, 2005: Charter launched, beginning of World Relay in Brazil and activities to create patchwork pieces for the quilt

March 8 – October 17, 2005: Relay marches

October 17, 2005: Arrival of the Charter and the quilt and 24 hours of Women's Global Solidarity

October 18, 2005 and continuing until 2006: Global patchwork solidarity quilt tours different countries

Source: Newsletter from the World March of Women,

March 2003: www.marchemondiale.org/en/bulletin/05-2003.html

December 2003: www.marchemondiale.org/en/bulletin/12-2003.html

**Violence
against
women is
violence
against
society.**

Urgent action for the ratification of the Protocol of the ACHPR for the Rights of Women in Africa and to the inclusion of women in all spheres of action of the African Union!

At this moment, the AU is gradually setting up its different decision-making and operational structures. Also, the Protocol related to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa has to be ratified by 15 countries to become in force and to be implemented in every country.

Act now so African women can fully participate in newly institutions and to ensure that gender issues are dealt with in every programs and policies.

Take a look at our **Urgent Actions** section under **News** to read all the details of our campaign.

Urgent Actions: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/actu_iii.htm

Follow-up on the Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council

On March 26th, 2004, 47 countries out of the 53 have signed the Protocol and 32 of them have deposited their instruments of ratification.

EVENT

Call for paper: CODESRIA Conference on electronic publishing and dissemination

Information and communication technologies have brought considerable changes and innovations in the creation, management, publishing and dissemination of knowledge.

Aware of the importance of these technologies and their effects on the production and dissemination of knowledge, CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa) is organising a conference on the impact of information and communication technologies on documentation, research, electronic publishing and dissemination.

Deadline for submission of abstract:

30 May 2004

E-mail: abou.ndongo@codesria.sn;

amndongo@hotmail.com;

aboumndongo@yahoo.fr

Source: www.Pambazuka.org

Venue: Dakar, Senegal

Date: 1-2 September 2004

Conference:

www.codesria.org/Links/News/elpublish.htm

GOOD WEBSITES

You are surfing on INTERNET? Here is an interesting site!

Subject: **Women in politics**, of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, is a section full of information including statistics on women in politics, how they are seen in the medias and a bibliographic database.

Language: English and French

Website: www.ipu.org/iss-e/women.htm

If you know websites that members of WiLDAF/FeDDAF could use in their work, don't hesitate to share this information with us!

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.

The deadline for the reception of the texts is: May15th 2004 (for July 2004 issue).

Who are the Newsletter readers? The Wildaf West Africa Newsletter is distributed to WiLDAF West Africa members in nine countries of the sub-region BUT ALSO to our partners in Europe, Scandinavian countries and America.

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

wildaf@cafe.tg

Beijing + 10 or a fifth World Conference on Women

Will there be the organisation of Beijing+10 or a fifth World Conference on Women in 2005? This is the question being asked by many.

The fourth World Conference on Women which was held in Beijing in 1995 was an event organised by the United Nations (UN) and which ended by the adoption of a Declaration and a Plan of Action by the General Assembly. As such, the latter has the responsibility to follow-up on the Declaration and the Plan of Action. Therefore in 2005, it should organise the follow-up of the fourth Beijing Conference within the framework of the integrated and coordinated follow-up of major international conferences and meetings (resolution 58/148 adopted by the General Assembly). The date of Beijing+10 is still yet to be determined.

The issue of the organisation of a fifth World Conference on Women still remains unsolved. It could be convened under the aegis of the United Nations but this is not compulsory. World women organisations could take the initiative to do it by themselves. Some are reluctant because it requires, on the one hand, personnel, financial resources and time. On the other hand, several wish to evaluate the progress made since 1995.

However, there is a wide consensus on the fact that there should not be a re-negotiation on the language of the Declaration and of the Programme of the Plan of Action.

One thing is certain. In 2005, there will be at least three events within the United Nations, which will relate to the status of women:

1. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2005 will consider the implementation of the Beijing platform;
2. The UN General Assembly will conduct the follow-up, Beijing+10, which it must carry out within the framework of major conferences that it organises;
3. There will be a review of the development objectives of the Millennium Declaration in which several points directly relate to the status of women.

Press release of the CSW of March 12, 2004 : www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/wom1447.doc.htm

Main critiques by the international women's movement, as well as the challenges and opportunities that the MDGs present for the advancement of women's rights: www.whrnet.org/docs/issue-mdg.html

Beijing+10 : A feminist Strategy for 2004-05. A Working Paper for NGOs on How to Move Forward (March 2004) : www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/csw04/B10strategy-CSW04.pdf

Beijing+10 on AWID: www.awid.org/frontlines/beijing.html

Agenda of institutional events: www.wedo.org/meetings.htm

Pro's and Con's: www.eurosur.org/wide/UN/WCW.htm

NETWORK NEWS

IN BURKINA FASO

The "Stop social exclusion for witchcraft" caravan is an activity undertaken within the framework of «16 day campaign against gender violence». It was supported by "Droit et Citoyenneté des Femmes en Afrique francophone -Law and Citizenship of Women in French-speaking Africa (DCF)" programme. From 24 November to 10 December 2003, the caravan cut across 11 provinces, the most affected by the phenomenon. They are Kadiogo, Kouritenga, Passoré, Gourma, Bazèga, Oubritenga, Gnagna, Sanmatenga, Boulkiémdé, Zoundwéogo and Ganzourgou. This activity was aimed at sensitising populations on the ills of violence perpetrated against women, particularly social exclusion as a result of old women witchcraft; to observe these women's rights and freedoms, and promoting and protecting the particularly vulnerable groups.

Several activities were undertaken: information and sensitisation meetings with opinion leaders and some people in order to obtain their support during the sensitisation campaign; identification of resource persons in charge of the mobilisation in each city (provincial Services of the Ministry for Social Action, Women Associations of the visited cities); and preparation of theatre performance in the cities selected and achievement of eleven (11) theatre performances followed by debates in these cities.

This 30-minute radio production and broadcasting programme project on women's rights in national languages, namely Mooré, Dioula and Fulfuldé comes as a reinforcement to the series of activities started by WiLDAF/FeDDAF-Burkina Faso; particularly the need for legal information of the grassroots population in their mother tongue which was expressed during the training seminar of the para jurists in national languages in October 2002. The objectives of the programmes are to advertise: the legal provisions existing at the national and international levels and which protect women's rights; the various forms of violence perpetrated against women and their causes and consequences to the populations; and the national structures for the defence and promotion of women's rights, which can help and guide them, if necessary, particularly WiLDAF/FeDDAF-Burkina Faso.



IN GHANA

The WiLDAF/FeDDAF-Ghana is planning to organize the following activities for the period April to June : a project with refugees in Sanzule, a 'legalites' project where young people are selected from schools, given training on legal literacy and then they educate their peers on human rights, community education, advocacy on domestic violence bill through radio discussions, distribution of information and a walkathon or march in the Western region of Ghana and finally, legal aid to needy women in focal offices in Ho and Takoradi.



IN TOGO

The United Nations High Commission on Human Rights (UNHCHR) granted a financing of US\$ 5,000 for the implementation of the "design of information tools on matters of gender and reproduction health" project. Gender issues are increasingly raised in our communities and various sensitisation campaigns are conducted to inform the target groups. But we observe that despite various efforts being made in this field, few improvements are noticeable for lack of information on gender and reproduction health. The project, financially supported by the UNHCHR, will come to make up for these shortcomings. The objectives are to improve the level of knowledge of the population on gender and reproduction health, to design training manuals, booklets, folders, posters, image boxes and to put these tools at the disposal of men and women.

(continued on page 8)

EVENTS dealing with BEIJING+10

Globalising women's rights: Confronting unequal development between the UN rights framework and the WTO trade agreements

Date : May 20- 22, 2004

Venue: Bonn, Germany

Organisator: WIDE

Conférence : www.eurosour.org/wide/Structure/AC_04Pro.htm

Regional Consultative Meeting of selected national NGOs on Beijing+10

Date : July 26-30, 2004

Venue: Addis Ababa, Éthiopia

Organisator : ACGD/ UNECA

ACGD : www.uneca.org/fr/acgd/en/1024x768/acgd.htm

7th African Regional Conference on Women

Date : November 22-26, 2004

Lieu : Addis Ababa, Éthiopia

Organisator : ACGD/ UNECA

PUBLICATIONS

A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All

Public debate on globalization is at an impasse. Key international negotiations are deadlocked and international development commitments go largely unfulfilled. This report is an attempt to help break the current impasse by focusing on the concerns and aspirations of people and on the ways to better harness the potential of globalization itself. (in PDF format only)

Synopsis:

www.ilo.org/public/english/wcsdg/docs/synope.pdf

Report:

www.ilo.org/public/english/wcsdg/docs/report.pdf

Gender Equality and Trade-Related Capacity Building

A resource tool for practitioners interested in **globalization** and gender.

Report: [www.acdi-](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/GenderEquality2/$file/WEB-COVER-E.pdf)

[cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/GenderEquality2/\\$file/WEB-COVER-E.pdf](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/GenderEquality2/$file/WEB-COVER-E.pdf)

Trading away our rights: Women working in Global Supply Chains

The OXFAM report describes where globalisation is failing in its potential to lift people out of poverty and support development. It also explains how millions of women are being denied their fair share of the benefits of globalisation. In PDF format only.

Summary:

www.maketradeair.org/en/index.php?file=06022004174047.htm

Report:

www.maketradeair.org/en/assets/english/TAOR.pdf

NETWORK NEWS

(continued from page 7)

IN TOGO

Mrs Soukoude-Fiawonou, Assistant to the General Secretary for the board of WiLDAF/FeDDAF-Togo has collaborated with Amnesty International Togo for the launch of the international campaign «Stop Violence against Women» on March 20th, 2004. She presented the state of violence against women in Togo.

«March 8th 2004 : International Women's Day»

Benin: CEDAW, AIDS and violence

Activities: Some games on three radios stations, production of banners and banderoles and installation all over Cotonou, debates on radio and television on the theme of women and AIDS, open-house of WiLDAF/FeDDAF-Benin office and conference on forced marriage.

Ghana: Violence against women

Activities: A church service where the sermon was dedicated to women and a walk in Accra against domestic violence.

Nigeria: Awareness creation on HIV/AIDS in grassroots communities

Activity: A Rallye and a sensitization campaign

Senegal: Parental authority and early marriage

Activity: A debate on parental authority and a panel on early marriage : what strategies to give education to the girls.

Togo: Women and AIDS

Activity: Debate on sexual violences and how HIV/AIDS is spread.



West Africa sub-regional office

Soon, the summary of the synthesis of the project «Sensitisation and capacity building of judicial and extra-judicial stakeholders for the implementation of women's rights in West Africa», will be available in English and French on WiLDAF/FeDDAF website in the **Resources** section under **Publications**.

Mrs Adjamagbo-Johnson, the coordonnator of WiLDAF/FeDDAF-WA, and Mrs Olateru Olagbegi, the national coordonnator of WiLDAF/FeDDAF-Nigeria, will go at the 25th Ordinary Session of the **African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights** and at the preceding **NGO Forum** in Dakar at the end of April and beginning of May. They will lobby for the ratification of the Protocol relating to the Rights of Women in Africa.



EVENT

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XI)

Theme: Enhancing coherence between national development strategies and global economic processes towards economic growth and development and gender and trade as a cross-cutting issues.

UNCTAD: www.unctad.org

Civil Society Forum:

www.iatp.org/unctadxi

Venue: Sao Paolo, Brasil

Date: June 13 – 18, 2004

Source: WIDE – News no 3/2004

Everything you want to know about the CEDAW committee : an interview with Dorcas Coker-Appiah, president of the regional african network of WILDAF/FeDDAF

WILDAF: First, we would like to congratulate you for your nomination to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee. Can you tell us what are your tasks? What is your role as an expert in this Committee?

Dorcas: The CEDAW Committee was set up under article 17 of the Convention with the main purpose of monitoring progress of implementation of the articles of the convention by States Parties. As a Committee member, you consider the periodic reports submitted by State Parties and generally engage in constructive dialogue with their representatives when their reports are being considered. Additionally, since the coming into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, the Committee has additional responsibilities of receiving communications from individuals or groups with regard to alleged breaches, instituting inquiry procedures into the communication if it is deemed worthy of inquiry and then forwarding its findings to the state party for redress, where necessary. It should be pointed out here that the Committee, in its dealings with state parties, adopts an approach of constructive dialogue and therefore ensures that its questions and subsequent recommendations are made in a manner that is beneficial to the state party and will help improve the status of women in that particular country.

The Committee periodically comes out with general recommendations on issues regarding implementation of the Convention or an article of the Convention. So far, the Committee has come out with 24 general recommendations and, at the just ended 30th Session in January, the Committee adopted its 25th general recommendation on Article 4

of the Convention which is on « temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women...».

WILDAF: You have participated at the 30th session last January. It was your first experience in this Committee. What are your impressions?

Dorcas: I can only say that I was overwhelmed by the amount of work that the Committee gets done within the three weeks. At this session, the Committee considered the initial and combined periodic reports of eight countries. Each country report is not less than seventy pages long. In addition to the main report, there are supplementary documents to the reports which all together must be read to get the full picture of the situation in any country. It was very impressive to find how carefully and meticulously Committee members read all these documents and so are able to engage the state parties so meaningfully. The Committee's sessions are not times for play, considering that members may be serving on one or other sub-committee at the same time. The commitment of the Committee members is undisputable and as the newest member, it gives me great encouragement and also poses a challenge to me, which I certainly hope to fulfil.

I was also quite impressed about the efficiency and professionalism of the Secretariat staff and I think that the high output of the Committee, to a large extent, depends on the support that the Secretariat provides.

WILDAF: How many times per year does the Committee meet? How are the members nominated? Have you deposited your candidacy or an organisation proposed it? How much time does each member is nominated? How much time will you be on the Committee?

Procedure for nomination to the Committee is set out in Article 17 (2-7) of the Convention. In my particular case, I was nominated by my Government to fill the vacancy left by her Excellency Judge Akua Kuenyehia, when she was elected as a Judge to the International Criminal Court and I was honoured to have been accepted by the Committee to replace her. My term ends in December 2006.

Read an «INTERVIEW WITH PROF AKUA KUENYEHIA», in WILDAF Newsletter no 14, April 2003

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/ress_i.htm

A member is elected for four years and is eligible for re-election. It is not certain how long one can be on the Committee but I think some current members are serving their third term. Every year, a number of vacancies occur and any state party may submit the name of a national for election. The election is done by the State parties at a meeting specially convened for the purpose by the Secretary General.

WILDAF: What responsibilities were given to you in the Committee?

Dorcas: For the next Session, I was made a member of the pre-session working group to look at the reports of the countries that will be considered at the January 2005 meeting. This means after the meeting in January, the five members of the working group will receive the reports of the selected countries, read them and raise those issues which in their view have not been adequately addressed in the report or are unclear. These issues are then forwarded to the State party concerned and it is expected to respond to the issues before the next session at which their report is to be considered.

WILDAF: Eight countries, notably two Africans, Nigeria and Ethiopia, presented their reports at the 30th session. What are your

(continued on page 10)

(continued from page 9)

your impressions upon real progress for equality and decreasing discrimination in those countries?

Dorcas: I can only say that while some gains have been made, we are still a long way from our goal of achieving equality and I believe culture and tradition is our worst enemy. I also believe our governments should commit more resources to those areas that affect women more if they really want to see progress in the lives of women.

WILD AF: What is the process of examination of report?

Dorcas: On accession to the Convention, States Parties are expected to submit their initial report within one year and thereafter, submit periodic reports every four years. Unfortunately, for different reasons, not all States Parties have conformed stringently to the reporting requirements and you find that some States Parties are several reports behind. The Committee allows States parties whose reports are overdue to combine them.

Due to the number of signatories to the Convention and also the frequency of the reporting, it is not possible to consider reports as soon as they are received. The Committee considers maximum of sixteen reports in a year. Currently, I believe there is a waiting period of about one year or more before the report is considered. The Committee is obviously worried about this situation and is considering ways of expediting its work. In deciding which reports to consider at a session, the Committee takes into account geographic balance and initial and periodic reports.

WILD AF: How does the Committee verify some of the claims by States Parties in their reports regarding the real situation of women in their countries?

Dorcas: Well, the Committee proceeds on the assumption that the information provided is correct. However, the Committee also relies on information submitted by UN specialised agencies as well as NGOs in their shadow reports. Indeed, the Committee considers the shadow reports as very important sources of information and therefore encourages NGOs to participate in the session when their country reports are being considered. In fact, during each Session, two afternoons are set aside to enable NGOs from countries whose reports are being considered to present their shadow reports.

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

Why a communication plan?

You would like women to know more about your activities? You would like your organisation to be recognised for its work? You would wish to diversify your sources of income and develop your network of financial partners?

Then you should evolve a communication plan, which will help you use good means to reach those you target. It is a tiresome work at the beginning but it will facilitate your work henceforth.

In a team, it will be necessary for you to answer these questions:

1. What are the mission and activities organised by your organisation;
2. Who are your targets? (women, judges, donors, etc.);
3. Why do you wish to reach each of the target groups? (goal and objective);
4. How do you reach each of the target groups? (regular news on the status of women or on the organisation's activities, quarterly report, official statements, public relation, etc);
5. What means must you use to reach each of the target groups? (paper, Internet, communication staff, etc.);
6. What results you wish to achieve in the short, medium and long terms?

Once you will have answered these questions, you will have done a good chunk of the work. It is only the beginning of the process of developing a communication plan but already, you can start your communication activities by using a clear strategy, the outcome of which you could assess in short, medium and long term.

WILD AF: What happens when a country doesn't deposit its report to the Committee of the CEDAW? What recourse is available to the Committee in that situation?

Dorcas: Unfortunately, the Committee does not have any right to sanction a state party for not reporting on time. Indeed, its concluding remarks are only of persuasive nature and a State Party may act or not act on them. Every year, the Secretary General issues a list of countries whose reports are five years overdue with the hope that this will encourage them to write their reports.

WILD AF: Any final thoughts on CEDAW process and on your participation to it?

Dorcas: I believe the Convention is one of the best things that happened to women of this world. It is an instrument that we can use to claim our rightful place in all our countries and in this regard, I believe civil society organisations, especially

(continued on page 11)

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

176 countries has ratified up to March 17th 2003. Equatorial Guinea and Angola will have their reports examined at the 31st session which will be held in New York from July 6th to 23rd 2004.

Follow-up on ratification: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/states.htm (en anglais seulement)

31th session: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/31sess.htm (en anglais seulement)

(continued from page 10)

organisations like WILDAF/FeDDAF, have a critical and key role to play in ensuring that what our governments have agreed to in the Conventions are implemented.

I believe that I, as a Committee member, together with my other colleagues have been placed in a unique position to help bring about change in the lives of women throughout the world. It is an honour that I am not taking lightly.

Complementary documents:

CEDAW text and the Optional Protocol to the Convention are available in DOC and PDF:

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/ress_iii.htm

« CEDAW made easy » is available in DOC and PDF format:

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/ress_i.htm

General Recommendation no 25 in PDF format:

www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw30/GenRecWP1-auv.PDF

On CEDAW and its Committee:

www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/index.html

The Optional Protocol to CEDAW and its applicability «on the ground»: www.whrnet.org/docs/issue-cedaw1.html

- NEWS FLASH -

BURKINA FASO: Government tackles tradition of girl-brides

In impoverished Burkina Faso, girls as young as eight are married off to men often older than their own fathers. But the government is now trying to eradicate this practice, alarmed by the continuing emergence of pregnancy complications in very young mothers.

Source: IRIN news of March 23, 2004

GHANA: "I Know My Goal" Campaign

A programme to improve the capacity of 11- to 15-year-old girls to protect themselves from HIV infection and other factors that may threaten their ability to fully benefit from the country's education system. The campaign addresses all primary and junior secondary schools in Ghana and child welfare NGOs operating at the community level, while also focussing on boys, teachers, parents, and community members.

Article:

www.comminit.com/pdskdv52003/sld-7826.html

- NEWS FLASH - NEWS FLASH -

GHANA: Shun cultural practices that promote HIV/AIDS, says Health Director

Miss Melany Bokuma, Lawra District Director of Health Services has appealed to Ghanaians to do away with cultural practices that could spread HIV/AIDS. Speaking at the launch of the Lawra district HIV/AIDS activities, at Lawra, organized by the District AIDS committee, Miss Bokuma said the stoppage of such practices would go a long way in enhancing the health status of families and communities. She mentioned some of the practices as inheritance of widows of deceased relatives, female circumcision and polygamy.

Source:

www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=51771

RWANDA: 4.8 per cent of young girls in Rwanda have HIV

A HIV Survey amongst pregnant women attending clinics indicates the AIDS prevalence rate among the girls aged between 15 and 19 is now estimated at 4.8 per cent and the majority live in urban centres. Statistics from the third National Population and Housing census (2002) indicate that 67 per cent of the total population of 8.4 million in Rwanda is younger than 25 years. Only half of youth between 15 and 24 have both parents living; among the other half one in ten is head of a household.

Source:

ippfnet.ippf.org/pub/IPPF_News/News_Details.asp?ID=3240

LIBERIA: monitors document sexual violations

Human rights monitors are travelling around Liberia documenting crimes of sexual violence during the country's 14-year civil war in a project backed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Over three months, 22 monitors will interview a random sample of 4,000 Liberians and give the results from those interviews to the country's soon-to-be established Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the agency announced on Tuesday.

Source:

www.pambazuka.org/index.php?id=20674

UGANDA: Ugandan Divorce Law Made Fairer for women

The Ugandan Constitutional Court ruled that the current divorce law was discriminatory and therefore inconsistent with the constitution. Petitioners have been campaigning for change in the law since 2003 on the grounds that elements of the divorce act discriminated against women.

Article:

ippfnet.ippf.org/pub/IPPF_News/News_Details.asp?ID=3332

AFRIQUE DU SUD: Strip the back page

Are you tired of reading newspapers that portray women as stereotypes? Tired of editors thinking that the average reader believes women are only newsworthy if they are half-naked or the victim of a crime? The South African National Editors Forum (SANEF) has committed itself to get South African newsrooms to evaluate their performance on gender sensitive reporting. In line with SANEF's plans to engender the media, South African gender and media activists propose that all newspapers commit to leaving out their back page or page three "babe" section from the 5th to the 8th March 2004. Instead, content for these pages will be generated by members of the South African Gender and Media Network (SAGEM) around the theme of International Women's Day.

Information:

womensnet.org.za/MediaPetition.shtml

Source: Pambazuka, NEWS 144: 19

FEBRUARY 2004

INTERNATIONAL: Send a 'birthday card' to the World Bank

The IMF and World Bank will celebrate their 60th birthday in 2004. But it is no time for a party, not as long as debt continues to impoverish and take away the sovereignty of peoples and nations across the global South. On the institutions' 60th birthday, Jubilee USA Network is organising a birthday card campaign to the IMF and World Bank. They have developed birthday cards that call on the IMF/World Bank to cancel 100% of impoverished country debt without conditions, and we will be distributing the cards to activists across the U.S. and around the world. Contact: neil@jubileeusa.org

Campagne : www.jubileeusa.org/take_action/birthdaycard.pdf

Source: Pambazuka, NEWS 144: 19
FEBRUARY 2004

INTERNATIONAL: Violence Against Women feature: Asylum seeking women confronted with specific obstacles

Many of the tens of millions of people who have been displaced from their homes are women fleeing oppressive norms and violence. Some are women who may have opposed their oppression and stood up to the state, society, their husband or their relatives.

Article:

news.amnesty.org/mav/index/ENGPOL3010032004

EVENTS

African Conference on Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS

Conference theme: Social Aspects of Access to Care and Treatment

"The conference will bring together stakeholders interested in the Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS Research in Africa. The conference is expected to be all embracing of all institutions, networks and alliances and would be widely disseminated through AFRONETS, AFAIDS and other dissemination channels.

Venue: Cape Town, South Africa
Date: 9-12 May 2004

Information: Dr Olive Shisana, Executive Director
Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS & Health, Human Sciences Research Council,
Private Bag X9182, Cape Town 8000,
South Africa

Tel: +27-12-3022860

E-Mail: mrousseau-maree@hsrc.ac.za

Source: Resource Net 'Announcements' issue 197

4th African Development Forum

Theme: Governance for a Progressing Africa.

Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Date: October 2004

Information: rokello@uneca.org

Source: www.uneca.org/adf/adfiv/index.htm

Workshop for African regional organizations on «Linking peace, security and regional integration in Africa»

Capacity building for regional organizations on peace and security.

Venue: To be determined
Date: June 2004

Information: info@upeace.org

Source: www.upeace.org

1st Seminar on faculty and staff development teaching gender and peace building

An exploration of links between the presence of women in peace building and development.

Venue: Kitwe, Zambia
Date: 27-30 July 2004

Information: info@upeace.org

Source: www.upeace.org

Developing guidelines for good governance for southern African NGOs

The Charities Aid Foundation Southern Africa will be hosting a regional one-day working conference on governance and accountability in the non-profit sector. The conference is aimed at generating discussion on the need for Southern African NGOs to apply principles of good governance and accountability in their work, as well as to launch the process of developing a draft Code of Good Governance for the non-profit sector.

Venue: To be determined

Date: May 25 2004

Information:

www.pambazuka.org/index.php?id=20125

Source: www.pambazuka.org, no 144

African Development and Poverty Reduction: The Macro-Micro Linkage

The current global environment poses both a threat and an opportunity for Africa. Taking advantage of the openings afforded by trade and investment, while managing the risks and focusing on benefits for the poorest, is the central African challenge in economic policy making.

Venue: Cape Town, South Africa
Date: October 13-15 2004

Deadline for **submissions of abstracts: April 15, 2004**
Decisions: June 15, 2004

Information:

dpruconf@commerce.uct.ac.za

Conference:

www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0000694/index.php

WILDAF WEST AFRICA

Newsletter

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World Forum on Human Rights

The purpose of the Forum is to bring these actors together to advance knowledge --and use of knowledge-- to address new challenges facing human rights in the 21st century.

Venue: Nantes, France

Date: May16-19 2004

Inscription and information :
aframery@laurus.fr

Source: portal.unesco.org

INGOs/Civil Society

Organisation of the 5th Francophone Conference of international NGO.
Theme: The Francophonie, a space of solidarity for a sustainable development.

Venue: Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Date: November 1-2 2004

Information: ddss@francophonie.org

Source:
agence.francophonie.org/dernieres/calendrier_eve.cfm?eve_id=1225