

WILDAF WEST AFRICA

Newsletter

Women in Law and Development in Africa

N°20 - October 2004

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BEIJING+10 SPECIAL -- BEIJING+10 SPECIAL

This is a special issue dedicated to the process of evaluation of the implementation of the Beijing Platform which will be done in 2005 at an Extraordinary General Assembly of the United Nations. African women prepare themselves actively. They will soon participate at the next NGOs Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and then some of them will also assist at the 7th Regional Conference. Both meetings will give the opportunity to unveil the two reports: the shadow report from African NGOs and the regional states report. Both reports will be sent to the committee of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York and taken into account in the conclusion that will be presented at the General Assembly. Also take a look at recommendations from West African NGOs for Beijing+10 and note activities that WILDAF/FeDDAF-WA will organise during the NGOs Forum.

We invite you to follow on the process of ratification of the Protocol to the ACHPR on the Rights of Women in Africa, to read on the Women's Manifesto and the Domestic Bill on Violence of Ghana, to see how the African Union is trying to include women into their policies and organs, to start to be prepare for the evaluation of the program for action of Cairo (ICPD+10) which will also take place in 2005, etc.

And last, we congratulate men and women, especially our WILDAF/FeDDAF-Senegal network, for the monitoring of the ratification process of the Protocol to the ACHPR on the Rights of Women.

Have a nice reading!

Colette LELIÈVRE
CUSO volunteer, Communication Officer

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The *WILDAF West Africa Newsletter* is also available on our website:

www.wildaf-ao.org

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From Beijing to Addis Ababa: what has progressed for African women?

(Article published in Pambazuka no 176)

Towards the implementation of fundamental human rights for women

The issue of women's rights in Africa has undergone a remarkable change in the legal arena. Almost all African countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), a global legal instrument.

In the African region, the appointment of a special rapporteur on women's rights for the first time in 1998 by the former OAU proposed by the African Commission on women's rights was seen as an opportunity to draw greater attention to women's rights. A protocol of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women was adopted in July 2003.

At the national level, most constitutions recognise the same fundamental human rights for all citizens regardless of sex. The last few years have seen legislative measures aimed at global recognition and protection of women's fundamental human rights². Women have had access to free legal aid in all countries and volunteers in human rights education under the appellation of paralegals or barefoot legal workers have carried out awareness-raising work on women's rights on the ground.

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The fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995 raised hopes of a substantial improvement in women's condition across the world and particularly in Africa. The Beijing Declaration and programme of action considered by the United Nations' Secretary General to be "one of the most remarkable documents ever produced by an intergovernmental conference"¹ commits States to taking concrete action in twelve priority areas in relation to women's autonomy. Ten years after Beijing and on the heels of the seventh Regional Conference at Addis Ababa, in evaluating the implementation of the platform of Action adopted there, where are we now? Have African women and girls really made remarkable gains in such essential areas as education, fundamental human rights, violence against women, their participation in decision making, health and the fight against poverty?

Notable progress but significant challenges remain in education

Education, a fundamental human right for women, is also a tool for transformation and an essential means of implementing egalitarian objectives, development and peace. In ten years of implementation of the Beijing platform, noticeable progress has been made in education and training for women and girls. Effort to bring about universal primary education for all, positive discrimination in favour of women's and girls' education and training in areas apparently reserved for men, and awareness-raising campaigns have had encouraging results. However, there are still major

constraints on equal access to education from men and women. Cultural practices and stereotypes have a negative influence on access, maintenance and development of girls across the whole school curriculum. Credits allocated are usually insufficient, girls continue to be the object of sexual harassment in educational institutions, as is evidenced by the concept of "sexually transmitted marks" which persists under different appellations in several African countries. These are only a few of the challenges to be faced before women and girls enjoy full human rights in education and training.

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

Only 31 States parties have signed it and four (4) have ratified as of September 27th 2004.

WEST AFRICA	EAST AFRICA	SOUTHERN AFRICA	CENTRAL AFRICA	NORTH AFRICA
Benin	COMOROS	Lesotho	Burundi	Algeria
Burkina Faso	Djibouti	Mozambique	Congo	LIBYA
Côte d'Ivoire	Ethiopia	NAMIBIA	Democratic Rep. Of Congo	
Gambia	Kenya	South Africa		
Ghana	Madagascar	Zimbabwe		
Guinea	RWANDA			
Liberia	Tanzania			
Mali	Uganda			
Nigeria				
Senegal				
Sierra Leone				
Togo				
12	8	5	3	2
Number of countries for each region				
16	13	10	9	5
Number of countries which have ratified for each region				
0	2	1	0	1

To keep up to date on signatures and ratification, go to www.africa-union.org and check *Treaties, conventions and Protocols* etc. under **Official Documents** section.

From Beijing to Addis Ababa

(continued from page 2)

Capacity-building activity relating to those charged with implementing the law has been initiated. There has been considerable progress in this area.

However, many obstacles must still be overcome before women participate in full rights.

Several countries have ratified CEDAW with reservations. The protocol relating to African women's rights has still to receive the required minimum number of ratifications to become applicable. Shouldn't the current difficulties in ratifying this instrument be seen as the sign of a lack of governments' political will? Governments' have now committed themselves once again in July 2004 in Addis Ababa to ratifying the protocol before 2005. What happens at the end of the due date that they themselves have appointed, will definitively settle the question on the existence of political will to promote women's rights. And at the regional level, the first special rapporteur on women's rights as well as the current rapporteur have come up against difficulties in carrying out consistent work to promote women's rights.

At the national level, many laws still have provisions that constitute a veritable denial of women's fundamental rights: Families Law in almost all African countries confer the monopoly of decision-making power on the male head of the family. The introduction in Mali of the duty of obedience of a woman to her husband illustrates the failure to recognise the power of decision making for women in the family sphere in most African countries. In Togo, a husband has the legal right to forbid his wife from having a separate career. Also in that country, as in many others, traditional forms of inheritance enshrined in law deny women any rights of inheritance. In Senegal and Mali, the legal system authorises Islamic laws of succession under which women are permitted only half the inheritance permitted to their male relatives. Provisions in force sometimes forbid women's participation in certain types of work in certain countries, or permit the appointment of women as civil servant only on production of a medical certificate certifying that they

are not pregnant.

In addition to discriminatory provisions there are also gaps in legal systems which fail to protect women faced with new forms of violation of their rights.

Finally, African women continue in practice to suffer numerous violations of rights which are, in theory, recognised. In many countries they do not have the same access to justice as men.

The causes of such numerous violations of women's rights are many and complex. There is, of course, ignorance of the law and of their rights on the part of women, but also on the part of men and the different strands of society. This ignorance is aggravated by illiteracy among women. Their poverty is an additional factor contributing to violation of their rights. A negative role is also played by certain holders of judicial and extrajudicial positions (magistrates, lawyers, doctors, police, traditional and religious leaders) intervening in the informal or formal resolution of conflicts. Despite the fact that their mandate constrains them to act to protect the rights of individuals, observation has shown that in many cases they contribute to violations of women's rights³. The *Human Development Report 2002* confirms this on a section on *prejudice against women and legal proceedings*⁴.

Two other factors are determining for the lack of progress in implementing women's rights. They are the lack of political will in States which, despite their commitments, show little enthusiasm in most countries in carrying out concrete reforms; and the influence of religious fundamentalism.

Nonetheless, looking to the future it is vital that certain significant steps are taken towards the implementation of these rights.

Participation in public decision making: still only a theoretical right?

An important step has been taken in the representation of women in government by countries such as Rwanda, now among world leaders with 48% female members of

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WOMAN OF HONOUR

APPOINTMENT OF AN UGANDAN WOMEN AS
SPECIAL ADVISER ON PARITY AT THE UN

The General Secretary of the UN, Mr. Kofi Annan, announced on 12 August 2004 the appointment of Mrs Rachel N. Mayanja as a Special Adviser on Parity between men and women and to the Promotion of Women ranked as General Secretary Assistant. Mrs Mayanja, from Uganda, is actually the Director of Human Resources Management Division of the FAO (UN Food & Agriculture Organization). She has a degree in Law from the University of Makerere (Uganda), Mrs Mayanja has also a Master Degree in Law from Harvard University.

Source: AWID Carrefour vol. 3, no 31

GODELIÈVE MUKASARASI IS THE WINNER OF THE 2004 JOHN-HUMPHREY FREEDOM AWARD
Rwandan human rights activist Godeliève Mukasarasi is the winner of the 2004 John Humphrey Freedom Award, Rights & Democracy announced today. A survivor of the 1994 genocide, Ms. Mukasarasi has gone on to make an invaluable contribution to the promotion of human rights and democratic development in Rwanda as the founder of SEVOTA, a support group for the widows and orphans of the April 19, 1994, massacre of Tutsi in the town of Taba, and as a social worker with the Women's Network for Rural Development.

Communiqué: www.dd-rd.ca/english/commdoc/prelease/JFHA2004.html

FINANCING

CALL FOR PROJECT

In order to actively find and fund initiatives of women in Africa that truly break new ground in advancing women's rights, Mama Cash has decided to bring out a call for proposals focusing on two thematic areas: peace and security and economic justice.

Applications can be downloaded via a grant request sheet on the website: www.mamacash.nl

Send you project to: Africa@mamacash.nl

Deadlines: 1 November 2004

All final decisions will be communicated within three months after the deadline. Mama Cash grants range from 500 to 15,000 euros.

Source: AWID Carrefour, vol. 3 no 33

From Beijing to Addis Ababa

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parliament since 2003.

However, the generally poor representation of women in public decision making indicates that their participation remains only a theoretical right for African women. Statistics compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union are eloquent. In September 2002, at the national level, sub-Saharan Africa came next to last (before the Arab countries whose percentage of women in parliament was 5%) with a total of women in parliament of 13.6%⁵. Participation in executive power, which was hardly any more impressive stood at 10%⁶. The same statistics at 31 July 2004 show slight progress in parliamentary representation with an average of 14.4% all Houses combined. These results are hardly surprising when one considers that, even in the private sphere, and particularly within families, decision making is always accorded to men. It is also the case even when, unusually, families, according to the law, has been headed by the man and woman in partnership.

In general, women in the continent still live in patriarchal societies where men control decision making at all levels as well as controlling resources.

Persistence of violence against women, despite some actions

Some actions are noteworthy in respect of violence against women since Beijing. This consists in the adoption of laws outlawing certain specific forms of violence such as female genital mutilation, domestic violence and sexual harassment⁷. NGOs have raised awareness among populations about the effects of violence against women and set up coalitions to fight this phenomenon. However, violence against women still persists in the professional and domestic spheres, in the community and in society in many forms: physical, moral and psychological violence, acid baths, female genital mutilation, marital rape, sexual harassment, exploitation of women and girls etc. In many countries forced marriages still continue along with Levirat⁸, despite legal requirement for the

consent of both parties to a marriage. Particular forms of violence such as trafficking in women and girls are increasing in volume in the West African sub-region.

Here again, obstacles are linked to the fact that it is difficult to enforce the law and the resources allocated are inadequate. Social pressure, prejudice and socio cultural inhibitions prevent action from being effective. If one has observed a growing awareness among populations and particularly among men who are beginning to be associated with the fight against violence against women, the road leading to a significant reduction in this type of violence seems a long one.

Health: still too many women dying or facing the scourge of HIV/Aids

In the health arena, the adoption of policies and laws addressing reproductive health issues in particular has facilitated the setting up of programmes designed to allow women a greater enjoyment of their rights and control of their bodies. Nonetheless, figures from the different annual reports on human development up to 2004 have continued to indicate high levels of maternal mortality and incidence of anaemia among pregnant women.

Furthermore, an emerging question in all countries, in relation to health, has been the particular vulnerability of women to HIV/Aids⁹. Different analyses throw into sharp relief the links between violations of women's other rights and their susceptibility to this pandemic. It is no fate that too many women die by giving birth or have to suffer from with HIV/Aids.

Armed conflicts continue to impose a particular burden on women and girls

The increase in situations of armed conflict particularly in Central and West Africa gives rise to and exacerbates specific forms of violence against women. This includes rape and coercion of all kinds, sometimes committed by agents of the State or by humanitarian workers charged with their protection. One positive

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The Family Law in Benin has been promulgated

The Family Law of Benin was promulgated on 24 August 2004 by the President of the Republic. WiLDAF/FeDDAF-Benin was once again the first to break the news in the media during an appropriation workshop on the said law organised in collaboration with an American institution, Women's Legal Rights Initiative, for members of the network. The workshop took place from 6 to 8 September 2004.

The promulgation of this law by the current Head of State officially acknowledges the existence of a Law and makes it enforceable. This is to say that effective from 24 August 2004, the Family Law is applicable to all Beninese across the national territory.

See article on the revision of the Family Law in Newsletter n° 19 of July 2004.

WiLDAF/FeDDAF-Benin will soon start a popularization campaign on the Family Law. The campaign will be implemented in collaboration with the Women's Legal Rights Initiative and is entitled: «Sensitisation and capacity building of judicial stakeholders and intermediaries on the Family Law for the effective implementation of women's rights».

Information about Women's Legal Rights Initiative: www.cedpa.org/projects/wlri.html

You can download Court Justice Decisions on wildaf-ao.org website under **Resources** section.

Ratification of the Protocol in Senegal: the process has not yet achieved but it is well under way!

We have discussed today with a senior executive from the Exterior Affairs Ministry (Direction of Legal and Consular Affairs) which has informed us that the Protocol have not yet been ratified but the process is under way (things are going well). The ratification should be happening in the near future and then the instrument will be deposited.

From Beijing to Addis Ababa

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outcome in limiting this type of violence has been seen in the work of the tribunals in Rwanda and Sierra Leone which have passed judgement on this type of act. But in general this type of reprehensible act remains unpunished.

Women have understood the importance of organising themselves to be more visible in preventive work, during the conduct of conflicts and in post-conflict reconstruction. One example of this is the Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET). However, we need to recognise that more effort is needed to enable women's participation on an equal basis with men in the prevention and conduct of war as well as in reconstruction in peacetime¹⁰.

A context in which poverty has a woman's face

All these facts have as their background a kind of poverty which increasingly has a woman's face. Several actions and strategies have been developed by States with the objective of reducing poverty, as is evidenced by the numerous action plans undertaken across countries. Nonetheless, such plans have not been conceived from an egalitarian perspective and they have not been sufficiently sensitive to the problems and strategic interests of women. The action and strategies developed rarely give women control of resources or means of production.

Moreover, structural adjustment programmes and globalisation have exacerbated the poverty of African women. Globalisation reinforces the inegalitarian character of the world economic order while limiting access for women to control of the internal workings of the international market.

There is no doubt at all that the implementation of the Beijing platform of action has failed to meet the expectations of African women. But one of the advantages of the Beijing Conference has been that during ten years women have been able to organise themselves into a genuine lobby group pushing governments to act. At the regional level, the adoption of parity within

the Commission of the African Union and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC)¹¹ and the protocol to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women are examples of what can be won when women are well organised. Similarly, at the national level, feminist pressure groups have succeeded in obtaining important political and legal reforms for women in a variety of countries.

It is now an urgent matter to enlarge these movements and bring States to develop further programmes and take concrete measures which will make a real difference in the life of women and girls in Africa.

Kafui Adjamagbo-Johnson
Coordinator of the West Africa sub regional office

¹ Beijing Declaration and programme for action and Beijing+5 policy Declaration and final document, United Nations Information Department, UNO, New York, 2002.

² For example, the whole series of laws on female genital mutilation enacted at the end of the 1990s and at the beginning of 2000 in Togo, Senegal, Ivory Coast and Kenya; the recent adoption in 2002 of the Families Law in Benin and the same process currently under way in Mali and Togo, where Families Law in existence since 1980 are being revised; the adoption of laws on domestic violence in Senegal; on sexual harassment in Senegal and Ivory Coast; and the adoption of quotas for women's participation in political life in Cape Verde and Niger.

³ Fortunately, capacity-building work among holders of judicial and extrajudicial stakeholders begun in West Africa by WILDAF/FeDDAF has shown that such people do contribute more effectively to respect for women's rights if they are made aware and receive appropriate information concerning current legal norms.

⁴ P. 66.

⁵ Analysis of the data by country confirms this trend, despite considerable differences between countries. For example, Senegal has the highest level of participation in West Africa with 19.2% of women in parliament since its elections in April 2001. The totals are respectively

Don't miss the special issue of Pambazuka on the NGOs Forum and the 7th Regional Conference on African women. Go to: www.pambazuka.org

Violence against women is violence against society.

12%, 11.7%, 9%, 6% and 4.9% in Nigeria (elections in February 1999), Burkina Faso (elections in May 2002), Ghana (elections in December 2000) and Benin (elections in March 1999).

⁶ Population Reference Bureau, Women in the World, 2002.

⁷ A campaign against gender violence and trafficking in women and children should commence in two years across Africa instigated by the solemn declaration made by the Heads of State of the African Union at the time of the recent Addis Ababa Conference in July 2004. (Assembly/AU/Decl.12(III Rev.1)

⁸ Levirat: "Duty of the brother of a deceased husband to marry his childless widow".

⁹ A report by UNAID, UNFPA and UNIFEM in July 2004 reveals that 57% of HIV positive adults in sub-Saharan Africa are women.

¹⁰ It is to be hoped that the African Union will implement its declaration on the integration of women in the peace process at the time of the recent Conference of Heads of State in July 2004 in the solemn declaration on which reads as follows: that they agree to "ensure the full and effective participation and representation of women in peace process ... and to also appoint women as Special Envoys and equality between men and women, Special Representatives of the African Union" (Assembly/AU/Decl.12 (III) Rev.1)

¹¹ 50% of the Council's members will have to respect the principle of gender equality (article 4.2). Agreement adopted at the Conference in July 2004 (Assembly/AU/Dec.48(III)).

The Women's Global Charter for Humanity is a testament to our love for life and enchantment with the world's beauty.

We have been marching a long time to denounce the oppression we live under as women and exhort the powers-that-be to end the domination, exploitation, egotism and unbridled quest for profit that breed injustice, war, conquest and violence..

Our feminist struggles and those of our foremothers on every continent have forged new freedoms for us, our daughters and all the granddaughters who will walk the earth after us.

We are building a world where diversity is considered an asset; where both individuality and collectivism are seen as sources of wealth; where dialogue flourishes and where writing, song and dreams can flower. Taboos and fear will have no place in this world. Solidarity, justice, equality, freedom and peace will prevail. We have the power to create it.

PUBLICATION

Report from the WSIS Gender Caucus of the PrepCom 1 for the WSIS

Report from the preparatory meeting 1 in anticipation of the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society which was held in Hammamet-Yasmine, Tunisia, from 24 to 26 June.

Report available in Word and PDF in WiLDAF/FeDDAF-WA website: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/actu_i_0.htm

Source : Liste WSIS

EVENT

African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights

36th ordinary session: 23 November to 7 December 2004

Venue: Dakar, Senegal

Commission: www.achpr.org

To read the rest of the Charter go to:

www.marchemondiale.org/en/charte/charte.html

About the consultation process going on:

September 2004: mailing of the second draft to your national coordinating bodies; discussions at a national meeting to prepare the delegates to the 5th International Meeting of the World March of Women in Rwanda, December 2004.

December 10, 2004, in Rwanda: adoption of the final document.

To follow about the charter, follow the link for the charter.

Citoyennes africaines de la société de l'information

A publication from Réseau Genre et TIC
Series ENDA Study and Research

Important manual aimed at raising awareness of decision-makers, advocacy for decision-makers and public, private and civil stakeholders, on the necessity to take into account gender into information and communication policies in order to have an information society of Africa that is fair, plural and inclusive.

Available in French in PDF.

Download a copy:

www.famafrique.org/regentic/e-citoyennes.pdf (876 Ko)

Source: Femmes-Afrique List

GOOD WEBSITES

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

Subject: 'Countdown 2015: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for All' is an initiative dedicated to assessing the progress and mapping the future for the key goals of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994.

Language: English, French, Spanish and Italian

Website: www.countdown2015.org

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 initiatives? 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 or info@wildaf-ao.org.

The deadline for the reception of the texts is: November 15th 2004 (for January 2005 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 Africa, Europe, Scandinavian countries and America.

For any question or comment, don't hesitate to contact us.
wildaf@cafe.tg – info@wildaf-ao.org

Recommendations of West Africa sub region on the evaluation of the Beijing Platform 10 years after its adoption



Some appreciable progress has been made in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by States in the sub-region. While appreciating the result achieved, women organisations believe that the results are not at the level expected by women and do not reflect the resources put into implementation; for example in the fight against poverty. In a general manner, actions have remained at level of policies and adoption of laws whilst practical implementation is still inadequate.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Commit more resources for implementation of policies. In fact, policies have been adopted, but few resources are committed for their implementation
- Integration of gender into programme planning and budgeting
- Enforce the principle of democracy, good governance and transparency as tools for development
- Systematic allocation of public resources to strengthen the capacity of NGOs
- Allocate resources under the Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative to women's work where applicable.

GOVERNMENT

- Adopt affirmative action to increase women's participation in politics
- Depoliticise national machineries and structures for implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

- Strengthening of NGOs capacity is an important priority and resources should be set aside for that purpose.

7 priority areas for the next 5 years

1. Poverty and economic empowerment
2. Decision making
3. Health including HIV/AIDS and reproductive health
4. Violence including trafficking of women and children
5. Education of women
6. Peace and security
7. The girl child

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

POVERTY

Women's NGOs recognise the efforts made in the fight against women's poverty. However, in spite of these efforts women and girls constitute the majority of persons living below the poverty line in the countries. Inequalities still persist in regard to women's access to and control over resources and means of production such as land, credit, technology and knowledge and information on modern methods of production. To this effect, West African NGOs recommend the following:

- Adoption of a people centred macro economic framework
- Facilitating access to and control of rural women to means of production
- Adopting policies and programmes for strengthening women's capacity.
- Creating enabling conditions for women to master the new information and communication technology.
- Creating enabling environment for the development of activities of women in the informal sector.
- Creating enabling conditions for access to and control of resources by women for development of women enterprises.

THE PERSISTENT UNDER REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICS

- Adopt affirmative action policies for increasing women's participation in politics and the public sector
- Review socio-cultural practices that inhibit women's participation in decision making at all levels.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

- Facilitate HIV positive women's access to anti-retroviral drugs at a subsidised cost.
- Set up maternal and child health centres offering free services.
- Adopt and implement laws and policies on reproductive health rights.
- Adopt laws and policies for the treatment of vesico vaginal fistula (VVF).
- Take preventive measures for control and treatment of malaria.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS (SUITE)

WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS INCLUDING VIOLENCE AND TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS

Women's rights are human rights. They are inalienable, indivisible and interdependent. Consequently, human rights are the basis for the Beijing platform for action.

Violence is a violation of women's rights and therefore is an obstacle to the development and the realisation of the full potential of women in West Africa.

To this effect, the following recommendations are made:

- Withdrawal of all reservations made to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the domestication of the provisions for effective implementation.
- Ratification and effective implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's rights on the Rights of women in Africa
- Repeal all existing discriminatory laws and other harmful traditional practices.
- Adopt specific laws against FGM by countries which have not yet done so and insure their effective implementation.
- Adopt laws against trafficking in women and children and ensure the punishment of the traffickers and protection of victims.

- Adopt comprehensive laws against all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence and sexual harassment.
- Strengthen the capacity of NGOs working in the area of women's rights.

PEACE AND SECURITY

An environment which ensures peace and security is an important element in improving the situation of women and girls.

Women and girls constitute the majority of targeted victims in situations of armed conflict. They are victims of all sorts of violence. To this end, the following recommendations are made:

- Continue to involve women in conflict prevention and management
- Undertake educational programmes on the role of citizens in conflict prevention
- Adopt laws to punish violence against women and girls during conflict and post conflict situations.
- Establish trauma centres for treatment of victims of violence.
- Institute and strengthen democracy and good governance in order to ensure peace and security.

WOMEN'S EDUCATION: A PRE CONDITION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Education is a human right and

essential for the full realisation of women's potential and the economic and social development of a country. In this regard, the following recommendations are made:

- Allocate adequate resources for effective implementation of all policies and programmes for improved quality education.
- Adopt special programmes and allocate resources for the training of women.
- Introduce gender concerns into training programmes and curricula.

THE GIRL CHILD

The young girl of today is the woman of tomorrow. Young girls are often treated as inferior to boys of the same age. This results in discrimination against them.

In this regard, the following recommendations are made:

- Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child
- Institute mechanisms for the alleviation of domestic burden placed on young girls.
- Encourage the enrolment and education of the girl child.
- Eliminate all forms of exploitation against the girl child
- Take measures to prevent and protect the girl child from sexual violence and trafficking.

Launch of the Togolese chapter of WACSOF and preparation of the next assembly

The Executive Committee of WACSOF met in Lomé (Togo) on 16-18 September to prepare the next assembly and launch the first national chapter of the Forum. It was decided that the assembly would take place in Accra (Ghana) on 9 to 12 January 2005 before the next ECOWAS Heads of States Summit. Members of the Executive Committee took the opportunity to launch the first of the fifteenth potential chapters in Togo.

Members of the Togolese focal point of WACSOF got together after the opening ceremony to determine what critical areas regarding human security they wish to be prioritize by the next Forum.

Read the final press release of the Lomé meeting which is available in PDF and Word format: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/actu_ii.htm

The Women's Manifesto of Ghana

The Women's Manifesto is a political document that sets out critical issues of concern to women in Ghana and makes demands for addressing them. It has been produced out of a concern about the insufficient attention to these issues, and the limited presence of women in public life and their poor participation in politics and policy making. This is because given the challenges that women are confronted with, it is important to put in place mechanisms that would progressively draw attention to their needs and concerns and enable them to participate actively in public affairs.

A Manifesto would allow women to articulate their concerns in the 2004 Elections and beyond as well as provide information for those who wish to become conscious of what is needed to achieve gender equity and become equipped to make demands for its realisation. It would also allow progressive women and men to use their votes as a bargaining tool and recruit others to do the same and would allow women and men candidates to have something to work to once they are elected to parliament and the District Assemblies. Finally, it would promote accountability of political parties because it would be possible to assess them on where they stand in relation to issues that concern women as outlined in the Women's Manifesto.

The Manifesto is available in the WILDAF/FeDDAF-WA website in Word and PDF:

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/actu_i_0.htm

Domestic Violence – The Sad Truth

Domestic violence discussions evoke mixed reactions from people some thinking there has been an inundation of the topic, others of the view that 'let the debate continue'. As a dichotomised debate society is grappling with what should be private and what should be public.

NETWORK NEWS

IN GHANA

Coming events

1. On the Women's Manifesto: There will be a community education for people in Eyisam in the Central Region in November and women will be encouraged to vote for female parliamentary candidates. We will have radio discussions on the manifesto.
2. WILDAF/FeDDAF is part of the Coalition for Domestic Elections Observers (CODEO); Ms. Patricia Essel is on the Procurement Committee of CODEO which is responsible for ensuring that materials needed by observers for monitoring the upcoming elections in December are procured through approved procedures.
3. WILDAF/FeDDAF has been nominated as one of the members of a three man committee to do a report on institutions mandated to promote advancement of women in Ghana; which report will form part of the Status of Women Report that Netright (Network for Women's Rights) is putting together.
4. The WILDAF/FeDDAF Legal Awareness Programme in Volta Region is carrying out a 'Legalites' (young peer legal rights educators) project that is training youth from first and second cycle schools to become peer educators on human rights specifically children's rights.
5. The Legal Awareness Programme in Western Region has an ongoing project with the Crisan Refugee Camp in the Western Region which hosts refugees from Côte D'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Liberia.
6. WILDAF/FeDDAF and FIDA Ghana are jointly writing a manual on legal literacy training. It is a project sponsored by the World Bank through the Ministry of Justice.

IN TOGO

Soon WILDAF/FeDDAF-Togo will start a project to redynamise the fight against sexual harassment in school, a phenomenon that is increasing and is starting to be recurrent. During 2000 and 2001 sensitization campaigns against gender violence, WILDAF/FeDDAF-Togo implemented help committee for victims of sexual harassment named Committee SOS Girls in 89 schools (colleges and secondary schools) in Lomé, and in Maritimes, Plateau and Central regions. The project is funded by the USA Embassy. The project will be reinforced and be extended to all regions of Togo. The project will also have for objective to have a law being adopted against sexual harassment.

(next on page 10)

The perception, when research provided startling data of its prevalence in Ghana, was that the myth had been broken. There was a readiness to break the silence! Recent discussions on the domestic violence bill apparently portray a section of society that is suddenly tethering to the 'privacy' end of the spectrum. What has occasioned such a dramatic shift in the continuum even within the Executive, the Judiciary and members of the Legislature? Analysing comments by a cross section of the public presents such varied opinions that in no-way de-emphasize the need for a law on the issue that is long overdue. On the whole the Domestic Violence Bill is good except for a couple of provisions that are the seat of discomfort for

many, viz, the sexual abuse clause and the provision that amends section 42 (g) of the Criminal Code on consent for force by spouses.

Perhaps, the advocacy is moving too fast for many to come to grips with the import of such a law. Let us therefore get to brass tacks in this paper through a discussion of what is domestic violence, its causes, its impact concluding with an analysis of the Bill.

Author: Bernice Sam, coordinator of WILDAF/FeDDAF-Ghana

Download the full article:

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/actu_i_0.htm

Download the Domestic Violence Bill:

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



The NGOs
Forum in Addis
Ababa on 6-7
October 2004

The Women in Law and Development in Africa /Femmes, Droit et Développement en Afrique is activement working for the organisation of the next NGOs Forum which will be held in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, from 6-7 October before the 7th Regional Conference on African Women. The regional and West Africa sub regional offices both participate at the Organizing Committee. Considering the human and financial resources and the time allocated to do it, it is a tremendous challenge. 300 NGOs representatives are expected for the Forum. A certain number of them will then stay for the Conference to raise awareness of States representatives about NGOs priorities.

The objectives of the NGOs Forum are to:

- Examine the level of implementation of critical areas from the Dakar and Beijing Platform for Action and to question the States which are supposed to give account of their actions;
- Discuss emerging issues on women's rights which request more attention;
- Discuss cross section issues of women's rights;
- Make sure preoccupations and critical areas of African women and NGOs working in the field of gender equity are taken into account in the process of evaluation of both platforms.

Activities of WILDAF/FeDDAF-WA in Addis Ababa

1. Panel on the state of ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa
2. Panel on promoting women's rights in Africa: learning from each other experience
3. Workshop to strategize for the ratification of the Protocol in West Africa
4. Daily newsletter on what will be going on at the Forum for three days

NETWORK NEWS

WEST AFRICA SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE

The West Africa sub regional office will actively participated into the NGOs Forum for African Women by organizing numerous activities. The Coordinator will also assisted at the 7th Regional Conference that will follow the NGOs Forum. Because of our follow-up of international legal instruments for the rights of women and because of an invitation by Women's Rights Action Watch-Asia Pacific, Mrs Adjamagbo-Johnson will go Khatmandu, Nepal, from 17-19 December to discuss about strategies to adopt so the Optional Protocol to CEDAW is adopted and implemented par States parties of the United Nations.

Campaign: www.iwraw-ap.org/protocol/campaign.htm

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Some activities during the «Panafican Day of Women on July 31st»

IN BÉNIN

Messages broadcasted on the following radio stations: Radio Maranatha, Radio Nationale, Radio Immaculée Conception in Allada and Radio Tokpa.

IN NIGERIA

A letter was sent to the President of Nigeria to recall him to maintain highly on the African Union's agenda the status of women which he is now the President. Read the letter: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/actu_i_0.htm.

IN SENEGAL

Mrs Mariame Coulibaly, Coordinator, presented the Protocol to the ACHPR on the Rights of Women focusing on article 15 (food security) on the invitation of the Ministry for Family, Social Action and National Solidarity in front of numerous media and a big population. She took the opportunity to talk about the need to popularize the Protocol by translating it into national languages and to proceed to its implementation on a national basis.

IN TOGO

A conference including debate was organised in collaboration with the Direction for the Promotion of Women on Women and HIV/AIDS and the family unit. A message was sent to two catholic and two protestant parishes on problems for the Togolese women.

Before the Forum, the WILDAF/FeDDAF-West Africa organised a west african meeting on the evaluation of the implementation of the Beijing Platform Lomé on late 26-27 August. Ten countries were represented. Together, the representatives of country NGOs finalized the synthesis report of the sub region which the content will be integrated into the regional shadow report

Available in WILDAF/FeDDAF-WA website are: the synthesis report, the final press release, a list of representatives, shadow reports from NGOs and States reports.

Information on the process of Beijing+10 and African meetings: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/Beijing10.htm

Special feature on the NGOs Forum:
www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/ForumNgo.htm

Gender equality: a real will of the African Union or dust in the eye?



The Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) meet annually¹ to take the necessary decisions pertaining to the development of the continent. During the last Conference that was held from 3 to 6 July 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, they took the following decisions concerning women:

1. A solemn declaration on gender equality in Africa among which are:

- A decision of the Chairperson of the AU Commission to transform the African Women Committee for Peace and Development into a the African Union Women's Committee whose headquarters will be located at the Gender Directorate and which will serve as an Advisory Body to the Chairperson;

Hereby agree to:

- «Ensure the full and effective participation and representation of women in peace process ...and to also appoint women as Special Envoys and Special Representatives of the African Union»;
- Initiate, launch and engage within two years sustained public campaigns against gender-based violence as well as the problem of trafficking in women and girls;
- Expand and Promote the gender parity principle...to all the other organs of the African Union, including its NEPAD programme,
- Undertake to Sign and ratify the Protocol to the ACHPR on the Women's Rights in Africa by the end of 2004 and to support the launching of public campaigns aimed at ensuring its entry into force by 2005;
- Accept to establish an African Trust Fund for Women.

2. The Executive Committee took a decision of the enhancement of economic empowerment of women (doc. Ex.cl/117(7)) which calls on member States to formulate and implement a national policy which will then be included among the criteria for under the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) of the NEPAD;

3. The Statutes of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union were adopted.

One of the objectives, which does not feature in its draft statutes dated 14 May 2003 reads as follows: Promote, advocate and defend a culture of gender equality (article 2.6)¹. The Council will be comprise of 150 civil society organisations (CSO) including half being the youth of between 18 and 35 years and that 50% of the members should observe the principle of gender equality (article 4.2).

It cannot be denied that the African Union is making efforts to integrate and spearhead gender equality. Hence, the Heads of State started the Conference with a discussion on gender put as the first item on the agenda. However, it is time for this will to be transformed into concrete actions and by the granting of adequate resources. Of course, the AU indicates that it wants to establish a Trust Fund for Women but to the tune of how much? When we analyse the budget attached to the 2004-2007 strategic plan, we observe that 70% of this amount will go into Peace Fund and the NEPAD Fund and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Obviously, we cannot be against a peace fund in order for the conflicts to cease; but then the budget appropriation leaves little or no place for other priorities.

In prelude to the Conference, the AU Civil Society Forum was held on 26-27 June 2004. It issued a declaration which was published on the AU site. The least that could be said is that it is the work that must be done to make the peers of the civil society to know the importance of involving women in development. Hence, contrary to the Heads of State, gender equality is absent from their declaration.

In spite of this determined good will, one may regret that this is detailed only in the official declaration without an appropriate consideration in the specific decisions to further support it. For example, the Heads of State adopted a decision on the implementation of NEPAD taking note of the progress made since the previous Conference. It would have been proper to recall the intentions of the Heads of State which are to: «Promote and expand the gender parity principle ...including its NEPAD programme». The conference also adopted a decision on the operationalisation of the establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC). It would have been proper to recall the intention to «ensure the full and effective participation and representation of women in peace process...and also appoint women as Special Envoys of the African Union», as indicated by the official declaration. Yet nothing. Similarly, can women not be included in this organ while the declaration for commitment

(next on page 12)

When will the initial appointments of judges to the African Court Human and Peoples' Rights take place?

In our last newsletter, we mentioned that the Heads of State, according to the Protocol relating to the creation of the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights, were to announce the appointment of the first judges to this African Court, under normal circumstances.

Under normal circumstances, the Heads of State should have appointed the first judges to the African Court. According to Pambazuka, only 10 countries out of the 15 that could propose candidates have done so. However, no decision on the subject has been taken looking at the decisions published about the Conference on the AU website.

Let us recall that it is an important institution in which the Conference shall ensure that there is an adequate gender representation.

Pambazuka: www.pambazuka.org/index.php?id=23018

(continued from page 11)

Gender equality in AU

towards peace and security during the official launch of the PSC which took place on 25 May 2004 in Addis Ababa is silent over it?

In short, the African Union's intention of including women in all its organs, its new institutions and programmes is laudable. However, it seems to remain the prerogative of the Heads of State without reflecting over within the institutions themselves. The budgets allocated to the priorities demonstrate the real intentions. And finally, other events also show the right picture of the intentions of the AU. Let us note that the conclusions of the Summit on employment and poverty held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) from the 3 to 9 September where of course, the objectives proposed included the consideration of issues related to gender parity but whose expected outcomes is limited to wanting «integration of gender equality policies». Let us swear that it is too little in terms of expected outcome in order that women contribute as full stakeholders to the development of Africa.

¹ The Heads of State and Government however took the decision to hold two ordinary sessions considering the immense assignments to be carried out. (Assembly/AU/Dec.53 (III))

¹ Home made translation.

To consult Decisions of the last Assembly of July 2004, go to:

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/actu_i_0.htm

EVENT

49th session of Commission on the Status of Women 2005

Date: 28 February to 11 March 2005

Venue: New York

Source: daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=E/CN.6/2004/L.8&Lang=E

CEDAW Committee

The periodic reports from Algeria and Gabon will be examined.

32nd session: 10 to 28 January 2005

Source: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/32sess.htm

33rd session: 5 to 22 July 2005

Venue: New York

Source: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/33sess.htm

IN ANTICIPATION OF ICPD + 10

PUBLICATIONS

Strategic advocacy and maternal mortality: moving targets and the millennium development goals

Author: Lynn Freedman

In 2005, the United Nations will proceed to the evaluation of the implementation of the program of action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Maternal mortality will be certainly discussed and analysed. Lynn Freedman argue that there is space for feminist action around the remaining Millennium Development Goals (MDG) on reducing maternal mortality although women's health is not its primary concern. Only one goal having any explicit connection to women's health remained, the number 5, which is to «improve maternal health» which should progress should be tracked by two indicators: first, the maternal mortality ratio, and second, the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel. She concluded in focusing attention which must be given to the globalisation policies that have contributed to the devastating of health systems in many parts of the world.

Article published on AWID website available in PDF: www.awid.org/publications/gen_dev/freedman.pdf

Maternal mortality in 2000: Estimates developed by WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA

Available in HTML and PDF:

www.who.int/reproductive-health/publications/maternal_mortality_2000/index.html

Lives worth saving: Abortion care in sub-Saharan Africa since ICPD. A progress report

From: Ipas

The program of action of the ICPD is anchored by a vision of development that requires attention to gender equity and specifically recognizes that women need universal access to reproductive-health care in order to participate fully in society. Delivering safe abortion care to all the women who need it, when and where they need it remains a challenge in Africa. Some targets are: overcoming the limitations of poor health infrastructures; securing resources for abortion care; mobilising political will to support comprehensive reproductive health; addressing abortion in the context of the HIV/AIDS crisis; and meeting the special needs of young women.

To read the report in PDF: www.ipas.org/publications/en/ABAFRICPD_E04.pdf

Follow-up on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

178 countries have ratified the Convention.

On ratifications: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/states.htm

Follow-up on the Optional Protocol to CEDAW

Up to 31 August 2004, only 75 countries have signed, twelve (12) from Africa. Of the 64 States parties which have ratified, only four African countries did it. Following Mali, Namibia and Senegal, Libya did it since 18 June 2004. There is still 54 instruments of ratification missing to entry into force.

On ratifications: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/sigop.htm

A good text published by WHRnet: www.whrnet.org/docs/issue-cedaw1.html

Resource: International Women's Rights Action Watch, Asia Pacific, www.iwraw-ap.org

Follow-up on the amendment of article 20 paragraph 1 of CEDAW

As of 11 June 2004, only 45 States parties have agreed on the amendment. In order to achieve legally binding force, it needs to be ratified by 2/3, which means 118 of the 177 States parties. In Africa, only six countries have accepted the amendment and they are Egypt, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius and Niger.

Take a look at the list of countries which have accepted the amendment on www.wildaf-ao.org in the Newsletter in the News section.

Other information:

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

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

IN ANTICIPATION OF ICPD+10

HIV/AIDS and women: an important crisis

The problem of HIV/AIDS is so important for women, above all in developing countries that UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM published a specific report showing again that it is striking, not to say a capital and primordial importance.

«The overwhelming majority of people with HIV/AIDS – 98% of women and 94% of men – live in developing countries. Of all regions, sub-Saharan Africa is the most devastated. No other region in the world approaches its HIV prevalence rates or displays such a disproportionate impact on women and girls: 77% of all HIV-positive women live in sub-Saharan Africa. ... about 23 million adults aged 15 to 49 are infected, with 57% - 13,1 million – of them women.» (Women and HIV/AIDS: Confronting the Crisis, p. 1)

The following table reveals quite enough risk that women have to become infected of HIV.

Country	Prevalence rate of HIV Taux de (15-49 years) M/F
Benin	1,7/2,1
Burkina Faso	3,6/4,8
Côte d'Ivoire	6,0/8,1
Gambia	1,0/1,3
Ghana	2,6/3,5
Guinea	2,7/3,7
Guinea-Bissau	
Liberia	5,1/6,7
Mali	1,6/2,2
Mauritania	0,6/0,7
Niger	1,0/1,4
Nigeria	4,6/6,2
Senegal	0,7/0,9
Sierra Leone	
Togo	3,6/4,7

Source: State of the World Population 2004

Sexual and reproductive health for women living with HIV/AIDS in french-speaking Africa: a review of the literature and policies

Beatrice Humarau for International Community of Women Living with HIV-AIDS wrote a bibliographical research report of policies and programmes on sexual and reproduction health on women living in Africa where French is an official language.

Download the **report**:
www.icw.org/tiki-read_article.php?articleId=91

Women and HIV/AIDS: Confronting the Crisis

A joint report by UNAIDS, UNIFEM and (UNFPA), which reveals that women represent nearly half (48%) of the persons infected by HIV. It shows the devastating effect of AIDS often invisible on women and girls and underline how discrimination, poverty and violence against women are contributing to the spread of the disease. The document, published through the United Nations program on HIV/AIDS for the occasion of the XVth Conference on AIDS that was held in Bangkok, Thailand until 16 July pleas for the fight against gender violence and the reinforcement of their inheritance rights. It is affirming that any measure to fight against HIV/AIDS will be a defeat if it does not integrate gender equality. Also a report from the PNUD reveals that life expectancy is decreasing in numerous African countries to 40 years old because of AIDS. It is then the major decline factor of human development in Africa.

Report available in PDF and HTML:
www.unfpa.org/hiv/women/report

Press release:
www.un.org/apps/newsFr/storyF.asp?NewsID=8440&Cr=sida&Cr1=

Source: AWID, Carrefour vol. 3, no 32

State of the World Population 2004

«Gender inequities and male domination in relationships can increase women's risk of infection and limit their ability to negotiate condom use. Poverty leads many women and girls into unsafe sexual relations, often with older partners.

This "feminization" of the epidemic is further exacerbated by women's roles as managers of the household and primary caregivers for family members infected with HIV. Other factors that make the impacts disproportionate include the legal, economic and social inequalities women often face in the areas of education, health care, livelihood opportunities, legal protection and decision-making.» Report of UNFPA in PDF and HTML.

Report : www.unfpa.org/swp/index.htm

To have or to hold: Women's Property and Inheritance Rights in the context of HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa

Confirming some hypothesis of the 2004 State of Human Development edition, the report suggest that where women's property and inheritance rights are upheld, women acting as heads and/or primary caregiver of HIV/AIDS-affected households are better able to manage the impact of AIDS. Additionally, preliminary evidence indicates that such rights may help prevent further spread of HIV/AIDS by promoting women's economic security and empowerment, thereby reducing their vulnerability to domestic violence, unsafe sex, and other AIDS-related risk factors. Available in PDF.

Summary:
www.icrw.org/docs/2004_info_haveandhold.pdf
Report:
www.icrw.org/docs/2004_paper_haveandhold.pdf

Beyond the targets. Ensuring children benefit from expanded access to HIV/AIDS treatment

De: Save the Children
Report available in PDF:
www.savethechildren.org.uk/temp/scuk/cache/cmsattach/1599_BeyondtheTargets.pdf

Call for nomination for the African Union Women's Committee

Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) is appealing to the African women's networks involved in the process of mainstreaming gender in the African Union and those who have directly participated in the process or not, are urged to nominate possible candidates as members of the new African Union Women's Committee. It will be composed of sixteen eminent women.

The Committee will be:

- A resource for the Chairperson of the Commission and the African Union as a whole in relation to gender issues, as well as in enhancing the capacity of the Women, Gender and Development Directorate of the African Union, and widening the reach of its operations;
- A further channel for the voices of African women at all levels to enable them to participate in and influence all policy and decision-making in the African Union and its organs;
- A channel for popularizing the decisions and workings of the African Union;
- A support mechanism for the African Union to further its goals and objectives.

Criteria for Membership

- Experience in working on women and development issues;
- Track record and performance in terms of achievements; an activist who has and is still working on the furtherance of gender equality in any area;
- Demonstrated commitment to the cause and struggle of women, taking into account the diversity of women in Africa.

Send you nomination to:

Professor **Margaret Vogt**, Director of Cabinet, Office of the President of the African Union Commission
P.O. Box 3243
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: (251) 1.51.7700
Fax: (251) 1.51.7844
VogtM@africa-union.org

Send a copy to:

Mrs Yetunde Teriba:
yetundet@africa-union.org

PUBLICATIONS

Human Development Report 2004

If the world is to reach the Millennium Development Goals and ultimately eradicate poverty, it must first successfully confront the challenge of how to build inclusive, culturally diverse societies. Not just because doing so successfully is a precondition for countries to focus properly on other priorities of economic growth, health and education for all citizens. But because allowing people full cultural expression is an important development end in itself.

Report:
hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2004/

Source: Faits de Vendredi d'ACPD, vol. 5 no 6

"Political Shari'a"?

Human Rights and Islamic Law in Northern Nigeria

New report by Human Rights Watch on implementation of Shari'a law in 12 northern Nigerian states stresses that "the application of Shari'a in Nigeria has revealed patterns of fundamental human rights violations which are not peculiar to Shari'a but typify the human rights situation in Nigeria as a whole." A section is on discrimination against women.

Report available in HTML and PDF:
hrw.org/reports/2004/nigeria0904/

Source: Africa Focus, 22 September 2004

Perspective on governance with recommendations and action plan: West Africa subregion

Report done for the African Development Forum of October 2004.

Report available in Word and PDF in WiLDAF/FeDDAF-WA website:
www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/actu_i_0.htm

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

Forty six countries have ratified it for the inauguration of the Parliament on 18 March 2004. No new deposit of ratification's instrument since then. It is in force since December 14th 2003.

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

As of 12 July 2004, 47 countries out of the 53 have signed the Protocol and 36 of them have deposited their instruments of ratification. It is in force since December 26th 2003.

African Union: www.africa-union.org

Debt to women concept: reflections on a just and caring economy, alternatives to globalisation

By Barbara Kalima

Paper presented at the Conference 'Women's voices on Alternative Globalisation' in Manila, Philippines from 27 to 29 August 2004.

Available in PDF WiLDAF/FeDDAF-WA website:

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/actu_i_0.htm

The young face of NEPAD: children and young people in the NEPAD

This paper suggest that the aspirations of NEPAD's initiators, partners and stakeholders for progress, peace and poverty-reducing growth should find their foundation in Africa's human capacity development, which in turn must start with Africa's children. Available in PDF in the Publications' section of ELDIS: www.eldis.org

African Commitments to Democracy in Theory and Practice: A Review of Eight NEPAD Countries

Of which Nigeria, Senegal and Ghana in West Africa.

In PDF:

www.iss.org.za/pubs/Other/ahsi/ahsipaper1.pdf

Sexual violence epidemic exposes flaws in gender and minority protection

Published by Minority Group

Report available in PDF.

Report:

www.minorityrights.org/recent_publication_Detail.asp?ID=38

- NEWS FLASH - NEWS FLASH - NEWS FLASH -

Côte d'Ivoire: 2005 elections: Women leaders want to have their candidates for the 2005 presidential election

Taking part in politics in quite another way is the ambition of women of Cote d'Ivoire who participated in a seminar at Bassam to become hardened for the next year electoral consultations.

Article:
fr.allafrica.com/stories/200409150318.html

Gambia: Rights of Women in Africa workshop

The African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, ACDHRS, last Wednesday held a one-day National Consultative Workshop on The Ratification and Implementation to the African Chartered on Human and Peoples' on the Rights of women in Africa at the Kairaba Beach Hotel.

Article:
allafrica.com/stories/200409030614.html
www.acdhrs.org/

Ghana: Media urged to expose corruption in society

Mr Daniel Batidam, Executive Secretary of the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), on Thursday, urged the Media to expose corruption and other social vices in society rather than concentrating on politicians.

Article:
www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=64863

Mauritania: Little progress in fighting slavery, FGM in Mauritania

A Mauritanian human rights committee, after a three-year delay, finally has been able to report on the progress in the fight against slavery, female genital mutilation (FGM) and racial discrimination in the country. While the Committee mapped grave problems, authorities

in Mauritania keep denying there are any matters of concern.

Article:
www.afrol.com/articles/13864

Niger: Battle Against Fistula Moves Ahead

Zeinabou Baba had just about given up on the prospect of living a normal life by the time aid workers arrived in her village of Tera, west of Niger's capital Niamey.

Article:
www.ipsnews.net/africa/interna.asp?idnews=25238

Nigeria: Nigerian Women need better post abortion care services

In Nigeria where abortion is illegal and the criminal code strictly prohibits any form of procurement of abortion except in saving the life of a women, there is indications that induced abortion is still widely practiced.

Article:
www.ipsnews.net/africa/interna.asp?idnews=24989

Sierra Leone: Sierra Leone war crimes court lacking funds

While the special court for war crimes in Sierra Leone is officially backed by the UN and its member states, who are to help providing funds, lack of financial means is now impeding its work. Human rights groups now voice concern that the important court may lose its capability to do its work.

Article: www.afrol.com/articles/13915

Africa: The Divergence of AIDS, and Sexual and Reproductive Rights

AIDS prevention efforts and initiatives to support sexual and reproductive health would seem to be natural allies. Why is it then that projects to

advance these causes so often proceed in isolation of each other? Report: www.who.int/reproductive-health/publications/maternal_mortality_2000/index.html

Article: www.angolapress-angop.ao/noticia-f.asp?ID=280312

International: International Court Boosts Justice for Women

The appointment of a deputy prosecutor to the International Criminal Court is expected to strengthen the court's commitment to justice for women.

The selection of Fatou Bensouda from The Gambia out of an initial pool of 198 applicants will strengthen the court investigations under way in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, rights activists say.

Article:
www.ipsnews.net/africa/interna.asp?idnews=25432

International: The Divergence of AIDS, and Sexual and Reproductive Rights

AIDS prevention efforts and initiatives to support sexual and reproductive health would seem to be natural allies. Why is it then that projects to advance these causes so often proceed in isolation of each other?

Article:
www.ipsnews.net/africa/interna.asp?idnews=25397

EVENT

World Summit on Family

Date : December 2004

Venue: China

Source: Décisions du Conseil exécutif de l'UA (eX.CL/Dec. 93-164 (V))

etc.

Source: Pambazuka.org, AWID, GainsNet, etc.

EVENTS

Women and ICT: Challenges and Opportunities on the Road to Tunis 2005

The overall objective of the conference is to draw a roadmap for the caucus that will enable effective Women participation at WSIS-Tunis 2005. The specific objectives are:

- Report back of the activities and agreements made at the Geneva-WSIS 2003
- To draw up a detailed workplan through a participatory approach covering all major challenges that Women identified at the Geneva phase in readiness for Tunis 2005.
- To study the draft Geneva 2003 Draft Plan of Action and identify entry points for the caucus' further intervention.
- Develop continuity strategies, including funding, for the Women ICT activities in the region.

Venue: Arusha International Conference Centre, Arusha, Tanzania
Date: 18-20 octobre 2004

For more information, contact:

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Source: www.wougnnet.org/Events/proiectnews04.html

Réunion préparatoire régionale africaine pour le SMSI

Venue: Accra, Ghana
Date: 2 to4 February 2005

Information:

www.itu.int/wsis/preparatory2/index.html or www.wsisaccra2005.gov.gh

Conference on Africa and media by UNESCO

Venue: Marrakech, Maroc
Date: 22 to24 November 2004

Information:

www.mincom.gov.ma/mediaconferenc/en/index.htm

3th AfrEA Conference

"Africa is important, evaluation is important: joint forces for democracy, governance and development".

Venue: Cape Town, South Africa
Date: 1er au 4 December 2004

Information: www.afrea.org

Source: La Toile d'elles numéro 83, août 2004, www.famafrique.org

Gender, Citizenship and Governance

International course organised jointly with the Royal Tropical Institute, this training course has two broad aims. First it aims at providing a gender analysis of the governance agenda and institutions; second, it aims to familiarize participants with strategies to ensure that gender equity and equality are prioritized on the governance agenda.

Information: www.macmag-glip.org/events&workshop_nov04.htm

Contact: gcg@crted.org

Venue: Beirut, Lebanon
Date: 17 to 26 November 2004
Source: Gainsnet List 6 September 2004

World Social Forum (WSF) 2005

Venue: Porto Alegre, Brazil
Date: 26-31 January 2005

Registration of workshops and conferences starting August 2004.

Information:

www.forumsocialmundial.org.br

The WSF 2006 will probably be organised in Africa, maybe Egypt.

Source: WIDE – News no 3/2004

WILDAF WEST AFRICA

Newsletter

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3rd African Social Forum

Venue: Zambia
Date: December 2004
Source: Pula no 4 Mai 2004

World Summit on Information Society

Venue: Tunis, Tunisia
Date: 16-18 November 2005

Information: www.itu.int/wsis
NGO Gender Caucus: www.genderit.org
Civil Society Gender Caucus:
www.wougnnet.org/WSIS/wsisgc.html

IMPORTANT DATES

16 days of activism against gender violence: 25 November to 10 December

2004 Theme: **For the Health of Women, For the Health of the World: No More Violence**

More information on campaign: www.cwql.rutgers.edu/16days/kit04/theme.html

E-mail: cwql@igc.org

Source: Instrawsnews 1st September 2004

World AIDS day: 1st December

2004 Theme: **Women, Girls and HIV and AIDS**

More information on campaign: www.unaids.org/en/events/campaigns.asp

Source: Gainsnet 22 Spetember 2004